



**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
ON-LINE ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING - 3rd DECEMBER 2020**

Dear President, Vice President, Members and Fellow Committee Members,

Well, 2020 has been - and continues to be - dominated by the worldwide pandemic, and Rearsby Lodge Riding Club has inevitably been significantly impacted by that. I am immensely grateful to everyone for your quick responses to the ever-changing circumstances in which we have found ourselves. At times it has felt like being delicately perched on the top of a massive wave on a surfboard with absolutely no idea as to destination, temperature, speed, wind power - or precipitation!

In addition to that, 2020 will be memorable in the long-term history of the club, as it was the year in which Brooksby-Melton College terminated our agreement, which has effectively been in place since 1997. It will undoubtedly mean ongoing challenges in the future in terms of finding suitable venues, but I do hope that it will prove to also represent opportunities for the club to move forward, expand and remain successful. After looking at all indoor competition venues within our reach, your committee decided to try out Pickering Grange - while continuing to use a range of different venues for training clinics.

2020 was also the year that opened up time and head space for the committee to develop a brand new website. Kate Hill led all the work with tremendous technical and people skills, and it has already received a lot of positive comments. I hope that everyone associated with the club will feel a real sense of pride in it. If anyone wants to contribute to it - in words and/or pictures - we would be absolutely delighted to hear from you. We are grateful to Claire Atkins for having administered the previous one for a very long time - thank you so much, Claire.

At the beginning of 2020 the committee created a 'social task group' to explore non-mounted and mounted activities for our members in response to information from members at the last AGM in 2019. The group commenced that work, but was of course interrupted in March. It will be picked up once the Covid situation has settled.

One of this year's explicit goals for the committee was to increase the club's membership, which has run at around 100 for several years now. As you can all imagine, it remains at that level at the end of this year. We are setting ourselves that goal too for 2021, so it would be great if everyone could continue to promote club membership at every opportunity, particularly on social media.

Activities 2020

And now to the really important 'stuff', i.e. which activities have we been involved in during this year? I want to thank everyone for developing and adhering to the club's and venues' Covid19 risk assessments, without which we would have been unable to run and participate.

Club Activities

Dressage Shows

Those that could go ahead continued to be well attended by members and non-members, and those who come say they enjoy them. A huge thank you to Liz Atkins for your continued commitment to organising and running them; we all appreciate all your work very much.

Dressage Training

Our two regular coaches, Jane Peberdy and Jane Carruthers, always attract members and non-members alike. Thank you to both for all the support during 2020, especially the way it all 'got going' again after lockdown1. Also thank you to the organisers, Jules Johnson, Jacqui Ludlam and Liz and Claire Atkins.

Showjumping/Arena Eventing Shows

The events that we were able to run were extremely well attended, if not by members. It feels somewhat contradictory that we have amazing arena eventing teams, yet club members are hugely outnumbered by non-members at the club's arena eventing competitions. If anyone can shed any light on the reasons for that, I would be very grateful. It must be acknowledged though that the income for the club from the arena eventing competitions was excellent.

Jumping Training

Jo Holmes-Cole has run several sessions, and those sessions are continuing to increase in popularity. She has brought with her a number of juniors, who may join the club in 2021. Thank you so much to Jo and to Sue McGrath for organising.

Quadrille

Quadrille riding has now become 'mainstream' for the club and remains popular. We were thrilled to have found the most amazing indoor venue, but alas, with Covid19 that proved to be short lived. A low key competition with 3 teams completed our outdoor season in October. My grateful thanks to our wonderful riding master, retired Cavalry Officer, David Boyd and to the entire group of 'core riders', of whom there are now around 12. Please do check out the recent Rider magazine to see an article by Hilary Bowerman.

Teams

Generali World Club Tournament in France

Marianne Stringfellow, Lily Walker, Nicky Grayson and Genevieve Walters won the BRC Intermediate Show Jumping Championships back in September 2019, and as a result were due to represent their club and country in France in July 2020. We were all so exceedingly excited and looking forward to that amazing honour. Alas, it had to be postponed. We all so hope that it will be possible for it to take place in 2021.

Dressage

Dawn Muston and Jacqui Ludlam represented the club in dressage to music and qualified for the championships, which they both attended and did very well.

Jumping

Nicky Grayson represented our club at BRC Arena Eventing Championships in March and with a 2nd place out of a huge field, she and her club were just thrilled. Many congratulations to her and her wonderful Henry.

Arena Eventing

At Speetley the Arena Eventing Team of Nicky Grayson, Claire Lewis, Helen Garner and Lily Walker came 2nd in the 100cm class with Lili winning individual to qualify for the championships in March 2021. Claire Lewis was 5th. In the 70cm Megan Pickering came 4th.

Intermediate Dressage and Showjumping Qualifiers

Team Willow made up of Dawn Muston, Hannah Parr, Becca Smith and Di Poyser won and are off to the championships in March 2021. Yasmin Thorpe, Helen Garner and Becca Binks in Team Beech were 4th and Team Oak comprising Celia Dyson, Jules Johnson, Alix Davis and Alice Smith had a good outing too. Alice Smith jumped a double clear in the 80cm to finish 9th. Hannah, Jules, Dawn, Becca, Yasmin, Becca and Di achieved individual placings too.

The club is extremely proud of all riders and horses - and their results - and I would like to thank you and congratulate you all on being such fabulous competitors and on representing our club. Many thanks also to the Team Managers, Tracy Walker, Rachel Frew, Nicky Grayson, Claire Atkins and Becca Smith. We are looking for a junior team manager for 2021. In 2021 we will trial the role of Team Captain to support the teams and their managers, so we hope that will support the team managers and the teams as well as building capacity for team managers in the future.

We actively encourage all our members to compete in a team. Area Qualifiers are held throughout the year for all 440 affiliated riding clubs in the UK. It is great fun and will enable you to compete in many different venues, and if you qualify to compete at national championships. The support that is provided by the Team Managers is second to none, and you will be made very welcome. It really is for everyone!

Volunteers to help before, during and after club shows and at qualifiers and championships

This presented no difficulties during 2020, but there was of course not a full calendar of events.

Committee Members

Our club's constitution stipulates a maximum of 16 committee members and as there are currently 13 of us, we have 3 vacancies. If you are interested, please do contact me for an informal chat about what the work entails.

Plans for 2021

...and what of the future? As you hopefully all know, the committee has decided that the membership fee for existing 2020 members will be reduced by £5 in 2021, provided you pay before March 2021. There is an expectation that all members will volunteer to offer their time to help at least once during the year. We are trying out a new competition venue at Pickering Grange as well as at least one other training venue at Kirby Bellars. The outdoor season will remain at Aylesford, where we are supported well and feel very welcome. If possible, we will start to arrange social mounted and unmounted social events as well.

Should you have any thoughts on what you would like your club to do, I would love to hear from you!

My final thanks go to the committee members. You are an extraordinarily capable, dedicated and encouraging group of people, who love Rearsby Lodge Riding Club and want it to be the very best it can be. You are truly the 'backbone' of the club as without you there would be no activities.

Wishing everyone a merry Christmas and a happy and safe new year.

Anette Whitehouse

30th November 2020