

THE RYAN BRYN JONES MEMORIAL YOUNG HANDLERS AWARD SCHEME 2022

text and photos by Sweet Photography





Young Handlers Awards



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Overnight at the 2019 Arab Horse Society National Show the Arabian horse world suddenly lost Ryan Bryn Jones, known here in the UK (and beyond!) as “The Greatest Showman”. His loss was felt deeply by many Arabian horse enthusiasts in a wide number of countries round the world. A Memorial Trust Fund was set up which included benefitting young people in the future and provide three trophies to be awarded in his name. Sadly the world was then affected by Covid and no shows were held. In summer 2021 The AHS Show took place at a new venue, The David Broome Event Centre near Chepstow in South Wales, a place the Jones family regularly successfully competed at when the Wales and West Arabian Show was held there for

many years. However the time-scale meant it wasn't possible to put the plan in place. So it was at the 2022 Show in July that the family introduced The Ryan Jones Memorial Young Handlers Awards in recognition of one of Ryan's greatest pleasures – encouraging and training other young handlers to help them achieve their goals. It was obviously an emotional presentation as the family gathered in the ring and long-time family friend Mike Ashmore explained the background to what was to follow in the show.

We were then treated to just over two hours of 4 enthralling (and at times emotional) classes and a Championship for young handlers in the main ring. Ryan's very close friends,



Mike Ashmore, Seamus McCormick, Mark Hardcastle, Rod, Kim, Harry, Farrah, Sue Oldham (Ryan's partner), Sue Jones (Ryan's mother) ... Emrys Jones (Ryan's father) Rhidian/Seren, Rhiannon (Ryan's sister), Stuart Howells (Rhiannon's husband), Rebecca McCormick (AHS Show Organiser)



Seamus McCormick, Mark Hardcastle, Kimberley Jones, Farah/Andrea Ashmore, Harry, Rhodri Jones, Mike Ashmore, Rebecca McCormick (AHS Show Organiser)



Kim, Farrah, Harry Jones

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Mark Hardcastle and Seamus McCormick were the ones tasked with the judging.

The first class was for Assisted Young Handlers in which we were to see the youngest competitor, 2 year old Ava Cooper! In this class the 6 youngsters were accompanied by an adult. They were expected to exhibit all aspects of an in-hand showing class – walk, trot and a stand up. I don't think anyone envied the judges! Rhodri (Ryan's brother) and Kim Jones accompanied their twins, Farrah and Harry aged 4 sharing their mare Lyla Rose JCA (Brandon Bey JCA/Fforever Rose) and each of the twins had their opportunity to show her (with dad or mum close by!). It was

easy to see they had had a good grounding already in their handling and showing techniques and were totally at ease with Lyla Rose as she was with them! Equal first place for them! There was also a tie for 2nd place with 4 year old Zara Constable showing OTTILIAH JJ (Emerald J/Olivia K), a mare who had won two ridden Championships at the show ridden by Zara's mother, Emily, and 5 year old Seren Mai Jones Howells with ONCE UPON A THYME (Pyro Thyme SA/Elegancebyversace), a mare with a Gold Championship in KSA amongst her many successes! The gentleness and patience exhibited by each of the Arabians shown by these incredibly young humans was something to warm the heart!



Farrah Jones



Harry Jones



Mark Hardcastle, Libby Lowe, Andrea Asmore, Seamus McCormick, Mike Ashmore

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The next class was for 8 to 12 year old handlers. Again there were 6 entrants with the win going to 8 years old Rhidian Jones Howell (Seren's brother) with ONCE UPON A THYME. Rhidian showed for the first time last year at the Arab Show – and due to being too young for the young handlers class (under the show's then rules) he was given permission to enter the Amateur class which was the biggest class in the show. He came an excellent 4th that day. Second was Jessica Rushton with former British National Champion Mare JUST SO VERSACE MA (ViVegas/Virginia AM). Two lovely mares, both in harmony with their handlers.

The 13 to 16 years class was headed by Libby Lowe (from

the well-known Claverdon Stud dynasty!) showing PORCELAINNA (Psytadel/Psierra PGA), another mare with a fabulous show record. Libby also enjoys riding Arabians. Lucy Cooper and her sister Lauren's gelding, who is in his novice ridden season, BA ANIESWA (Tuscany BP/EAS Aanika) took 2nd.

The final class for 17-21 year olds sadly saw only one forward from 3 entries. This was Megan Ayling, very competently showing the part-bred JUMPING JACK FLASH who she also shows in ridden classes.

So now it was Championship time! I doubt there was a dry



Megan Ayling



Seamus McCormick, Mark Hardcastle, Rhidian, Rhiannon (Howells), Andrea Ashmore, Stuart Howells, Mike Ashmore



The Jones Family

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eye on the showground when Ryan's nephew and niece, Harry and Farrah were announced as joint Champions and became the first recipients of the fabulous head study trophy created by the internationally acclaimed J Anne Butler! With their cousins Seren and Rhidian (also Ryan's niece and nephew as their mother is Ryan's sister Rhiannon) also doing so well Ryan's family legacy is obviously in safe hands for the future! The Reserve Championship was awarded to Libby Lowe.

Extremely well done to all the 18 entrants, their supportive families and their beautifully behaved and turned out equine partners! You all made everyone who witnessed the classes feel proud and I'm sure that Ryan would have been too! The scheme is to be expanded in the future and we look forward to following the progress of all these youngsters and the others in the future who will also become part of Ryan's heritage. In the words written in Welsh on Ryan's trophies for the Senior Female Champions "Rhedeg fel y gwynt" ... run like the wind – just like Ryan always did!



Seren and Rhiannon Howells



Emily and Zara Constable