



SPRING 2019

# *Grip Fast* *Equestrian News*

**Welcome to the spring issue of the Castle Leslie Equestrian newsletter. It's packed with all the latest news from Equestrian Centre Business Manager, Jenny Richardson and her team.**

Castle Leslie Estate offers memorable horse riding holiday experiences for riding enthusiasts of all levels. So whether you're a beginner or an experienced rider, Castle Leslie Estate is the place for you. The Estate offers an idyllic setting for outdoor activity and adventure and we are conveniently located in County Monaghan, only 80 minutes from Dublin airport and 60 minutes from Belfast airport. It is the perfect place to discover the thrill of exploring the beautiful Irish countryside on horseback. We welcome riders of all ability and offer expert tuition in hacking, show jumping, and dressage along with gentle hacks and exhilarating cross country rides together with a range of certified training programmes and clubs for children.

**The Equestrian Centre** combines the authentic charm of a country estate with all the amenities you'd expect from one of Ireland's best horse-riding locations:

- 1,000 acres of private estate
- 300 cross country jumps
- 21 miles of meandering bridleways
- Mile-long all-weather gallop
- 56 stables
- Horse simulator - Mechanical horse for beginners
- 50x30 metre indoor arena with indoor cross-country fences
- Tiered seating for 200 plus private dining/viewing room
- Lounge and showering facilities
- 20 x 50 Dressage Arena
- 30 x 20 Outdoor Ménage
- Sand Gallops
- SJI approved show jumps
- Horse walker
- Lorry & trailer parking
- BHS, SJI & AIRE Approved



## Upcoming Events

### HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDES

*A horse drawn carriage ride is a wonderful way to experience the beauty of Castle Leslie Estate.*

Journey back in time on an enchanting carriage ride through the tree-lined avenues and bridleways, sit back and be charmed by what awaits you on your personal tour of the most beautiful areas of the Estate. Our Stately horse and experienced driver make this jaunt a perfect way to enhance a visit to the Estate. Carriage rides may be booked through reception or directly with the Equestrian Centre. Subject to availability and advance booking is essential.

#### Price: €90 per Carriage Ride

*The carriage seats 4 adults, or 2 adults and up to 2 children and has a 1 hour duration*

Enhance your experience with: Bottle of Bubbly @ €40.00; Delicious Homemade Lemonade and Biscuits @ €5.00 per person

22nd, 23rd and 24th March 2019

### BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY CAMP

Get the opportunity to come on holiday with your horse or hire a horse from Castle Leslie Equestrian Centre and enjoy unique training from some of the top instructors.

#### For further details please contact:

**Susan Spratt directly on 0044 7808 141 079**

## What's New

### New staff member Chris Bogues

Chris, from Belfast has joined the team at Castle Leslie Equestrian Centre. Chris who worked at a riding school in Donegal comes with a wealth of experience. He will be also studying for his British Horse Society Exams. Chris works full time at the yard and his two favourite horses are Blueberry or Percy. If you are looking for Chris you will find him with them!!

### Child Protection Level 2 course

Staff at Castle Leslie Equestrian Centre recently took part and passed the child protection level 2 course. Well done team!

### New Livery 'Bailey'

We are delighted to welcome the lovely Bailey as a full time livery to Castle Leslie Equestrian Centre. Bailey, a 14.2hh Dun Connemara is very handsome and is owned by Clodagh Andrews and her son Collie Andrews. Clodagh and Collie mainly do flatwork although Collie is showing a keen interest in jumping 'Bailey'.

## Transform your transitions

*by Castle Leslie Equestrian Centre Business Manager,*

**Jenny Richardson BHSAI**

Here at Castle Leslie Estate, we welcome many riding guests who use their time with us to work towards their flatwork or jumping goals. Is 2019 the year you will step up from Novice to Elementary, in your flatwork, perhaps? In this article, we will look at some key areas and tips.

In Novice, the horse is asked to demonstrate the ability to lengthen the stride in trot and canter, and complete small, balanced circles; but Elementary is the first level to require collection and also some lateral movement.

Medium trot and extended canter are also introduced, to showcase the horse's ability to move between transitions within a pace. Therefore, it is vital for the Elementary horse to have 'throughness' (fluidity through the quarters and back) and a relaxed outline, to perform these transitions well, be 'off the leg' and also demonstrate a little more self carriage than at Novice.

In my mind, honing transitions is the main key to showcase these points to the judges. Transitions help develop balance, suppleness and impulsion, and are a good indicator of a horse's willingness and confidence in the rider's timing of the aids.

**So, here are my top tips for improving your transitions within your home-schooling, with a view to achieving pleasing Elementary work:**

- No matter at what pace you're working on, try to aim for consistent strides in the pace, especially when you're making transitions. For example, when you make an upward transition from trot, the first stride of canter should be same as the third stride; it shouldn't speed up or slow down.
- Utilise 'quarters-in' exercises, where the quarters come onto an inside track and the horse is positioned towards the direction of travel, as an engaging exercise. It's great for stretching the muscles through the horse's

body and creating swing through his back in the early stages of your riding session. The mobility in the horse's quarters pelvis that quarters-in creates will be useful for improving your canter transitions, and also for honing half pass; they're essentially the same movement, as half pass is travers on the diagonal.

- Try to 'change gear' every few minutes when schooling, e.g. make a transition, to keep the horse 'on the ball', and take his mind off any repetitive movements. If you're riding movements in the short ends of the school, use the long sides as an opportunity to use a smart, energetic upwards transition. It can really revitalise your movements, especially if you let the horse enjoy a forward going trot or canter in a relaxed frame.
- Try to hone the subtlety of your aids with the downward transitions, making them more subtle as the session progresses. Can you focus on the movements of each 'ring' finger on the reins, for example, or a small movement in your lower back?
- If you're working on your simple changes, don't fret about a canter to walk transition too soon in the horse's education; we are still wanting to focus on 'forwardness'. You can come progressively down from canter to walk from trot, if your horse is new to the level, without losing too many marks. You must then show some clear walk strides in between, before making your direct, upward transition to canter on the new rein, from walk. It's more important to maintain straightness through the downward transition, in my opinion, than achieve a direct canter to walk transition that could be a bit 'stuffy' or backward.
- Utilise rising trot in your test riding, unless you are incredibly mobile through your back and pelvis, to avoid 'blocking' the horse. As the horse needs to have 'throughness' or fluidity through the quarters and back at Elementary level, rising will help develop nice lengthened strides, and some cadence.

## Meet the Horses

Our horses welfare is of paramount importance to us at Castle Leslie Equestrian Centre. Our aim is to provide an extremely high level of care to our horses and we work with a number of key suppliers including an equine chiropractor: Ted McLaughlin, equine dentist: Carol Perkins, farrier: Shane Cullen and vet: Donncha Houlihan MVB MRCVS. We now have 27 horses in our equestrian centre and in each of these quarterly newsletters, we will be featuring some of them. In this edition, we'd like to introduce you to 'El Hoss', 'Samson', 'Beau' and 'Jessica'.



EL HOSS - One of our largest flying arm chairs at Castle Leslie Equestrian Centre. El Hoss is 17.2hh and enjoys cross country, is very forward going and is used for our advanced riders.



SAMSON - Samson is 8 years old and is around 17.hh. He is certainly a flying armchair. He enjoys going for hacks and really loves trotting through the Glaslough Lake. Samson has settled in really well to Castle Leslie Estate and is already a firm favourite with our guests.



BEAU - Beau is 14.2hh 14 years old Dun Connemara pony. Beau enjoys flatwork and jumping and is very well schooled. Beau is now best friends with Henry the carriage ride horse.



JESSICA - Another of our school masters at Castle Leslie Equestrian Centre, Jessica has nothing to learn. Jessica a 15.2hh piebald mare enjoys jumping, flatwork and hacking.



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