**Secretary’s Easter Message**

Hello everybody,

I hope that this finds you fit and well. I know that many of you will be in the throes of lambing and calving - and of course we are beginning to see a number of Clydesdale Foals on the ground, which is great news. Sadly, I have also heard of some foal losses and I send those of you affected by these my condolences.

I was checking back my records to about a year ago and recalled that it was around this time last year that I first issued a blog, which affectionately became ‘Ditherings and Diatribe from the Dining Room,’ for many weeks during that first Lock Down. Little did any of us think 12 months ago that a year on, this thing called Covid 19 would still be with us and that it would still be restricting us in quite the way that it continues to do. Like many of you the present Mrs Roy and I have both had our first vaccinations and I hope that some of you might even have been jagged for a second time. It would seem that getting people vaccinated is going to be the catalyst around which things are going to open up in the weeks ahead.

Of course we are all continuing to miss meeting each other at shows which have been decimated for a second year. Let’s hope that as the vaccination program proceeds, it will be possible to have some shows with public viewing in the autumn and moving towards winter. The date in our diaries for the 2021 Winter Fair is 20 November 2021 and at present I am proceeding on the basis that this will go ahead.

As many of you have been telling me, and I agree, the first quarter of 2021 has been hard. Still, there’s been lots going on in the office especially trying to cope with the change in registration regulations for our European owners and breeders following Brexit, as I reported in our last newsletter. But we are getting there, and I hope that in the next couple of months we will have fresh arrangements in place to accommodate our friends in the EU and in EEA countries.

Can I thank those of you who have renewed your 2021 subscription. The final deadline for collection of 2021 subscriptions is tomorrow and, at present, some 31 folks (a figure which is lower than in recent years) have yet to renew. After tomorrow the subscriptions for those folks will lapse and we will be sorry to see them go.

On the plus side, since the turn of the year we have taken on 24 new members, who will be receiving this update from me for the first time.

Welcome to each and every one of you – it’s great to have you on board, playing your part in helping us to continue our work of sustaining and preserving this wonderful breed of ours.

The 2020 stud book is in the process of being collated and I remain hopeful that this will be available, printer permitting, by towards the end of April or beginning of May. Watch this space and Facebook for more news of that.

Hazel and I are looking forward to a trip to Newark in September to be a part of a Heavy Horse Appreciation Ball being organised by Judith Rak. This ball is being held specifically to raise funds for the Shire Society, the Suffolk Society, the Percheron Horse Society and ourselves. I attach a flyer and an application for tickets if you are interested in attending and I very much look forward to meeting members and friends from England and elsewhere at that event in September. We will be hosting an information and merchandise table in the foyer of this event and it will be good to see you there.

So, time to get the mothballs out of the kilt I think! And oh, what is a tie?

As of 5pm tomorrow night, 31 March 2021, the Society office will be closed for just over a week to allow me to have a few days of leave. The plan is to spend some quality time with Hazel and normal service in the office will resume on Monday 12 April at 9am.

In the meantime, for any of you who are able and lucky enough to have some time off over Easter, enjoy yourselves. And my over-riding wish, as it has been for the whole of the last year, is that all of you should stay safe. Hard though it is, try to be patient for a while longer - and I look forward with great anticipation to the times when we can all meet again, have a good chat (and maybe even some gossip) and share in a glass of something to toast the beginning of a new phase of life for us all.

Yours aye,

Ian