

Chairman – Dave West

President – George Spencer



**Minutes of Competitors' Conference held 16th November 2014
at The Kegworth Hotel**

Chairman's Report: Dave West reported:

Generally a good season, we enjoyed mixed weather, entries were overall up on last season and as you have learnt from Mike [Hawley], finances are much tighter this year but we have a much better web-site and there are three top class obstacles in the ground at Onley.

Before we look back at the 2014 season a look forward to 2015; we have given you a copy of next year's programme. We are going back to the original format at Anslow with Training on the Saturday and a one day event on the Sunday. We are back at Belvoir which we hope will continue to develop into a first class venue. There will be a Novice Qualifier at this event in 2015. At Onley we will again be hosting the BYD championships and a Novice Qualifier and hope to put in a fourth permanent obstacle.

So now a bit of a review of the season if you have any comments about any event please chip in:-

We started at Catton with reasonable weather. We welcomed a good entry which provided good competition especially in the open single classes. Thanks as always to the Neilsons for their welcome and support. Our luck with the weather changed; we had to cancel Anslow due to a combination of wet ground and a low entry.

Then came Belvoir; on the Tuesday before the event Geoff [Goodwin] rang, very worried about the ground conditions, so a drive over to the castle in the pouring rain and a site meeting. With a new place for the lorry park, the rain stopping and a reasonably favourable forecast we decided to continue and run the event. By Thursday morning when you could not see the castle from the lorry park and you needed your boots on before you stepped off the caravan step, I was beginning to question my sanity. But then the sun came out and we had a wonderful event. Most were towed on and off the field and we were in wellies for the whole event but all the feed-back was positive; so well done Geoff and the Belvoir team.

We moved on to Onley; Dave [Smith] designed and organised the building of three permanent obstacles, thanks to everyone who helped especially Geoff [Goodwin] for sorting the timber, Dave [Wheeldon] for moving it, and everyone who came and lifted, shifted, fixed and painted. As it was the third time we had used the same route for both sections and we used the new white arrows to sign Section A; our competitors found it easier to work out where they had to go. The site's facilities are good and getting better. Phil Baker and the polo club team are still a long way from the end of their building programme. This is a venue with great potential and again next year will host a Novice Qualifier and the BYD championships; a special thank you to Dave, Ruth [Auton] and the Team for an excellent event.

Widmerpool ran at the end of August in sunshine. Ben and Jane [Smith] again provided a super event. A good set of obstacles and, thanks to some extensive earth moving and a pump, we had a water obstacle with water this year. Jane came up with a novel route for Section B which confused some but worked very well. Here the landowners make no charge but ask for a donation to their charity [of choice] so our thanks to the Brooks family. A cheque has been sent to the East Midlands Air Ambulance.

We finished at Catton this year mostly dry. The competition was good and my course appeared to provide a good test. Kate and Dave provided Yorkshire Puddings and sausages which were followed by Dorothy's puddings. What a super way to end the season.

Now I must congratulate our members on successes in National and International competition; Mick [Ward] and Sue [Johnson] for being selected to represent Britain at the Para World Championships at Sandringham, Megan [Wheeldon] for representing the UK at the European Youth Championships in Poland, Cath [Brockie] third in the Novice Pony [National Championships] and so close to winning, Dave [Smith] runner-up in Intermediate Pony even though he drove his first double clear in cones that I can remember, Tracey

[Fletcher] winner of the Advanced Pony, Karen [Bassett] winner of the Pony Fours and of course Jane [Smith] who won the Advanced Horse class at her first outing at that level. Well done to all of them.

This is my opportunity to say thank-you and recognise people who helped to keep the club moving forward. Ian Pilkington who managed our web-site for us until we launched the new site;

To Keith Harding who has continued to produce the marathon schedules for the events.

To Wendy [Nix] for all her work to publicise the club which she will tell you about in a moment and for taking the Minutes at all our meeting - now if you have an interest in PR please come forward as Wendy has announced her intention to stand down at next year's AGM.

To Mike [Hawley] our treasurer

To Emma [Burton] for the super newsletters, and for the management of the club's new web-site

To Alan [Potter] and his helpers for dealing with the scoring

To all who have stewarded at our events

To the rest of the Board and many others for your help and support through the year

All the club's activities need a lot of people to make them happen and more willing bodies are always need, especially to take on some of the important roles such as TD, course design and scoring. BC is organising courses for TDs in March 2015; thank you Geoff Kirby and Pam Brown for volunteering to attend, CDs and club judges to follow in 2016. I'm very willing to teach any willing volunteers how to score so if you interested in getting more involved or learning a new role please talk to me. Remember, without people to fill these roles it becomes very difficult to make the events happen.

Finally I must thank Lesley who, as well as what you see at events and here today, does a tremendous amount in the background to ensure things run smoothly, including this year the job of returning officer for the election.

Publicity Report: Wendy Nix reported as follows

Press releases:

Since the last AGM, 16 press releases and editorials have been issued, including variations for the club's website and the British Carriagedriving Club News section on its own website.

These kicked off with an editorial for a 'Who to Join' feature in Equestrian Life, accompanied by an advert. This was followed with the announcement in March of the club's new logo and website and the news that MC was to host the British Young Drivers National Championships at Onley.

As the season progressed, reports were written after each event and, in the build up to our inaugural competition at Belvoir Estate, the decision was taken to place advertorials (adverts accompanied by text and images) in local publications 'Going to Places', 'What's On' and 'Notts in Focus' to try and encourage members of the public to come and watch, not only at Belvoir but also at later events. Sadly, given the financial investment, this did not pay off and the Board has given much thought as to how we can get the message across more effectively. We are looking at producing flyers and posters that can be distributed to local equestrian outlets such as feed merchants and tack shops as well as making use of facebook.

The competition reports were distributed to Carriage Driving, Inharness, All Horse and Equestrian Life as well as the aforementioned websites. Carriage Driving and Inharness have both included Midlands' news items on their facebook pages. In addition, Horse & Hound ran a report on the BYD Championships at Onley.

Website

The new website is a vastly improved publicity tool for the club and it is great that we can now upload information, results and reports so much faster than previously so a big thank you to Emma Burton for her work on this.

2016

Some of you may be aware that I intend to step down at the 2015 AGM so the club is looking for a volunteer to take on the role of Publicity Officer. While I have had the advantage of being professionally involved with journalism and publicity it is not beyond the capabilities of anyone who can write at least three coherent paragraphs to have a go; I am more than happy to let someone 'shadow' me over the next season in preparation of taking the job on in 2016. I will also supply all relevant media contact details and make introductions when the time comes.

It is a job that can be completed in the evenings, in the comfort of your own home; all it requires is pre-planning of the diary to tie in the writing up of competition reports with magazine copy dates, a laptop or

similar, an email address and a basic knowledge of image resolutions (which can be taught). There is nearly always someone with a camera but it is helpful if you can take photographs at the events.

Events 2015

As explained within the Chairman's Report

Winter Events/Training: Angela Flanagan (AF) reported as follows

Some training events were held last winter; a plea for an indoor arena at reasonable cost; training would be arranged for end of February, beginning of March 2015; arrange to have dressage days at Catton Park where judges would be available for comment and feedback; a cones course would be set up; several UKCC Level 3 and Level 2 coaches are based in MC's catchment area; trainees to come with own plan
In meantime, if anyone needed help AF willing to visit or arrange for a nearby UKCC coach to assist
Possibly have Fun Days in the New Year

Questions:

Allow competitors to use the Dressage Arena on Friday afternoons (Granville Styler put by Dave West in his absence)

This would be subject to ground conditions; technically against the rules but would be permitted as MC is a club and not everyone has facilities at home; a suggestion for next season that would be considered

Anne Chambers – Difference between 80 and 100 arena

Potential for ground marking

Put up a practice arena (subject to space)

Jane Smith – Allocate time slots

Use cones to mark practice arena border rather than a full blown arena

Geoff Kirby – Limit number of people using arena

Need policing

Ben Smith – Make clear use of arena at discretion of TD

Paul Hart – Space for a practice arena near lorry park at Anslow

Dave West concluded it was worth a try and would offer the facility at the first Catton Park event

Rule changes 2015 (Dave West)

At National events, whips and grooms will wear back protectors; the rule was recommended for clubs in 2015 and will be compulsory in 2016; must be British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA)-Approved back protector

British Carriagedriving rules for 2015 – increase of time penalties in obstacles (Section B) from two per second to 2.25 per second; this can alter balance of outcome for competitors

Jane Smith raised question of competitors wearing armbands with medical details during marathon phase (as in British Eventing); this was discussed but no decision taken

British Carriagedriving considering dressage tests for next season although Dave West felt any change would be in Advanced tests

Competing in a lower class

Last year the conference discussed allowing competitors to drop a class for a year to bring on a young/novice horse; limited to one season only; members agreed to continue

Open Discussion:

Dave West pointed out that there would now be two National events at Catton Park (May and July); Lesley West organising stewards for both, would appreciate volunteers

Jack Brooks brought up the question that as he had driven a pair (once) at the end of last season, was he now restricted to Open Single classes?

Jane Smith felt that as Widmerpool has exceedingly bumpy ground she would like to have the facility for grooms to stand instead of sit during dressage and cones; Dave West suggested the proposal on an event by event basis; use as a dispensation only after consideration

Sue Johnson stated that the Forest of Dean Driving Club would be holding a Backsteppers Training Day at the David Broome Event Centre (near Chepstow) on 10th January 2015

Ruth Auton asked if club was going to publish who would be in which class for the coming season; Dave West replied that recently the club had left competitors to [move up a class] voluntarily; it was not a situation of 'time served in a class', rather more on level of success

Presentation of Trophies and Rosettes

Club President George Spencer presented the 2014 Trophies and League Rosettes

It was noted that Anne Chambers had first won the Tandem Horn over 20 years ago

The Chairman's Trophy was presented to Geoff Goodwin; Geoff had joined the club only three years ago and was voted onto the Board a year later; he has put a lot of effort into organising the collection of wood from Windsor Park (used by the club for obstacle building) and also into organising the successful inaugural event at Belvoir Castle