



Dolau, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5TL  
Tel: 01597 851890  
Email: [info@underhillridingstables.co.uk](mailto:info@underhillridingstables.co.uk)  
[www.underhillridingstables.co.uk](http://www.underhillridingstables.co.uk)

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Hi everyone,

Well here we are heading towards the end of a year that has just flown by – with many highlights along the way. This time last year it had started to rain, and it just didn't want to stop, resulting in a winter of mud, flood and misery for so many.

Little did we know that when it did stop raining we would have such a long spell of mild and predominantly dry weather with perfect grass growing conditions and endless balmy evenings in which to have B-B-Qs and swimming parties!!

Easter time brought it's own surprise – not an Easter bunny, but an Easter foal! Pheobe Watkins pony, Stripe, came to stay while she and her family were on holiday, and produced a beautiful filly foal! There it was born and on it's feet in the stable ready for breakfast!! Then... come Whitsun, what did we have, but another surprise foal- this time out of our favourite pony, lucky!! Chloe was the fortunate one to see him born while she was preparing a stable – all over in twenty minutes, a cracking colt foal this time! So, considering we had no breeding program for this year, we have acquired two smashing little people for the future!!!

It was also the year that we felt we might at last be coming out of this long and tough recession, and for sure there were a lot more visitors around wanting to come and ride at Underhill. The horses and ponies as ever rose to the occasion and carried countless riders around our beautiful countryside with grace and good manners (most of the time!) giving people the opportunity to see parts of Radnor that can't be accessed any other way.

We would like to say a big 'thank you' to all our members of staff and helpers who must have walked hundreds of miles during the summer months leading the horses and looking after each person that rode, making sure that they were safe and enjoying their experience! Without all the willing help and happy attitudes Underhill would not be the same place.

There have been some further changes, with us having to wave goodbye to our faithful girls Sarah, Hannah, and Chloe who are leaving home to embark on their chosen careers. We wish all three of them loads of good luck for the future.

Also, congratulations to Becky Lewis and Adam on the birth of their baby boy Ifan, and to Kat Ingram and Phil who are expecting their first child in January.

Just lately we have been refurbishing the shop so that we can actually find all the stock that we have been carrying by making the most of our space. We have surprised ourselves with how much bigger the space is! Remember to call in and see for yourself when you need something horsey and Christmas gifts, or simply give us a call/facebook us we will be happy to post or arrange delivery / drop off point for a reasonable cost.

Don't forget we are open Tuesday to Sunday 9am to 6pm, for riding and shopping. We have floodlights on both arenas so are able to do lessons after school, with the loan scheme children welcome to come and join in as often as they can as well as at the weekend - with winter approaching most of the ponies will be in at night, this will please them as they won't have to walk to the field in the dark to turn out their pony after riding! Even if it's pouring down the ponies would love a good groom, and the tack always feels great after being cleaned, so plenty to practice at.

We have had a few enquiries regarding BHS exam training, this is something that could be available as an evening course to people over 16 who are able to make a serious commitment to training on a weekly basis. Cost will depend on numbers attending. Please let us know if you are interested and we will see if we can organise a course to start after February half term.

## **PONY CLUB NEWS**

This was the year that our very own Centre Pony club would compete in the Area mounted games and qualify for the Zone finals at Taunton in Somerset – a feat that had never been achieved by any Centre in the country before. For those that don't follow Pony Club or mounted games, this was no mean feat, and all hands together for the effort put in by the team members, their trainer, and all the parents in order to make it happen. We will get together during the Christmas holidays to see if we have an eligible team for 2015 and see if we can achieve the same result again! Please express an interest if you would like to train towards the team selection date.

We will also be looking for area quiz and horse and pony care competition teams, the latter is to be held at Underhill, it would be great if we could have a few enthusiastic members to partake in these competitions. Please let us know if you would be interested in either of these.

This year's Pony club camp sessions went very smoothly with quite a lot of new faces joining us, as well as a new instructor Jenny Campbell BHSAI joining Team Underhill. Her first day was a bit testing, with the children not being sure of this new person – but their patience paid off and by the Friday they absolutely loved her! Well done, Jen, for surviving the deep end! Jenny has since returned with great success to teach on our rally days. We also have another new member to our team of instructors, Michelle Martin Jones, who has started teaching on rally days, and has scored a direct hit, with all the children asking 'when is she coming again?' So New blood in the camp alongside our excellent team of established

instructors, Rachael, Emma and Milly - all of them full of enthusiasm and new ideas – Great stuff!!!

We have plans to run our usual training course for Pony club C test and C+ test on a Tuesday evening after Christmas with a view to an exam date in February half term. We will issue a concrete plan in early January. Please let us know if you are interested.

We shall also run a Riding and Road sense achievement badge and pony club test training during February half term, with the test at the end of the week. Please let us know if you are interested.

### **Our Pony Club Christmas party days will be:**

#### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Dec and Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Dec**

Please be sure to book in advance as it is really difficult to get things right without accurate numbers to work on. Bookings need to be made in person or over the phone (preferably in the presence of an adult with younger children, due to us having received some recent bookings made by children who then haven't arrived for their session), for each month, as it is too uncertain to assume bookings stand for the following month. Horses and ponies will be allocated on a first come first served basis and may have to be shared on the day according to numbers. **Please contact the yard as early as you can should you need to cancel a particular booking - this is of great help to us from an organising point of view.**

**Thank you.**

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**NOV 30<sup>TH</sup>**- Fun showing and trec afternoon, ponies available for cleaning and tidying at 12.30pm. Ponies will be booked on a first come first served basis.

We will be running some special festive playtime afternoons for 3-11 year olds, £15 per child 2pm -5pm , to include mounted and unmounted activities. Let the kids be entertained while the parents prepare for Christmas. These will take place on **Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup>,13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of December. BOOKING ESSENTIAL.**

**Dec 28<sup>th</sup>** Ladies Christmas special party day, lots of fun and frivolity, get your Festive jumpers out!! Please book in advance.

There will, as ever, be days over the Christmas period when the yard will be closed, aside from the usual Mondays - those days will be as follows:

Wed 24<sup>th</sup> Dec( loan children allowed only), Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> Dec, Thurs 26<sup>th</sup> Dec.

Wed 31<sup>st</sup> Dec(loan children allowed only), Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> Jan, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> Jan

This will enable all our hard working members of staff and ourselves to have a few well earned family days, and the parents of their horse-mad children to spend some time with them, too!!!

On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> JAN we are planning a visit to the grove ten pin bowling in Leominster, as a social for our loan scheme children. Please let us know by Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec if you are able to make it so as we can book the alleys.

As always, have a great festive season, we hope the weather is kind to those of you that travel to visit friends and family, and we look forward to seeing you all over the holidays and into the New Year.