**Supreme Championship Show Report November 2019**

We took a gamble this year and switched blocks of classes around between days at the weekend. We did this as our numbers of In Hand class exhibitors are shrinking whilst interest in the ‘fun’ classes such as Agility, Working Donkey, etc are increasing. It seemed silly to be squeezing the fun classes into just a Sunday morning, whilst we had pauses in activity in the In Hand rings which had all day Saturday. It also gave people the chance to drive / do fun classes one day and then take part in the In Hand classes on Sunday. A gamble – but it worked!

We have some tweaks to make, and we will never please everyone, but broadly the show went well and we received many supportive comments. The Fun classes, Agility, Driving and Juniors classes all took place on Saturday, and with the careful class-juggling skills of our Show Secretary, Barbara Whale,  exhibitors could take part in a wider range of classes, and also have time to watch other classes of interest. This made for a relaxed and very friendly atmosphere as people congregated round the various rings watching and cheering on those taking part.

What was particularly pleasing – and so indicative of donkey owners at their very best – was the welcoming attitude shown by the ‘old hands’ to help and support the ‘newcomers’ at their first Championship Show. Help, advice and general encouragement was given and I know it meant the newcomers had an absolute whale of a time and are already planning to return next year and tackle even more. This is what donkey shows are all about, sharing good times and a love of donkeys with fellow exhibitors, with the rosettes and trophies being an added bonus.

The Agility classes were, as ever, a true highlight, and the Fancy Dress was a great delight with amazing costumes being worn by imaginative owners and very patient donkeys! The Saturday night supper and quiz were well supported with some of us crawling off to bed exhausted by a busy day, and others with more stamina (and dare I say youth?) partying far later.

Sunday classes leading up to selecting the In Hand Supreme Champion ran smoothly with spectators having time to watch the donkeys being very thoroughly judged before the top prizes were awarded. There are things we can do to shorten the overall time taken, but for a ‘first time’ with the days switched we all got away by very early afternoon… and we will improve on this next year.

Huge congratulations to our main winners –

Supreme Driving Champions, the tandem of Hapgood and Guildenstern with Whip Debbie Street, In Hand Supreme Helen Naden’s stallion Glendene Tao, (being her third generation of this bloodline to win!) and an amazing weekend for Champion Young Handler and also Champion Young Rider Caragh Cochrane who came over from Ireland for the weekend with an entourage of supporters, and went home triumphant with not only these two top awards but also a lorry full of other rosettes and trophies. Our Miniature Champion was Janet Lee’s Aspirin Acres Magma and Sunday (now Saturday!) Points Champion was John & Terri Morris’ Wychbrook Just William. The winners of the Team Challenge ‘Lastminute.com’ consisted of Trinitas Tintinnabula, Timothy (at his first ever Championship Show) and Clanvaraghan Barney over from Northern Ireland. The winners of the Photographic competition, the Progeny Points trophies and the Trinette Hindle Award for Best Dressed In Hand exhibitor will be announced today.

The show cannot run without the support of Council and the tireless efforts of members of the committee and other helpers. This does not just cover our judges, stewards, raffle ticket sellers, trophy stewards, tea and coffee makers and the other people you see on the day, but also our ‘before and after’ helpers who sort out the sponsorship (without which the show could not survive), organise the suppers, sort out the insurance, order the rosettes, calculate the points, produce all the paperwork and of course our Show Secretary Barbara and ‘being everywhere doing everything’ stalwart Carol Morse.

I thank everyone who took part in any way – sponsoring a class, laying out rings, designing agility courses, sorting out dressage tests, taking entries, collecting trophies, preparing fancy dress outfits, trimming / grooming donkeys until they shone – just everyone who had any part to play!

Pop the date in your diaries for next year – August 15th / 16th 2020, Moreton Morrell, Warks. Exhibitors, helpers and spectators all very welcome!

Carole Travell

Chairman – Championship Show Committee.