



MIDLANDS CARRIAGEDRIVING

Belvoir event a huge success

Despite three days of non-stop rain in the week leading up to the inaugural Midlands Carriagedriving event at Belvoir Castle (31 May & 1 June), the competition went ahead as planned – and proved to be a great success. Organisers Geoff and Julie Goodwin worked their socks off to ensure a well-run, friendly, event which kicked off with an impressive Pimms reception on the Friday evening.

The constant rain left the ground soft on top which held up well in the mown dressage arenas. The cones course, built by 13 year old Ian Potter, proved quite technical and number 16, placed on a loop away from its neighbours, caught a few out, either being omitted or driven backwards. The Duchess of Rutland presented dressage rosettes before everyone sat down for a well-earned meal in the marquee.

With the dramatic backdrop of Belvoir Castle overlooking the whole venue, marathon Section A produced some jaw-dropping views from the top of the hill before working its way back down for six well-built, open and flowing obstacles in Section B. The obstacles, set in a line, were ideal for spectators; due to the ground conditions the organisers had shortened the length, but not the time, of this section and competitors drove tactfully to complete.

The largest class was Novice with 15 entries including three from Amanda Nisbet's yard. Fifteen year old Lewis Shaw, who is blind, stole everyone's hearts as Amanda skilfully guided him around all three phases. Also competing were the Para-Driver National Novice Champion and Reserve, Charlotte Thomson and Graham Smith. Winner of the class was Katie Moran while junior driver Laura Priestley took the Pre-Novice hotly pursued by another junior, Rhea Auton.

Angela Flanagan's groom, Gary Picken won the Intermediate class from David Smith, also driving one of Angela's ponies. Angela herself, competing in the Pairs class had to give best to Roger Campbell who fairly scooted round driving Emma Burge's ponies. James Binns' immaculate handling of his tandem, resulting in one of only six double clears in the cones and a marathon win, gave him the lead in his class.

Of seven entries in Open Pony just three saw the competition through, the win going to Mike Hodgson ahead of Sue Mart with her new pony, Fudge. In the Open Horse Pam Neill just managed to scrape past Geoff Kirby in the marathon to win with a mere 0.08 penalties in hand.

The one day event was also well supported with Sara Binns making it a family double with Joanne Gadsby in second. Geoff and Julie had secured sponsorship for every obstacle plus an array of prizes which ensured winners went home laden.

ENDS

Issued on behalf of Midlands Carriagedriving by

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