



OLIVER TOWNEND, 2009 WINNER

Behind the scenes at The Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials

Lincolnshire Life continues looking at life at Burghley as the preparations accelerate for the 2010 horse trials

For 'local lass' Mandy Stibbe (nee Jeakins) Burghley has been a part of her life for many years – since she was a child growing up near Stamford. Mandy, a former competitor who is now a member of the organisational committee remembers the excitement of the park when she was at school in Stamford. "We used to play rounders in the park and when the trials were on there was a rush to get out after school to go and see the horses – still in

our school uniform."

Having ridden since she was a child Mandy began to take horses seriously in her teens initially representing the local Fitzwilliam Hunt in the highly competitive Pony Club inter-branch show jumping competition, held in the park in front of Burghley House – a competition still going strong and a highlight of the year for members of the nearby branches. Mandy also well remembers how whilst out with the



MANDY STIBBE

Fitzwilliam she and her friends jumped some of the competition fences. "After the Burghley meet we deliberately used to hang around at the back of the field and bet one another to jump," says Mandy now rather horrified at the then bravado of the dare.

In 1983 at the age of twenty-three Mandy got her first chance to jump the fences for real and gained her first completion. Six years later she was a member of the British team that won team silver at the European Championships held at Burghley. For several years Mandy competed at top level completing Badminton on four occasions – twice with Woden and twice with Kings Jester. It is with some irony that it is not the successes that Mandy is remembered for but a spectacular photograph of her upside down, captured before landing in the Lake at Badminton. The picture, sold worldwide on birthday cards, became an iconic representation of the sport and is still available. "I did a massive somersault which certainly looked impressive. However I landed on my feet, got back on and completed the competition – which looking back now seems a rather mad thing to have done."

After retiring from competition in 1995 Mandy became involved in the running of the sport initially as a selector for the British Young Rider team and member of the board. Mandy is still involved and is now the Chairman of selectors of the senior international team. This year she will be responsible

for the committee that selects the team to represent Great Britain at the World Equestrian Games – also known as the World Championships – in Kentucky at the end of September. It is a big responsibility. At the last World Games in 2006 Great Britain brought home team silver and Zara Phillips was crowned World Champion.

Around the same time as she first joined BE – the sport's governing body – Burghley's then Director Bill Henson asked Mandy to join the horse trials committee. "I started out as a rider representative to give the committee a rider's view on various aspects of the competition," says Mandy. "Between the members there is a big spread of knowledge and it is a good and effective working committee."

Not surprisingly The Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials is one of the first dates to be put in the diary each year. "I don't think I have missed a Burghley since I was nine-years-old – its part of my life," says Mandy. "Even for many of my non-horse friends Burghley weekend is an institution. And maybe I am biased because I'm local but I always think it has a fantastic happy atmosphere. I think Burghley always manages to knit together the three elements of competition – the riders, owners and those that are involved with the spectators really well. Everyone enjoys it."



ELIZABETH INMAN, DIRECTOR OF BURGHLEY HORSE TRIALS CONTINUES HER DIARY AS SHE PLANS THE NEXT STAGES OF THIS PRESTIGIOUS EQUESTRIAN EVENT

All those pre-Christmas jobs are coming to fruition. The printer's proofs have arrived in the office for the car passes and admission tickets – this really does herald the start of our year as the final product will soon be in the offices ready for checking and auditing before onward transmission to the Box Office.

12,000 envelopes were ordered for the April mailshot. We do not have the luxury of a machine and everything is hand-stuffed prior to posting. Many on our mailing list will wish to take advantage of pre-event discounts or book grandstand tickets early to be sure of the best seats. The flood of applications that arrive on the first day of the Box Office opening continues to amaze – there is normally a mid-day communication from those co-ordinating these bookings, excitedly informing us that we have received 'x' more orders than at the exact same time last year – let's hope we get off to a similar flying start in 2010!

We have finalised the advert designs for placing in various

publications, some 'horsey', others 'lifestyle' – Burghley Horse Trials is not just for the equestrian enthusiast, there is much more besides and we must get that message across. I sit on a steering group for the East Midlands 2012 visitor economy and am due to meet shortly with Visit Lincolnshire, to see how we can work more closely with each other. The county of Lincolnshire has much to offer everyone throughout the year, but we must surely be the jewel in the crown of sporting and social events in the county. Five years ago an EMDA (East Midlands Development Agency) survey concluded that as a result of the Horse Trials nearly £20m was fed into the local economy throughout the year – a staggering figure. I wonder what it would be now - how we have grown since the first event in 1961. 2010 sees the 50th running of Burghley, and we are already looking forward to celebrating our '50th anniversary' in traditional style in 2011 – our 51st year.

Now to the more 'mundane'. Having had the opportunity to talk to most of our large contractors; grandstand, security, tentage, etc, and establish costs, the 2010 budget is ready to present to the finance committee tomorrow. Later in the week I will report on arrangements to our main committee, which meets four times per year, so there is much ground to cover. A hectic week ahead, before taking a few days off, hopefully for some skiing, and then settling down in earnest to tackle challenges that I know are just round the corner – not least the re-location of our trade exhibitor park, a complex operation – more on this next time.