**Secretary’s Blog – Week 2 of Lock Down**

Hello everyone,

How are you all getting on this week? How are you coping with the isolation that we are all facing? Of course, I know that for many of you on farms, spending time alone in the fields at this time of year is something of an occupational hazard! But having restrictions placed upon us ‘from above’ is a wee bit different. I do hope that everyone is bearing up and staying well.

For us in Crieff, we are very lucky. Hazel and I are trying hard to steer clear of people – but we do have our daily walk in the beautiful countryside around us and I’m still able, for business purposes, to drive to the bank and post office, although I am cutting these activities to once or twice a week. And our local shops are doing us proud with home deliveries. Yesterdays’ home delivery organized by ‘she who must be obeyed’ of soil and bags of bark, do mean that next weekend there will be work to be done in the garden, I fear!

In the 3½ years that I have had the privilege of working for this great Society, there have been many good moments – many highs, but not so many times that I would describe as being ‘low’ or sad or disappointing.

But I can say with real certainty that the last fortnight has been one of these ‘low’ times. No, not so much that I am sitting around bored, twiddling my thumbs with nothing to do - but more so because of the number of show secretaries who have written to me. And you can just feel their devastation as they write, almost in unison, and almost apologetically, words along these lines ‘Sadly because of government advice and Covid 19 …… our committee has had to take the decision to cancel our show this year’. You feel that these good folks have just taken a massive kick or punch in their collective stomachs as they relate to me these sad words – you just feel that they are ‘gutted’.

And I feel sure that more of these emails will be coming into the office in the next few days and weeks.

It makes me think of the enormous amount of work it takes to organise a show. I know what it takes to put on our Winter Fair which, in many respects, pales into insignificance compared with the wide range of work involved in putting on a larger, County Town or County Area show.

So, this week a ‘shout’ for Show Secretaries. I know that some Secretaries ‘rule the roost’ with a rod of iron (and they possibly must!). But, collectively, these hardy souls have organizational skills which our governments could today put to good use in these trying times, as they organise ‘their‘ show with military like precision!

And in addition, this week we also need to ‘shout out’ for all the show committees who will be feeling equally devastated that their annual event is not going ahead this year. The tireless work that they all do behind the scenes not just in the lead up to show day, but all year round as they organize fun nights, dinner dances and events to raise funds to make their show pay, must never be forgotten.

And let’s also not forget the charitable fundraising which takes place at many of these shows – raising money for good causes – fund raising which this year will simply not happen.

This week is the time to salute you all - and we say loudly and clearly ‘haste ye back’ next year to put on shows which will be even bigger and better and which will show everyone more clearly than ever before, the vital place and role that these shows have in the social fabric of our communities.

And to keep us all encouraged let me share with you some of Amanda Stewart’s fantastic photographs of the Clydesdale principal winners at this years’ National Stallion Show, which thankfully did go ahead.

Thank you, Amanda, as always, for allowing us to share your great photos which we all really appreciate.

Champion and Male Champion – Doura Magic Touch (Charlotte Young)
Reserve Champion and Female Champion – Littleward Meghan (Charlotte Young)
Cawdor Cup Winner – Downhill Master Tom (Geoffrey Tanner)
Cawdor Cup Reserve – Muirton Spirit (Thomas Clark and Sons)
Gelding Champion - Mill Gordie - John McMillan & Family
Ridden Champion - Bandirran Sir Daniel - The Lindsay family

Speak to you all next week for some more ramblings from the Secretary’s Chair (at least this week I have spared you all from a picture of me!!) and meantime, stay safe and well and ‘Tak Guid Care O Yersels’.

All the best.