

Dear Members

I hope you are well and having a successful season.

Many of you, like myself, will have recently returned from **The Royal International Horse Show**, I hope you had an enjoyable and successful time. The classes that I watched were of a very high standard and getting in the top eight, let alone winning or gaining a reserve or championship, is a fantastic achievement.

Many thanks go to Lizzie and Edward Bunn, David Ingle Show Director, the excellent Stewarding Team, Course Builders and our Judges for all their hard work to put on such a fantastic show. With ample time allocated to each class and ponies looking in wonderful condition, with gleaming coats at this time of the year is a fantastic spectacle. Many congratulations to Izzie Hartswood-Collier on her Working Hunter Pony, Beech Hall Ryan for taking the Supreme Pony Championship. I watched this combination jump the most fantastic round over a very testing and technical course.

On the Sunday of the Show it was thrilling to see **Joy Hall**, our Executive Officer being awarded The Roger Stack award by The Royal International Horse Show for her outstanding contribution to our sport. Joy has led the Society for 43 years and retires at our Summer Championship Show this year. Joy is not someone who 'wants a lot of fuss' but I know many of our members will want to personally thank her for all she has done for the Society at this year's show.

The Summer Championship Show will be the last year for our Show Director **Mike Hall** (no relation to Joy!) who will be retiring from this role that he has held for the last 29 years. Over that time Mike has seen that show grow, develop, move venues and cope with Covid-19. Again, I am sure many of you will wish to use the opportunity while attending the show of thanking Mike for his fantastic contribution to the Society.

### **The Summer Championship Show**

The Summer Championship Show will soon be upon us, led by the Show Chairman, Philip Hilton, Show Director Mike Hall, Assistant Show Director Adrian Beaumont, the Head Office Team, Arena UK and Sharon Thomas organising the ever popular and ever-growing children's entertainment, you can look forward to a wonderful Championship Show. Like the RIHS where I saw so many young children playing shows and jumping little courses in the lorry park we will create the same happy and safe environment that our children can enjoy and look back on with happy memories later on in life.

This will be combined with top level competition, including the Young Judges Competition, a stepping stone for training our judges of the future, free classes such as The Best of the Best, Best Rider, Breeders Challenge, Grange Bank Awards and the final of the Robert Oliver Showman's Award. The 4-, 5- and 6-year-old Championship so

popular last year will once again be held on the Tuesday, there are wider categories for the Show Pony to Music competition in addition to the new Young Riders Intermediate Championship. All our normal classes and championships including HOYS qualifiers will give you plenty to do! I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible. As I said in a previous letter we have held the entry fees at last year's prices, recognising the challenges that everybody is facing with the cost-of-living increases and our ever-increasing costs of putting on these events.

Thank you in advance to all our Judges, Stewards, Course Builders, Helpers and our wonderful Sponsors for all your support.

### **Welfare of Horse and Ponies**

You will all be aware that the welfare of our horses and ponies competing in all equestrian sport is rightly being highlighted and addressed. I would remind all of you to ensure you have read **Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies at Events** on page 89 of our Rule Book. So many of our members contact me to ensure we uphold the highest standards regarding the welfare of our horses and ponies, last year body condition scoring was carried out in a number of our classes with advice and guidance given to our members. This will happen again this year in addition to having a BHS Welfare Officer who will be present at the show, again to provide advice, guidance, education to our members should this be required. I know many of you will see this as a further positive step forward along with a number of other initiatives we are taking on Rider Safety, Safeguarding and Inclusivity.

### **Passports**

A reminder from our Dope Testing Officer, Dawn Christie, that you should carry your horses or ponies passport at all times when at shows and events. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that you have a full knowledge and understanding of which judges you are not able to show your pony under and this must be in accordance with the BSPS Rule Book.

### **International Working Hunter Pony Team Event**

By the time you read this letter the International Working Hunter Team event this year run by the Scottish Branch will have taken place. Many thanks to our friends in Scotland for putting this on. It is a fantastic achievement to be selected for your Country's Team and to be able to wear your Country's flag on your jacket with pride. Riding as a Team Member puts additional pressure on the rider that they have to learn to cope with. It is

no wonder that the BSPS has been the starting point for so many international riders of the future in all disciplines including racing.

## **Other Matters**

I would encourage everyone to ensure that you not only behave well to each other but also to take the opportunity to thank our hardworking officials and respect requests to adhere to rules and protocols at our shows. We will not hesitate to act against anyone who behaves in any way that bullies, intimidates or harasses any of our members or officials. 99% of members of our Society are generous, kind and helpful and give up so much time voluntarily to support our sport, let's not have a small minority spoil it.

There will be some spot checks carried out at shows to ensure that competitors have not tied reins onto handles in lead rein classes, this is both against the rules and dangerous.

Our new London International Qualifiers are gaining traction and interest and we are very grateful for the feedback we have received as we continue to review how these classes are developing. They provide an opportunity to focus on performance, improve riding and provide an opportunity for many of our members to have a fantastic indoor championship show to attend in December.

It remains the Council's objective to ensure that the BSPS offer as many opportunities as possible for our members to aspire to achieve the opportunity to compete at our Championship Shows, qualifying to ride at the Royal International Horse Show, Horse of the Year Show, Burghley Horse Trials and London International Horse Show.

We have some absolutely fantastic children, families and adults competing on some superb horses and ponies in our Society, let's cherish not only the opportunity to compete but also the wider benefits that we all have by our association with our wonderful equines.

Thank you again for all your support and engagement and I along with my fellow Council members and our Head Office Team look forward to seeing you at our Summer Championship Show.

Regards

Paul Cook, BSPS National Chairman