



Volunteers at the start of the marathon section



Being a volunteer can be great fun

Sign up to be a volunteer

Have you ever thought about volunteering at a driving event? Perhaps you have, but you don't really know how to get started, what's involved or who to talk to. Sue Mart from Bennington offers an insight into volunteering and explains why a Bennington stewards' training day might be just what you need to help you on your way.

There are many benefits to volunteering at a driving event and the best part about it is you don't need to have any previous experience, or even know anything about horses or driving to help out.

Volunteering is the ideal way to learn more about carriage driving and it offers you the chance to give something back to the sport, which you may wish to do if you are a competitor who has benefitted from the services of other volunteers over the years.

On the other hand, if driving is a sport you are considering having a go at, volunteering can be a great starting point that allows you to learn more about the rules and what's involved, as well as helping you decide whether it's definitely the right discipline for you.

Whatever your situation, one thing's for sure – you'll be hugely appreciated if you offer your time to help at an event. Our sport needs you.

Anyone can sign up, so tell all your friends and spread the word so we can increase our volunteer base and keep our much-loved events up and running. Here's how to get involved.



A happy steward at Catton Park

Showing support

If you do decide to volunteer at events in the future, your day is likely to start with a volunteers' briefing, where you will find out what your responsibilities are. Inexperienced volunteers are likely to be teamed up with someone

knowledgable, so you'll have your own mentor for the day.

No driving event could exist without a huge team of helpers, and events always need the following people:

- Dressage stewards and writers

- Marathon timekeepers
- Obstacle stewards
- Course marshals
- Score collectors
- Cones, arena and collecting ring stewards.

If the event runs for more than one day, you may have the chance to stay over at the venue and join in with some of the social activities. The driving community is a friendly one and we will welcome new – and old – faces with open arms. Not only will you get the opportunity to visit some great venues, but I have no doubt you'll make some life-long friends, too.

Bennington stewards' training days

Once a year in November, we hold stewards' training days here at Bennington near Newark. Everyone is welcome, whether you are a non-driver, novice or experienced, so why not come along and bring a friend? The days are free of charge and tea, coffee and cake will be provided. All you need to bring is yourself and a packed lunch!

During the day you will receive an overview of what's required from



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volunteers at events and weather permitting, there will be the chance to watch some of the driving turnouts simulating mini one day events, where you can join in and simulate the volunteering duties that are required at a real event.

Trainees will then receive a pack to take away, which includes information on how to enrol as a volunteer, if the day has inspired you enough to do so.

To book a place on this year's Bennington stewards' training day, which takes place on Saturday 2nd November, 10am-2pm, contact Angela Flanagan on 07740 707729 or email Amflan1@hotmail.com

For more information about volunteering, click on the volunteering link at www.britishcarriagedriving.co.uk

What the stewards say

We spoke to two ladies who volunteer without even having their own pony and turnout. Here's why they recommend getting involved.

Anne McDonald says: "Carriage driving is such a friendly sport and the people are so welcoming. Why would you not want to volunteer and give some time back to the sport? We must keep the flag flying for driving. I've been so fortunate to have been encouraged and guided by Sue Mart at Bennington

Carriages. She has given me so many opportunities to drive and volunteer without even having my own pony and turnout. I count myself extremely lucky."

Caroline Crawley adds: "It's great fun watching other people enjoying themselves and I feel you can learn something every time you volunteer. There are always nice new people and ponies to meet and it's very friendly. I love helping people to enjoy carriage driving and I just love watching."



You may get the chance to stay over and join in with the social activities



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