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Summer Newsletter, August 2016

For a change we have had some 'summerlike' weather!

After what seemed like rain at every event during 2015, and a years' worth of rain on the Sunday of Onley, we have had some great days of competition in the sunshine. Ok it's not been perfect, but a definite improvement I think! This season has flown by, an event less than normal due to time restraints with the Single Horse Championships and the proposed Countryman Fairs that unfortunately had to be cancelled after the calendars were produced. But we have had four cracking weekends already, with just our club Championships coming up at the end of August, being held as always at the superb venue of Catton Hall in Staffordshire.

Our season starter was also at Catton, back in April when the showers are always expected and generally appear! We had over 60 entries for the weekend, with some competitors using the event as a pre season tune up ready for the National season starting. This led to tight competition and lots of friendly rivalry in all classes, singles and multiple alike.

Starting at the top, the tandems & team class produced a win for Judy Hilditch with her tandem of horses after a fluent marathon, and the pairs class saw Dave Wheeldon's ponies just pip Fred Pendlebury to the post - no mean feat!

Moving on to the singles competitions, Chris Ainsclough & Tracey Fletcher won the open horse & pony classes respectively. Perhaps it was fortunate that Sue Mart was only doing day 1 as her dressage score of 25.12 would have been very hard to overtake! The size of the Intermediate entries also caused that class to be split, Megan Wheeldon contesting her first class after moving up from the novice section but finding no trouble and taking the red rosette. Emily Villier won the horse section, with Mick Ward hot on her tail just a few points behind. Katy Alvis took the novice single pony class and Mark Riley the corresponding horse class, Mark was contesting both novice classes with his two turnouts, he could be taking home plenty of rosettes this season. Phillip Wright won all three phases to win the Pre Novice class, and Isobel Wesbroom-Warr topped the class of 9 starters for the ODE event.

And on to Tutbury, a two day booking but with Saturday taken up in training and a one day event competition on Sunday. The training was as always oversubscribed from entries opening, Peter Bennett stood out in all weathers offering advice and opinion with a smile no matter of the rain and wind. Our thanks go to him for giving up what must be valuable 'free' time. Sunday produced a disappointing turn out, a combination of surrounding competitions, personal time restraints and last minute problems meant only 9 turnouts contested the marathon, disappointing for the hardworking organisers and also for the stewards who had agreed to help the club out. But all those competitors without exception were polite, gave the watchers some exciting obstacles & produced a really good day for everyone involved. Wins were obtained by Nicola Corbin, Megan Wheeldon, Anne Chambers, Debbie Daniel & Phillip Wright, with the top Dressage score going to Deborah Daniels and her smart pony. Tracey Robson took the Queen Of The Cones award here, with the only round that managed to leave all the balls of the cones, some achievement! Tutbury was also the event we moved across to electronic scoring thanks to Steve Trebble and his team of inputters..... As we have said several times since, please bear with us whilst we learn the job and iron out the small creases!

We returned to Belvoir for the third year in 2016, set in the grounds of the castle and with stunning outdrives and views. We are very lucky to have this venue, and it has grown each year. We had 50+ turnouts present this time around, testament to the quality of event produced. The infamous MC bridge was installed in an obstacle and although it looked imposing it caused little trouble, although Karen Scott Barrett may argue that point after her pair said a definite 'no!' to crossing it! The one day event on the Sunday was won by Ruth White who's cones score definitely sealed the victory, and Sue Botley and her pair of horses beat the opposition into oblivion by surviving where her classmates could not, a win is a win! Alan Clarke won two of the three phases and took the pony pairs class red rosette, and a tightly contested tandem section ended with a win for Anne Chambers from Fiona Powell's delightful grey ponies. The novice qualifiers went to Nicola Corby & Mark Riley, interestingly with Mark being consistent in each phase but without a win whereas Nicola won all three. It just shows, never write a competitor off regardless of a phase result, nothing is certain in this game! Sue Mart won the open singles combined class from David Wagstaff-Myers who chased her right to the end and finished up only 4 points behind, whilst the intermediate class was taken by Megan Wheeldon & novice by Cerys Gilbert. The now traditional Pimms reception on Friday evening was popular even though a little rain was falling, although the marquee was dry and that was where the alcohol resided!

Last weekend saw our visit to Onley Grounds near Rugby, with their beautifully flat dressage arenas and welcoming balconies for dining. The farm shop is also very well stocked and I hear it is chock full of tasty goodies....book yourself in for a visit if you missed it this year! MC hosted the Young Drivers Championship again in 2016, these drivers are certainly the ones to watch for speed and skill through cones and obstacles, well done to them all, the future certainly looks bright in carriage driving. Mark Riley continued his winning ways by taking the novice class, he was also in 4th place with his other turnout, but he had a busy weekend! Meanwhile Nicola Fallaize & Mary Jane Campbell took their respective qualifiers and their tickets to Cirencester, their scores throughout the phases were very close, both deserving winners. Granville Styler won all three disciplines to win the Intermediate, And Gemma Owens took a full and combined horse/pony Open singles class. The multiples were many, with four teams competing, unusual for a club event! Angie Smith pipped Sonny Hillier to the post, perhaps short legs do have an advantage after all.... Fiona Powell coming out victorious with her tandem of ponies although Laura Priestley won the dressage section nicely, no mean feat at her first tandem competition! Only three from the entries of seven pairs completed all three phases over the weekend, but it ended up a close fight between Dave Wheeldon's smart black ponies & Emma Burton's new Welsh A bays. The cones seemed to be the decider with the Welsh leaving more balls atop their cones, so Emma took the laurels. Tabitha King kept her head nicely on Sunday to take the award for the one day event competition, although Linda Wiggin pushed her hard the whole way. The sun kept shining all weekend, and the event ran pretty much like clockwork although a stray, fully tacked up horse was spotted galloping around an obstacle field at one point so all hands were on deck to locate the rider & ensure they were both ok! And apparently the barges on the canal were duck spotting and offering sandwiches to all listening, ah the wonders of radiowaves and the ease you can pick up another conversation.....

So we are looking forward to welcoming you all to Catton Hall on the bank holiday weekend for our club Championships. Dave West has assured us we will have an enjoyable marathon on offer and at least 7 obstacles, 8 if possible. So that means lots of exercise for us all, now we are fit after a full season of events! Entries close on the 17th of August, online entries are now available or we do still accept paper entries using good old snail mail.....

Horse pairs carriage & harness for sale.

Steve Jarman 3 phase carriage and black with white metal fittings black pairs harness (fit 15.3-16.3)
Hartland make, no bridles.
£2300.
Located in Leicestershire
Contact Ruth Auton

Swingletree Photography

Cathy & Martyn are omnipresent at the MC events, standing out in all weathers to capture our heroic turns and effortless extensions. Please pop over to their website to view photos after the event, and show your support by purchasing those you like, use it or lose it is the common phrase I think!

www.swingletree.photography