

Jump and Drive at Hand Equestrian Centre.

The inaugural ride and drive class held at Hand Stadium's Christmas show was a very festive affair. The camaraderie between riders and drivers was good and the true spirit of Christmas was very evident, but the competition was still fierce. At first glance it was hard to take it seriously, with Nick Burd, the owner of Hand Equestrian strutting his stuff as Cat woman with a Madonna-like bosom, outdone only by well-known show jumper Paul Taylor's cleavage that would have put Jordan in the shade.

It soon became very evident which show jumping horses were used to seeing carriages. Terri Hill's mount became totally freaked out by the whole experience and had an absolute 'wobbler'. It was to Terri's credit that she stayed on board, and she was quite a sight with her Cinderella robes flowing throughout the whole performance.

The drivers initially drove a cones course against the clock and the clock kept running while the show jumpers negotiated a well-designed course. The combined score counted. (Balls off cones, and poles down added five seconds for each incident.)

The fastest four teams after the first round went off into a jump/drive-off. The Shepherds, Father Christmases, Wild West and the Superheroes battled it out. Fourth were the Father Christmases of David and Matthew Broome. Third was the Wild West team of Rachel Ball and Kirsty Pearce. Second were the superheroes of James Binns and Nick Burd, and the winners of this inaugural event were the Shepherds of James Broome and Martin Edwards.

This was a spectacular fun class, topped afterwards by a festive supper in the Hand Equestrian Sport function room where the food was as good as any five-star hotel. For those who didn't managed to make the event, put it in your calendar for 2006.

The contenders:

Andy Pilkington, Partnered with show jumper **Abi Bottomley**. Fancy dress theme: The Queen and her soldiers

James Binns, Partnered with event rider **Nick Burd**. Fancy dress theme: The Superheroes of Batman, Robin and Cat woman.

Rachel Ball, Partnered with show jumper **Kirsty Pearce**. Fancy dress theme: Calamity Jane's Wild West

David Broome, Partnered by his show jumping son **Matthew Broome**. Fancy dress theme: A Triplet of Father Christmases

Trisha Luxton, Partnered by show jumper **Paul Taylor**. Fancy dress theme: Fairies

John Horne, Partnered by show jumper **Julie Nunn**. Fancy dress theme: The three musketeers.

JAMES BROOME. Partnered by show jumper **Martin Edwards**. Fancy dress theme: Shepherds

BARBARA NADIN. Partnered by show jumper **Terri Hill**. Fancy dress theme: Cinderella and the Ugly sisters.

REPORT AND PICTURES COURTESY OF KATHRYN PEARN AT " EQUESTRIAN NOW! " MAGAZINE.