**Secretary Blog – Week 9 of Lockdown**

Hello everyone and welcome to another round of delectable dishes from the dining room up here or, depending on where you are, ‘doon there’ in Crieff.

As I write this on Sunday night, I can’t say that it has been the warmest weekend on record, but it was certainly dry enough not to have the excuse for ‘she who must be obeyed’ for any failure in cutting the grass! So, glad to say it was job done! And if there were no brownie points for this one, I certainly avoided the big black mark this time!

Can I take this opportunity to thank the many of you who are engaging with me on these posts on Facebook very week and also to those who respond to my equivalent email circular? We have 430 who receive this blog by email and it’s great to hear back from you all.

And before my nonsense this week can I also thank those of you who responded to Emily Windsor following my blog last week. I had a very appreciative email from Emily on Wednesday telling me that she has had lots of responses! So well done all of you.

This weekend I also heard from Claire Myers. Those of you who attended last year’s Winter Fair may remember the lovely trade stand that Claire brought along with her, selling so much of her lovely artwork. Claire told me then that she owned a Clydesdale which she rode, and she promised to send me some pictures. Claire’s riding tends to be with friends out in the countryside rather than in the formality of the show ring and my photos for sharing this week are some of the 10 which Claire sent on to me. Thank you, Claire. At present Claire is running a competition on her Facebook page – Claire Myers Artist – so why not look her up, like her post and you could win one of her wooden keepsake boxes, complete with a lovely animal picture and painted by her on the top.

We continue to remember all the show secretaries and show committees at this time and I notice this weekend the cancellation of the Aberfeldy Show. From some of your comments to me I am finding a real mix of feelings of loss and sadness about this year’s showing. So many of you are finding all the blank Saturdays to be a great gap in your lives and this is so understandable. And whilst it is not the real thing, we are so grateful to those who are running virtual and photographic events at this time: -

* Well done to Matt Burks and Jacqueline Pettigrew for taking the championship at the Kilmacolm Virtual Show held recently.
* And don’t forget that entries close this coming Friday for the Dillars Lock Down Virtual Show which is being held on 30th May the same day as the Lesmahagow Show will was due to take place.

And if you are a Facebook fanatic Amanda Stewart is doing a great wee reminisce each week – which includes setting everyone the challenge of identifying horses from shows which would have taken place in the week / weekend of her post. This week Amanda majored in on the Balmoral Show and her photos are really well worth a ‘look and see’.

DNA Testing in 2020 - I will be making a full news release this week, but the time is opportune to tell breeders that we have reached an agreement with Weatherby’s that they will undertake our DNA parentage testing work this year. The position with regard to the future of Animal Health Trust is still not certain, but what is still clear is that their laboratories are not currently operational. This not a decision we have taken lightly but we did have to secure a mechanism which would allow us to continue to register fillies and stallions and remove the current uncertainty for our breeders. There will be some minor changes to our procedures which I will cover more fully in my news release. For the most part the transition should be seamless and will be at no additional cost to you. You may have noticed that our colleagues at the Shire Horse Society announced a similar decision last week and these decisions have been endorsed by the Rare Breed Survival Trust.

For my swansong, this week something just a wee bit different. I said a couple of weeks ago that I have been re-reading Mary Bromilow’s book The Clydesdale: Workhorse of the World. In Mary’s book she reproduces a poem composed by the renowned journalist, J G Flett from Orkney. I thought you might enjoy reading it: -

Thudding hoof and flowing hair

Style and action sweet and fair.

Bone and sinew well defined

Movement close, in front, behind.

Muscle strong and frame well knit

Strength personified and fit.

Thus, the Clydesdale – see him go

To the field, the stud, the show.

Noble eye and handsome head

Bold, intelligent, well bred.

Lovely neck and shoulder laid

See how shapely he is made.

Proper back and rib well sprung

Sound of limb and sound of lung.

Powerful loin and quarter wide

Grace and majesty allied.

Basic horse, power-living force

Equine King, the Clydesdale Horse.

Have a good week until next week. Stay safe, stay well and be good!!

All the very best.

Ian