

Update from the Director

It's been a great start to the year for Ebony and we're as proud as punch to highlight not only our centre activities, but trips to places including Lewisham's mounted police branch, world-renowned Badminton Horse Trials and of course our foray further afield – our annual trip to Wales. We're working collaboratively with 17 local schools, housing associations and youth groups, with up to 170 young people riding a week during term time.

While our 90 members continue to flourish - key life skills such as responsibility, timekeeping and teamwork are ingrained in everything we do. We have our fabulous horses, instructors and staff to thank for that and last but by no means least our band of terrific volunteers – without whom, Ebony simply could not thrive. A RESOUNDING THANK YOU to all who turn out in all weathers to keep the show on the road.

The horses are on their well earned break during June giving us a small breathing space as we up the pace to raise essential funds and plan for next term. Please continue to support us in every way you can.

Ros Spearing MBE
Director



Out with a BANG!

Ebony finished 2012 on a high as we were appointed official charity at one of the world's premier horse events – the International Horse Show at Olympia which ran from 17 – 23 December. It was a real honour to be invited to take part and tell a wide audience about the work we do at Ebony.



As part of our involvement, 20 of our club members took to the arena with staff, volunteers and three of our ponies to act out Ebony's story, narrated by ITN Newsreader, Alistair Stewart. The performance was met by great applause and resulted in generous donations and lots of people visiting our stand to find out more about Ebony and the work we do.

Helped by a team of fantastic volunteers, we also ran the shopping drop off point, looking after over 1,500 people's shopping bags whilst they enjoyed the show!

It was an incredible week - a once in a lifetime opportunity for Club members and our horses while most importantly creating awareness and raising vital funds.

www.ebonyhorseclub.org

Back to school

Michael Tippett, a secondary school for children with complex special needs, was the first school to visit Ebony when the centre opened and currently sends two groups of students each week. Seeing the positive impact time with the horses has had, we have gone one a step further and now take horses to the school! The visits enable students whose disabilities prevent them from coming to Ebony the opportunity to interact with the horses. The visits are a much anticipated part of the week and it's difficult to know who enjoys them more – the students or the horses!



Going up the grades

There was much celebration at Ebony in February half term holiday when we learned that former Club members, Shanice and Sheneka Reid passed their BHS Horse Knowledge, the Care and Riding Stage 1 qualification. The twins, who had been with Ebony for over eight years, went on to study for the BTEC Level 3 at Plumpton College in September 2012 and are doing incredibly well.

Everybody at the Club is incredibly proud of their achievements and both Shanice and Sheneka are a real inspiration to everyone at the yard. Two other students Nashon Devin and Rebecca Hennessy are undertaking BTEC Level 2 in June. We hope the students success will provide the motivation to encourage others considering pursuing a career with horses to go on to further studies.



For he's a jolly good fellow

One of the equestrian worlds' highest honours was bestowed on Ebony's Equestrian Consultant, Darrell Scaife in February 2013. Following two days of gruelling assessment, the former three day event rider was awarded the prestigious title of Fellow of the British Horse Society.

Darrell uses his knowledge and experience to advise Ebony on the running of the yard. His story is one of inspiration to Club members as he was born in the industrial city of Sheffield and had no equestrian background. At 13, his grandmother gave him £40 to buy a BMX bike but instead he persuaded a farmer to sell him a pony which he kept in his parents pub! His love and empathy for horses developed from there.



On the beat

With the Lewisham Mounted Police branch close by, we were able to take seven members to visit during the February half term. Told to expect horses bigger than they had ever seen, there was still shock when then came face to face with some of the branches' gentle giants. Members were given a tour of the stables, learned about the qualities a police horse needs and some of the roles they perform. They were also shown the riot-protection equipment the horses and riders use and were given the chance to try on some of the heavy clothing to understand how difficult it would be to ride in.



Housing a future generation of riders

Thanks to an ongoing local partnership with L&Q Homes, children have been benefiting from free horse riding lessons. One of the largest housing associations in London, L&Q offered children living in their South London homes the chance to take part in 2-day Introduction to Horses sessions held in the holidays. As well as spending several hours in the saddle, they learned about different aspects of horse care, anatomy and equestrian facts. Those who showed real dedication and skill were then invited to take part in additional riding lessons as part of a follow on course. In total 60 young people have been given the opportunity to ride thanks to the partnership.

Our friends in the States

In May we welcomed a group from Work to Ride, a similar project to Ebony in Philadelphia, USA. Our Director, Ros has forged a great friendship with them over the years as they share many of our goals for young people. They were stopping over in London on their annual trip to Nigeria to play in a polo tournament and made sure their schedule enabled them come and see us. On their last visit, the

centre was still under construction, so it was great to be able to show Lezlie Hiner, their Executive Director and her team how much we had achieved. It was also an opportunity for some of our members to meet theirs – and to enjoy some pizza in the park!

After Ebony

Continuing to strengthen our links with Plumpton College, Ebony took a group of Club members who have shown an interest in pursuing a career with horses to an open day at the College. The days provide a fantastic opportunity for our members to look around and learn more about the courses they could enrol on – from horse care to veterinary nursing, forestry to agriculture and farming.

Before joining Ebony, many of these young people hadn't given thought to what they might do after school so we are thrilled to be offering them an insight into career paths that having an interest in horses opens up to them.

Recognising the financial burden that going on to study brings, Ebony has a College Bound fund to help young people realise their ambitions – and we are always looking for people/organisations keen to help us support more students wishing to go on to study. If you are interested in helping, do get in touch.

Only boys allowed!

Whilst horse riding is typically seen as a female-dominated sport, Ebony is very proud of the fact that a higher-than-average percentage of its members are in fact male – with almost 40% boys. As part of the Easter holiday activities, we arranged special boys-only development sessions for some of our members to spend time 'working' on the yard, looking after the horses and having a riding lesson. They all got stuck in with real enthusiasm and were just as committed to the horse care sessions as they were riding.



Easter trip to Wales

The annual trip to Wales took place in April – the fourteenth year that Ebony has visited Tregoyd Mountain Riding Centre. Accompanied by instructors Sue and Julian, and member of staff, Jess, six boys and four girls went on the much anticipated trip.

With two rides a day, members spent up to five hours in the saddle following trails that weaved through forests, required them to scramble down tracks, jump over streams and canter across the mountain side. Snow capped peaks and newborn lambs gambolling in the valleys, provided breathtaking scenery. Not only did their riding improve but it had a huge impact on their confidence.

As always, three awards were given: Adetayo won Most Improved Rider, Cameron took Best Bond with Horse and Chloe, who never stopped smiling, was deemed Best Team Player - but it was hard to choose. Trail leaders, Laura and Emsy, said they were one of the best groups they have had at Tregoyd – in their riding and their behaviour!



Big jump forward - STOP PRESS

As we go to print, Ebony Horse Club's reinstated Championships are being held, for the very first time, on our own site. Competition is rife, with a greater number of boys riding than girls. Grouped into Juniors, Intermediates and Seniors, members are being tested on horse knowledge, riding and stable management skills. The seniors are having the added challenge of performing a full dressage test and jumping a course of jumps – the first time we have been able to include this in the Championship. This just goes to show how much progress

members have been able to make as a result of having our own Centre.

The Championships are helping members see just how much they have improved, whilst putting an emphasis on what they need to work on in the coming year. Running over three days, this year's Championships are proving a great success and we are already thinking about plans for next year, when we will put on an even bigger event.

Out and about

Nine members spent a glorious day at Badminton this May on Cross Country day. Charlotte Steel, International Event rider and one of our Patrons, who competed at Badminton up to the 90s was an inspirational guide. She gave our young riders a real flavour of what it was like to be out there, negotiating the woodland, jumping into the lake and the euphoric moment when you took the final fence. Congratulations to Jonathan Paget, this year's winner. Perhaps one day it will be an Ebony rider who lifts the trophy!



How you can help

- Make a donation via: www.virginmoneygiving.com and search Ebony Horse Club
- Undertake a challenge event and raise money by getting sponsored
- Make a corporate donation or raise funds through fundraising activities at your work
- Transfer online through your CAF account
- Set up regular giving through payroll giving or your personal bank
- Nominate Ebony Horse Club as your chosen 'Charity of the Year'
- Hold a dinner party or coffee morning and show our short DVD
- Leave Ebony Horse Club a legacy in your will



I would like to make a donation by cheque of £ _____ payable to Ebony Horse Club.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Email _____

I want Ebony Horse Club to treat all donations I have made for the six years prior to this year and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as a gift aid donation.

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By ticking this box, I confirm that I am paying an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax for each tax year (6th April one year to 5th April the next) that is at least equal to the tax that Ebony Horse Club will reclaim on my donations in the appropriate tax year.

Please enclose slip and post to: **Ros Spearing MBE, Ebony Horse Club, 51 Millbrook Road, London SW9 7JD**

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