

# We're virtually competing



It isn't the season that was planned but from Council meetings and safety clinics to quizzes and unconventional competitions, the carriagedriving community is still managing to work together.

## OFFICIAL NEWS

### Council Meeting

For the foreseeable future, Council will be conducting business through on-line meetings and email conversations. Council always welcomes, and takes into account, feedback received from members, so if there are any matters or issues which you would like Council to consider, please send an email to the British Carriagedriving office.

### Let's get logged in

If you have time on your hands at home (an unusual circumstance for people with horses), why not use the "members login" on the website to check you can remember your username and password, have a look at the services the new myClubhouse system offers, browse what's on offer in the shop and check that your personal details are up to date. You can also register your horses in the horse module (which needs to be done to enter events). If you have any problems logging in, please contact the BC office and get help. If you phone while you have your computer, phone or tablet available to access, you can be talked through the process. Please don't be scared of the technology. Many people have had some difficulty to begin with but end up saying, "I see what you mean. That's actually really easy".

### Class Communication

Class representatives (or Chefs d'Equipe) often need to canvas views from drivers on issues affecting their respective classes. They can only do this if they have contact details for you. The list of class representatives is published on the website so please get in touch with them if you wish to be included in any consultations. This also applies if you wish to raise a query with Council as your class representative can do this for you. If you drive single, remember that the Single class representative covers Novice to Advanced classes.

### Clinic Reports

Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the club clinics in the north for Judges and Course Designers had to be cancelled. The two Safety Clinics managed to go ahead using on-line meeting technology.

#### North and South Safety Clinics

At the beginning of this year, British Carriagedriving was updating the Official Safety Officers list and agreed it would be a good idea to hold Training Clinics to act as a refresher for existing officials and in an endeavour to encourage new people to become involved. It was decided to hold two such clinics, one in the north of the country and the other in the south.

John Woollacott was to officiate for the South Clinic to be held on Saturday 21st March and David West to officiate for the North Clinic scheduled for Sunday 29th March. As we are all aware due to the Covid 19 outbreak these both had to be cancelled. After some discussion Peter Bridson, Chairman of the BC Safety Group, thought it would be a good idea if the clinics could proceed on the same dates but via teleconferencing.

In order to try to make the planned clinics run as smoothly as possible all three of those involved agreed to be available for the teleconferences scheduled and also held a number of practice sessions in advance. Luckily, Peter Bridson also had the required software available to make it happen plus the experience of having conducted such meetings previously.

The various paper handouts (some 18 in total) which had been prepared for the face to face clinics were dispatched by John Woollacott via email to all the delegates for the two clinics.

The South Clinic commenced via the computers and after an initial talk through covering the documents received by delegates there was a lively discussion on a wide range of topics including, "how to compile a risk assessment" and "what needed to be taken into account when considering the most appropriate medical cover". Discussion also

covered the need for the Safety Officer to be on site early to liaise with the paramedics and to share/complete the appropriate paperwork.

The North Clinic was conducted in the same way and again, after the initial discussion concerning the paperwork provided to the delegates in advance there was another lively discussion covering, "electric fenced enclosures for horses/ponies", "fire extinguishers", "lorry parking separation distances", "rolling risk assessment preparation and completion", and finally the requirement for "Accident Reports to be completed and submitted electronically".

In total there were 7 who took part in the South Clinic and 16 for the North Clinic. At the conclusion of each of the teleconference clinics all those who took part said they thought it had worked well. This view was shared by Peter Bridson, Dave West and John Woollacott and that it was the only practical way to have dealt with the situation.

## EVENTS

### Virtual Events and Riding and Harness Stuff Quiz League

Until such time as we can resume events, instead of the Riding and Harness Stuff Driver of the Year Points League, there will be a Quiz League which will take place on the dates of existing events. Each will have a few questions specific to that event. The first round at Ashfields took place on Saturday 2nd May and 53 people challenged themselves to a variety



of general knowledge and equestrian related questions. The first winner of the £50 Riding and Harness Stuff voucher was Hamish Reid.

A cheerful meet-up then took place via Zoom "at Ashfields" with around 50 devices logged in but the numbers participating were around 70 as many had multiple family members taking part. Amongst other topics, members were invited to suggest which rule, if they could choose one, they would like to have changed. Surprisingly, there were very few suggestions!

The next virtual event will be Hopetoun. Look out for the email with the links. If you're joining the Zoom Meet-up and can wear something tartan, that's even better.

Some aspects of the event at Ashfields did manage to take place. There was a video on Facebook of the final competitor achieving a clear round in the cones, seen her negotiating the tricky oxer element of the course.

## GENERAL

### A Birthday Party With a Difference

Due the lockdown preventing any social interaction, Janet Pilling invited friends from as far afield as Australia to join her in a virtual cocktail party to celebrate her birthday in March. Many of the video windows managed to squeeze in two heads so it was a noisy gathering. This was great fun and a welcome diversion from the doom and gloom pervading the country.

### Anglo-Netherlands Society

Back in March 2019 British Carriagedriving was approached by the Anglo-Netherlands Society, via the BEF, asking if equestrian

disciplines would like to submit an article for a forthcoming ANS Centenary book. This request was passed on to Wendy Nix who readily took up the challenge, liaising with Paul Dimond CMG who is Honorary Secretary of the society.

With help from Jill Holah, Cindy Timmer (Hoefnet) and James Broome the draft article was pulled together. There are so many links between the British and Dutch in carriage driving that, with a limited word count, Wendy decided to concentrate on horse and pony fours plus para-drivers when discussing international competitions. She covered the period from the first Horse Fours World Championships held in 1972, where Britain's John Miller took individual silver and Douglas Nicholson individual bronze (with only two to a team, the pair also brought home Team Gold), to modern day driving. During the research, it was interesting to see how some British competitors were driving Dutch horses while some Dutch competitors were using our native ponies. The subsequent draft article was sent to BC Chairman Chris Smith for approval before being submitted, along with a selection of photographs, to Paul.

With contributions being received by the editing team across a whole range of topics there was some delay in publishing the book, originally aimed at December 2019. The whole thing finally came to fruition in February this year and the book was due to be launched at a grand reception hosted by the ANS at Kensington Palace on 17 March. Around 250 people, limited to members of ANS and book contributors, were invited to the reception, to be attended by guests of honour TRH the Duke of Gloucester, the Duchess of Gloucester

and Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands. Wendy was delighted to find that she was also invited to be among a small group to be presented to one of the guests of honour, in her case HRH the Duke of Gloucester, the Queen's cousin.

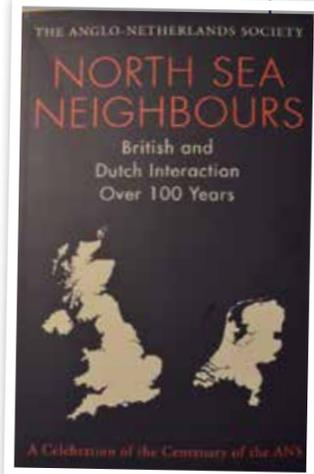
However... thanks to the Coronavirus outbreak the reception was cancelled just a few days before it was due to take place, so Wendy had to put her little black number back in the wardrobe and cancel her hair appointment; she is now hoping for a rearranged date.

A copy of the book was posted to Wendy and she was pleased to see that under the sport section, carriage driving has been given over double the coverage compared to the combined article on eventing, show jumping and dressage.

Sadly, the book is not available to the general public although a further copy will be held by British Carriagedriving for members to read.

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Graham Heath, Ashfields 2019



Sally Bullar, Ashfields 2019