

We went to a demo at Bleheim (10<sup>th</sup> April 2012)

We managed to arrive as expected, only 'near to the ring' has a different meaning in Oxfordshire. We were well over a mile away from the ring and in a field with grass about 6 inches long discovered that horse owners don't pick up after 'stuff' is left behind - even in Oxfordshire!

On the Saturday we learnt that the advance party who were supposed to put all the equipment together forgot the key to the trailer, so rather than walk all the way back, decided not to bother. This meant that after marching from the 'field' to the ring for over half an hour with dogs, bags, chairs etc, the equipment still had to be put together. Meanwhile, hundreds of members of the public were still arriving and there we were loaded like pack horses trudging through the 'retail tent village' trying to find the equipment trailer. We found it hiding behind the Kennel Club tent and in front of the go-cart track.

We were part of a day long alternative entertainment for the horsey types. Other attractions included side saddle horse riding, hearing dogs for the deaf, display of mules, fencing and Kennel Club Agility (Watford Agility Club). The fencing didn't turn up, so we had to go on early. This display comprised of a very long agility course (most club members bitterly complained that it was too long and they were kn\*\*kered by the end) although the second part was a relay race between different sized dogs, which the fairly large crowd enjoyed.

On the Sunday, we were first in the ring (so the equipment didn't have to be taken down etc.), so the combination of an early start, slightly overhung display members (and public) and a slight chill in the air meant that the audience were thin on the ground, although as this was a 'try out', not to be expected. The course was smaller, the relay just as hectic and to finish the demo, children from the audience were invited to try their hand at agility using some of the club dogs (and our well known plonker/plodder - Jamie). From past shows, we know this always goes down well, and this event was no exception.

After dismantling the equipment and packing it away, a we marched back to 'base' we met at least one couple who were sorry that they had arrived too late to see the group in action. We understand the Kennel Club were pleased and it may well happen again next year.

In case you are wondering, I never did find out if the fencing was two blokes trying to kill each other or someone building something to keep sheep in, perhaps we will find out next year.