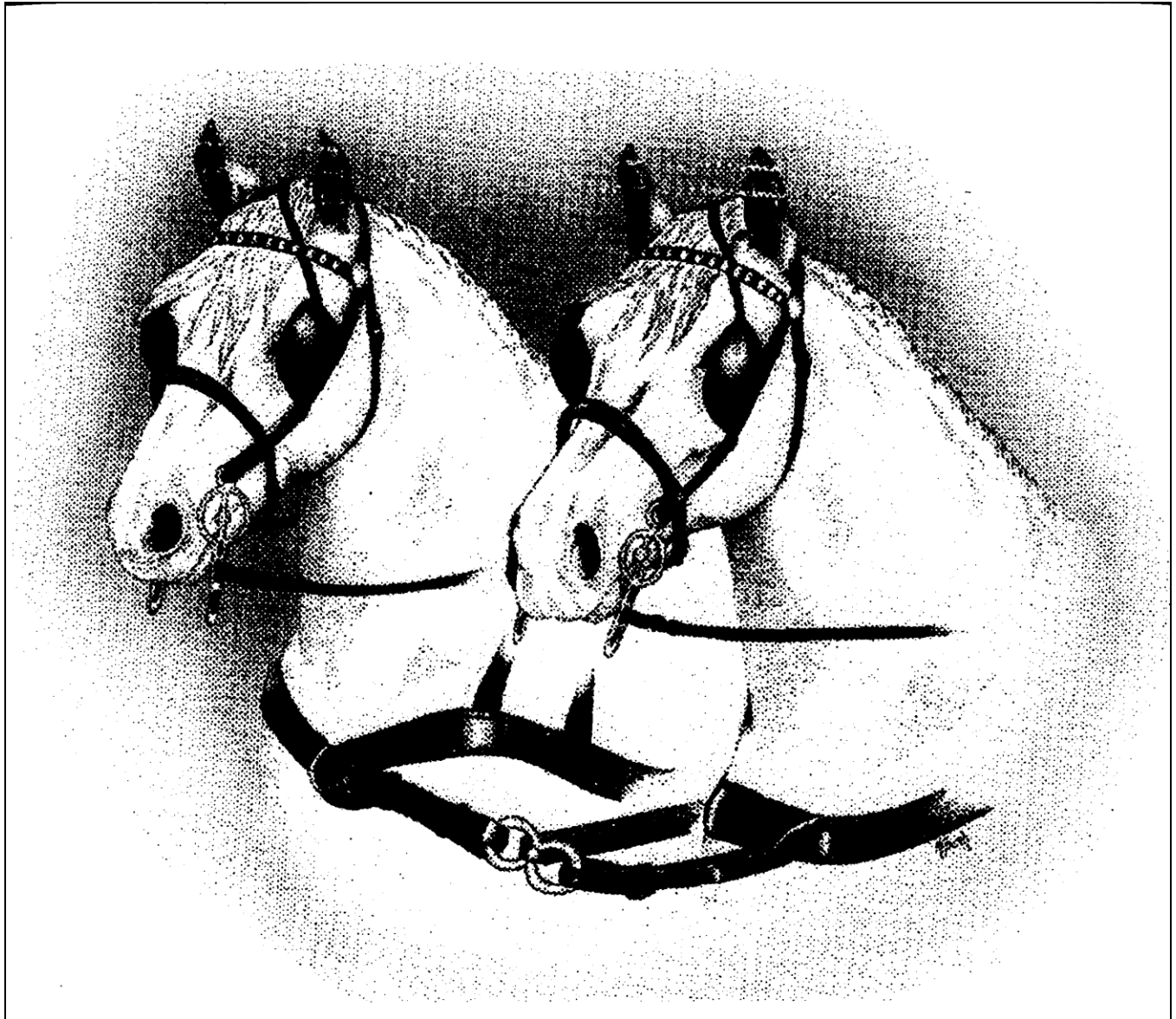
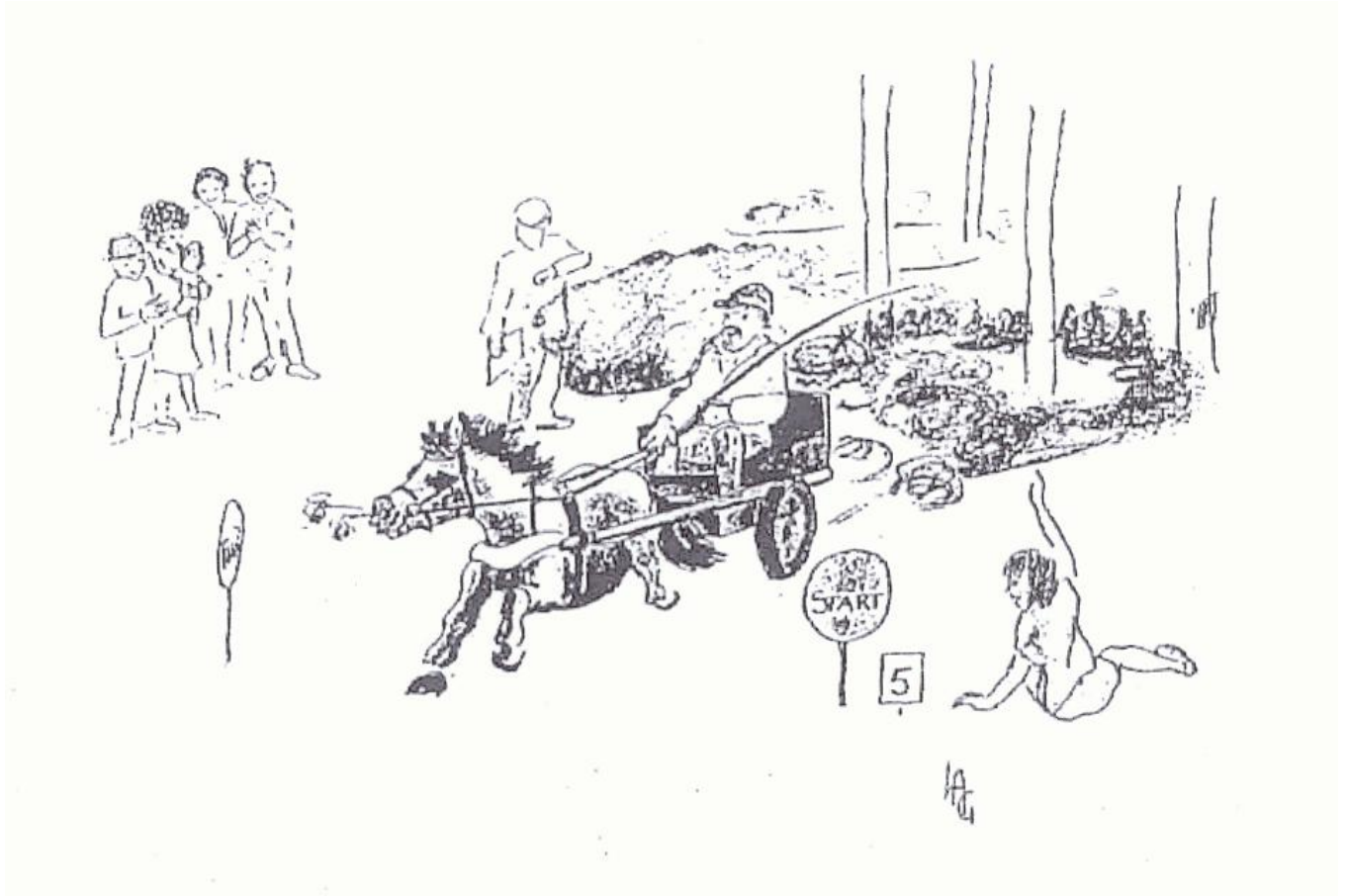


**A Beginners' Guide to Combined Driving
Or
Handy hints for a Happy day!**



New Zealand Carriage Driving Society Inc.



Compiled by Isabel Cochran

Illustrated by Lucy Giles

Beginners Guide to Combined Driving Or handy hints for a happy day!!

Combined Driving trials are modeled on ridden eventing and are basically a triathlon for horses, ponies and donkeys in harness. Modern Driving trials came into existence in 1968 when Prince Philip initiated the rules for this new sport. Particularly in Europe, the sport is booming and the Big Boys and their teams of four are something to see and aspire to!!

In NZ, the parent body for carriage driving, the New Zealand Carriage Driving Society is affiliated to the New Zealand Equestrian Federation, which gives us associate membership of the FEI who run equestrian sports world wide.

There are local clubs based throughout the country, who run carriage driving events, and New Zealand Combined Driving competitions are run largely using the FEI International Driving Rules.

The Rules are available from the NZCDS Secretary and new competitors should get a set and read them. This manual gives only introductory guidelines.

The competition consists of Three Phases

Competition A Dressage

If you are completely new to equestrian events, ask your local club' where you can get a copy of the NZ Driven Dressage Manual from. This will be very helpful.

For training and novice competitors there is also Competition A1 which is a presentation class judged at a halt. This is used as a safety check as well as a turn out competition

Competition B Cross country marathon with up to eight special obstacles/ hazards.

Competition C Cone driving the driven equivalent of Show Jumping.

Penalties are incurred in each phases of the event and the winner in each class is the competitor who completes all three phases with the fewest penalty points. Horses and ponies are divided up into several height classes, and there are separate classes for multiples i.e. pairs, teams or tandems, and for donkeys and mules.

Although it is allowed to use different vehicles for Competition B, most Kiwis use one vehicle for all sections of a competition.

Drivers must make sure that their animals are fit enough to complete the marathon distance, approx 18kms for 3 phase.

When you get to an event and well before the start time, get your competitor's number from the secretary and establish where you should be and when.

Officials

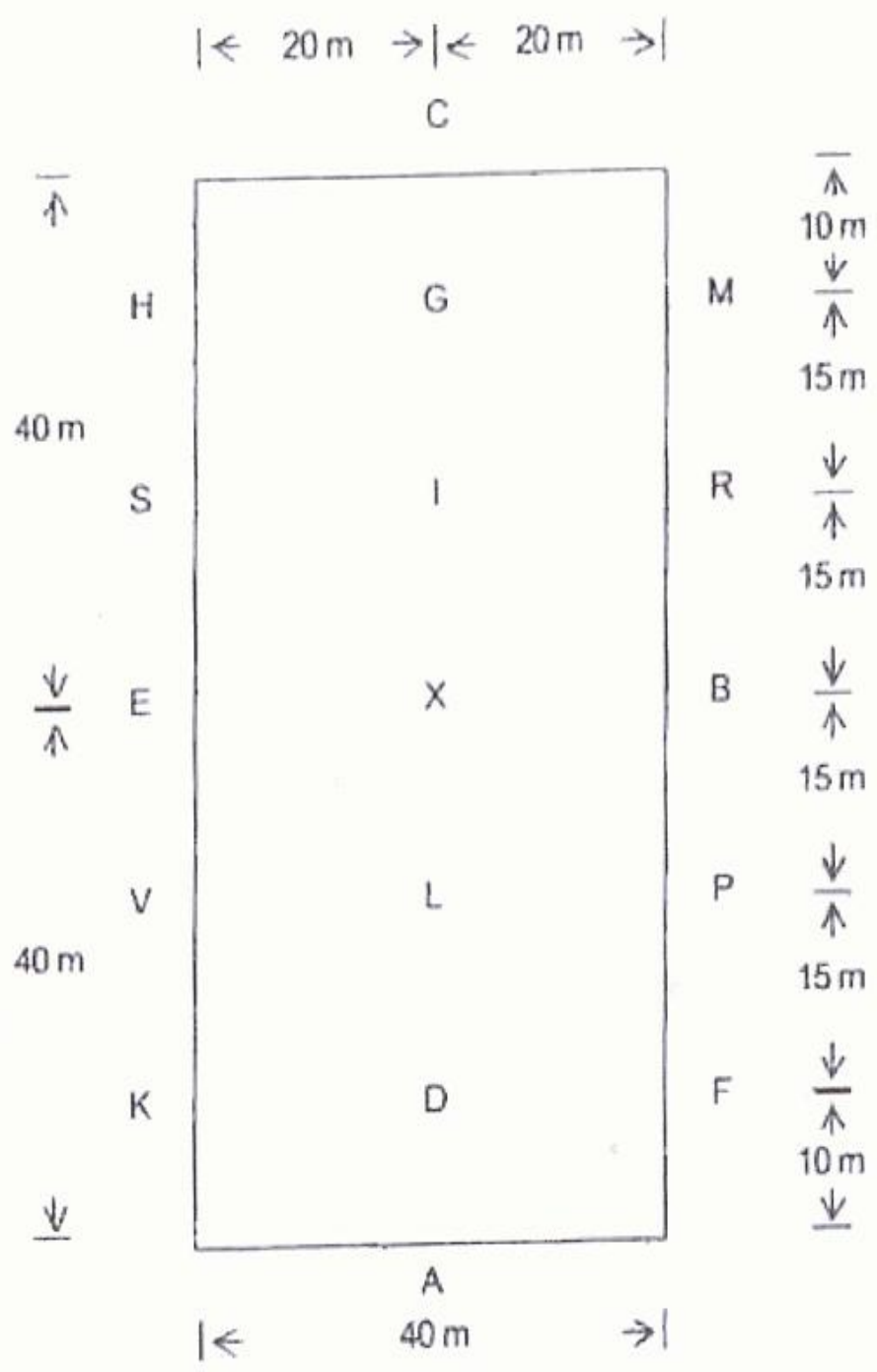
The Ground Jury

Consists of the President, who is the Judge at C in the Dressage and 2 or 4 other knowledgeable people. They should be the other Dressage Judges, and are the first people who handle any problems that may arise with the running of the event. If they cannot resolve an issue, it is then referred to a panel called the Appeal Committee.

The Technical Delegate

This person is responsible for making sure that the technical side of the event conforms to safety and technical standards. Any concerns the competitors have regarding the course should be raised with the T.D. usually at a briefing held after the marathon course has been viewed.

DIAGRAM OF THE SMALL DRESSAGE ARENA



Competition A1

Presentation

In Novice Competitions, the competitor presents his turnout to the judges who are looking for cleanliness and correctness of turnout. The balance of the vehicle is very important and this is usually checked by the judge with both the driver and groom in the vehicle. In open classes, Presentation is judged on the move as part of the dressage test.

Competition A

Dressage

Dressage is not an ordeal put on especially to confuse and terrify drivers, but is a sequence of movements which show how obedient the horse is, how supple it is, how it moves and the skill of the driver in handling the reins. The test is driven from memory and is judged on the accuracy and skill of driving and command of the horse, as well as the way the horse goes.

It can be very frustrating as what the horse performs outside the arena is frequently quite different from what it does inside the arena. Nerves may have something to do with this!!

The arena itself is based on the same layout as a ridden one but is much bigger, i.e. normally 80m by 40m, for some tests it is 100m by 40m, which looks enormous. There are usually three judges based at C, B and E, although for some Championships, five judges are used in which case they are at C, R, S, V and P.

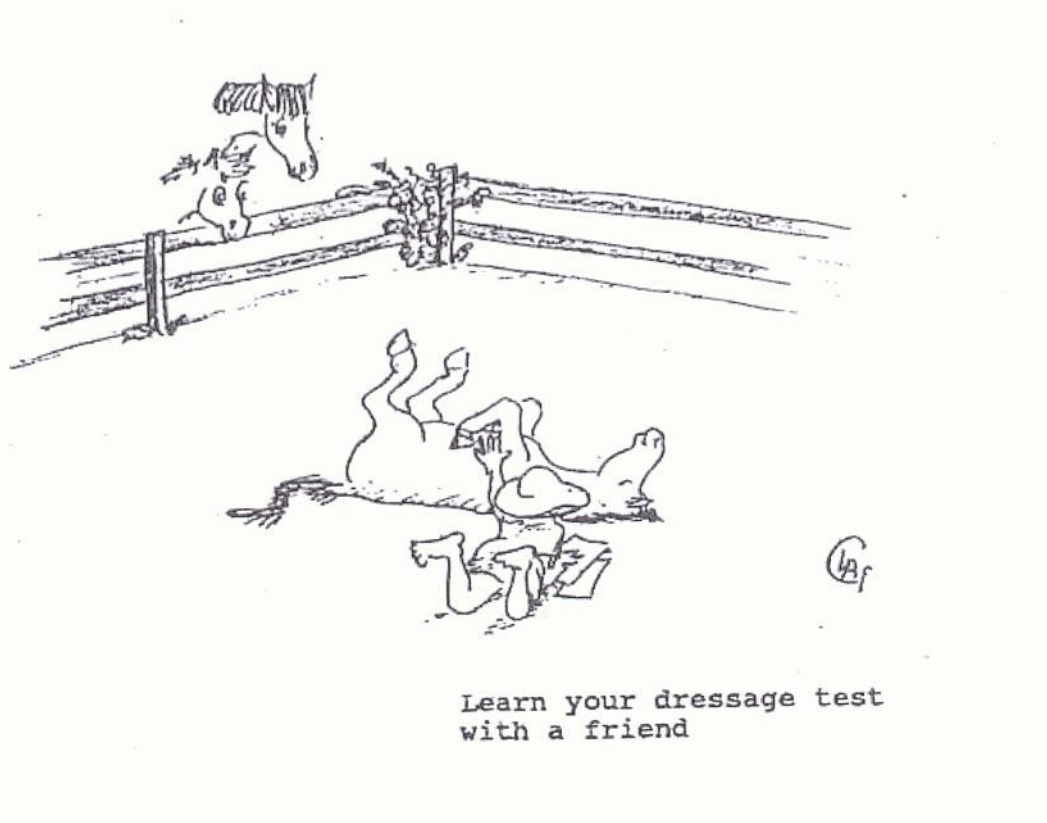
In all but very small ponies and single donkey turnouts, a groom is carried, hopefully purely as decoration, but their role in life is not to speak or help in any way unless the driver has a major safety problem.

The movements in a driven test are restricted to variations of walk and trot, and include a series of circles, turns and usually a halt and rein back and are driven from memory. The driver uses his reins, voice and whip as his aids and the horse relies on these to guide him and tell him what to do.

Dress for this competition is formal i.e. the driver must wear a hat, gloves, driving apron and carry a whip in hand. Women drivers usually wear a tailored jacket and skirt or trouser suit which gives them neatness and mobility as they must be able to get on and off the carriage with ease. Gentlemen usually wear a suit.

Grooms are dressed either in riding clothes or in a neat and tidy outfit, which compliments the driver's.

The total marks awarded by the judges are added together, averaged and calculated into penalty points. The fewer penalty points the higher the placing.



Competition B

The Marathon

This is in most cases, the part of the event that is enjoyed most by drivers, grooms and horses.

It is divided into 3 sections, each of which has a maximum and sometimes a minimum time allowance, and the speeds required for each section and size of animal are set.

The competitors are usually driven around the course on the day before the marathon to view it and take note of the terrain and any landmarks or natural hazards to be aware of. They also need to learn the route they intend to take through the obstacles/hazards.

The groom's job is to assist with directions, keeping times in each section and helping the driver go correctly through the hazards, as well as providing moral support and sweets for blood sugar when required!!

Essential to be carried on the marathon are the plan of the route and hazards (a waterproof sleeve can be useful), a pencil or pen and 1 if not 2 stopwatches. A halter and lead per animal should be carried and a sharp pocket knife, a piece of binder twine and some electrical tape can be useful. Drivers and grooms must wear suitable hard hats.

At the start of Section A you will be given a time card on which times for each section will be recorded by the start and finish stewards. Keep your own record as errors can be made and only you can dispute it if you get given time penalties unjustly.

The Course Section A

Driven at any pace, consists of a drive over varied country. There is an allowed time, which is set to a speed taking into account the type of conditions.

There is also a minimum time set, 2 minutes slower than the allowed time and the driver needs to get within this 2 minute window so not to get any time penalty points. Coming in under or over time is penalized.

Section D

A walk of up to 1 km. The driver must walk the horse in this section and penalties are given for sustained breaks of pace.

This is also timed and an allowed time is given but there are no time penalty points given if you come in under the allowed time.

After this there is a 10 minute halt and a vet check. The horse's heart rate and respiration are checked as is its general wellbeing. After approximately 5 minutes, the heart rate is checked again to ensure a suitable drop has occurred.

You can be held back here if the horse does not have a significant drop in heart rate.

Section E

This is the fun part.

Included in this section are the marathon obstacles/hazards, which are a series of gates (red & white flags), which have to be driven in sequence and as quickly as possible. There are up to 8 of these MO's/hazards, which can be made from natural obstacles such as trees or water, and flagged to show the route required. The driver needs to go as fast as possible from the start flags through the MO/hazard to the finish flags, as the less time spent means less penalty points. There are several different routes in each MO/hazard some requiring more skill than others, some quicker and some safer. There are penalties given for various mistakes made in the MO's/hazards.

Section E is also timed and this time there is a 3 minute window where there are no time penalties awarded.

When you walk the MO's/hazards, take careful note of the terrain, position of gates etc, and use your course plan to make notes of how you will drive each one. This is where your groom comes into their own as a navigator. They can refer to the course plans of each MO/hazard to be driven and make sure that you drive them correctly.

Everyone driving an MO/ hazard incurs penalty points from the time their horse's nose goes through the start and accrue at the rate of 0.2 for each commenced second until you go through the finish flags. All the careful thought and planning when walking the hazards should, with your horse's co-operation, ensure that you finish each hazard with the minimum of penalties.

If you take the wrong course in an MO/ hazard you are allowed to go back and correct the mistake from where you went wrong. You may take any route to get back to this point but you will be given 20 penalty points for each corrected error by the stewards. Uncorrected errors, however, incur elimination. It is useful to shout "course error" to the stewards to ensure that they notice the correction.

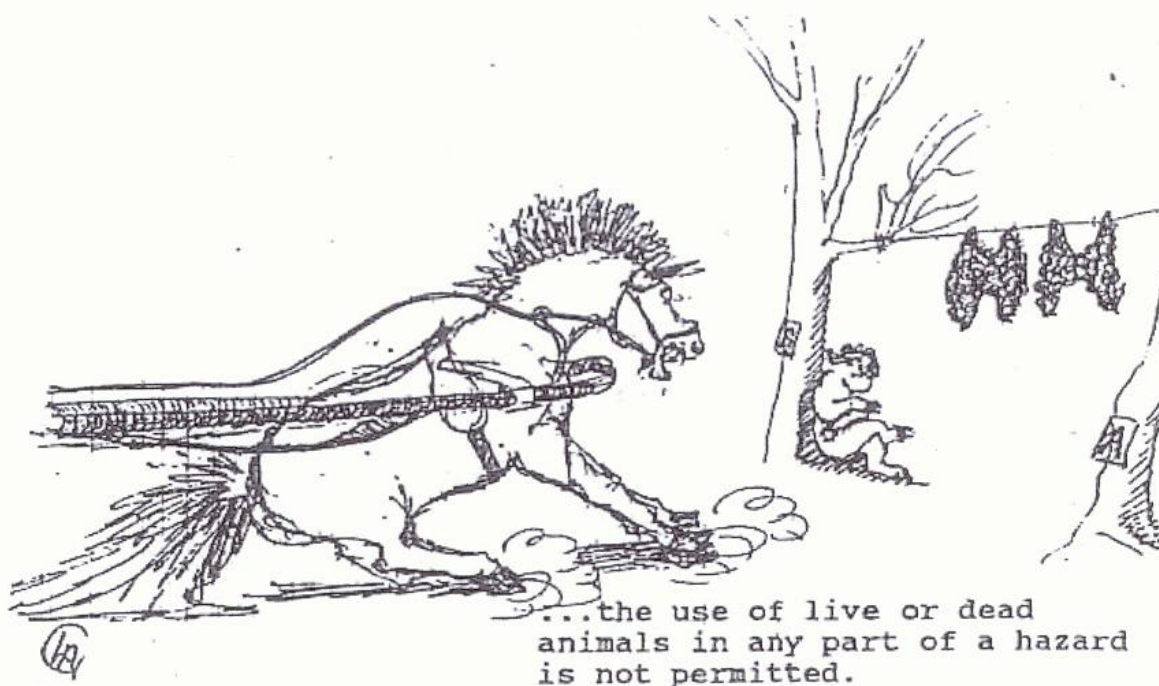


Constructed Water Hazards must not be deeper than 40 cm.

On the marathon course you will find a variety of marker flags. Yellow flags are directional markers and are there to show you the planned course. On sections A – E you will find kilometer markers to help you judge your speed.

Where it is necessary to make sure that competitors go to a certain point, you will find compulsory markers. These consist of a pair of red and white flags with a number on them. Compulsory markers are numbered consecutively in each section and it helps to make sure you mark them on your course plan. Failure to go through compulsory marker flags and MO/hazards in the correct sequence will result in elimination.

Where you find red and white flags on the course, they must be driven with the red flag on the right.



Competition C

Cones

The driven equivalent of show jumping, this requires the drivers to go through a series of cones and basic obstacles with the cones set slightly wider than the gig wheels. The driver gets to walk the course, as in show jumping, but the groom does not and also cannot assist the driver during the round. Penalties are given for knocking the balls off from the cones, going too slowly and also for things such as the groom indicating the course to the driver.

This competition is driven in formal dress again.

If there is a steward, they will tell you when to enter the “arena”, and then you present yourself to the judge, salute and the bell will then be rung for you to start. It is etiquette to halt and salute the judge again after finishing the round.

Definition of a groom.

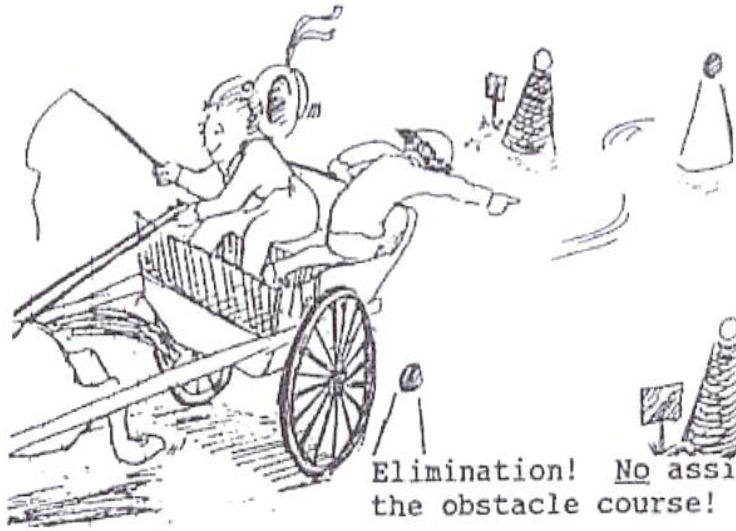
Someone who owes you a favour who when trained and is really good, gets hooked and buys their own animal!!

At a 2 day event, the dressage and cone competitions are usually run on the first day with the marathon on the second.

At a 3 day event, the competitions are usually run in sequence, A, B and C.

A Salute for lady drivers is to come to a halt, put reins in one hand and raise the whip horizontally about the level of the hat and nod the head slightly. Alternatively, the whip hand can be extended out to the side. Men may salute the same way as ladies, or put the reins in one hand take off the hat, drop the hat hand to the side and nod the head. Return to normal with reins and whip and off you go.

In competition A and C, the rules state when you must carry a whip in hand but you can drive with the reins in one or both hands at any time.



Elimination! No assistance in
the obstacle course!