

SOUTHEAST TREC GROUP CELEBRATE 25 YEARS



Fundamentally, SETG was started in 2000 by Maggie Robertson who, with her partner Rob Billson, organised many events and training sessions in the South East until they moved to Somerset in 2007. Joy Taylor then took over the running of it all including newsletters, training and co-ordinating competitions. SETG always had a member on the BHS's TREC Advisory Group, subsequently the Competitions Advisory Committee, which drew members from all areas of the UK and who met regularly to discuss all matters TREC.

Winter trec competitions were originally sponsored by Kelly Marks of Intelligent Horsemanship. Many of the riding clubs in the South East were involved in running events, including Maidstone and District, Bookham, Faversham, Hailsham, Invicta and Rother Valley.

Anne Rillie competed at what was possibly the first TREC in the South East at Bradbourne, Sevenoaks, before 2000, when TREC was run by the BHS. Anne went on to compete at Level 3 with Jane Scott, and her daughter Caroline Dorey; She competed as a pair with Wendy Neath at the very last BHS TREC Championships in 2014. Anne still comes along to Winter TreCs at Willow Farm with Caroline and her children - so 3 generations of SE Trec!

Joy Taylor remembers 'we all had lots of fun; a couple of highlights were when we ran a TREC demo at the Royal Windsor Horse Show in 2008 followed the next year by a TREC Pro-Am competition at the same event'. It included riders such as Robert Whitaker and Tim Stockdale and was won by Kelly Marks (Intelligent Horsemanship/Monty Roberts). Except for Kelly the pros all rode horses loaned by SETG members. "It's harder than it looks" was the general consensus of the day. Ten professionals including Kelly, Tim Stockdale and Robert Whitaker took on Anna Weston and Anthea Kendrick at Control of Paces and eight PTV obstacles. Members of the South East Trec Group provided obstacles and horses for some of the professionals, and were judges for the competition. The event proved to be real success drawing the biggest audience of the day to the BHS Frogmore Arena and really capturing people's attention.



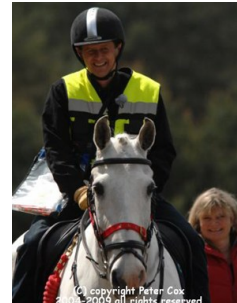
Royal Windsor Horse Show 2008



Pro-Am Demo, Royal Windsor Horse



Mike Bushell from BBC Breakfast showcased TREC as an evolving sport in 2009. Jenny Snowdon remembers Ali Large asking her to bring Hobo, her horse, and herself to Stonehills at Tilford for the filming. In the early days Tilford Riding Club ran two competitions a year which gave everyone a lot of local experience. A favourite venue was at Bryanston School near Blandford where the grounds team always provided a very smart PTV.



The 2nd 'Balanced' TREC was held at Byhurst Farm, Malden Rushett in aid of Epsom RDA. A number of trecs were run from Epsom RDA including one that took riders and horses through the car park at Chessington World of Adventures, with balloons and children everywhere! Donations over the years were made to Brooke Animal Hospital, Epsom RDA, Air Ambulance, Downs Syndrome Association, Snoopy Dog, Gambia Horse & Pony, Macmillan, Alkham Valley Community Project, Cervical Trust, Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice, Jasmine Trust, Teenage Cancer Trust, TREC GB International & Young Riders, and no doubt many others lost in time!

Our annual awards evening started in 2008, (see photo of winners), and the Christmas POR, started in 2007 at Farley Heath in Surrey, was always a popular event, see photo of Kate McMorris (now in Cumbria) and Clare Reynolds in fancy dress.



League Wnners 2008



Kate McMorris and Clare Reynolds



Batman and Robin – the electric horsewomen

VTH or Versatile Trec, Horse, was started by Joy Taylor because her local Riding Club (Bookham) has a lovely club field but no decent hacking so they couldn't run a full TREC from there and this was the next best thing. It proved to be really popular with a local rider, Beryl Hare, who was particularly successful at it, so her husband sponsored a trophy in her memory. People enjoyed the informality of it and any type of horse or pony being able to compete, rather like TREC itself.

Wendy Neath started competing at TREC with her horse, Seamus in 2004, and then decided to have a go at running something. VTH seemed the easiest way to get into it. Wendy then ran a livery yard at Street Farm on the North Downs in Kent and it was already well set up for VTH with hills and a small XC course. The first competition was in 2010, and right from the start people kept asking if Wendy would run a full TREC, but Street Farm didn't really have enough safe or good off road riding for the longer distances.

Meanwhile non TREC riders were asking about the sport, and expressed interest in coming to watch Wendy compete. She had to explain that TREC really is not a spectator sport. She used to say it's like cricket – goes on for days and no-one understands the rules! Then it occurred to Wendy that cricket had reinvented itself with 20/20, and so 10/10 was born! 10 PTV obstacles, 100m MA, 10km POR.

Right from the start in 2016 it was a success, and for a couple of years two were run at the start and the end of the season. The early ones featured a Starter class with pre-drawn maps and help for newbies, and for the more experienced riders 10 questions to be answered in the map room or en route, but this was an unnecessary complication! Karen Ransley scored for Wendy and over the years fine-tuned her system. They made the very best use of the real advantages of running a 10/10: just 1 checkpoint, grouping obstacles, and running the competitions at Street Farm kept the numbers of helpers down. And for riders it was a manageable day to which they could bring a helper, and which had a reasonable entry fee. They added in a course walk at 9.30 and usually managed prize giving by 3.30

The very last Street Farm 10/10 was in July 2020, postponed from Easter that year, and it was the first outdoor TREC of 2020!

Other memorable venues in the SE include Parham Park where the POR went up over the South Downs, and Chilham Park in Kent in 2007, 2009 and the English Championships and European Cup in 2017.



Julia Phebey and Luca at Chilham Park in 2017



Kay Ford on Ben at Chilham in

The South East currently has 154 members, including over 20 from the early days, and the club's current members are maintaining SETG's profile by filling four of the Champion and three of the Reserve Champion places at this year's National Championships at Winwick along with fielding the top two places in the teams competition. We also fielded Level 3 pairs Champions at the Scottish Championships 2025.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OF TREC AND ALMOST OUR LAST!

Written by Caroline Barton, SE TREC

My first experience of Trec was back in 2006 and was a bit of an accident!

We had a lovely little pony called Lucky who my husband and I, with some advice from the great Sarah Howe, broke to driving with the added help of DVDs and books! Always the best way to learn something complicated! I had been grooming for a number of friends at some great pleasure drives. These involved a little drive out on a pre-marked course with plenty of tea, cake and the odd alcoholic tippie. Having just introduced Lucky to driving I was looking for something very low key to start our education and spotted a sign for TREC at Underriver, Kent. I was also recovering from spinal surgery following a rather nasty car crash and thought that a little drive out with my 11-year-old daughter and driving a hired 3.5 tonne lorry around the M25 was just what I needed to get my confidence back. What could go wrong?

The penny started to drop that this might not be quite the gentle breeze I thought it would be by the number of times people said to me "So let me get this right. You have never done TREC before and do not know what it is? And this is your very first outing ever then!!!! Are you sure you want to do this?"



Someone then said something about obstacles. Odd I thought, not seen them on the pleasure drives but we will give it a go. In for a penny in for a pound! But no, my pony does not rein back yet, she has only been driving a few weeks-is that an issue? I do have to admit it was a little bit of an issue but mainly for the judges who had to put the obstacles back together after we went over them, through them or just kicked them around a bit!

There was also a little bit of a shock that I was sending my 11 year old daughter into the map room. Was I sure? Well yes I was because I could not leave her holding the pony and I could not take pony into map room with me. That would be silly and irresponsible!

Now my daughter Bronwen is an incredibly clever lady, now all grown up and an English teacher with more qualifications than you can shake a stick at! But even now she has no sense of direction, struggles with left and right, and has no idea how to use a map. After the allotted time she came out. "Do you know where we are going?" I asked. "Sort of Mum" came the reply. I think the photo suggests my doubt on the truth of this statement.



But off we went, with confidence and enthusiasm in a totally different direction to everyone else. I know that because my husband watched us leave (we were the first out) and saw us come back hours after everyone else. Also, from a completely different direction to everyone else.

Still Lucky was up for it. We sped along, we went up stairs and down stairs-yep stairs. Not entirely sure we were meant to! I can share that when going down stairs at pace, 11-year-old daughters can fly through the air and only remain in said carriage due to Mum grabbing the child in mid-flight! We went along roads, we went into woods, we went into fields sometimes more than once and sometimes we just lapped them a few times hoping for inspiration. There was one particularly steep set of steps when Lucky stopped, turned round to look at us straight in the eyes as if to say "are you sure you know where you are going? Can I have a look at that map?" And I think the answer to that question was no, we did not know where we were going or even where we had come from!

Having got back so late it was now time for the return journey in the hired lorry. When I collected said hired lorry I was given strict instructions "do not put it into first gear." On the way there we discovered why I was given those pearls of wisdom-because having forgotten them, it took the combined efforts of me, my daughter and my husband to get it out of first gear. Maybe not the best vehicle to overcome a bit of flash back from the accident in but the return journey gave us a few more challenges.

You do have to change lane to get back home and one of those lane changes is to move over into a left lane. Not awfully easy when the wing mirror has fallen off and the only way you can tell if it is clear is to dangle your 11-year-old daughter out of the window to see if it is safe to move over!!

But we all survived just. It wasn't until years later when I did my first ridden TREC at Chilham that I realised this was actually the same sport I had tried with the carriage. Karen Ransley and I also returned to Underriver years later. We found that event quite a challenge too. We began as two individuals but the legendary Paris had other ideas. Having crashed through the trees a few times to get to his best mate Currin, Karen and I agreed we would pair up in the future. And as always Paris was quite right. We made an awesome team mainly due to Karen's skill and my ability to do something muppety at each event! Lovely days.