

# Pair Driving 104

by Hardy Zantke

## More on Rein Adjustment

I hope you had time to read and think through Pair Driving 103 on Pair Rein Adjustment. Now let me add one more item as that is often misunderstood, even by VERY experienced pair drivers.

Some people think that by shortening or lengthening just one of the reins at the bit, they can influence only one horse and not the other. That's wrong. Think about it!

If you shorten a rein on one horse, it ALWAYS has the same effect as lengthening the rein on the other horse, regardless WHERE you do the change. If one is shorter it also means the other is longer, no matter if you shortened it at the coupling rein buckle, or at the bit. Just the same as when a tailor would shorten one of my pants legs by an inch. Then one would look shorter and the other would look longer, and it doesn't matter, if he took out the inch at the bottom, or at the knee, and unless I would wear my pants always at the very same spot around my waist, you couldn't tell if one pants leg would have been shortened or the other would have been lengthened.

The same is the case with our pair reins, since the ends which we hold in our hands are flexible, and are not riveted to the dash board. So, since shortening one ALWAYS has the same effect as lengthening the other, that means, you can NEVER just influence ONE horse by shortening or lengthening the reins at the bit or at the coupling rein buckle, you ALWAYS influence BOTH horses! And that is the reason we change rein length ONLY at the coupling rein buckle, and not at the bit, as to most of us it is more clear that we influence BOTH when we change at the coupling rein buckle, and we easily forget this principle when we start changing rein length at the bit. And THAT is the



Joan Fernandez driving her pair.

reason that you should NOT lengthen or shorten just ONE rein, but always do it on BOTH reins, as when one horse is crooked, and you try to change that by changing just one rein on him, you are now punishing the other horse by also pulling his bit crooked into his mouth.

So if one horse travels crooked, you CANNOT correct that by rein adjustments - provided your reins were not crooked to start out with. You can only correct that by working on getting the crooked horse straight with other means - with whip aids, with switching him, under saddle, driving him single, working him in longlines, etc, plus working the figure eights as described in Pair Driving 102.

I can hope that I could explain this properly this time, as quite often I have failed when I tried to explain it to some very experienced pair drivers, who wouldn't believe me and are still changing rein lengths at the bit and are still thinking that with doing so they can influence only one horse and not the other. The fault when I couldn't convince them, always was not in the above truth, but always only in my failure to explain it properly.

Happy Pair Driving!