

3* Pardubice (or 1 always wanted to see the taxi jump or its good to be in Bohemia)

Anyone of my vintage who read the horse and hound's in 70's will remember the win of Chris Collins in the famed Pardubice steeple chase modelled on "Liverpool" (The grand national) but containing the monumental "taxi" jump and contested by the iron curtain hard men boosted by snapps/vodka.



Thus an opportunity to keep a watchful eye on Pam, Graham and Tim who attended a FEI level 2* officials course conducted around the 3* event built on the Pardubice race course needed little resisting.

It is very humbling to note that not only are our riders and horses making their presence felt in the global eventing world but also the stalwarts of our sport who pay their own way to attend these FEI courses in order to benefit running of our local shows.

Full thanks to Pam, Graham and Tim and also Priscilla Young who completed such a course in England last month.

The next time any reader enjoys an eventing outing at ICB or Northern Farms or Springs or Natal please buy one of these officials, who make it happen, a few beers.

Some random notes:

- Pardubice is some 100km east of Prague in the Czech Republic.
- Logistics guided by ICB's Mandy were very straight forward and reasonably priced.
- Air France Airbus 380 to Paris, air shuttle Paris to Prague, bus to train station and an hour train trip to Pardubice. No matata particularly if you have learnt not to pack a hair dryer and three changes of clothes per day.
- Czechoslovakian currency is the Crown but Euros are easy to change and when you note the numbers the excellent lager type beer is cheaper than in SA – Viva Czech Viva
- Everyone drinks beer at any time but no lager touts were seen and the country was like all of Europe almost litter free.



Everyone drinks beer



At any time of the day this is a 9am trotup

- Pardubice has some 90000 souls living in a mix of wonderful old town gothic splendour or communist block bricks The officials drew the short straw with their sixties concrete in "new" town whilst the writer managed

a very pleasant old town lodge complete with a revolving door in which I managed to get stuck with my mandatory eventing cycle.



Mike's bike "Matt"



Matt parked outside the lovely museum in the old city

- Rent of a brand new bike from the station was R50 per day and served me well despite some inclement weather.

Horse stuff

- 5 FEI events were held in the confines of the world famous race course
- The advantages of such a venue of permanent infrastructure, stables, offices, power, loud speaker system most certainly helps and there was ample space to lay out the 5km CCI track.
- The going was natural meadow grass on a sandy base and the going was excellent.

Stats:

	Starters	No of Countries	Elim/Retired	Winner	Entrance
CCI 3*	14	8	1	€800	€300
CIC 3*	15	11	4		
CCI 2*	1	1	1		
CIC 2*	15	4	3		
CIC 1*	13	6	2		

- No 3* or 2* competitors came in within the X/C time.
- Dressage moderate but X/C and S/J riding was very good.
- Some very pleasing horses were on display and the Czech combinations are making progress.
- After seeing the SA flag flying at recent events in Europe it was poignant not to see it in the arena but honour was being upheld in the lecture room as Pam, Tim and Graham impressed all with their knowledge in this class room and on site and their beer drinking ability in warm down time!!
- Graham in particular has the perfect CV of a world class rider and is the ideal age to develop in all spheres of FEI affiliation with course designing looking the favourite.



SA Team with a New Zealand and Romanian delegate in the Pub underneath the racing grand stand



FEI stewards are well dressed and easy to spot



Still looking for my high heeled lady walking poodle
and in Prague it is a male occupation to walk dogs!!
Help!

Cycling around Prague was also a delight and at this very pleasant hotel organised by Mandy bikes were part of the service so G & T with the bike, good stuff.



One of the many modern statues scattered around Prague



Not for the young and uninitiated



Matt and the pub