

Interview with Naphill Riding Club Chairman – Martin Liggins

Tell us a little about your club.... (which area you cover, what you do, who you are, what abilities you have, how many members etc.).

The Naphill Riding Club is based in **mid-Buckinghamshire**, with most of our 140+ members being in the area between High Wycombe, Aylesbury and the M40 surrounding area into Oxfordshire.

The club was formed approximately 36 years ago. It was initially formed to cater for the needs of adult riders in the local area. As the years have passed the club has evolved and our membership has expanded both in terms of numbers and the events and training that we offer.

We are a local friendly club who hold varied events for all levels of riding ability from the complete beginner to the extremely proficient. The Club has competed in British Riding Club Qualifiers and Championships and has over the years been successful at National Level.

We run a varied group of activities, which include Dressage and Show jumping competitions, Trail Rides, Pleasure rides, Cross Country Schooling Sessions, Training Sessions in all Disciplines at all levels, Rallies, Riding Club Camps (This years will be the 35th successive Riding Club Camp) and many other social activities catering for all including our popular monthly "Natter and Noggins" through the winter to include Riders and Non Riders, Friends and Family the emphasis on everyone enjoying themselves

Most of our events are held within about a 15km radius, including venues such as West Wycombe Park Estate, Bury Farm Slapton, Berkshire college of agriculture, Rose hill and Darkwood Farm, Park Corner.

How long have you been with the club? 6/7 years

What are your aims e.g. to make it the best club in the area/to make it fun for all ages and abilities/ to qualify for National champs etc.?

Our aims are to try to make sure all our members achieve their own personal Goals however big or small they may be and enjoy their time with their horse, whether it be to ride competitively for a Riding club team, or to successfully negotiate clear round course or dressage test for the first time with a young or new horse. We provide a wide range of training sessions to suit every level at many different venues locally and with a variety of well-respected instructors to help our members achieve these goals.

How have you seen the club change over the years?

The club had broadened its horizons in the time I have been a member and moved forward with the ever moving equestrian world but not forgetting its focus being a local and friendly club, always focusing on the enjoyment of riding. As well as the traditional disciplines show jumping, dressage and cross country we offer members the opportunity to try something different with "taster days" including Le Trec, Polo, Western Riding and recently Quadrille.

Do you have any teams?

We aim to enter teams for all Area qualifier competitions in all disciplines. Anyone in the club is welcome to put themselves forward for teams, we often enter more than 1 team so people are never turned away.

We are a member of Area 6 riding clubs which has its own annual competition called Liaison Trophy which is designed for grass roots members who don't normally compete on teams, or those with young or new horses which enables riders to have a go at many disciplines they may not yet or normally have competed in . There are 4 disciplines, traditional dressage, show jumping and Cross country but also a roads and tracks section so even endurance or "happy hacker" members can get involved.

Has the club had many successes? Please tell us about them.

We have had individuals and teams represent the club in all disciplines at Regional and National level, only last weekend we qualified a team for the championships of the Novice Horse Trials.

However we also have a number of fairly new members who, having attended our training sessions throughout last year are now feeling confident enough to have a go at competing for our Area teams this year – we consider that to be a huge success!

How would you describe the club in three words?

Local, Friendly, Fun

What are your plans for 2011 and onwards?

We like to listen to our members and every year ask them how we've done and what they would like to do more of/less of and try to keep our pricing reasonable for all events and training which encourages more members and member stability and loyalty in these difficult times offering subsidy wherever we are able to do so

We believe that you have to move forward and try new things but remembering never to forget the basics. This only encourages us to keep moving forward and try our best to keep doing the things our members like and make the equestrian world fun and friendly place to be part of.



Martin Liggins – Naphill Riding Club Chairman