

Royal Tournament 2009



The Royal Tournament ceased several years ago now so why I hear you ask is the annual trek to Leicestershire called Royal Tournament? With the demise of the pageant in London – long to be remembered for the horses staying in temporary stabling on the middle floor of a below surface multi storey car park!! the Army offered to hold the show jumping classes at the Defence Animal Centre in Melton Mowbray whilst retaining the classes that the Tournament was famed for. Now instead of the Royal Tournament it is possible to qualify for a Services show jumping class at the Olympia Horse Show.

7 horses should have made the journey however a few days prior to the show CPO Price and her young horse Bubbles had a fall which resulted in him being unable to compete and so 6 made it to Leicestershire with one more arriving later. 2 horses made the mammoth trip from Scotland, a two day trip with an overnight stop in York whilst the rest of the team travelled up from the South; it's still a 5 hour trip! With Jenny Robson deciding that her new horse was not quite ready it meant that there were no RN competitors in the Futures Cup; a class for those who have been riding less than 2 years. 4 stepped up for the Princess Anne; Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark with the lovely Rabbit, Lt Beth (forever to be remembered as Betty) Oldfield with the leaping pony Splash, Lt Sharon Brown with Gromit and Musician Debbie Smith with Betty, a horse generously loaned to her for the event.

A mixed bag of results followed with Suzanne and Rabbit coming closest to a placing with a quick 4 fault round which left her just outside of the rosettes with Splash jumping well but not quite in his normal exuberant style. The weather the next day, for the team competition was a little like the team spirit a little bit grey and overcast, that said the sunshine definitely came out for the rounds with Suzanne and Beth with them both going clear and setting the standard for the rest of the teams to follow unfortunately the occasion became a little too much for Betty who didn't really seem to settle jumping on the grass which unfortunately resulted in an elimination for both herself and the team.

The six bar competition with a winner takes all 1st prize meant that 4 RN riders were entered and all were progressing well until the last 3 riders all knocked down the same fence (4) in the same round! That said it was a good light hearted class that the RN hosted. Seamus with Lt Cdr Al Skelly made the trip up from Portsmouth solely for the Junior Derby which is held on the Friday and tests both the horse and riders courage and jumping ability by combining a mixture of show jumping and semi permanent cross country style fences. Unfortunately once again we suffered a mixed bag of results with no RN rider in the prizes but still everyone enjoys this class. With no RN riders in the big 2 classes the Queens and Kings cup it meant that unfortunately for this year there will be no RN representative jumping at Olympia however we can look forward to the future with Lt Cdr Vicki Sollitt vision for the progression of RN riders.