



Scottish Carriage Driving Association

Newsletter - March/April 2011

From the Editor.

This promises to be a very full Newsletter as so much has happened in one month. Notes from the Secretary's Desk are extensive, please take the time to read them, especially if you were not able to attend the AGM as they are all relevant.

March 5th was a very full day with the business of the Conference added to the AGM. The day started with the usual coffee and blether. Most of us were introduced to the new McCutcheon—Danna, if you didn't meet her then you will over the season!

Trophies were presented as well as the Scottish Points Rosettes, kindly sponsored by IB Horseboxes, full details in the October newsletter.

As you will see from Simon's notes Ewan MacInnes was presented with an award for his extraordinary work with SCDA, there is more further on.

The morning session moved on to the presentation by Janet and Owen on their foray into International competition, the joy, the stress and lessons learnt. They repeated the mantra—smile and remember it is fun, we do it because we enjoy it!!!! Well we enjoyed their presentation and their talk.

Notes from the Secretary's desk March 2011

The event organisers held their annual meeting in Blackford at the end of January – the meeting which would normally have taken place before the conference in November, and there was an opportunity for your secretary to update members on the outcome of that meeting during the morning of the AGM day on March 5th.

Some of the key points mentioned in the last newsletter were confirmed:

- the introduction of a Leisure Class at some events – you will find these on some 2011 event schedules;
- the progress being made to make the training up of new scorers easier and more attractive involving hard work by Mike McCutcheon and Vic Kusin;
- the progress towards building a group of Scottish-based judges capable of judging at Club events under the auspices of Jane MacInnes. On AGM day, Jane presented David Ivison with a certificate to mark his completion of the programme in one year and took the opportunity to remind the others, and anyone else who would like to join the

programme, that learning the judge's role will normally take a few years, but that it greatly enhances your understanding of the sport and the enjoyment of your own participation as a driver or groom or whatever. The programme will continue in 2011. Please contact Jane or me if you would like to take part – Jane has offered to do another day's training in April, as she did so enjoyably last year. Details to come, but let her/me know if you would be interested.

- As you will see from the Omnibus, we are all reminded about fire extinguishers for lorries and caravans, and horse passports and flu vaccination certificates, without which we may be refused entry to events.
- Don't forget also that Full SCDA membership – or Full or Associate/Club Competitor membership of BHDTA – is ESSENTIAL if you wish to compete in an SCDA event. Without it the event is not insured.
- Let the event organiser know whether you would like to use electric fencing at an event – it is up to the organiser whether to allow it or not.
- Take care using quad bikes – the event organiser may disallow their use if he/she considers they are being used unsafely.

Dogs

Janet Pilling and Hamish Reid both told cautionary tales about dogs at events – it's maybe not wise for us to leave our dogs unattended tethered near our vehicles, as lots of us do, as unscrupulous and litigious people have been known to claim that the dog has bitten them and to take the owner to court – difficult for the owner to prove otherwise.

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

Ewan suggested that SCDA might like to mark the occasion later this year of HRH's 90th birthday, given his long and influential connection with carriage driving and frequent appearances at St Fort and Hopetoun. The directors will discuss it and let you have their opinion – what's yours?

Welfare of horses and electric fencing at events (not necessarily related topics)

Andrew Mylius reminded us that there is currently much discussion at the higher echelons of the sport about the time it takes for a horse or pony to settle down enough after a marathon to be able to travel any significant distance in comfort. Research suggests that recovery times are longer than previously thought, and his point was that there are implications for Club events where the last activity

is the marathon, shortly after which competitors are loading up to go home. He asked that competitors coming to St Fort, for example, take great care to ensure that their horses or ponies are given enough time to be sufficiently settled after the marathon before embarking on the homeward journey.

Andrew also talked about electric fencing at events. While it will be allowed at Club events at the organiser's discretion, St Fort will follow BHDTA rules which do allow electric fencing up to 3m x 3m. But he wanted to remind people that BHDTA's reason for allowing electric fencing was purely to accommodate newcomers to the sport who had not yet graduated to lorries and side-stabling – those people with the latter do not also need electric fencing. Please let him know in advance if you are thinking of bringing electric fencing to St Fort.

A few points from the AGM, attended by 48 members with 16 apologies which saw the retirement from the committee Ewan MacInnes and John Nisbet, replaced by Michael Brown and David Brown, the standing down as Chairman of Audrey Barron, replaced by Louise McCutcheon.

The announcement to universal applause by Jane Isaac of new main sponsorship of Hopetoun by Gerald and Margo Smith, replacing Owen and Janet Piling to whom she expresses gratitude for their enormous support on behalf of everyone involved. There are still plenty of individual sponsorship opportunities at Hopetoun, all sizes—from a portaloo to an obstacle—please spread the word and ask any potential sponsor to contact Jane.

Ewan announced the decision by SCDA and BDS to join together in sharing the organisation of an end-of-season event to take over from the existing BDS dance, in the hope of safeguarding its future and increasing its attendance.

Hamish Reid expressed concern over the small numbers of young drivers in SCDA—a subject raised not for the first time by him and others—and the matter will be referred to the next directors' meeting for discussion.

Finally Ewan MacInnes has a box of papers he has accumulated over 35 years he has been so closely involved with building the sport of carriage driving in Scotland—which contains records of what must have been fascinating times, strong personalities, strong arguments and plenty of politics! Rather than throw them on the fire, he has offered to make them available to anyone who might be interested in going through them, recording the main story leading to the setting up of SCDA as it now is, and preserving those papers of significance so that the historical perspective of those important years is not lost. A fascinating small project for any member

with interest and a little time, or indeed a student looking for experience in that sort of work. Please contact Simon or Ewan if you are interested.

Points of Importance

Your Fire Extinguisher should be placed at the front offside corner and your mobile phone number should be clearly displayed in the drivers door window.

At the Scottish Regional Event you should take your horse's passport to the Secretary's tent when you collect your paperwork.

SCDA Judges

In January 2010 I put a proposal to the directors of SCDA that we needed more judges for our events, as we are reliant of a handful of BHDTA judges for our Points League.

They were keen for me to go ahead, so in April we held a clinic in Blackford, Nr Stirling. It was open to anyone who was interested, even if they just wanted to find out what was involved, and we had a good turnout of 14 folk, with apologies for 3 others.

We had an excellent day, and the participants had their eyes opened to what is involved, and how much work and knowledge is required of a competent judge!

A judge must firstly have a good grasp of the Rules, and know how to find their way round the Rule book. They must be well prepared, on time, be familiar with the tests and appropriately dressed. They are in fact responsible for the entire conduct of the event, must be prepared to eliminate or disqualify a horse, and are responsible for the control and publication of the results.

I should go without saying that a judge must know if the horse is correctly harnessed and put too, and should have the experience to and knowledge of paces and correct way of going – particularly able to appreciate the wonderful variety of breeds and types horses and ponies we have here in Scotland.

The judge should also have inspected the marathon course, liaised with the TD and be ready to sort out any problems which may arise.

At our events the cones are normally held straight after the dressage, so not judged by the main judges. However, I believe it important to have walked the course, and be prepared to assist with any problems arising, bearing in mind that cone judging decisions have to be instant and require total concentration!

the dressage, so not judged by the main judges. However, I believe it important to have walked the course, and be prepared to assist with any problems arising, bearing in mind that cone judging decisions have to be instant and require total concentration!

I suggested to plan of action those wanting to go ahead, which involved sitting in with 2 different BHDTA judges, marking tests on 2 occasions – with analysis, and taking any opportunity to officiate at grassroots or Indoor events, as well as inspecting marathon and cone courses with 2 different judges.

I am delighted to say that David Ivison ticked all the boxes and is now our first qualified SCDA judge. David is a long term single and tandem driver, and just the sort of person we need. Congratulations to him for making such an effort.

I hope to hold another clinic in the autumn. Anyone interested, please contact myself, or Simon.

Jane MacInnes

So Where Have All The Stewards Gone?

Event Organisers organise, Competitors compete, Judges judge, Officials officiate and stewards provide the feet on the ground that keep the event moving forward. Everyone plays his or her part and no event can run without all these people making themselves available.

It may come as a surprise but to run a three day National event with two dressage rings, three sections, eight obstacles, and cones on Sunday we need well in excess of one hundred stewards. Compare this number with the miserably low entries at some events last year and you will see that there is a massive task facing the Helpers Organiser for any event in order to provide helpers for sometimes as few as forty competitors.

So what part do YOU play at events? Competitor? Groom? Spectator? Are you there wondering whether to take up the sport? Whatever your reason for attending events you could play a very positive role by volunteering yourself, your family members, your friends and neighbours or even your workmates to come along and lend a hand. Nobody is ever exposed to jobs at which they are inexperienced and there's always a band of experienced stewards ready to pass on their advice and knowledge to newcomers. If you're considering taking up the sport then there's no better place to learn about competition than from the ground and several of Scotland's top competitors started that way. If you have a caravan or a tent and fancy a long weekend staying in the grounds of a stately home and socialising with people who share your interests in the sport than we have the job for you.

Interested? Then contact Chris Atkins on 01436 676083 and she'll put you in touch with suitable event organisers and helpers organisers.

Geoff Atkins



Ewan MacInnes received an engraved decanter as a token of thanks from the SCDA to mark his retirement as a director.

Ewan was the founder member of the Association, and had a long spell as chairman. He has been hugely

instrumental in the development of the competitive side of driving in Scotland, and many of the more 'seasoned' drivers will remember his very successful and enjoyable Buchanan Castle event at Drymen during the 80's. His ideas and vision have been much appreciated over the past 30 years.

He has also been a long term competitor, firstly with his mare Honey, his cob Jasper, his Russian pair Corsica and Geizer, and more recently with a variety of his warmblood horses. Now Ewan wants time to concentrate on coaching with his team to the Royal Highlander road coach.

Whilst Ewan felt the time was right to make way for new directors to come forward, he is still willing to be available for help and consultation, and will continue with his sponsorship for Hopetoun and the organisation of the Thornton event. He may well still be seen competing with a pair at some events!

Jane MacInnes

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TD Clinic

At the seminar for club T D at the George hotel in Penrith, Philip Bateman had 23 people turn up 7 of whom were from Scotland. His talk and slide show took 3hrs starting with the first site visit, then on to rules, the duties and responsibilities of the T D right to the end of the event. Paper work can be down loaded from B H D T A.

I feel more people should attend these clinics. In the afternoon Peter Bridson took a Club Safety Seminar we all got about 40 pages of dos and don'ts, rolling risk assessments, health and safety, and 100 other briefings .

We should all take a look at our selves to see if we could be more safety conscious. Again some one from all club events should attend ; very frightening but very good.

Davy Brown

New Venue for Season's First Event

The first outdoor event of the IB Horseboxes Scottish Club Points League is at Biggarshiels on 22nd- 23rd April. Please note this is a **Friday and Saturday** as this is the Easter weekend. Due to other commitments, these are the only possible dates. We appreciate that this is a gamble as events are conventionally on the Saturday and Sunday, but we hope that with enough notice, everyone will be able to organise Good Friday as a holiday. This has the advantage of leaving Easter Day free for family or other holiday activities.

One inducement to enter is the supply of homebaking from Mary's mum (aka Isobel Dew) which stewards and competitors are invited to partake of before the prize giving.

If you are not planning to enter, please feel free to volunteer your services as an obstacle steward or any other role which you may prefer. Mary will be happy to discuss options with you.

We hope you will support the function on Friday evening in the Elphinstone Hotel in Biggar. This offers a choice of 3 hot main dishes and a desert. The hotel provides a bar so there's no need to bring drink. Sheila will be organising round 2 of the successful party games she orchestrated last year. Please book and pay for your dinner with your entry. We'll get a list of drivers organised to transport anyone who does not have a car with them.

There will be six obstacles in total, including a water obstacle (assuming we do not have a heatwave). The obstacles can be accessed on foot from the parking field. The marathon route will utilise neighbouring properties and be almost entirely off road. The start of Section E will involve a hill so it will be more challenging than Eglinton (but not as steep as Falkland) so generous times will be allocated as this will be the first club event of the season. It will be good preparation for the Regional event at St. Fort a few weeks later.

Please note the need for dogs to be kept on leads at all times and remain in the stabling field. This is out of consideration for the neighbouring farmers who will have sheep lambing. They have kindly given us permission to use their ground and we hope to do so again in future years.

Due to the slope on the parking field, please come prepared with blocks to level your caravan or lorry. The field is very large so there should be plenty opportunity to find a flattish bit.

The event will offer horse pairs an opportunity to drive test 8b. Please note this change to the published schedule. This has been changed at the request of the class as many of the entrants are taking part in the selection event for the World Horse Pairs championships at Ashfields.

We are indebted to the following people who are sponsoring many aspects of this event.

- Owen and Janet Pilling's Fleet Vehicle Graphics company OPG who are providing signage and the generator.
- Damian McDougal, fencing contractor, who has donated a day of his time to build obstacles
- Hamish Dykes, fencing supplies, who donated a post chapper for a day.
- Scott McCaskie Contracting for ground work.
- A. J. Jenkinsons for providing wood chip to coat the new tracks for Section E

If you've missed the entry date, don't panic – just phone Mary and ask if a late entry is possible. Fingers crossed we get the season off to a dry start.

Mary Kusin

Boyd Exell Clinics

The clinics may be over and we'll have to watch for their impact over the season. Drivers, however feel they're worthwhile. Turnouts at the second session of Boyd's clinics ranged from single pony to horse teams. Drivers ranged from international to last season's intermediates. Spectators included club novices, those who don't drive, those who felt they were not ready to put themselves forward for such public tuition, some who wanted to see what it was all about and others who don't have a turnout at the moment. As time went on more people arrived and all watched with great interest, all ready to learn.

This was not a clinic where you harnessed up, had your lesson and went home, no, here the only time the driver was not at the arena side was when they were getting ready for their lesson. Everybody watched everybody else; questions were asked of those on the carriage and at the arena side. If social chit chat started up then more questions flew. Lessons overran but nothing was left uncompleted and as the lunch break disappeared lunch was taken in situ. Stamina was demanded from all of those involved, the days were long and likely to overrun. The atmosphere was calm but intense, even enjoyable.

Spectators were welcomed and involved, their questions and opinions were invited and answered. Hopefully they will also have taken away helpful advice to help them improve. A judge and two ex judges were amongst those present, perhaps an indicator of the level of tuition.

One driver celebrated their birthday on day 3 and as a lot of people were staying over, the opportunity to celebrate was obvious. One groom was competing in a show jumping event in the evening.

Rowallan is a well appointed centre offering all that was needed by all those who attended; a very pleasant time was spent there. Next time maybe more people will spectate. The day was not daunting nor was it boring, the opportunity to watch and learn was there. A tutor who is so willing to share his knowledge and "tricks of the trade" is invaluable. If there is a lack of lead ropes this year blame Boyd!

Chris Atkins

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SCDA Information

Newsletters:- Adverts for the newsletters should be sent to the SCDA Secretary, Woodfield, Balmullo, St Andrews, Fife KY16 0AN. Private Adverts cost £5 and business adverts cost £10. Please make cheques payable to Scottish Carriage Driving.

All material should be sent to Mrs C Atkins, Inchcruin, Redgauntlet Rd, Helensburgh G84 7TP and will be used with discretion.