

The Main Ring on Show Day

The Main Ring plays an important part for our visitors on show day and provides entertainment from 9am, when the show opens, until 6.00pm.



The arena stages a continual programme of events and as Chief Steward for the Main Ring it's my job to keep the activities organised and running to time.

The events will have been decided well in advance. Prior to show day I contact the various participants to establish any particular facilities they require and the length of time they will need to prepare and complete their part of the show. The ring and commentary box, plus all the other related equipment will have been set up during the weeks preceding the show so that on 'The Day' we are ready to go.

I like to arrive on show day by 6.30am to check through everything with the show secretary and other members of the stewarding team. These people are vital to the successful running of the ring and their generous support helps make the day a success. It's necessary to be able to contact everyone running the arena and a good radio system is really important. The public address system is another piece of equipment which needs to work well so that we can let the ring-side visitors know what is happening. Sometimes we can add some extra entertainment such as a demonstration from the steam section.



Once 9am arrives the Main Ring Show is 'on the road' with various horse classes being judged. These classes regularly attract many spectators and if you have never seen the Welsh Cobs being judged or watched the Side Saddle Costume Concours d'Elegance put it on your 'must do' list for next year's show. They really are worth seeing.



At 1pm the day's star attraction takes place offering a different type of entertainment. Over the years this has been as varied as Medieval Jousting, The Jez Avery Stunt Show and Joseph's Amazing Camels; all of which have been thoroughly enjoyed by the crowds.





The Curre and Llangibby Hounds often come next. At the end of their demonstration we invite the families to enter the ring and meet the hounds. This is always very popular and seems equally enjoyed by both the children and hounds.



The Mounted Pony Club Games follow and it is great fun to see the youngsters battling it out for the trophy. The lap of honour is well deserved and enthusiastically applauded by the spectators.

Whilst the pony clubs are busy with their competition, I will have been checking with the Agricultural Stewards that all are mustered and ready for The Grand Parade. For me, this is the most impressive event in the main ring. And here they come, thanks to the stewards, on time and looking magnificent.





Proudly led by their handlers, these are the champion animals from all the livestock and horse classes which have taken place throughout the day. They present a wonderfully colourful spectacle in the show ring, gleaming in the sunshine and demonstrating the hours of commitment and effort which goes into bringing an animal to show perfection. After the animals have been paraded around the ring for all to see and admire, they are lined up for the Supreme Champion sashes to be presented to the winner of each Livestock section.



The awards are made by the Show's Patron, Mr David Morgan and the Show's President, Mr Gwyn Cadogan. To gain Supreme Champion is a prestigious achievement and held in admiration by the agricultural community.



As the livestock leave the ring the champion horses are brought forward to be judged for the Best in Show award. This can be a challenging task for the judges since the horse classes are very diverse and deciding on a winner is not easy. After some intense discussions a winner is agreed and they proudly receive the Best in Show sash.

The Grand Parade comes to an end well into the afternoon, but there is still time for a few more events. Preparations are made for another showing of the day's star attraction giving our visitors a second chance to see it since, with all the show has to offer, they may have missed the earlier performance.



The penultimate event is often supported by the rugby club which sometimes organises a Touch Rugby tournament, another favourite with the crowd. Finally, if we are lucky and the weather has been kind, it is time for the hot-air balloon ascent. When I see this take place my official day is over and I know that the main ring, and all its wonderful helpers, has played its part in helping to continue the success of Usk Show.

Keith

P.S. Look forward to seeing you round the ring next year.

The 2nd Saturday in September