

Interview with Lynne Hutchinson

South Glos Reporter
Bristol Evening Post

Interviewer: Melvin H. Cox – SportsQuest International

Date: May 2, 2003

Event: Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials

Log Reference: Badminton 2003 – Tape 1

Time Code:

00:39:13:25

Lynne Hutchinson:

My name is Lynne Hutchinson, and I work for the Bristol Evening Post a regional newspaper in the South of England.

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Melvin Cox:

And you've been covering the Badminton Horse Trials for many, many years?

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Lynne Hutchinson:

I think that the first time I covered the trials was in 1979, so yes you can say that's a very long time.

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Melvin Cox:

So, obviously, you've seen a lot of changes both in terms of the competition and in terms of how Badminton is covered by members of the media. What have been the most dramatic changes in each of those areas?

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Lynne Hutchinson:

I would say, as far as the media is concerned the amount of space that we've got here and the new technology that is now provided for us. When I first came here, we were on little wooden benches and you brought, well they did provide typewriters, but you could bring your own if you wanted to. And as far as I was concerned I had to get a messenger to drive all the out from the center of Bristol, probably 18 miles, to pick up my copy and take it back – all the way to Bristol where it would be input by hand. So, that's probably the biggest change I would say.

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Melvin Cox:

And in terms of the competition itself, is it more complex to understand or ...?

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Lynne Hutchinson:

I wouldn't say it was any more complex, the competition still runs in the same format. Ok, there have been changes in certain things, the Dressage scoring has changed, but for all intents and purposes the competition is the same as it always has been. The riders (are) more professional, far more professional and since sponsorship came in then you notice that they – its not like getting the horse out of the fields and hopping on and jumping over big fences.

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Melvin Cox:

Exactly!

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Lynne Hutchinson:

It's much more professional!

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Melvin Cox:

Now has that made your job as a journalist more challenging?

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Lynne Hutchinson:

I wouldn't say so, I wouldn't say so, at the end of the day its still brave riders riding over big fences at speed, (slight pause) and its still an exciting sport, so

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Melvin Cox:

Exactly!

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Lynne Hutchinson:

And the crowds are still the same...

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Melvin Cox:

What other events do you cover on an annual basis? What are the other fixtures that you would cover for you paper?

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Lynne Hutchinson:

The main one would be the British Open Horse Trials Championships at Gatcombe Park, home of the Princess Royal. My paper doesn't have the luxury of having a full time equestrian

writer, unlike the nationals or the equestrian magazines. I am actually a news reporter, so I have to fit in the equestrian writing around my news reporting duties, and even when I am here, if something big happens news wise, I would still have to cover it and fit in the horses when I could.

00:42:07:23

Melvin Cox:

Those of us in the States are sort of, I guess, operating in the backwoods of this sport. If there was something that our viewers in the United States and in Canada should understand about the challenges of covering a Badminton Horse Trials, or a Gatcombe, what would that be?

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Lynne Hutchinson:

Oh! From a reporter's point of view, um, its keeping up with the, at this level, the number of horses that are taking part. If you're trying to interview one rider who's just done his or her Dressage test, and another good rider has just come into the arena, you're trying to watch them and interview somebody else at the same time. So, that is, that is tricky. We get by, thankfully, with the sort of closed circuit coverage and we now have the ability to rerun a Dressage test if we want to on the screen. So we can watch something that we might have missed before.

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Melvin Cox:

Excellent!

Well, thank you very much for taking a few minutes out of your, I know, a very very busy day...

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Lynne Hutchinson:

It's my pleasure

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Melvin Cox:

... to speak with us. This has been a very good overview of what you do, because I think a lot of times we take the media for granted, and give us a little bit of an edge in understanding exactly the challenges that are involved.

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Lynne Hutchinson:

That's my pleasure

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Melvin Cox:

Thank you very much!

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