

Alconbury TREC 21.08.16 by Sarah Wynn

This is the first outdoor TREC event I have organised, having cut my teeth on an arena TREC in the spring. Home Farm has a lovely cross country course plus some purpose built TREC obstacles, like the footbridge. The venue must have one of very few hills in this part of Cambridgeshire and therefore for locals it is a bit of a novelty!

In the run up to the event I recruited sponsors for the prizes 'Forever Horses' and BHS Bedfordshire both kindly sponsored prizes for the Newcomers, Novice and Intermediate classes. I visited the venue a number of times to plan my routes and got course setting. With no POR the plan was to do a long PTV course taking in all the lovely features on the site, so lots of walking.

Once the course plan was done the next challenge was to recruit judges and helpers. They came from far and wide (and some very local). A massive thank you to all my helpers, you were stars! Entries started coming in, start times were done and competitor information sent out - there is so much to do to get everything ready for the day.

A couple of days before the event Louise and Sarah Ayres (the hosts of the event), helped me to set out all the flags and obstacle numbers. On the Saturday morning my sister (Katie), Linda Taylor and I travelled up with a vehicle stuffed with TREC obstacles to set the course (all bar a couple of obstacles that were travelling up separately). Once the course was set we headed home for a quick bite to eat before grabbing the horses and heading back to do the course walk. Katie and Linda went off to ride the course and set the times whilst I timed them. Then it was time to head back to the start and find the Newcomers ready for their guided course walk. We decided to have a demo pony for the Newcomers to show them how each of the obstacles should be ridden. Oso (Katie's pony) introduced himself to the course walkers and proceeded to allow them to lead the way, before demoing the various obstacles on the route. Then it was on to the rest of the course walk for the other classes, without Oso's help.

Mean while Mum was busy at home preparing the judges lunches and baking lots of tasty cakes.

I arrived at the venue on the morning of the event about 7.30. I met various helpers there to help set up the secretaries tent, put the final touches on the course and prepare for the judges briefing. All judges arrived well in advance of the start and collected lunches. Once everyone was there we did the judges briefing and folks headed out onto the course ready to start the day.

The first class was the Newcomers, sponsored by Forever Horses, and lots of first time, or very new to TREC treccies set out on course. They headed off under the low branches, up the hill, round the S-bend and back down the hill. At this point a number of riders had sat nav issues and struggled to find the gap through the hedge to get to the corridor, before turning back to come over the footbridge, through the gate and up to the led obstacles to finish. There were lots of happy faces finishing, with some great rounds. Winner of the Newcomers was Leanne Little with Xander.

The next class was the Novice, sponsored by BHS Bedfordshire, this started with the Control of Paces set round a challenging horseshoe shaped course. Competitors then set off on the 1.7km long PTV course. First off they headed under the low branches, before galloping (or trotting) up the hill to the S bend. The course then swung off further up hill to the cloverleaf, before returning back the way it had come to head down hill on to lovely long canter to the immobility. Then they splashed through the water and headed on to the bending followed by the neck rein. The novices then proceeded to the ridden corridor and a small tyre jump, before rejoining the Newcomers course at the footbridge. The winner of the Novice class was Jill Crawford with Viking.

We stopped for a spot of lunch, before resuming with the Intermediate class, sponsored by Forever Horses. This followed a similar route to the Novice, but added a slightly larger jump up near the cloverleaf and replaced the corridor with a ridden pathcrossing. The winner of the Intermediate was Phillipa Burgess and Upperlochton Fergus.

The final class of the day was the Fun class. This course followed the same basic route as the Intermediate, but at the end there was a joker challenge for double marks reinback, side pass to corridor. It all rode very well. The winner of the fun class was Bev Abbot and Sahara Bay. There were lots of smiles at the end of the day and most competitors seemed to really enjoy themselves. Competitors were fuelled by lots of lovely cake. The competition and cake sales combined raised £305.40 for Cancer Research. I have got the bug as an organiser now, so need to start planning the next one...

Huge thanks go to all the judges who gave up their time, Mum for baking all the cakes, my family and friends who helped on set up and making the day run so smoothly, to Jenny Snowden from EATG for the loan of some of her kit and acting as Technical Delegate for the day, to Louise Ayres and family for all their support in the run up to the event and for allowing us to use the venue and of course to all the competitors. All photographs with thanks to Andrew Johnson - our official photographer - further event photos available [here](#).