

### **Thinking of holding a Grade/Instructor Examination Day?**

The Side Saddle Association offers Grade and Instructor Exam days where members have the opportunity to achieve an accredited, internationally-recognised qualification.

*However, in order for these days to take place, do you know what goes on behind the scenes?*

The Association relies heavily on the continual support of its officers, members and their helpers, to make these days happen. The organising officers who take on this job are responsible for:

- Pre-planning and preparation
- Sourcing a suitable venue that provides the right facilities/environment
- Collating the huge amount of equipment that may be required for all sections of the syllabus
- Organising a range of side saddle riders, of all levels, to act as guinea pigs for their fellow members. These volunteers give up their day, bring their own horse and travel at their own expense. Without them the Instructor exams would not be able to go ahead – no one to teach = no instructor exam!

*Once the above are sorted, the officers then spend hours ...*

- Building a framework for the day, organising a timetable/running order that incorporates every element, for every Grade, for every single candidate
- Providing a timetable/running order for organisers
- Providing a timetable/running order for guinea pigs
- Devising a contingency plan for any unexpected changes or cancellations. (No easy task, believe me!)

*On the Exam day they ...*

- Transport car boots full of the equipment needed, including food & drink for the whole team.
- Set up and work tirelessly from start to finish, keeping everyone to the strict timetable and if necessary, swapping and making changes to accommodate all situations throughout the day.
- Patiently wait for each section to finish, coordinating the guinea pigs to be on time, with side saddles girthed up and ready to go.
- Run around keeping everyone calm/uplifting spirits
- Provide an endless flow of food and drink to everyone, especially the examiners.
- Generally fetch and carry whatever is needed!

Owing to the wide variety of exams offered, and the different elements within them, this makes for a very tight schedule, with not a minute to be wasted. The examiners work continuously throughout the day, often eating lunch on the run. Their eyes are never off the job and high concentration levels maintained in order to keep up with the continual stream of candidates.

*Once all sections are finished the work doesn't stop there .....*

- Examiners collate their findings for each and every section, of every exam, for every candidate.
- Certificates are completed and signed
- Every candidate has a brief feedback interview and, if successful presented with their certificates.

*Day almost done, but not before .....*

- All the equipment is cleared away
- Accounts and expenses are sorted out
- Result sheets are completed for return to HQ

After a (usually) long drive home and all the unpacking, the day is finally done!!!!

A good day, but without the time, energy and unquestioned support of a great team of unpaid 'volunteers', there would be no way exam days could take place, or candidates provided with an opportunity to achieve their goals.

On behalf of the Side Saddle Association, I thank each and every one of you - we are indebted to you all!

Compiled by, Janet Senior, The Side Saddle Association Chairman, 2014 - 2020