



Shire handler in the making . . .

Champion Shire at Warrington Horse Show was Martin Fountain's seven-year-old Woodhouse Calendar Girl, home-bred by Woodfield Ted, who was taken on a lap of honour by 10-year-old Will Fountain, having been shown by his grandfather. "It was a wonderful sight," says Lynne Shore, "and my photo is one out of about 700 of the day!"

New Percheron turnout turns heads

It was good to see a new turnout horsed by a Percheron with a great presence, pictured here at the Suffolk County Show. Barry Atkin's Ludwell Salix Alba pulls a 1911 Essex Barge Wagon, ex-Maldon Ironworks. The enormous horse is by Willingham AxI and out of Malcolm & Lynn Scurrrell's Willingham Ella. His owner, Barry Atkin, told Jane Muntz-Torres at the Royal Norfolk Show that he had had him measured at the vets; he was at least 19.2hh and weighed 1,090kg. Barry said: "Fortunately he has a temperament to die for, and is a joy to own! And is a great credit to his breeders Malcolm & Lynn Scurrrell of Ludwell in Dorset".



Kevin Wright

Duke lives up to his name

Fiona Clark's Suffolk stallion Shotleyfield Dazzling Duke, was up to his tricks again in the ring at the Suffolk County Show. A great one for showing off his moves, he was doubtless celebrating his Suffolk Punch championship and reserve supreme at the event, with a display of all four feet off the ground once more. Handler Stephen Gowing knows what to expect! Later in the season Dazzling Duke won the Royal Norfolk Show Stuart Group In-Hand Supreme championship for the second year running. "Not bad for a cart horse!" says Roger Clark.



Kevin Wright



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Former Horse of the Year champion, ride judge and trainer, Nigel Fuller, has been working with the British Ridden Heavy Horse Society on promoting high standards in ridden classes. He provides some useful advice for Heavy Horse World readers

Top tips for ridden heavy horse classes

I have been involved in training, competing and judging both riding and driving horses for many years, but it's only quite recently that I have become familiar with the 'heavies'. Some people may well say: "What does he know?" My response is that, at the end of the day, heavy horses are no different to any other, and good stable manners, training and horsemanship should be the same whatever the breed or type of horse.

For many people in the heavy horse world, moving into the ridden field of horse showing is a whole new ball-game. It is for those individuals that I offer a few guidelines on the production of a ridden horse to help them along the way. All trainers and producers in any discipline will have different views and methods but the following are the ones that have worked for me.

Find your horse

Not all heavies will suit the ridden job. The horse will need to be forward going and athletic. Traditionally, these horses were expected to work at a walk and a steady working trot. The ridden job is now asking them to walk, trot, show some extension, canter and gallop.

Fitness

The horses are expected to carry themselves in an outline in all areas, go forward and carry the rider safely. A horse that is shown in-hand will have a very different level of fitness to a ridden horse. Moving a ton of horse flesh in

canter over a period of time requires the horse to be fit in its muscle tone and breathing.

Feeding

Traditionally, heavy horses, as with any other breed, are fed good hay for bulk and hard feed to provide them with the extra nutritional elements they require. Middlings make up a very large part of the heavy horse short feed. This is adequate for the steady work of an in-hand draught horse, but we are now asking these horses to canter and gallop. As the old saying goes: "Feed according to work done". The heavy horse is being asked to perform as we would expect a ridden

(1) The ridden heavy horse line-up at the Barber Family Ridden Heavy Horse of the Year Championship at HOYS 2016 – something to aspire to! (2) Nigel Fuller schooling a Shire. (3) Heavy horse ridden classes at county and smaller shows throughout the country usually now have two judges, a conformation judge, who will be a specialist on one or more of the heavy breeds, and a ride judge, whose sole function is to judge the horse's ridden ability. They are allowed fun too, as you can see from this photo of the ridden class judges at the Royal Cheshire Show! On the right is conformation judge, Ellis Davies and on the left, the ride judge, Tracey Southern. (4) Ridden heavy horse champion qualifier at the Royal Norfolk Show this year was David Curtis' Percheron, Hales Hector, ridden by Jamie Bradbury.

hunter or cob to perform and must therefore be fed accordingly. The introduction of energy food such as competition mix or even oats should help to provide the vigour and dynamism I feel big horses need to perform at the faster paces we are expecting of them.



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Rosemary Cooper talked to the breeder of this year's National Shire Horse Show stallion champion

The Snelson bloodline – destined for immortality

It's always a pleasure to meet a gentleman like John Williamson, breeder of this year's winner of the King George V Cup, Snelson Gatsby, now owned and shown by Alistair & Matthew King.

John's grandfather George, born in the 1880's, was a keen ploughman. He bred a few Shires before the First World War, but sadly died aged 40, and the existence of these horses didn't come to light until John discovered some old studbooks. When the Mobberley Shire Horse Society was formed, it brought a stallion to this part of Cheshire, so John's father, Frank, started to breed Shires. The foal would be left in the stable while the mare did a few hours' work, after which she was ridden home, going straight to her foal.

The foals were good enough to register, so Frank started to show locally. Horses could be led from the farm to Chelford Show just down the road. One

of his fillies was Snelson Duchess; John was surprised to find that George had also registered a mare by this name. In 1963 the second Duchess bred a colt, Snelson Supreme, by Polwarth Spellbinder IV. Supreme was too good to geld, so Frank kept him as a stallion. When the Mobberley Society hired him, Tom Moss sent mares to him, and one of the fillies he bred was Hillmoor Lady Alice. Her son, Tony Bull's Hillmoor Prince Charles, sired the great Moorfield Edward. So Snelson Supreme's bloodline seems destined for immortality.

Frank rented Wood End Farm where he kept a herd of Holstein cattle, but had space for more horses. In the 1970s he regularly took four horses to shows, and the whole family became involved. John, born in 1952, learned to plait as a youngster. In 1975, he married Janet; their children are Jane, born in 1977, and John Frank, born in 1981. Both help with the horses, as do Jane's children,



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William and twin girls Izzy and Lucy. A neighbour, Dennis Flanagan, who had been a stallion leader in his youth, also helped at shows, continuing after Frank's death in 1980.

Over the years the family kept about 20 stallions and bred half a dozen foals a year. Seeking an outcross in the late 1970s, Frank bought a two-year-old colt by Crossfields Supreme, Trem-y-Wyddfa Dylan. His dam Edingale Wendy was the fourth generation of mares bred by E J (Joss) Holland, whom John describes as a tremendous breeder. Dylan was an 'old-fashioned' Shire of great substance whose daughters were deep powerful mares. Crossed with stallions of modern type, they bred excellent show horses.

Since John could run faster than Frank, when he was 14 he took over showing. In 1972 Frank sold two fillies, Snelson Midnight and Marianne, to America, followed by Snelson Katrina. More Snelson horses were exported, to Canada, Australia, Holland and Germany.

As a two-year-old, one of Frank's fillies, Snelson Elizabeth, qualified for the Shire Horse of the Year (SHOY) final. She was a lovely horse to show, being quiet enough for young handlers' classes with Jane and John Frank. She was just as good as a brood mare, and in 1990 she bred a colt, Snelson Magnus, by Dothan Mastermind. Magnus was Spring Show junior stallion champion in 1993, and reserve champion three times. Being very quiet and intelligent like his sire, Jane could ride him around the farm. For several seasons he covered over 40 mares a year. His sister Snelson Mary won five championships as a two-year-old, and was sixth at SHOY. John's most successful mare of recent times is Snelson Suranne, named after the actress Suranne Jones. In 2016 she won six championships.

Gatsby's dam, Hainton Quest, is a daughter of Wheatland King and great grand-daughter of Cubley Charlie. When Gatsby was a foal, John's neighbour Emma asked what he was called. John replied that he was too young to have

Goodwin trinity



John Goodwin has been scooping up turnout championships up and down the country this summer, competing with four-horse teams and unicorns, as well as pairs and singles. Our photographer, *Kevin Wright*, captured him perfectly in this shot at the Suffolk County Show.

