

SPRING SUNSHINE FOR DRIVING EVENT:

Halleluia! The sun shone down on both days of the Escrick Park driving event on 23rd/24th May, making life much more pleasant for the 63 entrants plus organisers and stewards. Competitors from all over the region converged on the two day event to do battle across eleven classes. John Wilkinson took the honours in the pre-novice and despite a high attrition rate of only four finishers out of thirteen starters, led throughout with an extremely respectable score, ahead of his nearest rival by a considerable margin.

There were three competitors in the Novice Horse qualifier and four in the Novice Pony. In the former, Graham Heath took the win from a hard-pushing Becky Pflanz and in the pony class 13 year old Michael Hodgson showed his somewhat older competitors the way home with his tough little Shetland pony. In the club Novice Kelly Wilson gave another polished performance to lead the class throughout with her smart chestnut pony and in the horse class Carolyn Cunningham won the dressage with her tall bay horse, dropping down to third place after the cones but pulling back up into the lead with a good marathon, less than one penalty behind Steve Nichols.

Wendy Mason from Scarborough took her second win of the season in the Intermediate Horse class from Lorraine Swift, and Ollie Dernie made her journey all the way from Scotland worthwhile by winning the Intermediate pony from Jill Williams.

In the open horse class Judy Hilditch made good use of the club's recent training sessions by performed a good dressage test, but then had an uncharacteristic 12 penalties in the cones. However, her horse Bishop Blue stormed round the marathon obstacles to record an extremely fast time giving her the win ahead of Alec Jeffrey in second place. Jackie Herd took the Open Pony class and after a whole year off from driving she showed no visible cobwebs at all and was also awarded the prize for the best dressage and the lowest overall score of the competition. Fastest marathon however, went to flying Lancastrian Gary Brown, something of a specialist in this phase, which brought him up into second place.

Six competitors fought it out in the pairs class and the eventual winner was Tony Mould from first time visitor Chris Hillman. Pat Cooper took the mixed Tandem and Team class, the teams providing quite a contrast with one of small ponies and one of huge horses!

End of first day prize giving took place in the marquee, which everyone agreed was an excellent facility, allowing for a good get together on the Saturday night over wine and some delicious sausages!

The whole circus now moves on to Allerton Park, so lets hope for a repeat of the excellent weather and camaraderie.