

TRAINING DAY – SWINDERBY 5TH APRIL 2009

The day started with a start at 6.20am when we realised I (It had to be ME) had omitted to set the alarm for 6:00am. It was my job to put the kettle on as I passed through the kitchen en route across the field to feed the horse – dressed, of course, appropriately in night attire and dressing gown, complemented of course by a stylish pair of green wellies!!

Our aim was to leave by 8:00am to arrive in good time. Alas, all good plans etc :((

We eventually left at 8:50am (good timekeeping for us) wondering if we'd revisit our nemesis. Same venue last year our entrance to our first real Poachers event was of Richard leaping through a hedge into the venue asking for help as Broc had gone down in the trailer with spasmodic colic 100 yards up the road and would anybody please help us – which of course everybody did!!! No such entrance this year – calm, cool, collected:))

The day dawned glorious and kept that up through the entire day. What a pity so few showed up – but, what a lovely atmosphere.

A sort of plan, which worked well, was drawn up to ensure that we all had half an hour of Wendy's time, after which we could go round the cones course, followed by lunch. After lunch we would all be taken to the obstacle, talked through how to walk it, then have a go ourselves, under Wendy's instruction.

The day ran smoothly, with everybody getting their time without too much hanging about. The cones course was lovely – so easy to follow, the next number was visible as you passed through the previous number.

After "The Lunch Break" we all gathered round the obstacle and Wendy demonstrated how to walk it, explained why we should walk it in such a way and gave us all tips on how to drive an obstacle at a good pace, without upsetting the pony/horse, and, more importantly, how to make it an enjoyable experience for both horse and driver. Wendy also took time to explain the Groom's role in all of this and tips on what worked for her.

We all got to drive the obstacle three or four times, being timed on each occurrence. I was really pleased to improve my time the second time by 8 seconds, and to improve a further 3 seconds at my 3rd attempt.

I got a lot out of today – Wendy took time to ask me what I wanted to improve upon, and she helped me to start to achieve it, both by instruction but by also driving Broc so she could understand my problems, she also sent me away with a bucketful of tips and exercises to improve him. As a groom, Richard

understands his role a lot better – though he'll never, ever grasp reading a female's mind:))

I hope that everybody else got as much out of the day as we did. It was fun, relaxing and exceedingly sunny.

I think we need to say a **BIG THANK YOU** to Ben and Jane for inviting us to their place today, and for their wonderful hospitality. Not to forget also a **THANK YOU** to Wendy.

We eventually arrived back home about 5.15pm, without mishap, tired but very happy bunnies:))

Carol & Richard Wood