



MIDLANDS CARRIAGEDRIVING

PRESS RELEASE

Belvoir Castle event on the up

The second visit to Belvoir Castle (13-14 June) by Midlands Carriagedriving was again enjoyed by competitors with increased entries and National Novice Qualifier (NNQ) status. The popular one-day event (ODE) had record entries (10) and the weekend was boosted by the services of professional commentator Flip Vero – the voice of National competitions!

Four came forward to contest the NNQ which was won by Emily Viller, a young driver who has already made her name on the junior international scene. Having qualified at Ashfields earlier this year, Emily's ticket for the Championships passed to another pony driver, Andrea Scott who finished third overall in the combined class. Second-placed Anja Walker had the only horse in the class and she too goes forward to Cirencester Park in September.

The ODE had a veritable mix of people and horses from those competing for the first time to more experienced drivers trying out new combinations, proving its value in bringing newcomers to the sport at a level they can enjoy as well as being a useful learning curve for very novice animals – or as a refresher for both. The class was won by Kevin Smith and his very quick coloured mare, notching up incredibly fast obstacle times to overcome a heavy dressage score and receive the new Bennington Carriages Trophy specially commissioned for this class. Mick Ward and new horse Douglas were second while Jill Williams was third. Others to note in this class were retired vicar Fred Connell who, with his wife Clare, also a retired vicar, has come through from the Driving Back to Sport project and Sioux Gardner who has taken the step from Indoor Carriagedriving to outdoor events and drives a two-wheeler.

The Novice Single Horse class threw up a hot contest between eventual winner Nicola Corby driving her father Geoff Kirby's mare and Lucy Barclay who is making

great strides with Judy Hilditch's Bishop Blue. Nicola won the dressage by just 0.02 of a penalty from Lucy and increased this tiny lead by three after cones. The marathon was equally tight with a score of 74.50 for Nicola and 74.75 for Lucy who finished second.

Megan Wheeldon had a far more comfortable time of it in the Pony equivalent, winning by a margin of 29.30 from Cathy Gilbert who is no slouch either. Megan also won the body protector generously donated by Bennington Carriages for the fastest time of the day through the Bennington Carriages-sponsored obstacle. Three members of Amanda Nisbet's Sports Driving Unlimited had travelled down from Scotland to compete in this class, Charlotte Thompson, Graham Smith and Lewis Shaw; Lewis is totally blind and reliant on Amanda's verbal instructions to find his way. It was a pleasure to witness such joy on their faces driving ponies that are worth far more than their weight in gold.

Julie Goodwin, co-organiser of the event, headed the Intermediate Horse class courtesy of dressage leader Amanda Hawley having to correct her course in Obstacle 2 while Julie Tomasik and her new pony took the very competitive Intermediate Pony ahead of Stephen Trebble by just 1.65 penalties. Cath Brockie competed HC in this class with her speed merchant Davy and was one of only three to post a double clear in the cones, the other two being Megan and Cathy. The cones phase was designed by Ian Potter, aged 14, who is proving to have a rare talent for ingenious courses; this one included slaloms at 1 and 11 plus a bridge between 9 and 10. The bridge did not count for driving penalties, only clocking up time if animals paused to have a look, and Cath quickly steered Davy round it when she felt him hesitate in their approach.

The combined Open Singles class was won by Sue Mart and her smart dun pony, Fudge, from dressage leader Sara Clough and her horse. Jeff Banister won the marathon phase to take third.

In the combined Pairs class it was the highly vocal Flying Scots, Louise Kaiholm and backstepper Stephie White, who headed the line-up from David Wheeldon and Angela Flanagan while the Tandems & Teams class went to Gary Power with his pony team, ahead of tandem driver Peter Young. A corrected course in Obstacle 5 cost Jeff Ormerod dear, dropping him from second to fourth place; Anne Chambers was third.

Full results can be found on: www.midlandscarriagedriving.co.uk

ENDS

Attached images: as captioned – credit Kingswood Associates

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