



Scottish Carriage Driving Association

Newsletter

August 2005

Hopefully most of you will have been out and about, either competing or stewarding at the events so far this year. As ever, the competitors are indebted to the army of helpers and organisers that make the summer such an enjoyable experience for us. It was good to see Helen Speirs, a long time supporter of carriage driving in the West Area, receive the B.H.S. Award of Merit for outstanding service to B.H.S. Scotland over many years.

Hopetoun 2005

Yet another successful event in 2005! **Owen Pilling Graphics** once again were the event's main sponsor and their generosity is hugely appreciated by everyone connected with the event. The weather could have been kinder but the weekend finished with a glorious sunny day, enabling everyone to relax and enjoy watching the cone driving and drive off the field under their own steam.

Ian Gilbert's obstacles were worthy of an international as usual and produced the usual headache for drivers as they attempted to choose the best possible route from a wide selection. Jacky Jeffrey's pink flamingo caused some concern, but no problems, in the water obstacle. She had certainly created some unusual and innovative decorations to amuse the spectators.

Hopetoun also ran the "British Championship for Drivers With Disabilities" and both the pairs and singles classes in this division were well supported. The "club class" enjoyed an increase in popularity too, where Owen Pilling successfully launched the competitive career of his young Gelderlander OPG Jedburgh.

Many thanks to all the helpers who formed the work party in preparation for the event - there really were no stones to pick up this year! Thanks also to everyone who helped set up or dismantle the equipment on site and to everyone whose green fingers contributed to the wonderful floral displays around the arenas.

100 Club

The 100 club was successfully launched at the AGM. There are still a few tickets remaining so if you would like to join in please contact Anne or Ian Gilbert.

The first draw has now been made with the lucky winners as follows:

1 st	£50	Carole Smith
2 nd	£30	Campbell Bosanquet
3 rd	£20	Paul Gregory

You have to be in it to win it, so go on, take the plunge and get your name in the draw for the next time.

www.scda.co.uk

The full event results are posted on the web-site as soon as Vic receives them – often before competitors are even home! This means that you can pore over your obstacle times, in comfort, at your leisure. If you are not familiar with the web-site, log on to www.scda.co.uk for the up-to-date news and chat on the discussion page. Don't forget that the web-site operates an advertising service, free of charge for members, where you can post "wanted" or "for sale" items and reach a wide audience quickly.

Event Reports

Lunan

Sun, sand, and sea. Are we in the Bahamas? No, amazingly enough, this was Lunan Bay on Sunday, April 17. Those who attended the lovely Sleet Storm event here 2 years ago will, I trust, stop making those comments about Antarctica and Husky dog teams!

Our dressage judge, Carol Boswell, got through the excellent entry of 24 competitors in good time, and we were never more than a few minutes behind.

Hew's usual testing cones course resulted in only one double clear, achieved by Lyndsey Brown with her horse Otto in the fastest time of the day. The only others to go clear on time were James Lockhart, Ruth Skinner and Sue Hendry.

This year, we followed the same format for the obstacles as in 2004. Competitors drove the four hazards once, then about an hour later had another chance to drive them again. Only the best score of the two was used for scoring. Ten drivers chose not to take this second opportunity, resulting in several eliminations for wrong course.

Hazards 1, 2 and 4 were the scenes of some unconventional decisions, whether on the part of horse or driver history does not relate. Susan Don, Jane Williams, Heather Gow, Helen Hunter, and Alison Birkett all managed to go 'somewhere else' in the tractor tyres and Jane Williams had a further newcomer moment in Wood-henge, while Campbell Bosanquet, James Lockhart and Alan Munroe thought they would drive a more creative route through the sleepers (sleepers not being the obstacle judges, I hasten to add!) The three fastest times through the 4 obstacles all came from the single pony class. Sue Hendry put up some very fast times, and won the Best Obstacles rosette on a score of 24.3.

Thanks must go to our TD and cones judge, Ian Thornton-Kemsley, to our dressage judge, Carol Boswell, and to all the other helpers and obstacle stewards, without whom this event definitely would not have taken place.

Karen Blair-Imrie

Eglinton

The season of Scottish Points events got under way in earnest a week earlier than usual to avoid clashing with a caravan convention in Eglinton Country Park. A relatively short section A was kind to those who may not have achieved peak fitness and a record level of entries set off to enjoy Ian Gilbert's course. The obstacles were spread throughout Section E and drove well with some fast times posted. Competitors, grooms and friends enjoyed the Gilberts' hospitality in the Raquet Hall on Saturday evening for a meal and ceilidh which was as popular as ever. Altogether an excellent start to the season.

Dalmeny

Ian Bertram struggled to improve the dressage arena for competitors at Dalmeny this year. Instead of the familiar undulations, you needed a leap of faith to enter the new arena with a small pony turnout as you were unable to see the judge's car until you had crested the hill. A new format was tried for the cones. Competitors drove the first part of the course in the usual way and this counted for your final score. If you were clear up to this point you continued the course with time added for a ball down and the fastest round won the cones trophy. The marathon route and obstacles were as enjoyable as usual, affording splendid views of both the road and rail bridges spanning the River Forth on section E, and views over the Firth of Forth as you drove the first 5 obstacles.

Racks

Sadly Racks were unable to run as a Scottish Points event in 2005.

Seacliff

In the middle of the season a fun event at Seacliff allowed competitors the chance to return to a previous National venue. Parking was in a walled garden and the sun shone continuously for the whole weekend giving a relaxed atmosphere at this fun event without the pressure of serious competition. Saturday saw the dressage test being judged by Tommy Fawcett on a fantastically flat arena and the afternoon comprised of the driveout through woods, tracks and along the edge of the beach. An innovative idea was to have a prize, won by Jacky Jeffrey, for the competitor who could most accurately estimate the overall distance of the course. Horse classes had the opportunity to attempt the dreaded test 8 for practice in the evening. Carol and Stephen hosted a fantastic barbecue with plenty to eat and a drink.

Sunday saw the cones course create some friendly rivalry and this was followed by two obstacles to be driven using the indoor formula. This was great fun as everyone got a chance to watch the other competitors' efforts. The two obstacles were then re-lettered and driven again throwing up even faster times. It was a fantastic weekend and hopefully this will remain as a fun event as it certainly lived up to all expectations.

Falkland

It is lovely to arrive at Falkland knowing that all you have to do is put the handbrake on and let down the legs on the caravan – oh the joys of a completely flat field! A beautifully smooth dressage arena produced a number of very good tests and the cones was run using the "run-off" format where the last section is against the clock. The marathon route wends its way through the woods to afford fabulous views from the hillside which is definitely worth the climb (and the hill seems slightly shorter each year). The obstacles were a delight to drive as usual and all remain intact for next year (I only brushed against the post this year John – honestly!) Pat and John White are brave enough to invite everyone to their home for a "cheese and wine" party on the Saturday evening, an event which everyone enjoys.

West Newton

Totally spoilt by now, the next event was at the home of Audrey Barron near Arbroath. Again the facilities are excellent with some permanent obstacles using a wide variety of materials and terrain with some sited in the woods. The cones course included a box but competitors generally seemed able to cope with this. Again the weather was kind and everyone enjoyed an excellent meal and ceilidh in the indoor school which Audrey floors for the evening. For the dedicated folk that could stay for an extra couple of days there was a clinic with Boyd Exell which everyone found very beneficial.

Barskimming

We are once again indebted to Miss Jean and Miss Heather Galbraith for their warm welcome to Barskimming. Competitors were fewer than previous years, primarily because so many had gone to support the World Championships at Catton, but we all enjoyed two glorious days in the sun.

The marathon was somewhat different from previous years as the start and finish were both adjacent to the stable field. Miss Jean had again extended the network of tracks through the wood and we can now complete the marathon without using public roads. We also used a track along the river edge for the first time, which includes a man made tunnel through the cliffs. This tunnel caused some concern for a few drivers as they worried about how the horses might react to the gloomy surroundings. The option was given that the tunnel could be by-passed but a penalty would be awarded. However, on the day, none of the horses venturing down the tunnel route even gave it a second glance. Miss Heather's new water obstacle, proved quite challenging for some of the novice competitors.

A vote of thanks is due to Wilson Weir for the successful events he has organised at Barskimming over the past few years. He has decided, as he now lives outwith the area, that it is time to hand the reins over to a new team leader and Colin Smith has agreed to head the Barskimming Team in 2006.

In all a very enjoyable weekend was had by all.

Anne Gilbert

St. Fort

Despite requiring medical attention following a sporting injury at West Newton (nothing to do with horses) Andrew Mylius was up and about again and organised an excellent event at St. Fort. The cone course was testing with Carole Smith achieving the only double clear of the competition. Helen Hunter was ecstatic, and felt her weekend was complete, when she negotiated the cones course and left all the balls intact for the first time ever.

Using a variety of tracks and terrain, the course is all off road and interesting to negotiate, with the twists and turns keeping drivers alert all the way. Making use of the obstacles, which were previously used in the National competition, Andrew provided a number of challenges including the famous St. Fort water, where Andrew Smith won the prize for fastest through the water with Basil. Owen Pilling surprised a few when finishing 4th in a strong horse class with his young horse OPG Jedburgh, who is showing fantastic promise after only a few events.

It was an emotional event for Phillipa Gammell, who was unable to compete with her team due to a pony going lame, as St. Fort was the first event she brought her team to when they first came out in 1989. This is a very special venue and everyone is looking forward to returning next year.

Catton

What can I say! Being selected for the FEI World Combined Pony Championships, held at Catton Hall near Birmingham this year, was a truly fabulous experience. Sparky and I competed as individuals and finished 14th of 36 single ponies from 15 different countries. I had gone with trepidation praying we would not be last.

Having arrived on the Monday, Sparky settled happily into his accommodation and looked as though he had lived there all his life. He honestly did not put a foot wrong the whole time we were there. I am fortunate to have so many friends who generously lent so much equipment for the occasion. The carriage was Carole Smith's and she also contributed the pad and tugs to the harness. Audrey Barron kindly supplied the rest of the harness with a few minor items from Jean Wren and myself. It was quite an undertaking getting it all organised in time. Andrew Smith came and lived on site too and was regularly seen polishing carriages and lending a hand.

Andrew May had even travelled all the way down to lend a hand with the dressage warm-up. The dressage was an experience in itself. We struggled with the flies which are a constant source of irritation for him but he did a respectable test. I was amazed as Sparky calmly entered the arena, trotted past the tents which housed the judges, past the grandstands and straight down the centre line. I felt as though it was over in about 15 seconds – certainly the most stressful test I have ever driven!

Knowing we had a "day off" on the Friday, I had taken plenty of books in order to sit in the sun and relax. Relax!! No chance! There were visits from the team vet, physiotherapist (for the ponies), meetings at "base camp" and obstacles to walk. Vic had arrived late on the Thursday night as the BBC would only give him the Friday and Saturday off work. We walked the obstacles three times which included the team course walk with trainers Boyd Exell and Robert Buck.

The heat was phenomenal and I was very glad that Sparky was clipped. Marathon day was the only morning which was slightly overcast and this change in the weather could not have been better timed. At the halt it was a weird experience having ten people descend on you and take over the pony. Boyd arrived with last minute instructions and details of how the course was driving – it was slightly disconcerting to hear how many grooms had already been dislodged and how many turnouts had tipped. When we arrived at obstacle one the cheering was amazing. I could not believe how many people had travelled down to this event from Scotland. As we exited, I am sure we were quicker than usual as Sparky responded to the crowd. There was no chance to hear what Andrew Cowdery had to say. The biggest worry was the bridge into the water but Sparky did not hesitate – I could have jumped out and hugged him there and then. He was such a star the whole way round and finishing 11th overall on the marathon was way in excess of my wildest hopes.

Cone walking was an experience too. No-one was allowed to walk the course until 7.30 on the Sunday morning. Consequently, 96 competitors were waiting en masse for the course to be opened. Our Chef d'Equipe, Jill Holah, suggested that I stay and watch the first two competitors through the cones before getting Sparky ready. In principle this was a good idea. In practice, since they both cantered the whole course, I wished I had just gone before they started. Boyd's advice was to go the whole way in an extended trot and canter if at all possible. Carole was more nervous on the dickie seat than I was but again Sparky responded to the crowd and steered beautifully. Sadly we had no studs as two had sheared off on the marathon as the ground was so hard. Two cones down with 0.91 time penalties was not bad for us and we finished in 14th place overall.

Will I go for selection in 2007? Not at this moment in time, but who knows how I'll feel next year. The huge amount of Scottish support definitely contributed to my enjoyment of the event. It was also nice to meet Diana Brownlie at the initial vetting, hear the familiar tones of Andrew Cowdery commentating and meet Graham Munroe at the final vetting. He was the official FEI vet but many of you might remember him at my long distance drives at Aberfoyle many years ago.

The whole experience is one that I will treasure for a long time. Due to the geographical location of the selection events, there were times when I felt that enough was enough. In the end the effort was certainly worth it and we have the memories and photos to look back on in years to come.

Mary Kusin

SCP Events Scoring

Don't forget that a slight change has been introduced to the scoring system for the Scottish Points events. The number of scores that count towards your annual points total will now be **3 less than total number of events**. This means that a total of 6 events will count, assuming the remaining events run to schedule.

Trophies for 2005

The first trophy to be awarded this year is the "Mr. Blobby Trophy", in memory of Jack and Maureen Clyne's much loved pony, which is awarded to the highest placed Scottish National Novice at Hopetoun. In 2005, this was Jacky Jeffrey who won the Novice Driver Pony class after a nail biting cone competition.

ANDREW MAY LHHI

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SCDA information

How to benefit the SCDA

The SCDA still benefits from a substantial rebate from the BHDTA if any new BHDTA members join on a special form through our club. Please contact Mary Kusin for a form if you intend joining the BHDTA for the first time, or if you know of anyone who may be going to join.

Publicity

Any material or photographs you would like to see in print should be sent to the publicity officer, Wilson Weir, South Woodend North, Annanbank, Johnstonebridge, DG11 2RT. Telephone: 07818 618118 or e-mail publicity@scda.co.uk

Newsletters

Material and adverts for the newsletter should be sent to: Mary Kusin, East Overhill Farm, Stewarton, Ayrshire, KA3 5JT. Tel. 0845 226 9498, e-mail newsletter@scda.co.uk

Adverts

Private adverts in the newsletter cost £5 and business adverts cost £10. Please make cheques payable to the Scottish Carriage Driving Association and send them, with details of your advert to: Mary Kusin, East Overhill Farm, Stewarton, Ayrshire, KA3 5JT.

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