

FORMAL LADIES TURNOUT AND THE STORY OF **DIANA RAINEY**



Diana Rainey

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Formal turnout, equestrienne turnout - what is the mystical equation it takes to win this event? As a junior adult rider through to my late 20s, I enjoyed the precision required and competing in formal turnouts and am now called upon to advise competitors and judge these classes, having a thorough understanding of what is required.

Unfortunately in Australia, especially NSW, these classes have all but disappeared from our general agricultural show programmes and the amount of competitors at Royal Show level appears to be dwindling with lack of competitors possibly due to the amount of time, money and preparation required to compete on a level playing field. Winning the legendary Garryowen Trophy, held annually at the Royal Melbourne Show, is a dream held by many lady riders in Australia.

The requirements for these classes are precise and exacting without room for interpretation and many, understandably, do not attempt turnout due to the precision involved. There are clear and succinct guidelines widely available, regarding the required criteria for costume and saddlery, via various showing bodies and judging rules - for example the NZ Royal Agricultural Society Judges/Competitor's Rule Book/Guidelines - plus of course, if you ask, most people who have won these classes are only too happy to pass on their experience and knowledge.

It doesn't matter if you have mortgaged yourself to the hilt, ensuring your saddlery and costume is the very finest money can buy, people tend to tie themselves in utter knots regarding their clothing and saddlery but completely forget the fact that they must also ensure their horse is in peak condition and performing to his utmost and that they must also be able to ride the horse to maximise points in the other components of riding, manners and paces and conformation and soundness.

Make sure you actually use your saddlery, especially if you have a second saddle specific to the task, so that you and the horse are comfortable with it. It is also worthwhile riding in those non-stretch, heavy wool breeches and your top boots (especially if only just purchased) a few times. Nothing is worse than on the day of the event, finding you physically cannot sit in the saddle and are therefore unable to ride effectively.

Excellent articles have also previously been published, in regard to the minute detail required which may help attain every possible mark for your costume and saddlery, so it would be surplus to again repeat these. However, after judging costume and saddlery in the 2008 Diana Rainey Memorial, I would like to offer some assistance as to where precious marks are lost:

Saddlery: saddlery which does not fit (more points would be lost under me for an ill fitting turnout saddle as opposed to a saddle which may not be as correct, but actually fits the horse) plus brand new gear which is hard and unyielding, poorly dyed saddlery resulting in a two tone effect, bridle and saddle not matching, dirty gear, dirty bits and stirrup irons, rubber treads in irons, reins on back to front, those great big knee rolls currently in vogue on dressage saddles, missing buckle guards, girths which are not Fitzwilliam, girths on back to front and not secured on the same hole either side and rubber girths – this will all lose you marks.

Costume: dirty clothing and dirty, unpolished boots, messy hair plus clothes which are too big or too small, non traditional leather top boots, zips in the rear of boots, synthetic boots, floppy boots, spur straps minus stitching, incorrect spurs, spurs not sitting on ankle seem of boot, no garter strap, garter straps minus stitching, leather inner of garter strap not pale leather to match breeches, garter straps not sitting between second and third button on breeches, garter strap buckle not sitting parallel to spur strap buckle, tongue of both garter and spur strap should be pointing outward of boot, no buttons on breeches, incorrectly tied stocks, stock pin not attached through shirt, no safety pins securing ends of stock to shirt, makeup on stock, no studs to secure the stock, brass buttons on vest, velvet on collars and cuffs, cuff buttons fixed (any clothing which is not SPECIFIC to the event), cane incorrect sizing and leather not matching the tack – all this will also lose you marks.

The Story of the Diana Rainey Memorial - wanting to hear the story of Diana Rainey, the lady of whom this prestigious memorial is

held in honour of, I spoke with Diana's daughters, Anna Borthwick and Fiona Rainey.

Where did your mother grow up and how early and what type of association did she have with horses?

"Mum grew up on a farm near Darfield about 40 minutes west of Christchurch. She was probably riding ponies by the age of 4 or 5. At age 10, she won the Elizabeth Milliar Unity Class at Christchurch Show. Mum was one of the people whom I admire within the horse world; her parents were not "horsey" people although they were farmers, her father being a well-known stud sheep breeder. She grew up through the general circles of Pony Club and A&P Shows.

She commenced showing then progressed to jumping and was in the NZ Pony Club Championship team one year but her main love was the show ring. She always seemed to have a nice horse around her and may have inherited her gift of being a good judge of stock from her father. She had the incredible ability to pick a good horse through a woolly coat or if it was in poor condition. This is something she drilled into us for which we are very grateful.

She won many champion pony classes with SUNNY MAC, her 14.2hh pony and many champion hacks with her lovely mare, CINDY MARIA."

Did she have any particular favourite horses?

"Mum had a pony named GREYBOY when she was younger. Fiona and I learned to ride on him in his twilight years of retirement but I think one of her favourites may have been our pony, BLACK CHERRY."

When did you and Fiona commence riding?

"I think I was around 4 and there are photos of me leading Fiona around on my pony when she was possibly 3. Mum was instrumental in teaching us to ride but when we were older and commenced jumping, we took lessons with more experienced national riders/coaches."

Tell me about BLACK CHERRY?

"Standing around 12.2hh, she was bred by the Johnson Family of Mt Torlesse by ALLADIN'S LAST who left many lovely ponies in the Canterbury region. She was never an easy pony for us, her manners unfortunately let us down at times but she was stunning being jet black with two rear white socks. She took many championships and supremes at A&P Shows around the South Island.

Fiona won the Elizabeth Milliar Cup and the Branston Unity Cup at Christchurch Show on BLACK CHERRY, Mum was incredibly proud of this and we feel this success was largely due to Mum's amazing plaiting skills and exacting attention to detail."

Tell me a little more about your Mum?

"Mum was an excellent seamstress, making the odd riding jacket

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Diana Rainey's two daughters - left: Fiona Rainey and right: Anna Borthwick with 2005 winner Megan Robinson and COINTREAU.



Yvonne Watson – UPTOWN GIRL – Winner of the Diana Rainey Memorial 2006.

when we were young, covering velvet riding caps and making pretty brow bands. Being very thorough, Mum excelled in any fiddly skills requiring patience and she could plait a pony beautifully.

Whilst Mum adored horses, she loved all animals be it a cat, dog or sheep and they all loved her in return. She had a wonderful, nurturing ability and could bring an almost dead lamb back to life.

She was one of those salt of the earth A&P show people, being brought up in the country way of life and with her parents showing their stud sheep.

I remember we used to arrive at the show with the ponies in the rear of the float and the pet lamb/sheep at the front which would make show day quite hectic! We would have to jump off the pony and race down to the sheep section, showing our pet sheep in our riding gear and then race back onto the pony and into our classes!"

How do you think your Mum would feel about such an event being named in her memory? Do you think she would enjoy the formality and precision of the event?

"I think she would be very proud to have this event in her name but wouldn't understand all the fuss about her! She was a somewhat shy person when it came to things like that, however it is a great honour for us as her children and I would love one of our close friends to win it. A very good friend of ours, Jane Gerard was placed second in the event which was made even more special as she was wearing Mum's riding jacket.

We like the way the class runs and in particular, that points are awarded for conformation and soundness of the horse. We were once asked if we would prefer if this element were removed. Our answer was no, as Mum loved and had a great eye for a nice horse, so it was important that this section remains part of the event."

What do you think your mother would think of the show ring today, especially the dress and types of riders?

"I'm not sure if Mum would be into all the "bling" that is available these days and especially the expense in regards to this. We always had very basic gear, lovely bridles but very plain and the saddle we used on BLACK CHERRY was a horrible, straight cut affair, which used to be Mum's. We always had lovely riding jackets though. Mum was never a fan of those gold chain link brow bands, however, I have always liked them and use them on my racehorses. She is probably telling me off up there!

She was really keen on being well turned out and this has stayed with us and no matter if we are jumping, hunting or racing, those white socks are always washed!"

Ringmaster of the Royal New Zealand Show and the New Zealand RAS Judge's Coordinator, Mrs Nicky Hutchinson was instrumental in implementing the Diana Rainey Memorial Turnout event for the Canterbury A&P Association and also a close friend of Diana's. I interviewed Nicky in regard to this:

What was your relationship to Diana Rainey?

"Danny's" family were good friends of my family. Danny and I were often at shows together and often competing against each other.

What was a favourite memory of yours regarding Diana?

Diana had a wonderful sense of humour and was very competitive which often lightened the more serious side of showing. Her turnout of both herself and mount was always correct and immaculate. It would be fair to say nearly anyone you ask will remember her for this.

How and when did the "Diana Rainey" event come to being at Christchurch show?

I was privileged to be judging the Sue Yearbury Memorial event at the Royal Easter Show in Auckland. I loved the concept of the equestrienne turnout and felt it would be an ideal event to hold at the Canterbury A&P Show. It was put to the committee, who along with Diana's family and a few close friends saw it as a fitting memorial to Diana who had always set such a high standard of presentation and horsemanship at the shows. The Committee accepted it as a fitting memorial to Diana. Danny was also a long time friend and co-competitor of many on the committee.

When was it first held, were there many entrants?

The first Diana Rainey Memorial Turnout Event was held in 1999 and there were 25 entrants. As you can imagine, it was an extremely emotional occasion with Diana's husband, Neil, and daughters Fiona, Anna and Robyn at the presentation of the inaugural trophy. The winner of the first event was Melanie Townley-Knight riding the Bailey family's SEATTLE. I was delighted with the event and how it ran. There wasn't a dry eye in the house for such a wonderful horsewoman and lady. The judges for this event were Shona Duncan, Kevin Cholmondeley-Smith, Greg Smith and Tiny White.

What are your thoughts when you watch this event today?

I do feel very proud of the standard that is set each year in honour of Diana. It is always soul stirring to see the ladies in their exquisite attire parading before being judged and always an emotional occasion for many.

Is it difficult to find judges who have the correct knowledge pertaining to costume and saddlery for this event?

This is one of the most important factors when choosing our judges. We have had no problem to date locating qualified judges, as we are very organised in securing judges who have the correct knowledge and understanding of these areas.

What do you imagine Diana would think of the event?

Diana would be delighted with the concept as it is the continuation of the unity classes held at the Canterbury A&P Show starting with the Elizabeth Milllear Unity Cup for Riders 11 years and under, followed by the Branston Cup, Junior NYDFA, Intermediate NYDFA and Senior NYDFA for Riders 17 years and under 21 Years. Diana herself had taken out the first prize in these events.

In your opinion, what is required to win this class?

Whilst the importance to detail of the correctness of formal turnout of rider and gear is of utmost importance, in my mind the complete overall picture of a well conformed, sound horse with elegant paces, excellent manners and a polished, professional workout by horse and rider is required to win this class.