**Secretary Blog - Week 2 of Semi-Serious Opening Up**

Hello everyone. How are you getting on this week? Well, I hope.

In the last week, here in Scotland, for the first time since March, many of us have been permitted to travel more than 5 miles from our front doors. I don’t know what you did for your first trip away ‘from the hoose’, but for me it was a trip to Waitrose in Stirling – and how absolutely awesome that was!

The last week in the Society office has seen a noticeable cranking up in passport application requests and requests for DNA kits – and in this time it has been good to get a few passports issued following the first wave of DNA results coming back from Weatherbys. So, the passport roll for 2020 is now gathering pace.

The past week has been a ‘good news’ week for some – the Young’s from Doura won the Scottish Farmer Champion Horse of the Decade Award with Doura Magic Touch, the Blacks from Collessie reigned supreme at the Scottish Agricultural Virtual Show last weekend with Collessie Jennifer - and also, Lauryn Burks took the top honours in the Horse and Overall Young Handlers event at the same show. As I have mentioned in Facebook posts in recent days, we offer our warmest congratulations to all concerned.

Yet, only yesterday we heard and also reported the sad news of the demise of the Animal Health Trust – the genetic services company which has been supplying DNA test results to us for many years. Although the writing has been on the wall for some time, there was always the hope that a rescue package might be found. But alas, no! So we now have to say farewell to Claire, Angie and the whole team at Newmarket who have taken care of our needs in this area and who, certainly over the last 4 years, I have found to be so helpful in the business of registrations and passporting on behalf of our breeders and owners. We wish them all well.

This last week has also brought the sad, but probably not unexpected news, of the cancellation of HOYS 2020 – another victim of these difficult times.

On Monday it was a real pleasure to announce the winners of our recent competitions for Young people. Miles Chester did a masterful job with ‘find the number of words’ in the phrase ‘The Clydesdale Horse’ - amassing a stunning 309 words. Jenny Craig won the junior photo competition with Sophie Mitchell coming in second and the aforesaid Miles a close third. Look out for their photos on the Young People page of the 2021 CHS calendar which I am working towards having ready for issue in the early Autumn.

This week the visual face of Facebook took on a new, arguably more user-friendly look. For users, Facebook is ‘big on statistics’ and I was astonished to see right there before my very eyes the fact that between 7th June and 4th July our posts on the CHS Facebook page have reached a massive 15,834 people. In addition, 5,107 folks have engaged with us and a creditable 131 people have joined our page. As we all know, the reach of Social media can be huge and beyond our capability to comprehend, and these statistics show just how much this media helps us in our quest to promote the Breed. So, this week I offer a massive thank you to all of you Facecloth (as an elderly friend of mine refers to FB!) followers – it’s great to have you all around.

Some other news this week: -

1. A few weeks ago, I promoted with you research work being done by Jessica Thomas, a student at Dick Vet in Edinburgh, who is embarking on a thesis which is due to look into factors which affect fertility / reproductive performance in Clydesdale mares. To date she has had a great response from Breeders in the USA but very little from Breeders in Scotland. I have been asked to publicise this one last time with the plea that if you think you can contribute to this research you should contact Jessica direct on J.B.Thomas-1@sms.ed.ac.uk.
2. I have heard from the Yorkshire Agricultural Society that the Great Yorkshire Show is also going ‘virtual’ this year – featuring 3 full days of entertainment and informative video footage. Have a look at their website [www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk](http://www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk) for more information on this.
3. Watch out for a post soon with an exciting new opportunity which has been developed between Whistlefish and ourselves (by kind permission of Whistlefish and in keeping with their continuous generosity to our Society). I really think you are going to like it – so, watch this space!

And finally, I close this week’s blog with a couple of photos which have recently come my way. The first is from John McMillan and was taken 36 years ago – showing the McMillan family coming home from a local fete with their first gelding and cart. How things have changed in these last 36 years!

And secondly, I loved this photo reputedly taken at our new Council Member Stiofan Doran’s establishment in the Republic of Ireland where it would appear that some of his coos (or calves) have just not been brought up proper!!

And with that I’ll close this latest dollop of diatribe from the dining room, with the news that it will be a fortnight until I send out my next blog – giving you all a rest from my dithering and just enough time to prepare to wish me ‘happy birthday’!!

But please do keep on ‘face clothing’ for more immediate news and events which cross the dining room table. And the real wish in the meantime from Hazel, the dugs and me is that you stay safe, take care and keep spreading the good news of this wonderful breed of which we are all privileged to be a part.

Orrabest fur noo!

Ian