

RAFEA SHOWJUMPING REGIONAL NORTH TRAINING AT RAF CRANWELL SADDLE CLUB ON 22 MAY 2021

Report by SAC Lois Brown

RAF Cranwell Saddle Club hosted the first RAFEA northern showjump training event for 2021. The schedule of events covered rider core strength and stability, show jump theory (Course Walk and Talk) and a showjumping course riding lesson. For some of our riders this was their first outing since the last lockdown. It was good to get the horses out training in a non-competitive environment.



Katie Bell and Felix
Lois Brown and Milan
Emma Gilbert and Eira

Cath Vale was the instructor for the day and for many this was their first clinic with her. The day started off with a flatwork session which enabled Cath to get to know each rider and their horse before jumping in the afternoon. The flatwork session consisted of rider core strength and stability where Cath worked with each rider individually to help improve their communication and connection with their horse.

In the afternoon the riders were split into two groups for jump training. The first group was SAC Katie Bell, SAC Lois Brown and Flt Lt Emma Gilbert. For these individuals this was their first RAFEA training, so it was nice to meet some members of the team and put names to faces. Both Katie and Lois were riding five-year olds Felix and Milan and both felt the training day was a great learning experience for their horses to get them used to a busy atmosphere. Cath set up some jumping exercises with V poles which both youngsters benefitted from and it really helped improve their jumping technique. Emma and her horse Eira had been doing lots of fitness training at home before the clinic and this really showed as they jumped round a lovely course with ease and plenty of scope to go a lot further.

Flt Lt Emma Gilbert said: "This was our first time attending an RAFEA training event and our first-time training away from home since being posted to RAFC Cranwell from RAF Lossiemouth in January. Since moving to RAFC Cranwell we have started competing in 90cm classes and the training was a great way to help build our confidence competing away from home. The training given provided great insight into how to improve the going of your horse, helping them build muscle in the right places and work correctly. Since training we have seen a massive improvement in our show jumping results with a double clear and 2nd place in a 90cm class."

Rebecca Champion and Miller



Lois Brown and Milan



Emma Gilbert and Eira



Katie Bell and Felix





SAC Nicole Thackray explains about getting back out training: "First of all, I was just happy to be out training with the RAFEA again! And I think Verdi was too! We found the jumping lesson particularly helpful, as it helped to build on my confidence to move higher through the levels. Our instructor was very knowledgeable and made the lesson informative, but also good fun! I feel we are prepared for Royal Tournament now and could make a competitive combination!"

Flt Lt Michelle Randall said: "I have had lessons from Cath Vale in the past, so she knew myself and Ruby quite well as a combination. We have been competing at 1.05 since last October and now we want to move up to 1.10cm; to do this, we need to get 'up in the air' to help Ruby get used to jumping bigger fences. This involved a grid exercise, of 4 fences, which increased incrementally and the final fence finishing at 1.30cm by the end of the session. Cath has a keen eye and was able to pinpoint what I can do to improve my balance over the horse's centre of gravity through the 5 phases of jumping. As a direct result. It is safe to say the exercise achieved the goal and Ruby and I are now feeling significantly more confident at jumping bigger tracks!"



Photography by: George Parish