

Welcome to the first newsletter of the International Mounted Games Association. I realise this is one part of IMGGA that has been lacking in recent months, however in order for the newsletter to work all countries have been asked to let me have any news that is taking place in their country.

This is a problem across the world and several countries have suggested that riders should be properly recognised for what they are achieving. A good way is to make contact with your local newspaper or equestrian magazine - and let them know what is happening within your country and invite them to some shows or training nights

Remember, if they don't know that you are holding a mounted games

competition then how can it be reported? Similarly with this newsletter - if I don't know then I can't include it.

Some of you may know me but for those that don't I've been a member of MGAGB for 16 years.

I've ridden for Scotland at mounted games competitions all over the world, and in 1997, was part of the Great Britain team at the World Team Championships in Lamotte Beuvron. Since 2000 Scotland has been able to compete in the World Team Championships and I was part of the team at Bremen, Fontwell and last year in Bridgend.

Melanie Scott

A few words from the Chairman...

I don't know how far into February it's still reasonable to wish anyone a happy new year, but I'm sure no one will take it amiss if use the opportunity of the publication of this newsletter to wish everyone not only a happy new year but a successful one too, both inside and outside the Mounted Games arena.

We start 2006 with a new Vice-Chairman, Alun Whitney, and a new Communications Officer, Melanie Scott, and I'm sure you will all join me in welcoming them and at the same time thanking Ro Day and Felicity Hotston-Jones who had to leave these posts for personal reasons.

We go into a new season (not forgetting that our Southern Hemisphere members are right in the middle of their season already) with great enthusiasm for the future. I've attended every IMGGA annual meeting since they've been held, and I have to say that the meeting in November last year was the most positive and productive one we've ever had. There was a great feeling of working together towards common goals and cooperating in moving our sport forward in many ways.

The programme for 2006 published on the IMGA website already shows 31 planned events and I'm receiving more information on others all the time, so we will have a very full year. Let's make it a fulfilling one too.

Keith Martin
Chairman IMGA

Each member country of IMGA was asked to reply to a few short questions and here are the replies...

1, What was your country's highlight in 2005?

America: The November competition, the BlueGrass Finale was a great close to the year, with perfect weather, wonderful food and social events and lots of fun. Teams from Sussex and Canada made the finale an international competition to remember.

England: The highlight from 2005 has got to be retaining the World Team Championship. The team of James Knott, Melanie Edwards, Elaine Trevor Jones, Peter Walters, Robert Leese and our trainer Malcolm Trevor Jones were outstanding.

France: Third place at the world team championships.

Germany: Reaching the fourth place at the Worlds 2005 in Wales.

Luxembourg: Being able, at the very last moment, to send a team to the World Championship in Wales. Our current membership is very young and inexperienced, and so we'd decided not to enter for 2005, but then four golden oldies dragged themselves out of retirement and with a little help from a friend they made it to the championship.

New Zealand: One of the highlights for mounted games in 2005 was achieved by Northland riders, Dee Cherrington and Nancy Te Whata. Their success was recognised in the Northland Sportsman of the Year Awards. Dee won the Sportsman of the Year Award and Nancy was one of five finalists in Sportswoman of the Year. Together, as "Team Ngapuhi", they were one of seven finalists in the Team of the Year Award.

Northern Ireland: As the 2005 season comes to a close it can only be fair to say it has been an amazing year. Right from the first practice on January 4, to the end of year ball held on November 12 it has been non-stop. Teams have competed all over Europe as Northern Ireland and a healthy Co Down team competed at

several British competitions. Some ponies clocked up 16 ferry trips and riders surpassing 25 MGA related plane flights. As a set of annual fixtures we have three All Ireland championships, first off the All Ireland team championships was not held this year due to a very busy schedule so Co. Down remain reigning champions.

Norway: The highlight in 2005 was many new national riders and teams.

Scotland: There were many highlights in 2005 but winning the second session at the World Team Championships is the one that sticks in our minds.

Wales: I think the highlight of 2005 in Wales was the hosting of the World Championships and also the display at the Royal Welsh Show. I think to do either of these in a life time would be enough but to do them both in two weeks is just too much to comprehend.

2, What is currently happening in mounted games within your country? (to end April 2006)

America: We are concentrating on doing more public venues to get games in front of more people. We are also focusing on bringing in top international trainers for clinics to improve the level of all our riders and starting a new development squad.

Canada: There is not too much to report from CMGA due to the fact that we are in the throws of winter. Our season usually kicks off with the first leg of the North America Cup Championship series that is hosted by USMGA at the Kentucky Horse Park mid-March - the series consists of five separate competitions. CMGA is also planning another trip/tour to South Africa in mid-March where we will be hosting a series of training clinics for riders and coaches. At that time we plan to do a series of clinics for a new group from Kenya.

England: The latest thing to happen in England is that at long last we have an England committee. The chair is Sheila Peck and selectors are Alistair Elliott, Marilyn Hackman, Nikki Carter, Malcolm Trevor Jones, Keith Hardy and Caroline Davis. The secretary is Sue Williamson and show organiser is Kay Leese. There is also a web site www.englishmga.co.uk

France: Trials for the Worlds and Europe champs will take place from January 28 until March. A friendly pair competition will take place on February 19 at Cote Poney and an international pair competition will take place at Chaufour on April 1/2.

Germany: Preparing the new season that includes selection of riders for our national team.

Luxembourg: Continued recruitment and training of our young riders with the aim of building up a team which will reach the standard required for international competition.

New Zealand: It is summer in New Zealand and the games season is in full swing. Planning is well in hand for New Zealand's premiere games event at the Horse of the Year Show in March. Meanwhile our four NZMGA branches are holding local competitions and training days.

Northern Ireland: Plans for this year are as ambitious as ever with a large amount of international shows and competitions and also plans to promote and spread MGA within Northern Ireland its going to be another exciting year. Forthcoming events are an indoor demonstration at Laurel View (March 4) and the Eurofriendly Cup Ballywater (April 29/30).

Norway: At the moment we are looking forward to Arctic Pairs, last weekend we had a lot of riders testing for three international teams and we are currently working with a new internet site for Mounted Games Norway.

Scotland: We have just hosted the Scottish Ball with traditional Scottish dancing. This was its 10th anniversary year and was well attended by members from throughout Britain. The following week there will be a selection trial for the team riding at Scandinavium in April

Wales: We are currently preparing for Welsh Ball on March 4 (there are still a few tickets available) and we will have trials for Welsh team on April 1.

3, With regard to the World Team Championships what are your country looking forward to? Have your country selected the team - and if yes who is riding?

America: Yes, our team has been selected. Members are Leigh Montgomery, Brandon Clevinger, Haley Textor and Sara and Cassie Greiling. Traveling reserve will be Julie Benson. The team is looking forward to seeing old friends, meeting new ones and putting in their best effort.

Canada: We will not be choosing our international team until the second week in May.

England: We will be selecting teams for the World Team Championships in Sweden, the Royal Welsh Show in Wales and we hope to take a senior and junior team to the European Championships in Switzerland.

France: Trials going on and the team is not decided yet. Well, lets hope to get the first place....

Germany: Reaching the A final again. The team selection has not taken place so far.

Luxembourg: Unfortunately, Luxembourg will not be participating this year.

New Zealand: Our riders are looking forward to this great opportunity to visit Norway and Sweden and especially to be able to renew friendships with our Norwegian hosts. The team has not been named yet.

Northern Ireland: The team has not been selected.

Norway: With regards to the World Championship we are looking forward to meeting a lot of old friends, making new friends, compete against the best teams in the world - hopefully there will be at least one Scandinavian team in the A-final. We have not yet selected the team.

Scotland: The competition and meeting old friends. The team will be selected in May.

Wales: The riders are all looking forward to the Worlds in Sweden and experiencing the culture of the country. They are anticipating a very keenly fought competition with the standard improving every year.

4, If your country could change one thing in mounted games what would it be?

America: It would be to increase the knowledge of and interest in mounted games around the world.

France: Lower fees for competition such as the worlds.

Germany: Increasing the number of IMGA members monumental.

Luxembourg: Oh, that's a tough question. There are lots of things we'd like to see happen, but let's just mention one - more international rider exchanges. The IMGA website now has a section of its forum dedicated to this, and that's where you should go whether you're offering a rider, or trying to find one. You might also be able to arrange training visits and exchanges.

Norway: The weather.

Scotland: Publicity for mounted games competitions and better recognition for the talents our riders have.

Wales: I think what we would like to change is not inside mounted games but the impression of Mounted Games by those not involved in it. Perhaps we will need some changes inside to alter those impressions outside.

With special thanks to Paul Greiling (USA), Jim Dunn (Can), Sheila Peck (Eng), Julie (FR), Burkhard Bohn (Ger), Frie Martin (Lux), NZ, Rory Prime (NI), Norway, Bruce Nicol (Scotland) and Alun Whitney (Wales) for their answers.

Forthcoming events

March 4 - Welsh Ball

May 14/14 - Danish Pairs

June 24/25 - Danish Friendly Individuals

July 14/16 – European Championships, Switzerland

July 18-23 – World Individuals Championships, England

July 24/25 – Royal Welsh International, Wales

July 28/30 – World Team Championships, Sweden

August 26/27 - Danish Individuals

September 23/24 – World Pairs Championships, England

Don't forget...a new rule-book is being printed and will shortly be available to buy. For those of you who can't wait a copy is available online at

<http://www.mounted-games.org/imga/games/rules/index.html>

If your country has any news or ideas for the next newsletter please email me at communication@mounted-games.org