

Spindles Farm survivor Duke triumphs at local horse show

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A thoroughbred gelding who survived one of the worst animal cruelty cases the UK has ever seen this week won his first ever dressage competition at a local horse show.

Duke (<http://bit.ly/tht-duke2>), a gorgeous thoroughbred gelding, was rescued from the horrors of Spindles Farm, Amersham. Over 100 horses, ponies and donkeys were found in the most appalling conditions, 34 horses were already dead. These poor animals were found barely alive, crammed in foul, stinking stables and standing on the dead bodies of their companions. 115 animals were rescued in an 8 day joint operation mounted by UK welfare charities.

16hh black gelding Duke arrived at The Horse Trust (<http://www.horsetrust.org.uk>), a Buckinghamshire based horse charity, in January 2008 along with 13 of the sickest horses, ponies and donkeys rescued that day. He was only 2 years old and like most of the animals rescued Duke was very sick, emaciated and suffering from life-threatening infections. After intensive veterinary treatment and care Duke slowly began to recover, but sadly his troubles were far from over. Duke developed Sarcoids on his left eye and had to travel over 200 miles to the University of Liverpool's Equine Hospital to undergo specialist treatment to remove the tumours. Thankfully Duke's treatment was successful but he went on to suffer recurring bouts of colic and had to undergo life-saving surgery at The Royal Veterinary College. This beautiful horse has been through so much in his short life, but thanks to his incredible spirit, the round the clock care and specialist treatment given at The Horse Trust and the generosity of the public, he has overcome every ordeal.

Duke is now 6 years old and a happy, healthy horse and has now been backed and is living life to the full. This week Duke took part in his first ever show jumping and dressage competitions at Widmer Equestrian Centre (<http://www.widmerequestrian.co.uk>) in Lacey Green, Buckinghamshire winning the dressage competition with a score of 59%. Not only was it his first dressage test but also his first time in an indoor school! Duke also took part in the clear round jumping. The Horse Trust only have 3 jumps with rustic poles, so Duke had never seen a coloured pole or jumped a course of jumps. However, brave Duke rose to the challenge and with the encouragement of his rider, The Horse Trust's resident trainer Jane Calvert, he popped over all of the jumps beautifully.

Jeanette Allen, Chief Executive of The Horse Trust said 'We are so proud of all that Duke has achieved despite tough start in life. We hope that this will be the start of a promising career for Duke and that he will go on to represent The Horse trust as many more shows in future. Duke's health problems mean that he can't be rehomed, but we guarantee that he will have a happy and secure home at The Horse Trust for the rest of his life.'

The Horse Trust relies on donations from the general public to help care for horses like Duke. To find out how you can support website The Horse Trust (<http://www.horsetrust.org.uk>) visit www.horsetrust.org.uk or call 01494 488464.

Widmer Equestrian Centre (<http://www.widmerequestrian.co.uk>) is British Horse Society approved riding

school, livery yard and facilities centre, which holds regular affiliated and unaffiliated shows to find out more visit www.widmerekquestrian.co.uk (<http://www.widmerekquestrian.co.uk>) or call 01844 275139.

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PHOTOGRAPHY:

Duke jumping at widmer (<http://bit.ly/tht-duke1>)

Duke-after winning his first dressage test (<http://bit.ly/tht-duke2>)

Duke-leaving for first dressage test (<http://bit.ly/tht-duke3>)

Notes for Editors

1. The Horse Trust, founded in 1886, is the oldest horse charity in the UK. Based at Speen, Buckinghamshire, it provides a place of retreat for working horses that have served their country or community and nurtures them throughout their final years. The charity also gives sanctuary to horses, ponies and donkeys that have suffered and need special treatment. The Horse Trust funds non-invasive research that advances knowledge of equine diseases, improving diagnosis and treatment and reducing suffering among equines worldwide. The charity also offers training for professionals and owners, with a focus on equine welfare and quality of life assessment.

2. The Horse Trust depends on the support of the public to look after retired working horses. It costs the charity an average of £12 per day to look after each horse at the sanctuary, which includes the costs of grooms, forage, farriery and veterinary care. The Horse Trust spends £50,000 per year on medication and vets fees for horses just like Teddy. To donate to The Horse Trust, please visit www.horsetrust.org.uk (<http://www.horsetrust.org.uk>), or contact the charity on 01494 488 464 or info@horsetrust.org.uk.

3. Widmer Equestrian Centre in Lacey Green Buckinghamshire a British Horse Society approved riding school, livery yard and facilities centre. Located in beautiful Buckinghamshire countryside the centre's fantastic facilities allow Widmer EC to offer riding lessons and livery and competitions all year round. Widmer EC also hold regular affiliated and unaffiliated shows including British Dressage shows, British Show jumping Association shows. For further information about Widmer EC please visit www.widmerekquestrian.co.uk (<http://www.widmerekquestrian.co.uk>) or contact Jenny Davies on 01844 275139.

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