

An amazing experience – 6 go to ride Wildwoods Equestrian Centre's Trojan Horse

When I first booked my ½ hour on the Trojan Horse I thought, "Not long, but a taster". How wrong I was! I don't think that I've ever learned so much in such a short time and I'd really like one of my own – mind you, that's what we all seemed to be saying.

Each of us started by accustoming ourselves to riding the horse, ensuring that we could change pace effectively (with help and guidance from one of the centre's instructors). The display (on a huge screen in front) showed whether you were sitting centrally and in balance, whether you were using the right leg, weight and rein aids, and whether the horse was bent correctly as well as confirming the pace and movement being carried out. Once we had got the hang of that and were, probably, starting to think that this was easy, we progressed to riding the horse in an arena or in the countryside outside of the arena. The display now showed the rider's view (looking out to the front, between the horse's ears), a small version of the pressure/sensor display (that had been there before) so that you could still see that you were sitting and aiding correctly, and a bird's eye view of the horse within the arena (or within the ground outside the arena). It was somewhat of a shock to realise just how much we rely on our own horses, knowing their way around the school and reading our minds as we "half aid", and suddenly have to really ride the whole arena and the movements within it. Steering was more of a challenge than we had expected and several arena markers were demolished and several horses "left" the arena. The Trojan Horse does not spook, spin or have any other unpleasant reaction to any of these mishaps and its movement was very easy to sit to both in trot and canter; it was also easy to tell when you changed between collected and medium or legs at canter as well as changed between paces.

So much to think about – organising one's body to do exactly what you want it to do so that the Trojan Horse reacts in the desired way - so much to put into practice. Our real flesh and blood horses will wonder what's hit them!

Jane Scott

Also have a look at the video clip.