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Issue 284 April/May 2016 £3.25



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TALKING TO THE KIVLOCHANS AT WAKES END FARM

Report by Sue Mitchell

I have known Sharron Kivlochan (nee Sheppard) since the early 1990s when she was a local showjumper and came regularly to Stags End EC near Hemel Hempstead where I had my mare Asia in livery. Her daughter Elle was just a baby at that time and Sharron used to wheel her around the horse shows in the pram. Now she is 25- years-old and building an impressive equestrian business at the new family home of Wakes End Farm near Eversholt, Bedfordshire.

The Kivlochans moved into Wakes End Farm nearly three years ago from Caddington. It was a huge step up, giving them a farmhouse, stable yard, outbuildings and 30 acres of pasture. To get there, you come off the M1 at junction 12 and then meander along country lanes for several miles. When you get there you are in another world, transported from the hustle and bustle of motorway traffic to peace and tranquillity; although as Elle said, "We are only 10 minutes' drive from central Milton Keynes."

I was invited into their homely kitchen, the central hub of their large elegant farmhouse, warmed by a big blue Aga. I was given a large mug of coffee and seven of us gathered to chat over our beverages, joined by a boxer puppy.

After refreshments and a catch-up, it was down to business. First stop was the newly refurbished yard. They have 12 stables supplied by Monarch which have been fitted into the original shells of outbuildings and a central tethering site which makes an attractive and useful feature in the centre of the yard. It's all very functional and yet appealing to the



Elle and Maisie Kivlochan



Elle and Tom

eye. We went on to meet the ponies in person, starting with Tom, Elle's 16-year-old old Connemara pony that really got them into the big time in mountain and moorland showing. Known as Braemar Be Lucky, this fab pony went to the Horse of the Year Show five years on the trot, qualified for Olympia in 2012 and won the £1,000 Disney class at the British Show Pony Society Championships. He is still a stunner and you can see by the twinkle in Elle's eye when talking to him, that he is very special to her.

Maisie Kivlochan is Elle's younger sister by ten years and now fifteen, Maisie has no fear and just wants to 'jump bigger and higher' according to Elle. Although she likes the excitement of jumping, Sharron said she would not be following a career in showjumping. "We couldn't afford to buy showjumpers," said Sharron. "To seriously compete in that world you have to be very well off! Maisie can do workers in showing if she wants to continue jumping."



Water Complex

Maisie likes to contribute her views and when asked what she wanted to do, she went quiet for a short time before saying, "Although I like jumping, for 2016 I want to show my show pony Blue Bell and qualify her for HOYS again." Wayfaring Blue Bell is a stunning 138cm bay show pony and although she is only six this year, she went to HOYS last year with Maisie as a five-year-old.

Connemaras are popular with the Kivlovhans and another Braemar grey who has also been to HOYS with Elle is Braemar Breeze. "He is a great confidence giver," said Sharron. "You need to kick him which is good when learning to jump. He hasn't got perfect conformation but I always 'see' him when he is in the ring. He is always consistent and I think if you look at a class and don't look for your own pony but just look at them all equally and identify the ones that stand out, they are the best ponies in the class. I always 'see' Breeze which is why he has



Maisie and Breeze



Custard

done so consistently well. Blue Bell is less consistent at the moment but she is only six. We will sell her at the end of the year and I think the next owners will get the best out of her.

Another Braemar in the yard is six-year-old Braemar Worth It, or Custard as he is known. A

stunning dun colour, Custard was Sharron's 50th birthday present from her husband Kevin. "He stamped on her foot but she still wanted him," said Elle. "He is very forward going and a great jumper," added Elle.

Moving away from the yard, we went down to the new arena. It is a 60m x 30m newly laid Charles Britton surface and it looks a picture. Walking on foot onto the arena, you can feel that is kind to horses' legs. It feels firm to the tread but it has spring and texture.



Interesting working hunter fences

Due to the location, and the help of the natural sandy sub-soil, the arena drains well and there has only been one day when Elle held back from riding on it until lunchtime due to a heavy frost.

It was Maisie's turn to show off her riding skills by taking Breeze over the large course of interesting cross country fences designed and built by Elle's boyfriend's company, H&R Contracting. The course is open for hire and they run schooling and clear round days to which the general public are invited.



Maisie and Blue Bell winning an early championship at the College Keysoe this season

From the arena, Breeze was taken to the cross country course where I took some photos of Maisie jumping the water complex and the steps. The water was deep following a heavy period of rain which made it even more fun, watching pony and rider get soaked!



The Steps

Back in the kitchen to warm-up and have another cuppa, we talked around the age-old topic in showing – do the top producers look after the select members of the club by putting each other at the top of the line when judging/competing. The answer from all was a resounding 'Yes, definitely.' But how do you get into the club? Sharron said, "You have to earn people's respect. It doesn't happen with one win or one pony; it is a long campaign. 14.2hh Show Pony Roseview Limited Edition put us on the map nine years ago and qualifying Tom for HOYS five years on the trot earned us respect. We produce the ponies ourselves too by buying them as youngsters when they cost around £9-10,000 and then sell them once they have championship wins on their card. We don't want to spend £25,000 on a top pony as we want to produce them ourselves," said Sharron. Elle added, "We have sold them when we are

'aged-out' of them and often the people that buy them have got the best out of them and gone on to to win big championships. Some people can spot a good pony just by looking at it over the stable door. We had a mare called Hornbeam's Fantasia who we had an interested buyer for but they didn't want to take her for a few months. A well-known producer visited us and wanted to buy her there and then and wouldn't take no for an answer. She was so set on having the pony that we knew she would do well with the family and we were delighted that with a very good little jockey on board, they won Royal Windsor, took BSPS Reserve Supreme at the Winter Championships at went to HOYS. It was a match that was meant to be."



Connemara livery called Storm

New for 2016, Elle is planning to hold some showing shows at Wakes End Farm and the good news is that they will be CTR Qualifiers for the RB Equestrian Chiltern and Thames Championships on 11th September at Herts County Showground. With their super arena and course of working hunter fences, it will be the ideal place to qualify for the CTR Worker classes from Cradle Stakes to Working Hunter Horse.

They are also keen to take on some more full liveries, so if you are looking for a new yard, I recommend that you give them a call. They have a lot of expertise for showing but also jumping so if that's what you like, it could be the right place for you. If you are a happy hacker, there is direct hacking onto the Greensand Ridge and they are situated close to the new Centre Parks.

To find out more call 07834 526459 or 07769 676841 or join the Wakes End Farm Facebook page.



The Team

About the Kivlochans

- Sharron used to showjump and her best horse was called Hereford
- Elle is a graduate of Herts University with an Equine Performance and Management degree
- Maisie likes diving as well as riding. She is a member of Dacorum Diving Club; she competed at the Irish National Championships last year and she met Tom Daley
- Maisie's dream is to win HOYS this year with Blue Bell.
- Elle is focused on running shows and building the equestrian business at Wakes End Farm but she still wants to qualify for HOYS with Breeze and Custard
- Dad Kevin prefers 4 wheels to 4 legs and is a classic car enthusiast
- Where would you expect the Kivlochans to holiday? Dubai

The best of the ponies

**Braemar Be Lucky or 'Tom' went to HOYS five years on the trot
Braemar Breeze has been to Olympia and HOYS twice
Wayfaring Blue Bell won the Cuddy as a three year old**