



TRAINING THE TEACHERS OF TOMORROW

Registered Charity no 296443

CLOSING NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2017

“We owe great gratitude to the Sewell Family who started the TTT at their home at East Whipley Farm. It is because of their foresight and service to the industry that they have won the admiration and support of International Trainers who shared their vision. Without the Sewells’ generosity in time and dedication many people would not have gained such precious knowledge first hand in the UK.

Article in ‘Dressage International’ by Mal Kendall (Hollands) BHSII July/August 2014

CHARLES DE KUNFFY ON THE TTT

All the years I lived in the United States I hoped and advocated for the establishment of a national riding academy with the duty to promote the uninterrupted survival and wellbeing of the classical riding tradition. I certainly believe that only institutionalised care for the great riding tradition can perform this important function. Such an institution of course must be under the supervision of classically trained and dedicated experts. Its staff, especially its instructors should have both the academic preparedness, as well as the acceptable methodology to impart the classical equestrian principles. Nothing came of my hopes and dreams in the United States.

However, a well fated acquaintance with Mr and Mrs Sewell and their talented equestrian daughter, Alex, opened a door to a chance to create a school for riders, future instructors and judges dedicated to the correct traditions of classical equitation. I explained the need for an institutionalised on-going year round programme to keep a systematic educational programme alive for those who wish to continue to pursue knowledge inherited from our equestrian cultural past.

While I may have been the ‘idea’ man and the ‘fanatically enthusiastic advocate’ of such a programme it was given birth by the efforts of Tom and Jennifer Sewell and their daughter Alex. I think that the four of us were the founders of the TTT. The merit of this Trust has easily been recognised and given the status of an important educational Trust. The TTT rapidly expanded, matured and became popular. Consequently a valuable educational programme developed which featured international instructors senior instructors and a richly varied programme that represented well the classical principles.

The TTT has done a great deal of good for classical riding. For riding is a living art and as all living arts, its survival is in the hands of its practitioners.

It has fostered the development of many able and knowledgeable young instructors and judges! It gave “shelter” to the young “priesthood” that could administer to the growing number of enthusiastic riders. It has given me great satisfaction.

Charles de Kunffy

How it all began by Alex

A chance invitation to ride on a dressage course in 1980 set in motion the 30 year journey of the TTT.

I was a determined event rider aiming for the Young Riders Team when I was introduced to Andrew Day by a friend who thought that he would be able to help me with my dressage. At the time Andrew was managing a yard in Chobham for Andrew Rymill and they invited me to ride on a course being given by a friend visiting from the US. I happily accepted as the lesson was conveniently on route to some afternoon show jumping practice at Windsor Park!

My first lesson started with my ebullient event horse promptly depositing me at Charles' feet! Where upon Charles calmly said 'get back on and I will now teach you to ride'. Needless to say I didn't bother to go to Windsor Park.

In just 2 lessons Charles opened my eyes to a whole new way of thinking and riding and left me wanting much more of his incredible knowledge. We contacted Charles in America to see if it was possible to go and spend 6 months training with him. Charles explained that he spent his year travelling all over the US giving clinics. But he suggested that if we could organise a clinic, he would come to East Whitley Farm the following spring.

In the early 80's dressage clinics were unheard of and, we had 24 hours to coerce 12 friends into committing to 4 days of lessons with someone they had never met or heard of... my mother, being the tour de force that she was, had it all sorted in 12 hours!



Original recruits with Charles in 1984!

Bi-annual clinics followed. Over subsequent evenings round the dining table Charles and my parents discussed the need for future generations of Equestrian teachers to be able to access classical training not available to them in the UK. The idea was beginning to form of a centre where likeminded professionals could partake in an annual programme of workshops, lectures, clinics, demonstration and seminars, whilst continuing their own work.



Being sculpted by Charles at one of our early clinics

My focus was moving away from eventing and I wanted to spend some time immersing myself in the art of dressage. Charles introduced us to Arthur Kottas and suggested I go and spend a winter training with him. My parents generously supported this idea and I spent the mornings watching the training at the Spanish Riding School and the afternoons riding at Arthurs' private yard just outside Vienna.

I was lunged daily at Arthurs' stables and was taught on the most wonderful old Grand Prix school master. He showed me how little I really knew in my first embarrassing lesson with Arthur - because I was unaware of where my weight was I couldn't even get him to leave the track onto a 10m circle!

This whole amazing experience confirmed to us the need for the TTT. We would bring the best International experts to East Whitley, and open the doors to all.

When the Trust was set up in 1987 we were delighted that not only Charles but also Arthur agreed to become regular visitors and form the core of the Trusts ideology.



And from there the TTT journey began.



**"A horse knows how to be horse
But a rider has to learn to be a rider"**



"Take time but don't waste time".



Over the years we have received fabulous letters of appreciation and, on bringing the Trust to a close there have been further thoughtful and heartfelt letters from many of you. They are testament to the spirit and dedication of our Members, all of whom are committed to pursuing the best possible training for their horses.

A FEW LIGHT HEARTED MEMORIES!

- * Mrs S always ready with a box of tissues, a glass of wine and a shoulder - to commiserate, celebrate or to just lean on!
- * A small group of Senior Instructors (no names mentioned!) decorating the Indoor School with bunches of bananas and pineapples in an effort to convince Charles that it was as warm as California - even though it was snowing outside!
- * ‘A huge Thank You! for the opportunity to attend today's Trainers’ Day with Charles. So much fantastic information – my brain is in overload!’
- * Alex trying to keep a straight face riding for Arthur while Andrew Murphy was in the gallery at C wearing a lopsided wig.
- * An interlude at one of the TTT Galas when Andrew strode into the Arena wearing two baseball hats as a bi-corn to ‘teach’ Alex as alter ego ‘Tamara N’er-Coombes’ on her horse ‘Olympic BBQ’.



- * Frantic changes to our day's clinic schedule when the BBC kept altering the time Herwig was needed on The One Show to promote The Spanish School's UK tour - four taxi changes later he made it in the nick of time and was, of course, amazing!



- * Riders' Forums where the experience of the day's lessons soaked in as did the wine.
- * Stephens' wonderful communication with horses extending to dogs as well!



~ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ~

There are so many thank you's that it is hard to know where to start! Perhaps at the beginning...

Charles, Arthur, Stephen, Herwig, Mark. World class Trainers by anyone's standard – and all loyal to the Trust for between 12 and 30 years. How amazing is that?! More recently, they have been enthusiastically joined by **Gerd** and **Miguel**, adding their expertise to the incredible level of training available at the TTT. I know of no other institution with such an auspicious and consistent faculty. We send the most enormous thank you to each and every one of them.



Andrew, Alex, Debby, Andy and Adam: Where would we all be without these superb instructors to teach us with word pictures and detailed insights into our horse's way of going and our ability to communicate with our horse? We have benefitted from the training they have received from the early days of the TTT. As our Senior Instructors they pass all this knowledge and experience on. They sculpt us and cajole us until the magic starts to happen – and then they give us the homework that will make all the difference! So many thank you's to each of them. Thankfully they are all still teaching: you just need to contact them!

Alex Cookson, Andrew Day and Andrew Murphy have presented the most superb Seminars and Lectures over the years. These ranged from Biomechanic Workshops to Sculpting and Aiding Workshops to very specific seminar days for Instructor Members only. These were subsequently open to all, as Members understood the importance of such detailed analysis. A huge amount of work went into the drafting and setting up of these sessions, and we are so grateful to these three for that and for their presentational skills. Never a dull moment on these days! Of course these sessions hark back to Charles' emphasis on the theory of Classical Horsemanship, and as such have formed a vital part of the Trust curriculum.



Coral Green has been helping in the office since Tom and Jennifer began the Trust. She has been the most diligent of secretaries for the Trust. Bearing in mind that it has only been for one day a week, it is amazing how beautifully she keeps everything in order. We are so grateful for her calm and steadfast approach, not to mention her cheerfulness at all times!

Maggie Copus has been the auditor of our accounts since the inception of the Trust. Huge thanks go to her for her annual visit into our books and for making sure that all is in order.

Our **Trustees** over the years have been tremendous supporters of all that the Trust stands for and does. They have been great sources of advice and inspiration, as well as helping with all the practical aspects of running a Charity. Past members of the board include Becky Whitcombe, Alan Brown and Dominic Shorthouse. A particular thank you to our current Trustees Pru Burt, Judy Craddock, Eileen Jamieson and Caroline Rake. Their time and wisdom is greatly appreciated.

East Whitley Farm staff: Thank you to *all* of them over the 30 years. They have prepared stables, swept, painted and repaired and generally kept the Farm in tip-top shape for all the TTT visitors.

So many Members have helped over the years that there is not room to mention them all individually! The jobs have included fund-raising of various sorts, stuffing envelopes (when all correspondence was by post!), desk-manning at clinics, monitoring and ushering at the big events, raffle ticket selling, setting up and clearing away, poo-picking the arena, meeting and greeting and generally welcoming new people. The list could go on. You have all been so willing to help – an attitude that says a lot about the spirit of the Trust. Thank you to one and all.

Susie Watson has been a stalwart of the Raffle and Merchandise effort. She searched high and low for Raffle prizes for our big events and tirelessly sold tickets on the day. Her efforts gave some amazing results! She has also been in charge of the merchandise for some time now, and again worked valiantly to keep up with demand and to do a hard sell at various events. Thank you, Susie!

Tammy Weal leapt into the breach of organizing Mark Phillips's Jumping Clinics for many years. We have been so grateful to Tammy for taking this huge task on. Her contacts within the Eventing world were particularly useful in making sure that the places were offered to those who could really benefit. Last spring, the clinic was moved to her Farm in Wiltshire, as her new indoor arena is larger than the EWF arena and more suitable to jumping. The two clinics held there have been great successes – and Tammy plans to hold more clinics with Mark in the future.

Hilary Clemerson and Jenni and Hannah Fenech kindly and cleverly organized the “Away SIC's” at the Unicorn Trust for a number of years. These were a great opportunity for some of our more distant Members to attend a clinic nearer to home. It has only been logistics recently that prevented us doing more of them!

Jennifer and Tom, Alex and Nick. Leaving the best to last, this Newsletter would not be complete without the ***biggest of thanks*** going to these four remarkable people. Not only did Jennifer and Tom have the foresight to found the incredible TTT, but they also made sure that their Farm was the most welcoming of places. Their legacy has been carried on without a moment's hesitation by Alex, and of course with the blessing of Nick.



The ‘invasion’ into their life has been considerable, when you think of the number of days in the year that the Trust events took precedence over all else. It takes very special people to embark on an enterprise such as the TTT, and we Members have been fortunate to know four such people.

Closing Words



We cannot finish without a tribute to the source of our passion – our horses. In our pursuit of excellence in our riding, to bring out the best in our horses, to feel their willingness to work and to give them longevity, it is their generosity and nobility that constantly astounds us. As we learn to listen to them better, we realize how much they enrich our lives.

Thank you's have been said; history has been covered; thoughts and comments conveyed. It leaves me with the job of signing off, and yet I feel that is premature, that the Trust is really an on going entity. The comradeship, the lessons learnt and opportunities taken, are all part of our lives now. It is up to us, TTT Members, to pass all that on. The legacy is strong, with so many of you out there, teaching forward. Keep the words of wisdom in your heads at all times – and you will teach well! It has been a huge privilege to be a part of it all.

Tucker