



Friends of Dressage at Hickstead

NEWSLETTER

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Visit the Dressage at Hickstead website at www.dressageathickstead.com

Looking Back at 2011

Although there are to be some major changes in 2012 (see below) let us start with a quick look back at the 2011 year. The Unaffiliated shows and the DatH Championships were once again fully supported and thanks are due to all who competed, judged, stewarded, helped and did all those thousand and one things to make the shows work. There is no doubt that the organizing team has been very successful in meeting an increasing demand for friendly, smooth running and relaxed events, and long may it continue.

On the affiliated front the shows were again well attended and the competition as keen as it has ever been. The Dressage Masters format seems to work well and again the events are widely appreciated by competitors. The International show in July again provided the excellence that we have come to expect with some memorable performances.

It was good to have received a number of messages from Friends after that show, complimenting the organizers on both the facilities and the content. The messages were passed on to Dane and Maureen Rawlins and they have expressed their thanks for your loyal and continuing support.

As with the unaffiliated shows there is a large crew of workers that do all the organizing to turn a grass field into the sporting village. On behalf of Dane and Maureen Rawlins we would like to pass on their thanks and those of the competitors to them.

All the results from this year, including the various champions, can be found on the [Dressage at Hickstead website](http://www.dressageathickstead.com).

Programme for 2012

It was inevitable that the scheduling of the Olympic Games would affect a variety of UK sports' dates in 2012. For Dressage at Hickstead the proximity of the Games to the usual July show has caused a bunching of

international events at around that time. Try as they might, the organizers have been unable to come up with an alternative date that meets with the approval of the FEI, and fits with other countries, riders and the UK calendar.

With great reluctance Dane Rawlins has had to cancel this year's international event but is going all out for the usual event in 2013. However, although Hickstead's loss might seem to be the Olympics' gain, he is determined that Dressage at Hickstead 2012 will offer an expanded programme for both affiliated and unaffiliated competitors.

The provisional list of Dressage at Hickstead events contains 14 affiliated shows including the Dressage Masters' semi-finals and the Para Championships in June, and the Premier League show in July. The Premier League Show will include a special Gala afternoon on Saturday 21 July and, in the evening, an Olympic Celebration Ball (keep an eye on the website for details).

There will be 14 unaffiliated events including the South East Championships and DatH's own September Championships. DatH will again be hosting the very successful Inner-London Riding School Championships.

For those of you with horses of added years – horses do not seem to be saddled with age discrimination legislation so I think we can say that - once again DatH will be running qualifiers for the 15+ championships: details can be obtained from Linda on 01588-650180 or go to website horse15plus@aol.com.

The full list of dates is set out in the 2012 Programme of Events enclosed with this newsletter (or as an email attachment with this newsletter).

Subscriptions for 2012

We of course recognize that the absence of an international show means that an important

part of the Friends' package is missing, so for 2012 only we are making a major reduction in membership subscriptions. This year's benefits of membership will include:

- entry, car parking and seating at all the days of the Premier League show in July
- free entry to the Gala afternoon
- a £2.00 per class discount on your entry fees for DatH unaffiliated events (but not the SE or 15+ Championships)
- two Friends newsletters in 2012.

All this is on offer for £20.00 (Friend + partner/additional Friend £35.00; each additional Friend thereafter £15.00; family two adults + two children under 16 £60.00). This is less than 50% of the 2011 price.

Membership details and the 2012 renewal form are included on pages 6 & 7 of the full programme of events enclosed with this newsletter.

Unaffiliated Categories

Over the years the organizers have tried as far as possible to level the playing field for competitors in the Prelim and Novice classes in response to comments made by competitors and owners alike. This was the reason why the two categories of amateur and professional were introduced.

This came about because some amateur riders felt that owners who used (or were themselves) professionals – that earned all or part of their living from teaching or riding – could be seen as having an advantage over amateur owner/riders in the introductory classes: hence the introduction of the open and restricted categories.

However, even that system is not perfect and has led to comment about who might or might not fall into the 'professional' category.

Other sports have different ways of dealing with this. For example, they might have a handicap class system based on a history of measurable results at a central competition or at a specified number of events. The results then provide the basis on which to make the handicap assessment. Competitors can drift up and down the rankings over the years depending upon their results.

Would that it were so easy in the world of human plus animate object, but the available definitions are not so precise to be easily enforceable with a rod of iron! Unaffiliated dressage exists for the grass roots to compete both where they feel comfortable and where they can stretch themselves. It is meant to be pleasurable and depends upon a sporting ethic adopted by the participants. Like the amateur motor-racers of old there is a will among participants to help each other out, and long may it remain so.

So, for 2012 the organizers will be adopting the following rule for Prelim and Novice classes at DatH Unaffiliated events:

"Classes 1 & 2: open to non-professional riders (ie those who do not make their living from riding or teaching riding). However, we also welcome professionals at these levels but would ask them to use their discretion and enter HC."

If anyone has any other constructive ideas for a workable alternative please do not hesitate to write to the Secretary (Unaffiliated) at DatH (see below).

Contact Points

Dressage at Hickstead Office - (all entries, queries etc for unaffiliated and affiliated shows, advance ticket bookings and enquiries, Hospitality and the Dressage at Hickstead Gallery bookings and all other general enquiries):

Secretary, Dressage at Hickstead, Bolney Park Farm, Broxmead Lane, Bolney, West Sussex, RH17 5JR. Tel: 01444-882150 & fax 01444-882151.

Friends of Dressage at Hickstead

Up to 31 May in the year, membership enquiries and all issue related to Friends:

Friends of Dressage at Hickstead, Yew Tree Stud Farm, Harbolets Road, West Chiltington, West Sussex, RH20 2LG. Tel/fax: 01798-813159. Email <guv.bastille@btinternet.com> and <goody.bastille@btinternet.com>

From 1 June in the year please contact the DatH Office at Bolney Park Farm (see above).