

2011 CHAIRMANS REPORT

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen; Firstly may I apologise to you all for my absence on this my last AGM as Chair of the South Western Association of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society.

2011 has been an extremely busy year for the Association running as we do all 8 shows, I am not aware of any other Association that runs quite as many shows as the South Western Association, plus clinics, competitions, stud visits and young judges, which does bring with it a mountain of organisation, venues, contacting judges arranging accommodation, setting up and taking down all the rings etc etc the list is almost never ending. We are lucky to have some really dedicated members that undertake all these tasks and I wish to extend my sincere thanks on your behalf to them, these shows would not run without them. **BUT** they ARE JUST a FEW and we desperately need more help, stewarding, entries, car parking setting up the day before and taking everything down. This is a plea we make every single year for every single show but very little changes and it is again JUST THE FEW that take it on. This must change if you really want to keep so many shows, An hour or two of your time is all we are asking. We are all busy people but it is time to stop sticking our heads in the sand thinking someone else will do it as they will not always be there to do it.

I would also like to make a point of saying a big thank you to all our sponsors, again many of our shows would be struggling without you SO THANK you one and all. There is one sponsor I feel I am more than justified in highlighting. Edwina Turner. Edwina has very generously provided funds for the Association to purchase its own wireless PA system, which will be absolutely invaluable, as well as saving the shows from paying the large amounts that it now costs to hire such a system. This system has been purchased and will be in full use next year once we have got to grips with how it all works. Edwina, many, many thanks from us all.

This year our Welsh Champion of the Year show had to be postponed due to very severe weather that was forecast on the Wednesday when the decision had to be taken whether to go ahead or not. Jenny and Nicki did a fantastic job in contacting everyone who had entered. There were mumbblings but I can assure everyone that it was a **committee** decision, which was not taken lightly,

to postpone and the new date was the ONLY one available at Newhall. Or anywhere else for that matter! The show was a great success at Newhall.

I make no apologies for sounding like a grumpy old lady but occasionally there are issues we all try to skirt around hoping that they will go away but I think these need to be said occasionally and I am taking the bull by the horns. In this day and age of high technology and instant communications we all have to be wary and thoughtful of just what we say/ write on things like twitter, face book, the various gossip forums, email and text messaging. When we talk to each other we can hear the intonations and understand the intention of the speaker but with instant messaging this is not the case and as such can be taken in a completely different context often causing offense or hurt. This then becomes a bone of contention and causes ill feeling between members. Please be careful when discussing anything to do with the Association that it doesn't cause ill feeling or brings our Association into disrepute. If you have a grievance or concern PUT IT IN WRITING with your name AND SEND TO THE COMMITTEE WHO WILL DEAL WITH IT. Your complaint will then be looked into and a response provided....The committee cannot act on anything that is not put in writing or does not have a name to it.

On a lighter note, our Area has so much to be proud of, the ponies bred here in the Southwest have gone out to the highest level nationally and come home with some amazing results, both in Hand and ridden. Winning and holding their own throughout the country in hot company. Many Congratulations to you all. Our Ridden Performance teams have done well again this year in the National Performance Competition in spite of some members not being able to do as much as they hoped. In spite of this and against increasing participation by other Areas, we managed 4th and 5th places. Congratulations to everyone and thank you for being part of our teams.

Our Young Judges, Georgia Wildgoose, Jenna Chamberlain and Zoe Skyrme went off to the National Welsh and Welsh partbred Show at Malvern where they did very well with Georgia winning her group and receiving a bronze medal.

Another group of South Western Association members went off to Malvern, not to show ponies but to provide the support to the 2011 Welsh

International show where many of us spent the weekend stewarding or compiling results. It was a great weekend although a bit wet at times!

Sue Hardy took yet another group of people off on the Annual Stud visit to Wales where as usual they saw many lovely Ponies and Cobs and have quite a few stories to tell as well, many thanks Sue for arranging the trip as always.

Our Annual local Stud visit this year was to the Pasadena stud of Section As and Cs belonging to Tom and Yvonne Small where we were not only shown beautiful ponies and cobs but had a very enjoyable social occasion with a delicious lunch, Many thanks to Tom and Yvonne and their helpers.

The two working hunter clinics went well and were much appreciated by those who took part and I hope these will continue if enough support is given.

Our Stud competition was held in September this year Steve Hayes Brockabye took on the judging with Jenny Cheshire organising. It would be lovely if more studs, big and small entered this competition. You don't have to take ponies anywhere, the judge comes to you and ponies do not need to be turned out to show standard, just tidily presented.

The various organisers will give fuller details of the major events.

Many thanks must go to all the show and competition secretaries, and event organisers for the time and effort that they have made to make all these events run so well. Also I would like to say thank you to Janet for compiling the newsletters no easy task!

I have enjoyed my time as Chairman of our Association but due to various family and work commitments I have not had the time to give as much attention to the Association as it deserves so I have come to the decision to retire and allow another with fresh views and ideas and hopefully time, to take my place. I would like to thank the committee and you the members for all the support you have given me over the past few years and I wish my successor good luck.

Many thanks and good luck to you all.

Anne Brown

