

## Brechin Castle Equestrian Update

I can't believe it's the end of February already but it's great to see the light stretching into the evening. I don't want to tempt fate so I won't go on about how lovely the weather's been!!

Following the article in the Courier last month about the ODE at Brechin Castle, I have received numerous emails from folk asking why I've stepped down from organising the events. Just to set the record straight, I haven't stepped down and the events will be running as normal this year again! The ODE is going ahead but will be organised by David Reid this year and not by Dalhousie Estates, and this will not affect the normal running of the BCE events in the showfield. This was maybe not made clear in the article.

We have many events planned for the showfield this season, starting in March with JumpCross Training and a JumpCross Pace. Paces are great fun and there's no pressure and it's up to the rider how long he/she takes to get round the course. We will however, send out a search party for you eventually! (I've attached a JumpCross Pace explanation.)

Before each JumpCross event this year, we'll run training classes in the morning. Riders who do the training in the morning can do the Pace in the afternoon if they wish, but may not enter the competitions, and the JumpCross course will not be available for hire with an instructor the full week before any competition. I think this makes it fair for everyone.

I've had to change the date for the Hunter Pace, so it will now take place on Sun 18<sup>th</sup> March. The Hunter Pace has a similar explanation as the JumpCross Pace and a great way of practising XC. Weather permitting, the Maulesden water complex and jumps will be included in the course.

The Unaffiliated Showjumping League starts on Sun 25<sup>th</sup> March with Alison Duff judging, and the heights range from 2ft to 3ft3 - 11am start.

I've already started taking bookings for Erik McKechnie's clinic in April and you'll find the entry form in the Calendar of Events on the web site.

John Cleneghan will be holding Show jumping Clinics in the showfield again this year, dates to follow.

David Gatherer will be holding XC clinics on Sun 6<sup>th</sup> May after the ODE and on Sat 14<sup>th</sup> July

The Unaffiliated Dressage League starts in April and the tests are also now on the BCE website. Each competition will include a walk and trot test, plus three other tests in the 40x20 arena and two tests in the 60x20 arena.

I haven't scheduled any Natural Fences competitions this year yet as they were not popular last year. However as before, the natural fences, show jumps, xc and JumpCross (with an JumpCross instructor) can all be hired out by the hour. The hire forms are on the website.

The schedules for the Spring Show on Sun 13<sup>th</sup> May are almost ready but I'm waiting for the NPS to clarify the classes we're being allocated as some of the sponsors have changed this year.

New qualifiers for this year are The Side Saddle Association and CHAPS – The Coloured Horse and Pony Society, as well as the other qualifiers including The Ex Racers Club Championship, the Veteran Horse Society, the NPS qualifiers and the Blair Castle Tullibardine Contractors Working Hunter Pony Championships. So hopefully we have something for everyone again!

The Brechin Castle Members Club was very popular last year and I'll be emailing out renewal forms in March as the membership runs from April to April. There's an Easter egg up for grabs again if you get lucky membership number 25 !

I still don't have a burger van for the show field so I'm giving up the search for the moment! I'll have tea, coffee, crisps and homebakes for sale in the bus and an honesty box, so folk can serve themselves!

As ever we will be looking for volunteers for our events. It's a real worry before any event if we don't have enough helpers and can be a decider if the event goes ahead or not. We value our helpers and appreciate the time given up so this year again will be

thanking any helpers with a complementary hire of the facilities. ( or a box of sweeties if they don't ride!!) I realised that I relied too much on my family for help last year so I'd like to use them only in emergencies! My mum and dad ( both in their 80s) even had to be called in on several occasions to jump judge but almost leapt out of their skins as the first horse went past as their radio was turned off!! They were sitting reading the paper in peace and quiet!!

So if you can spare an afternoon or evening please get in touch. I hate hounding folk to help !!

Many thanks to our Showjumping and Dressage judges for this season, SJ - Jean Paterson, Alison Duff , Terri Brooks, Dressage – Hazel Stewart and Sandra Ramsay Thanks to Fiona Hirst who is the Brechin Castle JumpCross Instructor and many thanks to Anne Clark for First Aid cover at JumpCross and XC events.

Please email me with any queries about the website (which isn't the easiest to work with!!) [val.blewitt@btinternet.com](mailto:val.blewitt@btinternet.com)

Sorry this is so long winded!

Looking forward to seeing you all again!

Regards

Val Blewitt