**Secretary Blog – Week 10 of Lock Down**

The word ‘change’ is a word which is being used quite a lot these days – usually in the context of Covid 19 and often accompanied with expressions such as ‘things will never be the same again’. ‘Change’ is a strange thing and ‘change’ can make us uncomfortable probably because when things have to change, we are taken out of our comfort zones!

When I was a year or two younger than I am now and working in another world, I remember being on one of these dreaded courses about ‘Managing Change’ and I vividly remember a young whipper snapper type (or so I thought!) lecturing we ‘know it all’, experienced managers – and as predictably as night follows day I vividly remember him concluding his remarks by telling us this:

‘If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got’.

So, what has changed this year and particularly in the last 10 weeks for the Clydesdale Horse Society.

There certainly have been some blows: -

1. No Highland Show. For many of you this is the event of the year, which I know you look forward to - me too! For some of you this is your only holiday opportunity ‘off the farm’ all year. For us as a Society no Highland means that we are disappointed not to be able to meet up with you socially and also miss our big annual promotional opportunity with the general public (and where we make a bob or two selling merchandise to you and them!).
2. No local shows and so no Young Handler qualifying events this year. Not only is this a blow to us but the cancellation of shows this year in this magnitude for the first time since foot and mouth back in 2002, is hitting many communities across the country.
3. There have been very few renewals of ridden memberships this year. This is quite logical in many senses - why pay £10 for the privilege of riding at affiliated and qualifying shows when there are no shows to be had?
4. The level of mail coming into the office, with certain exceptions, is not as voluminous as it used to be.

So, are we doing anything differently? Well: -

1. This blog is something just a wee bit different and with few exceptions you seem to be finding this to be to your liking.
2. Council. Two Council meetings have had to be cancelled but we have continued to operate in certain areas by email and by snail mail for the 11 folks on Council who don’t have email. This has allowed new membership applications, stud prefix applications, approval of our accounts for 2019 and other routine, non-controversial issues to be dealt with – so avoiding a significant build up in work and undealt business.
3. In the last fortnight, Council approved by a significant majority that we should aim to get membership approval for a number of straight forward, non-controversial, time beneficial matters – matters which would normally have been dealt with back in March at the AGM. So, last week all members were issued with a letter and voting form covering these more routine items. Please use your vote and please bear in mind that your views can only be considered if you send us back your voting form.
4. Youth Newsletter – we issued our first Youth Newsletter and a second will go out later in the year.

Some of you have asked why we don’t hold meetings by Zoom or equivalent? This may be something for the future but we will have to bear in mind, in any decision making of this nature, that at present 20% of our Council and 36% of our membership do not appear to use email or equivalent. At a time of ‘bringing together’ we felt that now may not be the time to disenfranchise folks by exclusion. But increasingly use of technology may well have to be the way forward in future.

But back here at the office some things won’t change: -

1. Mail does trickle in almost daily – although I still don’t have last week’s Scottish Farmer!
2. The mail has included a regular stream of passport related issued – transfers of ownership and a replacement passport or two as well – and all are being dealt with within a two working day turnaround from receipt.
3. I still get between a dozen and twenty emails a day and I try to answer these, if not on the day, then certainly next day (unless the subject matter is something on which I need to consult).
4. A Stud Book for 2019 is written and is ready to go to print when our printers are fully operational again.
5. We will have a calendar for 2021 – it may, of necessity, look a little different this year, but we will have a calendar.
6. We will have a raffle this year – raffle tickets are printed and were available for collection on the day the country closed for lock down. But I will get these in good time for issue later in the summer.
7. We will have another newsletter – again it may look different and it may be a little less voluminous this time, but it will be issued in late July / early August.
8. We announced a photographic competition back in January and this is still very much alive and awaiting your entries.
9. I know that foals are now on the ground and I have had an initial string of requests for passport applications. Passport applications can be issued on request. If it’s for a colt it can be emailed if you wish, but I usually post out applications for fillies because the DNA testing kit cannot be emailed for very obvious reasons!
10. Encouragingly, I have also had a few requests for stallion registrations, and these are in hand.
11. And last week someone sent me a nice order for merchandise too.

And talking about photographs I am now receiving more photos from you than I have space to include in my weekly blog – but please don’t stop sending them in. I have now created a gallery on our Webpage ([www.clydesdalehorsesociety.com](http://www.clydesdalehorsesociety.com)) called 2020 Gallery – and all photographic competition entries and other photos received this year will find their way onto this new page. If you have sent in ‘paper-printed‘ photos you will be hearing from me soon inviting you to email me digital copies too.

And finally, for this week’s blog I am grateful to Debra Rothery Derek Bailey and Jacqui Tait for the photos from their gallery this week. More from each of them on 2020 Gallery on the website.

Have a good week till next week by which time I hope that we may be able to visit garden centres and our local waste disposal dump. It’s all so exciting!!!

All the very best to you all from the Dining Room – stay safe and take care.

Ian