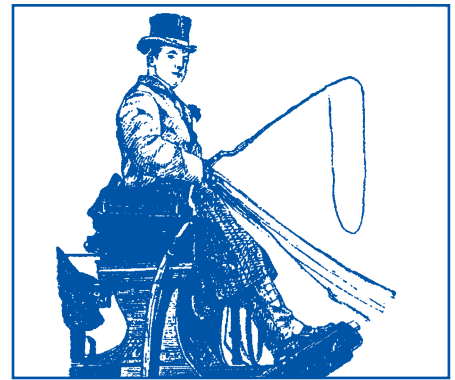


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During the South of England Carriage Driving Fair last year, young driver Adam Alexander having fun with his cob in the junior's competition. This year's fair at Ardingly is on Sunday March 14th.



From the Box Seat

It had never really occurred to me that there were such a significant number of dedicated carriage enthusiasts until the recent Pomp and Power conference in London, the Association Internationale d'Attelage Tradition (AIAT) meeting in Holland and the Carriage Association of America symposium. A total of 300 people attended these meetings. All of these conferences had subjects covering particular sectors of the industry (if that is the right word) and prompted deep discussion.



photo: Dicky Jim

Probably the most significant factor from these gatherings was the announcement at the AIAT AGM that as the Association encompassed 10 European nations, possible UNESCO heritage and culture funding may be available for a specific project.

At home the Health and Safety culture is still creeping up on us. The BDS recently announced that judges should not accompany junior drivers in a carriage in a show ring or drive any of the turnouts, an insignificant regulation for most but another example of a nanny state. It would be a sad day if this culture crept into the hunter classes and halted the judge riding exhibitors' horses. It does also pose the question whether a BDS test assessor should accompany a young driver when he/she is taking a BDS proficiency test and particularly the road-driving assessment element on a public highway.

Is a judge or assessor better qualified to accompany a junior than an unqualified parent or groom, who may have little driving experience?

Better news is that despite the difficult economic climate, both the BHDTA and BDS chairmen in their respective annual journals confirm that memberships have remained stable. Both subscriptions include valuable insurance packages, a great incentive to renew your membership.

Happy driving.

Richard James

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Front Cover: Gary Haffenden driving his Champion Hackney Pony Aghaderg Supreme Demonstrator at last year's New Forest Show where he won the Hackney Championship and then was the Reserve Supreme Harness Champion. You can see why the Hackney is called the ballerina of the equine world.

Photo: Dicky Jim

The opinions expressed in *Carriage Driving* are not necessarily those of the Editor

Editor: Richard James • **Deputy Editor:** Stephanie Kill
 • **Advertising Sales :** Claire Burden • **Circulation Director:** Sally Boettcher
 • **Production Director:** Richard Hamshere • **Publishing Director:** Jon Benson
 • **Printers** Pensord Press Ltd, Pontllanfraith, Blackwood, Gwent NP12 2YA
 • **Publishers** A & D Media Ltd, Jesses Farm, Snow Hill, Dinton, Wilts SP3 5HN
 ISSN 0958-1820
 Editorial: 01722 716998. Advertising: 01722 716996. Subscriptions 01722 716997.
 Fax: 01722 716926. Email: edit@carriage-driving.com
 www.carriage-driving.com 