

F&I AGM - Chairman's Report - Annual Course, Wednesday 3rd January 2024, Addington

So sorry to the members for the delay of this report but it's been a crazy few days, following the last day of our great F&I Annual Course. I stayed to the end to ensure everyone, and every horse, were safely on their way home, only to then find that my lorry decided not to start. This turned into a comedy of errors from the recovery company, resulting in me not getting back home to Nottinghamshire till gone 4am in the morning, only to be up a few hours later to do the yard, ride and do two long, full but inspiring days of coaching (thanks to our brilliant Annual Course)

So, with time allowing me to reflect and receive more feedback from so many members, I would like to say a big thank you for taking the time to message and email me and the Committee. It's so lovely to hear so much positive feedback from you all about our fantastic start to the F&I year. Also please do let us know if you have constructive comments that you would like us to receive as we are always trying to look to evolve and improve where we can.



A massive thank you to you all for attending and supporting the F&I Association all year, a big thank you to everyone who has come to this Annual Course and especially to the coaches and the riders, as without them we would not all be able to benefit so much from these days. We also would like to thank the Hong Kong coaches for making the journey – we had Christian Allderidge, Laurel Cooke, Sarah Corner and Gary Johnston, not only with us but also writing a report for us!

A massive thank you to David Sheerin for all his work and support towards F&I and especially for producing the programmes.

The biggest thank you must be to Ann Bostock who has worked endlessly, securing this super venue again for us. Despite various logistical wrinkles, we still managed to deliver a superb 2 days of training. Ann also spends months working on the programme, timetables, rider groups and dealing with menu options and endless changes that happen right up to the very last minute. Her organisation is second to none and she is extremely passionate about her role within the F&I. We are all so grateful, Ann!

Also, a massive thank you to Alison Craig and Jude Murphy for their endless work behind the scenes and the support that they both give myself and the rest of the Committee all year - and of course the rest of the Committee who are involved in all decisions needed and who contribute the great ideas and vision they have for F&I to move forward. So a big thank you to Nick Turner, Danny Anholt, Amy Bannister-Bell, Brendan Bergin, Jen Morris and Becky Monk. And as of the AGM we have a newly voted for and elected committee member and we are delighted to welcome Liz Eaton onto the Committee team, I'm sure she will be a great asset.

Ann Bostock, Jude Murphy, Alison Craig, and Sam Champney-Warrener all received stunning flower bouquets for their work on the Annual Course, in Committee and running the Facebook page, and our thanks are also extended to Sally Newcomb for her excellent work on our website.

I would like to thank all those members who have actually organised events during 2023:

- David Pincus F&I study day – Carol Bennitt
- Social media training session – Danny Anholt
- National Equine Forum, Westminster in London - Danny Anholt
- Talland study day - Pammy Hutton
- 2 Hartpury study days – Jude Murphy
- Judy Harvey dressage study day – Ann Bostock
- Badminton course walk with David Doel – Ann Bostock
- Zoom evening for five star eventing - David Doel, Kylie Roddy, Nick Turner
- Eric Smiley study day
- “Let's focus on show jumping” day in Scotland – Jen Morris
- Irish day Kildangan Stud, Racing Academy and Centre of Education Curragh – Faith Ponsonby
- Burghley course walk with Eric Smiley – Ann Bostock

This year we have several events already organised - please see the back of the Annual Course programme and keep an eye on your emails, F&I newsletters, Facebook, and the F&I website.

Don't forget the “Horses Inside Out” conference on the 17th – 18th February 2024. If you would like to join us for the evening dinner please can you let me know asap about this and I can arrange an F&I table. Book yourself in for the conference tickets (CODE: FandI to get 10% discount - do let me know if there are any issues with booking).

<https://www.horsesinsideout.com/c24>

At the AGM I proposed that we have an international / Europe trip during 2024, in conjunction with the “Fellows Association” - to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Fellowship status being started. Specific details of this trip will be communicated asap when we have firm dates and prices but the proposal is to go to the fabulous city of Vienna, then go to the Spanish Riding School to observe a morning training session, have a stables tour and possibly a full dress evening performance. Further to that we have been invited to visit an additional yard, compliments of one of our International Group of Equestrian

Qualifications (IGEQ) members Susanna Kleindiest. The plan is that Susanna's daughter Anna will welcome us to her yard, where we can observe a morning or full day of the work of none other than Arthur Kottas-Heldenberg - previously chief trainer at the Spanish Riding School. Arthur has had a career at the Spanish Riding School of Vienna spanning four decades, and for the past 22 years he has held the most senior role among the riders. He will work a range of horses of all levels, in hand and under saddle. We may well do some discussions and workshop activities while we are there. Vienna is a wonderful city and there is so much to do there, so it will be a great trip all round. It is also home to the world famous Prater, home to Vienna's giant Ferris wheel first opened in back in 1897 – for those who enjoy a slice of history!



A massive thank you to our coaches this year Richard Waygood and Gareth Hughes. Many of you will know that Richard suffered a severe and crippling back issue on the morning of the second day, and, despite all efforts, he could not coach day 2. The quick decision was made by committee to use our home-grown resources - after all we have a vast selection of very well qualified and experienced coaches - so we quietly and efficiently carried on, and had myself, Kylie Roddy, Eric Smiley and Jayne Smart step up to coach. We were so upset that Richard could not follow through with his training on day two - but actually every cloud has a silver lining and all the riders were fantastic and accepted the situation gracefully. We have received excellent feedback that this situation actually allowed observers and riders to see different approaches to a similar set of fences - and great sharing of good practice - and how interesting it was to see different Fellows' approaches. These coaches were brilliant for stepping in at the very last minute, and we all very much value their contribution and expertise. We will have Dickie back next year!

We had a fascinating Day 1 lunchtime presentation from Dr. Russell MacKechnie-Guire who led us through some excellent slides, demonstrating the very latest research on bridle and noseband fit and its effect on the horse's way of going. We are extremely proud that Russell is an F&I member, being such a key figure in evidenced-based research within our industry and he really is a world leader in these subjects - not forgetting he is also a practicing BHSI as well. The feedback from the members on his session was very much about us running many more sessions like this. <https://www.centaurbiomechanics.co.uk>



Russell is also involved in the next F&I Equine Sports Assembly on the 7th /8th October 2024, up in Scotland at SNEC, open to all members. It will be well worth the trip north for everyone. Get the dates in your diaries and any queries please do contact Jen Morris walkietalkiej@ gmail.com.

On Day 2 lunchtime we had a fantastic Fellowship presentation where we had our latest successful Fellowship candidate, Liz Eaton, and also Brendan Bergin, who was not successful on this occasion but was incredibly honest and generous with his thoughts and reflections on his own Fellowship journey. I think it shows great professionalism and a natural desire to help others, despite him not achieving Fellowship status on this occasion, but I think you will all agree this is an example of some of the qualities we all look for in a Fellow of the BHS. It was a super session, providing an overview of what both these individuals discovered on their journey, and key aspects that they would advise others to explore on their individual journeys towards this world-wide qualification. Many Fellowship assessors were present, as was Tracey Castles, Head of Education for the BHS. There was a very good amount of advice being provided and also a show of hands of people who are considering submitting CVs to be reviewed by the panel. It looks as though we have a healthy number of BHSI's working towards this prestigious status. A big thank you to Danny Anholt for organising this session and chairing.



A big thank you to all the Fellows who held study groups throughout the two days, all of which were full and very well received, again so much great feedback from everyone. Fellows and I's who conducted them were myself, Judith Murphy, Judy Harvey, Jenny Ward, Islay Auty, Nick Turner, Kylie Roddy, Eric Smiley, Tim Downes, Danny Anholt, Pammy Hutton, Mandy Luesley, Lizzel Winter and David Sheerin. Everyone was gifted with a lovely bottle of wine for their efforts.

The AGM was conducted as expected via the Constitution rules and guidelines and as always the Minutes will be available to you. The Treasurer's report presented an overview of the Balance Sheet as of 31 December 2023 and our profit on activities for the year. The accounts were not only drawn up by Jude as of 31 December, but also examined by our independent accountant and signed off before we arrived at the Annual Course – quite a feat! Our independent examiner will not accept payment for this so we send her a gift voucher for her timely help to Jude.

Moving on to the Committee and its future, current Committee roles are as follows:

- Sam York (Chair) was re-elected in January 2022, for her third term of 3 years
- Nick Turner (Vice-Chair) was elected in January 2022, for his first term of 3 years
- Alison Craig (Secretary) was elected onto Committee 2015, re-elected in January 2018, and took over the Secretary role (again) in January 2019. She was re-elected in January 2021 for her third period of 3 years. Hence she reached the end of her second set of 9 years on Committee this year, January 2024
- Jude Murphy (Treasurer) was elected onto the Committee and took over as Treasurer January 2020, so was re-elected in January 2023 for her second term of 3 years.
- Danny Anholt was re-elected in January 2023 for his third term of 3 years.
- Amy Bannister-Bell was re-elected in January 2022, for her second term of 3 years.

- Brendan Bergin was elected in January 2022 for his first term of 3 years.
- Jen Morris was elected in January 2022 for her first term of 3 years.
- Becky Monk was elected in January 2023 for her first term of 3 years.

So, in summary, Alison was due to step down at this AGM, January 2024. Separately, as you will all be aware, Alison has offered to take on the permanent role of Hon Secretary (she says she should be good for several years in harness yet...!) and, with the approval of the Members at the AGM, the Committee has co-opted her, to work with the Committee in that (non-voting) permanent role. This was approved an overwhelming show of hands and support, everyone agreeing that we simply cannot lose Alison and she will now stay on in the permanent role as Hon. Secretary.

We have altered the wording of the Constitution accordingly to reflect a permanent Hon Secretary position.

We are absolutely delighted about this. Also, looking ahead, if there is anyone who thinks they may fancy this role in the future, please do come forward and we can look at a longer-term shadowing process to allow a suitable member the chance of doing this important role in the future.

We of course have awarded our prestigious F&I Awards. This is always an exciting and often emotional process and I know we are all so proud of what our amazing members are always achieving. This year there was a great deal of discussion from the committee and suggestions from the members and I do not think anyone had any qualms with the final decisions of this year's very worthy winners.

The Tom Searle award – is for “a young up-and-coming F&I member who is supportive and inspirational for other up-and-coming members.” Unfortunately, we did not have any strong suggestions for this award this year and after much debate it was decided that it would not be awarded on this occasion. We would love more nominations to consider – so watch your newsletters, Facebook and emails as there will always be an autumn opportunity to nominate those who inspire us for all the awards.

The Achievement award “showing exceptional dedication and commitment to the path they want to follow.”

This award has been given to a person who we feel is a key individual who has influenced and supported many successful riders as well as providing complete support for the whole team behind the riders. She is considered in our eyes as an unsung hero and we would like to recognise and award her dedication to the industry and in supporting riders.

This award goes to Maggie Doel.

Maggie has been involved in so many aspects of equestrianism, from working with the Beaufort hunt horses, being a nanny/ groom in New Zealand, she's worked with polo ponies and even tacked up polo ponies for our current King Charles. She has worked at Talland and Wellington Riding. Chief Instructor for Avon Vale Pony Club. Treasurer for F&I.

Been involved with the BHS training and assessing in Ireland, USA, Hong Kong, and China.

Maggie has trained many successful riders including Louise Lockwood and Helen Martin. She also trained Wendy Schaeffer who went on to win gold eventing at the Atlanta Olympic Games. Maggie has evented and represented Team GB in Switzerland in 1995 and then took that horse onto advanced level. Maggie went on to focus on dressage up to Grand Prix level. Maggie has obviously built the infrastructure behind her son David, who has been a very successful competitor from Junior Europeans and Young Rider level and obviously has gone on to be super successful at 5 star level and currently Ranked 7th in the world.

Maggie oversees the training of the horses and deals with all the administration work needed. She looks after the stakeholders, owners, sponsors and support staff. She is truly the unsung hero and is very valued and respected by so many people in the equine industry. We are very proud to have Maggie as an F&I member and very proud of all that she has achieved. A huge cheer!



The Pat Smallwood Award - for “outstanding service to F&I and the membership and the equine industry as a whole”.

This year’s recipient fulfils all the above requirements. Not only is she involved in coaching and assessing candidates for BHS qualifications, but she is also a Pony Club A Test Examiner and a Horse Sport Ireland Level 2 Tutor. She recently achieved List 2a as a Dressage Judge and is a FEI 3*eventing judge, judging Internationally.

The award goes to Faith Ponsonby.

Faith is a Level 3 Side Saddle Coach and rides side saddle herself. She officiates each year at the Royal Dublin Horse Show, and is on many judges’ panels including the Irish Hunter and the Irish Pony Society panels as well as the British Show Hunter Association and the British Show Pony Society judges lists.

Over many years, Faith has organised F&I Study Days in Ireland. With her many contacts and friends, these days are an absolute ‘MUST ATTEND’ and we enjoy counting the number of GB registered cars in the various carparks! From Coolmore Stud to Aiden O’Brien’s racing

stables, Francis Connors' show jumping yard and in 2023 Kildangan Stud, just a few of our visits arranged by Faith. A rousing cheer from everyone! And "Wistful" will cross the Irish sea to be stabled with Faith in County Tipperary.



The Queen Elizabeth II Award

This very worthy winner needs very little introduction - this lady has become one of the most influential and effective coaches that we've seen in this country for a long time. Not only has this person produced and ridden for most of her life up to five star level, but she has also dedicated her time and efforts in helping others. She has always had a very strong desire for coaching and supporting riders coming up through the ranks.

I am of course talking about the formidable and inspirational Caroline Moore.

Caroline gained her Fellowship in 2008, has been a Young Rider selector and has for over 10 years been a Youth Performance Coach. Caroline coaches all levels and nationalities, helping endless riders to win medals both Junior and Young Rider level as well as Senior level including European, World and Olympic Games. Caroline has been both an owner for and trained Ros Canter, and Ros states that Caroline has been instrumental in her eventing career.

Caroline is currently running a performance mentoring programme. There are two pathways which operate under this title - the professional event rider mentoring scheme and the performance coach development scheme. This is a great opportunity for developing coaches and riders for the future.

Caroline has also produced her first book in 2023, "Training to Win". This is a great read, relevant for all riders from grassroots to top level professionals, and a consolidation and record of her methodical, clear and concise approach to training, with no stone left unturned. Caroline's attention to detail and "no excuse" policy has made her the massive success she is today, again we are honoured that Caroline is one of our F&I members. It

gives us great pride to award her with the Queen Elizabeth II Award for outstanding dedication to the equine industry. Caroline received an emotional standing ovation!



After dinner activities included a wonderful “ode” from Tim Downes, that was, as always, current, just about politically correct, and as always very funny! Thanks so much again for this, Tim - an Annual Course would not be complete without a Tim ode. And extended thanks to Tim and to Pammy Hutton for all they do for the BHS, the equine industry and the F&I Association.



Also a thank you to Eric Winter who was invited as a guest as he offered to do an after dinner talk - which was very thought-provoking, discussing where equestrian sport is going and providing ideas about safeguarding the sport by making differences to the format, with

suggestions of making eventing cross-country safer in one respect by the fence design but providing more challenges to it with the use of flag penalties to encourage more accurate and careful riding. It created a lot of discussion and debate, many thanks again to Eric for this session.



There was lots of super networking, discussing, checking and challenging of our thoughts and simply catching up with F&I friends old and new. What a great two days we have had and I know I am already looking forward to the next F&I event in the diary.

We also awarded Liz Eaton with her Fellowship certificate so we could all congratulate her for her amazing achievement.



Happy new year to you all!

Sam York FBHS