



ANNA PARATENE

SHOW RING JUDGE

WORDS: DEBBIE KNOWLES PHOTOS: MENDIP FARM PHOTOGRAPHY

Anna has two daughters. Sarah is eleven years old and has just started riding again after initially giving up at six years. Kelly is twenty-two and works for Air New Zealand, having been there a number of years. Anna's occupation was as an "Animal Control Officer" for Manukau Council but a work accident prevented her from returning to that job so she is currently training and bringing on young horses and ponies. She also instructs at Dairy Flat Pony Club and says, "It is something which I really enjoy and have met and made a lot of new friends."

Anna began riding at an early age "riding anything I could get my hands on and got my first grey pony when I was about ten years old, gifted to me from my Uncle, which I took to Pony Club, Ribbon Days and progressed to A&P Shows all over the North Island with my parents support. Those days, when we weren't competing, we rode bareback, or however we liked, flat stick and anywhere we liked.

"I rode with some success at HOY level and took a great interest in judging and attended the first ever judging seminar, run by Mr Kevin Cholmondeley-Smith. That was when Kevin began writing the RAS "Rule Book" as we know it today. I became more involved with the

When we see a Judge in the ring, we never know their history or how they got there. This is Anna Paratene's story...

A&P movement when my father, Anzac Paratene, took over running the Waitemata A&P Show and later the equestrian side of the Royal Easter Show. It was there that I became Head Steward and gained vast experience as to the finer points of judging under the guidance of Kevin Cholmondeley-Smith and my father."

Anna recalls her first really good horse "was the Park Hack **PARK ROYAL LADY** which my father purchased from Des and Irene Taylor and their daughter Leonie (now Geddes), who have always produced top quality show hacks and ponies. I had many others but she was my favourite. Then I spent time in Australia becoming polo groom for a polo stud in New South Wales and attended the Sydney Royal on many occasions. After returning to New Zealand, I worked for a steeplechase trainer for a number of years, schooling horses over hurdles and preparing them for race day. Following that, worked as a Showjumping Groom for a couple of years, where the family competed most weekends extensively throughout New Zealand. I also groomed Polocrosse for a local family before getting back into the showing scene. I would have to say that showing is my favourite discipline and I enjoy judging and attending as many shows as possible. I spent a few years



Sarah Paratene - **GLENVAR BLUE PETER**

as a lead-rein Mum and enjoyed that until my daughter Sarah decided to take a break."

Anna describes her main hobby, apart from judging, as "animals in general. I have two Labradors, two cats and a pet lamb. I enjoy spending any spare time I have just at home with my partner Andy, my daughter Sarah and all our animals plus catching up and spending time with good friends.

My current good horses' are a yearling, **GRAEMAR ENVY**, which is the grandson of my favourite mare **PARK ROYAL LADY**. I also have at home a very smart new pony, owned by Kevin Cholmondeley-Smith, called **GLENVAR BLUE PETER**, which my daughter Sarah is currently competing."

Anna describes her judging history; "I became an RAS judge fifteen years ago and was graded a Grade 1 Judge when it was decided to

introduce the grading system. After five years of judging I was invited to judge in Australia, on two separate occasions - Horse of the Year in South Australia and Horse of the Year in Queensland and then became an International Judge. My favourite classes to judge I guess would be turnout, which I believe sets the standard for the day and all flat classes."

We asked Anna what she thought about the modern day "competitive spirit" and she replied "well yes, that's a hairy topic! Like my Dad always said, the only happy competitor is the one who is winning. I feel competitors moan far too much when they aren't chosen on one show day, forgetting that it is just that individual judge's opinion on that day and there is always another day."

Anna feels that the judging pool has got smaller "due to the young people being put off the whole idea because they have seen what has happened to other judges, as far as criticism. Through my role as an instructor at pony club, I am working on encouraging people to get more involved with showing and the A&P movement and have had success at doing that. I now have several members, who once upon a time, would never attend an A&P Show, who are now attending. I believe in the continuing, on-going seminars, workshops and practical training days for judges and for the competitors and, if we continue to do this, surely it will be for the betterment of showing in NZ.

Showing in the good old days was definitely friendlier and more fun. I am currently a Grade 1 Tutor Judge with International status, something that I have worked hard to achieve. My father, Anzac, has also dedicated many years of his own personal time, in setting up the Forbidden Substance testing for the RAS, which we now know as the FSJC for New Zealand and has done a great job. I feel, all the years involved with horses of all disciplines and stewarding for many years at top level, has given me the grounding I require to be a fair, honest and professional judge."

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