

EAGLE MOOR SWISS DERBY

June saw our second visit of the season to White House Farm, Eagle for a Swiss Derby event. The weather was good, not as hot as it had been earlier in the week thank goodness, otherwise there would have been sun baked bodies, both human and equine strewn over the field.

The whole day ran very smoothly in fact the only hiccups were one wrong course in the dressage and a harness belly band not fastened --- actually both incidents could be classed as senior moments --- we all have them !!

A couple of new backsteppers were introduced to the sport, both had silly grins on their faces all day and have said they will be back and the icing on the cake was a rosette each.

Once again, Richard Wheeldon was our Dressage judge for the day and, as usual, gave all competitors very helpful feedback on the sheets.

The Marathon course is set on (mainly) flat grassland, with obstacles design from both natural resources and portable equipment. The obstacles of the day varied in length, some being long and rangy, which suited the bigger equines to some that were slightly tighter which suited the smaller ponies. One particular obstacle here that always causes interest is nicknamed Stonehenge, due to its formation of metre high tree stumps set around a hillock!! As is the case with a Swiss Derby, one of the obstacles is a small cones course, set at the width for a cones course in a One Day Event. The reason behind this is for drivers to demonstrate their skills at bringing their equines back into hand in the middle of a course where they are travelling at marathon speed and navigate the course without knocking any cones.

The competition itself was very close in both the Novice and the Open classes.

Though he was lying in 3rd place with Jess after the dressage section, this lovely pony's speed through the obstacles, including a clear round in the Cones obstacle, saw John Gadsby take the Novice class from Clare Golland by 7.95 penalties, despite picking up 2.81 time penalties on the marathon. In 3rd place came Jayne Hayes, followed by Judith Corker in 4th and Anne Rhodes in 5th, with Bransby Titch at his first Poacher event.

The Open Class was an even closer finish. Carol Wood went into the marathon 2 points ahead of Anne Chambers, it was Annes' clear round and faster time in the cones obstacle that caused Carol to end up in 2nd place a mere 4.97 penalties behind Anne. 3rd and 4 places went to Sue Lawson who drove 2 turnouts and in 5th place because the Pocket Rocket won't accept that he has to go at pony speeds and picked up a cricket score of time penalties, came Richard Wood.

The Overall Winner of the day, awarded to the competitor with the least penalty points on the day was Anne Chambers.

The Rosette for the Best Dressage Score was shared by Carol Wood and Clare Golland

The award for Best Groom of the Day went to Sam Ward who stepped for Sue Lawson.

As always we cannot run these events without the people who give up their time and day to course build and steward, many thanks to all.