Hello everyone,

I’m hoping that you are all getting on fine and that you are staying in good health and keeping well. This morning it looks as though it’s going to be another glorious day although my iPad says that the temperature is -1 at the moment, reminding us that spring may well be sprung, but that consistently higher temperatures are not yet with us! But I do hope that this better weather is letting those of you who are farmers get on with the spring work.

Even in this time of lockdown I’m amazed at how many of you are still corresponding with me, sending passports for transfer, looking to join the society and every day seems to bring up different questions and different requests for information. Keep these coming because it’s good to keep in touch!

I’m back in the office this morning after having had a wee break over the Easter weekend, which was very nice and relaxing. On Sunday Hazel and I went for a walk in the countryside (on the roads of course), and if you know our area, we walked a couple of miles and back along past Glenturret Distillery. It was great to see all sorts of wildlife in the peace and quiet - including deer, a red squirrel, pheasants and even in the quietness of the lack of traffic, a wee field mouse scurried across in front of us. Nice to see some lambs appearing around us and Hazel was particularly taken by all the wild primroses which were flowering.

In the office as I say things keep moving along - work continues on finalising the studbook, getting it ready for the printers when they reopen, and last week we received the Horserace Levy Board annual grant which means I can make payments to premium stallion owners and to breeders of foals from last year - this will have my focus later on in the week.

Last week I wrote an article for the Farming Scotland magazine. They originally got in touch with me looking for some input for their Royal Highland Show preview edition which was due to come out in May / June. However, with the cancellation of ‘The Highland’ they decided to change the focus of their early summer edition and asked me to write an article about the history of breed, which was good to do.

And on the subject of the Royal Highland Show, those of you who subscribe weekly to the Scottish Farmer will have noticed the new initiative between SF and RHASS, in which SF will feature various breeds in the weeks leading up to the original Highland Show dates. They have created a virtual show, and the plan is that every breed that normally shows at the Highland will be showcased. The Breed Champion from the last 10 years will be photographed and there will be online voting to allow an overall 10-year Champion, to be eventually selected for each breed. Like everything else at the moment this won’t replace the real thing, but we applaud ‘The Farmer’ for this initiative to help keep all our interests stimulated at this time.

Clydesdales will be featured in a couple of weeks and am delighted to say that we have sponsored the Clydesdale event this year.

There’s been a lot of talk of late about hosting virtual shows and this is something which keeps our thinking minds active. But hats off this week to Elliott Anderson for launching his new Facebook page a few days ago called ‘Quarantine Heavy Horse Show’. Some lovely photographs have appeared on this page in recent days all courtesy of yourselves - and not just Clydesdales - and it’s been great to see. Thanks Elliott!

We won’t be copying Elliott just at the moment and stealing his thunder with our own virtual show, but we will have something in the offering in a couple weeks’ time where you may be able to help us to complete our 2021 Calendar.

Thank you, all of you, also for your interest in our imported horses which featured in last week’s blog! And I’m delighted to say that we are almost sold out, but I will be doing another order fairly soon for delivery in a few weeks’ time - and I’ll let you know when this comes in. It does take a week or two for stuff to come from Australia and the delivery of these items are not top priority in the UK at present, for perfectly understandable reasons.

So, time now for a bit of breakfast and the second caffeine fix of the day.

Keep in touch - stay well - be safe – and let’s all hope that it won’t be too long until we see this deadly virus easing off and until we can meet again. Speak to you all again next week.

Yours aye,

Ian