

# HorsesNCourses



***HorsesNCourses is a professionally-run adult training course and Localrider's advertising executive Antoinette Marley tells us how she jumped at the chance to join its Show-Jumping Courses and about the important lessons learned***

*Above:* Chris told Antoinette that she collapsed her body during the jump, making it difficult for her horse to make a good shape over the fence

*Right:* Once Antoinette sat up more over the fence her horse was able to make a better shape whilst jumping

HorsesNCourses is a fairly new company, run by Simon Gaskin, with the aim of providing training for all levels of horse and rider for jumping and flatwork. The training is in the form of day courses with local trainers and will, in time, be in the form of adult camps. Personally, I cannot wait for it! Having recently experienced some issues in show-jumping with my event horse, I was



very pleased to have the opportunity to join in a recent show-jumping training course at Hickstead Showground with trainer Chris Wellings.

The day consisted of three small groups, with the morning session covering grid work in the huge polo arena, and an afternoon session in one of the grass arenas, working on riding a course. I was due to ride in the third group so arrived in plenty of time to watch the group prior to mine. This group consisted of novice and young horses and riders, and I was very impressed with the training as it progressed, with positive and helpful comments, care and attention being given to each horse and rider as they tackled the grids. There were quite definite improvements in the way the horses performed by the end of their training session.

## **Rushing the fences**

As I stood watching, I was joined by another girl, Katie, on her Belgian mare which,



In this picture it is possible to see the tension in Katie's hands as she holds on to her mare over the fence...

session. Chris straight away recognised the root of our problems and explained that because I collapse onto my horse's neck as he prepares to take off over his fence, he is having to lift both himself and me off the floor – no wonder he keeps on knocking out the top rails. He explained that I needed to sit tall over the fence and having reminded me a couple of times, we started to progress nicely.

Katie was told not to hang on quite so tightly to her mare and Chris also loosened the curb chain on her Pelham to stop her horse running away from it. The mare settled more and really started jumping well, and I know Katie was also pleased with her morning's progress.



Chris walked the course with each group, explaining how to count strides and what to look out for when riding a course

### Expert eye

After a break to watch the other groups, we began our afternoon session in one of the grass arenas, to put our morning's work into practice over the course of jumps. Under Chris Wellings's expert eye and tutelage, both Katie and I were very pleased with our obvious progress and our horses performed better than expected, with our initial problem areas very definitely having been ironed out.

I am very much looking forward to joining another HorsesNCourses training session and would highly recommend other riders, of all levels of ability and experience, to join in. The organisation of the day, level of tuition and the experience in general, were all outstanding. Thanks to you both, Simon Gaskin and Chris Wellings.

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...but here Katie is more relaxed and both she and her mare are enjoying the jumping

I found out, had a tendency to rush its fences. I explained that my horse's problem is that his jumping technique is letting him down now that we are moving to the bigger fences, and he has a tendency to knock the front rail out with his feet as he comes up off the ground. The pair of us waited excitedly, if a little nervously, to start our morning session.

Chris Wellings, our trainer for the day, introduced himself and I instantly liked his manner and knew that this would be a good session. We discussed our problems and once we had warmed up, we started our grid work



Sherrie Cooper, Janice Illingworth, Melissa Abdulgani, Maxine Lower and Anna Goodman pictured with Chris Wellings