

NEWS

Contesting top championships in the West of England

The 2017 show season sees heavy horse enthusiasts from across the South of England once again aiming to qualify for the West of England In-Hand & Harness Championships.

These prestigious championships, sponsored by Wadworth & Co Brewery, Devizes, are contested at the Wessex Heavy Horse Society's Annual Show, which will take place at the Turnpike Showground, in the beautiful Dorset countryside between Gillingham and Shaftesbury on Sunday 24 September.

Qualifiers are held at shows across Dorset, Devon, Cornwall and Somerset throughout the show season.

The Wessex Heavy Horse Society started life as a hiring society, and held an annual show and auction at Shaftesbury Livestock Market for many years. The show moved to the Turnpike Showground in 2004, and has gone from strength to strength, now attracting around 50 heavy horses on show day. As well as the West of England Championships, the Wessex Heavy



2016 winners were Morley Roberts' Hiraethog Holly for the In-Hand Championship, and Malcolm Scurrrell's Willingham Ella for the Harness Championship.

Horse Society's own show takes place on the same day, and includes classes for ridden and driven horses, as well as in-hand and harness classes and a young handlers' class.

The show is run by an enthusiastic and hardworking committee of volunteers, who bring years of experience in showing horses and organising shows to produce this fantastic event. Other attractions include a fun dog show, ring displays, classic and vintage vehicles, trade stands and children's games – a show the whole family can enjoy!

Remaining qualifying shows are:

8-10 June	Royal Cornwall Show
15 July	Camborne Show
25-27 July	New Forest and Hampshire County Show
3 August	Honiton Agricultural Show
11 August	Okehampton Show
16 August	Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show
24 August	Melplash Show
24-28 August	Great Dorset Steam Fair
9 September	Romsey Show

Cobs demonstrate horse logging in Worcester Woods

Stephen 'Crunchie' Whitby and his coloured horse logging Cobs proved the star attraction at Worcester Woods Country Park's annual Woodlands Alive event in March. Crunchie's Cobs are mother and daughter Holly and Ivy, aged 14 and eight. They demonstrated to an appreciative audience the clear advantages of using horse extraction through awkward terrain without disturbance or compaction of the woodland floor. This year, in addition to the usual chain method, Crunchie demonstrated his Amish-developed 'Chore Tongues' tool for grasping the logs. This simple device is quick to apply and saves the need to pass the chain beneath a heavy log. Photograph: *John Green*



Delma Nulty – encouraging young people into Shires



For the first time a woman will judge the 2017 Shire Horse of the Year championship. Diana Zeuner spoke to her about the appointment

Q Delma, you have been appointed judge for the 2017 Shire Horse of the Year championship at the Horse of the Year Show at Birmingham NEC in October – the first woman to do so. That's a fantastic achievement. Tell us your reaction to the news and your hopes for the occasion.

The invitation arrived just a few days after my father's funeral so I'm afraid my reaction to the news was slightly overshadowed by my father's passing. It wasn't until several months later that I realised the magnitude of what I was about to undertake. Obviously when it finally sank in I was delighted to be chosen to be the first female to judge the Shire Horse of the Year championship. It is a great honour and I am very humbled

by my appointment. My hopes for the day are the same as they are wherever I judge, that I will have some good animals forward for my inspection.

Q How will you prepare for the task of judging the best of the best in the Shire world, and what are the things you will be looking for in your winner (without giving too much away, obviously!)

I don't think I will prepare for this judging appointment any differently than I do for any other show that I judge. Every time I judge a show each animal that comes before me gets the same appraisal and HOYS will be no different. What am I looking for in the winner? Well, until I have finished judging them I won't know!

Q Tell us about your background with Shires and farming, your family links, and horses that have been special to you.

My background with Shires and farming has been life-long. My great grandparents bred Shires and farmed up the road from the farm that I have lived on all my life. My grandfather, Anson Franklin, bought Higher Minn End Farm a few years after he and my grandmother married in 1929. He registered his first home-bred Shire under the Bosley Minns prefix in 1936 and since then there have always been Shires under that prefix residing here. He was the last man in Bosley to have a tractor as he loved to work the land with Shires. He was one of that small group of men who kept the breed going through the 'dark' days; his heart ruled his head for which I am truly thankful.

From the age of five or six I accompanied my grandad to shows, and the bug bit. He would think nothing of doing 20 shows in a season. He was never that bothered by a red rosette: he went to a show simply because he enjoyed it, if he did come back with a red rosette or a trophy, well that was a bonus. I was a very lucky lass because I grew up surrounded by the great names of the past – Joss Holland, John Suckley, Tom Yates, Charles Etches, Ernest Cosgrove, Reggie Nunn, Tom Moss, Frank Williamson, and many more were all friends and contemporaries of my grandad.

After Grandad died in 1979 Dad took over and whilst we still did some showing Dad was more concerned with preserving blood lines, something that I am also passionate about. There have been many Bosley Minns Shires during my lifetime but there are three that stick out from the past. Bosley Minns Dawn was a Tremoelgoch Bengie-sired mare that did a fair bit of winning in the 1970s. I loved to show her; she was a big dark brown mare and she and I had a lot of fun beating Dad who showed the Royston Harold-sired mare, Bosley Minns Queenie. Arlin Wareing always had a yearning to buy Queenie but Dad was too attached to her. The last one that impacted on my life was the first I bred under my own Dane Valley Prefix. Dane Valley Princess Royal was by Edingale Sir William, then owned by Jim Yates. We did a fair bit of showing with her but it was her foals that through the late 1980s and early 90s gave me some nice wins.

Q Can you think of special moments in your life with Shires, which live on in the memory?

There have been many occasions with Shires which have shaped my life. I have been a member of the Midland Shire Foal

Carol Stevens



(1) Pip Read, right, with Lancashire Premier King, and from left, David Sherwood with Cragg Hall Connor and Nicola Read with Bryn Ffynnon Foxy at the Royal Norfolk Show, 2016.

them and competing in young handler classes. At the same time they bought a three-year-old black Shire, Sam. He had never been shown and hardly been handled but the following year we attended the National Shire Horse Show where we were placed eighth out of 16 in the young handler class. Later that year he was sold to Colin Horler of Radford Shires where he went on to be their single horse for a couple of seasons and had a place in their team.

What happened next?

When I was 17 I was offered a job at Radford Shires and so met up again with Sam (or Brigadier as he had become). My time there was well spent and I learnt to drive a pair of horses, had a go at timber extraction, and under the watchful eye of Tracy Horler, learnt to clean harness to a high standard.

After two years Brigadier came up for sale and the temptation was too much. He was now seven, an ideal age and with plenty of experience for my first Shire. In early Spring 1998 we moved back home to my parents in Hertfordshire so I could start showing under my own name. The next big acquisition was my white Jersey mineral water dray from Rex Vass of Hampshire. It was eye catching as it was the only white one on the circuit! We had already had a single set of harness

We discover more about one of our keen showpeople As much fun as you can have with Shires!

The heavy horse world is full of people making their mark in and out of the showing, at fairs and rallies, workings and parades, in-hand or turnout, or decorated harness – one of these is Pip Read.

Pip and her partner Stuart are based in the village of Upwell just outside Downham Market, Norfolk. Their four black Shires, Whitewater Bonnie, Cragg Hall Connor, Lancashire Premier King and Bryn Ffynnon Foxy can be seen all over the country at events large and small. But Pip's love of heavies dates back to the early 1990s.

How did it all start?

Having grown up with horses I first came into heavies when I was 12. As a birthday treat I was taken to the National Shire Horse Show at Peterborough and from that point I was hooked. Soon afterwards my parents bought their first Shire from Brookfield Shires, a black gelding. Their dray was purchased from Mike Flood and so we started attending events.

In 1992 Dad met Mike Grayson of Loch Creran Clydesdales, based not far from us, and they decided to put on a working day for charity. It took place in May 1993 and on the back of that event

Hertfordshire Heavy Horse Association came about. Mike and his wife Kathy were firm believers in encouraging young people to get involved with heavies and soon I started attending shows with





2017 National Shire Horse Show

(1) Female champion was Cotebrook Loch Anna, for the second year running, seen here with owner Alistair King. She also took the junior championship having been judged top-placed three-year-old.

(2) Horse of the Year Show ridden qualifier was Morag Snow on Gautby Arclid Flashman who celebrated in style.

(3) Matthew King with his King George V Cup stallion champion, Snelson Gatsby. Bred by John Williamson, the horse also won the junior championship having been top-placed in the three-year-olds.

(4) Charlotte Webb had a good show with several wins including the decorated harness class with Dothan Silver Coin, here receiving the trophy from show chairman John Peacock.



1

The series for ridden heavy horse enthusiasts by *Annie Rose* of *Cumbrian Heavy Horses*

Under saddle

“Summer days . . . drifting away . . .”

When I wake to lambs bleating, sun shining and a hum of activity I could (almost!) burst into song. At last summer is here – isn't it wonderful to be back to better, warmer weather? The opportunity to enjoy the partnership between you and your horse, meander down country lanes, enjoy a pub lunch whilst your horse grazes contentedly . . . Suddenly all the back-breaking work over winter pays off! Hopefully you'll have overhauled your hairy legged equine friend, he's passed the MOT, you have researched your routes and have loads of great ideas for summer.

Heavy horses of all breeds are more than capable of riding outside over a variety of terrain, providing they are fittened, as they can do well on long routes. Little Prince and I, alongside Sparky and Therry, competed at novice level with Endurance GB, going to 42km over difficult mountainous routes (and getting graded, a measure of fitness and speed).

Safety first

To encourage everyone to get out there safely I thought I would look at safety whilst riding, with information on what to take with you, as riding outside is a whole different ball game to riding in a school. The environment is open with a multitude of hazards, some real (which we see) and some imagined (which the horse notices, often with drama queen reactions). With the heavier horse just be aware of long term consequences of concussive injuries, so be kind on harder surfaces.

Access to good riding routes in the UK is variable, with some areas having amazing hacking, some none, with more riders using roads to get onto bridleways. Sadly, the incidence of accidents on roads in the UK appears to be rising steeply. This might be down to organisations such as the British Horse Society (BHS) encouraging us to report incidents, but is more likely to be due to a larger number of equines being ridden on the road, and sadly, more impatient,

(1) A day including roadwork in mind, everyone is in high vis and carrying saddlebags. (2) Annie Rose enjoying Endurance GB with Little Prince. (3) Close-up of the kit, and enjoying the Roman fort on day five of a riding holiday.

thuggish and rude drivers. To this end, do look at the BHS website (www.bhs.org.uk) where you can find information on their reporting of accidents on our roads, should you need to.

Incidentally, I cannot recommend membership highly enough. There is a wealth of information available through the BHS regarding access, bridleways and insurance (gold membership gives you this), and their charitable work is amazing. If you ever use a riding centre for lessons or to enjoy hacking outside I recommend using a BHS Approved Centre. We heavy horse owners are not regarded as 'mainstream' yet, but it is happening, so joining organisations such as the BHS provides you with much information and advice which applies to any type of horse.

If your route involves roadwork, wear high visibility kit at *all* times. Even off road, be aware of the potential requirement for (worst case scenario) a fall requiring an air ambulance. High vis items can be useful in such situations to help the pilot see you and land safely, so although you might not wear it, have it with you.



2