



Patron: Andrew Hoy



PRESS RELEASE

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3-TIMES OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL WINNER ANDREW HOY AGREES TO BE PATRON OF THE WOBBLEBERRY CHALLENGE

Seven-times Australian Olympian Andrew Hoy has agreed to be the Patron of The Wobbleberry Challenge.

Sam Elms, one of the Founders of the Challenge explained, “Andrew was the obvious choice. He has been an active supporter of the Wobbleberry Challenge since the very beginning and is one of the nicest, most generous athletes you could ever wish to meet. I remember asking, on Twitter, whether there were any “professional” eventers who would support the Challenge and Andrew replied very quickly saying he wanted to help and he has been true to his word, helping out whenever and wherever he can.

In March of this year Hoy Eventing hosted a flatwork and jumping Clinic for Wobbleberries at their stables in Leicestershire and very generously provided lunch, intensive coaching and a tour of the stables. By raffling places and rewarding those Wobbleberries who had raised the most sponsorship the Clinic raised over £10,000 for Hannah’s Willberry Wonder Pony and a date has been set for this to be repeated in 2018.

Andrew Hoy explained, “My first contact with Hannah’s Willberry Wonder Pony Charity was at the Tattersalls Event in May 2016, when I had the privilege of meeting Hannah. She gave a very touching speech at an Owners & Riders dinner and we all were very emotional about the strength and courage of this wonderful young lady. On that day, I knew I wanted to do something to support the charity. When I heard that the “Wobbleberries” were looking for support later on that year I felt it was the right time to “get active” and support the charity in memory of Hannah.”

Last year's clinic for a group of Wobbleberries was a great kick off to our cooperation and I look forward to making this an annual event!"

Founder Sally Barr said, "Andrew was the first rider to wear the new "Wobbling for Willberry" armband as he rode around Blenheim carrying his Willberry Wonder Pony "Hoyberry" on his back. He has also very generously agreed to front a series of training videos for Wobbleberries for 2017/18. He was the perfect choice for Patron, he takes it very seriously and we can't thank him enough".

Ends.

Notes to Editors

About Hannah's Willberry Wonder Pony Charity

Hannah's Willberry Wonder Pony Charity was founded by Hannah Francis in March 2016. Hannah, a hugely talented young event rider, was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer, in May 2015 at the age of just 17 years old. The prognosis was very poor indeed and Hannah subsequently endured many months of painful and debilitating treatment, fighting the disease with extraordinary courage and dignity. Hannah's sheer determination was plain to see and she defied all medical opinion, continuing to ride right up until her tragically early passing at only 18 years of age on 1st August 2016.

Hannah founded her charity, Hannah's Willberry Wonder Pony, in March 2016 to raise money to fulfil two principal objectives – to fund research into osteosarcoma and to provide equestrian experiences ("Willberry's Wishes") to seriously ill people. The charity made strong progress under Hannah's leadership and has gone from strength to strength since her passing, raising more than £800,000 in its first 18 months. The charity is commencing a significant research programme as Hannah so dearly wished and is granting Willberry's Wishes to seriously ill people in the hope that these experiences inspire others in the same way as they did Hannah, bringing a little happiness and hope during the darkest of times.

About The Wobbleberry Challenge

The Wobbleberry Challenge is aimed at people over 25 (post Pony Club), who would like to step up to BE and want to be involved supporting the charity. The 2017 Challenge was aimed at middle aged, wimpy riders – and this is still the core group. So far, our oldest Wobbleberry to complete was 76 years young!

There is no need to commit to completing the challenge within 12 months – it should be a sensible journey, incorporating a training programme that takes into consideration an individual's current level.

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