

THE GREAT WESTERN HARNESS CLUB  
NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2011





[www.gwhc.co.uk](http://www.gwhc.co.uk)

Hello, and Goodbye,

Sadly after only 1 yr back in the saddle (so to speak) and only 4 newsletters later, I have decided to retire my post and let some one new, with some refreshing ideas have a go at this fun, but somewhat time consuming job.

Unfortunately "Life" has taken over, working 5 days a week, and what with the social lives of my two lively lads (which is better than mine, I hasten to add!!) I have little time to dedicate to the Newsletter. I also do feel that because I am not in the "competing loop" any more, (*and before Gail tells me she has a pony and carriage I can use,*) nor do I intend to, - I have little knowledge of what is really going on in the background....

Therefore, this role would be suited to someone who regularly goes to events with the GWHC.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for welcoming me back last year after a 4 yr absence from the GWHC, but it is time to say Good bye again!

Good luck to all you competitors out there, have fun and be safe!

*Lorraine*

Anyone interested in taking over the newsletter should contact Gail.

## Chairman's Report

The nights are drawing out, spring is just around the corner and we have the new driving season ahead of us to look forward to. We have more activities and events for you this year with a more varied programme. It would be great, if we could promote these events, and the club and encourage some new members to join and share our enthusiasm for carriage driving. So please help us to gain new members and maybe get some old members back on board and get our club back buoyant again.

Of course the indoor season is drawing to a close and by the time you read this the British indoor champs held at Keysoe, Bedfordshire will have taken place. The GWHC will be well represented here, with Lisa Phillips, David Whitfield Hazel Fisher, Colin Cornwall, David Browne, Isobel W-Warr and myself all taking part.

The Twelfth Night Supper held at the Blue Ball Exeter provided a great opportunity for old and new members to get together and enjoy each others company, without the horses present for a change. We were pleased to welcome Johnathan Waterer as guest speaker. Thank you to Trisha who organised this most enjoyable evening. See write up later in the newsletter

But what is to come next? There is the Andrew Counsell training clinic on the 30<sup>th</sup> April, to be held at Duchy. Always nice to know you can get in the dry for your 40 min lesson at this early stage of the year. Then on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May at Easter Hall Park, we have our 6<sup>th</sup> annual carriage driving taster day for beginners and novices, (can also suit as a refresher). This one is really good for anyone who might be thinking of making purchases and getting set up in the sport. So if you know anyone please call Rachel and get them booked in its only £7.50 for the day.

We have the 2 day training clinic at Easter Hall Park 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April, this is aimed at drivers with their own turnout who want to improve their skills, or that of their animals, at the start of the season. We also hope to put new members through training or testing for their competency test. Steward training can be catered for on the sat p.m. It is not however, exclusively for owner/drivers, if you have a turnout you can hire or borrow or would just like to come along and watch please give Rachel a call.

Well after all these training opportunities, we have a number of driving trials to put your skills to the test with firstly the Inside- Out at Hayes Barton, Jacobstowe, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, a beautiful venue with a relaxed atmosphere, its well worth coming just for the drive.

Then there's the Newnham Park 2 day regional qualifier. [Continued on page 17](#)

# 12<sup>th</sup> Night Supper

This was held at the Blue Ball Pub, Sandygate, Exeter on Saturday January 8<sup>th</sup>.

The weather was good - no snow, wind, rain or fog, so it was a good night for travelling. What a relief! The venue was in a good central location for member and friends to congregate, and they came from North, South, East and West, including Cornwall and Somerset as well as Devon.

We had a warm welcome from the staff and the chance to catch up with friends before we took our places in the dining room. Due to a high demand for tickets (over 50 sold) some of us were a little squashed, but the good food more than made up for this.

It was really good to see members old and new, previous members and our stalwart stewards from many events over the years, including Amanda Preston and Gina Gordon, who also arranged many previous 12<sup>th</sup> Night Suppers.

We were treated to a talk by Jonathon Waterer, who gave us a fascinating insight into his life with horses and, in recent years, his filming activities which culminated in him putting together 22 shire horses to pull the replica of the Titanic Anchor from Dudley to Netherton - a mammoth task indeed.

All in all a very successful evening, and our thanks go to Trisha for her splendid organisation.

***Anne Briggs***

## ALL ABOUT.....

### *MARITA.*

Unlike many of you my riding did not start until I was in my late twenties, I was born and brought up in Inverness. I had no opportunities for riding as a child but always had a love of animals. I joined the WRNS and married a Royal Marine moving down to Devon in 1967. After one of my husband's long tours of duty, leave (holiday to you) was given and he became bored very quickly had a look in the yellow pages for some sport to do and found a riding school in Calstock – off we went to the school and that started my life with horses.

I worked at the riding school at weekends to learn as much as possible from the mucking out upwards. I also went to the Royal Marine's grooms who looked after the parade horses and took lessons from them, very different way of teaching riding I can tell you, not for the faint hearted.

I did take part in events with the services representing the Navy. Police horses, Royal Marine Chargers, Household Cavalry horses, Gun Carriage horses and Naval riding school horses were pooled for events. The horses you rode were drawn by lots therefore you rode a different horse for each phase. This method of eventing does test your riding and you would get about five to ten minutes to ride in and get used to each horse, this way of competing does give you such a rush. I particularly remember a gun carriage horse I rode cross-country - I must admit when I saw she was hogged I did put on a neck strap just in case but she was so clever and gave me a wonderful trip.

We bought a couple of horses which we kept at livery but this did have its own problems with having to drive to the yard each time we wanted to ride.

Eventually we got our own land and moved the horses from St Dominic, this took several hours, part was through Cotehele woods and then along the riverside below Calstock and over the narrow bridge to the Devon side of the river. I started as a pleasure rider then slowly progressed to riding club events. I joined East Cornwall Riding Club while we were at livery and then Bridestowe and District Riding Club were I eventually became chairman.

My husband became ill and was unable to get on his horse, I then decided to take on loan from a lady near us a driving pony to enable my husband to keep up his interest in horses, as he was able at that time to get onto a carriage. Elizabeth McQueen who kept her horse with us (after an accident, but that is another story), agreed to take a second pony on loan and we joined the GWHC and BDS. Our first venture into a two-day event was with the ponies as singles knowing nothing about the rules, **not a good move** believe me. I drove my pony and

groomed for Liz she drove her pony and groomed for me. We had no time to breath, lack of knowledge and no chance to ask for help made it a very long and hard days. I would advise anyone taking up the sport **not to try** what I did first time out, go to steward or just go to watch there is so much to learn and take in and lots of chances to talk to those who know what they are doing.

It was suggested that the ponies should be put together as a pair, which we did. **Another bit of a mistake** - as a pair you have to go straight into open classes you are **not novice** (oh but yes I was). This I found out on arrival at our first two-day event as a pair having learned the novice test. With help from other competitors explaining what each movement involved I learned the open dressage test and I took my place in the open class (my brain had great troubles).

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# DRESSAGE ARENA

## HELPFUL ACRONYMS

A FAT BLACK MOTHER CAT HAS EIGHT KITTENS

A KINDLY ELEPHANT HAS CRUSHED MY BLINKING FOOT

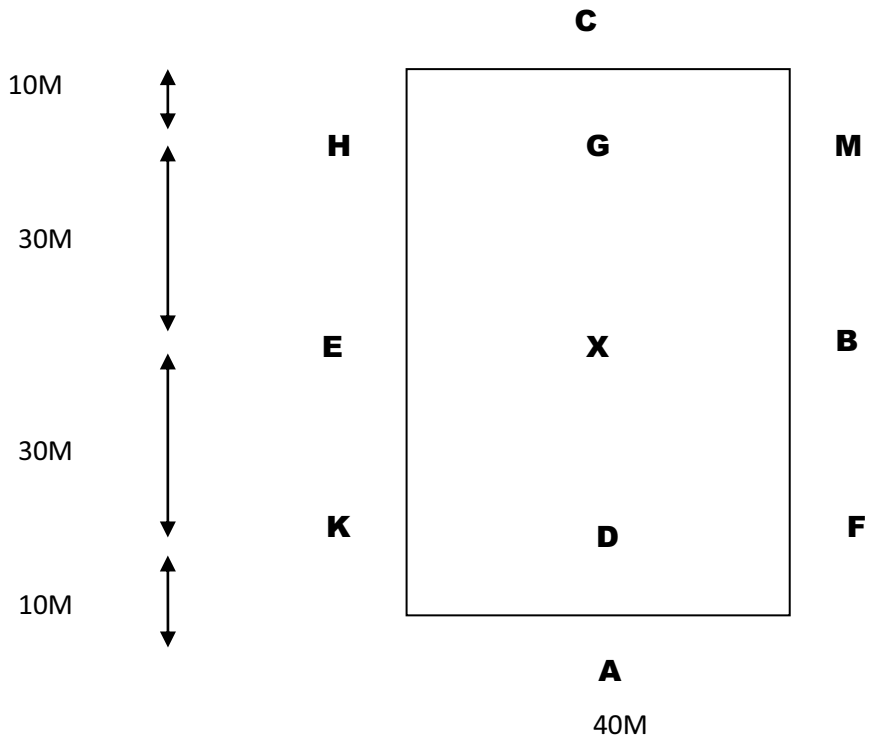
A LL KINGS EDWARD'S HORSES CAN MANAGE BIG FENCES

ALL FAT BROWN MARES CAN HARDLY EVER KICK

ALL FAT BLACK MANX CATS HATE EATING KIPPERS

## TIPS

Some times RSVP is also used in the 80 x 40 arena. See the acronyms below to check where they slot in.



# FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR GWHC

**16-17 APRIL**, TRAINING AT EASTER HALL PARK,  
CONTACT RACHEL MOAST 07971 761115

**30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**, ANDREW COUNSELL TRAINING DAY AT  
DUCHY COLLEGE,  
CONTACT RACHEL MOAST 07971 761115

**1<sup>ST</sup> MAY**, TASTER DAY AT EASTER HALL PARK,  
CONTACT GAIL PALMER 01837 810350

**22<sup>ND</sup> MAY**, INSIDE OUT COMPETITION, HAYES BARTON,  
CONTACT MIKE STAMP 01837 851675

**4-5 JUNE**, TRAINING AT EASTER HALL PARK,  
CONTACT RACHEL MOAST 07971 761115

**18-19 JUNE**, NEWNHAM PARK REGIONAL AND CLUB  
EVENT,  
CONTACT MARY JANE CAMPBELL 01752 830221

**3<sup>RD</sup> JULY**, FUN DAY AT SUNNY BANK, CULLOMPTON,  
CONTACT DAVID WHITFIELD 01884 266459

**6-7 AUGUST**, EASTER HALL PARK 2 DAY EVENT,  
CONTACT GAIL PALMER 01837 810350

**3-4 SEPTEMBER**, MOORHAVEN DRIVE, IVYBRIDGE,  
CONTACT JONATHAN MATHYS 01752 691718

## OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**1<sup>ST</sup> MAY**, FENIX 1 DAY EVENT, WELLINGTON,  
CONTACT JO BROADBENT **01823 652600**

**28-29 MAY**, WHHC REDENHAM 2 DAY EVENT  
CONTACT BRENDA MAY **01590 682356**

**31<sup>ST</sup> JULY**, FENIX 1 DAY EVENT, WELLINGTON,  
CONTACT JO BROADBENT **01823 652600**

**27-28 AUGUST**, WHHC, WEST OVERTON 2 DAY  
EVENT  
CONTACT BRENDA MAY **01590 682356**



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**01271 371271 or email  
david@toptown.co.uk**

**Membership Fee's**

**Adult** £25.00 + £8.25 BHDTA fee

**Family** £55.00+ £8.25 BHDTA fee

**Junior** £15.00 + £8.25 BHDTA fee

**Associate** (non driver) £12.50

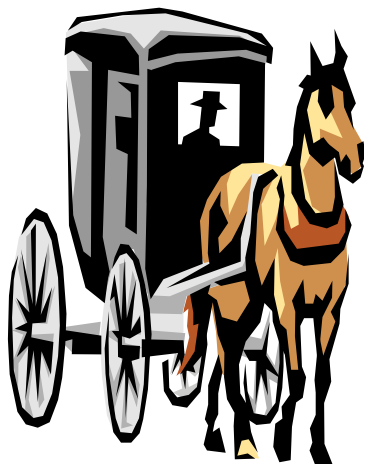
**Club Shop**

**For all your gwhc clothing and  
accessories.**

**Contact Marita Wakeham**

**[www.gwhc.co.uk](http://www.gwhc.co.uk)**

# BLISLAND HARNESS MAKERS



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**CONTACT JANE TALBOT-SMITH  
01579 320593**

Marita , continued

In those early days a pair was a pair be they 16'2 or 10'2 – and timings etc were the same for all sizes as all phases of an event, needless to say our ponies being 10'2 coloured Dartmoor crosses were usually last in the multiple classes with a cricket score of penalties. I may have started all the wrong way but have had a great deal of fun and learned lots from actually having a go and from the other members of the club. Liz and I drove these ponies for many years taking it in turns to drive or groom at every possible type of club and BDS events, we even went showing at Okehampton and Liskeard annual shows (lots of cleaning and polishing oh yes and painting over the chips the carriage gets - I wonder how!). Some of you may remember Jono and Jemimah and may find an article about these ponies later in a newsletter. Jono is still with us and is well in his thirties a very cheeky old man!

# EASTER HALL PARK

We offer carriage driving and riding lessons from beginners to advanced standard, our facilities include an indoor, outdoor arena, and over 180 acres of land, we have varied cross country jumps, and a course of driving obstacles.

Easter Hall Park also offers training livery to carriage driving or riding horses, we take horses in for breaking and corrective schooling, and work closely with the owner to develop a successful relationship with their horse. We also have a holiday let on site useful for owners that wish to visit their horse during their training programme.

Along with plenty of pony days and pony club camps we also hold an annual carriage driving trails, which is always well attended and a great day out for all involved.

There are sometimes carriage driving and riding horses up for sale so it's worth checking out our website.

[www.easterhallpark.co.uk](http://www.easterhallpark.co.uk)

**01837810350.**



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## ***Is history boring.....***

There is an old Hotel/Pub in Marble Arch, London which used to have gallows adjacent. Prisoners were taken to the gallows (after a fair trial of course) to be hung. The horse drawn dray, carting the prisoners was accompanied by an armed guard, who would stop the dray outside the pub and ask the prisoners if he would like “ONE LAST DRINK” If he said YES it was referred to as “ONE FOR THE ROAD”. If he declined, that prisoner was “ON THE WAGON”. So there you go – more bleeding history.

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were

starting to smell brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water...the man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies, by then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying “doesn't throw the baby out with the bath water”.

The floor was dirt, only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying “Dirt Poor”. The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in winter when wet so they spread thresh (straw) on the floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on they added more thresh until when you opened the door it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway. Hence a thresh hold.

**Continued on page 14**

Sometimes they could obtain pork which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could “Bring home the bacon”. They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around talking and “Chew the fat”.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle and guests got the top or “The Upper Crust”.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky, the combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of “Holding a Wake”.

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people so they would dig up coffins and take the bones to a bone-house to reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins one out of twenty five coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. They would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell, thus someone could be “Saved by the Bell” or was considered a Dead Ringer”. And that’s the truth.

**With Thanks to Marita for this Interesting article.**

## NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2011

**Chairman's Report;** Gail said she thought the AGM went well, but it would have been nice to see more people. It was better for being early, as any increase in subs could be implemented straight away. As the BHDTA had not increased their fees there was no need for the Club to increase theirs.

The newsletter needed to go out early enough to advertise the AGM so people could put the date in their diaries. Some members have said they are quite happy to have their newsletter sent via email, members email addresses need updating.

Gail had read through all the filled in questioners from the AGM, and people seemed to be fairly happy with what the committee were putting on for them. A number of people said they liked the social events, as you could meet people for a chat without the worry of the horse needing to be fed or got ready for the next phase of an event.

The juniors and new drivers would receive continuing support from other members for as long as they needed.

Everyone said they liked the website, but would like to see more pictures and write ups about the Clubs activities.

52 people attended the 12<sup>th</sup> Night Dinner, which was thoroughly enjoyed along with the after dinner talk.

It is nice that the Juniors results are getting in the press, but it would be even better if they mentioned they belonged to the GWHC.

Chris Hillman of the BHDTA would like to promote driving to all social classes.

The Club shop needs to get to events so that members can see what is for sale, and also what can be ordered.

The Club needs more trophies for events, and a book for winners to sign so they can be traced.

[Continued on page 16](#)

**Secretaries Report;** I have a list of the BHDTA 2011 clinics if anyone wants to see them. The BHDTA membership categories for 2011 are;

Club (restricted); costs £40 and gives members 3<sup>rd</sup> party legal liability cover at all events whether or not they are members of the organizing club.

Associate; costs £54 and offers 3<sup>rd</sup> party legal liability cover 24/7 for 365 days of the year. This cover extends to all animals owned by the member and to anyone handling the animals with the member's permission.

First time full BHDTA members can join for £70 in their first year (even if they have previously joined as a groom or associate). Full details of each category can be seen on the website, [www.horsedrivingtrials.co.uk](http://www.horsedrivingtrials.co.uk) under "membership" in the index.

**Any Other Business;** David suggested that the whole committee should take part in organizing an event, without participating themselves, so that members could get to know their committee.

It was suggested to do a treasure hunt to appeal to the whole family.

To have a drive at Mike Stamps along with the BDS.

The juniors are going to Stowe 18<sup>th</sup>- 22<sup>nd</sup> April for a training day.

Anne says she cannot do the Dastardly Drive this year as the tide times are all wrong. But she will try and organize a cliff walk and pub lunch, then perhaps at a later date try and organize an informal drive over some of the route.

A Mr. Michael Van de Lar would like to do some training days with club members, his specialty is dressage.

Gail was worried that Health and Safety was not being covered properly at events, Liz and her husband will sort it out.

Johnny Mathys event in September, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> will be the BBQ, in the evening, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> will be the event. This way people can go home, on the 4<sup>th</sup>, as soon as they have finished.

Continued from inside front cover.....

ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AND 19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE,  
This fantastic venue does have some steep hill so animals will need to be fit. For the less fit you can always do the Sec E only.

Also at Easter Hall Park, a training weekend 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> June.

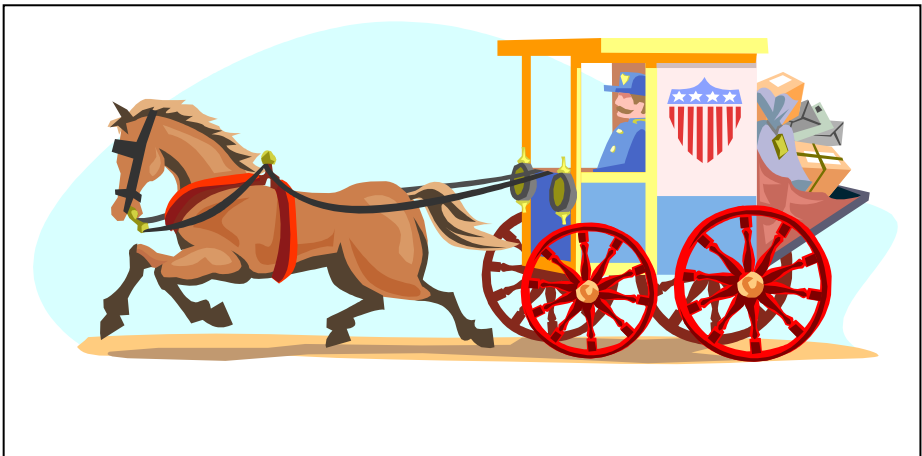
Then of course on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of August we have Easter Hall Parks 2 day event, with its infamous Saturday night party and lovely weather!!!!

For comprehensive listings please see dates for your diary.

So come on drivers let's have a bumper entry for these shows this year and make all the event organisers hard work well rewarded, with a good number of entries. Could I please remind everyone to get their entries in early, 3 weeks if not more would be greatly appreciated, post dated cheques are fine?

Finally I would like to thank Lorraine for her fantastic work and efforts with producing the newsletter, of which we all look forward to reading. Sadly Lorraine will be giving up this role and will be greatly missed. On that note if there is anyone wishing to assist in the production of the newsletter or take the reins of this role, then please contact me to discuss further.

# Gail



## Moorhaven Drive – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010

It had been a quiet year with the horses for us. Diane having been quite badly hurt during 2009, we had decided to take a year out of competitive driving; so that, combined with starting some fairly major work on our house, had kept us at home for most of the summer. Our pair of Comtois (who many of you will have seen) had been turned out and were even fatter than usual and Garlic, our big Ardennes, was getting seriously bored, so the idea of a fun event with Johnny Maythis seemed just the ticket.

We had been invited to stay over on Saturday night with Johnny, but builders and Garlic (who hadn't been boxed in quite some time), conspired against us. Still, Sunday morning dawned bright and Garlic seemed much more cooperative, allowing us to make an uncharacteristically early start, arriving at Moorhaven ahead of schedule and in time to fully appreciate the magnificent views.

What a splendid venue! Set on the south slopes of Dartmoor looking out towards the coast and with a small valley, home to Johnny's summer house and pond. On a beautiful late summer's day it couldn't have been more perfect.

The event was a joint BDS/GWHC venture with the emphasis on fun and comprised a drive in the morning (with two alternative routes) and an obstacle and cones course after lunch. As Garlic was somewhat less than fit we opted for the shorter of the two routes. What a good job that we did. The route took us predominantly downhill along quiet country lanes to South Brent and then back again. Garlic set off at a keen and brisk pace, enjoying the ease of the outbound route. Not so the journey back, which more than highlighted his lack of condition and prompted him to adopt his pathetically over worked cart horse impression; somewhat belied by his generous proportions.

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Still, we made it back in time to enjoy a picnic lunch in bright sunshine and allow Garlic to regain his composure before a short drive, a go at the driving trial obstacle and a bash at the cones course. We hadn't taken Garlic round an obstacle for many years, although we used to compete regularly before acquiring our pair. I'm pleased to say he remembered his job remarkably well and although not fast, managed to canter part of the way.

On to the cones course, which was quite extensive but nicely flowing.

Being

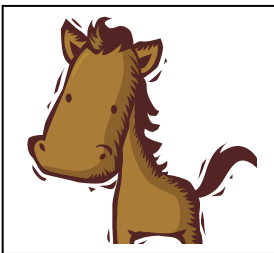
somewhat out of practice we thought we'd take it steady and try to be accurate. Garlic, however, decided that a lolloping canter was his preferred gait, despite which we only had one cone down which was a pleasant surprise.

We were the last to go, so prize-giving followed on fairly swiftly accompanied by tea, bacon sandwiches and a sizeable array of cakes. Johnny Arden, well known Dartmoor driver and regular contributor to Carriage Driving Magazine, presented the rosettes. We had managed second place in the cones, amazingly only 0.1 seconds behind the winner. So must try harder next time!

All in all a really delightful day, made all the more enjoyable by Johnny's enthusiasm and infectious sense of fun.

So make a date in your diary for this year's event on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2011. We certainly shall!

**Mike Stamp**



**[WWW.GWHC.CO.UK](http://WWW.GWHC.CO.UK)**

**Drivers medical examinations.** Low cost medicals for £52 incl vat. To book or enquire [www.driversmedicals.com](http://www.driversmedicals.com) or 01454 317436 / 0870 6091540

**Mike Stamp** has again very kindly offered the use of the obstacles and dressage arena at Hayes Barton to club members. There is no charge but please ring Mike 01837 851675 to arrange a time.

**In-Harness magazine** [www.inharness.co.uk](http://www.inharness.co.uk). £17.95 for 4 issues and £19.99 for 5 issues. Please send cheque to Fiona Powell, Inharness, 7 Gamma Terrace, West Road, Ipswich IP3 9SX. or [pay online](#)

**Offers and discounts** available to club members from [Ponyandcarriage](#)





# COMMITTEE MEMBERS.



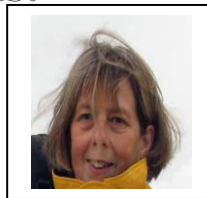
**PRESIDENT; TOM PETTIFER.**

**TIVERTON; 01363 866850**



**CHAIRMAN; GAIL PALMER**

**OKEHAMPTON; 01837 810350**



**VICE CHAIRMAN; TRISH LUXTON**

**TIVERTON 01398 351565**



**SECRETARY; JENNIFER COLLIE**

**Bere Alston 01822 841074**



**TREASURER; and Membership secretary, MARITA WAKEHAM**  
**Bere Alston 01822 840573**



**PUBLICITY; LIZ MCQUEEN**

**01822 840703**



**New member support;**

**Lisa Phillips**  
**01297 531461**



**Health & Safety;**

**David Whitfield**  
**01884 266459**



**Stewards Secretary;**

**Kate Fincham –Powell**  
**01626 866257**



**Training, Rachael Moast**  
**07971 761115**



**Juniors; Ann Walter-Symons**  
**01752 830154**

