



Archive News from Middleton Equestrian Centre

Title: Team Apollo News

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I had hoped for a better start to 2009. For regular visitors to the Team Apollo news page, you will know that 2008 was a year in which I endured the two things that I hate most in life. - injustice and betrayal.

Therefore, I was resolute in looking ahead, and wanting to make 2009 the year that Team Apollo resurfaced and was back in its rightful place – winning!

However it was not to be!

Duke – Apollo's Destiny, 21 years old this year and part of my family for 18 years grows more fragile by the week. In mid January I thought I might lose him, something that, even now, I cannot

contemplate.

He has a disease called 'Cushing's' where his body produces cortisone and doesn't know when to stop. His pituitary gland fails to work, and the knock on effect of this are having some devastating consequences. He suffers also from laminitis, and arthritis. Consequently he is now on a cocktail of drugs to keep him comfortable – although on some days they appear not to work. I've had special imprint shoes fitted to his front feet to try and make him more comfortable also and to make walking easier – but they don't really He has been in his stable now for some 8 weeks and it almost kills me to watch him struggle everyday.

Our Vet Matt Fernandez has been outstanding as ever. He has a magical sense of humour that keeps us going. I am sure that, at times, he humours me, but I am eternally grateful that he continues to try anything and everything to make my precious boy well in his final years.

Our Farrier, Neil Wilding has also been a rock. – He is completely dedicated, and has done his utmost to help me out in these dire times; even driving to Chesterfield, in the dark, to fetch the imprint shoes when they didn't arrive on time, and then he fitted them, with a head lamp on at 7.30pm on a cold winters night, whilst Lewis, Dawn, Lisa G and Trevor looked on, and made tea, and tried not to fuss



My sister and I have already cried a million tears and hugged him and each other over the previous month and prayed for a miracle.

I would like to thank everyone who has been supportive over the last few weeks and months.

For those of you who have seen the tears and quietly walked by Duke's stable whilst I have been having a quiet hug with him, for all the texts and emails and calls I have received asking about him – A BIG THANK YOU.

To my friend Kate, thank you for knowing how it feels.....

To Michelle Tomlins for her concern, and hours of petting and grooming him at the weekends, to make him feel special

To Lewis for just being there

To my staff and lovely liveries (you know who you are), who, at the first sign of a crisis, stand together and show a VERY united front....

To my beautiful sister Sally , who saves lives for a living, who is the only other person on the planet who feels the pain as deeply as me, and knows all too well what it would mean to lose our very dear friend – Sally was 4 years old when Duke arrived one Christmas Eve !!!!! I wipe her tears away only to spill more of my own

Just before we went to Mexico I had his feet re-x rayed to find that the damage to his pedal bone was not as severe as we thought. Matt has prescribed a new set of drugs to help him further. For now we have a reprieveLet's hope that things get better. Matt will not allow me to carry on forever – only whilst Duke has a quality of life, after that I will do the right thing, but for now that's too awful to consider.

Apollo's State Secret – Buffy

To add yet more misery Buffy stood on a nail on New Years Eve that penetrated her foot, next to the frog, to the depth of about 1.5 inches..

Frantic poulticing followed, then x-rays, then a scan to ascertain the damage – in all, due to our quick reactions she was only off work for 2 weeks, and is now back in work and is 4 weeks into her fitness programme in the hope that she will be ready for her first Affiliated BE Event at Stafford in mid March – I've entered so watch this space.

This year BE has changed the name of its classes and has introduced a new entry level class called Tri Zone training. I have long since thought that the 'jump' (excuse the pun), from riding club level eventing, to Affiliated level, was too great, and put people off the whole idea of registering themselves and their horses.

We now have some events running this new class at 80cm, with hopefully flowing and inviting XC courses, that are less technical so that those new to eventing can enjoy the



sport at affiliated level for the first time – or even those bringing their ‘baby’ horses out for the first time.

From this year the classes are re named as follows :

BE80 (T) – Tri Zone Training – 1st rung of the affiliated ladder
BE90 – Intro
BE100 – Pre Novice
BE110 – Novice

And so on

Due to the long lay off that Dan and Buffy suffered in 2008, I have decided to start the season with a BE90, as a first run of the season, and then hopefully progress through the ranks to 100 and maybe even 110 by the end of the year.



So Buffy is on a diet and doing up to 2 hours of fittening work per day. I am 12 weeks into my own fittening programme and running 5km every other day, and now confident on the Bosu and gym balls, that have greatly improved my core stability and balance – see the News and Events page if you are interested in fitness that will help your riding, through correct and targeted exercises.

Both Dan and Buffy will go to Stafford, and Emily Statham is to try her hand at the BE80(T) - she will be brilliant with Apollo's Tara Noir.

There is a rumour that the Dressage Diva himself, Richard Hayward, is going to enter alsowell I'll eat my hat if he does !!

Finally onto my new purchase – formerly called ALCO now named LEO or Apollo's Secret Liaison. He is a 3 year old stallion - why oh why did I want a 3 year old stallion I can hear you asking ??– well I didn't, but he

was just so beautiful that I just had to have him. We are two months on with his training and he is lovely and reminds me of the donkey from SHREK when he turns into a Stallion!!!!!! When I have pictures I'll post them but for now it's on with the basic training.....and trying to stop the naughty nipping ...

More news after Stafford