

# BELGIAN HORSES IN HARNESS

The Bundoran Draft Horse Driving School

by

Clint Buck



**F**our tons of heavy Belgian horses in harness in front of you - the lines are in your hands! You are sitting eight feet off the ground in the driver's seat of a wagonette break. The wagon is full of happy fellow-students all taking their turn at the driving lines and watching you do it right. *Stressful*, you think? Maybe, but only if you let things get out of hand! The professional instructor sitting next to you is watching carefully to see that no mishaps arise. The Bundoran Belgian horse crew emphasizes safety above all else.

The Bundoran Belgian Draft Horse Driving School is located in southwestern Albemarle County, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. On any soft foggy morning, the carriage house at Bundoran awaits your pleasure. The horse teams live in the paddocks adjacent to this working barn where grooming and hoof care are part of the daily routine. The carriages rest inside.

The Bundoran Farm's elegant coaching vehicles are descended from the Scott ancestors and include

*Clarence Brougham*, which the Scotts purchased new around 1870. It was made by Flandreau and Company of New York City and is an extremely formal vehicle for a gentleman and his family. It seats four inside, with room for one more next to the coachman. Elizabeth Strother Scott's graceful 1910 *Brewster Victoria*, is as elegant a lady's vehicle as there is. Before her death in 1926, she drove this vehicle regularly. After her death it was bequeathed to her daughter, Mrs. John H Boccock, then given by her children to their cousin, Mr. William T. Reed III, who passed it on to the Scotts of Bundoran Farm. It seats two under the

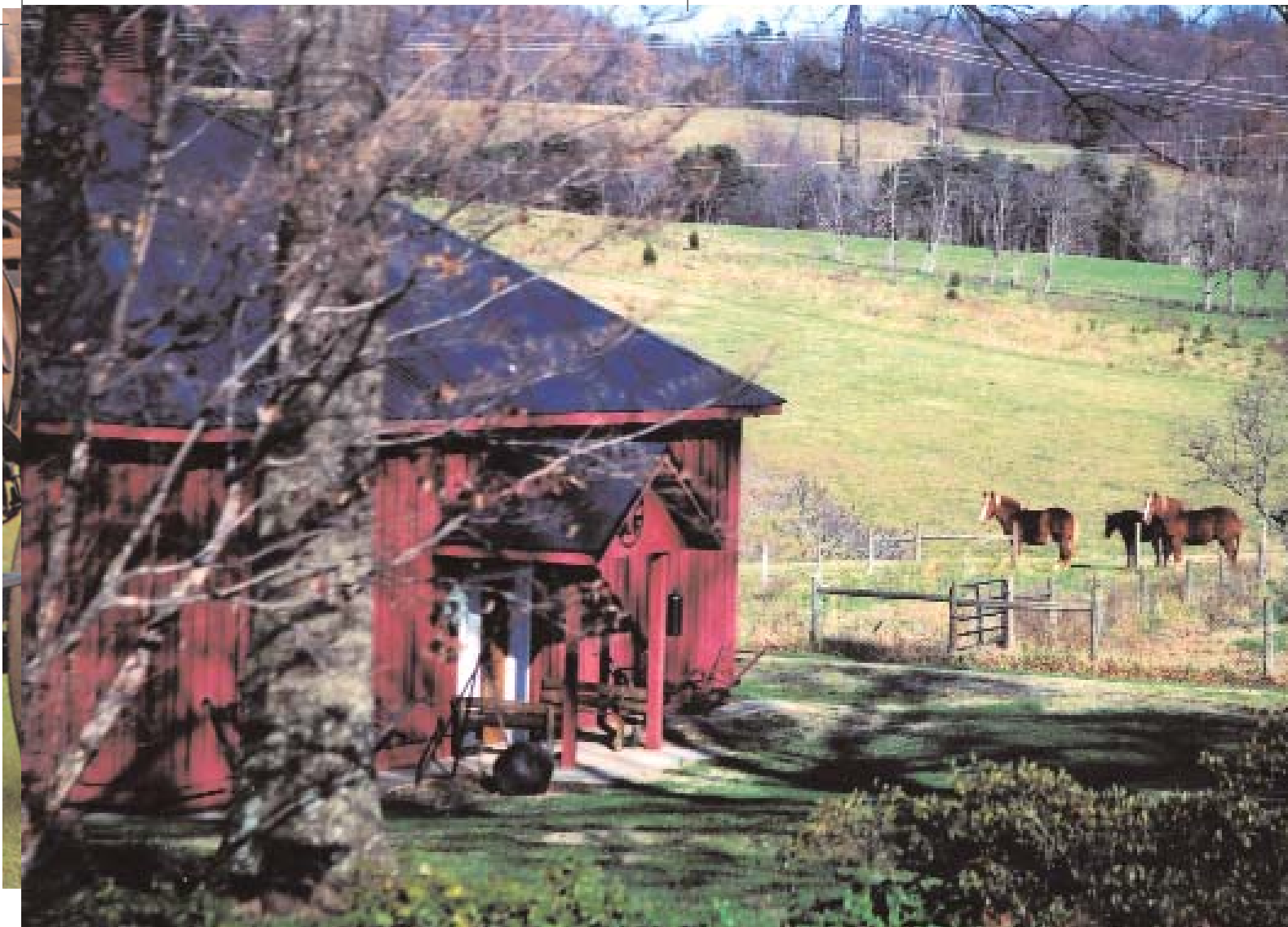




*Clarence Brougham*, purchased by the Scotts around 1870, and made by Flandreau and Company of New York City.

collapsible hood. Mrs. John H. Boccock also owned a c.1920 Rockaway omnibus, which is used as a semi-formal carriage. Fully restored with a dark blue interior, its vertically sliding windows make it ideal for variable weather. It can be pulled either by a single horse or a pair, and it seats four inside.

The owner, Fred Scott, and his professional instructors are not only trying to show the students how to control a team of powerful beasts, but are also making sure the students are having fun and enjoying a great experience. Every class is filled with students from different backgrounds and with different interests and goals. Safety is a major issue and is what the school focuses on first. Next come the basics, which are universal whether one is driving in Bundoran or anywhere else in the world. The things that will keep a driver out of trouble



The Carriage House at Bundoran Farm.

The Kentucky breaking cart, which carries a driver plus one, is used mostly for training, but is perfectly appropriate as a light sporting cart, as well.





**Four up to the Bowman Hitch Wagon.**

**Photo by Don Long**

developing an understanding of the risk in any driving style and with any type of horse. Why draft horses in Bundoran? Because they are so *BIG* that their size makes any sensible person pay attention, and because they are so quiet that their disposition reduces the risks for novice drivers.

Aside from instructing new drivers, professional teamsters often return for recurrent training. These professional teamsters frequently operate in resorts such as Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort and Spa near Pittsburgh, and the Mountain Lake Hotel in Virginia. Over a hundred horsemen - and a few intrepid vacationers - have attended, and all enjoyed learning how to drive the draft teams at Bundoran Farm.

Ben, Abe, Tom, and Bob are the four "big guys," and while they are

incredibly gentle and extremely powerful.

"They really seem to like people, and I truly believe that they enjoy the school," says Scott. "Every morning, the horses are waiting at the fence for the students, seeming to ask, 'What do we get to do today, folks?' when they could just as easily be grazing on the far end of the pasture a half mile away." The team formed by these four horses has represented such business as A. Smith Bowman Distillery, Faulconer Hardware in Orange, and other distinguished businesses in public displays and exhibitions. Recently, to the roaring approval of 700 professional horse people, they were exhibited at Morven Park at the annual conference of instructors who teach disabled riders and drivers all around the United States.

Texas, and Louisiana. Scott comments, "I keep thinking that everyone who wants to learn this skill must have already done so, but the students and vacationers keep coming!"

For additional information, see [www.bundoranfarm.com/team.html](http://www.bundoranfarm.com/team.html) or contact Fred W. Scott, Jr. at [fscott@bundoranfarm.com](mailto:fscott@bundoranfarm.com). (434) 295-4188.

Students have come from all



Three Bowman Belgians in a parade hitch driven by owner Fred W. Scott, Jr., pulling the Charlottesville Volunteer Fire Company's 1904 steam pumper.

Photo by Kirstin L. Curtis

