Hello everyone,

Well here we are into another week of lock down and another set of ‘ramblings’ from the office. I don’t know about you but isn’t this weather just great and for the many folks who are finding this time of social distancing and isolation to be frustrating, at least it’s good to have some sunshine to cheer us all up.

I am also finding myself being cheered up by some of the wide range of stuff I am seeing every day on Facebook and on other Social Media. There is so much variety out there – so many wonderful photos doing the rounds of Clydesdales and some of the newer foals; Elliott Anderson’s Quarantine page is just great and is taking on a real international feel; and I am discovering just how talented are some of our members - from Kelsey Logan’s musical numbers from her stables, with Hero always in the background, to some great Scottish Country Dance ‘Tunes In the Hoose’, often featuring our own, our very own, Adam Young! All great stuff and all helping us pass the time at the moment. Thank you all for this!

And yet out there, ‘there’s life Jim but not as we know it!’ Yes, for so many of you in the agricultural and equestrian world, real life goes on – it has to go on – stock have to be fed and watered and mucked out, lambs and calves and foals have to be tended to, horses have to be ridden, fields have to be sown …. and so much more! But this year with no showing nor equivalent activity, it’s certainly not as we know it – nor is it as we want it to be!!

We also have to look forward to next year. As a Rare Breed, our role as a Society and one of your main desires as Breeders, is to keep this wonderful breed of ours alive - and this is the time when you start your work and planning for 2021 foals. Many questions are being asked right now - can I take my mare to the stallion? - is travel for Rare Breed breeding activity considered to be what is currently termed essential travel or appropriate activity? So many questions … so many worries, especially with all the rules and regulations associated with lock down facing us at the moment.

On Friday I was able, thanks to the invaluable help and support we have received from the Rare Breed Survival Trust (RBST), to put on our website (www.clydedsalehorsesocity.com) some guidance on all of this - a Protocol with the title ‘Covid-19 Guidance Protocol for Clydesdale Breeders – April 2020.’ This little guidance note summarises the advice we have received from RBST and some others about how owners and breeders might apply ‘best practice’ to continue with breeding activity whilst, concurrently, complying with current Government Advice.

Of course, as a Society we cannot enforce this guidance – nor do we want to have to – nor can we be held responsible for others and what they do. But what we want to do is to try and explain that which has been brought to us by a ‘sister’ organisation which cares about the survival of our Breed – in an effort to help you continue with breeding programmes, whilst at the same time ensuring that the overall priority must always be Public Health and NHS Resources.

Of course, what has been set out might not be perfect – nothing can be perfect in these most unusual times. So I would ask you please ‘don’t shoot the messenger’ on all of this – but as a Society which relies on the support of Rare Breed Funding, it is, we believe, good practice to recommend to you the advice we have been given by them, following their discussions with Defra and Government Ministers. RBST has a super website which I would commend to you all.

Here endeth the lesson for this week!!

For the last year or two this week has been habitually the week when I would have been getting in touch with all our 2019 Young Handler Winners from local shows - inviting them to apply for the YH Final at the Royal Highland Show. We need to encourage the smallish number of youngsters in our Breed – so this year I have decided to get in touch with all of them, hopefully later this week, and send them a wee newsletter which I am creating, to tell them that their qualification for the 2020 Highland is being carried forward to 2021. This is exactly what the Society did last time the Highland Show was cancelled in 2001 due to the Foot and Mouth outbreak.

Last of all for this week, as you know, I like a wee bit of fun too! I’m attaching a couple of pictures I received (courtesy of MJL Equestrian) by email last week from Jodie Lee Stainer. Jodie said to me ‘Today I realised that one of my Clydesdales has a French Bulldog silhouette on his nose! Feel free to share.’

Some of you might have seen Jodie’s post on her own Facebook page and I am delighted to share Jodie’s photographs on our page. I wonder if you would like to share any other photographs you may have of your Clydesdales with other ‘pets’ you own – just for a wee bit of fun! Let’s spread the fun and give our chuckle muscles a bit of exercise at this time!

I hope you all have a good week – stay safe, stay well – and be of good cheer until we reconvene once more next Tuesday for another dose of drivel (or maybe dialogue!) from the dining room! All the best and TTFN!

Ian