



The Show Horse Council Of Australasia proudly presented The GALLERY EQUINE Grand National Championships” at SIEC Equestrian Centre from 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The Event again lifting Show Horse competition to another level. SHC members all over Australia spent the year chasing the win to qualify them to compete; the best of the best then coming together to compete for the coveted titles on offer.

Under the direction of our International Judges who arrive with no preconceived ideas, every horse and rider combination has the opportunity to show their best work in what was the most spectacular arena to showcase their horses. As a committee we try to give them the best possible experience at the event, and I think we achieve that.

This year the Council had constructed, the wrought Iron Entry feature, and Anna King based the horse shoe garden design to follow the soft curving lines of the backdrop poster to follow through with a beautiful fragrant garden. As everything started to go into the arena the excitement grew, I cannot thank Anna and Steve enough for working with the Show Horse Council, they deliver exceptional designs of excellence.

2016 saw the Five Grand Champions classes, & Mini Champion Ridden Pony included on Saturday night Final program, the culmination of four days of competition. I feel this worked very well, and competitors then had the chance to travel home on Sunday.

This year our three Judges visited from the UK; Mrs Lesley Whitehall, Mr Martin Skelton & Mr Jordan Cook. All Judges were very impressed with the high standard of competition, being very complementary to the capabilities of our child riders and the level of presentation of our horses. Their highlight was the Saturday evening Grand Champion events.

This year we again held Children’s day on Wednesday. Entries for these events were excellent, continuing to grow and offering our junior members a special day, just for them. Classes were strongly supported and many happy smiling faces left the arena with beautiful gifts from Ponyella Design in Qld, ribbons, twinkling garlands and their trophy rugs.

The “Peter Horobin Night of Stars” was how we promoted it, and WOW but did the horses and riders deliver for us. Everyone was on such a high, huge congratulations go to all competitors who won through and put on such a show for the crowd that filled the stands at SIEC. The winners of the Grand Champions –Rebecca Crane “France” (Show Hunter), Trish Steadman-Towell “Royalwood Concerto” (Saddle Horse), Kasey Currall ( Grand Champion Rider), Gates, Heyne & Cherrington Ponies “Eagle Park Casino” ( Champion Childs Ridden Mini Pony), GC Equestrian & Quirk Family “ Walden Park Columbus” ( Grand Champion Childs Ridden Show Hunter) & Shaw Family “ Gordon Park Concerto” ( Grand Champion Childs Saddle Horse) with all competitors delivered a polished workout to be awarded their Titles.

The Grand Champion winners take home cash, prizes, and special memories that they will have with them forever. Thanks must also go to these great sponsors The Harcourt, McNamara Families & HM Garlands, Horses In Action Competitors Assoc South Australia, MG Bridles, Elcon Constructions & Mark Bullen, Imperial Welsh Ponies, who put their financial support behind these Grand Champion classes.

Many thanks to Peter Horobin who donated a saddle, Debbie Johnson-McNeill being the lucky winner from the crowd of competitors.

Results will be sent out to all sponsors, I have already received many positive emails from both business and personal sponsors as well as competitors, it is a testament to all the hard work the committee and individual helpers put in to make the 2016 event such a success.

This event relies heavily upon the support of our event sponsors, The SHC is extremely fortunate to have Gallery Equine and our individual class sponsors who are very loyal to us, and continue to sponsor this event. I cannot thank them enough for coming along for the ride every year. For the second year HM Garlands, (Philippa Harcourt) became involved with the Grand National supplying the most exquisite Garlands for both our winning Horse and Rider Classes. Each piece was an individual work of art, adorned in special jewels, these garlands are the most special treasure for the lucky winners to have as a keepsake of their win.

The Announcing team of Chris King, Lori Howell & Sheridan never missed a beat over the four long days & nights.

The Council also employed the services of Australian Equine Network to live stream the four days of competition, this again proving to be popular with members who were not able to attend the event, over 50,000 people viewed the Championships, allowing exhibitors family and friends the opportunity to take in the atmosphere and see the results as they happen from their living rooms. Carol Heuchan in her role as announcer interviewed many experienced Show Horse Industry figures, this giving an insight into the action taking place on the arena.

It was wonderful that we had many of the States supply people to help us in an official capacity, their assistance was invaluable. Greg Trembath SA, Geraldine Crocker SA, Denise Fenwick SA, Jill Feilden SA & Donna Button WA.

Sandra James ran the BBQ on Tuesday night. The South Australian contingent diced, chopped and served; Bruce Flood did the shopping assisted by Helen Kirton with the meat order. This night is always well received by competitors prior to the start of completion on Wednesday, and is a great time to catch up and socialise in a relaxed environment.

The Show office is always a busy hub of activity, and was very ably manned by Roseanne Bowerman (who worked with me at SIEC from the Monday before the event) and Roma Stonestreet, who in my absence were the faces that dealt with all the competitors needs prior to getting into the classes. The Sam's family were invaluable from beginning to end & afterwards, still pulling down when everyone else had long gone.

Leanne McDowall spent a lot of time assisting in the stabling office. The new Bump in/bump out system was introduced and proved to be very effective for competitors and SHC.

The marshalling this year was very efficient under the direction of Mark Leslie who spent four days directing competitors; he was assisted by Steve Benton & Jill Feilden. This is such a vital area, with these guys on their feet the whole time, out in the rain and heat, dealing with some challenging situations, trying to keep to the tight timetable.

Once they entered the arena our stewards Geraldine Crocker, Donna Button, Ashley Roberts, Tim Hadlow, & Greg Tembath assisted the Judges over the 35 events, all done under the watchful eye of our Ring Master Bruce Flood who co-ordinated everybody to ensure the smooth running from ring control.

Nicola Donoghue was our chief ribbon & Prize steward, sorting out many of the wonderful prizes the competitors took home as keep sakes from the Grand National, assisted by Jody Winning, Broni & Demi Sam's, Jill, Denise & Greg. Amanda Peters kept competitors informed with her handy stop watch & bell on timing. I had many lovely comments regarding Suz Worsley music. Lorelle Mercer Photography, Lisa Gordon & Danni Milligan were on hand throughout to capture the magic moments & Scott Williams Productions captured all Classes on DVD.

The Saturday night Dinner had a record 180 guests to be seated, the area looked very inviting and I received some lovely comments from guests as they arrived. To think the busy little team put it together in a few hours is a feat to be proud of. I must say the best thing is to have happy, positive people around you, it's great to have a bit of a laugh and that keeps you going when you start to feel a bit flat.

The 2015 SHC Volunteer Awards went to Roma Stonestreet & Helen Kirton joint Winner, Nicola Donoghue 2<sup>nd</sup>, Amanda Peters 3<sup>rd</sup> tallied by most days attended as volunteer at four different events. All our volunteers are much appreciated for their support at SHC events.

The Grand National is a massive undertaking, getting bigger and I hope better every year, to become the most recognised Show Horse event in the Southern Hemisphere, without the help of the people mentioned above from SA, & WA Hawkesbury & Hills, Central Coast & Lower Hunter & the Tablelands Clubs in NSW I could never make all my own plans and dreams for this event happen.

2017 is the Grand Nationals 25<sup>th</sup> Silver anniversary, exciting times lay ahead for that celebration year. Personally I hope all members have a wonderful experience competing, sponsors are proud to have their name associated with the event and the Show Horse Council continues to grow & thrives with horse owners who want to qualify to compete at THE GRAND NATIONAL.

Leonie Roberts- Show Secretary.