January Blog

Firstly, apologies that this blog is late; one of my goals was to do a monthly blog this year; so here it is. January flew by and I cannot believe that March is fast approaching already!

January was a great month as my sister and niece had come over for Christmas and they spent the first week of January with us too. It was fantastic to see my sister and spend some lovely time with my niece. Their visit flow by and before long it was time for them to return to America, goodbye never gets any easier!

I started the month as I wanted to go on; 1st of January and sessions nailed! I then managed to get a chest infection which meant that training carried on but I had to try and take it a bit easier than normal, that's hard for me! I had a super first session of the year on Damo, it was really cold but he was a very good boy. Then we got the brilliant news that me and Damo had qualified for the Winter Para Dressage Gold Championships; this will be Damo's first Nationals.

Those of you who follow me on social media will know that during last year's lockdown I fancied a new adventure so decided to try Para Rowing. My poor hands are taking a real battering and its serious hard work, but I am really enjoying it and love seeing all the achievements I am making on a daily basis. More about Para Rowing to come in next month's blog!

Damo had a lovely massage from Lee; it was great to hear how good he felt and looked. Damo has a massage every month to help him to perform at his best. I am very thankful to be sponsored by Lee and to have massages myself on a regular basis. Lee worked on my legs to help my circulation which is very poor and on my lower back and shoulders that get tight. I always feel fantastic after our sessions.

The new Leisure Centre near home has finally opened its doors. It was time to go and check it out for accessibility. I am happy to report it is accessible and they even have a hand bike in the gym. I can now go swimming on a regular basis which is fantastic and it's great to be back in the pool. I can also use and access the equipment in the gym with some help from my mum.

Damo had his first squad session and unfortunately his last as sadly I wasn't renominated onto World Class as Damo apparently needs a fuller CV. So at the end of next month all my funding ends and my access to Bisham. Damo was a complete superstar and the squad were all very impressed with him and me, we both got gold stars. The arena at the Unicorn is very spooky especially with the lift but Damo didn't bat an eyelid; he was such a good boy. We had a great lesson with Angela and he was nice and relaxed. He then thoroughly enjoyed showing off his moves to the vet and farrier!

I have regularly been attending Bisham to see Caryl my Physiotherapist who has massively helped me as my body now gets very tight with the extra work and exercise I am doing. I have also managed to fit in a few Strength and Conditioning sessions with Henry.

Plus I have been to Performance Hertfordshire to see Fiona and will be going monthly once I no longer have access to Bisham. It was great to see Fiona and to have a new programme which I can do in the gym.

We have started doing some groundwork with Damo, to improve his confidence; I am really happy to say that after a few sessions we can already see the benefits. Damo is a lovely kind horse, he just gets a bit tense when pushed outside his comfort zone. But Emily is really helping us with this and Damo's confidence is improving.

At the end of the month we decided to head off to Hartpury College to start collecting some summer qualifying points and to get Damo out to a new place. He has been to Hartpury before but he competed in the outside arena this time it was indoors.

We arrived; it was very busy and starting to get dark. Damo was a bit restless, but it was soon time for mum to get on him and warm him up; he was a bit on his toes but was a good boy. We walked him down the steep Hartpury hill, he was a star as it was dark and there were no lights. We walked him around the indoor warm up arena a few times and then I got on him. He felt a bit onward bounds but good, we went into the arena, and he found it a bit overwhelming! The judge moved something and I think he got stage fright. The bell went and the test started, it wasn't our finest few minutes in the sand pit! He didn't do anything naughty as such, just got very tense. Anyway we finished the test and I used some of our new tool kit from the groundwork and this seemed to help as we left the arena.

Back in the warm up Damo relaxed, he then went into the arena and was a completely different horse. I was so proud of him and the test was so much better; we were rewarded with 73% and lots of 8's. There were still a few mistakes but nothing that we can't sort out.

I was delighted to leave with two red rosettes and a 73%+ in the Individual test and a good number of points in the bag.

We have been having weekly lessons with Rob and Damo has been going really well and we are trying out different things to perfect our test movements.

Bear is back out in the field and loving life, and he is being a very good boy for mum. Hopefully it won't be long before I am allowed back on him; I cannot wait!

That's it for this month…..