



# We fly the flag for pony driving and are proud of our local roots and British-made products

**Whether she's competing in Europe or coaching youngsters on how to drive horses safely, Sue Mart is passionate about her family's award-winning business, Bennington Carriages**

**M**y engineer father started Bennington Carriages 50 years ago, moving from the hustle and bustle of Nottingham to Long Bennington near Newark with my mother, my sister Wendy and me. At the time, it was fashionable to own a Shetland pony, so before long we got Dusty and Fusty... and they were little horrors, biting and bucking whenever we tried to ride them!

Using his engineering skills, Dad built a carriage that allowed us to drive them safely, and Bennington Carriages was born. Driving trials were in their early days then, and we built our first competition carriage after Dad was introduced to Prince Philip back in 1979.

We still hold the royal warrant to this day, with the silver crest hanging proudly outside our workshop. Each year we go through all the necessary checks to make sure we're producing carriages to the right standard.

Dad's skills helped bring carriages into the 20th century, replacing wooden parts that were prone to breaking with aluminium wheels and carriages with back steps. Now, the technology has raced ahead! We have a local team of craftsmen who have worked with us for many years, producing and manufacturing custom carriages to suit the needs of our customers; whether it be for competitions, leisure or specially adapted carriages for para-drivers. It really is an accessible sport for all ages and abilities.

When I'm not overseeing the business, Wendy and I love to enter driving trials, competing in the FEI World Driving Championships for Ponies. Last year was the second time we've been on the British team and we won bronze! I'm also a coach, so I share my experience with the community through our Try Carriage Driving courses.

Not only do we fly the flag for the sport but we're also proud to be a business founded on local roots and British-made products. From our small village, our carriages travel far and wide. In fact, one of our specially commissioned carriages is used to carry brides to their wedding ceremonies at Disney World in Florida. It went on its test run outside what is now Lincolnshire Co-op's Long Bennington store.

MEMBER  
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Visit the Bennington Carriages website at [www.benningtoncarriages.co.uk](http://www.benningtoncarriages.co.uk)