

# British Carriagedriving

## OFFICIAL NEWS

### Council Meeting

The date for the next meeting of the British Carriagedriving Council is Thursday 26 January.

At the most recent meeting held on 24 November, there were several points of note:

- The minimum age for Young Drivers has been reduced from 10 to 8 years.
- Barry Hilditch and Ian Gilbert will remain for one year as Chair of the F&GP and Competitions Committees respectively. This will facilitate the handover of their knowledge and experience to new Council members.
- Evolution classes will now have four obstacles, the option of dressage and cones in a 100m arena and permission to wear protective boots in all three phases.
- Declaration forms will now ask for an ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact for drivers and grooms to assist the event organiser. Please ensure this is completed.
- The membership review will be implemented for 2018. It is planned to issue the changes to the membership in the summer to help identify any unforeseen anomalies.
- Memberships for 2017, paid with either a debit or credit card through the PayPal system, are subject to a small surcharge as BC was losing over £1,000/year in fees. It is hoped that as many members as possible will pay using BACS for which there is no additional cost.
- BC recommends that members take out their own insurance policies for risks such as loss of earnings if they feel this is necessary. Adding this to memberships would be prohibitively expensive.
- The International Team Selection Form (published on the web-site) and Team Members' Agreement (available on request from the BC Office) have been revised.

## GENERAL

### FEI Driver of the Year

Anna Grayston is the first British carriage driver to win an FEI Driver of the Year title. Although the accolade of FEI pony Pair Driver of the Year was won in 2015, Anna only recently received her award from the FEI. She panicked momentarily when it arrived and

wondered how she could have inadvertently ordered such a heavy item on-line from Switzerland. On opening the parcel, she was puzzled by the block of wood but puzzlement turned to delight when she turned it over!

### Carriage Driving Subscription Offer

Special offer for BC members – 25% off your Carriage Driving subscription

Carriage Driving is the only monthly magazine dedicated entirely to the sport and recreation with the harness horse – trusted, respected and loved throughout the whole of the international driving community.

With in-depth features, insightful articles and stunning photography from the world of driving, Carriage Driving is your perfect companion, whatever your driving interests. Order by January 1 to receive a free 2017 driving calendar with your first issue. You'll also receive a *Driving Show Guide* with your April edition.

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Julia Crockford, BC's New Event and Publicity Officer

### Event and Publicity Officer

The Council of BC is delighted to announce the appointment of Julia Crockford to the role of Event and Publicity Officer. Her contract details are still to be finalised with the new Treasurer, once appointed, but she is already working on the Yearbook entry for the 2017 National Championships.

Julia will be well known to many of our members and has organised indoor and outdoor driving events for the White Horse Harness Club where she has been Chairman since 1999. She organises stewards for all her local events as well as Sandringham and the National Championships where she also decorates the obstacles. She runs the popular BC Regional event at Redenham Park. Julia has had a varied career and currently works as a PA to the landowner and tenants on a large private estate where she is employed on a part time basis (mornings) but on call 24/7.

Julia has trained her own horse for driving and competed at Novice level.

Although no longer an active National competitor, she clearly continues to maintain strong links with the sport. She still has two driving horses as well as three black Labradors which she bred and trained to pick up pheasants at two local shoots. In addition to her interest in animals, Julia enjoys travelling and cake making and decoration.

The BC Council look forward to working with Julia who will be out looking for information to publicise the sport as well as taking over the reins of the flagship event at Cirencester.

FEI driver of the year Anna Grayston with her trophy





## There are aliens in Wales?

As volunteers/stewards it is so pleasing to receive words of gratitude for our services, whether spouted by one of the committee in one of those “on field public acknowledgements” that make you blush, the formal salute at the end of the dressage test (not forgetting the second judge) or the informal yet more personal “thank you” and/or “POLITE hand gestures” from competitors on leaving our sections on the course.

While the majority of us are seasoned volunteers in the sport, quick to fill in where there is a gap or need for our services and always willing to train the new recruits, many of whom have been press-ganged by the delegated chief steward for the day and soon to be groomed into seasoned campaigners. Although you may not hear us, inside we are willing you on to do your best and delight in your performances, we also feel your disappointment when things go wrong and are quick to offer words of encouragement.

Many of us are in place early in the morning, before the first competitor has reached the start line and our services are required right up until the last competitor has gone through the finish at the end of the day, during which time we welcome the opportunity to sprint to the on-site facilities

for a comfort break and, should time allow, grab a modicum of sustenance – activities that also help refuel the brain, and bring back the circulation after long periods of being rooted to the spot with little or no shelter from the elements, all performed at a turn of speed that would make us a serious challenge to Usain Bolt over 100 metres.

Decked out in our hi-viz tabards on the field or sat in the judges’ cars, we are instantly recognisable as the support team for an even greater army of hard working committee members and volunteers who work tirelessly for many days before and after the event, building and breaking down the course and performing admin duties etc.

So, next time you encounter one or more of us “aliens” whose only weapons may be one of, or combination of, a pencil and clipboard, stopwatch, and whistle: please take a moment and look for the obvious signs of our discomfort: crossed legs, a fixed smile from the forces of nature and the elements at an altitude of 1,300ft above sea level, our ambidextrous use of “weapons” and well-meaning words of encouragement. Please allow yourself to smile at us, not only will it help alleviate your tension, doing so will also benefit your overall performance. We will not take offence but rather interpret your intentions as well-meaning, sympathetic and

*Above and below: Are these aliens? No, just volunteer stewards who we all owe a debt of gratitude to. Their services allow us to continue to enjoy our sport*

appreciative of our plight and effort to help make your time with us memorable.

Thank you for being such good sports, entertaining us with your skilfully executed and sometimes daring manoeuvres, with or without the banter, and we look forward to doing it all over again next month.

*Written by Aurwen Mills on behalf of “the aliens” at Eppynt Carriage Club*



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