



OAK LEAVES

Newsletter from the Oaks Driving Club August 2020

View from the Top

After what has been a very difficult year so far we are pleased to be back in action running some events. To kick off, Christina and her family have kindly invited us to a BBQ at their house (socially distanced of course) on Sunday 16th August. This will be a lovely get together and time to chat.

We will be running two inside out competitions, one at Broad Farm and one at Priory Court Farm plus Pru Wynne-Evans is organising another of her popular World Cup competitions at Hale Farm. We will be following current government guidelines regarding Coronavirus and will be doing everything possible to keep everyone safe.

As some of you know, Golden Cross Equestrian Centre is no longer available to hire for competitions, this has left us in a bit of pickle as to where we go to hold our indoor events, in fact it was more a question of who would have us? I have spent literally hours on the phone and computer trying to resolve this problem. I am pleased to announce that we will be running two competitions at the South of England Showground, Ardingly. There are two lovely outdoor rubber arenas measuring 60m x 20m alongside lots of hard standing car park. The two arenas lie alongside each other with a road width separating them, P&P in one and cones in the other, one driver doing both elements before the next driver starts. Obstacles in the afternoon. Our own catering van will be present too. It is a bit further for some of you to drive to compete but I think you'll agree the facilities will be terrific. The indoor school has been turned into a drive-in cinema.

On a sad note, yet again, we report the passing of both John Smith and Barry Garbett. Both gentlemen keen and active supporters of the Oaks Club and driving in general.

Jason Fieldwick has stepped down from the committee, he is having difficulty trying to find enough hours in the day, Jason is busy running his business and has also made a good name for himself as a carriage builder. We thank him for all his hard work and hope he will continue to help us out when time permits.

Liz Howe - CHAIRMAN



Next event: BBQ, Sunday 16th August 6pm - 8.30pm

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2020

August

Sunday 16th Barbeque. 6.00pm - 8.30pm
Bridleway Cottage, Green Lane,
Blackboys TN22 5LA
£5 per head. Please bring your
own chair, drink, plate and
cutlery. Book by 9th August.
No tickets sold on the day
Contact: Christina Fowden

Sunday 23rd Inside Out, Broad Farm,
Hellingly BN27 4DU
Contact: Liz Howe

September

Sunday 6th Inside Out, Priory Court Farm,
Sayerland Lane,
Polegate BN26 6QX
Contact: Jan Curd

Sunday 27th World Cup, Hale Farm BN8 6HQ
Contact: Pru Wynne-Evans

October

Saturday 17th Autumn Driving Event
South of England Showground,
Ardingly RH17 6TL
(Princes Gate entrance)
Contact: Moira Evans

March 2021

Saturday 13th Spring Driving Event
South of England Showground,
Ardingly RH17 6TL
(Princes Gate entrance)
Contact: Moira Evans



visit the website for up-to-the-minute news

www.oaksdrivingclub.com

DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in the articles printed in the Oak Leaves are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor of the Oaks Committee.

John Smith

3rd February 1941 – 16th June 2020

John was the eldest son of Jack and Margaret Smith, each of whom were from families of seven children.

During World War II, all the men of East Peckham were away fighting, so John and his brother lived close to or with Grandparents and other family members. After demob, sisters Linda and Jenifer joined the boys.

John spent much of his time with Grandad, and the farm horses, and later the whole family worked on the farm, the boys being expected to do jobs. This suited John, as he didn't find school easy but enjoyed the farm work.

Upon leaving school at 15, John worked with a heavy horse in the quarry, cycling there each day in all weathers. When the horse died, John left the quarry and took a job gardening at a care home, then returned to family at Springgate Fruit Farm in East Malling, Kent, where both his parents were now living.



In the summer of 1961, John met Angie and her friend, Ann, at a Fun Fair, then two years later, John and Angie were married. They set up home in a one bedroomed cottage – tin bath in the kitchen and a toilet down the garden, which had to be flushed with a bucket of water.

They only stayed a year, as John took a job as herdsman at Charing Heath, milking every other weekend. They had a lovely cottage in Pluckley, where they made many friends and were able to cycle to Charing station to visit family at East and West Malling.

In 1966, they adopted Andrew, their first son, and started their family.

In 1968, John was made redundant, but was offered a job at Firle. When they moved into their new home, they lit a fire, not knowing that the previous tenant had put oily rags up the chimney – it went up like a bomb, needing two fire engines to put it out, one of which became stuck in a ditch. Everyone now knew that the Smiths had arrived!

John did not enjoy the work, so 5 months later, when John was offered a job at Mays Farm, Selmeston, he took it. In 1969 John and Angie adopted Keith, and so their family grew.

In 1974, John and Angie moved to Lower Mays Bungalow, with the milking parlour at Lower Mays Farm, Selmeston.

Then the driving began, when John bought Kelly for himself and Keith to drive. The all joined the Oaks Driving Club at Maggie Hills invitation. Many fun years followed with Kelly, then His Nibs (A Welsh Section A) and followed with Lucy, a half bred Clydesdale and John's great love.

With the Oaks, John and Angie enjoyed not only the driving, but the social side too. John instigated the New Forest Holiday, arranging accommodation in a field for campers and a holiday flat for those less inclined to outdoor sleeping. This was with Helen and Chris Beale at



Sway, with lovely drives, pubs and evening barbeques, as well as endless rounders matches. As Chris was a Forrester and Farrier, we learned a lot about the life of the New Forest.

These holidays continued for several years and were enjoyed by many club members.

John and Angie also began the refreshment caravan at Oaks events, serving up delicious bacon butties, hot dogs, burgers, sandwiches and yummy cakes.

In 2000 John retired from milking and farm work and that meant a move to Hailsham. The boys had left home by then and John's life became less hard work, although still very active, including doing gardening jobs and driving Lucy most days.

With years in the milking parlour taking a physical toll, John developed arthritis, needing a hip replacement. Then, 9 months later, he fell in the garden and broke his femur of the same leg! Unfortunately, the plate mending the break also broke, requiring another operation and resulting in John being in a wheelchair or on crutches for most of the year.

Angie looked after Lucy until John was fit enough to drive again and resume his other interests, as a member of SESH (South East Shire Horses Association) for whom he stewarded at shows, including Edenbridge, Kent County, Ardingly and the Easter Harness Horse Parade. John also loved going to ploughing matches.... all for the horses, of course.

In 2014 John and Angie found a lovely flat in Fazan Court in Wadhurst and Lucy came to Ticehurst. John brought Lucy to Kipling County RDA Group each week, which they both loved.



Guard of honour, whip salute: Hilary Hill, Jan Curd, Angela Burgess, Christine Jones, Helen Bridges and Susanne Willis. John was driven on his final journey by Adie Matthews.

Photo courtesy Susanne Willis

Sadly, Lucy came to the end of her days at aged 30+ years in 2008.

Three months later, John saw an advert on the Kent Messenger, with a tiny picture of a pony version of Lucy. Holly had been rescued by the RSPCA in Leybourne, and, needless to say, after seeing her, she became John's and mine.

John spent many hours teaching her and preparing her for driving and was able to drive her several times. Even that morning of June 16th, John had spent time with Holly.

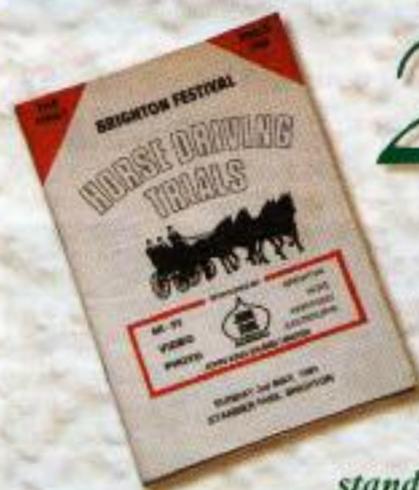
John will always be remembered as a cheerful helper, with many tales to tell and a great lover of horses.

Sheila Petitpierre

Angie wishes to thank everyone for their kind messages of sympathy.



BLAST FROM THE PAST
The following three pages
are taken from
Carriage Driving magazine
April 2007



25 YEARS OF HORSE DRIVING

This year marks Brighton's quarter-centenary making it the longest standing national driving trials event in the calendar barring Lowther. And it all began through the enthusiasm of one Brighton business man, John King, whose daughter drove a pair of Shetlands.



The trees at Brighton have always been a feature of the marathon course at Brighton, where Mavis Clarke was a regular competitor over many years.

It was at the end of the 1970s that John King approached the person who was giving his daughter carriage driving lessons, Bill Vine, with the idea of putting on a carriage driving event in the southern part of the country. Co-opting Dick Carey, they went to see the then Director of Parks and Recreation for Brighton Council, Mike Griffin, having considered that Stanmer Park, on the outskirts of Brighton, would be an ideal venue.

"I put it to my committee at the council who gave the idea approval," Mike Griffin says today. "Then I went to see the Nursery and Estate Manager, Peter Riddlestone, and asked him to take Bill and Dick round the park."

Peter laughs and says, "Mike said to me the famous words – 'I don't think it will involve us in much work' – which I have often quoted back to him."

Twenty-five years on – actually 26 years but the year 2001 was lost to the foot-and-mouth epidemic – Peter and Mike have good cause to smile wryly over these words. Although both now retired from their respective council posts, they are still actively involved in the Brighton Horse Driving Trials, of which Mike was the hands-on committee chairman for 20 years and Peter was constantly involved in helping prepare the course as well as serving on the committee.

John King an inspiration

John King, who sadly passed away in 1994, was, however, the event's early guiding light. As a business man and a magistrate in Brighton, he was successful in pulling in a considerable amount of local sponsorship almost from the beginning. His enthusiasm was such that at the first event – a one-day affair held on Sunday 3rd May, 1981 – he wrote in the programme, "With the optimistic belief that today will be a great success, we look forward to 1982 with even more competitors for a two-day event".

That first event had five classes – single horses and ponies (13 entries), pony pairs (four entries), horse pairs (nine entries), pony teams (six entries) and horse teams (six entries). Karen Bassett won the pony teams with her Shetlands and David Saunders driving HM The Queen's horses won the horse teams, HRH Prince Philip being unable to compete owing to a previous appointment. Looking through the programmes he has competed at almost every event since then, however and the following year was second to Alwyn Holder in the 10-strong horse teams class.

It seems that that first event was run in dreadful weather and yet, according to Mike Griffin's note as chairman the following year, 'several thousand people braved the elements to view...the spectacle'. A success, it was, and 1982's event was indeed run over two-days with a total of 50 entries – singles horses and ponies now



In 1982 Stella Hancock, with husband Ron, won the single horse class at Brighton, after her success at Cricket St Thomas, the fortnight before.

OF BRIGHTON IVING TRIALS

divided into two classes. The following year, novice single horse and pony classes were added with novice ponies netting an outstanding 22 entries and novice horse – just one! By 1984 the event was running over three days with 125 competitors entered in the programme, 16 of them horse teams. And in 1986 – with the FEI World Four-in-Hand Team Championships at Ascot that year – competitors from America, Holland and Sweden entered the event giving Brighton international status.

Carriage driving - an art form

For some time the event was run as part of the Brighton Festival – as a fringe event. This helped with such aspects as publicity – festival posters also featured the driving trials – and there were festival rosettes. When, at some later stage, the festival wanted to disassociate from the horse driving trials, Mike Griffin wrote an apparently masterly letter outlining how carriage driving was an art and thus should continue its association.

"I can't remember exactly what I said," he laughs. "But I do remember resorting to the dictionary for a suitable definition!"

Whatever he said, it did the trick and association with the festival continued into the 1990s.

Bill Vine had suggested Dick Carey should be course builder that first year and there he remained for 18 years – indeed he is the only person who has remained on the committee from the first year to this day. The seven obstacles at the first event were routed almost entirely around the trees in the park.

"There were piles of logs where trees had been cut down in some places," Dick recalls. "We marked out a route through these and in other places we just used the trees. There was virtually no posts and rails or hammering and nailing in the early years."

The famous dew pond

What there was, however, was an old dew pond up in the woods that made a superb water obstacle – and attracted large numbers of spectators, as film footage taken in 1982 bears testament. These were the days when there were few specialised marathon carriages and drivers and grooms were smartly dressed for the cross-country phase, complete with aprons (five penalties if you turned up at the halt without one!). More than one groom returned home soaking wet from the knees down having had to dismount to lead a reluctant horse into the water!

"The problem with the pond was that it leaked," Dick remembers. "We had to start filling it up with a hose pipe some days before – from a tap some 600 metres away. It would be quite deep for the first class through and considerably shallower by the end of the day!"

Gradually the obstacles came out of the woods to be placed first on the farmland to the right of the road that runs through the park and then joined by others on the left. By the end of the '90s, one or two were built close to the dressage and cones arena for ease of viewing. For Dick, the construction and siting of the obstacles has been one of the major changes over the years.

"From virtually nothing but going around the trees to begin with they went to ever more sophisticated and technical designs," he says.

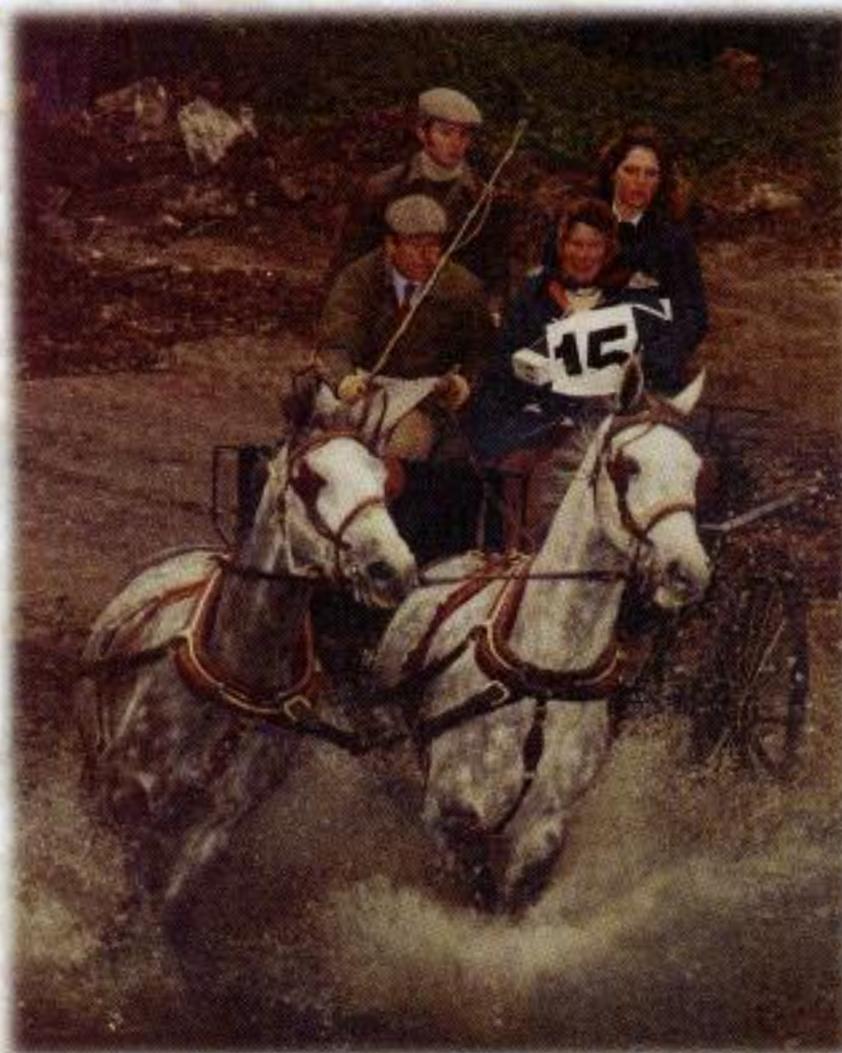


At the first two-day Brighton event, Alwyn Holder won the horse team (now four-in-hand) class with 161 penalties from nine starters, beating HRH The Duke of Edinburgh who had earlier won the dressage phase.

"The terrain has always been a problem – it's chalky and flinty, making it hard to hang in posts, particularly with the equipment we had to work with initially. You could end up with the whole obstacle on the ground if you weren't careful! And everything has to come out at the end of the marathon, within a few days it would be as if there had never been an event in the park."

Hands on chairman

In the first year, Mike Griffin recalls how the secretary's office was John King's horsebox. For a year or two following, he was able to call on his secretarial facilities at the council, but by 1984 the person who would be secretary for the next 20 years, all of them with unfailing efficiency and good nature, Sue Vine, had assumed the post. Speaking



Here at the famous Dew Pond we see Stefan van Kallenborn who won the horse pairs class at the first Brighton event; a one-day competition then.

as chairman, Mike Griffin is unstinting in his praise of her.

"I left the organisation to her," he says. "So much credit goes to her and Dick Carey for the smooth running of the event."

While this may well be true, the committee all speak fondly of Mike Griffin and his involvement.

"My most vivid memory of him is him turning up in the secretary's tent each morning wearing the largest pair of orange gloves you've ever seen," Sue says. "He was off to clean the loos!"

Not usually the duty of the chairman, but that was – is – clearly the part of the philosophy that made Brighton the happy event it has always been.

"I was a hands-on chairman," Mike acknowledges. "But I had a wonderful committee. They were always people who would say, 'we can do this' rather than find difficulties or reasons why it couldn't be done."

1987 hurricane no deterrent

Even after the hurricane of 1987 which laid waste much of the woodlands, leaving the rides impassable and the park in a mess, the ground was cleared so the event could take place the following year.

"It was quite a job, but it needed to be done anyway," Peter Riddlestone recalls. "It was just a matter of getting on with it."

Brighton has inevitably seen changes over the years. It began in the days when horse driving trials were part of the British Horse Society and it was run as a Combined Driving Affiliated Event. It has run in all weathers from burning heat to torrential rain and freezing cold (Sue

and Bill Vine remembers ducks on the dressage arena and pyjamas frozen to caravan windows!). Some years it has had international status and others not. It has had dog shows and dog agility trials, heavy horse competitions and private driving classes. For 11 years (competitors today may be interested to know!) it managed not inconsiderable prize money. The dressage and cones arena moved from the football pitch of the nearby university nearer the road through the park – and once, moved to the other end of the park before moving back the following year.

Memories

In addition many of the great names behind the furtherance of horse driving trials in this country – Lt Commander Douglas, Joe Moore, Frank Haydon, Tom Coombs – have served on the organising committee or been judges. Competitors – Sallie Walrond, Sheila Petitpierre, Avril Lewis and Claudia Bunn – have moved to be judges while many of today's top competitors – George Bowman, Di Hayes, Karen and Pippa Bassett, Mark Broadbent, Georgina Frith, Sarah Garnett (to name only a few) – have cut some of their competitive teeth here. Richard James was the Technical Delegate for many years.

Still it remains a staunch and certain fixture in the national calendar. In 2005 the Indoor Driving Company took over the running of it and this year will be running club as well as national classes. And Mike Griffin and Peter Riddlestone, who have always been its heart, will be there again – as they have been every year for the last 25, helping out wherever it is needed. www.brightonhorsetrials.co.uk

Sarah Garnett had a commanding lead in the first tandem class held at Brighton in 1982 until she missed a gate in hazard (obstacle now) No 7, handing the win to Dr Anderson from Australia. Notice the hoops worn on the wheels in those days.



Bible Humour

LOT'S WIFE

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My Mommy looked back once while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "And she turned into a telephone pole!"

GOOD SAMARITAN

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. She asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."

DID NOAH FISH?

A Sunday school teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?" "No," replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms."

HIGHER POWER

A Sunday school teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But, there is a Higher Power. Can anybody tell me what it is?" One child blurted out, "Aces!"

MOSES AND THE RED SEA

Nine-year-old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday school. "Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his army build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he radioed headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved." "Now, Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?" his Mother asked. "Well, no, Mom, but, if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter. Little Rick was excited about the task - but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much

practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

UNANSWERED PRAYER

The preacher's 5 year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why. "Well, Honey," he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his messages. "I'm asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon." "How come He doesn't answer it?" she asked.

BEING THANKFUL

A Rabbi said to a precocious six-year-old boy, "So your mother says your prayers for you each night? That's very commendable. What does she say?" The little boy replied, "Thank God he's in bed!"

ALL MEN / ALL GIRLS

When my daughter, Kelli, said her bedtime prayers, she would bless every family member, every friend and every animal. For several weeks, after we had finished the nightly prayer, Kelli would say, "And all girls." This soon became part of her nightly routine, to include this closing. My curiosity got the best of me and I asked her, "Kelli, why do you always add the part about all girls?" Her response, "Because everybody always finish their prayers by saying 'All Men'!"

SAY A PRAYER

Little Johnny and his family were having Sunday dinner at his Grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Little Johnny received his plate, he started eating right away. "Johnny! Please wait until we say our prayer." said his mother. "I don't need to," the boy replied. "Of course, you do." his mother insisted. "We always say a prayer before eating at our house." "That's at our house." Johnny explained. "But this is Grandma's house and she knows how to cook!"

Strange alternative sayings

“Not my circus, not my monkey” = not my problem (Spanish)

“Work is not a wolf, it doesn’t run into the woods” = I’ll get back to that later (Ukrainian)

“To have a wide face” = to have a lot of friends (Japan)

“Straighten the horns and kill the bull” = stuffing something up completely by insisting on correcting a minor flaw (Japan)

“Pulling an old cow out of the ditch” = bring up an old argument (Holland)

“Pretend to be an Englishman” = pretend you’re innocent and don’t know what’s going on (Serbia)

“God bless you and may your moustache grow like brushwood” = bless you, like after a sneeze (Mongolia)

Funny definitions

MARRIAGE: It’s an agreement wherein a man loses his bachelor’s degree and a woman gains her master’s.

CONFERENCE: The confusion of one man multiplied by the number present.

CONFERENCE ROOM: A place where everybody talks, nobody listens and everybody disagrees in the end.

SMILE: A curve that can set a lot of things straight!

YAWN: The only opportunity some married men ever get to open their mouths.

EXPERIENCE: The name men give to their mistakes.

DIPLOMAT: A person who tells you to go to hell in such a way that you actually look forward to the trip.

OPTIMIST: A person who, while falling from the Eiffel Tower, says midway: “See I’m not injured yet!”

BOSS: Someone who is early when you are late and late when you are early.

POLITICIAN: One who shakes your hand before elections and your confidence afterwards.



Come and join us for a celebratory BBQ to start the rest of the driving season.

Invitation by kind permission of Christina and the Fowden family to join them at their home - Bridleway Cottage, Green Lane, Blackboys TN22 5LA on Sunday 16th August 6pm - 8.30pm.

Please bring your own seat, drink, plate and cutlery (to avoid other human contact)

Please send your cheque or pay by BACS to Christina. Cheques payable to The Oaks Driving Club. Do let Christina know the names of everyone in your party.

BACS Payments

Please could anyone making a BACS payment make sure to state what it is they are paying for. There is a little box that you can type which event or membership payment. Tom needs to know exactly what the money is for.
Account No: 31440500 Sort Code: 40-23-01

Barry Garbett

Barry died peacefully on Monday at his Herefordshire home where he and his wife Pauline had set up home after their initial retirement with their horses to France where they enjoyed many years of relaxed life while still managing to run a top class B & B.

Barry was a member of the Oaks Driving Club served on their committee and organised many events. He was also a member of Brockham Harness Club and was heavily involved in the Carriage Driving Fair. Barry competed with success at both club and national level back

stepping for his wife Pauline. They also were the dominant force in the early years of Indoor driving trials with their horse Jet.

Barry had a full and varied career with a wide ranging CV featuring, Paratrooper; Tram Driver and a Stocktaker to the Licensed Trade among others. Anyone who met him will remember him for a warm smile and a cheery word, now sadly gone. His wife Pauline has the support of her family and is bearing up well.

Anyone who had paid their Oaks membership subscription prior to Coronavirus 2020 will have their membership carried over to 2021 - nothing more to pay until 1st January 2022!

Blast from the past - part 2



Hilary Hill driving Eclipse at Brighton Horse Driving Trials 2003. Note the two wheels!



Liz Howe driving Goodgollymissmolly, Oaks Show 2006 - note the full lorry park in the background.

Fire Extinguishers

Please make sure you carry a fire extinguisher in your horsebox / trailer. They need to be checked each year

Copy for the October newsletter should be sent to Liz Howe by 25th Sept 2020
Email: elizhowe515527@gmail.com
If you would like to receive your newsletter by email, please contact Liz at the above address.



Online entries and membership
www.ihdt.co.uk/oaks.html

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Fax: 01424 460050

Email: morescvr@gmail.com

OAKS DRIVING CLUB MERCHANDISE

Sweatshirts - Yellow embroidered logo on navy sweatshirt. Small, Medium, Large, X Large, XX Large

Polo Shirt

Body Warmer

Showerproof Jackets

Car Sticker - 50p

Contact: Jan Curd. Tel: 01323 849615

MEDI ARMBANDS

Porcelain Mugs £5.00 each or 6 for £25

Badges (metal) £3.50

Hand cut lead crystal glass tumbler with Oaks logo £7.50

10 notelets with white envelopes £2.50

Contact Jan Curd 01323 849615

Cheques payable to The Oaks Driving Club

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