



## Blandings Farm report – 5-6 April

A working party of Janice Parker, Sid King, Zoe Morgan, Mike Watts and Fiona Powell set up much of the course on Friday while David Taylor had marked the obstacle gates and drawn maps and Nigel Collins had done his risk assessment earlier in the week.

Saturday's trainers Wilf Bowman-Ripley and Mike Daniell had a full day yet enjoyed every minute, appreciating the enthusiasm of their trainees as much as we did their efforts.

Eunice and Wally Binder and ten BDS turnouts drove round the marathon route and tested the cones course on Saturday morning – with the cones a foot wider – and had a lovely time. I could see some of their members eyeing the obstacles...

Meanwhile Technical Delegate Jean Lane and Safety Officer Nigel Collins did their "Forth Bridge" act, going round and round the course checking and re-checking, marking and making a few changes so the event would run to plan on Sunday. David Taylor flagged the obstacles in the morning and conducted a well attended "obstacle walk" on number 1 in the afternoon while Hilary Ray and I did some steward training on obstacles 2 and 3 with about 20 people, followed by tea and cake.

Sunday began for me with a couple of phone calls asking if we were cancelling "because of the snow". Fortunately the local weather gods smiled and a few flurries of snow never came to much and those of us in industrial-strength granny underpinnings scarcely felt more than a coolish tingle in our toes. We started promptly at 9:30 with Peter and Julia Pethybridge running the two dressage arenas, judged by Wilf Bowman-Ripley and Mike Daniell (open) and Heather Davenport and Rachel Gallyon (novice and pre-novice). Wilf was also President of the Jury for the event.

Norman Hudson, Karen and Katrina ran a long and twisty – but not too difficult – cones course designed by Mike Watts. Twenty-one pairs of cones is l-o-n-g for those of us used to indoor driving. Two double-clear rounds (without knocking anything down and within the time set for their class) went to junior driver Sacha Clarke and Diana Irwin, the reigning National Indoor Intermediate Horse Champion.

The 7k marathon started at 12:45 with a loop round the gallop to obstacle 1, next to the pond, on to obstacles

2 and 3, the bridge and the wood, round the gallop again and into the same obstacles, now 4, 5 and 6. Lots of people liked the repeated obstacles as they only had three to learn. It was a challenge to drive them better the second time. The stewards, some of whom came to the training on Saturday afternoon, were able to practise or to get back into their timing and writing skills and we all reminded each other how to do everything!

Anne Yemm was especially pleased to finish the marathon safely as she is partially sighted. Husband Martin navigated patiently from the backstep.

Caroline De Rienzo, David Crosby and James Dalton completed their first

event safely and Cathy Gilbert, Janet and Brian Nicholls daughter, was another newcomer who was delighted with her young horse's performance. Lyn Price returns to horse driving trials after a long break and was also very pleased with the training and her Morgan horse, below.

It's never easy to get the scheduling of an event perfect – we set people off at seven minute intervals on the marathon – and you can't know what will happen nor who goes faster than another, so the stewards and competitors had some hold-up practice, but I don't think anyone was held for more than two minutes at a time.



*Janice Parker brought Gelderlander Thomas to his first event, Sid King backstepping.*



*Lyn Price competing for the first time at Blandings with her Morgan horse and Chris, also a first-time groom.*

We held a prize-giving at 5:30pm and most people stayed. Stephanie Richards, our newest open pony driver, took a well-deserved third place, and it was good to see new faces and “old” drivers with new horses at this pleasantly low-key and friendly warm-up event.

Most of the ponies and horses were fit although some looked a bit tired at the end. The marathon was only half-an-hour and should be well within the capability of anyone contemplating Ashfields, 19-20 April, where the marathon will be up to 15k with up to seven obstacles.

Thank you to all who made the event such a success, to Louise Garget and family for being our efficient, welcoming hosts and to our fantastically effective, good-humoured band of volunteers. *FP*

**Results:** 29 competitors Best dressage: novice horse Sue Hargreaves 39.5 Best cones: open horse Diana Irwin/pre-novice pony Sacha Clarke (junior) Best marathon: open pony, Fiona Powell Best overall: novice horse Sue Hargreaves 115.6  
**Open Pony:** 1 Janet Seaman 117.24, 2 Fiona Powell 126.67, 3 Stephanie Richards 155.69, 4 Jenifer Barker-Simson 164.04, 5 Roger Driver 188.61, 6 Sue Squirrell 211.86 **Open Horse:** 1 Diana Irwin 122.51, 2 Jill Wood 123.47, 3 Janice Parker 148.69, 4 Goldie Francis 169.61 **Pony Pairs:** 1 Tabitha King 128.54, 2 Caronne Daft 173.00 **Horse Pair:** 1 Brian Burton h/c 169.39 (no dressage) **Prenovice Pony:** 1 Sacha Clarke 137.07, 2 Denise Taylor 179.28, 3 Clare Iveagh 226.07, 4 Veronica Zwetsloot 231.80, 5 Lorna Gordon 242.02 **Prenovice Horse:** 1 Zoe Napier 166.60, 2 Cathy Gilbert 167.89, 3 James Dalton 407.02, 4 David Crosby 422.41 Novice Pony: 1 Wendy Wyatt 123.44, 2 Deirdre Luff 132.32, 3 Brendan Conneirley 135.17, 4 Tim Bradford 141.71, 5 Anne Yemm 371.48 **Novice Horse:** 1 Sue Hargreaves 115.60, 2 Lyn Price 174.21, 3 Paul Mills 221.56 *Apologies to Paul Mills - after results were finalised, extra hold up time acknowledged reducing section E penalties to 0, obs 4 time corrected to 81.9*

### Forthcoming Events 2008

19-20 April	Ashfields two-day event & Spring Ball
16-18 May	Ashfields Crinkly Camp
31 May-1 June	Euston two-day event
20-21 June	Blandings Farm Training Camp
22 June	Blandings Farm Inside-out event
28-29 June	Sandringham House two-day event
2-3 August	Blandings Farm two-day event with novice qualifier classes
12-14 August	Ashfields Junior Camp
29-31 August	Ashfields Crinkly Camp
20-21 September	Ashfields two-day event & club championships
12 October	Blandings Farm one-day fun event
tbc November	AGM, Ashfields Clubhouse

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### Stewards wanted for Ashfields 19-20 April

Hilary and Jo were delighted that so many people turned out to steward at Blandings. Although it was cold, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and felt it was a useful practice for the big event at Ashfields, 19-20 April – 85 entries including eight horse teams.

We always welcome an extra pair of hands and eyes. Can you help? A morning or an afternoon on Saturday or Sunday at Ashfields would help to share the stewarding work around, and you can enjoy close-up spectating and learn a lot – as well as have some fun - being one of the team.

Please call Hilary Ray 01206 251339 and leave your contact number if you'd like to join the volunteers.

### Notes on hold-ups – what to do

It is inevitable that, because there can only be one turnout in an obstacle at a time, you will get held up on the marathon one day. It's important to know what to do!

**Driver:** seeing the steward holding the “hold-up” sign, should slow down and stop next to the steward in order to hear their instructions. The steward will have made a decision about how long to hold you up – if you are repeatedly held up behind the same turnout, you might ask the steward to give you a longer hold-up in order to let the other driver get further ahead.

A hold-up is normally given in whole or half minutes (whole minutes being preferred by the scorer). The steward tells you how long the hold-up will be. You can circle your horse in order to prevent him stiffening up.

Usually at around 15-20 seconds before the end of your hold-up, the steward says you'll be counted down, so get to the place where you were stopped. You must start off from a standstill. The steward counts you down, usually from ten or five seconds. You set off again.

**Groom:** the well-prepared groom has a third stopwatch specifically for hold-ups. Start this stopwatch as soon as you come to a halt – you may miss a few seconds but you should be accurate enough. While your turnout is circling, whether you have a stopwatch or not, note how long the steward has said the hold-up will be and write this on your “green card”, the card on which the times for each section are written, and make sure you keep a record of it elsewhere, too, in case of queries.

Don't try to remember it: we need a record! (When you get to the end of the marathon and hand in the card to the section finish steward, tell him or her your hold-up times and see that they are noted them separately from your actual finish time on the card.) It is not the steward's job to say whether you were inside the section time or not.



*Hilary's mum on hold-up duty.*

Of course you will check your hold-up times have been allowed for correctly in your marathon score. If you believe you were on time and still have section time penalties, please query the result as soon as possible in the secretary's tent: please don't go to the scorer yourself.

**Steward:** you have selected a place to stand for the hold-up, safely out of the way of any drivers and where there is space for a turnout to walk round. (Wally Binder's tip is to line yourself up with two objects, such as fenceposts or trees to make sure you stand in the same place at the start and the end of the hold-up.)

You keep an eye out for the next turnout coming along. If you think that the competitor in the obstacle is not going to be safely clear of the finish before the next competitor reaches it, walk out to your hold-up position with your stopwatch and with the hold-up "bat" held up and clearly visible. The competitor must stop. You start your stopwatch, tell them they are being held up and give them a time in whole minutes. You may say you'll give them 30 seconds warning and a countdown. At the correct time you call them over to you and then give a countdown before they start again. Make sure that the hold-up time is recorded for that competitor on the obstacle score sheet.

## Four East Anglian Indoor National Champions!

Amanda Wells, Diana Irwin, Grace Smith and Mark Bell took home the champions' sashes from the Carriage-house Insurance National Indoor Horse Driving Trials Finals, 29-30 March, at The College, Keysoe, near Bedford. There were 120 entries, 13 classes, from about 1300 competitors this season all over the UK. Hurrah!

Robin Hyde-Chambers with pony tandem Riot and Leo, father Riki backstepping, gave Amanda a run for her money, despite Amanda's 40-penalty lead going into the obstacle phase with Jazz and Sunset, regular groom Pippa Botting on the backstep.

Janice Parker, driving David Taylor's tandem leader Alfie (single), Sid King grooming, pulled up from fifth to third in the intermediate horse class, of which Diana was the ultimate winner, leading from the front with Dutch warmblood Dutch Courage, daughter Katie grooming on Saturday and Mike Watts on Sunday. Tony Irwin watched Diana's victory and was delighted, too.

Grace Smith, 7, was the first of our National Champions, driving Pickle in the extra young junior class, father Chris on the dual-control reins. Mark Bell with "B" won the senior junior class again, sister Katie's Cobb dropping to third place after the obstacles: Charlotte Snow was eighth, Harriet Bradford 11th, Pippa Botting 14th, all having had a tough yet proving season jockeying for ribbons at Wix. We've got some good juniors coming through the ranks indoors.

Cathy Gilbert from Norfolk area was fourth, Wendy Wyatt sixth, Emily Green tenth, Caron Knox 12th, Amy Last 19th in a powerful field of 20 novice pony drivers.



*Diana Irwin, Intermediate Horse Champion*



*Will Amanda ever let us forget this? Pippa Botting grooming.*



*Grace Smith, Chris and Pickle, who didn't put a hoof wrong.*



*Janet and Nigel Sycamore and the mini-marvels.*

Open pony: Nina Snow and Fiona Powell were 11th and ninth. Paul Mills was sixth in open horse and in pony pairs with Janet Sycamore's pair tenth, Anna Mann was 12th: 18 in a strong class. Veteran class saw Brian Nicholls fifth and Bruce Finlayson in eighth place (this was against Di Hayes: how many of us can say that? Barbara Nadin of Equifor won it.)

Janet Sycamore's Small Pony Awards were very popular and there is lobbying afoot (*a-hoof?*) to have their own class at the indoor finals next year.

Wendy's Great Idea of having orange hats to wear was a highly visible success as we could spot each other in the stable area and dotted about in the audience. It was a terrific boost having such huge support behind you. *FP*



### Time-saving tips

We want you to get the maximum enjoyment out of all our events and there are some things you can do to help us make this happen and to save everyone a few minutes.

We recognise, of course, that horses, lorries, even grooms aren't 100% dependable and we'll always do our best to accommodate you when the unexpected happens, however we'd really appreciate it if, the rest of the time, you help us by:

- entering the event before the closing date
- sending full payment with your entry
- making sure your entry is correctly and fully completed (giving your phone number on the form saves us having to hunt around for it)
- telling us on the form what, if anything, you are sharing with another competitor
- telling us quickly if you have to withdraw or when you have a problem – if you'll be late, say – or want to change your entry. We might be able to re-arrange things (within reason! We can't perform miracles.)
- telling us quickly when you think there's been a mistake so that we can correct it, if possible, or address the issue to try to resolve it: please be kind to us - we are only human and mind-reading is not among our multiplicity of skills.

*Most of you already do these things - thank you...*

### Dressage diagrams

All the dressage tests we plan to use this season are in the club yearbook. (If you have not received yours, please call Fiona 01473 735732.)

You can find the diagrams for all the dressage tests under the reference section on the BHDTA website, [www.horsedrivingtrials.co.uk](http://www.horsedrivingtrials.co.uk). If you have difficulty with this or are not electronically enabled and haven't a friend who'll oblige, please send a sae with a note asking for the diagrams for a test and we'll send them to you: EACDg, Ivy Cottage, Boot Street, Great Bealings, Woodbridge, IP13 6PB

*If you have to leave before the prize-giving, please leave a sae with the event secretary for any rosettes you might have won.*



### Qualification/competence forms...

As Clare, Lady Iveagh, pointed out in her recent letter in Carriage Driving magazine, in some countries competitors must have a licence to drive at events. In the UK, we don't insist on this however, we, your committee, seem to have generated more heat than light with our new driver

qualification cards. (The BHDTA calls them "competence forms": but not having a form or card does *not* mean you are incompetent and nor do we, the committee think of you as any less capable...)

Arguably, this system should have been introduced last year when the BHDTA changed the class structure (see the BHDTA website for more details). However, then there were no novice and pre-novice drivers wishing to drive multiples so the problem did not arise. This year several wish to do this and, because we want to enable them to progress and treat everyone fairly – with regard for the safety and welfare of everyone, all the club members, the club itself, the volunteers and everyone at an event – we thought this system was the fairest and most reasonable way to do it.

In the past you had to work your way through the novice class to earn your open driver status. Case study: I drove my first event in September 1999 and achieved open (club) driver status at the end of 2002. I drove novice qualifiers in 2003 (ending as reserve national champion novice pony driver) and drove three open pony events at nationals in 2004 before I took my pony pair to national events. We learned a lot!

It's taken other drivers I know from eight to eighteen years to gain open driver status "the old way": we, your committee, don't think that asking someone who's still in the novice or pre-novice classes to compete satisfactorily in three events under observation is unreasonable, although we must stress that this is a *minimum* requirement. By advancing yourself and your horses beyond your experience you are making things much harder, as you'll be driving more difficult dressage tests, competing against stronger competition and there will be higher expectations of you. Once you are in open classes, you can't go back to novice.

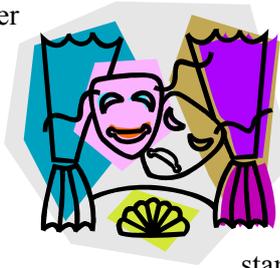
We agreed this system with the best interests of everyone in mind. Other clubs do it on a case-by-case basis: that is their choice. Insurance companies like records, however, and we've been advised that our system is a good one...

You can print your own driver qualification card from our club's website or you can ask for one before an event. It is then your responsibility to look after it, to tell us when you want it signed and to keep it safe and to keep the results of the events for which it's been signed.

Because we need to brief officials whom to watch, we cannot sign it in retrospect: we must know who's being observed before the event starts. We will sign the BHDTA National Novice

Qualifier forms, too, of course. Why not get these signed at the same time and enter our own novice qualifier class at Blandings, 2-3 August? Pit yourself against the top club drivers?

We value your thoughts on this and other issues. If you have any comments or queries, please ask your committee, preferably before an event or at an event when we are not just about to compete. We'll always find time for a chat. Remember that the course builder, technical delegate and safety officer are on the course at an event to do their job and they are not directly involved with the administration of the club.



*Why not get yourself qualified to compete in our National Novice Qualifier class at Blandings, 2-3 August? You might qualify for the national championships at Windsor. Give it a go!*

### Free lunch!

The lunch for volunteers on Sunday, 23 March, was well attended despite the Arctic weather and icy roads. Those of us who managed to get there enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch – thank you to Zoe and Wilf for their hospitality – and many of the stewards are thoroughly enthused for a season's support.

### Rent-a-groom? Buddies wanted?

Groom and driver matching service! If you would like to go on the back of someone's turnout at an event or if you are a driver without a groom, please contact Fiona as soon as you can. Please note that we cannot guarantee this service!

We are also looking for experienced drivers to "buddy" or help newcomers competing at events: please call or email Fiona if you'd like to know more or join in.

*Photos in this newsletter thanks to Mike Watts and Fiona Powell. See lots more on Mike's website, [www.mikewatts.com](http://www.mikewatts.com), where photos can be downloaded free.*

### Crinkly Camp – 16-18 May

The first 2008 "training camp for grown-ups" is going to be a busy one although there are still a few spaces remaining. Please send in your form and cheque (£250 for you and a groom, payable to EACDG Ltd) if you'd like to attend: trainers are Anna Grayston, Minta Winn, LHHI, and Wilf Bowman-Ripley. Three days of intensive driving can do more than several weeks of weekend-only practice and it's very good value for such high calibre instruction.

Enter on the website or download a form and send a cheque - and of course the form is in the yearbook.

*If you have not received the yearbook, please call Fiona – apologies – there have been production problems.*



### Avoid a drama

Please help us at events by checking your scores for each phase as soon as they are posted. You are the best person to spot any errors or inconsistencies: please tell/ask us immediately, don't wait!

When scores are posted on the noticeboard they are signed and time-stamped. You have 30 minutes from the time of posting in which to check your scores and tell us if you have a query. It's a good idea to understand the scoring. Get a BHDTA rulebook and even read it...

As soon as you get your dressage score, add up the marks and check the total is correct. The number of penalties you get from that score depends on the test, as some tests have more movements than others. Check that any error-of-course or other penalties have been correctly awarded and have not been duplicated.

When you drive the cones course you should be told the time you have. This varies from class to class: see the table below, and also on the generosity of the person with the measuring wheel. The course should be measured for each different class (in theory) because each type and size of turnout drives it in a different way.

Class	Speed allowed (metres/minute)	
	Ponies	Horses
Pre-novice	210	210
Novice	220	220
Intermediate + teams + horse tandem	230	230
Open single + pony tandem	240	240
Advanced single + pair	250	250

After you've driven cones, confirm your time and the number of balls down with the stewards. Resume breathing...

As soon as the scores are posted, check your own score and, if you have any query, please ask the day secretary, usually Hilary, who's in the secretary's tent, with your specific question. She will ask the scorer and your query will be addressed as quickly as possible.

Thirty minutes after being posted, if there are no queries, the scores are deemed as correct and are not usually changed, especially after the end of the event.

So please avoid any unnecessary dramas and, if you are out on the course when the scores are posted, get a friend to phone you so you can come back to check them as soon as you can.

### New stuff for the club

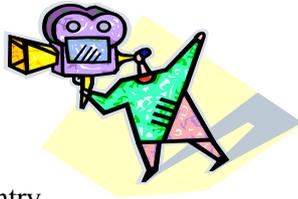
The club's new and longer range radios worked a treat at Blandings and we have new cones ordered.

Admire our new trailer, fitted out and awning-ed by Tony Clarke. We also have replaced broken stopwatches, clocks and have some new whistles.



## Be a movie star?

Jackie Herd, a keen open pony driver, will be at Ashfields in April with a film crew from Fairview Studios and the aim of making a film for Horse and Country television.



If you want more than a glimpse of stardom, **Northernplan.com** in the form of Nic and Libby Castle are also coming to Ashfields and they will video your performance in all three phases and send you a dvd to watch over and over again at your leisure. They also have headcams for hire. These give you a surreal over-the-horse's-ears view of your progress round the marathon course and obstacles. It's well worth doing and can be quite hilarious. See their website, [www.northernplan.com](http://www.northernplan.com) and view some of their work or phone 01477 544427 to book a headcam or video.

*The real Clare Iveagh is pictured below. I mistook another competitor for Lady Iveagh in the yearbook.  
Apologies to all concerned...*



## Your committee 2008

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*If you would like to send a letter, photo, advert or article for publication in the newsletter, please get in touch – Fiona Powell, 01473 735732, [fiona@eacdgc.co.uk](mailto:fiona@eacdgc.co.uk)*



*Slick Dick Lane at the wishing wells, Ashfields Spring event 2007.*