



THE NATIONAL PONY SOCIETY

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RECORD ATTENDANCE AT A VERY SUCCESSFUL JUDGES CONFERENCE

Held at the Scottish National Equestrian Centre, West Lothian on 22nd February 2015

The National Pony Society Judges Conference and Training Day saw an impressive group of equine experts share their invaluable knowledge and insight into the world of judging the show animal. The Society secured a host of key speakers who helped build an impressive event attended by over a hundred judges and members at the Scottish National Equestrian Centre in very cold conditions.



With blankets and rugs wrapped around them, the audience saw Mrs Vicky Rowlands, MRCVS, start proceedings with a power point presentation on limbs, their correctness, faults and consequences. This was most informative and beneficial to judges and members alike. Following on from this was a practical session on limbs and conformation where the audience came down into the arena, split into supervised groups and were given the opportunity to voice their views and point out faults and blemishes, as well as good points, on horses and ponies very kindly supplied by Oatridge College.

Highly respected judge and NPS Council member, Mrs Jennie Loriston-Clarke MBE, then shared her expertise and personal views on judging "Way of Going" as related to the show ring. Mrs Loriston-Clarke gave an enlightening talk on each pony as it used the impressive indoor school to give an individual show. Show ponies, show hunter ponies, large and small mountain and moorland ponies were all given the opportunity to benefit from some sound advice. The judges and members then took part in a lively question and answer session which proved to be extremely interesting and highly beneficial to all.

After a short lunch break the warmth of the classrooms within the Oatridge College seemed a very welcome way to spend the afternoon. David Blair and Tom Best had arranged rotating group sessions which included discussions on NPS Rules and Competitions with Tweetie Nimmo and Jackie Webb. David Blair took a group on Dealing with Dilemmas and Tom Best took a group to discuss Marks as a way of Assessment.



This conference has received very positive feedback and it appears to be one of the most popular for some time. The success of the day was gauged by asking all the attendees to complete an evaluation form. 100% of those asked were happy with the event and the same amount were happy with venue and the facilities. 98% were very pleased with the presentation sections, and when asked what general topics the judges and members would like to see at future conferences mixed replies were received. However most asked for discussion on breed differences, way of going from different breeds, and it was deemed to be worth looking into breed workshops or similar. The marks system is another very popular topic, along with bits and biting in the show ring.

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When asked if the conference was enjoyable 100% offered an emphatic yes; and the same result was received when asked the question "do you think the balance of speakers, discussion and practical input was right". The attention to detail and the hard work put into this conference has been noted by many. Tweetie Nimmo and her NPS Scotland team who, together with David Blair and Tom Best, created a highly informative and well-structured day and the commitment put into the event did not go unnoticed. Chairman of the National Pony Society, Mrs Joanna MacInnes, expressed her pleasure at seeing so many people attend, and on behalf of the judges and members thanked the Scottish team for all the hard work they had put into the day and made a special mention of the Scottish hospitality

