Hello folks,

As many of you will know this coming Friday, 8th May 2020, marks the 75th Anniversary of VE Day (Victory in Europe) which signalled the end of the Second World War in this part of the world. This week, I have found myself re-reading Mary Bromilow’s rewrite of her wonderful book – The Clydesdale: Workhorse of the World’ – where in Chapter 5 Mary describes the massive role played by horses in particular and heavy horses specifically in the war efforts of the 20th Century.

That chapter of Mary’s book makes sobering reading – reflecting initially on the huge loss of horses in the torrid conditions of the trenches in World War One followed by an interesting contrast with the huge role our Breed played on the home front, particularly working on the land helping to produce food during World War Two.

Humanity owes a great debt to heavy horses from these difficult years, after which because of the introduction of mechanisation – the Fergie tractor et al – Clydesdales went somewhat out of fashion with numbers in fast decline right up until the 1970’s where the Breed came close to the risk of being lost altogether.

Today, thanks to all of you – especially the owners and the breeders – but never forgetting all you folks who put your hands in your pockets to attend local and national shows (when these are on!), those who purchase our merchandise, those of you who buy raffle tickets – and all you many folks who simply show an interest – our Breed is in much better shape than was the case 40 years ago.

Last year in 2019 as a Society we registered just over 200 new foals and during this time of lock down, one thing which certainly stirs my heart is the sight, at what is traditionally our peak foaling season, of new foals on the ground. Facebook is a great mechanism for you folks posting your pictures and videos – like the picture shared with me this week by Desi Hill of her mare Snowy and her foal, Star and which I attach to this blog. Thank you, Desi for allowing me to share!

So, this week, new, newness and new things seem to be the theme of my blog – starting with all the new foals as we have just described.

This week we also welcomed 4 new full members to our Society: -

Paul Graham from Cumbria

Craig Hanna from Ballymoney

Liam Anderson – Porter from Co Westmeath in the republic of Ireland

Alan Willey – from Chopwell, Newcastle Upon Tyne

Gentlemen – you are all very welcome indeed – it’s great to see new folks continuing to join the society in these times. Of course, Craig Hanna is no newbie ‘so to speak’ – graduating as he has done from the junior ranks. Isn’t it just great that in Craig and also in Kiera Gowan (both stars of our young handler classes in recent years), that we have in our senior ranks two very enthusiastic ‘younger’ Clydesdale folk – this is really good news for the future of our breed.

And talking about new things - this time last week I noticed that we had 4,449 people following our Facebook page - and this morning that number has grown to 4,491. In January when I wrote the January 2020 newsletter the number of FB followers was 4,000. Now, I’m not going to be like government ministers and set targets, but wouldn’t it be great to see the number of FB followers rise to 5,000 this year. This interest is beyond our wildest imagining when, very cautiously, we dipped our toes into Social Media just over 3 years ago. So, thank you, all of you, for your loyal support. Keep spreading the word and the Clydesdale news!

And then we have new ideas. Last weekend there was the Rare Breeds Greatest Virtual Agricultural Show which saw Matthew Burks and Jacqueline Pettigrew reign as Champion Heavy Horse and as Reserve Supreme Horse overall with their 4-year-old mare Auchengree Amy. Well done to you guys!

And this Saturday sees the Kilmacolm Virtual Show – an event which is also open to all – have look at their website - [www.kilmacolmshow.org](http://www.kilmacolmshow.org) - for more information about that.

Last of all, on a similar theme to the section about new foals, one of our new members from earlier this year, Mark Main, shared with me the second photo for this week – their Balvenie sired foal that they call Thor. Thanks, Mark, for allowing this photo to accompany my blog this week.

As I close can I just thank everyone once more for all the supportive comments that you are sending me in response to this weekly offering of ‘diatribe from the dining room’! Keep safe and stay well and may the sunshine cheer your days. But also, beware the old expression ‘Ne’er cast a cloot till May be oot’ – for I understand that the forecast for next weekend includes stiff northerly winds and some wintry showers!

Till next week – same time same place – cheerio for now and all the best.

Ian