



MIDLANDS CARRIAGEDRIVING

PRESS RELEASE

Lesley, Jay and Lynn qualify for National Championships

Following an unscheduled break in its competition calendar this year, Midlands Carriagedriving made a welcome return to Onley Grounds Farm, Warwickshire, where it hosted National Novice Qualifiers alongside several club classes and a One Day Event over the weekend of 5 – 6 August.

Lesley Tilbury and Jay Snow both qualified for the British Carriagedriving National Novice Pony Championship to be held at Cirencester Park in September. It was nip and tuck between the two with Lesley scoring 48.4 penalties in dressage and Jay scoring 48.8. In the cones, Lesley had two time penalties having driven clear while Jay had two cones down inside the time. Out on the marathon and here Jay headed Lesley on obstacle times by a mere 0.25 penalties, not enough to take overall lead. Holly Dormer, who finished in third overall and who has already qualified for Cirencester, was only 1.50 penalties behind Lesley on obstacles.

Lynn Riley finished second overall to Chris Patrick in the Novice Horse Qualifier but with Chris already qualified she takes her place alongside him and husband Mark in September. Once more 0.25 penalties was the difference over obstacles between Lynn and Chris but Chris' better dressage and cones won him the class. As Lynn and Mark normally groom and backstep for each other they will be looking for new recruits to help them out at the Championships.

In the club classes Sandra Jackson rose from fourth place after dressage to first in the Pre-Novice with Caroline Saunders finishing second despite picking up time penalties in both Sections A and B of the marathon. Mark Riley, this time driving his lovely Appaloosa gelding, led throughout to head the Novice Horse. The three others in the class all had 20 additional penalties for a corrected course in Obstacle 3 but this made no difference to the leader with Philip Wright finishing second.

Novice Pony saw Helen Burrows maintain her lead despite Joanne Gadsby beating her in the marathon to take second overall. There was no stopping Mick Ward and Douglas in the Intermediate as the pair led all three phases with Linda Wiggin – competing in her first 2DE for more years than she can remember – taking second with her Fell pony. The Open Single class was claimed by Chris Ainscough who led after dressage with Sue Corlett coming in behind him. Megan Wheeldon won the marathon and obstacle phase but had too much to make up to be a danger although she climbed from fifth after dressage to complete in third place.

Pony Pairs was a strong class won by Emma Burton on one of her rare appearances. Fourth in dressage, she won the cones to take the lead and stayed there with fast obstacle times. **Wendy Wadsworth** was second with **John Cornell** in third. Claudia Bunn competed in Horse Pairs, a change from her usual tandem outfit, to finish second behind Clare **Marley** who led the dressage and marathon. Both Claudia and Clare had identical cones penalties, eight time and one cone down.

Most people would think about retiring from the sport once they were in their mid-seventies but not Geoff Kirby who competed in the one-day event with his new ponies, sourced from Ireland and of indeterminate age. He led the dressage on a good score of 44.85 but gave best to Jon White in cones and obstacles to take runner-up spot with Jon first.

Despite a lack of competition acreage, Onley is a superb venue offering a polo playing arena-like level grass surface for dressage and cones. Sections A and B of the marathon run over the same course but some nifty time scheduling ensured no clashing of competitors and the six obstacles, most of which are now permanent, were marked to flow well with various route options. The meal in the clubhouse on Saturday night was another bonus and well attended by competitors, grooms and supporters.

ENDS

Images:

Lesley Tilbury and Emma Burton – please credit David Rhees

Linda Wiggin and Jay Snow – please credit Sara Jane Hayes

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