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Hello everyone

What a wonderful summer we had when it finally warmed up! I can't remember cutting and baling ALL our harvest in one go – ever!

I'm sure you will all agree it was exactly what the doctor ordered to pull us all out of the mindset of this long and dreary recession, and to add to it, we have had a very pleasant autumn as well. Here we are in the middle of November, still with lots of horses out in the fields with grass at their feet and hardly eating any of that lovely haylage!

Anyway, we are ready to expect worse weather now, not many weeks till Christmas, looking forward to early evenings in and that log fire burning.

So, what's happening at Underhill?

Wed 27th November, a shopping evening with a Christmas twist – mince pies and mulled wine, a repeat of last year with local people bringing their crafts and gifts for you to see and buy, and a general chin waggy evening.

Throughout December we will have a late night shopping evening in the tack shop on TUESDAYS, we will stay open until 9pm, to help accommodate you busy working folk. Karen has a lot more lovely gifts on display now, too, so think of 'www.itsagift.me.uk' when you need presents for birthdays and Christmas! Remember the shop in Presteigne.

We also have Pony Club books, sweatshirts, ties, scrunchies, and yard jackets (with your name on) to consider for pressies, and everything for the horse and rider in the tack shop. Come along and have a no obligation browse! Remember, we are open six days a week Tues – Sun, normal hours 9am – 6pm.

Pony Clubbers are as usual having Xmas Parties every Sunday on their normal rally days, so remember to bring some party food for the table instead of your packed lunch, and take part in the mounted fancy dress competition, lucky dip, and quizzes on your pony club day! The dates for the party days are the 1st, 8th and 15th of December. There won't be a rally on the 22nd as we guess it's too near Christmas Day. Please book early to make sure you have a place! If the weather is too poor to ride, we will still have an on foot party so as not to miss out on the fun, AS LONG AS THE ROADS ARE SAFE TO TRAVEL.

Sun 22nd December – Competition day, open to all, Christmas fundraiser, contributions will be made to The Phillipines Disaster Fund and Dolau Playgroup. Come and Show Jump in your Pyjamas, Handy Pony and Best Decorated Pony Competition. Lots of fun and jollity, and maybe a few surprises!
Competition Entry: £20 for the day – enter as many classes as you like. Hire of Pony: £15 for the day.

Sun 29th December is our day for the horse mad Ladies to have their 'Pony Club' party! If you still have a bit of the KID in you and want to join in on their day, please ask! You don't HAVE to ride, the social side is great!! We have a Ladies Pony Club day once a month on the fourth Sunday, should you be inspired by their madness and want to join in on a regular basis, either on one of our horses or bring your own.

After Christmas, we shall settle down to train our pony clubbers again for C and C+ tests and Riding and Road Safety badges and Exams. Please put your name forward in the New Year as soon as possible, so that we can arrange these sessions, which will probably be weekly in the evenings, testing probably at half term and Easter hols.

I know there may be some children away at school who can't make the evening training sessions, please talk to us about this, we may be able to arrange some times in your holiday periods to cram in some training, and advise you of the theory that you can learn at home. If you have the Pony Club Manual, all you need to know is in there. If not, put it on your 'Father Christmas' list! We have them in the shop at Underhill.

We have a growing strong contingency appearing on Wednesdays to make the most of our reduced rate lessons and hacks - it's lovely to see the camaraderie and friendships that are formed on this day, horses are so good at bringing people together. So, too, are the Mars bars and the coffee!!!!

It could be possible to extend this arrangement to another day if we have enough adults (you don't have to be female!) that genuinely can't do a Wednesday, it needs to be on a regular weekly basis during term time, but of course, no-one ever manages to do EVERY week - 'cos life's not like that! So if you are wishing you could do Wed but can't get it free, let us know what day you can do and we'll see what interest we get.

We continue to have regular visits from our saddler, dentist and osteopath they are always happy to help you sort out your saddle problems or your horses teeth and back - please ask at the office for dates of their attendance should you want to visit them, or else have their numbers and give them a ring to discuss your requirements.

The loan scheme for children is ever popular, and we have welcomed several newcomers onto the list this year. We do still have one or two ponies available should you be thinking down these lines and don't want the responsibility of a pony at home, we have a publication for you to read now that outlines the scheme for your information on what it has to offer. Please remember that your children are continually supervised and taught by our trained and qualified staff both on and off the ponies!

Attached to this newsletter will be a revised price list for the New Year. You will find a few changes on it to keep in line with current costs and ideas, but hopefully will not be too much different from the old one!

We still run BHS courses fully funded by Coleg Cumbria during term times and during this year Hannah Layton, Chloe Paosila Jones, Sarah Parry Wright and Milly Clark have all achieved their BHS Stage 1, with Beth Perks gaining her BHS Stage 2.

Our regular PC members have continued to achieve many badges and tests over the year, well done everyone.

PC Area Competitions next year: Quiz, Horse and Pony Care, gymkhana - any of you out there wanting to have a go at this, talk to Milly or Chloe. The 1st two are very good practise for C & C+ theory.

Jess and I have been looking at the idea of running a few basic short courses for adults during the next year in term time - mainly because we have frequently been approached in the past by people who are keen to learn fundamental stuff for various reasons, but cannot commit to long term college based courses that we run with Coleg Cambria (formerly Yale). They could be designed over a few consecutive weekdays, to include riding and horse care, or just the care side without riding. Any one interested? Have you got a child with a pony and you can't help them through lack of knowledge? We can help you, with individual requests moulded in if needs be. Watch this space!

We continue to offer our breaking (starting) and schooling service for ponies and horses, little and large, whatever the breed, young or older, at a competitive professional rate. Talk to Jess or Kath if you need more detail.

We are aiming to take a trip to Badminton Horse Trials on May 4th 2014 (cross country day). We are looking for some commitment from those of you who would like to come. We are also planning a trip to Walsall to visit the saddlers workshops in June, date to be confirmed.

Underhill will be closed over Christmas holidays on: Monday 23rd, Tuesday 24th, Wednesday 25th, Thursday 26th Monday 30th December & 1st January 2014

We are changing the format of Pony Club in the New Year, to improve efficiency and release a day for a monthly competition / trip out. We will no longer be doing Pony Club on the first Sunday in the month. Those of you who are affected by this, please ring the yard for an alternative date.

Sunday 5th January 2014 - Weather permitting will be Dressage & Gymkhana to start the year off. Tests to be confirmed, please ring yard.

Well I think I've exhausted the news now, so here's to a fantastic Christmas and a very Happy New Year to you all, and let's hope 2014 turns into a good one!!