



# Scottish Carriage Driving Association

## Newsletter - June 2011

### From the Editor

After all the training, preparing, and polishing the season has started and since the last newsletter half the season has passed. With this edition we have tried to catch up with the news from each event. Do not forget all the results are on the website shortly after the end of each competition. Have you any views or news which you feel you would like us to include? Please email or write to me at the address on the last page and let me know. Letters to the editor would be very welcome.

### Biggarshiels

As we arrived on Thursday, glorious sun welcomed us to an impressive new venue. Some very welcome National competitors ventured north over the border as a warm up for their season. There were also several people returning to competition, welcome back! Friday saw Carol Boswell and David Ivison judging on a near perfect arena where all four corners could be seen. There was every combination from small ponies to horse teams, leisure class to advanced. Geoff Atkins judged the cones; the course was undulating with several difficult angles. There was only one double clear at the end of the day. Friday evening many of us decamped to the local Hotel for an enjoyable hearty meal and one of Sheila's quizzes – there was lots of head scratching. Valuable prizes were vied for. The only thing that was missing was the answers!

Saturday dawned dull and the forecast rain came as the competitors arrive at the start of E. The obstacles held up well with few incidents or retirements. Some impressive overall scores and performances were achieved. There will be some hotly contested classes this season.

The monsoon creased as the prize giving ended and we drove off into the sunshine.

Prize giving was once again enhanced by Mary's Mum's excellent baking, whilst Sandi and Alexi Lanni had kept their catering going over the two days – many thanks to all of them.

A lot of very hard work had been put in to provide competitors with an enjoyable drive and large flowing obstacles. Altogether this is another wonderful venue at which we are lucky enough to have the enjoyment of competing. Many thanks to Mary, Andrew, Susan, their team and sponsors.

Mary promised us that we would be back, and that Biggarshiels will be a regular venue in our calendar. Here's to the next time.



### St Fort

The Scottish Regional Event ran with Andrew's usual care and attention to detail. As a result of the event's enhanced status there were three judges on duty for dressage. The arena was in pristine condition. The cones course was testing, with only two double clear rounds and the obstacles were sporting their new letter bands, courtesy of OPG. Even the weather was kind – well for this year anyway.

The usual drinks "do" followed the competitor's briefing on Saturday evening with the event's sponsor coming and enjoying the social banter. The marquee had its usual crush and the noise level indicated a good party.

Even so what the event lacked was competitor's. Andrew's disappointment and frustration was palpable. With only 23 turnouts competing the ground force was more than 3 to 1. None the less the resulting scores showed that no one took the easy option. The battle between Ian Bertram and Jock McFarlane continued. Both put in very respectable scores. Jock achieving a dressage of 30.72 and Ian with a marathon of 66.98. Finally Ian won by a 2.09 penalty advantage. The event may have lacked turnouts but Carol Boswell made a welcome return with a tandem and we were treated to three horse fours enjoying themselves. All returned final scores which would not have been out of place at a National.

Let's all hope that we have the opportunity of holding another Regional Event at St Fort next year. Thank you Andrew.

### Snippet

Did anyone else catch George Skinner in episode 7 of Landward? A nice piece about his Clydedales. Unfortunately by the time this is published it will no longer be on iplayer.



## Hopetoun 2011.

Preparations were going well – that is until windy Monday. After that, the week and especially the event itself rang to the sound of chain saws. Radios appealed for people to return to their lorries and caravans so that they could be moved as yet more cracks appeared in the tree branches. One steward lost his caravan under a branch and it could not be seen. Luckily Jim wasn't at home, the van emerged bruised but not battered with a few marks and scratches.

Friday evening saw the social gathering in the marquee. We were delighted to watch Ewan MacInnes present the Duke of Edinburgh with a gift for his 90th birthday. The speech Ewan gave was met with much amusement and appreciation by those attending.

One of our judges this year was Dot Willcoxson from Australia, her husband Doug was one of the jury of appeal, an arena steward and general assistant. They are attending several National Events in the UK this year; we hope they enjoy them as much as Hopetoun. Ge Konig made a welcome return as our other international judge.

With much hard work from Ian's gang the competition went ahead, how many times they cleared the course of debris we don't know. Increased numbers of competitors compared with last year added more interest. There were a good number of Scottish competitors and many familiar faces from South of the border attending again. With Wilf Bowman Ripley and Karen Basset both competing with pony fours a new slant was put on that class.

The rain never made as much impact as the wind. Hats didn't droop they disappeared both on Friday and Sunday. Saturday's marathon was taxing as usual and several people didn't finish the course. There have never been so many ball boys and girls (of all ages) who worked so hard as the arena party on Sunday. If you were spectating a measuring stick was put in your hand. Advanced Single Horse saw Jock and Ian lock horns again but this time it was Jock's turn. Again he turned in a wonderful dressage score to set himself up for the weekend. It was never Ian's event; dressage was not what he wanted. The marathon saw him dump Catriona a fact he didn't pick up on instantly and for which she is threatening him with Specsavers! Her knee did not suffer permanent damage but Sunday saw Karen Walsh as groom for the cones.

However, the competition was completed, with difficulty at some points but everyone got away safely. Once again we must thank our sponsors, they put in the finance for the event and then put in the time and effort to make it work.

## The Falkland Event

They say that football is a game of two halves – and so it was at The Falkland club event last weekend as the weather showed off its versatility. Saturday was dismal; it poured with rain all day. Sunday was beautiful, with sunshine and a gentle breeze. The event revolves around the dressage arena and one obstacle in Mandy Law's stables area, the cones course and two obstacles in land around the homes of John and Pat White and Janet Melville, the marathon course through the Falkland estate, Falkland Golf Club and Mike and Lyndsey Brown's home Myreside, and finally three obstacles and the entire parking area in one of David McKerrow's fields at Nochnary Farm. Nails were bitten to the quick on Friday as David had only managed to clear his field by lunchtime, leaving the working party the bare minimum time to erect obstacles 4, 5 and 6, including the old favourite The Dragons. Of course their experience and teamwork won the day, and everything was ready for the Friday arrivals and for the start on Saturday morning. 26 competitors in all: the first time in recent years that the number has fallen below 30, due largely to four drop-outs in the last few days.

Dressage Judges David Ivison and renowned ridden dressage rider Mary McFarlane overcame the steamed-up car windows and windscreen wipers and it was fitting that none other than Jock McFarlane should emerge with the prize for the lowest dressage score in all classes, one of the few under 50. Jock incidentally was driving Peanut, his 'other' pairs horse. He had intended to bring Splash but he was out of sorts, so he brought Peanut instead, whose only other outing as a single had been at Cothal. And he went so well for him that he has decided to take him to Sandringham in a fortnight. What a learning curve for Peanut: Cothal, Falkland, Sandringham, all in the space of one month!

Saturday evening was the time for enjoying Pat and John White's generous hospitality as usual – indoors this time because of the weather, and everyone was grateful to Pat and John for this welcome opportunity to, as it were, warm up and chill out.

One point of interest at the event was the size of the new Leisure class – seven entries made it the largest class at the event, which seems to demonstrate that there is indeed a demand for such a category. And the fact that it included drivers of great experience like Carol Boswell and Andrew Mylius should have reassured some of those who were worried that such a class would simply attract complete newcomers looking for an easy way in to the sport. All those Leisure entrants had good reasons for just wanting to do dressage, cones and Section E – and still walk away with a rosette. Plus in the case of your correspondent's wonderful wife, a fine bottle of whisky donated by Drew and Mandy Elder for being the slowest through Obstacle 4. The reason for our slow progress through all the obstacles (nothing of course to do with the groom being unsure of his way round), and our entry into the Leisure class, was that Zoë is bringing on her inexperienced pair of Hackney ponies, completely new to driving trials. But winning a bottle of whisky for being the slowest was nevertheless a delightful surprise! Another welcome sight in the Leisure class was the (temporary?) return to driving of David Brown driving a pony of Mary Kusun's – it caused some concern amongst the event organisers present who trembled at the thought that Davy might forsake course building for competing again!

The last competitor finished just before 2pm; Zoe Ross had the scores out in no time, and at 3 o'clock Cathy Endeacott started the prize giving.

One by one, all the prizes seemed to go to Anna Grace - though she had had to leave for her homeward journey before it, in order to be on time for her Sunday evening waitressing shift (and then to work on Monday incidentally, as a firefighter. Yes, I too think that is worthy of another round of applause!). So David Ivison kept coming forward on her behalf gradually filling up a carrier bag with her trophies and rosettes. Anna won the Nochnary salver for best marathon, the Liz Melville trophy for fastest cones, and Faith Szczuka's Just William trophy for overall Champion. Susan Don emerged as Reserve Champion and duly offered a vote of thanks from everyone to all the team of volunteers on the Falkland event committee - thanks which in an e-mail Anna asked me to repeat. She said the event was such fun that she and Di her groom hardly stopped laughing all weekend.

And if Ian Bertram's modesty will permit a final word, those of you who look carefully at the results will notice that Ian had in fact recorded the best dressage score, the second best cones score, and with his low marathon score achieved the best overall total by a considerable margin - but had for his own admirable reasons elected to enter HC.

*Simon Sanders*



## Horses Help Heroes

Ewan and Jane MacInnes have been carriage driving on the West Coast of Scotland in late June, but not in a turn-out that SCDA members would readily recognise. They brought over Sox, Sylvester, Torridon and Roma to put to the WW1 replica ambulance making its way from Lands End to John O'Groats. The challenge was to drive this vehicle, pulled by a succession of pairs, the distance of 1000 miles and raise £1,000,000.

Ewan and Jane were accompanied by Ann ( the organiser of the marathon) and Gordon as grooms and also by two wounded servicemen who enjoyed taking the reins for some of the route. Their pairs drove from Tyndrum to Loch Awe, and Loch Awe to Benderloch on Monday 27th June, staying there overnight after a welcome in the village from the local Argyll RDA Group, piper Alastair MacDonald, the nursery and primary school children and a coach load of supporters from BLESMA in Crieff.

On leaving Glasgow the previous evening, the turnout had been running up to 2 hours late but the spirited run by these horses brought the event back on schedule.

On Tuesday morning they set off in the wagon to catch up and plan to put to again in Inverness. 'My ambition is to drive the pair over the Kessock Bridge today as Ewan drove over the Connel Bridge yesterday whilst I had the worrying task of negotiating it with the large lorry and 6" head-room to spare' commented Jane

Other well-known faces in the carriage driving world in Scotland have also been involved including Richard Lanni and Barnaby Bowman.

*Jane Isaac.*

## 20 Questions

1. Your name Jock MacFarlane
2. Where do you live (area): Blairgowrie, Perthshire
3. What do you do in the real world: Farmer
4. How long have you been driving: about 6 years
5. How did you start: Introduced to driving by Mike Walsh
6. How long have you been associated with HDT: about 6 years
7. Is this a family sport for you: No, took it up after I gave up ridden eventing
8. What do you do in the sport? Drive
9. Do you do (or have you done) anything behind the scenes: Treasurer of SCDA and Vice Chairman of BHDTA council
10. What Classes have you competed in: Single Horse and Horse Pairs
11. What level do (have you) competed at: Open Single Horse but will be Advanced Single Horse at National from 2011
12. What sort of vehicle do you have now : Bennington B4X
13. What has been your vehicle progression: Fenix Flyer then Bennington
14. What have been your highlights: Winning Open Single Horse National Championships 2010
15. What has been your bloomer (s) (publishable ): Getting eliminated at Erddig for not correcting an error of course.
16. What are your goals or have you achieved all you wished to: To try and get selected for team GB
17. Which has been your favourite horse or pony - why: Wodka, my present horse, because he is so willing and cheerful. Always tries his best and is never in a bad mood or has an off day. He can be a little cheeky sometimes but always fun.
18. Who has been or is your hero: My wife Mary for general horse knowledge but driving-wise Carol Boswell as her skill and knowledge about driving is unsurpassed.
19. How do you feel the sport has progressed: I think the club events especially have improved greatly with much improved obstacles and very good cone courses. The event organisers do a wonderful job should be supported more by club members entering events.
20. How would you like to see it go in the future: I would like to see club events being well supported during the summer and in the winter I would like to see clinics and workshops to help us with fitness, feeding, long-reining, turnout, dressage, cone driving, carriage maintenance, etc.etc..

## Ibhorseboxes Points League

After half of this season's events this is how the points league stands:-

Jock McFarlane is currently ahead in Open Horse, chased by Jane Isaac and Ian Bertram; Anna Grace has a very narrow lead over Susan Don in Open Pony; two Dianas lead the Pairs classes: Diana Lindsay in Horse Pairs, and Diana Ferguson (with three wins out of three) in Pony Pairs; Fiona Morton is leading the Novices, following on from Kevin's example last year!

## Snippets

### Carol Boswell

For those of you who were not at Hopetoun for the National Horse Driving Trials you may not be aware that Carol means to perform a double this year.

She competed with Eric in her tandem and intends to ride him at the Hopetoun International Horse Trials. On the 30th & 31st July this year. This mammoth effort is in aid of the Cancer and Parkinson charities.

We'll let you know how she gets on in the next newsletter.

### Mandy Elder

Mandy had the misfortune to have her car broken into at the Royal Highland Show last week, and the thieves stole a bag containing her BHDTA rule book and her notes for sitting in with judges at events. Nothing of great value, thank goodness, but a nuisance nonetheless. This week SCDA Secretary Simon gets a call from someone working at a small industrial estate at Ratho, not far from the showground, who had found the bag and contents scattered about - from which he had got Mandy's name and the SCDA number (Simon's mobile) - and Mandy and bag and contents were duly reunited.

### Royal Birthday Party

Several Scots involved with Horse Driving Trials were honoured to be invited to a 90th birthday party. At the moment we're awaiting a promised piece to tell us about it. We'll just have to wait for the next edition! The tables at the meal were named after Events that had been in our calendar; Scone, Hopetoun and St Fort.

## ANDREW MAY LHHI

Light Harness Horse Instructor

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