



MIDLANDS CARRIAGEDRIVING

PRESS RELEASE

So good to be back!

It felt so good to be back at Onley Grounds near Rugby on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 September for the Midlands Carriagedriving's (MC) one and only event for 2020. After all the earlier cancellations thanks to You Know What, a hearty line-up guaranteed an excellent weekend of sport, whether it be for 'training' purposes, to shake off the dust or all out competition.

Hats off to the MC Board and club members who, along with very willing help from members of other clubs, put the event together in double quick time; they were rewarded with a good entry from far and wide plus dry, if a little chilly, weather conditions.

It was MC members Emma Young and Angie Smith who put up the most competitive performance as they clashed once again in Pony Fours. Angie took the lead in dressage on 53.28 with Emma some 15.15 penalties in arrears, the latter making up some ground with a better cones score. Emma's ponies showed that they have lost none of their zest since becoming 2019 National Champions and sped round to overtake Angie, who has a less experienced team, with quicker obstacle times to finish a hair's breadth .10 of a penalty ahead.

In the Horse equivalent, Karen Bassett is also enjoying a team that is coming together nicely to lead every phase and take the class comfortably. Mark Carruthers would have given her a run for her money in the obstacles had he not taken a wrong course in the second obstacle, incurring elimination. In the Open Single Horse class, young driver Harvey Cleghram Brown showed a clean pair of heels to his rivals Vicky Irwin and dressage leader Paul Hart in the obstacles to overtake both and win with plenty in hand while Vicky just squeaked clear of Paul (.38 of a penalty) to take second with Paul in third.

Megan Wheeldon had an uncharacteristic two balls down in the cones but that didn't stop her from coming out on top in Open Pony. Second was Nicola Corby driving Bobby for the last time in competition as he has now been sold on, with Katy Alvis in third. Overnight leader Amelia Waddicor kept her nose in front to take the Novice Pony class. Sophie Parker, who won the marathon phase by 1.0 penalty ahead of Amelia was second overall with Jane Hendy in third. Jon White was also the overnight leader in Novice Horse and he finished alone after his sole rival, Rosemary Armstrong, had a 'senior moment' in one of the obstacles resulting in elimination.

The two Intermediate classes were headed by Fiona Powell (Pony) and Chris Patrick (Horse) while Chris Manger came through with his Friesians to take the Horse Pairs class with Fred Pendlebury – out with a new pairing – in second. A true horseman in every way, Fred, along with his wife Beryl, justifiably received Carriage Driving Magazine's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019 and it would appear that at 77 years of age, he has no plans for retirement! Laura Priestley led throughout to win the Pony Pairs with a comfortable margin from MC Board member Dave Wheeldon with Wendy Wadsworth in third. Taking time out from his horse team, Barry Capstick was sole competitor in the Horse Tandem class with a classy performance – despite a slight hic-cup at the water hazard – of 54.33 in dressage, a double clear in cones and a very creditable marathon.

The Short Format class was well supported and won by Phoebe Matthews with Kim Scott second. Cath Brockie was overnight leader but her eye-catching young Welsh pony took exception to crossing the water a second time so she sensibly retired. However, she made amends driving her pair of 'white mice' (smaller grey ponies) into third place.

ENDS

Images: as captioned

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