

# Fenix One Day Event

This was my sort of day! Not too much pressure (until I saw it was Andrew Counsell judging the dressage), a whole class for the pony tandems (both of us) and the weather being excessively kind-rain the night before (sorry about those of you who had to endure the storm while under canvas, I didn't arrive until the next morning!), which just took the edge off the hard ground, fine weather but not too hot for the marathon and then, apologies again to those who had to clear up, the rain arrived just as we were leaving. I did feel guilty leaving all of you, but many are the time when we too had to clear the site in the rain in years gone by!

The whole day ran smoothly, it was just unfortunate that there was another 2 day event running the same weekend so a lot of those who might normally have come, were elsewhere-as we all know, an event needs as much organisation and as many stewards for 19 or 39, and it was to the credit of the organisers that they let it go ahead.

Originally, the marathon was to be a choice of 10 km or 5 km but it was decided to curtail it and run the shorter course, which I was pleased about anyway, I would have felt that I was pushing the ponies too hard if the weather had been as hot as it has been recently and they were happy with the shorter course, albeit it was quite hard going on the grass round the edges of the fields but the organisers had cleverly managed to put in the distance by using a lot of compulsory gates.

The dressage arena was in excellent condition and despite a slight mix up from some of the competitors, as to whether the serpentine was 10mtrs either side of the centre line or whether one went right to the edge of the arena (Andrew seemed very understanding!), we actually completed our test without a single blaspheme, which, according to my groom, meant that we were reasonably happy with our performance.

I was well pleased with the ponies on the cones course; we had a clear round, even completing the dog leg No. 15 without jumping out- however, we were far too slow and despite having been urged to 'canter the course', I didn't- and paid with penalties.

As mentioned before, the marathon course was great, and the obstacles were less intimidating than first imagined. Needless to say I forgot the first, and the second was completed solely by chance- I glanced at the obstacle drawings and saw there was an extra gate than I had walked- still luckily I managed to include it. Evil Edna (well it used to be called that in my heyday) proved to be not as awkward as I had thought it was going to be and then we circumnavigated the water without too much weed being attached; I'd only just managed to clean it off after the fun day. The bridge was our undoing- just like last time. At that time I dropped the reins altogether but this time the leader decided he'd had enough, and we did that rather trying manoeuvre, which many tandems have attempted and been unsuccessful- a 360 degree turn, which proved to be a real conundrum for those helpers who had to rush to our rescue for safety reasons, could have been a disaster. With everyone working like crazy we managed to get untangled and complete the obstacle with 3 seconds to spare before being eliminated-phew! The last obstacle was the castle, and though I say it myself, I was rather pleased with the way the ponies went- by that time they had got the hang of it and I think I was just a passenger. Whatever!

Anyway, we finished, way over time but I was delighted to complete and my very grateful thanks to the organisers and to all those unstinting stewards who turned out to give us a really superb day-Thank you.

**Pippa Pettifer**