

## Offchurch Weekend Diary – 5<sup>th</sup> August 2006

Following a hectic week of Pony Club Camp and Area qualifiers with Carly and Casper, I picked Alan and Danny up from Stansted on Friday, re-packed the lorry and set off early on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> August for Offchurch to compete as an individual in the British Riding Clubs National Intermediate Horse Trials Championship.



We arrived at the lovely Offchurch Bury Estate with time to settle Woody (Blakeney Cowboy) in his temporary stabling whilst Alan, Carly and I checked out the dressage and show jumping arenas and met up with Claire, Nicola and Malcolm Savage-Roberts. Claire had qualified both her horses for the individual Open Horse Trials and had already completed one day of competition.

After putting up the tent, walking the dog and plaiting Woody I was ready to do my dressage test. Woody managed to contain himself and we completed our test without too many mistakes and were lying 5<sup>th</sup> in our arena. However, the show jumping was a different story. Woody's excitement boiled over and he was a complete hooligan! We had two fences down and after the first day of competition we were lying in 10<sup>th</sup> place.

We enjoyed a hog-roast in front of the manor house and walked the cross country that evening. It's a real party atmosphere in the lorry park with everyone camping or sleeping in lorries and plenty of food and drink was consumed until the early hours.

The next morning I walked the 8km of Roads and Tracks and the Steeplechase with Tash (the dog) and enjoyed watching the Senior Novice Competition. Then it was our turn. The first 3km of roads and tracks passed without mishap and we had a very exciting and fast steeplechase round. We then completed the second 5km Roads

and Tracks phase. Then into the 10 minute box with vets checks, lots of drinks and cooling down and finally off round a very technical and up to height cross country course.

Woody was a star and we went clear with just 8 time penalties. This left me in 6<sup>th</sup> place with placings for the first ten in each arena, so I was delighted.

Thanks to Foresters Riding Club for providing me with this fantastic opportunity to compete at National level and to Audrey Tuck for sponsoring our stabling. Huge thanks also to Alan and Carly for their excellent grooming/support/driving and encouragement. This is a weekend not to be missed so set a goal to be in one of the teams for the qualifiers next year and get out competing so that Foresters can have lots of representatives at Offchurch in 2007.

Alison Woodgate