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MAUREEN, BRUCE AND LINDY WALKER

Winter Newsletter

3 June 2006

Bruce and I are back from our wonderful overseas trip and it has been great to see all of you again, and see your progress since we went away on 11th April.

Our Trip: Firstly we flew to Perth to join our friends whom we were travelling with, Pauline and Rob Fredericks. When we arrived in London we travelled by car to Devizes in Wiltshire where their son Clayton Fredericks lives. Clay used to ride with us and was a very successful show competitor before he specialised in Horse Trials (Eventing). He has been living in England now for 13 years and has married an English lady, Lucinda, who also rides for Australia. They have a little girl, Ellie, aged 2½ years, who rides her pony "Barley" everyday. We spent 10 days there in that lovely countryside watching Clay, Lucinda and the other riders working their large stable of Eventing horses.

Then Pauline, Rob, Bruce and I flew to the USA to a 4-star Horse Trial in Lexington, Kentucky. There was a problem with the aeroplane and we spent 4 hours on the tarmac at Heathrow before we set off on the 8 hour flight to Chicago. Naturally we missed our connecting flight to Lexington and had to wait there until the next day.

Lexington, which is one of the most famous Thoroughbred breeding and sales areas in the world, is very beautiful, with marvellous houses, horse barns and extensive tree plantings everywhere. Australian, Andrew Hoy won that event, which was very exciting for all the Aussies present. Another Australian, who is based in the US, Phillip Dutton had bad luck in the Dressage. Phillip has won the Leading Event Rider title in the US for the past 5 years. He was also in our Gold Medal winning team at the Sydney Olympics. Philip as a young rider always rode at shows; he is the same age as Lindy. The only time they competed against one another was at Moree Show in Showjumping. Lindy, riding Marena Sherpa won and Philip came second.

Bruce and I met up with Philip walking the Cross Country course and we had our photo taken with him – a sad story about that – tell you later.

From Lexington we returned to London and then back to Clay's place to prepare for our trip to the famous Badminton Horse Trials to watch Clay compete.

Throughout England there are many wonderful large estates with fabulous houses or castles on them. Most of the competitions – Horse Trials, Show Jumping, Dressage Events, and Shows – are held on them annually, these venues are a feast for the eyes. Badminton is no exception, with the Duke of Beaufort's Badminton house always there in the background wherever you go.

At all these horse events there is always a shopping "town" of tents with all sorts of merchandise from clothing to saddlery, gifts to furniture. I had a really good time there!



Clay received disappointing marks for the dressage but went clear in the Cross Country and Showjumping to finish 17th on his grey gelding Limbo from 80 odd competitors. See the photo of Clayton jumping the Giants Table with Badminton House in the background.

Andrew Hoy with a top Dressage test, a clear Cross Country and clear Show Jumping to win that event too. The rider who wins all three of the big Horse Trials will win \$US 250,000, only Burghley to win for Andrew.

Clayton took his top horse, Benalong Time, to Chatsworth and won that Horse Trial and his wife Lucinda was second. A week later he travelled to Saumur in France and won the Open Event again on Benalong Time and 4th with his young horse Neville.

He takes horses almost every week to Horse Trials somewhere but is looking forward to the World Cup to be held in Aachen, Germany in August. Clayton won the World Cup Final in 2005 so he is looking forward to Aachen with Benalong Time.

We said a reluctant farewell to the Fredericks as they were off to another Horse Trial at Chatsworth and we set sail for the Royal Windsor Horse Show.

The Marfleet family of Sydney are returning to England to live as a result of Mr Marfleet's business commitments. Recently they were on England on a visit. We caught up with Amanda at Royal Windsor Horse Show.

Royal Windsor was a thrilling experience, beautiful grounds with the show held in the Home Park, with the imposing Windsor Castle high on the hill overlooking everything. It was said that the Queen walks around the show at times so we were eager to see her. On the Friday she turned up and spent some time in the Food Exhibition Hall not long after we left there – we did not know of her visit until we read it in the next morning's paper.

Saturday we were off again to the Show. We saw hacks and ponies ridden, Show Hunter and Working Hunter classes, all the various British Pony breeds and other events for army personnel as well as the Household Cavalry.

Highlight for us was to see the International Carriage Driving in which a friend of ours, Boyd Excel, from Bega, who now lives in England. The cross country section of the event is judged on how quickly the team of four horses pulling a carriage can negotiate each complicated obstacle which has many twists and turns in it. Whilst we waited near a particularly difficult obstacle watching the teams we could hear from the commentary that Boyd was registering the fastest time on most obstacles. When he came through our obstacle I was busy snapping photos so I did not see it properly but at least I would be able to look at the photos – more on that later! News since has revealed that he had won the event. He always competes for Australia.

A phone call from Amanda had us running for the judging of the Highland Ponies. The QUEEN WAS THERE, watching one of her ponies competing. It was such a thrill to see her so close in person. Amanda took a photo of me standing quite close to the Queen and I took several close-ups of her – more on this later!

The Queen's pony came third, at which she was very pleased. With her was the Master of the Horse, Lord Vestey, and the past Master of the Horse, Sir John Miller. I was amazed at the apparent lack of security around her and how the British people respected her right to privacy. She was able to walk around to view exhibits without undue attention.

The most entertaining of the exhibits were the Dancing Diggers – 6 yellow JCB Front-end Loader-Backhoes, which performed patterns and movements in the main arena, much like our Police Musical Ride. It was a unique and very professional performance of loops, circles, pairs, fours, reverse wheels, etc. to their outstanding finale where 5 of the team raised their machines high into the air, side by side, on the front bucket and rear digging arms to provide a archway for the 6th Digger to pass through, at high speed!

At the show, walking casually in the crowd were various members of the Royal regiments, in their full regalia – I took several photos, but more about this later.

On our last Sunday we had a tour around London. It was marvellous to see all the places we have read about all our lives – Marble Arch, Piccadilly, 10 Downing Street, Tower Bridge, Clarence House (where Princess Diana lived), Buckingham Palace, where Hugh Grant and other film stars live, shopping at Covent Garden, and the list goes on.

On the Monday, Amanda and Freddy Marfleet took us on tour into Kent, then on the Tunnel Train into France. That trip across the English Channel took a mere 35 minutes! We drove to the medieval village of Montreille sur le Mer and stayed the night in an Inn built in the 1400's. I took lots of pics of the old building. The next day was our day to fly home so we had lunch in the sea port of Boulogne and headed back through the tunnel to London to collect our bags and to the airport to catch our plane home.

Whilst we waited to board the plane Bruce discovered that his small shoulder bag had been stolen – with my CAMERA in it and ALL THE PHOTOS. That was a big disappointment to end a superb holiday - still we do have our memories.

Sydney Royal Show: Lindy and the crew had a great time at the Royal. Bruce and I went down for the first day before we went off on our holiday overseas.

Nell Evans continues to develop as a rider and is doing very well. She won 1st in Childs Hack, 3rd in the Open Hack and 2nd in the Turnout on Marena Memories.

Jared Ashbrook won 1st in his Rider and Reserve Champion Boy Rider as well as 2nd in the Turnout on Marena Fanfare.

Belinda Scanlon's Alkyra Elegance (Elle) won 1st in Led Galloway mare, 2nd ANSA & ASH Filly and 2nd in the All Breeds Futurity for 2 and 3 Year Olds.

Marena Fanfare won 1st and Reserve Show Hunter. This followed his successes at Canberra Royal with Champion Show Hunter and Runner-Up Show Hunter at the NSW Horse of the Year.

Gosford Show: Also whilst Bruce & I were away, the Gosford Show which was run by the local Central Coast Hack Assoc. with too few willing workers. These volunteers do a great job for riders by running these events but they need help. Anyone who would like to help at these shows please contact Lindy or myself. It is a great experience for ex- competitors who are missing the showing or people who would like to learn; willing people will teach you.

Lindy and a group of our clients attended Gosford Show, some of the riders were having their first ride at a Show, and all gained places.

Jared won his Boy Rider and also the Adults Show Hunter with his horse Marena Outback.

Ellie Nichols won her rider class, 2nd Show Hunter Pony, 3rd Smartest on Parade and 4th Child's Pony

Bronte Cork 1st in the Smartest on Parade under 12, **Carlee Lind, Lizzie Gallagher, Nikki Melross**, all rode well and were placed or called in. **Alex Keith** won her Lady Rider

Showing for the first time **Janet Timmis** was 3rd in Novice Lady Rider and **Taryn Hall** 2nd Novice Rider

Kath Jones' Apptrak Lord Nelson was 3rd in ANSA Gelding, at the beginning of his career he has been placed each time he has been out.

Will Evans won 1st Smartest on Parade and Junior Gentleman Rider whilst sister **Nell Evans** won 1st in her Smartest on Parade, Champion Rider 12-17, Champion Small Hack on Marena Memories and Reserve Champion Show Hunter on Thompsons Destiny to Marena Fanfare who won Champion Show Hunter,

Alkyra Elegance won the Champion Led Galloway and 1st ANSA under 15 hh.

Schools: A **Three Day School** was held in April, which Lindy ran, assisted by Kristie. It was a big school with 17 riders and by all reports everyone had a good time.

Ladies School - This was held on Tues, Weds, Thurs 30th May – 1st June after we got home. We had a very appreciative group Janet Timmis, Gittan Inglis, Andrea Evans, Kath Jones, Gabi Hollows, Jan Kadar and Shirley Willis and the weather was very good. Unfortunately Kristie Nichols was sick and not able to ride.

THREE-DAY SCHOOL - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday - 3rd, 4th & 5th July, 2006
our regular and popular Three Day School will be run in the school holidays.

ONE DAY SCHOOL -- Monday, 10th July, 2006 10.00 am to 3.00 pm

This School is for our newer pupils that have not yet reached the standard of riding required to join our regular Three Day Schools. Numbers will be limited so book early to get the horse the horse you want.

SHOW PREPARATION SCHOOL Tuesday, 11th July, 2006 10.00 am to 3.00 pm

A Special School to train people how to present their horses for the Show Ring. Grooming, trimming, plaiting, pulling the tail and all the other things that make you feel equal when you stand in the Ring beside the professionals. **Please book early to ensure a place in the Schools on 0418 433 710 or 43 521 707.**

Lessons: Regular Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoon – and Saturday morning lessons will be not be held after Thursday 29/6/06 until after the school holidays. Lessons will start from Tuesday 18/7/06. Please ring nearer to your lesson time to confirm.

Do not forget to look us up on the Internet www.marenastud.com to see photos of your favourite horses and see how your fellow pupils are progressing at the shows.

Lots of love and best wishes for a great Long Week-end to all our pupils and their families.

Lindy and Mrs Walker

REACH FOR THE STARS

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