

Ayr Riding Club
Chairman's Report
AGM 2005

I would like to start by thanking everyone who has patiently supported me through this year. Particularly the Ayr riding club committee who have been rock solid and to the members for their hugs, cards, good wishes, flowers and gifts. I have missed so much not going to the competitions and training nights. I was fortunate enough to take in the area indoor showjumping novice competition at Ingliston House Stud in November, there I got a good injection of horse smells, excitement and chatting – it was a good day. It was great to be back!

I want to re-visit last years AGM, when you the members highlighted the need to improve our communications and information distribution to our members. I hope you have seen and enjoyed the improvements we have made.

1. We requested E-Mail addresses
2. Newsletter Quarterly, going out the first week of the months Jan, April, July & Oct
3. Training schedules for 12 weeks ahead
4. Website – Adam has turned the website around with the new member's page. Where you can tell us all of your achievements – we want to know what you are doing!

Combined Trainings

I wanted to turn round the early loses we made at Rowallan. The January CBT we were victims of our success. To develop the CBT we need to manage the time better. The Novice/novice class must start on time and be finished by 10am. We have had requests from Susan Ward and Leigh Harkins to introduce elementary dressage; I think this is an excellent way to progress. The points system for the CBT will now have three classes,

1. Novice with novice jumping & Prelim Dressage
2. Intermediate with Intermediate Jumping & Novice Dressage
3. Open with Open Showjumping & Elementary Dressage

The dressage only classes will still be available if numbers allow, priority in the first instance will go to the CBT entries.

I am running the January CBT event and I can tell you now I will be very strict with the novice/novice class so I pass the responsibility to you to be there and ready to start on time! As you know we run two arenas for the dressage and as a pilot in January I intend to alternate the novice and elementary dressage to assess the uptake. Do remember we are all volunteers – and there will be early teething problems – but I

will try and sort them out, therefore creating a good fun day with a learning environment for all. Last year we ran monthly combined trainings; this was a very heavy commitment on the committee, so 2005/06 will see October, December, January and March. We are also going to try some new variations.

March

With help from Mugs, I am going to try and get Christopher Bartle to do two days training with a lecture demo at night – so watch the website.

April

Area one hunter trials will be at Titwood Farm on the 9th April 2006 and the Working Hunter BHS Qualifier for the final at Blair Castle Horse Trials will be held at Murmill with other showing classes on the 23rd April 2006.

State of the Club

We have had a very healthy year with our membership, we have 47 new members in 2005 compared with 27 in 2004. But we must work hard to keep our members interested and willing to participate in what we offer. We had at the 31st October 159 members.

Rallies in 2005

We had on offer over forty rallies, seven shows, a very successful interclub combined training competition and the BHS Working Hunter Qualifier which we have hosted for the past four years, now with thirty five entries this is gaining in popularity – so we are not idle.

We have seen the introduction of Cross country training facilities at Titwood Farm and Burnockmill Farm which have proved to be big attractions.

Thanks has to go to the Training officers Lillias, Lesley and Elana for organising over forty rallies with the following trainers: Aileen Craig, Lindsay Babes, Ernest Dillon, Amanda Fergusson, Eleanor Dickie, David Gatherer, Muriel Colquhoun, Phyllis Beattie, Stewart Christie, Sue Chadwick, Tina Hazlem, Aly Boswell, Adam Muirdin, Jane Belding, Alisa Gilchrist and Christopher Bartle.

Teams - Area Qualifiers

Novice indoor showjumping November 2004 for the 2005 final finished in 2nd but were promoted to 1st but were unable to travel to the final. This years qualifier for the final in 2006 the team finished 2nd with Kevin Watson and Hector gaining the best turned out prize!

Showjumping

Novice team – 4th

Intermediate team- 4th with Lucy Reid 2nd Individually
Equitation Team – 3rd

Horse Trials

Novice Team – 5th

Alison Morrisay Qualified for the Novice Championships

Kara Craig finished 3rd individually and just missed qualifying for the championships.

Dressage

Novice Team – 5th

Riding Test Team – 2nd

Mugs Montgomerie and Julia Kerr – 4th in the pairs and 1st in the pairs to Music but were unable to travel to the final at Addington.

Susan Ward and Jane Kennedy won the pairs and went on to finish 11th at the national championships at Lincoln.

Caledonia Championships

Showjumping

Open Team – 1st

Rachel Rodman finished 1st individually in the Open

Jill Offer finished 3rd individually in the novice

Dressage

Team Finished – 6th

Susan Ward & Jane Kennedy 1st in the pairs

Irene Gillespie & Eleanor Pottinger 3rd in the pairs

Mugs Montgomerie & Julia Kerr 5th in the pairs

Jill Offer 5th in the Perlim

Mugs Montgomerie & Leigh Harkins both finished 6th in Perlim classes

Kara Craig 5th in the Novice

We were overall runners up in the points to Strathmore.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain the financing of entries to area qualifiers.

1. The club has to pay Stoneleigh pre-entries, the cost of this for 2005 was
2. Then the teams pay their own entries to the competition venue.
3. People who qualify for Lincoln, the club will pay the entries and their stabling.

This year the club sponsored Elana Chilton to attend the star of the future competition at Windsor horse trials. A report by Elana is available on the website.

Area One News

I have decided to remain as area One Chair, but have been very lucky to co-opt a vice chair to help me. Sandra Lamb chair of Pebbles and District Riding Club is going to take on the clubs in the east and I will serve the eighteen clubs in the west. We plan to replicate training and Try and develop inter branch competitions – like the combined training we ran in April. We are looking at Working Hunter Qualifiers with an Area Final combining the east and west. The Area qualifiers will still be united at present due to high costs – but I foresee in the future a split. Stoneleigh are currently looking at revamping the areas in the UK, as riding club membership has dropped by four thousand, with a large drop in Scottish membership of One Thousand. This is lost in revenue to Stoneleigh of nearly Fifteen Thousand pounds.

The area qualifiers for 2006 are still to be confirmed but are looking to take place as follows:

9th April Hunter Trials, Titwood Farm Kilmaurs

18th June Showjumping, Eglinton Country Park

Dates to be confirmed

Novice Dressage, Greenfields of Avon Dale

Open Dressage, Dumfires

Novice & Intermediate Horses Trials, Titlington North Berwick

Open Horse Trails, Part of Floors Castle Horse Trials

Indoor Showjumping, Ingliston House Stud, Renfrewshire

Training

First aid training was held at Sandyflats in March along with horse welfare. Kara Craig attended both days. Ayr Riding club require to run a course this year to keep numbers needed for running events and training.

A Child Protection course was held at the Carrick centre in Houston and attended by Adam, Susan, Mugs, Karen, Amanda and Cathy.

SEA Pilot

In February 2005 as a committee we decided to put in a bid for an IT project – Applying to SEA/Sportscotland for Five Thousand Pounds. The pilot programme is concentrating on the use of the internet to facilitate club activities. The systems and data will be part of the SEA databank and will be valuable in focusing the thoughts and ambitions of all riding clubs.

Our main aims are:

- To allow members to make bookings for events on line
- To allow online training bookings
- To allow online membership for clubs from their websites
- To allow credit cards payments

- To provide training on how to use these facilities
- To provide assistance for clubs who wish to develop their own websites .

Our committee has six key members, Lillias, Lesley and Elana involved in the organising of training, Kara the newsletter, Kirstine secretarial duties and Adam the website management. Over the past year they have all kept time sheets to let us build up a picture of the average time spent on these duties. The times varied from 30-40 hours per year a lot of voluntary time- this doesn't include committee meetings or competitions. The cost of sending out hard copies to members not on e-mail (paper, printing, stamps, time etc). We hope to make savings in which we can re-invest back in to the club and its members. We also have to undertake sending out a questionnaire to find out how our members feel about this now and once launched in January we will re-visit this at the end of March to find out if this has been a success or failure of the scheme. The credit card payment system will probably be delayed as we plan to be in discussion with SEA as they are about to launch their system and I feel we should be unified in this approach. It will also be safer and cheaper collectively – so keep an eye on the website for changes! – Those without access to a computer at home can use library systems in all Ayrshire local authorities. These are open during library opening times but hard copies will continue to be sent out to those without computers.

The money has been spent on re-imbursing some of the time to the committee members, with two and a half thousand pounds subcontracting Alan Arnott to develop the necessary IT system for us. With Adam involved to over see the project.

BHS Scotland

BHS in April dropped their bombshell that they as an organization were withdrawing from Scottish Equestrian Association and withdrawing Scottish Riding Clubs with the, without any prior consultation. Personally, I was amazed by their actions, never believing that a voluntary charitable organization such as BHS Scotland, would willingly behave in such a manner. Thankfully, due to the persistent lobbying of the Scottish Riding Club movements matriarchs', Anne Millar, Janet Spens and our very own Amanda Fergusson over the past few months BRC Stoneleigh now realize it is in our best interest to continue as members of SEA but with a new title of Riding Clubs in Scotland. The name change is due to the fact that BHS Scotland bought a load of relevant web sites in Scotland but not in England Ireland or Wales. Being members of SEA will guarantee a voice to be heard, along with the other 23 members of SEA, at Sportscotland, Scottish Executive and British Equestrian Federation.

Conclusion

I hope you agree we have a very healthy and I hope a happy Club. It is important for all of us to welcome new members but equally to ensure our regular backbone members are getting what they want from the organization. Remember we are all volunteers, doing our best, don't be afraid to offer to help, or to offer constructive criticism; we are more than willing to listen.

Goals for 2006

- Increasing Membership and members participation in club activities
- To complete the IT project
- To ensure combined training changes are successful
- To integrate more area competitions and qualifiers ie Working Hunter and Show Hunter classes