



Northern Ireland Branch, British Driving Society



"To encourage and assist those interested in equine driving."

The BDS continues to play an important role in representing the interests and needs of carriage drivers. Northern Ireland has a long tradition and interest in carriage driving; the significant growth in the membership of the branch has continued (now over 200 members) and with this there has been an expansion in the numbers of activities.

There have been many individual successes in the past year and congratulations are due to all those who were involved in the branch activities, particularly those who have competed at major events in ROI and on mainland UK.



Branch chairman:

Eugene Larkin from Lisburn has been Chairman of the NI branch since 2003 and also sits on BDS as a council member to represent the branch. As a young boy he began driving with his father and has maintained a lifelong interest. Trained as a vehicle engineer he soon turned his hand to carriage repairs and restoration. What started as a hobby and side-line ended up becoming a full-time business.

His knowledge of his art, and the quality and skill of his work, is widely recognised and he was awarded the 2002 Coachmakers Carriage Driving award by the Worshipful Company of Coachmakers & Coach Harness Makers of London.

As Chairman he has actively encouraged more people to join and learn to enjoy carriage driving, whether as show competitors, hobby drivers or as helpers and spectators.

BDS Shows:

Training a horse and putting it to a suitable vehicle and turning everything out immaculately and to the highest standard can be seen as the epitome of stylish driving.

Shows have numerous classes for all types and sizes of vehicles and animals, whether it be valuable original vehicles or modern exercise vehicles, highly bred carriage horses or the family driving pony.



Road drives:

Organised road drives are excellent social occasions without the formality of shows, they are useful to introduce young horses to working in company and as part of training and fitness programs.

All members are very welcome, many of the drives have shorter routes for smaller or less fit animals. The main drives are usually based on a route of 4-7 miles, mainly at a working trot.



Training and testing:

The BDS has always had a priority to care for and protect those interested in driving and its extensive and proven testing programme is now recognised across the world. These are practical based tests which ensure and show that you know the safest ways to harness, put-to and drive and have sufficient knowledge about driving safely. The range of tests suit different levels of experience and knowledge.

Many branch members have been trained and assessed in the preliminary driving and road driving tests. The BDS regards these important safety tests as the minimum standard for carriage drivers.



Two of our members are now fully qualified assessors, which has made organising tests easier. There are assessment days in the spring and again in the autumn with a dedicated training day several weeks beforehand. Come to the next one to find out more and get the confidence to have a go!



In our area two yards have been inspected and approved by BDS for training, both for BDS testing and private lessons: contact the Area Commissioner for details.

In April we plan to have an experienced BDS judge hold a showing clinic (for all levels of experience) where you will have one-to-one advice on your driving and turnout.



Young drivers:

We are very fortunate to have many enthusiastic young drivers with more taking up the reins each year.

All the shows have well supported junior classes, and with training and practise they can do the preliminary driving and road driving tests.



Junior drivers, Ballynahinch, 2009

In the annual national Kelvin/BDS Young Drivers Scholarships our branch has seen success with three young drivers among the winners in the past two years.

Last year a "fun-day" was run, with young drivers in mind and, for the first time, a program of training days for young drivers has been organised for 2010.

If you know of any young people who would be interested do encourage them to become involved.

Website:

The BDS website is at www.britishdrivingsociety.co.uk, the branch website is at www.ni-bds.co.uk.

Both are kept up to date with current issues, news and information and on the branch site you will find details of upcoming events and numerous photographs of recent events.

Contacts:

If you have any enquiries or need further information contact the Area Commissioner; Liz Kelly;
19 Closkelt Road, Ballyward, Castlewellan BT31 9QE
Phone: 028 406 71318/07771 798 281
E-mail: elizabeth.kelly2@btinternet.com

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH-BRITISH DRIVING SOCIETY FIXTURES FOR 2010

List

Jan. 1. New Years Day Drive –Millisle – Mr and Mrs. John Carnduff and family

Jan 16 Demonstration Day – NECARNE – 2.p.m. £10 per head

16TH Jan @2.pm Venue: Necarne Castle College of Agriculture, Irvinestown, County Fermanagh
This day is for highlighting and promoting the British Driving Society, and carriage driving safely, and encourages non drivers to take the reins to have a go
Contact Liz. Kelly 02840671318 or 07771798281

A planned program of training days for young drivers are planned for 13th Feb, 20th Mar, 10th April and 1st May 2010 (all Saturdays) at Joanne Orr Carriages, 54 Clanmaghera Road, Ballyward, Castlewellan, BT31 9SA.
Phone: 028 406 50436. Numbers of spaces are strictly limited. Turnouts can be provided.

March 6 Demonstration Prep. For Testing –Comber- contact Robert Smyth 02891814170

March 27 Testing Day – COMBER- contact Robert Smyth 028-91814170 or Liz Kelly 028-40671378

next BDS training day will be on 6th March and the next assessment days will be on the weekend of 27th March, both at Robert Smyth on 02891814170.... 60 Ballyrainey Rd, Comber. Co Down.... BT23 5JT , near Comber; further date(s) will be planned for the autumn (depending on demand).

April 6 Easter Tuesday 12 noon MILLISLE contact Mr.J.Carnduff 028-91861348

Showing clinic

If you want to improve your showing skills before the season, no matter what your experience is, on a One to one basis, you will be helped and advised: primarily in basic skills, correct & traditional rein handling, show ring technique by a BDS judge. All you need is your turnout and to dress accordingly.

If you are interested please let me know on 02840671318 or 07771798281 or e-mail me on elizabeth.kelly2@btinternet.com

April 17 BDS Drumlee 2.00 p.m. contact Mervyn Ward or Liz Kelly 028-40671378

Aril Annalong supper dance

May 3 (Monday) Irish Hackney Society Show, Ballymena

May 13 RUAS Balmoral Belfast

May 22 Ulster Folk Museum –Invitation Drive BDS Members only 1.00 P.M. (Traditional Type Vehicles only)
contact Margaret Carlisle 028-92665893

May 29 Ballynahinch International Carriage Driving Festival Show 9.30 a m contact

Margaret Carlisle 028 92665893

P.T.O.

June 5 Lurgan Show

June 19 Saintfield Show 12noon contact George Fawcett 02897511219 or M. Carlisle

June 26 BDS Ballyward Drive meet at Turley's contact Mervyn Ward or Liz Kelly

July 3 Northern Ireland Branch-British Driving Society Annual Show contact Eugene Larkin 028-92621184 or Margaret Carlisle 028-92665893

July 24 Kilkeel Show 1.00p.m. Contact Mrs Horner 028-43768446

Aug. 7 Annalong Show contact Mrs. Horner 028-43768446

Aug 14 BDS Necarne Margaret Carlisle 028-92665893

Aug 21 BDS Banbridge Show contact Margaret Carlisle 028-92665893

Nov 5 Annual Dinner

MEETINGS

Committee Meetings

11 January: 8 March: 10 May: 9 August: 11 October 2010

OPEN MEETINGS

8 February: Film show

12 April:

14 June:

13 September: 8 November 2010

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT 8.00 P.M. IN THE BRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRE, RAILWAY STREET, LISBURN.

WEBSITE: www.ni-bds.co.uk