

On the Hoof by Charlotte Baker

LOCAL rider and dressage judge Charlotte Baker takes a monthly look at the New Forest equestrian scene



Go Ape adventure firm in top 100 to work for

STAFF at the Ringwood tree-top adventure centre Go Ape are celebrating after it was featured in the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For 2018.

Go Ape was started in 2001 by ex-army tank commander Tristram Mayhew and wife Rebecca, who was previously head of corporate fundraising for Marie Curie Cancer Care. It now operates from 33 locations across the UK, providing accessible adventure opportunities to people of all ages.

The facility based at Moors Valley Country Park near Ringwood first opened in July 2003. A 1km course above the enclosed forest, it features climbing walls, high ropes, zip wires, Tarzan swings, rope bridges and net canyons.

Go Ape was chosen as one of The Sunday Times best 100 mid-size companies to work for in recognition of its staff training opportunities, employee support services and team building and charitable fundraising initiatives.

The Sunday Times said: "People with jobs at firms featured in our lists enjoy the most supportive and fulfilling working lives that British business has to offer. Inspirational leaders, a sense of purpose, career development, empathetic managers, motivational teammates, high levels of wellbeing and rewarding financial packages characterise the organisations featured on our lists."

Chris Swain, manager of Moors Valley Go Ape, said: "In addition to bringing adventure to the lives of individuals, Go Ape aims to create a fun working environment for all its staff – known as its Tribe. The Tribe is encouraged to take part in adventure training that is naturally powered, such as caving, and white water rafting, while all teams are engaged in charitable fundraising activities raising and donating many tens of thousands of pounds every year. "All jobs have their ups and downs but for us – the ups are our ladders and the downs are our zip wires – so it's a win win!"

Founder Mr Mayhew said: "We set up Go Ape because we wanted to do something fundamentally worthwhile with our lives, work with people we liked and respected, and do something fun that had a positive social impact. We decided we wanted to encourage everyone to live life adventurously and be the best adventure company on the planet."

Mrs Mayhew added: "We instinctively felt that to achieve this, we needed to create a culture where we all treat our customers, colleagues and possibly more surprisingly to some, our suppliers, as we would like to be treated ourselves. Doing the right thing is always the right thing to do. We are delighted that Go Ape has been recognised and are ever thankful to our colleagues for embracing and championing our culture and values."

For more information visit www.goape.co.uk/days-out/south-east/moors-valley

Theatre reviews

Made in Cornwall



MOB justice is taken to task in this gripping and timely show – which argues that compassion and love are the essential ingredients in helping someone haunted by their past make a fresh start.

Penned by renowned barrister Nigel Pascoe, *Made in Cornwall* is a penetrating look at how suspicion and fear can threaten to corrupt reasonable and well-mannered folk when they rely on gossip rather than information.

Set in the modern day, it focuses on the disappearance of a young child in the Roseland Peninsula in Cornwall, which coincides with the release of a prisoner, Simon, back into the community.

Because the newly released con served his jail sentence for

strangling his child to death many years before while suffering severe mental health problems, the tension builds as his past fuels local fears he is responsible for the very worst happening.

But all Simon is trying to do is move on with his life, and he forms a relationship with local woman Carly (pictured).

As the community begins to question the police, Simon's mental health threatens to unravel, derail his new start and lead him down a fatal path. Gradually, it becomes clear the only thing that can save him is Carly's love and faith in him – and her actions prove crucial.

A joint production by Minstead Players and the Lyndhurst Drama and Music Society, it is presented as a play

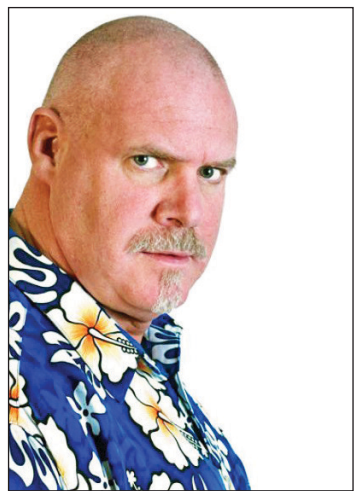
being read over the radio airwaves by the actors, who prowl the stage with scripts in hand, and the action is taut and gripping throughout.

The magisterial setting of Lyndhurst Parish Church lends gravitas to the show, the proceeds of which were donated to a £30,000 fund to carry out maintenance work to the bell tower at All Saints' Church in Minstead.

The uncomplicated form lends to the narrative well, sustaining the pace and helping director Michele Arkle coax compassionate performances out of actors to underlie the crucial point at the show's heart – sometimes people need help to help themselves.

JW

Chicken Legs Comedy Club



THE nomadic Chicken Legs Comedy Club returned to New Milton Rugby Club to the delight of a packed house.

Despite the arctic conditions leading up to the day, and some concern for travel arrangements, the show went on.

Andrea Hulbert opened the night with her wit and ability to silence the hecklers setting the tone for the evening, her tales of life on the comedy road showing the New Milton crowd why she is tipped for future success.

Kelly Convey, from TV's *First Dates*, had the audience in stitches regaling them with close-to-the-mark tales of failed relationships and the

chav life she had led. She's another name to watch the future, although the TV producers will most likely need to edit her set.

The comedic and literal giant Colin Cole (pictured) headlined. His years in comedy and 6'7" stature ensured the Australian had the audience in the palm of his hand.

Uncomfortable airline flights and Aussie stereotypes combined with his perfect comedy timing left the New Milton audience crying for more.

To see details of future Chicken Legs Comedy shows see their Facebook page.

E.B.

Riding students enjoy national test success

PUPILS from a Brockenhurst riding stables have celebrated passing a series of national exams.

Regular riders at Ford Farm Stables gained a variety of qualifications in the Association of British Riding Schools tests, which took place during the February half-term.

The highly-regarded exam series test a range of rider skills, from stable management to all aspects of riding, including transitions and theory.

Millie Blow and Lily Dennehy – who are both under eight years old – took their introductory equitation and stable management tests at Level D, while Ruby Mycroft, Chloe Baker, Kiri Avery, Michaela Earley, Daisy Gifford and Eleanor Monckton passed their level E exams.

Lucy Rook, Amy Hilder, Charlotte Cole and Rebecca Elliott achieved their Level 4 progressive equitation and stable management certificates, and



Photo (left to right): Chloe Baker, Millie Blow, Lily Dennehy and Kiri Avery with their certificates.

are hoping to complete Levels 5 and 6 in the upcoming Easter holidays.

Trudy Nineham, who owns Ford Farm Stables, said: "Quite

a number of our regular riders took different levels of the tests, and over 100 tests in all were taken. We are very pleased with everyone's achievements."

Breed Society performance schemes updated

CHANGES are afoot for New Forest Pony owners taking part in performance schemes run by the breed society.

Under the new rules announced by the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society, part-bred ponies will have their own dressage and eventing performance grades.

A new eventing grading system will also recognise ponies

that gain British Eventing Foundation points at BE90 and BE100 levels, due to the increasing number of New Forest ponies competing in these competitions.

Slight amendments have also been made to the dressage grading system, scrapping the requirement for the four necessary dressage sheets to be gained in one calendar year, and

instead permitting them to be acquired on a rolling basis.

Combinations will still be required to achieve four Prelim or four Novice scores of 65% or above under a BD listed judge to gain their dressage Grade One and Two ratings respectively. Riders competing at British Dressage competitions can also use their affiliated record to gain their dressage grading.

New clinics to help rider fitness and competition success

AN INTERNATIONAL dressage rider is combining her personal fitness and riding experience to offer a new kind of clinic for New Forest riders.

Based at Woodington Training Centre in Wellow, Olivia Oakeley will be starting the monthly sessions to try and get riders to think differently about their training.

Participants will have the chance to have a shared or private lesson with Olivia, before taking part in a group personal training session, complete with nutritional advice, meal ideas, goal-setting and exercises to take away with them.

Olivia told the A&T: "I have always enjoyed fitness, especially weight training, and I find it massively benefits my riding. "I decided to get my personal

training qualification as I love coaching and I wanted to learn about a different aspect, that I could pass onto my clients to help them that bit more.

"Rider fitness is a huge part of being the best rider you can be and, as we all have natural imbalances, these can hinder the horses unless we work hard to be as symmetrical as possible."

The first clinics are scheduled to take place on Friday 30th March, Saturday 12th May and Saturday 2nd June, and cost £60 per person for the private lesson option, and £45 per person for a shared lesson.

Email olivia.oakeley@hotmail.co.uk for further details or search 'Olivia Oakeley Dressage' on Facebook.



Olivia Oakeley in action at an international dressage competition

Hythe equine vet made partner

SEADOWN Veterinary Services has announced that equestrian specialist Laura Trigg will join their team of partners.

Laura has worked at the practice since 2009, and has focused on poor performance in horses and ponies, encompassing a wide range of specialisms including lameness examinations, airway endoscopy, gastroscopy and nutrition.

Laura said: "I absolutely love working at Seadown, no two days are ever the same! "One morning may involve

undertaking a complex lameness investigation on a sports horse, and in the afternoon I may be castrating a group of wild colts which have been rescued in a welfare case.

"Seadown's active role within the New Forest equine community means I can be in attendance at large agricultural events such as the New Forest Show, microchipping foals at the Beaulieu Road sales or vetting at our local hunt point to point."

Seadown partner Peter Tun-

ney said: "We are delighted that Laura is joining us as a partner. She went into large animal practice straight from university and is a natural as an equine vet."

"Having been at Seadown for nine years she is fully integrated in the equine community. She will act as a clinical lead for the equine team at Seadown ensuring that we can continue to provide our clients with the very best care for their horses."

PROFILE

THIS month we speak to Suzanne Kempe and Jane Murray, chair and secretary of the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society, which is the national breed organisation and holder of the New Forest Pony stud book.

Tell us about your organisation

The breed society as we know it today was formed in 1938 through an amalgamation of two earlier societies – the Association of the Breed of New Forest Ponies, and the Burley and District New Forest Pony and Cattle Society. From 1930, only fully registered New Forest ponies were allowed into the main studbook.

Our aims are to encourage the preservation and breeding of the best type of New Forest ponies and to record all New Forest ponies and enter them in the studbook.

What activities and events do you put on throughout the year?

We hold a number of events each year:

- Forest-fed competition – held in the early spring, when mares that live out on the Forest all-year round are judged.

- Stallion inspection and licensing days – held in April and September, involving a rigorous selection process.

- Futurity Colt selection day – a new scheme to encourage people to keep colts from a wide variety of bloodlines as potential breeding stallions.

- Mare grading – many mares which run the Forest are inspected and assessed in the summer and graded if they achieve a high enough mark,



Breed Show 2017 Supreme Champion Michael Maton with Brookhill Brumby (Photo: Audrey Scott-Hopkins)

thus providing a form of 'quality assurance'. Stud mares are also assessed in the autumn.

- Judging of foals on Forest in August – the Cranesmoor Cup is awarded to the stallion who is judged to have sired the best foals on the Forest in the current year.

- Annual stallion and breed show – the society's showcase event, which is held at the end of August.

- Boxing Day point to point – the only truly traditional Point to Point races held in the UK and run over the open Forest.

- Performance grading schemes – to reward achievement in dressage, showjumping and eventing.

- Pony Performance competition – an opportunity for members all around the country to take part in a wide range of

competitions and activities to celebrate the versatility of the New Forest Pony.

What is the ethos of your organisation?

We want New Forest ponies to be held in the very highest regard as a great all-round riding pony suitable for all members of the family to compete and have fun with.

The breed is renowned for its versatility, kind nature and willingness to please. New Forest ponies are the best!

What is the organisation's proudest moment to date?

In 2018, we are very proudly celebrating the 80th birthday of the Society in its current format and we can look back on many successes.

The ponies living freely on the

Forest will always be our bedrock and we are pleased that our efforts over the years have led to such a marked improvement in their quality.

The Society has been at the forefront among the native breeds in introducing schemes such as the Grading and Elite Scheme to achieve this.

How can people get involved?
Membership is open to all upon payment of a joining fee and an annual membership fee – members have reduced rates for registrations and entries at shows.

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