

## **Wainui Pony Club Head Coaches Report AGM 2014**

What a fantastic culture we know have at Wainui Pony Club. Everyone has made our new members and their families welcome in the junior rides and many of the senior riders are out competing together and showing great camaraderie.

Our club has had outstanding success and many of our riders have gone through to represent us in Area competition, Horse of the Year and National Pony Club Champs. Winning the District Dressage was a highlight for me with my dressage background. Dressage is such a great foundation for any of the disciplines riders wish to specialise in later.

In the Horse&Pony Magazine there is an interview with show jumping World Champion Phillippe Le Jeane who was in NZ to compete at HoY. He says the thing that is holding NZ back from making any impact internationally is not our horseflesh or even the talent or our riders, it is our lack of dressage training.

“You don’t need to import good horses now – you need trainers... It is all about the basics. “

This supports my belief that we need to continue to invest in the best coaches that we can get. Sophie Wilkinson continues to inspire and lead our event riders. We welcomed back Sue Whiddett and I am pleased to say that she will stay next year. Simones’ enthusiasm has been second to none and we hope she may be able to do some relieving work next season if we can find someone to push Lucy in her pram. It is fantastic that both Tasha Rocheford-Rennie and Brittany Newman-Marrs have been able to take their rides and do their mounted rallies, which enabled them to also represent Wainui at District, Area and National level. When the junior ride got too large we introduced a new coach, Nicole to assist here.

Certificates are an important part of pony club to ensure that everyone can ride well enough to establish a safe and happy partnership with their horse and that all horses are cared for to a reasonable standard. Prior to Christmas we had an examination day for D, D+ and C certificates and a C+ Horse Management theory clinic. At the end of the season there has been C+ Horse Management exam and D and D+ exam. There is a C+ ridden exam being held this Saturday and three of our members are doing their B certificate at the end of the month.

With Mercer Cup being later this year, the season has stretched out longer. We don’t do our C+ certificates until after Mercer Cup as that allows candidates to compete in this event. We have had two training sessions for Mercer Cup during the school holidays after our rallies had finished, one taken by Judith Finch and the other taken by myself.

While the pony club season has finished, I would encourage our riders to keep training over winter and go and watch as many events as you can, write for dressage, help at Woodhill Sands or perhaps go to Equidays.

I quote Pilleppe Le Jeune again - “I learn every day, I watch every day, I watch good riders and ask questions. I steal with my eyes and ears, ever since I was a child. Everybody can learn like this. “

By Chris Beach,

Head Instructor 13/05/14