**TRI EQUESTRIAN/LEINSTER TREC**

**PTV/MA LEAGUE & SPEED TREC, 23.4.17**

Brooke Lodge Riding Centre, in Stepaside, Co Dublin, with its excellent facilities, was the venue for the first leg of Leinster TREC’s MA/PTV League of 2017. This League is once again kindly sponsored by TRI Equestrian, long-time supporters of TREC, and based on the Curragh of Co Kildare.

The competition was held in the generously proportioned indoor arena, which allowed for a 50m corridor for the MA, together with ample space for an assortment of Obstacles for the PTV. The warm-up arena was outside however, high up in the Dublin hills and with wonderful views over the sunny reaches of Dublin city to Dublin Bay, and so riders were able to enjoy the scenery while also preparing to compete.

First class of the day was the Novice class. This included some newcomers to TREC who were eager to find out about this relatively new sport. Great enjoyment and some hilarity was the order of the day, particularly for Obstacle number 1, the Footbridge, which took many a horse and rider by surprise, who had never experienced the skill and obedience needed to complete this first challenge. Another fun Obstacle, the Low Branches, had riders ducking down low on the withers, trying to avoid knocking off the ‘branches’ as they walked, trotted or cantered underneath. A Tree Trunk and a Hedge were among the set of Obstacles and horses and riders had to rise to the challenge of jumping an obstacle, followed by immediate control needed for the approach to the next one,

The Novices all enjoyed themselves immensely and gained good scores, with Blue Smoke and Sheila Shanley in first place, closely followed by Silver and Emma Robinson in second.

Next came the Intermediate class followed by the Opens. The more experienced riders and horses now entered the arena but as always the challenge of TREC meant that nothing could be taken for granted. Once more the first Obstacle, the Footbridge, caught many out and the bogey obstacle of the day turned out to be the S-bend which followed after, as the clatter of timber falling off the pole pods was frequently heard. One obstacle which was done well in general was the One-Handed Figure of Eight, not long introduced to TREC, so perhaps it has been practiced more than others recently!

Winner of the Intermediate section was Ross ML ridden by Caroline Aragane and in second place was April Raven and Rachel Harney, both riders continuing their winning streak after the D-TREC of the previous week.

The Open class was won by the lovely Connemara Bob, ridden by Ailbhe Gavin, and with Garnagree Duke in second place, ridden by Vicky McMullen.

**Speed TREC League**: For the first time, Leinster TREC riders had the chance to try out this new class of competition, based on the PTV Obstacles, and it proved to be a very popular innovation. After a rider has completed their PTV round, a fewer selected number of the PTV Obstacles is then ridden once more. This round is timed and the fastest wins. But penalties are given as seconds added for any faults, which then becomes expensive in terms of time added, so care must always be taken to try to ride the obstacle correctly.

Riders had great fun doing this Speed round as all the smiles showed as each finished and it is certain that there will be more Speed TREC competitions throughout the year.