

IEOC Regional Meeting at Badminton

Friday 6th May 2005

At 5.00pm

Present: Alison Abrahams [UAE]; James Rooney [IRL]; Denis Currie [IRL]; Gillian Kyle [IRL]; Susan O'Brien [NZL]; Faith Ponsonby [IRL]; Anton Granhus [NOR]; Jane Tolley [GBR]; Ninnie Odenrick [IRL]; Celia Carew [IRL]; Sue Stewart [GBR]; Colin Furness [GBR]; Rosemary Lowry [IRL]; Nick Burton [GBR]; Steph Von Schilcher [IRL]; Angela Tucker [GBR]; Patrick Carew [IRL]; Stuart Buntine [AUS]; Sue Benson [GBR]; Jonathan Clark [GBR]; Hugh Lochore [GBR]; Eric Smiley [IRL]; Sue Baxter [GBR]; Wolfgang Feld [GER]; Jim Dunn [AUS]; Giles Rowsell [GBR]; Roger Day [GBR]; Mike Bullen [GBR]; Patricia [GBR]; Richard Meade [GBR]; Jean Mitchell [IRL] [List as signed in, so may not be complete]

Guests Present: Wayne Roycroft [C/M FEI Eventing Committee]; Catrin Norinder [FEI Eventing & Olympic Departments]; Mike Etherington-Smith [Deputy C/M FEI Eventing Committee]; Andrew & Bettina Hoy [ERA and International Riders]
Apology: Carl Bouckaert [BEL]

Apologies: Jillian Cobcroft [AUS]; Janine y Jacques Rohr [ARG]; Ronald Alexander [GBR]; Yuri Valev [BUL]; Ciska Van Meggelen [NED]; Jill Rolton [AUS]; Christoph Hess [GER]; Mercedes Campdera [MEX]; David Lee [IRL]; Anne-Mette Binder [DEN]; Judy Bradwell [GBR]; John Tulloch [GBR]; Andy Griffiths [GBR]; Jane Holderness-Roddam [GBR]; Lyndsay Jenkins [GBR]; Christian Landolt [SUI]; Martin Plewa [GER]; Andrew Fell [IRL]; Mike Tucker [GBR]; Hugh Thomas [GBR]; Tony McPherson [BEL] [please let me know if you have been forgotten]

- Richard Meade [Chairman] welcomed everyone, and thanked Hugh Thomas for the use of the Badminton facilities, and his hospitality, for this IEOC Regional meeting – always one of the best ‘gatherings’ of the year.
- Jean Mitchell [Sec. General of the IEOC] explained that as usual Wayne Roycroft and Catrin Norinder had been invited to attend, and that also this time we had Andrew & Bettina Hoy, representing the Event Riders Association [ERA] – to encourage a close liaison between these committees!
- Congratulations were extended to Eric & Sue Smiley on the occasion [that very day] of their Silver Wedding anniversary, and a ‘signed’ card was presented to Eric.
- The 6th AGM of the IEOC [yes indeed we have been in business for that length of time] will take place at BLENHEIM on Friday 9th September [during the European Championships] probably after the dressage.
- The web site, having now been running for 3 years, is now in need of a ‘re-vamp’, and Jean asked members to put forward ideas and suggestions, for changes that they would like to see.
- Anne-Mette Binder and Jean are responsible for collecting material for the bi-annual IEOC newsletters, putting them together, and distributing them [mostly by e-mail] to members and friends. They are always keen to get items of interest, photographs etc. to make the newsletters worth reading! So please help them by sending material along. The next newsletter will be produced after the AGM.

- There are about 140 ‘paid up’ members – to date – and Jean encouraged those present, who have not already paid for 2005, to do so, by providing membership forms. The club seems to be fulfilling a useful role, but does need the help, support and input, of the members.
- In 2005, the IEOC have been able to assist Judges, TD’s, CD’s and a Chief Steward, from Australasia, South America, Asia and Eastern Europe, to secure positions at Bramham, Blenheim, Blair Castle, Boekelo and Aalborg, and Jean thanked the Organising Committees of these events for their kindness!
- **It’s intended to continue this ‘scheme’ in 2006, so if you know of any FEI officials who would benefit, please contact Jean.**
- Mike Etherington-Smith and Christoph Hess liaise closely between the IEOC and the FEI Eventing Committee, helping to sort out many queries, and asking the IEOC to help when the occasions arise!
- Having Wayne & Catrin at this meeting provides a wonderful opportunity to continue this ‘interaction’, and is definitely NOT intended to give them an ‘ear bashing’!
- However, that said, there does seem to be quite a degree of feeling among IEOC members that there would appear to be too many “KNEE JERK REACTIONS” taking place at present!
- At this point Wayne was invited to address the meeting, and he started by thanking Richard Meade, Jean Mitchell and the IEOC for all their input – pointing out that “without some reactions, meetings like this would not take place”. He also thanked the other members of the FEI Eventing Committee for their support, effort and help, saying how good it is to have the new members on board.
- Wayne agrees that the sport needs to ‘settle down’ to the changes that are already in place, and indeed to take time to fully discuss any further ‘alterations’!
- The proposed changes for 2006 and 2007 will be put to the National Federations and all other interested bodies, before being further discussed at the next FEI Eventing Committee meeting which will take place in August 2006. He particularly thanked Catrin, Mike E-S and Tony McPherson for all their hard work in this area.
- Safety and TRC is working well through Mike E-S, Jonathan Clissold and Mike Tucker, who deal with all the protocol and test procedures. The mass of information is now being supplied by many events, and looked at by NF’s – producing positive reactions. However, it’s still vital that all officials remember to fill in and return their forms, and in particular clarify falls, which occur at water fences. Course design and building are now extremely important jobs, which can greatly affect the future of our sport.
- The strategic plan which is going forward for consideration by NF’s is a 10 year ‘Forward’ Plan, and contrary to any rumours that may be ‘doing the rounds’, the FEI Committee **“DO NOT INTEND TO DO AWAY WITH THE CROSS COUNTRY PHASE”!!!!!!**
- **Name of the Sport:** the name of Eventing ‘appears’ to be a problem in many countries [although well enough recognised in GB, IRL, USA and AUS] and so there is a definite feeling that it needs a better “BRAND” name to become recognisable worldwide. We need to accept that we are now in the “entertainment” industry, and - as such - to survive within the Olympics, our sport needs to have a name that can be instantly recognised and understood! It was however made clear that the word “TRIATHLON” is a ‘non-runner’!

- Mike Bullen then pointed out those names such as Badminton, Burghley, Kentucky, and etc. are all instantly recognised world wide, so why change? He also pointed out the cost implications of changing logos, paperwork, etc.
- Andrew Hoy then thanked the IEOC for the invitation to attend the meeting, and said that Kentucky are strong supporters of the 'long format', but that it seems inevitable that it now goes 'short'. However, if Jane Atkinson is determined to go back to the long format [after 2006] and is prepared to put up a 1st prize of say \$250,000, then it's his opinion that riders will find horses and will support the highest prize fund in the world. In turn this would bring in sponsors, TV etc. and so continue to promote the name of Eventing.
- Hugh Lochore asked how would horses and riders qualify, if there were only 1 long format in the year? Reply was that this can be sorted out and WILL work. There is only ONE Tour De France, for example – so it does happen in other sports!
- At this point Richard Meade made his point that BADMINTON is the name of the worlds' top event!
- **Ground Jury duties:** Jean pointed out that many countries already felt that the new rules [already in place] are actively discouraging the newer, younger officials from coming on board, and more importantly of getting the opportunities to have 'match practice'. Now that it's not necessary to have a Foreign Judge [if there is a Foreign TD] many countries will use their own judges, and this will stop the previous valuable 'International Interaction', which has in the past been so beneficial to our sport! She repeated the fact that the IEOC hope to continue to help those officials from the 'lesser' nations to gain experience at the bigger events, in 2006.
- Catrin Norinder agreed on the point that the present judges are not getting as many opportunities as previously, and that there are very few new judges coming forward.
- Richard Meade also agreed that there are not enough International Judges coming into eventing, and we really do need to encourage them to keep a 'universal' standard, otherwise smaller countries could end up having only 3 or 4 people who judge 'everything'!
- **FEI Eventing Courses:** Jean Pointed out that the Level 2 course being held at Blenheim is already over-subscribed, while the Level 1 course at Necarne Castle a week later has so far a rather small take-up, in spite of having Christoph Hess, and Jennifer Millar as Directors! **[Since the meeting, the FEI course at Necarne Castle will now be at LEVELS 1 & 2]**
- There would also appear to be the fact that quite a few 'would be' NEW officials feel that the 'time & cost' to themselves, of officiating, is now too great – i.e. they just can't afford it!
- **Question from the floor:** As TD's are going to be paid at 3 and 4 star level, why not at 1 and 2 star? Catrin replied that, at present, the FEI system did not allow for any payments, but that this was 'making a start' and may of course end up with others being paid – however this will be placing an even heavier burden on Organising Committees.
- Jean then reminded those present that it must be the responsibility of the OC's to provide accommodation, food and transport for all their FEI officials, including those who are presently 'termed' ASSISTANT!

- **Payment of Chief Stewards:** Colin Furness and Roger Day [both recently retired from being Regional Directors for British Eventing] were anxious to know who would now pay them for officiating at FEI events. It was made clear by Catrin, that FEI stewards are trained and promoted by their own National Federations – not the FEI. However the FEI will be happy to look at any proposal that may come through the IEOC. Jean made it quite clear that FEI Chief Stewards, who have also an extremely responsible and tiring job, must be offered accommodation, food etc. for the duration of their stay. Colin feels that we need more stewards, at present, but he feels that many of the younger ones do not want to give up the time, so are not coming forward. However – conversely – if it's just for money then this may bring the 'wrong' ones forward. The BSJA presently pays their officials, and this has already led to some problems.
- Wayne then expressed a worry about possible 'conflict of interests'! If the OC pay the TD, so they must be paid by the FEI, and so this has to be agreed by the FEI Executive before officials can be paid. Clearly payments must be affordable, and this is why it's been decided to start with the 3 & 4 star levels of competition. He agreed that many good people cannot afford to officiate regularly in our sport, which is also becoming much more professional. Presently the FEI will only pay at Championships, and will then collect from the OC – so this is actually a big step forward. Ultimately the money has to come from the COMPETITORS!
- Andrew Hoy stated that many officials are paid in TENNIS, but there are still volunteers helping to run that sport, and who will always want to be involved!
- Jean mentioned that at the 2005 IEOC Regional meeting at Kentucky, the point was made that" if the OC have to hire [pay] the TD, then the OC should also have the right to "FIRE" them, if they are not doing a satisfactory job!
- **Yellow Flags:** Wayne said that this proposal had come from David O'Connor, and he [Wayne] felt that there is a need to find an acceptable way to put it into practice. There has already been strong feeling from IEOC members that the present wording is not 'practical', and could allow riders to take action 'against' officials who would 'dare' to interrupt their rounds, especially if there was a subsequent accident! It would also require at least one more 'experienced and qualified' official [not a fence judge] for XC day!
- Jean asked if anyone could say why the 'system' appeared to have been 'set up', and then not used at Kentucky 2005? No body present seemed to have this answer.
- Jonathan Clissold pointed out that yellow flags are already used in British Eventing for a different purpose, and Wayne agreed that in the case of the FEI another colour could be adopted – yellow was not essential.
- Mike Bullen was interested to know how it would be implemented, and Wayne answered "by Section Controllers", who would have the responsibility and/ or be advised by the Ground Jury. Mike felt that while the idea is good in principle, he felt that it would be extremely difficult to put into practice.
- Andrew Hoy said that he had not heard much talk about the yellow flag scenario, and he wondered why the FEI didn't just enforce the existing rules, such as yellow cards, etc?
- Wayne explained that it's not an actual 'penalty', as such – just advisory! It's a way to stop a horse and rider, without it being FINAL, and gives them a 2nd chance to assess the situation. He also recommended that Officials should spend more time in the 'rider's tent' as there is often a very different feel there, from that in the Ground Jury box! Riders react very quickly to situations!
- Roger Day said that it's his opinion that only the XC CONTROLLER can activate a Yellow Flag situation, under instruction from the Ground Jury. It will

be essential to ensure that there is no 'personal' involvement, which could result in a 'conflict'! We need more 'unity' with the riders, and to understand their points of view. More money requires more 'clarity' of decisions, and the agreement of the riders!

- Eric Smiley was basically in agreement with the Yellow Flag issue, however, he stated that Eventing is a riding test, and that there is a system already there to stop riders, but it's not used enough! To stop and start riders will be fraught with disaster, as some riders may become anxious if stopped, and then not ride so well. He also agreed that if we stop and restart a rider, and an accident follows, then this could result in a major problem for the Officials and the OC.
- Sue Baxter said that many events rely a great deal on their Vets and Sector Stewards, as there is no TV. If a value from 1 to 10 was given through each sector, to the GJ, then action could be taken. This would only involve briefing and using the normal personnel, on the ground, who require to be knowledgeable 'horsemen' [or women]!
- Jean then pointed out that the Yellow Flag appeared to be to WARN riders that they are riding dangerously!
- Richard Meade stated that "Tired Horses" Versus "Dangerous Riding" can be difficult to assess, and if stopped, some riders may become anxious and argumentative!
- Susan O'Brien asked, "When does the existing 25 penalties for dangerous riding come in"? Wayne answered – could be a tired horse!
- On the Yellow Flag document - both Jean & Wayne agreed that the present terminology clearly is not satisfactory, and needs to be adjusted, as at present it clearly says "stop, explain and restart", etc. While the present system [already in the rule book] is not really used, we need to be able to give Officials the confidence to stop riders.
- Eric Smiley felt that the roving GJ member should be aware of the involvement and development that's happening on the course, and try to be in the best place to act.
- Jean pointed out that this is much easier 'said than done' at many events, where there is not even adequate transport for the TD / GJ, let alone a correctly functioning radio net, or at the major events where it's practically impossible to drive through the crowds]
- Denis Currie felt that a Yellow Flag should only be used at the 'designated' stopping points, on the course!
- Clearly the Yellow Flag discussion created a great deal of 'discussion / dissension at this meeting, and still requires a great deal more thought!
- **AOB:** Mike Bullen agreed that it was very important to have riders present at the IEOC meetings, as their input is vital to most discussions.
- He also brought to the attention of the meeting the "FEI Code of Conduct", with particular reference to the 'welfare of the horse', questioning how the Equestrian disciplines, in the 2008 Olympics, could be condoned to be run in Hong Kong, during August, when racing does not take place – due to the extremely high humidity! He [as a shipper of horse] feels that there is plenty of time for the Chinese to get organised, and that the thought of running in Hong Kong is merely political!
- Wayne explained that Catrin [in her position as Olympic Manager] is doing everything possible to keep the equestrian events in Beijing, but ultimately this is NOT an FEI decision. It was hot in Atlanta – but all went well!
- Catrin then gave an up-date on the OG situation. The FEI have made a very big 'plea' to stay in Beijing. However, the Chinese have decided that Hong Kong should be awarded at least one Olympic Sport, as 'compensation' and to include

them in the Games, they have found a weakness in the 'Veterinary Protocol', meaning that health checks that we would expect to be 'in place', are NOT there! The Health Authorities of participating countries would have to make decisions as to whether they would send their horse, or not, and sadly many will be unable to do this. So, it will be a very different Games, and indeed difficult. However, we will have to do our best to accept that the outcome is in the hands of the Olympic Games Committee!

- Jim Dunn expressed the thoughts of many members present when he thanked Catrin and Wayne for all their hard work in regard to Beijing, and hoped that the right decision would be made, for the welfare of the horses and riders
- **Scoring:** Jean informed the meeting that she has an 'on going dossier' about scoring proposal document, with almost everybody who has responded having their own 'solution'. She has passed on these suggestions to the FEI Eventing Committee, who will discuss this further at their next meeting – in August 2005.
- However there was one item that could perhaps be 'looked at' by the committee – the time penalties in the Jumping!
- Wayne said that the riders want some changes, and indeed there are some innovative ideas. We need to know if the Media are happy with the present system, and ultimately everyone must agree. It's not easy, and clearly any changes must be 'for the better'! He agreed that it might be better to leave it for the time being, with some thoughts on fine-tuning the time penalties. However he feels that 375 mpm is a fair, under acceptable conditions.
- Jean mentioned that at times some consideration has to be given to the measuring of jumping courses, on different surfaces, and sizes of arenas, etc.
- Wayne mentioned that it's already being considered that the Jumping heights should be raised further, and that we should get away from using 'shallow' cups, as horses can do with a 'rub' to waken them up – especially AFTER Cross Country!
- Richard agreed that many top Jumping designers do not recommend measuring courses too tightly, and feel that shallow cups are not correct for our sport!
- Andrew Hoy made it clear that he feels that 'excellence' needs to be rewarded, as in the Dressage phase. Cross Country has already a good balance of timing / penalties and heights.
- At present it's difficult to differentiate between CIC and CCI Jumping. Perhaps CCI's should run to the maximum, and CIC Jumping should run first, with a higher course? It works well in Fontainebleau and Lexington. All weather surfaces give the Course Designer great design opportunities to test the skill of both horse and rider. We must not go to flat cups and light poles!! When 375 mpm is measured realistically, it has improved the riding and the jumping – thus rewarding the good riders! So Andrew is clearly against changing the scoring system!
- Patrick Carew asked Andrew and Eric if – in their view - the use of flat cups with planks is a fair test. Andrew suggested a 'compromise' material, which would take a 'rub', or a small lip on the cup – Eric agreed. However some others agreed that it was not a 'fair' fence.
- At this point Richard Meade brought the meeting to a close, thanking Jean for all her work as Secretary General, and also Wayne, Catrin, Andrew and Bettina for their attendance.

The meeting ended at 6.40pm

