**Mid-Summer 2020 – Blogging In the Rain**

It’s ten past two on Highland Show Sunday afternoon. The Young Handler and Young Stockman classes ended in the late morning and the turnout championship has just been decided. The Clydesdale Horse Society stand is getting to the point of being ‘demob happy’ and the end of 4 wonderful days at the greatest show on earth is looming large. The last grand parade of the week is under way and, soon it will be back to auld claes and parritch (have I said that before?!) – and ‘only’ 360 days will pass before we return in 2021 to do it all over again.

Then, suddenly I waken up!

 In front of me is a laptop but its screen is blank. Well at least it’s switched on – but alas there are no words to write this year about winners (and losers), judges and judging, late nights and early mornings, burgers and booze – and of course there are no stories to tell and no memories to sustain us in the meantime.

This ruddy Coronavirus – blinking spoilsport …. so, it is!

I feel a bit like a journalist in panic only two hours before a print deadline with not a single idea coming to the fore. The brain is dead. A repeat episode of Fawlty Towers is advertised on UK Gold from the TV in the living room – the one about the Waldorf Salad. They only made 12 episodes of that oft repeated comedy – a timely reminder that all good TV Shows from days of yore stopped at the peak of their popularity – quitting whilst they were ahead.

Maybe I should also do the same – and cut my losses. After all the last two blogs went down really well – record numbers of likes on Facebook (at least, a record for my posts!), a huge number of emails and calls thanking me for my ‘Highland’ memories over the last fortnight – and a real sense of satisfaction and big headedness fills the air. With all due modesty, I gave myself the proverbial pat on the back. Then the oft quoted words of Margaret, my late mother in law, came to mind. I never had the fortune to meet this very gracious lady, but still I can feel her vibes – piercing down from on high - “Ian” she would be intoning, “Self-praise is no glory!”

Feeling suitably rebuked, I load up Word on my laptop and begin to type.

First of all a wee message to you all – thank you all of you for your great encouragement in recent weeks – I’ve enjoyed sharing my Highland memories with you and you have fairly cheered me up with your positive responses.

So, where to now?

I know - let me tell you about some of the things I did last week?

Well, to begin with I registered a few passport name changes for new Clydesdale owners and I did only my second 2020 born colt foal passport for the year.

I knew that would rivet you to the spot in swathes of great excitement!

And you know something else? I reckon I must have issued 25 passport application forms – the by-product of which will keep me very active later in the summer and into September.

I can feel the excitement building now! And it just gets better and better!

On Thursday I did an audit check on the voting returns which had come in from the recent member vote on a series of what we felt were non- controversial appointments and other matters in the life of the Society.

And it’s great to announce the outcome of that vote – congratulations to Alasdair Fletcher who is now the new President of the Clydesdale Horse Society and to Jim Greenhill who is our new Vice President. And we now have a fresh team of new Council members - Ian Smith, Shonah Campbell, Heather Fraser, Mairi Ralston, Jackie Marshall, Andrew Love, Willie Craig, Robert Sibbald, Bryan Lindsay, Joe Gibbons, Paul Bedford, Matthew Bedford, Andrew Whetton, John Cross and Stephen Doran. We welcome, and in some cases, we welcome back to Council, these new names. At the same time we pay tribute to and offer our grateful thanks to the following whose term of office in now at an end – David Walker, Norman Christie, Irvine Anderson, Tom Tennant, Mairi Barr, Christine Halliday, Ian Douglas, Allan Craig, Ronnie Black, Bob Hamilton, Catherine Bell, Gary Gorman, Elisabeth Grieves, Terry Edge, Wendy Holmes and Edward Cheasty.

We say a big ‘thank you’ to Jim Rochead who has now completed his term of office as President. Jim remains on Council as Immediate Past President and we also say a fond farewell and thank you to Peter Keron whose 6-year tenure is over.

To complete the voting, Neil Christie and Malcolm McFadyen remain unanimously as Honorary Presidents, Henry Brown & Co is reappointed as Independent Accountants and we now have 6 nominations as possibilities to fill the vacant Honorary President place on Council. On this latter matter it will be a case of ‘watch this space’ for the next stage of the appointment exercise.

Last week, as announced separately, the long awaited 2019 Stud Book came back from the printers and just under of 50 of these have already been sent out to willing purchasers.

The 2020 raffle tickets are now in my hands and these will be coming out to members soon. The initial planning stages of the 2021 calendar is now underway.

I am still on the lookout for photos for the ‘different format’ 2021 Calendar. These photos will be judged online as part of our 2020 photographic competition sponsored by Shona Harrison in memory of the late John Zawadzki. I would like some more photos and so you have until 30th June 2020 to get them to me – please email your photos to me at secretary@clydesdalehorsesociety.com.

And finally this week just to report that I had a very positive conversation with Fiona Ford, the new editor of Heavy Horse World, during which I offered any assistance to her as she takes up her new role, especially the supply of information from the Clydesdale Horse World for her to publish. Fiona is now a very welcome additional recipient of this weekly blog.

We started this blog way back in March when it began as Dithering (or maybe Diatribe!) from the Dining Room, Laments for Lock Down and Blogs for Boring Days. We are now beginning to emerge from these ‘lock down driven, boring days’ – but I remain very conscious that many of our older members will remain under the strictures of self-isolation at least until the end of July. So, assuming that the words will still come to me (and you can help me with this by sending me more of your stories), we will carry on with this weekly blog at least until then.

Meantime, Hazel, and I continue to send our good wishes to one and all. And now at ten past three and the rain thundering down on the Conservatory (office annexe) roof, some, but not necessarily all of you fermers will be happy (!), I now have these twa critters at my feet. Thought you might like to see them this week – just for a wee change!

All the best from the ‘Craic in the Conservatory’ - until next week!

Ian, Hazel (the present Mrs Roy!), Ben and Ruaridh.