

Hello and welcome to the December IMGA Newsletter,

If you attended the Annual General Meeting you will no doubt remember the torrential rain and high winds that battered Scotland. Unfortunately this extreme weather has continued, and as I look out the window and see the flooded fields and the ducks enjoying new ponds I know it'll be some time before I'm out riding again in the fields.

I'd like to thank everyone who made the trip to the west coast of Scotland and I'd just like to remind you all that the Annual Scottish Ball will take place on February 10 at the same venue. This is the first time anything remotely connected to mounted games has been held so close to me, and it was nice to see the number of supporters that turned up, especially those who had travelled long distances to be there. I've worked out that this year I've driven over 9,000 miles around Britain for mounted games competitions – and that's not including practices or team meetings.

At the recent annual general meeting Clive Jones was elected as Vice Chairman and he gives an insight as to what he hopes to achieve. Alun Whitney will still be involved as the Welsh regional representative and rules committee member.

Last time I produced a newsletter it was on the run up to the World Team Championships in Sweden and I asked for predictions as to which team would win. Lots of countries had set backs but once the competition started England never looked like losing and the question of 'who do you think will win?' was replaced by 'Just how many points will England win by?'. Congratulations to England for winning for the third year in a row – can they make it four times in Belgium next year?

Melanie Scott
IMGA Communications Officer

From the Chairman ...

Traditionally this is the time of the year for looking back and reflecting on both the high and the low points of the last 12 months, but it should also be a time for looking forward, so let's do a little of both.

We've had a very crowded calendar of events (there were 52 competitions listed on the IMGA website, but these were only those with an international flavour, there were hundreds more run locally), including not only the three regular World Championships for Individuals, Pairs, and Teams, but also a brand new European Championship held in Switzerland.

We've had an unprecedented number of rule changes considered by the Rules Committee, resulting in eight improvements and clarifications to the Rule Book; we've had a surge of interest from potential new members, mostly in Africa but also in Europe; and we've established the course of IMGA for a further two years with a solid agreement for strict application of the rules governing our sport, and the election of the management team at the Annual General Meeting in November.

I would like to thank Alun Whitney, who has fulfilled the duties of Vice-Chairman for the last year, and also add that it's been both a privilege and a pleasure to work with him. At the same time I welcome Clive Jones, who takes over that position, and look forward to working with him in the future.

So what's going to happen in those two years?

It's already clear that the emphasis is going to be on the "I" part of IMGA. We look forward to welcoming even more new members and to participating in competitions in the four continents where our members are located. Next year's World Team Championship will be held in Belgium, the Individuals, Pairs, and European Championships in England, the 2007 annual meeting in Florida, and 2008 will see us for the first time making the long journey to the southern hemisphere for the World Team Championship in Sydney, Australia.

This is how it should be, with the footprint (hoofprint?) of Mounted Games spreading wider and wider all the time.

I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas, and a successful New Year.

Regards,

Keith Martin
Chairman, IMGA



From the new Vice-Chairman ...

During the past eight years I have travelled overseas with Sussex and Wales, and have made many good friends around the world. Recently I have been involved with clinics in Canada, Northern Ireland, Sweden, America and Norway.

My family and I have encouraged riders from overseas to ride in Great Britain and for the past four years have invited riders from France, America and Norway to stay with us for the competition season. I am also proud to say that Sussex MGA team has had members from Belgium, Canada, France, Norway and America.

I am very interested in IMGA and am pleased to see the overseas teams getting stronger every season.

Having taken clinics, I have had input from riders and would like to represent them on the committee, as without riders we have no IMGA.

I am totally independent, I do not represent an individual country but I am genuinely interested in the progress of I.M.G.A. If any of you members have any issues or suggestions then please contact me.

Clive Jones
Vice-Chairman

News ...

At the recent Annual General Meeting, held in Scotland, the five officers of the International Association were due to stand for election. The results after a secret ballot were

Country development

Results: Jim Dunn 12 votes
 Roger Sykes 5 votes

Communication

There was only one candidate, Melanie Scott, who was automatically elected.

Finance and Administration

Results: Jens Martin 12 votes
Mary Worth 5 votes

Vice-Chairman

Results: Clive Jones 10 votes
Alun Whitney 7 votes

Chairman

Results: Keith Martin 11 votes
Ro Day 6 votes

During 2006 the IMGA Rules Committee has been very busy. To date they have handled 10 rule change requests, eight of which have been accepted and two have been rejected. Those that have been accepted will come into effect from January 1st 2007 and will be reflected in the next version of the rule book to be printed.

So that you can already prepare yourselves for next year, however, here is a quick run down of the eight changes that have been adopted so far this year:

1. The broken equipment rule has been completely rewritten. At first glance you might find the new rule a bit complicated however in essence all that we have done is take what is, in most cases, done already and put that in writing, thereby removing the discrepancy between the rule book and reality. In short, if you didn't break it on purpose, you won't be eliminated and if there is no safety risk, the race will not be stopped.
2. The rule book used to state that in the Joust the lance had to be held by the handle at all times. This has now been brought into line with Sword Lancers so that the lance only needs to be held by the handle when knocking over targets and handing over.
3. The changeover rule has been expanded to cover the eventuality of equipment being dropped on the line. In future if equipment is on or touching the line it will be deemed as being in the field of play.
4. The pairs race previously known as "Three Flag" has been changed to "Flag Fliers", similarly the individual "Mug Race" is now "Three Mug". This makes the naming convention of games consistent across the three formats.
5. It used to be that if a pony left the arena the individual, pair or team concerned would be eliminated. This has now been expanded to cover both pony and rider.

6. It has always been the case that if a piece of equipment is displaced after the last rider has crossed the line then you do not need to go back and correct it. What happens however if the equipment is displaced after one of the first three riders has crossed the line? Whose responsibility is it to make the correction? This has never been clearly defined but in future it will be the responsibility of the active rider to make the correction immediately.

7. In almost all MGA races, if you make a mistake you have to correct it immediately, however not in Association, Founders or Bank races where the fourth rider can correct mistakes made by previous riders. As this unnecessarily complicates the rules, this has now been removed and riders will have to correct their own mistakes in future.

8. A rule has been adopted out of MGAGB which states that at competitions where a video camera is in place to record the finishing order of races, the referee may also use that video to help in making other decisions involving the start and finish line.

In addition here are the two that have been rejected by the committee:

1. The complete removal of Three Legged Sack and Bank Race from the Rule book altogether.
2. Removing the requirement to be able to float the ball in the bucket in Windsor Castle and Moat and Castle if the bucket is knocked over.

Remember that a more detailed description of each of the above can be found on the IMGA web site under: www.mounted-games.org/imga/games/committee/index.html.

If you have any questions regarding any of the above, feel free to contact them, their contact information is on that same web page.

Rules Committee

There were only three candidates for three places on the Rules Committee, and were automatically elected:

Younes Ahlbom
Jens Martin
Margaret Welsby

The other three members of the Rules Committee, from England, Scotland, and Wales, were confirmed as:

Nicola Leese (England)
Yvonne Struthers (Scotland)
Alun Whitney (Wales).

Can you help ...?

Signe Sehested is currently translating the IMGA rule book into Danish and would like photographs of each race to accompany the text and also added to their new website.

If anyone has any pictures they could send to Signe then please email signe.von.s@mailme.dk

Canada has two girl riders who would like to be involved in the rider exchange program to be based preferably in Ireland, Belgium or France as one girl speaks fluent French. Contact Jim Dunn if you can help.

At the recent AGM the role of a Promotions Officer responsible for promotion of the sport was suggested. This may overlap with the Development and Communication Officers and it was suggested that a promotions sub-committee could be formed involving people who have marketing and/or media experience. Contact Jens Martin if you would like to become involved.

Country achievements in 2006 ...

Botswana

We are new to the mounted games community so have been moving along slowly this year increasing interest in the sport. We hosted an unmounted rally earlier in the year to introduce the games and rules to our riders. This past week the Botswana Pony Club ran a three-day mounted games camp with 24 children participating. Everyone worked hard at learning the new skills, vaulting off the ponies at a canter proved to be the favourite activity. We now just have to get them all back on

In January, we are hosting Jim Dunn and the Canadian mounted games team. Jim will be presenting a three-day coaching clinic and a two-day riders clinic. Coaches and riders from Botswana, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as South Africa will be attending. The Africa Cup Competition will be run on January 13-14 2007. Two heats will be run so both the international teams and the other participants in the riders clinic can compete. Jim has agreed to give a short officials clinic as well so our officials can get up to speed on there duties before the competition is held.

Canada

A very special seasons greetings to everyone from myself and the Canada Mounted Games Association. After a long and exciting season, the sport of

mounted games in Canada is winding down for the holiday season - the 2006 season was a busy one to say the least!

The Canada Mounted Games Association started its season in March with a trip to the Kentucky Horse Park to compete in the first segment of the North America Cup. This competition is a cumulative point competition followed by two more competitions in Barrie, Canada and the overall championship back in Lexington, Kentucky in October.

At the end of May, Canada sent a development team to South Africa for two weeks. In May, Canada is just coming out of our long winter and the South Africans are just going into theirs. The temperature was a balmy 13C with the Canadians in shorts and the South Africans in Winter Parkas. We were a great contrast! The focus of the team was to host a coaching clinic for South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. During our two-week stay, team Canada was hosted by Mande Siderfin and MGASA at Ompopo University. There are no better hosts than the South Africans. The team excavated ancient ruins in a 1000-year-old village, spent two glorious days on a South African safari, hacked through the mountains and had a great time four wheeling through the outback jungle. All in all, an amazing experience. This was Canada's fifth visit to South Africa.

The Canada Mounted Games Association hosted various pairs and team competitions throughout the season including the Ottawa Capital Classic. As development and education are such a large part of our program, beginner and advanced games clinics were hosted to new groups in Alberta, British Columbia and Nova Scotia.

In September, Canada also sent an International team to Mastaing, France. Canada had attended this competition once before in 1999 and we have always regarded the Maistaing competition as the very best. The competition is very well organized, extremely friendly and very competitive. Look out for these French riders and hats off to the Maistang and Bruille teams!!

At the end of January, Canada will be sending an international team to Botswana, Africa to compete in the first ever Africa Nations Cup. This competition will be attended by teams from Botswana, the South African regions, Swaziland, Zaire and Zimbabwe, just to name a few.

Denmark

As Denmark is a small country and still quite new in MGA, we only have a small group of riders, but it gets bigger and bigger each month, but that still means our competitions aren't the biggest and we don't have that many, but here is what we have done in Denmark in 2006, besides travelling to competitions in other countries.

We started the year with a clinic with Chris Jones and Pete Walters, they helped us a lot, and we had a great time with them.

In March we did a two days show in front of 9.000 people to the biggest horseshow in Denmark – 'Dansk Varmblods Hingste Kåring i Herning' - a show where the best stallions in Denmark are displayed each year. In May we

had the Danish Pairs, and the first qualification to the Northern European Championship and we also held a show.

In June we did two shows - we try to do as many shows as possible to show our sport to the Danish people so they will get what its all about.

In July we had a friendly individual. In August we did one show. And in September we had the Danish Individuals and one show over two days. In October we had the first competition ever for Danish teams, it was just for fun and to get everyone into it, but we had a great time.

And here in December we did a Christmas show - so as you can see we do a lot of shows, which is really fun, but in 2007 we want to have more competitions as well.

Besides shows and competitions we often meet up at the trainer Signe Sehested's home to eat, watch videos and sleep over. That gives us the possibility to get to know each other better and better and have fun besides mounted games. We also go to the movies and go out, because we like being together and think it's important to do things together and have fun!

Germany

It is an achievement for our country to grow and grow every year. Also this year we had more teams, more competitions and more attention in the public for our sport.

But the big achievement for Mounted Games Germany in 2006 was to have one hour of Mounted Games live on national television!!!

We where invited by the NDR (a telestation) to do a special Mounted Games Show Competition during a big international jumping and dressage tournament in the west of Germany. The telestation wanted us to send four teams - of course four of our best teams were send to represent Mounted Games.

The arena had only enough space for two lanes, because of this they let the first two teams do game number one, then the teams had to move out of the arena and the other two teams were doing the game. The placement was done out of the time the teams needed (the viewers were able to see that time). Very different to usual but



to



really exciting for the audience. Furthermore the two national coaches had to describe the games. Judith Moormann was interviewed in the studio and Gaby Makowski had to answer the questions inside the arena.

Every team was supported by one famous rider (e.g. Meredith Michaels-Beerbaum) - these riders participated in one game as well (sadly they do not wanted to ride). Also every team could pick one game as a joker to earn double points if they win it. The NDR had eight cameras and about 50 people working on that show to make it a success. Of course the most exciting fact was that the whole hour was telecasted live!!

It was a great success. It was telecasted three more times and the telestation were proud to tell us they had a large number of viewers. They will probably do a show like this again next year.



There is no better advertisement for Mounted Games!!!

Ireland

With two trips to Gothenberg one as part of the All Ireland team and then again for the worlds Mark Devitt and Aidan Hanlon were busy with Garry Corcoran, Ian Whelan and Nick Maher competing in the worlds.

At home we had a very successful autumn league which saw 22 players battle it out over four weekends to see who would win. Tony Whooley from Cork took first place with Shona Harpur coming second. We find the league a great opportunity for the players to have lots of fun. We are hoping to organise a spring league starting in March to get the games up and running early in 2007.

Mark Devitt and Ian Whelan travelled with Northern Ireland to France in late August to compete and Mark also travelled to Sweden for their individual competition - he won first place.



Ireland had six teams travel to Builth Wells in September for the Welsh Championships - a great weekend of games and socialising was had by all.

Luxembourg

Medieval games in Luxembourg - every summer, the small town of Vianden in the North of Luxembourg celebrates its medieval past with a week-long festival of street markets and various other related events like concerts of medieval music, banquets, and demonstrations of crafts like spinning, weaving, basket making and so on.

This year we were invited to come along to put on a jousting tournament. This involved all the riders getting dressed up as knights and pages for the occasion, but the games themselves were mounted games as we all know and love them.



Before each session a selection of riders, led by a town crier beating a drum, rode as a group from the "Tournament Field" alongside the river in the centre of town, up the winding main street to the castle to receive the flags for their respective teams and back, gathering spectators in their wake.

Two teams were formed, one to represent the "home" town of Vianden and one to represent the "rival" town of Echternach.

After four sessions Vianden came out the winners, and received favours from the Lady of the Manor.



Although the site of the "Tournament field" was less than ideal, a great time was had by all and the organisers of the festival were sufficiently impressed with the tournament to ask us back next year, to a more suitable venue where the games will be central to the activities and surrounded by the medieval market.

Norway

National: In 2006 we had five more teams competing compared with 2005, a total of 14 teams, and 12 of these went all the way to the National Championships. Two of the teams could not make it because of dates crashing with beginning of studies.

A new competition honouring the pony Embla, known to many games riders in Norway, was introduced. "Embla Open" is open for national and international teams and will hold a special section for junior teams, as Embla is a typical junior pony. This year Embla Open also hosted the Norwegian part of the "Northern European Championships"

International: Norway has had three international teams out competing this season, in Scandinavia and Europe. This is the first season with an expansion in this direction. The idea was introduced by Clive Jones after a week-end clinic visiting almost all teams in Norway. He said: "There are enough good riders in Norway to make up at least three international teams".

The Norwegian MG Association decided to take Clive up on his suggestion and trials were made for three teams to be picked, of which one was a junior team of riders 16 years and under. This has given at least 10 extra riders the opportunity to ride, compete and experience mounted games in a foreign country this year. We are very proud of all our riders and ponies.

In February, Norway MG was invited to arrange a mounted games competition at a new large indoor horse show, Arctic Equestrian Games. We were of course proud to be asked, and accepted the offer. We decided to run our third 'Arctic Pairs', as an open international competition. We had one foreign pair from Sweden, very brave girls driving from Gothenburg to Norway with new snow coming down all the way. For them, it was a trip worth the hassle as they went home with first prize. As this was an open competition it gave a lot of riders the joy and experience to compete in the same arena as famous showjumpers.

In October, Norway MG was again invited to arrange a show competition at the Oslo Horse Show. This year Norway took the victory home. The public was ecstatic and the noise and sound indescribable. As Peter Hern, our referee, said when we came out: "I had to look down to check if my feet still were planted on the sand, the cheering was so loud, I felt I was lifted up in the air."

Our PR activities have made us be recognised in major horse magazines as well as newspapers. Two competitions also have been broadcasted on web-TV, Arctic Pairs and Oslo Horse Show Cup. Our national TV-station is planning to show the Oslo Horse Show competition as a Christmas family program on prime time. MG is believed to have a major time slot in that.

The Norwegian Mounted Games Association would like to thank everybody involved making the 2006 season so memorable, with a lot of happenings and a growth in memberships. A special thank you to Clive and Carol Jones for giving Norway so much of their time. Likewise a big thank you to Peter and June Hern, always ready to help. A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year to you all

Scotland

Scotland has had a very successful year, beginning with the Annual Ball in February, held at Thistle Irvine Hotel, and was attended by 130 guests. Our first outing of the year was when a team ventured to Northern Ireland in the snow to participate in an indoor team demonstration where they finished second. Sweden was the venue for the next outing for Scotland, competing in the Scandinavian International Friendly, where they won both the Hastfocus Cup at the warm up competition and the Scandinavian Trophy at Gothenburg Horse show.

The next trip to Northern Ireland was to the Euro-friendly Cup at Ballywalter where the team from Lothian and Borders won and South Lanarkshire finished third.

Our World Championship team competed at the Open Home International in Peterborough, finishing fourth, and subsequently at the World Championships in Sweden, where they finished in a commendable third place. A team also competed at the Royal Welsh, finishing in a deserved fourth place over the two days.

Our junior Home International team again undertook the long journey to Carmarthen, finishing in fifth place.

Several teams participated throughout the year at MGAGB competitions, such as Spring Pairs, UK Masters, Intercounties, World Individuals and Pairs and Shrewsbury.

Also, a team from Lothian and Borders travelled to France to the Sojasun Cup.

Our own competitions, the Flower of Scotland, Individual and Pairs Championships and Champions of Scotland were successful, as far as they were well attended by Scotland's members.

MGA Scotland is currently an associate member of the Scottish Equestrian Association and intending to become full members in 2007.

Scotland was the host country for IMGA 2006 Annual General Meeting which was attended by representatives from Belgium, Germany, France, Sweden, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Ireland, U.S.A. Canada, South Africa and Norway, as well as, Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Sweden

This year was dominated by us hosting the World Championships. A lot of people got involved and made the competition run as smoothly as possible.

At the same time we managed to have 17 national competition weekends this year. We also had riders attending a lot of international competitions such as German Pairs, Danish Individuals, Danish Pairs, Arctic Pairs and World Pairs. We had the first official Swedish individuals besides having the Swedish pair championships and Swedish team championships.

We had another referee course. This was the second year we did it and we will continue to do it every year.

We also attended a lot of big shows in Sweden such as Göteborg Horse Show, Falsterbo Horse Show, Flyingedagarna and new for the year Hässleholm Horse show. These shows are really good for us as they draw a lot of crowd and help us promote the sport in Sweden.

Wales

The Welsh riders and their ponies have had a very successful 2006 season at county level, international level, individually and socially.

2006 has seen two Welsh balls, the first one held early in 2006 recognising the success of 2005 and the more recent very successful Ball that was held in November where many riders were awarded for their success in 2006.

Although having only a handful of actively competing county teams many have had wins and Wales has certainly proved to be a force to be reckoned with in all age groups.

The minis were dominated by Mid Glamorgan who had a wonderful season. The county team of Monmouthshire had an amazing season in under 17's winning many championship shows as well as winning the National League and taking the Blue Chip points series 'Champions of Champions'. West Glamorgan 'red' junior team and Mid Glamorgan junior team have also had a successful season and were always in the A finals, and for the first time ever Wales juniors should be proud of taking the first, second and third spots in the 2006 junior national league.

West Glamorgan 'red' team were the only Welsh county team to represent Wales in the Intercounties senior A final.

In March 2006, riders were selected and teams were picked for the busy international season. All squad and team members were thanked at the Welsh ball for their talented riding and great results.

The junior Welsh team became the 'Junior Home International Champions', in Carmarthen, The senior Home International Welsh Team took the reserve spot in Peterborough. We selected two Welsh Teams to represent Wales at the Royal Welsh Show where Wales took first and third respectively. Lastly for the international teams we sent a young World Championship Team to Gothenburg where they rode spectacularly to finish Reserve World Champions.

Many Welsh riders have had Individual success at the World Individuals and World Pairs Championships. We currently have a Welsh World under 15's Champion, Bethan Gould. Hollie Rauch became Reserve World Individual

under 17's Champion whilst in the open section Katie Davies also took the World Reserve Title.

Katie Hopkins took the World Under 17's Pairs Title in September, whilst in the minis Welsh rider Jordan Evans was Reserve World under 12's Champion. Many Welsh riders made the semi finals and it was so good to see so many Welsh representative in the World finals. It has been an amazing season for many Welsh Competitors, whether it be with their county team, international team or as part of a pair or individually. Wales is very proud of each and every one of them and we wish them continued success for the 2007 season.

All countries were invited to respond to this question. With thanks to those that replied - Sue Bookbinder (Botswana), Jim Dunn (Canada), Signe Sehested (Denmark), Pola Preugel (Germany), Ann Devit (Ireland), Frie Martin (Luxembourg) Alyce Lande (Norway), Jacky Skelly (Scotland), Younes Ahlbom (Sweden) and Gemma Hopkins (Wales).

Development

In May, Jim Dunn and team Canada and visited South Africa for a two-weeks tour to host a mounted games coaching seminar and to introduce the sport of Mounted Games to several other African nations. The clinic was well attended by 24 prospective coaches from as far away as Namibia, Botswana and the Cape region.

The visit and the clinic were both a complete success. Botswana has joined IMGA as a very active member with the prospect of Namibia and another four African nations in 2007. The outcome of our May visit was to have Botswana join IMGA as a full member this coming January 1st as well as having development seeds planted with other countries such as Kenya, Zaire, Zimbabwe and Namibia. I expect to see several of these countries become members in the near future.

Italy attended the European Championship in the younger age groups and expressed much interest in being re-involved. They had a long conversation with Keith and Frie about IMGA, and this was followed up with a letter to them (second time).

Last year the first ever International Mounted Games Symposium was hosted in Canada on May 6/7/8 2005. The purpose of the symposium was to showcase the sport of Mounted Games as well as to promote awareness and membership. The symposium was broken down into both classroom and arena clinics and was attended by 120 participants over the three-day period. Clinics were taught by some of the best clinicians available.

Following this success, it was planned to host another symposium in 2006. The plan was to move the symposium from a spring venue to a fall venue

and then condense the program into two days rather than three, but due to a conflict of dates and other commitments it has been decided to postpone to May 12/13 2007. Details will follow.

It is the hope of IMGA to have Italy join the membership of IMGA in the very near future. We have had an ongoing rapport with the Italian representatives and have just sent them an invitation to attend the next European Championships being hosted in May 2007. The Italians have a strong games program and it would be wonderful to have them involved.

Country development has also been in contact with representatives from Mexico, Argentina, Japan and most recently, Dubai.

Jim Dunn
Country Development

Don't forget, if your country has any news or ideas for the next newsletter please contact me at communication@mounted-games.org