



Luke Beech driving Ness Morris' Suffolks and Charlotte Webb's Shires to the White & Co pantechnicon was reserve in the team trade turnouts at the New Forest Show. (See also page 36) Photograph: Kevin Wright

Congratulations to this year's HOYS winners!

Paul Bedford's Fellthorpe Esther Jane won this year's Shire Horse of the Year Championship at the Horse of the Year Show, after glowing praise from the judge, William Livesey. Paul is pictured receiving his trophy. The championship is supported by the Shire Horse Society. Winner of the McNeil Family British Ridden Heavy Horse Championships at HOYS was Melindwr Lady Olwen ridden by Abigail Gresty, seen here at the trophy presentation

with mother and son Kim & Joseph McNeil, who were extremely proud to sponsor the championship. Kim said: "The heavy horse is the true workman of the equine family and is a magnificent animal." HOYS event director Emma Williams says: "The heavy horses are a significant part of our country's heritage and to have them so well supported on such a large stage is great for the lifeline of these breeds." Photographs: **Kevin Wright**



Promoting Shires at *Countryfile Live*, Yorkshire

The Shire Horse Society took its demonstration sequence honed at BBC *Countryfile Live* Oxford up to the popular television series' new venue at Castle Howard in North Yorkshire this year. On each of the four days they staged a musical ride and drive, a 'Shire horses through the ages' presentation and an agility course, a fun event, ladies versus gents. The public were able to get up close to the Shires in the stabling area where a meet & greet opportunity went down particularly well. *Countryfile* presenter Matt Baker was filmed with the Shires, and by all accounts thoroughly enjoyed the moment. (1) BBC *Countryfile Live* event visitors enjoy meeting the Shires. (2, 3, 4) 'Shires through the ages', with Alison Morris, George Coney and Jo Wadsworth. (5 & 6) Turnouts and riders demonstrate their skills in the musical ride and drive. Photographs: **Carol Stevens**



TOMORROW'S HORSEPEOPLE

Alice Ford – a young handler who made history!

I am Alice Ford, aged 15, and I live at Eardswick Hall, Minshull Vernon, near Crewe in Cheshire.

Tell us about your major achievement so far? I have competed in and won many young handler classes across the country with Shires. This led to me gaining the title of National Shire Horse Young Handler of the Year for the last three years' running, preparing, plaiting and showing Richard Bloom's Fellthorpe Clarry. I was also successful in winning the Midland Shire Horse Society Foal Show Young Handler Competition in 2018 and was runner-up in 2017: I qualified for this year's 2019 show. I was the only person to have ever won both competitions in the same year and so I was given a free membership to the Shire Horse Society for my achievements!

Where did all your skill and experience come from! From an early age I attended the Shire horse and county shows helping in my own way – passing flights or trying my hand at dusting the mare's legs. As I got older, I became an important member of my family's show team, plaiting and preparing the horses as well as aiding my mum (Sarah Ford) with most of the Shires. I intend to carry on my family legacy competing under the Hainton/Hainton Eardswick prefix. My interest in riding has also provided me with the opportunity to begin breaking in one of the Shire mares to ride and I am currently riding a home-grown Hainton half-Shire mare, which I hope to compete in pony club and other competitions once she gains more experience.

Which are your favourite horses? My favourite breed of horses would have to be the Shire – their gentle nature and sensible mannerisms ensure they live up to their reputation. However, I do love to compete my horses and have been very successful at show jumping. My best horse, Hainton Hidden Treasure, was bred by my uncle in Lincolnshire, and with him I have competed in many pony club and other competitions, most recently qualifying as an individual for the National Schools Championships at Addington Manor in Buckinghamshire.

Have you a special story about your time with heavies? This year I was lucky enough to travel to Australia where my mum had been invited to judge the Sydney Shire Horse Show. I enjoyed this thoroughly, and it was good to see the different ways and traditions with the Shires in Australia. From watching barrel racing to dressage with the Shires we saw how the Australian owners used their full potential and loved the nature and strength of their Shires.



Kevin Wright

Who has helped you get where you are today? I was born and bred into the Shire horse world and my grandad, Ernie Cosgrove, is a constant inspiration. My mum has passed down her knowledge and enthusiasm like my grandad did to her, passing on trade secrets and teaching me the ins and outs of the showing and day to day caring of the



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horses. My auntie Sue, uncle Maurice and uncle David have also inspired me and encouraged me on my Shire horse journey. We are regulars at many of the Lincolnshire shows, attending Lincoln County Show annually. I love being Ernie Cosgrove's granddaughter (or Cozzie's daughter) and hearing stories and memories of my grandad from his



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Friendly welcome for all at Aldborough & Boroughbridge Show

Text and photographs: Carol Stevens

The Aldborough & Boroughbridge Show is held in July at Newby Hall & Gardens, Ripon, a filming location for scenes in the recent BBC series, *Gentleman Jack*. Verity Bedford is the heavy horse secretary and ensures a well-run show and very friendly welcome. Judging this year was Brian Winn. (1) Winner of the turnout class was Stuart Green with Jack in an immaculately presented working rulle. (2) Three generations of the Bedford family parade for the trophy presentation, with two-year-old Reggie (son of Matthew and Verity) and his three-year-old miniature horse, Minnie stealing the show. (3) Ian Parkin won his first red rosette in the three-year-old mare or gelding class after 13 years' showing with Cottage Farm Popsicle: his new flight colours of red, green and black were made by Sharon Connolly in tribute to Ian's son, a member of Burma Battalion in The Yorkshire Regiment. (4) Supreme champion was Paul Bedford's Fellthorpe Esther Jane, handled by Matthew Bedford. (5) Junior champion and winning foal was Richard Bedford's Hartcliff Olivia: Richard also took reserve champion with Skelton Phoebe. (6) Young handler winner was Katy Darley. (7) Robinson's Brewery Shire team gave a driving demonstration with Helen Preece at the reins, assisted by Lisa Trotter. In other results Paul Bedford won the yearling class with his Clydesdale, Roughlands Refiner and the two-year-old class with Thorpe Hill Stella, handled by Robert Bedford.



Roy Tidman goes back to the early years of the English Cart Horse Society for Stud Book engravings of the champion stallions in the 1880s

The way they were!

Images of the champion Shire stallions in the 1880s Stud Books all appear to be of a similar stamp – short-legged, deep-bodied, tightly-coupled – and without excessive hair, which became more popular in the 1890s with horses like Lockinge Forest King.

The engravers varied, including Palfrey, Frohawk, Carter, Handel Gear and more, so we may be sure the similarities were not just down to one man's artistic license.

These were the types the English Cart Horse Society (later the Shire Horse Society) was encouraging breeders to aim for, to provide first class working horses for the farms and streets of Britain.

Virtually all my early stud cards up to and including the 1880s give a fairly standard description for Cart/Shire stallions – standing within an inch or so of 17hh, on short clean legs; with sound feet; a good middle; light, free action, and a docile temperament.

So here they are:

- (1) Admiral, No 71 – 1880
- (2) Spark, No 2497 – 1881 & 1883
- (3) Bar None, No 2388 – 1882
- (4) Enterprise of Cannock, No 2772 – 1884
- (5) Prince William, No 3956 – 1885 & 1888
- (6) Staunton Hero, No 2918 – 1886
- (7) Harold, No 3703 – 1887
- (8) Vulcan, No 4145 – 1889 & 1891

There were others that lived and died before the London Shows really got under way, or were just too old to compete – horses like (9) **England's Glory**, No 705, foaled 1814 and (10) **Honest Tom**, No 1105, foaled 1865.

So if you were the judge and these eight breed society champions were lined up before you, champion against champion, which would you stand at the head of the line and make supreme champion?

Or would you consider that none of them met the desirable standards of a modern Shire stallion?

And then, of course, there were the champion mares – but that is for another day!

