

# Mendip Stup Open Western Show

REPORT BY JUDITH HUBBARD PICTURES JUDY JONES

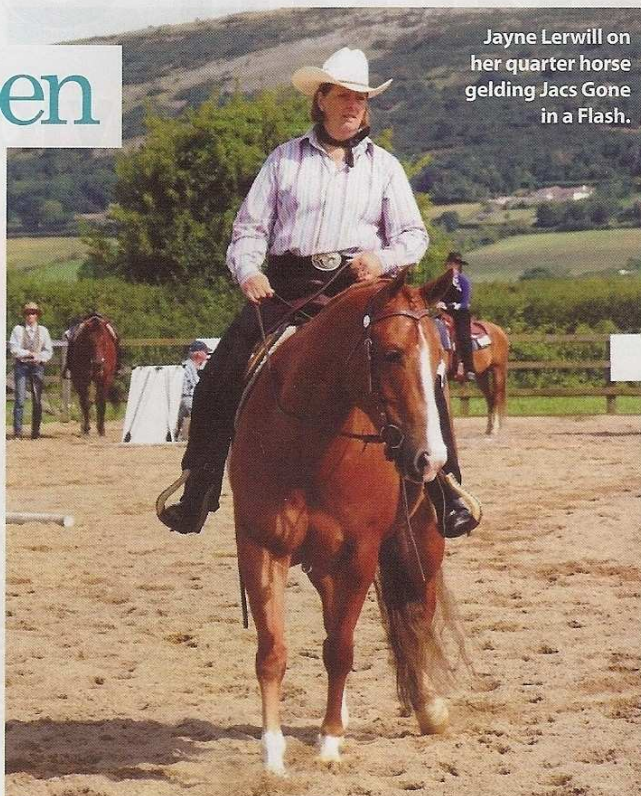
**H**eld over three days and featuring the West of England Championships this event attracted western riding competitors from all over the south west and beyond. A packed schedule of classes ranged from novice to open providing opportunities for every level of rider and handler. David Lloyd from Hampshire judged tirelessly in fabulous sunshine and maintained a smile until the very end. The Lerwill West of England Halter Championships were very hotly contested, with Sarah Davies' handsome quarter horse Jacs Gone in a Flash taking the gelding championship. Standing reserve, from Crewkerne in Somerset, was Debbie Burns and her own striking grey Chief Bar Tender. Debbie then went on to win the Western Equestrian Society Novice Rider Trail riding Clare Gates' beautiful buckskin mare Bueno Pep Olena.

Dominating the youth classes was Taliska Baden from Dorset whose calm, thoughtful riding went on to win her the WES Youth

Hi point trophy. Taliska rides a 6 yr old quarter horse My Mr Moonshine, given to her last year for her 14th birthday. Cornish rider Laura Dennis was also very consistent throughout the weekend, eventually winning a closely contested Amateur Hi point trophy with her sorrel gelding Pepoakie.

Everyone enjoyed watching the reining classes with Mike Gatt from Gloucestershire showing the superb abilities of his very reliable 11yr old stallion HR Dualin Smart. They were the winners of The West of England Open Reining Championship demonstrating dramatic sliding stops, spins, rollbacks and flying changes all ridden on a loose rein. Mike deservedly won the WES Open Hi Point trophy for combining his reining successes with those in a range of other classes. The Tailgator West of England Open Trail Championship was won by another experienced stallion 13yr old Warralee Mr Montana shown by Doug McGuire from Shropshire.

Jayne Lerwill on her quarter horse gelding Jacs Gone in a Flash.



And finally, Forest Jac (our very own Woody) won the WES Novice Horse Pleasure and then topped that with the NFU West of England Open Pleasure Championship.

Competitors and spectators were treated to a perfect weekend of western showing having been made most welcome and

comfortable by organisers and hosts, The Mendip Stud. Many classes had been generously sponsored with trophies, awards and rosettes, and the atmosphere was just about as friendly and supportive as it gets, from the first to the last class - 63 in all. Watch out for this show next year!

## Woody's Diary

Woody has surpassed himself this month, starting with a western riding demonstration for the Stevenstone and Torrington Farmers pony club at their camp. Woody showed his jog and lope to the pony clubbers and then we explained some of the schooling exercises we use to supple our western horses. We demonstrated turns on the forehand and haunches, leg yielding, side-passing together with stops and backing up whilst trying to explain what we look for during training. I worked on some counter canter and travers, explaining that they are an important preparation for the flying lead changes that Woody will work on over the winter. We finished with a bridleless riding display to show that western horses really are ridden from the seat and leg aids. I was so proud of Woody as he perfectly and obediently turned left and right, jogged, loped, stopped and backed up with just a rein around his neck. I almost felt he went better without a bridle on his head than with! The children were utterly amazed and we went on to have some very interesting questions from many of them before Woody was mobbed by everyone wanting to pat him

and look at his saddle close up. Last year he would definitely not have coped with having 35 excited children around him and I suspect would have taken off back to Minnesota given half a chance.

Just a few days later we drove to Axbridge to the Mendip Stud for the West of England show. I was very pleased with how he improved dramatically from class to class, becoming more confident over some very testing trail patterns ñ they certainly tested my powers of concentration and memory! We managed to remember the patterns though and were Reserve Champion in the Tailgator West of England Open Trail Championship.

With each class he showed how much stronger he has become. All the preparation and training really paid off in the pleasure classes where he was obviously become more engaged and better balanced. We took a first in the WES Novice Horse Pleasure, and won the NFU West of England Open Pleasure Championship. Wow. I couldn't believe it, he is still only 4 years old and competing against much older, seasoned show horses. He also managed a second in the WES Open Pleasure



Judith on Woody with John Calder receiving the rosette, silver salver and special award for winning the NFU West of England Open Pleasure Championship.

and third in the WES Open Trail which qualifies him for next year's WES Championships. I will be reporting from this year's Championships next month on Woody and all other South West competitors.