

ACT 7: SIDE SADDLE THROUGH THE AGES AND VERSATILITY – continued

Chloe Edgar rode as Queen Victoria on her grey maxi cob and very kindly took over from Jeanette Dixon whose sister made this costume for her. Queen Victoria was well known for riding her Highland pony. Chloe's cob is not a Highland but is a similar sturdy type and colour. Queen Victoria's Mr Brown was played by Mark Goodridge. Jana Carney riding her Black Shetland Dryknowl Brandish was wearing a copy of a costume from the watercolour painting "morning in the Highlands", she wore the dress worn by Alice, the second daughter of Queen Victoria. Painted by the Bavarian watercolourist, Carl Haag, this picture shows the Queen and Prince ascending Lochnagar, on the Balmoral estate, accompanied by the royal children, their governess Miss Bulteel and a number of gillies. The snaking procession and the sweep of the Queen's riding habit create a sense of dynamism, while the luminous colouring and unusually large size (the equivalent of many oil paintings) singled it out for particular praise when it went on public display in 1854.

Ellie Jones was riding her 7 year old Welsh section B LLanarth Gold Blend who she has brought on slowly herself since he was backed at 4 years of age. Ellie has had a wonderful 2 years competing side saddle on her grey Section A Sam before handing the reins over to her little sister Mimi, however she is looking forward another enjoyable season this year. Her outfit was styled on a picture found from 1856, during the reign of Queen Victoria. It was a velvet riding habit consisting of a full length sweeping skirt that creates the sense of elegance. The jacket had a cream shirt and a vintage stock underneath and neat narrow sleeves. The jacket had attention to the popular period detail including black military style frogging and black fur trim. The costume was completed with a matching hat decorated with fur and pheasant feathers.

Mimi Jones rode her 6 year old Welsh section A Pendre Sam. Sam has already had two very successful years competing side saddle with Mimi's sister Ellie. Mimi has taken over the ride this year. Mimi saw the famous picture of Cammie King, as Bonnie in the 1939 blockbuster, Gone with the Wind and decided she wanted her costume to be styled on this. Further research discovered that this costume was actually based on a typical Victorian design for children circa 1870's. This costume had been made using an eye-catching wine colour cotton velvet with attention to detail including contrasting black cotton lace trim to complement the colour of her pony. The gloves being worn are a pair of original black lace gloves that Mimi's great, great grandmother bought in the 1890's before she got married. The hat is designed to give the impression of the hats worn of that era. It is black velvet finished with a band and bows the same material as the dress, feathers and neat gold braiding to complete the elegant picture.

Sue Fernside was dressed in an Othello Original Aubergine Silk Habit. The costume was an original Victorian park riding costume dating from the late 1880's. It is made from heavy burgundy silk. The fitted bodice is boned with whalebone and is fastened with 31 pinchbeck and mother of pearl buttons. It is lined with pink and grey satin cotton. The shaped sleeves are in the leg 'o mutton style with further gathered sections to allow for movement. The skirt is gathered at the back in a bustle style to allow for sitting. It is lined with black cotton and is hemmed with velvet. The costume is trimmed with matching braid.

Sharon Thompson and her homebred horse Eagle River were needing a fresh challenge after many years competing at BE and general Riding Club activities, and so they started side saddle in 2012. After taking part in a small number of shows at area level, they competed at their first National Side Saddle Show in 2014, achieving several placings which was great encouragement. Sharon was wearing a burgundy, velvet habit based on the style of riding habits worn during the Victorian era of approximately 1880-1890. It was worn with a matching velvet hat, veil and feather and coordinated with an ivory silk stock and gloves.

Samantha Wilson started side saddle lessons in 2011 and jumping 2012. She also competes in showjumping, arena eventing, hunter trials and also working hunter classes. Nirvana Tywysog is currently Area 9 Equitation points champion and Performance points champion for the second year, as well as being the SSA Performance points champion, Adult champion, show jumping champion, Cross country champion and Pure bred Mountain and Moorland Champion. Samantha goes hunting sideways with Dumfriesshire and Stewartry Foxhounds, and also takes part in the Riding of the Marches and Common ridings which is a tradition that takes place in the Scottish Border Towns.



Samantha's outfit was based on a riding habit from the period of 1880s. It has been constructed using a historical pattern and the tailoring and seams are true to the era.

The outfit consists of a double breasted habit bodice and a full riding habit skirt. Colours were varied in this period although they were predominantly dark – in 1958 the colours mauve, plum and burgundy were mentioned. This outfit is constructed on a burgundy/red wine taffeta fabric. The riding habit skirt was described in this period as being approximately 12" longer than the walking skirt.

The riding habit skirt is essentially a longer version of the ladies walking skirt, only turned 90 degrees to accommodate the side saddle riding position. Research indicated that when the lady was walking it was elegant to drape the fullness and greater length over one arm, and sometimes cords were attached to allow the lady to perform this. The skirt in the 1880s would fall somewhere between the underside of the horse's belly and the ground. Hence the length was dictated by the size of the person and the size of the mount. The skirts were very full and would drape very low. The habit bodice had a roll collar and lapel, double points at the front, and a square tail with centre vent. It had a two piece bodice sleeve which is very slim. It is a style that was very popular during the late bustle era. The bodice is a very fitted garment and would work with a stock or a high necked frilled undergarment. It is lined and boned for a corset fit and the style of the back square tail and vent was designed to fold out over the very full bustle skirts.

During the first world war, ladies ride side saddle to administer first aid to the injured out in the battle fields. They were known as FANYS.

During the second world war men rode side saddle laying field telephone cable; this was done at a gallop and side saddle made it easy for them to work at this speed.

When hunting Victorian ladies distinguished the colour of habits to suit the fashion and as habits became the norm it was taken that unmarried ladies wore navy blue and a bowler hat and married ladies wore black, always with brown gloves as black were for mourning only. That way eligible ladies were spotted by prospective gentleman of the time as suitable for marriage.

Sophie Lane and Conspiracy Theory, owned by Mrs Rosamund Lane is one of the most consistent Ladies Hunter's in the Country. Major successes include:-

Qualifying for HOYS & RIHS for the past 5 seasons as a Ladies Hunter

2014 Area 9 Spring, Summer and Autumn Show Points Winner

Sophie wore a traditional hunting habit with the exclusive Duke of Beaufort Buff collar and hunt buttons known as the Beaufort livery. Buttons and collars are awarded to hunt members in recognition of support and long service to the hunt.

This beautiful habit was discovered in a Great Aunt's house and was passed to Sophie as the only side saddle jockey in the family. After a few tweaks and a bit of restoration this habit is now a treasured piece of history and is worn regularly by Sophie when competing in Ladies Hunter classes.

Katie Yeo rode Hillgarth Tino, a Welsh cob with a big personality; they have been competing side saddle together for 8 years. Katie has owned Tino for 13 yrs and having competed in all disciplines she decided to have a go side saddle. At the National Side Saddle Show results have been Adult Novice Reserve rider in year 2009, Adult Intermediate Champion 2010. After a horrific car accident, the determination to get back to side saddle riding kept Katie going and she was soon back in the saddle and jumping again, winning the Open Working Hunter title at the National Show in 2014.

Katie wears a vintage Hansel and Ruele habit. This habit was found in the local paper for sale and has always been cherished by Katie. It has the original lining, well most of it (!) and sloping pockets, very elegant on a side saddle jacket.

Emily Worthington wore a costume styled from an American painting (unknown painter) circa 1940. The painting shows 3 ladies riding side saddle along the beach.

Emily's navy blue jacket was very closely fitting with slightly puff sleeves and worn over a high neck cream silk blouse trimmed with pearls and lace; the skirt was navy with a cream/gold front insert.

Ladies often wore straw hats which were less formal than the traditional top hat; Emily was wearing an original 1930/40s vintage straw hat trimmed with navy silk ribbon. To finish the outfit Emily wore a pair of wrist length cream lace gloves and carried a hunting whip.

Claire Brown rode Oxnead Act One. Tom is a 17 year old purebred Haflinger breeding stallion who is quite intelligent and likes to have variety in his life! He has been Supreme Ridden Champion twice at the National Haflinger Breed Show and has numerous British Dressage points competing up to medium level. He was Claire's partner in 2013 when he got her into the top four in the Open Equitation Championship and into the Rider of the Year ride off. Tom also competed successfully in the German Side Saddle Championships held in Aachen last year.

