



OAK LEAVES

Newsletter from the Oaks Driving Club

June 2020

View from the Top

I wish I had some better news for you regarding Covid 19. Social distancing is going to be with us for quite some time which makes it very difficult when it comes to carriage driving where we need a groom on the back of the carriage - impossible to be two metres away! All I can say is that when we get the go ahead to start competing and running events hopefully not one of you will be missing because we will have obeyed instructions and waited patiently until it is safe to do continue.



This has been the hardest newsletter to put together, no events, no photos - thankfully a few of the committee have answered some obscure questions giving an insight into their lives, some answers are rather amusing.

What has been particularly hard to write is the obituary to John Hecks, a gentleman amongst gentlemen, he was a good friend to the club and respected by all who knew him.

There is also a fun quiz - how well do you think you know Sussex? Guess the villages and towns from cryptic clues.

Liz Howe - CHAIRMAN

Events and competitions postponed until further notice due to Coronavirus.

Inside this issue:

Know your committee - Liz Howe	page 3	Know your committee - Andrea Scott	page 6
Know your committee - Moira Evans	page 4	John Hecks Obituary	page 7
Know your committee - Jan Curd	page 5	Towns and villages answers	page 8
Guess the towns and villages in Sussex	page 5	Did you know these things have names?	page 8
		Where did these sayings originate	page 9

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2020

July

Saturday 18th Members Training, Berwick

Sunday 19th Open Mini ODE, Berwick

Contact: Liz Howe

Postponed

August

TBC

On Foot Marathon Training.

The Fir Grove, High Hurstwood
TN22 4AE

Contact: Andrea Scott

Sunday 23rd

Strictly Come Driving,
Broad Farm BN27 4DU

Contact: Liz Howe

September

Sunday 6th

ODE, 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 10th Autumn Indoor Event

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.

Know your committee - Liz Howe

What driving discipline do you prefer? Indoor driving Trials

Ponies or horses? Ponies for driving, horses for riding

Who is your favourite professional driver to watch? Koos de Ronde

Favourite horse film? Seabiscuit

Mares or geldings? Mares (never known a bad one, they give their all)

What other equestrian sport do you compete in? At the moment I have a 16hh coloured mare that I show at county level.

Do you ride as well as drive? I've ridden all my life since 5 years old. Showing, show-jumping, racing, side-saddle. I've never played polo though

What is your worst horse related injury? Breaking my neck in a rotational fall riding fast across country. 4th vertebrae broke in two

Tea or coffee? Tea, don't like coffee

Favourite meal? Roast beef, roast potatoes and all the trimmings washed down with a glass of champagne

Where were you born? Hammersmith Hospital, London

What job would you be terrible at? Teacher or accountant - on my inability to add up

Dream holiday? What's a holiday?

What is the luckiest thing that's ever happened to you? Meeting John Hecks and having 32 years of friendship and companionship. His knowledge of all things equine was incredible and his generosity and kindness to me immense

Favourite book? *For Kicks* by Dick Francis

What would be your first question after waking up from being cryogenically frozen for 10 years? Who won the Derby?

What do you take for granted? My health and strength

What irrational fear do you have? Spiders

What do you want your epitaph to be? I would feel proud if it said I was good with young horses

What is something you will never do again? Rev my sports car up then let out the clutch - I spun my Alfa Romeo 180 degrees (showing off)

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given? An old nagsman once said to me 'There is a key to every horse, you just have to find that key'.

What makes you most proud of in the Oaks Driving Club? I am proud that the club has a great reputation for starting new and junior drivers. Some have gone on to be national champions and even a junior world champion.

What do you regret not doing? Taking up an apprenticeship in horse racing when I was 16. My father said I had to get a 'proper' job

What's your biggest kitchen fail? A haggis that exploded in the oven, it took me ages to clean that up!



Know your committee - Moira Evans

What driving discipline do you prefer? Social driving

Ponies or horses? Both as long as they are friendly and well behaved

Who is your favourite professional driver to watch? Mark Broadbent

Favourite horse film? Not a fan of animal films but the original National Velvet was good

Mares or geldings? Mares (sorry Rebel)

What other equestrian sport do you compete in? I have taken part in most of them but now just the occasional hunter trials and sponsored rides

Do you ride as well as drive? Yes

What is your worst horse related injury? As I have at the time of writing a broken coccyx caused by being knocked over in the field, I would say that! Have had lots of broken bones over the years

Tea or coffee? Both but I am addicted to tea

Favourite meal? I am not really interested in food but perhaps lasagne

Where were you born? Surrey

What job would you be terrible at? Anything to do with figures (maths)

Dream holiday? Somewhere warm, preferably on an island

What is the luckiest thing that's ever happened to you? Being born with an inbuilt cheerful disposition

Favourite book? So many, I cannot possibly choose

What would be your first question after waking up from being cryogenically frozen for 10 years? Please could I have a cup of tea?

What do you take for granted? Hopefully nothing but I am sure I do

What irrational fear do you have? Heights

What do you want your epitaph to be? No epitaph, just scattered ashes

What is something you will never do again? Have a baby

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given? Cannot think of any, or perhaps I just haven't listened!

What makes you most proud of in the Oaks Driving Club? Friendly members

What do you regret not doing? I try not to regret anything

What's your biggest kitchen fail? Too many to mention but probably cooking chilli con carne for six guests although I do not like it and had never cooked it before and forgot the rice. Didn't even have any rice in the house so we had to eat it without.



Know your committee - Jan Curd

What driving discipline do you prefer? Dressage & Showing

Ponies or horses? Ponies

Who is your favourite professional driver to watch? Caroline Dale-Leech

Favourite horse film? Champion the Wonder Horse

Mares or geldings? Geldings

What other equestrian sport do you compete in? None

Do you ride as well as drive? Can do

What is your worst horse related injury? Bruised foot

Tea or coffee? Coffee

Favourite meal? Korma curry

Where were you born? Pembury

What job would you be terrible at? Anything involving maths

Dream holiday? Somewhere away from humans

What is the luckiest thing that's ever happened to you? My granddaughters

Favourite book? *Rebecca*

What would be your first question after waking up from being cryogenically frozen for 10 years? Prosecco please

What do you take for granted? Terry

What irrational fear do you have? Water - the Ocean in particular

What do you want your epitaph to be? Who knew!

What is something you will never do again? Eat offal

What makes you most proud of in the Oaks Driving Club? Committee team work

What do you regret not doing? Being a Vet or Musician or Artist

What's your biggest kitchen fail? Scones (but working on it!)

Guess the towns and villages in Sussex

1. Quiet refuge
2. Arsenal 1 chelsea 4
3. A shallow river crossing
4. A decaying person
5. What s to be done if little willie tears his trousers
6. How to support collapsing buildings
7. A portable crucifix
8. A nasty habit of bulls
9. Creepy
10. A lawn for game
11. Part of a fish and a Spanish gentleman
12. A grain
13. Chews cud and sheep enclosure
14. Found in church
15. A large scale fight
16. What a smokey lamp needs
17. A replete monarch
18. Wide and wet
19. Done to roads before the stones go down
20. A crossing for chefs
21. An equestrian measure and angry
22. A tart and a little village
23. Dried grass and what a bee does
24. Trees in a line
25. Good value
26. Bobs card game
27. What one does with sails
28. Crossing the river at shoreham
29. Fido will do this to a bone
30. A female horses home
31. A container and a shady walk
32. What you do after a good performance
33. Where free chicken roam
34. A freshly cut down tree
35. How to propel a punt
36. The fruit is ready to pick
37. A dazzling century
38. Where to cross salty water
39. This falling ice is false
40. Chefs pasture
41. Gods hospice
42. Lemon flavoured shallow river crossing
43. Old clothes
44. Nice ham shop
45. Find a stake and make a call
46. Athlete
47. A little for the unemployed
48. Tilting beach
49. Value of a four legged friend
50. Uncomplicated birth
51. D.C.
52. Toothpaste for whiter teeth

Know your committee - Andrea Scott

What driving discipline do you prefer? 3 day national events

Ponies or horses? Love both but have had a pony (Texas) now for over 7 years and what a star he is

Who is your favourite professional driver to watch? don't have a favourite I admire all the four in hand drivers for there skill I would end up knitting a jumper with all those reins

Favourite horse film? got to be Black Beauty

Mares or geldings? again have had both but Geldings seam to want to please you

What other equestrian sport do you compete in? did a couple of years of in hand showing but loved jumping cross country only not very good, spent most of my years pony clubbing with my daughter which I miss, was hopping to do with my Granddaughter

Do you ride as well as drive? I used to ride but after quite a few falls and not having a horse to ride gave up to drive

What is your worst horse related injury? Fell off Jumping landed on my feet, broke ankle in to three pieces along with the tibia and fibula bones spent 3 weeks in traction then 4 months in non weight bearing plaster not easy with two small children running a cattery and a small holding not very popular with him indoors

Tea or coffee? Tea but need a coffee to get me moving in the morning

Favourite meal? Fish and chips out of the paper sitting by the sea

Where were you born? Cuckfield we were living in Brixton London just after the war so my mother was sent to Sussex to give birth as the hospital's in London were all full

What job would you be terrible at? anything that requires me to read instructions

Dream holiday? I have been working on my bucket list for sometime now, and have managed to go to most places that I wanted to see but would like to go back to the Maldives and snorkel I only

learnt to do this a few years ago (always terrified of putting my face in the water) so missed out when we were there 25 years ago

What is the luckiest thing that's ever happened to you? Having my family and Husband for nearly 50 years

Favourite book? not sure I have one I only learnt to read when I was 10 dyslexia was not heard of in the 50's just told I was thick so now I read everyday

What would be your first question after waking up from being cryogenically frozen for 10 years? Where am I?

What do you take for granted? Never thought I took things for granted all ways very positive about things but now its got to be my health

What irrational fear do you have? dying before I have sorted out enough dinners for my Husband (he can't cook)

What do you want your epitaph to be? Would like to think I was kind to everyone

What is something you will never do again? The Carriage Driving Challenge for the NHS not keen on raw eggs

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given? Never give up just find a different way, learnt when working with disabled children

What makes you most proud of in the Oaks Driving Club? They are a great foundation club, they helped and inspired me to go on and compete at National events something I never thought I was capable of doing

What do you regret not doing? Not learning the carriage dive earlier

What's your biggest kitchen fail? Melting a christmas pudding in a plastic bowl in the microwave I lost the instructions (could have been the G&T's) cooked it on full heat for 30 minutes (should have been 3 min) shut the kitchen door melted the microwave filled the house full of smoke which we could still smell 2 weeks later. I was trying to impress my in laws blamed the smell on the open fire. Husband reminds me every Christmas

JOHN HECKS 17.11.1920 - 25.5.2020

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of one of the clubs most generous friends. Just six months off his 100th birthday after a short spell in hospital John left us.

John was born during the time when horses worked hard on the land, a son of a farmer it was soon pretty obvious that John would follow suit and farm in his own right. His start in farming was to be given twelve in-calf heifers by his father. John rented some land and raised them. He was very hardworking and farming was a different world back then before tractors and hydraulic lifts. In later years John suffered with his knees, he blamed it on having to carry sacks of corn on his back from the trailer to the barn - these sacks weighed 18 stone!

John had an inborn love for horses, he rode from a very young age and followed his father in the hunting field when he was seven years old. The day did not go quite to plan as John fell from his pony suffering a kick in the stomach. Instead of crying as most youngers might have done, John set off in hot pursuit, caught his pony and remounted to complete the rest of the day. John was no quitter.

John always had an eye for a good horse, he was a superb judge of confirmation and always bought a good looking horse and ones that could perform too. A consummate horseman, he lived to ride across country, no hedge too big nor rails too stiff. He loved trips up to Leicestershire visiting the high-class dealers yards. John's greatest pride was when he was made Master of the Southdown Foxhounds in 1974, the first farmer to become MFH of the pack, he followed on from Major Bruce Shand who always believed John would do a good job, needless to say he wasn't disappointed.

John bred and owned many a good show horse and had considerable success. County show winners came regularly and Horse of the Year and Royal International qualifiers were greatly enjoyed. John always said 'You can't win them all, but if your horse has tried it's best then you cannot ask for more'.

Horse racing was always an important part of John's life, he loved the National Hunt and the Cheltenham Festival was his mecca. Equally enjoyable was the Grand National and days at Plumpton, his local course. Latterly John has had shares in horses trained by Paul Nichols



and Nicky Henderson. A visit to the trainers yards was always greeted with enthusiasm.

John rode until he was 85 years old, by which time he was keen to watch his ponies perform in harness and was a regular spectator with the Oaks Driving Club. When the club were looking for a new venue to hold events, John was only too happy to offer his farm. Hence the 'Berwick Weekend' was born. Generous to a fault John would not hear of charging for the venue, he just loved to see people enjoying their horses and ponies, he took particular delight in donating and presenting bottles of bubbly to the class winners.

All in all a life well lived. John was a gentleman amongst gentlemen, his good sportsmanship and encouragement of others made him the most delightful companion and his tales of horses and farming made everyone sit up and listen. He leaves a huge hole in many peoples lives and an even bigger hole in their hearts. It was my great privilege to know him.



Towns and villages answers

1. Peacehaven
2. Winchelsea
3. Ford
4. Rottingdean
5. Patcham
6. Shoreham
7. Cross in Hand
8. Goring
9. Crawley
10. Partridge Green
11. Findon
12. Rye
13. Cowpen
14. Hassocks
15. Battle
16. Newick
17. Fulking
18. Broadwater
19. Tarring
20. Cooksbridge
21. Handcross
22. Pyecombe
23. Hastings
24. Forest Row
25. Worth
26. Robertsbridge
27. Firlie
28. Three Bridges
29. Bury
30. Maresfield
31. Boxgrove
32. Clapham
33. Henfield
34. Newtimber
35. Poling
36. Ripe
37. Brighton
38. Seaford
39. Hailsham
40. Cuckfield
41. Christs Hospital
42. Curdford
43. Warnham
44. Pease pottage
45. Dial Post
46. Charlton
47. Small Dole
48. Cambersands
49. Petworth
50. Easebourne
51. Washington
52. Colgate

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

DID YOU KNOW THESE THINGS HAD NAMES?

1. The space between your eyebrows is called a glabella.
2. The way it smells after the rain is called petrichor.
3. The plastic or metallic coating at the end of your shoelaces is called an aglet.
4. The rumbling of stomach is actually called a wamble.
5. The cry of a new born baby is called a vagitus.
6. The prongs on a fork are called tines.
7. The sheen or light that you see when you close your eyes and press your hands on them is called phosphenes.
8. The tiny plastic table placed in the middle of a pizza box is called a box tent.
9. The day after tomorrow is called overmorrow.
10. Your tiny toe or finger is called minimus.
11. The wired cage that holds the cork in a bottle of champagne is called an agraffe.
12. The 'na na na' and 'la la la', which don't really have any meaning in the lyrics of any song, are called vocables.
13. When you combine an exclamation mark with a question mark (like this ?!), it is referred to as an interrobang.
14. The space between your nostrils is called columella nasi.
15. The armhole in clothes, where the sleeves are sewn, is called armscye.
16. The condition of finding it difficult to get out of the bed in the morning is called dysania.
17. Illegible hand-writing is called griffonage.
18. The dot over an "i" or a "j" is called tittle.
19. That utterly sick feeling you get after eating or drinking too much is called crapulence.
20. The metallic device used to measure your feet at the shoe store is called Bannock device.

HOW MANY OF THE ABOVE DID YOU ALREADY KNOW?

Where did these saying originate?

Most ditty's and sayings that we use today originate from the 17th and 18th centuries and most derive from the days of Coaching Inns, Coach & Horses and Maritime.

WHERE DID 'POLE POSITION' ORIGINATE? It wasn't anything to do with circuit racing! In the good old days, working horses were used for all sorts of heavy duty jobs; anything from carrying armoury in the first world war, to our forefathers using horse and carts for all sorts of deliveries. Before that people would be transported by public coach & horses. Many a public house called 'The Cock Inn' will invariably be a pub positioned at the bottom or top of a hill where the Cock Horses were stationed. The 'Cock Horse' was often a heavier weight (albeit still agile) breed which would be added to the front of a team of horses to help bear the weight of the coach or carriage up hill, especially if loaded. Many of the pub signs which depict a 'cockerel' are a 20th and 21st misinterpretation of the Cock (horse).

POLE POSITION was nothing to do with car racing, as we best know the phrase today. If there were a pair or team of four horses, only one of the pair could mount their feed (nose) bag onto the centre pole (that ran between the pair) to reach the bottom of the bag! That horse took 'pole position'. The Americans claim pole position to derive from horse racing, where the favourite would be nearest the pole, but I suggest that our ancestors date back far longer here in the UK! The millennials will claim history that pole position related to the automobile track because they don't know any different!

Staying with Coaching horses, typically a team of four matching (coloured/breed) horses would imply that the coach is that of a private owner (wealth). A public coach would collect horses and drop off others to rest and hence would be of mixed colours. For these public coaches, they would almost certainly place a grey horse front offside so that when travelling at night, an approaching coach could be spotted sooner whilst travelling at speed. This point is nearly always depicted in old fashioned prints that you might see in a pub or such like. The DARK HORSE will be the one you couldn't see coming, hence reference to the dark horse being the unknown quantity that might suddenly shine through.

OUTSIDERS is another commonly used word, but traditionally it derived from those sitting on top of the coach in all weathers, as opposed to those

more affluent who could afford a ticket for the inside of the coach. Hence 'an outsider' is suggested to be in a poorer position.

HOLD HARD and HOLD YOUR HORSES means much the same thing, both originating from stopping a horse/s in their tracks. HOLD HARD is still used in the hunting field today - 'as to promptly not cross the line of the drag scent'.

If you were STUCK IN A RUT that might be more self-explanatory, where many a coach or cart would get stuck and the vehicle requiring unloading for the journey to be allowed to be continued. Perhaps that's where 'OFF LOADING' came from too!

Many an equestrienne will know that you might tell the age of a horse from its teeth. DON'T LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH is a result of the times when horses were offered as a gift and it would have been considered rude to have looked in the mouth to check the animals age! So, in other words, when you receive a gift, don't be ungrateful. LONG IN THE TOOTH continues this theme as the longer the horse's teeth, the older it might have been, hence a 'bit long in the tooth' might imply something is too old!

Many horses will literally and impatiently CHAMP AT THE BIT because they want to 'get going' whether under saddle in a race, or in a team with a fully laden coach behind. The saying demonstrates that the person we are referring to just cannot wait to get going, inferring eagerness, impatience and enthusiasm all rolled into one!

Notice how statues and paintings of prominent men (generals and alike) depicts them being on an enormous horse? Well that's when you might GET OFF YOUR HIGH HORSE - i.e. cease acting in a self-righteous, overbearing or smugly superior manner.

The list of equine related sayings we use today is endless including other sayings such as YOU CANT LEAD A HORSE TO WATER - hopefully self-explanatory where you can show someone where to go but you cant make them carry out the task!

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



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