

Winter Newsletter

Ramblings from the Editor

This will be the last mailing by post for those of you who have included your e mail addresses. You will receive everything electronically in the future! So if you have given me your e mail address and would still prefer to receive them from your Postman, please let me know. It will certainly make it easier to inform members if there is a change of judge or other problem! Those of you who attended the AGM will already know that we made a sizeable profit last year. A report is given inside and pictures of Len receiving his Pippa Pawley print will be on our website. I suppose I will have to mention the Credit Crunch at some point so it may as well be now. It is ironic that the first year we have a Silver Medal Show there has to be a massive economic downturn and I believe the whole showing scene will not escape being affected in some way. Less entries is the obvious worry but the committee is desperately hoping that, with less medal shows around generally, we will still attract sufficient numbers to keep the two Bronze and single Silver Medals we have been awarded. I have included the usual list of shows local to our area and your support for the two Charity Shows is always appreciated I know. If you have read the Spring Newsletter from the society, you will know all about the Royal Welsh Show and the Section B gold medal. Could this start a trend? Royal Welsh Show Gold Medals instead of those presently awarded by our own Society. Will it make a difference to those who were proposing to exhibit this year? We will have to see! With Easter falling late this year, our Youngstock Show will be one of the first local events. Hope the judges will make allowances for the winter coats that will almost certainly still be on most ponies, despite the rugs! We ended the year with just under 160 members, some from quite far afield, which is surely proof that we must be getting something right. Constructive criticism and suggestions are always welcome, especially your thoughts on the future of our Summer Event, if we changed our present plans to abandon it from next year. Would you still come if we could only offer you a Bronze Rosette instead of a medal? Or if we left the medal with the Summer Show, would you still compete at our Youngstock Show from 2010 if there was only a Bronze Rosette to be won?

SHOW DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Northern All Welsh - Mrs S Potter - Craven Garth, Allerston, Pickering, Nth. Yorks YO18 7PG

Sunday 22nd April and Sunday 7th June - Both at Wetherby Racecourse

NCPA - Brenda Gray - 01325 315277

Bank Holiday Monday 13th April - Stainsby Grange

Saturday 2nd June - Streatlam Park, Barnard Castle

Foal/Youngstock/Ridden - Saturday 20th October - Stainsby Grange

Scottish & Northern - Mrs J Redpath - Raisenside Farm, Dipton, Stanley, Co. Durham DH9 9AR, 01207 570793

Spring Medal Show - Bank Holiday Monday 25th May - Richmond Equestrian Centre

Foal/Youngstock Show - Sunday 1st November - Swarland Equestrian Centre

NPS Area 4 - Mrs N Thompson - 65 Burnett Cresc. Kelloe, Co. Durham DH6 4PH

Saturday 18th April - Richmond Equestrian Centre

Bank Holiday Monday 31st August - Yorkshire Show Ground, Harrogate

Grass Sickness Show - Mandy Mitchell 01740 655607 or 07745242227

Sunday 24th May

Forresters Charity Show - Sunday 7th June - Unicorn Centre - Mrs Callender, 36 Beaumont Hill, Darlington, DL1 3NG

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - HELD AT SEDGFIELD VILLAGE HALL 28TH FEBRUARY 2009

Around 30 members attended our annual general meeting at the very smart and newly refurbished Sedgfield Village Hall! News that our Society President, Mr Len Bigley, would be present attracted some new members from way up north and we warmly welcome them to our Association.

After the meeting Len presented the Young Achievers with their awards.

YOUNG ACHIEVERS' AWARDS - 2009

Entries for these awards have been steadily declining in recent years and with our ever decreasing committee, we had to ask someone totally unconnected to the Association, but nevertheless very experienced in all things equine, to read the entries and give her opinion. We have always strived to emphasise the fact that this is not a matter of putting those children who have attained the most championships first but to assess each child on how they have achieved their own personal successes. Perhaps with the low number of entries it would be a good time to re-assess the awards as they stand and have something new. Maybe an outstanding achievement award for those under 12

and another for the over 12's. If you would like to give me your suggestions in writing, we will be only too happy to implement them for next year.

We divided the 6 entries into two age groups and the first prize for those aged under 12 years was Chloe Cubello. All three Cubello children had a particularly difficult year as Kathryne had two spells in hospital and was not able to even visit the yard for a large part of the showing season. This left the children to carry out all the work of caring for the ponies after school and every weekend and getting them ready for their shows with just a limited amount of help available from Kathryne's sister. Apart from ridden classes, Chloe had also done well in WHP classes and is part of a Pony Club Team who compete in area Tetrathlons and she had even done well in Show Jumping classes.

Joint 2nd Maizie Walton. I remember first writing about Maizie when she won our Under 6 years award in 2006 and she has certainly come a long way since then with an impressive list of achievements considering she is still only 6 years old. Maizie is another child who likes to be hands on when it comes to caring for her ponies and instinctively seems to understand the relationship that needs to be built up between rider and pony.

Joint 2nd Abbie Walton. Our adjudicator could not separate these two sisters as, not surprisingly, they both seem to have the same amount of enjoyment actually looking after their ponies as taking home rosettes and trophies from the shows. Abbie's most outstanding moment of the season was coming fifth in the regional finals at Bowes with her pre-veteran pony, Shank.

Third place went to Daniel Cubello, who helped his two sisters with their ponies so that they could compete and contributed to their first place in the Amateur Showing Championships Fancy Dress.

In the older section First place went to Stephanie Cubello, whose confidence in her own ability has obviously grown over the year. She even took a first place with her sister's new pony, although I gather does not want to repeat the exercise.

A very close second went to Christopher Stansfield. This was Christopher's first year of in hand competition and he has certainly made his mark as he obviously competes in the main against us grownups. He took his gelding into two of our Millcroft Gelding Championships and came out with top honours on both occasions. He also took several Young Handler Championships during last season and even appeared in Horse & Hound.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2009

One of our members actually put forward the recipient of this award and the committee were more than happy to agree with their choice. Some of you may have read an article that appeared in a recent edition of the Green Journal describing a

mare who had totally rejected her first foal, to the point of actually wanting to do him harm, and was helped by medication to accept her next one and rear him naturally. Last year that same mare went down to Wales to be produced and won both bronze and silver medals and took many championships and supreme championships during the season. Her second foal, Rocky Balboa, also went to Wales in November and took the Section C Championship at the Winter Fair. Rhyd-Ddu-Ria is not the sweetest mare around and is positively disliked by Wendy and Karen but Geoff Hepple kept the faith and was prepared to go to any lengths to overcome any future foal rejection and also give her the chance to compete in the Principality to see if the judges there could appreciate the qualities he saw in her. It gave the committee great pleasure to present the 2008 Outstanding Achievement Award to Geoff Hepple of the Karnarth Stud and their mare Rhyd-Ddu-Ria.

Before delivering his talk, Len Bigley gave members an opportunity to ask questions and Mrs Jane Stewart brought up the subject of the Section B's not being awarded Society Gold Medals at this year's Royal Welsh Show. Len explained that the Showing Committee had recently brought into effect a rule that necessitated all Judges having to attend an annual seminar, in order that they could remain on the Panel. Obviously, only those Judges on the panel can award medals of any colour, which means that Judges who reside overseas cannot award them unless they return to Wales for an annual assessment. As this was the first year this rule had applied, there was some confusion regarding the selection of the Section B Judge, who would almost certainly have been permitted to award the Society's Gold Medal in previous years, as she had fulfilled her obligation to attend seminars in her own country and was a well respected Judge and breeder in America. The RWAS are now going to award gold medals of their own at this year's show to the Section B champions.

Len went on to talk about his early life and how he had become involved in the Welsh breeds and, in particular, the Llanarth Stud. It is hard to imagine when you see the large entries of Section C cobs at our present day RWAS that for several years there were only four stallions of note and hardly any youngstock. Apparently nearly all the Section A stallions were shod and shown in full stallion tack and everyone flocked to the ringside when they were brought into the ring, rather like they do for the Section D stallions today. It is also interesting to hear that 'fashion' in pony/cob types existed even in those far off days and it was Clan Pip, who came into the ring without any tack at all, who bucked the trend. It is now rare to see stallion tack in the ring today, compared to those who are just shown in a bridle.

At the end of his talk, Len was presented with a Pippa Pawley print. As a personal touch, Pippa had kindly added a pencil sketch of one of his very special stallions, Twyford Signal, sadly no longer with us, on the mount. It was a real pleasure to have Len attend our AGM and many members present took advantage of his visit to share some personal memories of ponies and cobs, both past and present.

