

## Ashfields Driving Back To Sport

19<sup>th</sup> February 2012.

The second 'Driving Back To Sport' day held at Ashfield Carriage and Polo centre was a huge success. There were 34 participants who had signed up for the full course after the initial pilot day and this time weather was very kind, and though cold there was glorious sunshine throughout the day.

After being divided into groups, participants were offered a choice of practical sessions, learning and driving a dressage test with Wilf Bowman-Ripley in the indoor school or correct and safe road driving with Minta Winn. During Wilf's sessions everyone walked through the test on foot, this was a test written especially for the day and proved to have just enough questions to challenge everyone without over facing anybody. The test was again walked from memory without the crib sheet before driving it properly. The participants each backstepped for each other and also discussed each other's test from the ground with Wilf, learning what was correct, or not, and how marks could be gained by improving accuracy.

The second driving group were kept busy by Minta learning safe and correct practice when driving on the roads. Ashfield's long driveway proved to be perfect for this purpose, junctions were simulated and the driver's were shown how to use hand and whip signals and practice signalling in a safe environment. Everyone was much more confident about progressing after this session.

Throughout the day Maxine Ingham was on hand to demonstrate rein handling and there were three rein machine's set up and they were in constant use. The driver's were very keen to learn coachman's hand and compare the differences between coachman and competition hand. As the participants became more comfortable and competent they were then helping each other, showing how it should and shouldn't be done.

Harness fitting was a subject that a lot of the participants had asked to be covered and Megan Caruthers who is head groom at Ashfields provided a very

interesting workshop on fitting and maintenance of harness which was very popular.

The last session of the day was in the clubhouse with TD Jean Lane and Maxine. Jean did a talk on different roles within HDT and how family and friends can become involved. Maxine then showed a DVD of a driven dressage test and there was a very lively discussion on how each movement should be marked and if/how each movement could be improved so that everyone went away with a clearer understanding of what our judges are looking for.

It was another very successful day, here are some of our feedback comments-

‘Fantastic, can’t wait for next time’

‘You have made everything so much clearer, I have had a brilliant time!’

‘Absolutly brilliant!!