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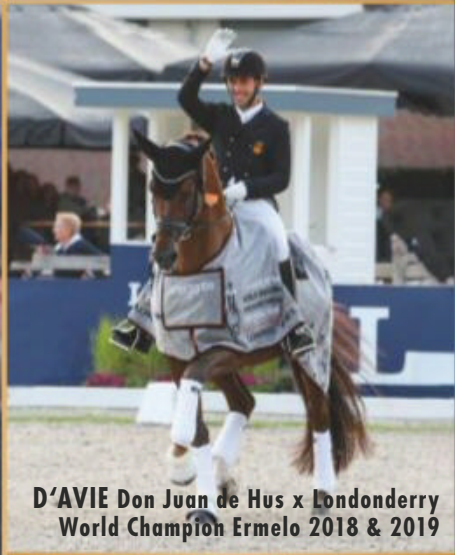
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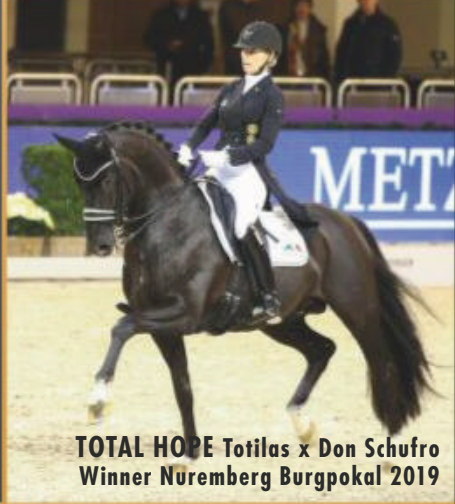
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EVENTING IS BACK!

'I FREELY ADMIT THAT THE BEST OF MY FUN
I OWE IT TO HORSE AND HOUND' - *Whyte Melville*

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'I FREELY ADMIT THAT THE BEST OF MY FUN I OWE IT TO HORSE AND HOUND' - *Whyte Melville*

HORSE & HOUND

Cabin fever



LAST year we were concerned Cheltenham could be in doubt as the racing industry went into lockdown to contain the equine

flu outbreak. This year the concerns are focused around whether a human virus could have that sort of impact instead. I've stopped reading on the subject because it's hard to maintain perspective — I've done my panic buying, we are sorted for carrots and ice cream — but a headline jumped out at me on the news stand this morning suggesting the over-60s of Gloucestershire should avoid large gatherings over coronavirus fears. My father just about fits this category and is notoriously difficult to advise to do — or not do — anything.

At the time of going to press, Cheltenham Racecourse is insisting it is on for the festival, and I do hope the same is true as you are reading.

Eventing did its damndest to kick off over the weekend, but not quite with the gusto we'd hoped for — only Isleham (report, p82) didn't succumb to the weather. We're well used to this time of the year bringing disappointment with events abandoned due to snow or rain, but it is hard to imagine how much more water the ground can take. And as Darren Edwards says in his column this week (comment, p110) the impact goes far beyond the jockeys — with owners and trainers left thwarted and venues at a loss.

For everyone climbing the walls, here's hoping for some dry weather and sunny spells — I hear coronavirus doesn't like those. Wishing you good health and (finally) good riding, too.

Sarah Jenkins
Editor-in-Chief

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COVER A foal at Mount St John Stud. Credit: Jon Stroud



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Get more
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p107

LOVE HORSES?

WE KNOW HOW YOU FEEL...



How changing our behaviour could improve horses' lives

The National Equine Forum covered how people's minds can be changed

BY ELEANOR JONES

CHANGING human behaviour could be key to improving welfare — and potentially averting an equine health crisis.

Experts were to discuss the topic at the National Equine Forum (NEF) today (5 March).

NEF vice-chair Pat Harris told *H&H* information is no more than facts if not used.

"Often one of the biggest challenges in applying new knowledge is providing it in a way the user can not only understand implementation is important, and why," she said. "Changing owner, rider, feeder behaviour is often key, which is why this year's NEF has chosen to concentrate on this critical issue."

Zac Baynham-Herd, of the government's Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), said people do not make decisions just based on information and intentions; environment and context have an effect. He said either an automatic system is used, for example by an experienced rider, or a slow reflective system, used by novices who have to think about every movement. He said these insights can promote positive change.

If riders' peers, for example fellow liveryies, are committed to a certain behaviour such as vaccinating, this will make them more likely to follow suit.

But in trying to change, the BIT considers whether the desired behaviour is easy, attractive, social and timely — the EAST idea.

"We think about reducing the effort it takes to do something, by increasing the effort it takes to do the thing we don't want," Dr Baynham-Herd said, adding that this can be as simple as putting biscuits in a hard-to-reach place.

"The attractive bit is in terms of attracting attention, and making the behaviour more attractive," he said, explaining that the desired behaviour should fit



Different owners may be affected in different ways by the same message.
Library image

with people's sense of identity.

The social aspect is the influence of other people — the more people vaccinate, the more people are likely to. And while highlighting the fact not enough people do may seem a good warning, it might also make those who do not vaccinate feel secure in that, as many others also do not, so the right message is key.

In terms of being timely, it has been found that when people are changing one thing, such as a new job or yard, they are more likely to change something else. The right messenger is also important, and the challenges are significant.

"We tell ourselves to do things and don't, so try telling others!" Dr Baynham-Herd said. "It has to go beyond providing information and telling people to do things."

'Will changing human behaviour avert the potential welfare crisis?'

DAVE RENDLE

Andrew and Abigail Turnbull, of Richmond Equestrian Centre in North Yorkshire, have been helping raise awareness and hopefully changing behaviour after their venue was closed by a strangles outbreak last summer.

"We've tried to turn a very negative situation around, give it

a positive tilt and educate," Mrs Turnbull said. "We told everyone straight away and I was surprised how many professionals said I should have kept quiet and stayed open. It's not worth thinking about what would have happened if we'd covered it up."

Mrs Turnbull said the centre opened eight weeks later, thanks to strict biosecurity, hard work and co-operative liveryies. She hopes her experience will help change attitudes.

"The seven weeks was hell, but it could have been seven months," she said. "Our vet said he'd never seen a yard take it so seriously but we have a duty of care."

"It was awful but we have a different view now; we got more out of it than it did out of us."

Sarah Freeman of the

the messages we put out are right," Prof Freeman said, adding that information given can depend on what stage a horse owner is at in the decision-making process.

She said it can be very difficult to change beliefs people have held for years, such as that it is better to walk a colicking horse rather than let it roll.

"If you target individuals but others at the yard, or the yard owner, believe differently, nothing will change," she said, adding that they are looking at different ways of affecting what happens on yards, and ensuring the campaign and vets give the same messages.

Feedback from owners has shaped how messages are sent, and how advice is worded.

"The challenge is trying to get to different people," Prof Freeman said. "All [information gathered] goes into planning our campaign."

David Rendle, an equine internal medicine specialist, was to speak about the impact of behaviour change on worming. He said the relationship between horses and their parasites is "at risk of turning full circle" as treatments become less effective; years of indiscriminate wormer use has led to resistant parasites.

"Will changing behaviour avert the equine welfare crisis that will inevitably ensue if [wormers] are rendered useless?" he asked. "We are about to find out."

Centres urged to take action on business rates

Now is the time to act, equestrian centres are advised, as the government has committed to reviewing the system

EQUESTRIAN businesses are urged to take the chance to act on business rates, as the government is to review the system.

The British Horse Society (BHS) is asking centres to contact their MPs, as the more people highlight the problems, the more likely the situation will change.

H&H has reported on the “disproportionate” rise in rateable values, which determine the amount paid, in 2017, and the BHS has long been campaigning.

The government is to review rates, while an increase in relief, from a third to 50%, is proposed for shops and pubs with a rateable value of less than £51,000, to boost high streets.

The BHS is calling for this relief also to apply to small equestrian businesses.

“There’s a high number of centres in this bracket so this should apply to them too, it would be a big saving,” BHS chief operating officer Sarah Phillips told *H&H*.

By ELEANOR JONES

The BHS has written to all MPs in England and Wales — the issue is devolved in Scotland — and is encouraging them to visit centres in their constituencies and raise the subject in parliament.

Ms Phillips said feedback has been positive, and she is encouraging all centres to write. The BHS has a template letter on its website, to which businesses can add their own personal problems and invite MPs to visit.

“The hike in rates is very often the difference between staying open and closing,” she said. “The message that needs to go to MPs is the impact this has. We assume announcements will be made in the 11 March budget so it’s important to act now.

“We have a new government that appears receptive; this could be a chance to change things for the better. It doesn’t take much to get the ball rolling, but if people

don’t say anything because they think no one will listen, then no one can listen.”

Lucy Thomson, of Lavant Equestrian in Chichester, told *H&H* the issue is “ludicrous”.

“My riding school is successful because I have a business background, but the main problem is riding schools don’t make a lot of profit, however well they’re run,” she said. “Business rates don’t reflect the margins.”

FINANCIAL BURDENS

MRS THOMSON said the rates are among the many financial burdens the sector has to face.

“This winter’s a good example,” she said. “You probably need an indoor school to survive, which we have, but only if you can afford to put one up, and get the planning permission, and pay the business rates on it. There are so many things weighted against riding schools, yet we meet all the government directives about getting outside, being active, improving mental health. If they want people to do these things, why don’t they help? I’m not talking about grants or anything, just to address the sector.

“Riding schools are closing as people can’t afford to run them.”

A Treasury spokesman told *H&H*: “Since 2016 we’ve cut business rates, with reforms that will reduce their cost by £13bn over five years. We’ll be conducting a fundamental review of the rates, and will release further details in due course.

“The retail discount is to support high streets and targeted at small retail properties including shops, cafes and pubs.”



Riding schools have been hit hard by rates increases

Closer collaboration for horse sports

THE British Equestrian Federation (BEF) believes closer collaboration with the Olympic disciplines will benefit “all who enjoy equestrian sport”.

The BEF, British Dressage, British Eventing and British Showjumping are to form a joint working group to “explore the potential for closer collaboration across equestrian sport”.

The announcement comes after discussions between BEF interim chair Malcolm Wharton, interim CEO Iain Graham, and the Olympic disciplines’ boards.

The working party will “review all aspects of the operation”, including shared services, and develop a “joint approach to deliver the strategic objectives of each organisation”.

Mr Wharton said: “We have discussed the principle of working more closely together with the boards and I am very encouraged by the initial response. It is early days and undoubtedly it will take some time to develop and test ideas, but I am confident we can find new ways of collaborating that will ultimately benefit all who enjoy equestrian sports.” **EJ**

HORSES IN THE NEWS



UN DE SCEAUX

The Willie Mullins-trained Group One winner, whose victories included the Arkle, Tingle Creek and Ryanair Chase has retired aged 12 owing to a suspensory injury. Owned by Edward O’Connell, he won 23 of his 34 starts.



DARGUN

The Dargun Syndicate’s 12-year-old, campaigned up to CCI5* by Emily King, finished second at his first event with new rider Piggy March (née French) in an open novice section at Isleham on 1 March.



BLUE HORS ZACK

The 16-year-old stallion and stalwart of Denmark’s senior dressage teams will focus on competition, not breeding, in 2020. This comes as Danish rider Daniel Bachmann Andersen aims for selection for Tokyo.

IN BRIEF

RIDER AND HORSE DIE IN EVENT FALL

CANADIAN rider Katharine Morel and her eight-year-old thoroughbred mare Kerry On were fatally injured in a cross-country fall in the USA.

The pair were competing in an intermediate class at Rocking Horse Stables Winter III horse trials, Florida, on Saturday (29 February) when they had a rotational fall at fence eight.

Ms Morel died in hospital.

The horse sustained fatal injuries and died shortly after the fall.

The United States Eventing Association, Rocking Horse Stables organising committee, and competition officials have sent their deepest condolences and sympathies to her family and friends.

DONATIONS POUR IN FOR RORY'S APPEAL

AN APPEAL to fund rehabilitation costs for showman Rory Gilson stood at £12,000 — more than double its original target — days after its launch.

Rory is battling the effects of a stroke as well as brain cancer, and after his plight featured on horseandhound.co.uk last week, donations have poured in.

"Rory and I have been overwhelmed by the enormous support," said his wife Vanessa, who is now his full-time carer.

"It has been a real struggle for us, but now we can get him the private physio he desperately needs. People's kindness has changed our lives."

● Visit: justgiving.com/crowdfunding/rorygilson

ASSAULT CHARGE FOR ALLEGED SAB

AN alleged hunt saboteur has been charged with causing actual bodily harm.

Kerry Seery, of Victoria Road, Acocks Green, was arrested in Oxhill, Warks, on 22 February, during a meet of the Warwickshire Hunt.

Warwickshire Police said the 33-year-old has been charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm. She is due to appear at Warwickshire Magistrates' Court on 27 March.

Calls for licensing after 'sanctuary' prosecution

A rescue centre welfare case has highlighted the lack of regulation in this area

By ELEANOR JONES

THE removal of 26 horses on welfare grounds from a "sanctuary" illustrates the need for licensing of such ventures — and for the public to be aware where their money is going.

One of the animals from North Devon Equine Rescue had to be put down, another had its eye removed as Ann Sim, 36, who ran the sanctuary, had failed to seek vet treatment and ignored advice.

Sim pleaded guilty to four Animal Welfare Act offences on 11 February. She was banned from keeping equines for 10 years and given a suspended prison term.

She said she had struggled to cope after a relationship breakdown, and been too proud to ask for help as she struggled to work during her pregnancy.

But World Horse Welfare said



Tiggy, who was rescued from the Devon sanctuary, had to have an eye removed

majority of cases, people set up with the best intentions; some just don't have the skills they need."

Mr Tyler said inspections would ensure animals' needs were met and there were plans for their future; whether rehabilitation and rehoming, or kept permanently.

"Some keep them until the end of their lives, and do it extremely well," he said. "But very often, people can't say no when they're

H&H members' welfare standards are checked. This is not "totally foolproof", but members must sign up to a code of conduct, and it is a "seal of approval".

NEWC has also run, and plans to run more, events at which charities can share best practice and governance advice, as bad governance can affect welfare, whereas good management makes enterprises sustainable and frees staff up to care for horses better.

Ms Gordon believes licensing would benefit horses and people.

"It would give the public confidence that their money is going to the right places," she said, adding that while registered charity status can provide security on the financial side, "licensing would cover the care".

Mr Tyler added: "We strongly believe licensing should not penalise dedicated organisations that strive to offer vulnerable horses a better future, but should give them clear guidance on what they need to do to ensure they are protecting their welfare."

"But when welfare is compromised, it would allow this to be established more easily and action to be taken to help prevent a repetition of this recent case and the suffering the horses endured."

A Defra spokesman told H&H: "We have been working closely with World Horse Welfare about the possibility of introducing welfare regulations for rescue and rehoming centres. Any future proposals would be subject to public consultation."

'In most cases, people set up with the best intentions'

TONY TYLER, WORLD HORSE WELFARE

the situation was a "cautionary tale", demonstrating that rescue centres are unregulated, with no guarantee of welfare standards, and that some organisations are not registered charities. Although this does not in itself mean they are untrustworthy, they are not subject to Charity Commission scrutiny and there is no guarantee money donated will help animals.

The charity believes the first issue could be solved by licensing.

Deputy chief executive Tony Tyler told H&H World Horse Welfare has seen numerous problems caused by well-meaning people who set up sanctuaries without the necessary knowledge, and sometimes finances.

"As a result, there have been welfare cases, and prosecutions, involving sanctuaries, which is very sad," he said. "In the vast

full so they reach a point where land and resources can't cope.

"It may not be until a member of the public raises concerns that the problem is recognised, by which time horses and ponies can already be suffering."

Mr Tyler added that the Devon sanctuary, like some other rescues, was not a registered charity.

"Some sanctuaries have been very successful in raising money from social media but people need to be very careful they know where that money's going," he said, adding that people can check for charitable status, and also ask to visit, to see how money is spent.

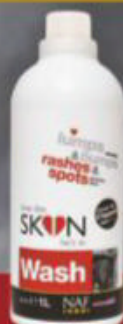
Another good sign is membership of the National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC).

NEWC vice-chairman Claire Gordon, also World Horse Welfare's chief field officer, told

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Minimum wage increases could hit yards hard

Horse world must unite to have a viable future

Debate at the first Equestrian Employers' Association conference focused on balancing the business books as well as complying with relevant legislation

EQUESTRIAN businesses have called for the industry to unite if it is to have a viable future.

The message came during debate at the Equestrian Employers Association (EEA) conference, at Stallion AI Services in Shropshire on 25 February.

The incoming rise in the minimum wage for all ages from 1 April, and the Conservative Party's election pledge to raise this to £10.50 within five years for over-25s, sparked discussion on how equestrian businesses can survive.

"I don't think any of us in this room want not to employ staff

By LUCY ELDER

correctly — I don't think anyone wants to avoid doing things the way they should," said Mike Hallows, of Hubbards Hall Livery. "[The horse world] is such a lifestyle and it's a huge amount of work to get the job done.

"How do we persuade government that what we do is important, and our clients that they are going to have to put their hands in their pockets a bit deeper?"

Rosie Lord, owner of Berkshire

Riding Centre, said that in her experience the way forward is to be open and honest with clients about where costs have previously been absorbed by the business, why that cannot happen forever and so why prices have to rise.

International eventer Francis Whittington said the time has come for a "united front" and perhaps a guide to the baseline costs of running a yard.

"It is a lifestyle, but you still have to be able to pay for everything," he said. "If one yard is undercutting, that devalues the whole industry."

The EEA was asked whether it would consider an agreement with the British Grooms Association (BGA) on working hours and pay, in a similar way to the racing industry.

RACING STRUCTURE

IN racing, the National Association of Racing Staff — a union, unlike the BGA — and the National Trainers Federation annually agree a minimum rates of pay structure. This covers everything from minimum rates, dependent on experience and role, weekly hours, overtime both on

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



Jockey **Richard Johnson** returned to the saddle with two wins at Musselburgh with

Made for You and Dubai Guest, 37 days after he broke his arm in a fall at Exeter.



Commentator **John Kyle** has been named as a finalist in the outstanding live event announcer

category of the One Voice Awards on 9 May for his work on the *H&H* Awards 2019.



Hascombe and Valiant Stud's **James Frank** was crowned employee of the year at the

2020 Godolphin Stud and Stable Awards. Zimbabwean James also won the stud staff award.

and away from the yard, expenses and more.

BGA chief executive Lucy Katan explained the way the grooms' and employers' associations in the wider industry work are different.

"Could we do something [similar] with the BGA and EEA? It wouldn't be the same because it is a very different relationship between the two organisations," she said. "What we could do is work to create some advice for employers."

She said they can look at creating a cost-per-day guidance on keeping different types of horses, which could serve as a guide for both employers and education for owners.

"We have to expect a rise of 44p every year [to the minimum wage]," said Ms Katan, adding the industry has been on the back foot when it comes to understanding staffing costs. "It is going to go up and up on all [age] levels."

"I feel that now we are catching up very quickly and unfortunately we are getting caught out. I've never heard of so many minimum wage investigations as now."

BREAKING THE RULES

THE financial and emotional stress an HMRC investigation brings were raised and employers were warned it is not a case of only "bad" bosses who can be affected.

Even those who are aiming to do the right thing morally, and to be legally compliant, were urged to ensure their records are meticulous as, should the inspectors come knocking, everything will be pulled apart.

The good news is that a lot of this is simple — riders were encouraged to make use of their yard diaries, which most still use; recording at the top of each day who is in, who is on holiday, start and finish times and lunchbreaks.

Members of staff should be asked to sign these at the end of each day or week to confirm it is an accurate record of what they did. While not a guarantee, the conference heard having solid records is a vital part of a defence.

Phil Conley, from HMRC's promoting compliance team, told the conference common causes of underpayment are not deliberate,

but are instead "error driven". For example, incorrectly applying the accommodation offset, the limit to the value of accommodation provided by an employer.

"It appears simple, but the devil is in the detail," he said.

The penalties are huge — arrears can be backdated as far as six years, to be paid back at the current minimum wage rates, as well as a 200% fine, plus £500 if the employer is named in a government press release. That is before his or her legal costs are taken into account.

"The costs of getting it wrong are harsh," Mr Conley said. "We encourage employers to carry out necessary checks and put it right."

Barrister Victoria von Wachter specialises in equestrian and employment law among other areas.

'The costs of getting it wrong are harsh'

HMRC'S PHIL CONLEY

"Doing what is morally right and what is acceptable to both sides of the equation sadly will not get you out of jail when it comes to legal compliance," she said, warning of the toll court appearances take on all sides.

"The reality is you must comply with the law and very often the law doesn't give the sense of family and comfort that working for a [good] employer will give to an employee."

She added the vocational nature of the industry means very often employees will hang around after their working day has officially finished, which is fine, but urged employers to be very clear about what times someone is and is not working.

"You are not breaking any law by not recording hours, but you would be foolish not to," she said, adding that employers are putting themselves at risk if it comes down solely to their word against their employees'.

"The more pieces of paper you have, the safer you are going to be," she added.

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Pictures by Sarah Farnsworth, Bob Langrish, Alan Crowhurst and David Davies



Jockey **Jack Andrews** secured his 100th pointing win at Horseheath on Fumet

D'Oudairies on 29 February. Jack had his first win at the venue five years ago. **Report, p108**



The Road Club's Bill Vine trophy was awarded to **Bob Alexander** at the club's annual meeting on 22

February. Bob's support of carriage driving events "epitomises" what the trophy represents.

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HORSES

IN THE NEWS



GLOCK'S ROMANOV

The medal-winning dressage stallion has died aged 20. He had success under Denmark's Sune Hansen and Dutch riders Edward Gal and Hans Peter Minderhoud, winning European team silver with the latter in 2013.



DOUBLE TRIGGER

The triple Goodwood and Doncaster Cup victor, who also won the Ascot Gold Cup and was formerly trained by Mark Johnston, has died, aged 29. Bought for 7,200 Irish punts (£7,966) in 1992, he won more than £550,000.



BRIAR

The 29-year-old has been included in the Gothenburg Horse Show hall of fame. He went to five Europeans, winning three bronze medals, four World Championships and three Olympics, with Sweden's Jan Brink.

OBITUARIES



Horses were Douglas Harrison's passion

DOUGLAS HARRISON

A NATURAL horseman and much-loved member of the equine community, Mr Harrison died on 19 February after defying terminal cancer for eight years.

Born in Dundee, he trained with Robert Hall at Fulmer and then the Micklem family in Cornwall. He rode in point-to-points, hunted and evented but developed a passion for showjumping, in which he competed at the top level.

Mr Harrison set up North Brook End Stud, Cambridgeshire, with his wife Sarah Backhouse 21 years ago. They owned and bred quality sports horses including the stallion Temple Claudius, who was campaigned at international level by Simon Crippen, and Cottage Prince, ridden internationally by Nigel Coupe.

Ms Backhouse, who still runs the stud, described her husband as a kind but incredibly tough, brave man; a perfect contradiction, who always had a natural way with young horses.

"He never felt like he'd worked a day in his life — he loved doing his horses. It was never a job, it was a passion. He was a big believer that if you put the work in, things would work out," she said.

"Many people said he was understated — and he was and continued to be."

Mr Harrison was keen to support young people in equestrianism, teaching for the East Hertfordshire and Cambridge branches of the Pony Club and often the "favourite instructor".

He asked his wife to set up the Douglas Harrison Youth Foundation in his memory,

awarding an annual bursary for training to a young person who shows a good attitude and "a way" with horses. A friend said he had his own "special charm" and was a "lovely, straight-talking man of great character".

A celebration of Mr Harrison's life will take place on 6 March at North Brook End Stud, Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire, with donations to the Douglas Harrison Youth Foundation and the Garden House Hospice.

MORGAN QUENNEL

A WELL-KNOWN and popular figure in the Scottish equestrian fraternity, Mr Quennell died on 14 February aged 71, having been suffering with respiratory illness.

Born in Shaunavon, Saskatchewan, Canada, Mr Quennell was brought up on a ranch rounding up cattle on horseback. He worked his way

up in the oil industry, working as a drilling superintendent, and travelled the world with his work.

After settling in Aberdeen, Mr Quennell bought a farm and met his wife Fiona when trying out a horse.

The farm started as a riding school and was developed into the popular Cabin Equestrian Centre, hosting British Showjumping and British Dressage events; bringing more equestrian opportunities to the north of Scotland.

Mr Quennell developed a passion for showjumping and spent his weekends competing and enjoying his horses, training to become a British Showjumping judge in 2010.

He retired from the oil industry three years ago and continued to judge until autumn 2019.

Mrs Quennell said her husband was a fair and tactful judge, known for his dry sense of humour.

"He was really well liked. He always encouraged people in their goals and he loved making long-term friends, being especially encouraging to young up and coming riders," she said.

More than 250 people attended a ceremony to celebrate Mr Quennell's life on 20 February, and on 22 February friend and fellow judge, Alison Bradford, led a tribute to him at a showjumping competition at Cabin.

"Equestrianism was in his heart, he just loved horses," said Ms Bradford.

"He loved to see everyone's achievements and progressions in any field, be it the child jumping clear around their first 60cm, a new four-year-old going clear in a British novice, or the most fabulous round jumped at a championship grand prix — they all made him happy and proud that Cabin had played a great part in it."



Morgan Quennell loved to see achievement at all levels



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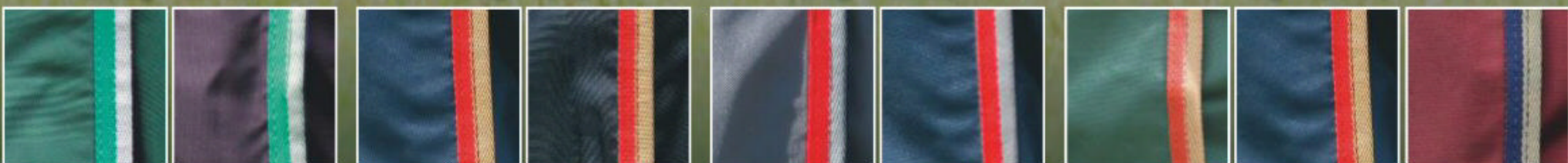
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▲ H&H

Spotted online, a reader asking for ideas on what to do with eight years' worth of *H&H* magazines, as her boyfriend wants the space in the living room. "Keep them and get rid of the boyfriend!" suggested another rider. We couldn't agree more...

▲ ADDICTIONS

Spotted, on the back of a horsebox, a sticker showing a jumping equine with the words: "Addictive as cocaine — twice as expensive" underneath. Riding is probably slightly better for you, too, but they have got a point...

▲ WINTER

Day 32,498 of winter. Horses' feet are webbing over. Riders can be heard muttering, wild-eyed, to anyone who will listen, that "we used to be able to ride on grass, you know — and sometimes the ground was *too hard*..." Of course it was, dear. Of course it was.

GOOD WEEK

BAD WEEK

▼ MORE WINTER

Two riders hacking out, enjoying a brief dry, even sunny (shock), interlude; but with heads down and jackets zipped to the neck against the lazy wind (can't be bothered to blow around you so it goes straight through). "It would be ideal drying conditions — if it didn't keep raining," observed one. Well, yes...

▼ FEED ADVICE

Overheard in a feed shop, a rider asking for the owner's expert advice. "What would you recommend for more stamina but without the fizz?" she asked. "Er, a new horse?" suggested the shopkeeper, helpfully. Um...

▼ WOMEN

Spotted, on a banner campaigning against the donkey skin trade, the phrase: "When donkeys are killed or stolen, women turn into donkeys." And while we get the point, and the seriousness of the issue... really?

Immigration changes could affect industry

A new points-based system could have an impact on foreign grooms working in the country

By SARAH RADFORD

A NEW points-based immigration policy that tightens up on "unskilled" workers has been welcomed by the British Horseracing Authority (BHA), but met mixed reactions from other areas of the industry.

The plan means migrants can only enter the UK with a job offer paying at least £25,600. In areas of recognised skills shortage, this will be £20,480.

Migrants must prove they can speak English, but can meet the points requirement if they have high-level qualifications in a relevant subject.

Ross Hamilton of the BHA believes it could mean more foreign staff would be able to access some jobs in racing. He told *H&H* he welcomed the lowering of the threshold from the current £30,000 for non-EU workers, as well as the fact some roles are now recognised as eligible for the skilled worker route.

Some 80% of racing staff are from Britain and Northern Ireland, 10% from European economic area countries and 8% from elsewhere (2% have no nationality declared). Racing has previously identified a shortage in skill areas including work riding.

"The BHA will, with the National Trainers Federation



and Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, engage fully and constructively with the government," Mr Hamilton said. "We will also engage in the process on the shortage occupation list, where we will continue calls for the system to recognise the skilled nature of the work, and allow us access to the best international talent supporting our domestic recruitment."

Mr Hamilton added EU staff must apply for settled status for themselves and their families.

The Hurlingham Polo Association (HPA), which brings in many high-level, non-EU grooms on sponsored visas, said it is working with the Home Office and will assess the impact on polo.

The HPA said the sport has long relied on foreign grooms as the short season makes it unattractive to many UK workers.

"It will be down to the Home Office as to how the criteria are applied to polo," an HPA spokesman said. He added that efforts had been made to fill a potential skills gap including

expanding arena polo and looking at routes to develop UK grooms, but changes "don't happen overnight and fundamentally, polo is a seasonal sport".

The changes will mean EU nationals may not enter the UK to work on a self-employed basis. Foreign workers seeking employment on yards are also unlikely to meet requirements.

British Grooms Association executive director Lucy Katan told *H&H* the loss of workers could be what the sector needs, and bosses will need to ensure jobs appeal.

"I'd be very surprised if a groom would gain skilled status," she said. "I believe we will now need to work far closer with the colleges to create a workplace attractive to young people as well as retaining those in the sector."

Equestrian recruitment consultant Caroline Carter agreed.

"In some ways it's a shame, but it forces the industry to get its act together," she told *H&H*. "I think it will make [employers] at the lower end of the scale raise their game. Change is long overdue."

And finally... From BBC to MXK

A TV presenter who has never ridden is to try his hand at dressage with Charlotte Dujardin.

Dan Walker and his *BBC Breakfast* presenters are each to be paired with a British athlete to learn a new sport, to celebrate this year's Olympics.



Charlotte appeared on video with Valegro to tell Dan of his challenge — at which he could be heard telling colleagues he had never sat on a horse.

The BBC told *H&H* Dan will "learn the basics" — and Dan said on Twitter: "What could possibly go wrong?"...



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Llanarth Braint, a shining superstar at Llanarth Stud

LLANARTH LOVE

THANK you for the wonderful article about the Llanarth Stud (20 February), which brought back happy memories for me.

My sister and I spent many hours helping Pauline Taylor and Barbara Saunders Davies and were always invited to stay for

tea. I remember the horses being transported by rail and walked in-hand down to the station. Llanarth Braint was a bit of a handful, but always the shining star and they were very proud of their achievements.

Marsha Nicholson
Holt, Wilts

READ ALL ABOUT IT

YOUR recent feature about Hyde Park Stables has inspired me to write to you, especially after reading Anne Cooper's letter (20 February).

If any readers of *H&H* are interested, Gillian Baxter wrote *Tan and Tarmac* in 1958, a wonderful story about horses and Hyde Park in the 1950s. This book was published by Evans Brothers in 1958 and again in 1967 by Atlantic Book Publishing Co Ltd. And Joyce Bellamy wrote *Hyde Park for Horsemanship* in 1975, published by J A Allen.

I have had my copy of *Tan and Tarmac* for about 50 years and my sister found Joyce's book for me last year.

Maureen Hadfield
Ashbourne, Derbys

A WORLD AWAY

LYNNE SUTTON'S letter of the week (13 February) reminded me of my time helping out at a riding stable. As a schoolgirl, I'd cycle from Bournemouth to Longham on a Saturday morning, collect headcollars and a friend,

then cycle off to the field where the ponies were kept, yet another mile or so away. Bikes despatched behind the hedge, we rode bareback, with two either side, to the stables for the start of the day.

If anyone remembers Miss Bush (and her show hacks, Chaos and Chasm) and co-instructor Miss Hay, they will know that standards were high and there to be kept. But oh how we loved it there — it gave us companionship, tuition and the chance just to be around horses all day.

At the day's end, the process was reversed, as we would ride bareback in the dusk along what is now a main road, with bicycle lights "fore and aft" — you'd never attempt it now.

I shudder each time I drive along that road, but warm to the memory of different times, with health and safety a world away.

Pauline Dobson-Spink
Brockenhurst, Hants

SPECIAL TIMES

LYNDSEY STRIDE'S life as a New Forest commoner ("All in a day's work", 20 February)

HORSE&HOUND

NEXT WEEK



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*Luthersson N et al, effect of changing diet on gastric ulceration in exercising horses and ponies after cessation of Omeprazole treatment, Journal of Equine Veterinary Science, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jevs.2019.05.007>



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

I AM probably not the only one who thinks the horseworld can learn a lot from the very sad passing of Caroline Flack, and the subsequent “Be kind” social media campaign that has followed.

With the rise of social media, people can now express their opinions easily to a large audience, and very often those opinions are neither kind nor helpful. Whether you are a professional or a pleasure rider, people are not made of steel, and therefore these comments and opinions will have an impact on them. People will approach things differently

with horses and get pleasure from different disciplines; maybe hacking, dressage, eventing or just spending time grooming.

As long as the horse is being looked after and not being abused, does it really matter? Let people enjoy their horses and let’s support each other

in whatever we want to do.
Estelle Turner
St Helens,
Merseyside



The writer of letter of the week wins a bottle of Champagne Taittinger

brought back some truly wonderful memories for me.

I had to stop riding some years ago due to arthritis, so I went to the New Forest sales and brought home two foals and a two-year-old filly. I intended to teach them from the ground and sell them ready to ride away at four.

They were such fun to have around, they learnt quickly and really enjoyed life. Over the next few years, I went to the sales annually and never came home without a New Forest. After the ninth one, arthritis took over again and I had to stop but it was a very special part of my life.

Margaret Millard
Caxton, Cambs

ALL CHANGE?

MY sister and I were musing about the changes that may occur after Brexit. Should one stop greeting people with two kisses and now stick to just the one?

Will we need to adopt the old-fashioned way of passing right to right rather than left to left on our horses? We did wonder if this may cause some pile-ups in warm-up arenas if the system were to be changed!

Mrs Ginny Oakley Pope
Potterspurty, Northants

PLAY SAFE

I WAS delighted that no one was hurt in the recent incident reported on your website in which a trailer became detached from its towing vehicle (21 February). But the accident highlights an important aspect of trailer safety.

A trailer must always have an emergency breakaway cable fitted, which means that as soon as the trailer becomes loose from the vehicle, the cable goes taut and applies the brake.

The breakaway cable must be secured to a solid fixed point on the tow vehicle — not simply doubled back and clipped to itself then looped over the towing hitch, because if the trailer does become detached, the cable will simply flip off the towing hitch. I appreciate this is done for convenience but if you ever need the cable to work, it’s your last chance.

Phil Hunter
Odiham, Hants

HAVE YOUR SAY

Do you feel strongly about an issue in the horse world? Write to H&H at hhletters@ti-media.com and please include your full name and address.

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Cheltenham racecourse doctor

Lee Humphreys on dealing with tough and wary jockeys and vaulting in a bowler hat on TV

My “day job” is as a consultant surgeon based in Plymouth, where I primarily work on bariatrics, or weight-loss surgery. I also do emergency surgery in the trauma unit.

I started out as a junior doctor in Cheltenham, where the racecourse's senior doctor, Sue Smith, was a consultant in intensive care. She would often take one of us junior doctors up to the racecourse for the day to experience how things were done there. I went on to become a doctor at the racecourse in 2005.

My background is not horsey, so I have found my work at Cheltenham fascinating — I've learnt a lot about horses and their unpredictable nature. I enjoy working in a big team of medics, but the role is very different to anything else I have done. I used to work across six racecourses but now solely focus on Cheltenham.

At my first Festival, back when doctors still had to wear bowler hats, I got a bit carried away when someone fell just after the final fence and I vaulted the rail. The incident was caught on camera and broadcast on TV and the big screens. I got a lot of stick for that.

On a raceday, there are three of us who can act as the senior doctor. If that is me, I arrive as soon as the gates open and go straight to the medical room, where I'll have a meeting with the medical coordinator, Tony Twiggs. Then I go through the racecard and each race individually, deciding where each doctor will be positioned for the day.

On “small” racedays, we have four doctors, while on “premium” days we will have five doctors on the course. We then rotate our positions throughout the day. There will always be a doctor by the final fence and three doctors mobile in vehicles — with another based in the medical room, along with two nurses and a physiotherapist. One



hour before first race, I will brief the whole medical team, which is standard procedure on raceday.

British Horseracing Authority rules state that a faller must be attended to within a minute.

Cheltenham is a large, complex racecourse and during the Festival there will be four ambulances just for the jockeys. There will also be two doctors, a team from St John Ambulance and two ambulances for the 70,000-plus crowd and racecourse staff.

Looking after professional sportspeople is very different to treating the general public.

I have learnt to understand a jockey's mentality — most of the time they are not too pleased to see you! Jockeys can be rude when injured and you learn not to take it personally. They can be wary of doctors. After all, if I step them

‘Jockeys are among the toughest athletes and don't like to let on they are in pain’

down from riding it can affect their livelihood.

The language they direct at you can be colourful, but you get to know the jockeys over the years and they do begin to trust you. You learn how best to communicate with each jockey. They are some of the toughest athletes out there and don't like to let on that they are in pain — if they say something hurts, you know they must really mean it.

It's a hugely rewarding but challenging role. I'm proud to be part of a big team, who play a vital part in offering high-quality care to jockeys during a great sporting spectacle. The trauma I see in racing is unique. The principles

are the same but the environment, and being on a racecourse, is very different to anything else you can experience. Common injuries include broken collarbones and wrists, soft-tissue injuries and concussion, while others can be more life-threatening.

I enjoy photography as a hobby. I began taking landscape pictures, before snapping away at the races — mostly of people working behind the scenes. Then

I created a book of my pictures and displayed the images at Cheltenham in November in aid of Racing Welfare. I love the backstories of people working at the racecourse — it's a part of the day that spectators don't get to see. I will usually have a camera on me during racedays. I am interested in people and I love capturing the different characters at the races, from the ground staff to the valets. **H&H**

● As told to Hannah Lemieux



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Crib-biting: what do

Findings from the past few years are building a bigger picture, explains *Dr Andrew Hemmings*

OVER the past decade, crib-biting has received much attention from researchers. By understanding this valuable work, we can contribute to the everyday management of crib-biting horses and ponies.

PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

GRASPING a solid object between his incisor teeth, the crib-biter will flex the brachiocephalicus muscles (running from his poll to the underside of his neck, sometimes termed the strap muscles) and emit an audible grunting sound.

All equine behaviour, including crib-biting, is controlled by the “supercomputer” — in other words, the brain. In 2018, researchers from the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) and Aberystwyth University revealed some fundamental brain-based differences between crib-biters and “normal” horses. These differences were discovered within two interlinked brain structures which control feelings of pleasure and motivation.

The nucleus accumbens and ventral tegmental area of the brain are naturally activated by the body’s own painkilling and pleasure hormones, known

collectively as the endorphins. Crib-biters possess more than double the number of endorphin-binding sites (termed opioid receptors), making the pleasure and motive circuitry hypersensitive and much easier to activate than would be the case for the non-cribbing horse.

In fact, in this sensitised state, the grasping movement associated with the behaviour — which may have originally been directed at finding food — is likely to activate the pleasure circuitry in the same manner as food itself. This explains why crib-biting is so difficult to stop once the behaviour has become part of the horse’s daily routine.

In effect, we are looking at a type of addiction. And in the same way that humans use alcohol and nicotine in stressful situations, it is highly likely that crib-biting helps the horse to cope with the stress often associated with daily management regimes.

The practice of physical prevention with cribbing straps or electrified stable doors could therefore be interfering with a valuable stress-coping tool.

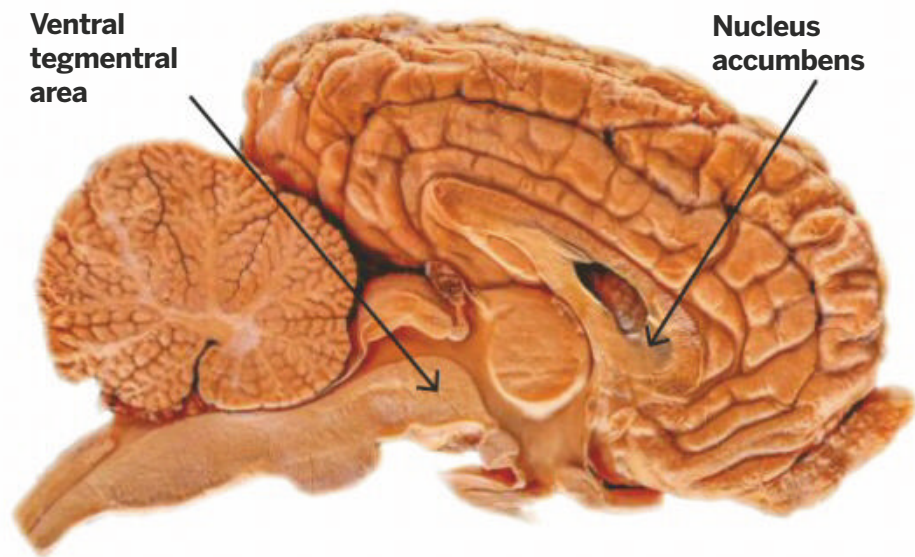
It is worth mentioning that stress seldom contributes positively to training and competition performance. My advice, based upon recent research findings, is not to physically prevent crib-biting but instead to consider alterations to the animal’s management regime.

FEEDING THE HABIT?

THE opioid receptors display particularly high levels of activation during feeding, especially when the horse is eating a palatable concentrate feed. This

Ventral
tegmental
area

Nucleus
accumbens



Crib-biting is controlled by the brain — namely the ventral tegmental area and the nucleus accumbens, which control feelings of pleasure and motivation, and are activated by the body’s endorphins

THE AUTHOR

DR ANDREW HEMMINGS is associate professor of equine science and head of the equine management and science school at the Royal Agricultural University in Gloucestershire. Teaching across a range of equine degree courses, he aims to make the complex topic of neuroscience relevant to horse management. His research interests are centred on the brain and behaviour. rau.ac.uk/equine

we know?

is why the highest levels of crib-biting are observed after a feed.

If you are viewing a horse prior to purchase, a small quantity of highly palatable feed will soon reveal crib-biting behaviour. This trick can be useful at horse sales, where the new environment can bring about a temporary cessation in cribbing behaviour.

It is worth considering that the horse's digestive system has evolved over 50million years to work best with an ad-lib high-forage diet, which is low in carbohydrates such as starch. In fact, cribbing levels in any horse can be significantly lowered if a diet naturally high in forage is provided — and there are some excellent bagged feeds available that feature highly digestible fibre and low levels of starch.

We don't know for sure what causes these changes within the brain, although work conducted with rodents suggests that changes to the nucleus accumbens and ventral tegmental area are brought about by two factors — namely, stressful life events and genetic predisposition, both of which must be in place for the alterations to occur.

Crib-biting often develops at the time of weaning or after a prolonged period of box rest, as both can be highly stressful to any horse. In a yard of 50 weanlings with identical management regimes, however, only five will ever become crib-biters. This suggests that a horse's genetic make-up also determines whether or not crib-biting will develop.

At present, there is no genetic test to identify predisposed horses. Lessons learnt from rodents suggest that a proactive coping style, where the animal is always moving and vigilant, goes hand in hand with genetic predisposition towards brain alteration and stereotypy development.

From conversations with owners, this appears to be very much the case in the horse. Should you identify youngsters that are particularly highly strung or hyper-vigilant, my advice is to seriously consider adjusting your management regime to provide prolonged turnout and ad-lib forage to reduce levels of stress.

The bad news, from the rodent research, is that it is very likely that the brain changes are irreversible. We must therefore do our best to prevent them

happening in the first place by following the principles of stress-free management.

BUSTING THE MYTHS

MANY owners and researchers still link crib-biting to gastric ulcers and suggest that it may be a strategy to alleviate stomach pain.

Recent research by Dr Simon Daniels of the RAU has suggested that a direct link may in fact not exist. Instead, in his paper published in 2019, the findings indicate that both crib-biting and ulcers merely share a causal agent, and that this causal agent is stress.

In support of this idea, crib-biters who also have ulcers remain crib-biters long after the ulcers have healed, so there does not appear to be a direct link. Alleviating the stress helps the ulcers, but due to the addictive nature of the behaviour and the long-term nature of the brain changes, crib-biting will continue.

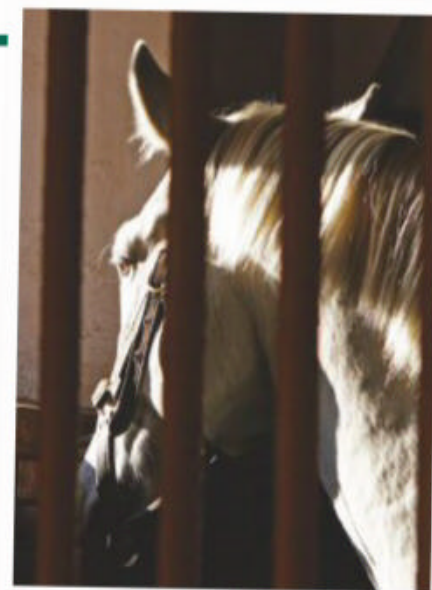
An additional belief is that crib-biters will “teach” non-cribbing neighbours this unwanted behaviour. As a result, crib-biters can be turned away from livery yards or are isolated from visual contact with others.

In truth, there has been little scientific research directed at this topic. What little work has been completed suggests that stereotypic behaviours, including crib-biting, are not copied in this manner. If we consider stress and genetic predisposition as causal factors, it is unlikely that copying plays a part. Instead, if there is an unusually high proportion of crib-biters in adjoining stables, this is almost certainly due to shared stressors or shared genetics.

At the risk of sounding repetitive, or even stereotypic, the priority should lie in the reduction of stress. **H&H**

**NEXT
WEEK**

**The role of hillwork
in fitness**



Time for a rethink?

WHEN we looked into learning differences between crib-biters, horses who weaved and a group of stereotypy-free controls, we were surprised by the results. Both the crib-biters and weavers learnt a simple button-pressing behaviour much quicker than the non-stereotypy equivalents.

While pressing a button might not equate to the real-life training scenario, I've spent the five years since the findings were published asking owners and trainers what they really think.

At least 90% of the people spoken to find that horses who crib-bite are fast learners and fast thinkers, and do their jobs very well. Since this supports our 2015 findings, it might be time for a rethink. Rather than an unsightly, unwanted “vice”, crib-biting seems to go hand in hand with positive performance attributes.



Crib-biting is a type of addiction that helps the horse cope with stress, but cribbing straps could be interfering with a valuable stress-coping tool

While stress and genetic predisposition are the likely causes of a horse crib-biting, many of those that do tend to be fast learners, fast thinkers and they perform well

Hazel Shannon

Martha Terry talks to the rider from the Australian bush who has taken an unwanted ex-racer from ignominy to the eventing history books

HAZEL SHANNON has just joined a very elite group of event riders. Since winning the world's latest CCI5*, the 27-year-old Australian — as-yet little known outside the southern hemisphere — now sits alongside Andrew Nicholson, Michael Jung and Kim Severson as having ridden one horse to win three five-stars at the same venue. That's some accolade.

"It doesn't feel like my name should be alongside those people," says Hazel, who didn't start eventing until she left school and went to work for top Aussie coach Heath Ryan, in New South Wales, where she's still a working pupil. Her victory at Adelaide in November added to the titles she won in 2018 and 2016 with the chestnut thoroughbred Willingapark Clifford.

Hazel's tale is the sort that inspires the likes of *National Velvet*. Country lass raised as a cowgirl, jumping logs for fun in the bush. Takes on a slow racehorse because no one wanted him and hits the jackpot — three times.

"It blows my mind when I think about my partnership with Clifford," Hazel smiles. "I happened to be in the right place at the right time to get the ride on him. I feel like it was the same odds as me winning the lottery."

Eight years ago, Clifford was a jobless ex-racehorse in a Tasmanian paddock. Hazel needed a ride after her first eventer, her aunt's Northern Fable, had retired. Clifford was bred by the Ryans' neighbour Wendy Ward's sister, who simply wanted him to go to a good home after his racing career failed to take off, so sent him to live with Wendy in Australia.

"Clifford hadn't raced because he was too slow," says Hazel. "The neighbours let me ride him, so I took him on just as a turnover horse, but he was likeable, cool, and fun to train."

"I had initially only been planning to do a one-star with him, but the next minute he was at five-star. We have a great partnership; he has the biggest heart. There's not a day when he doesn't give you 100%."

ALL good fairy tales have their bumps in the road, however. Although Hazel and Clifford contested their first five-star in 2015 (finishing seventh at Adelaide), there were a few wake-up calls en route.

At a four-star in September 2014, Clifford had a rotational fall at a sunken road, landing on Hazel and breaking her pelvis in five places. Five months later, she was back competing. But in April 2015, she had a fall from a young horse, suffering concussion and lying unconscious in hospital for a week. Yet again, she recovered in double-quick time to renew competition by July, well in time for her five-star debut. Hazel is sanguine about the falls.

"They haven't changed my attitude," she says. "I knew the sport can be dangerous and horses can be unpredictable. I think it's made me less naïve and a little tougher."

"I've gone over those falls with Heath, my coach. I think it will make me more careful with green horses moving to the higher levels."

The most recent snag in Clifford's tale came in 2017, when Wendy suddenly needed to sell him due to bereavement. Australia doesn't have the same owner culture as the UK, but Hazel's emails to businessman Terrence Snow proved a smart move — he bought Clifford, and soon

Hazel with a Contendro I colt — she breeds a couple of eventers each year



'We have a great partnership': Hazel Shannon and Willingapark Clifford en route to scoring their third victory at Adelaide, claiming their place in eventing's top echelons

'I had only been planning to do a one-star with him, but the next minute he was at five-star'

HAZEL SHANNON ON WILLINGAPARK CLIFFORD

after added Cooley SRS — Badminton runner-up in 2018 with Oliver Townend and now called Willingapark Cooley — to Hazel's string.

"I didn't know Terrence at all, but he's a big supporter of everything Australian, and eventing," says Hazel. "He liked the story about me coming from the bush and Clifford's background. Finding someone like Terrence in Australia is so rare — it's 100 times harder to get owners here than in England."

Cooley is a novelty for Hazel, in that she has not taken him up through the levels herself, but they've already been placed at CCI4*-S.

"I'm still learning which buttons to press," she says. "It's daunting taking on a horse that's been produced by someone else for the first time, but he feels amazing to compete and that's given me the confidence that we'll click and make a good team together."

HAZEL visited England to try Cooley, and is hopeful of coming to Badminton one day on her cross-



country machine Clifford, but there's little prospect of her following the likes of Andrew Hoy and Chris Burton here more permanently.

"I'd love to do more of the big events and I can see what draws people over, but I have good horses and people here and I'd be hesitant to leave that," says Hazel, who also has several broodmares and foals at the Ryans'.

She estimates "at least 50% of top Australian riders" have trained with Heath, and is hugely grateful for "the unbelievable amount of time he spends teaching me".

"There's no way I could have done what I have without him," she says.

Heath still events at four-star but is primarily a dressage rider, and Hazel also values this aspect of her training.

"I've ridden at grand prix, but I prefer eventing," she admits. "But on a proper dressage horse, it's enjoyable. It's a huge benefit to my eventing, as the dressage scoring is so important. Clifford is not a dressage horse and has a thoroughbred shuffle-trot by nature, but I've just taught him to do passage — aged 14."

Clifford has always been outstanding across the country, but such tweaks to the other phases are what Hazel hopes might make the difference in this Olympic year.

"He has a big new trot this season," she says. "He's a hot little thoroughbred and wants to go fast and on his forehand. He'll jump anything, but this trot in a test is a new side to him."

"I'm aiming for Tokyo, so we have to give ourselves the best shot, but the Australian team is tough to get into."

The other riders alongside Hazel in the treble five-star-winning quartet have each won multiple Olympic medals. Adelaide may be a softer option than the northern-hemisphere events due to the smaller entry, but it's still a top-level track and you can do no better than beat your opposition. Hazel's in the running for Tokyo, and who's to say the medals won't follow? **H&H**

NEXT WEEK

British showjumper Robert Whitaker

Mark Kyle

The Irish eventing Olympian on the usefulness of canter poles, the value of paying attention to detail and why he still heeds his parents' advice



MARK KYLE rode for Ireland at three Olympics and finished in the top 20 at Badminton and Burghley before retiring from eventing after an injury in 2017. He now trains his showjumping daughter Tabitha, a children-on-horses team bronze medallist in 2019.

As you get older, you realise it's worth taking more time with each horse, rather than rushing from one to another. I had a lot of horses when I was younger to make the sport pay, but with time you realise which ones you shouldn't be riding and focus on the better ones.

Dressage was my weakest phase and in my final few years eventing I spent more time on it. I also had horses with better brains, who were more trainable.

My first really good horse was Irish Patriot, with whom I won two advanced classes when I first came to England. I thought it was easy, but with time discovered it wasn't so simple. He was very like my London 2012 Olympic horse Coolio, a good jumper and brilliant cross-country horse.

Irish Patriot struggled on the flat, but over the past 25 years training methods have moved on and we probably could have ironed out some mistakes if I'd had him later in my career.

At a big competition, I would always walk the course early on my own or with one trusted person. Then I'd have a good breakfast; I never let competing put me off my meals.

Before leaving the start box, I'd always run through where I was going. Once at Allerton Park I jumped an extra fence, from the advanced course, on all three



'Take more time with each horse rather than rushing'

'A good jumper and brilliant cross-country horse' — Irish Patriot was Mark's first top horse, who 'struggled on the flat' but could take on any fence

of my open intermediate horses. Luckily I wasn't eliminated as the fence wasn't flagged off.

With Tabitha, I tailor my advice to each pony, but the recurrent theme is not to go mad, and to stay smooth and in a nice rhythm.

A USEFUL EXERCISE

YEARS ago I had lessons with Gerry Mullins and we always did canter poles, which I do now with anyone I teach. We use two poles three strides apart, riding over them in three or four strides.

This simple exercise shows up straightness, whether you have a good enough canter, and the rider's position. It's particularly useful in winter when the canter is

often killed by working inside a lot.

Attention to detail is vital in horse management, whether it's noticing lumps and bumps or looking at a horse's coat.

Always trot up the horses the morning after an event, even if it's just a one-day event, and observe if they are stiffer than usual or there is heat in a leg. It's about noticing small signs before they become a problem.

My parents Gillian and Johnny competed at the top level and gave me lots of useful advice. The parts I remember are to do your best and check your girth! I still do that before the ponies go in the ring; I check the girth and noseband and tuck in any stray keepers.

NEXT WEEK

Gold Cup-winning trainer and author Henrietta Knight

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Allmankind

Uniting two showjumping families is leading Triumph Hurdle contender Allmankind, a talented tearaway whose energies are being channelled towards the winning post, writes *Jennifer Donald*

TIM GREDLEY and his father, Bill, are well known as successful owner/breeders on the Flat, courtesy of the great stayer Big Orange and the Group One-winning Pretty Pollyanna. But, somewhat by accident, they have been thrust into the limelight as Cheltenham Festival contenders with their first jumping home-bred, Allmankind.

This son of Sea The Moon has always shown remarkable talent, but a certain “bull-headedness” has proved a conundrum for his trainers. In his early career on the Flat when trained by Michael Bell, this one-time Derby prospect’s refusal to settle eventually became his downfall.

The switch to jumping was something of an afterthought but, since joining the Dan Skelton team, Allmankind has found his forte and remains unbeaten after three relentless,

front-running performances in which jockey Harry Skelton has barely seen a rival upstages.

He won his hurdling debut at Warwick by 37 lengths and followed up eight days later at Cheltenham, where he pulled like a train for two miles in testing going and still stayed on stoutly up the hill. His hat-trick came with a gutsy victory in a Grade One at Chepstow in December, thus laying down his credentials as one of the leading fancies for Friday’s Gold Cup day opener, the JCB Triumph Hurdle.

Among his key rivals are the Gary Moore-trained Goshen, Aspire Tower from Ireland and new favourite Solo, sent out by Paul Nicholls. The question has been asked whether the big occasion might get to Allmankind. His trainer says: “He could boil over at a one-man party. The FA Cup Final wouldn’t stress him any more than a one-man party.”



Picture by PA Wire/PA Images



‘He was always special — but last year we thought we were heading to Epsom, not Cheltenham’

CO-OWNER AND BREEDER TIM GREDLEY SAYS...

“EVEN as a foal, out in the field with the rest of the gang he was always out in front. ‘Never sell that one,’ my father would say — we knew he was special.

“He has plenty of stamina in his pedigree and as a two-year-old we had hopes for him as a Derby horse. He always showed ability but he also had this habit of running away and it was happening more and more. When he won his maiden at Chelmsford, his jockey Silvestre De Sousa said that to be a top Flat horse he would need to learn to settle, but he just did the same old routine as a three-year-old.

“I’ve always had in my mind to send a horse to the Skeltons as I’ve known Nick for ages through showjumping, so when this situation wasn’t resolving itself, I rang Dan. Our idea was that sending him over the jumps might help him concentrate and slow him down a bit.

“We sent him in July and I jokingly said, ‘The next time I want to see you is at Cheltenham,’ but I didn’t hear a lot for a while — I think they were scratching their heads a bit. But he won his first race by more than 30 lengths and never came off the bridle. Now, you almost want him to be keen in his races because that’s his ‘thing’.

“I’m competing on the Sunshine Tour but I’m definitely taking Festival week off! This time last year we thought we’d end up at Epsom so at the moment we’re just enjoying this new experience with Dan and Harry — but if we’re breeding horses with the profile to go on and do some jumping, then it would be great to send Dan a few more.”



THE FACTS: ALLMANKIND

4yo bay gelding by Sea The Moon (GER) out of Wemyss Bay (Sadler's Wells)
OWNERS: Bill and Tim Gredley
TRAINER: Dan Skelton
JOCKEY: Harry Skelton
BREEDER: Stetchworth and Middle Park Studs (the Gredley family)
PRIZE MONEY WON: £71,243
BIGGEST WINS: 1m2f maiden stakes at Chelmsford (October 2018); 2m juvenile hurdle at Warwick (November 2019); Grade Two JCB Triumph Trial Juvenile Hurdle at Cheltenham (November 2019) and Grade One Coral Finale Juvenile Hurdle at Chepstow (December 2019).
CURRENT ODDS FOR JCB TRIUMPH HURDLE: 9/2

‘He’s the type of horse you encourage to do less, not more’

TRAINER DAN SKELTON SAYS...

“TIM GREDLEY told me that Newmarket was winding Allmankind up and sending him here may come to nothing but he was a really good horse if we could get him to settle. I noticed he was making a noise — his wind was a bit of an issue — and maybe that had been stressing him out. For about a fortnight [after a wind op] he was really good, then suddenly he was really keen again. I told Tim it could still be a waste of time but let’s just get stuck in.

“He is just so one-dimensional — he gets on with things and it doesn’t matter what’s in his way. He works with the other horses, but you’d only ask him to go upsides once in a blue moon because you don’t need to encourage him — he’s naturally fit, so you encourage him to do less, not more. There’s a definite buzz about him in the yard, he’s looking very good.”

Allmankind, a son of Sea The Moon, may have been bred with Flat racing in mind, but is now a front-runner for the Triumph Hurdle at Cheltenham this year

‘He was wild when he arrived — we’ve learned to let him roll along and do his own thing’

JOCKEY HARRY SKELTON SAYS...

“HE’S settled a hell of a lot — he was a bit wild when he arrived. At the races, he’s very professional and he’s very relaxed in the paddock beforehand — he has a good head on him. But as soon as the tape goes up, he knows his business and just runs along.

“His jumping has got better and he has the hang of it now — he was a bit hairy to sit on to start with. He still likes to get on with things, but we’ve learned to just let him roll along, do his own thing and not interfere too much.

“But the amazing thing about him is he’s a good stayer as well — about two furlongs out, he just picks up and goes again. You can feel his massive engine and it’s a great feeling.”

‘A laid-back little horse — but when he’s tacked up, he goes into speedy mode’

HIS LASS HOLLIE ROONEY SAYS...

“I’VE looked after ‘Old Man’, as I call him, since he arrived at Lodge Hill and he couldn’t be more opposite in the stable — he’s a laid-back little horse. He does like to stick to his routine though — he’d stand under the heat lamps all afternoon if he could, with not a bother on him, but tie him up somewhere else and he wants to be back in ‘his spot’.

“He goes out for picks of grass and on the walker twice a day and he’s good as gold to muck out and brush. He is greedy though — he’ll charge out the door to get his hay bucket! But as soon as you tack him up, he goes into speedy mode for our conditional jockey, William Marshall, who rides him every day.

“Allmankind was my first Cheltenham winner, so leading him in was a heart-racing moment. I can’t watch his races though — I keep thinking he can’t keep going, but he does. I’m very lucky to look after him.” H&H

‘A tough mare’



Flourishing trainer Philip Kirby talks to *Hannah Lemieux* about his Festival hopeful, dealing with setbacks and why his horses work in an outline

TEN years ago, a one-month-old foal arrived at the North Yorkshire yard of trainer Philip Kirby alongside her dam, Lady Chapp. Fast-forward a decade, and this bonny youngster has become one of the top National Hunt mares in the country, effortlessly combining good looks with steely determination and toughness.

Lady Buttons has become the yard's flag-bearer since making a winning debut on the racecourse in a Wetherby bumper in 2013 and, with 15 victories now under her belt, the Grade Two and Listed winner heads to the Cheltenham Festival in a bid to claim a first Grade One for herself and her trainer.

With entries in both the Close Brothers Hurdle and the Queen Mother Champion Chase, the “Queen of the North” — as she's affectionately known — is equally comfortable

over fences as she is on the hurdles course.

“Lady Buttons has been with us from the start and her work has always been very good; she was always above average and better than other three-year-olds in the yard,” says Philip of the daughter of Beneficial, who is owned by her breeders, Jayne and Keith Sivills. “She is a very straightforward horse to train, relaxed and talented, who loves her work and does as little or as much as is required.”

Philip adds that she is clever and can adapt easily, is quick over a hurdle yet impressively scopey when it comes to jumping a chase fence.

“Jumping is her strong point, which is why she is entered for the Champion Chase,” says Philip, who will decide which she runs in nearer the time. “We've always thought she's a better chaser than hurdler because her jumping is so brilliant, but the more winnable opportunities for her have come from hurdling.”



Jennie (right) describes Lady Buttons as ‘Benjamin Button’ as she gets better with age

CHELTENHAM PREVIEW



'Jumping is her strong point,' says Philip Kirby of Lady Buttons (both pictured with work rider Jennie Durrans), one of the top National Hunt mares in the country

Lady Buttons has moved three times with Team Kirby and the newest set-up is a purpose-built racing yard, a stone's throw from the A1 in the village of East Appleton.

Her work rider, Jennie Durrans, fondly refers to her as "Queen" when I ask what her stable name is. One thing is for certain, Lady Buttons knows she is top dog in the yard; so much so, she has a solarium placed 24/7 in her stable. She has a beautiful head and a genuine eye, and proves particularly photogenic while the *H&H* photographer snaps away.

Despite being unproven around Cheltenham (finishing fourth in last year's OLBG Mares' Hurdle), Philip believes she has every right to be there.

"I won't run her to make up the numbers, she deserves the chance to run at the Festival," he says. "But we won't know if it's a 'track thing' until she underperforms again there."

Jennie describes the supermare as "Benjamin Button" because she seems to be getting better and better with age. And with that, the dilemma for connections now is how long to keep her in the racing game before she heads off to her broodmare duties.



'Queen' wants for nothing, be it an exercise on the gallops with her rider Jennie or the comforts of a solarium in her stable (below)

"Her owner/breeders will definitely keep her for breeding," says Philip. "But it is undecided whether that will be at the end of this season or next, because she is running at her best ever this year. I am conscious not to keep running her for too long but then again, if she's in her best form is it silly to retire her?"

"I know we're running out of time with her but I'd love for her to win a Grade One, not only for the yard but for her — she deserves it."

PHILIP is flying the flag for jump trainers in the north of England, while also successfully training Flat horses, and his yard has been gradually increasing over the years. He now has around 100 horses, including broodmares and the youngstock he and his equestrian artist wife, Pippa, have bred on the 100-acre Green Oaks farm.

Early on, being a licensed trainer under Rules was not the plan Philip had in mind. Having started as a stable lad for late trainer Ferdy Murphy, Philip had a few rides as an amateur jockey — winning on his first — before training to become a farrier. While shoeing, he trained a handful of pointers and impressively became the champion hunter chase trainer with just three horses.

"Realistically, I never thought I'd be able to make a living training horses, but then my numbers started to grow and I had an owner who wanted me to take out my training licence. I had a great start early on," reflects Philip.

Four years ago Philip and Pippa, with their two daughters, moved to their current yard, which at the time was a derelict farm. The land is owned by Philip's friend John Bell (also an owner with Philip) and the pair have invested heavily in the farm. Within six months, the stables were up, a sand arena and lunge pen installed, and an all-weather gallop put down.

The trainer, who often rides out and most days can be found in the tractor harrowing the



gallops in between each lot, has experienced both the highs and lows of racing. But this year he will have his first "proper" Grand National runner in Top Ville Ben, after Don Poli was purchased the day before the National at the Aintree sales last year by Darren Yates and placed under Philip's name.

"It was all a bit surreal," he says, "because I couldn't really say I trained Don Poli for the National. I had prepared Blaklion for the race, before he sadly got injured."

Don Poli completed the National in 19th place, but Philip was hit with a blow over the summer when that horse, plus Blaklion and Interconnected, who was purchased for a record £620,000 at the sales, were all moved from his yard. Philip accepts it is "part and parcel" of the training game.

"Obviously, it is disappointing but every trainer gets their horses from elsewhere, and you just have to smile and move on — it doesn't worry me too much in the long term," he says.

"It's all part of the job and you have to get on with it and be pleasant, as there's every chance that owner could come back one day."

With the added influence of his wife, who's also a showing rider, Philip likes his horses to be worked in an outline in the arena before they canter, to learn how to "use themselves".

"I'm conscious that I have to get my horses as fit as the big trainers have theirs down south, but my philosophy is to have them fit, happy in their minds and healthy, and placed in the right race on the right day," he adds.

Having horses quality enough to run at the Festival and in the Grand National is something all trainers, big and small, aspire to. Philip has been knocking on the door for a while now, and 2020 could be a big year for this flourishing trainer. **H&H**

'I would love Lady Buttons to win a Grade One, not only for the yard but for her — she deserves it'



Getting the ‘Dartmoor bug’

With nothing to stop the impressive hounds in any direction, a day with the Mid Devon is a rollercoaster experience for the uninitiated

Two Bridges, Yelverton, Devon

“HUNTING hounds on Dartmoor is a totally different thing,” said Mid Devon master and huntsman Duncan Hume. “You’ll see as much houndwork in a day as you will in a season in the Shires.”

Well, I’m sure if you are a Dartmoor regular you do, and

By CATHERINE AUSTEN

how lovely for you, but during the first hunt of the day, a three-and-a-half-mile point and six as hounds ran, I honestly couldn’t look up. The terrain we were crossing — at a speed that continually felt a gear too high — seemed so treacherous that I found it hard to drag my eyes away from it.

If I did, it seemed likely that my hireling, Storm, would fail to spot some lethal bog/lump of granite/hole and we would tumble to our doom. I am exaggerating a bit for dramatic effect — I did watch these impressive hounds — but I certainly wasn’t standing up in my stirrups, cantering along easily, eyes on the horizon.

Of course, Storm, who belongs to Mid Devon joint-master Phil Heard and his wife, Lamerton master Mandy, was utterly sure-footed and in confident charge of our joint destiny. But trusting a strange horse across such alien

country doesn’t come easily, and although the locals laughed indulgently, it was tiring both physically and mentally.

When you are used to galloping smoothly across the manicured Cotswolds, Dartmoor makes you feel as though you can’t ride at all, as you try your best to balance yourself and not bump up and down on your mount’s back.

A TEAM EFFORT

IT was the Two Bridges meet, held annually at the Two Bridges

Hotel in the middle of wild Dartmoor the day after the Two Bridges Hunt Club dinner. Each of the four packs that hunts on Dartmoor — the Mid Devon, the South Devon, the Spooner’s and West Dartmoor, and the Dartmoor — takes in turns to organise the dinner, which has happened every year since 1929, and to hunt the four corners of the four hunting countries.

It already has a military connection through the involvement of the Royal Navy

Jack Jordan, 13, usually rides up with the huntsman and ‘is slowly being turned into his whipper-in’



Pictures by Peter Nixon



Mid Devon joint-master and huntsman Duncan Hume and hounds move off from the Two Bridges meet



Former master Anthony Jervois

Top: Major Richard Waygood, who gave the speech at the Two Bridges Hunt Club dinner. Middle: countryman and ex-army farrier Ben Turpie. Above: South Devon huntsman Robert Medcalf

Saddle Club, but Duncan introduced another this year. He spent six years in the Household Cavalry, and invited his former boss, Major Richard Waygood — now the British Equestrian Federation's performance director — to speak at the dinner and to come hunting. Duncan's kennel-huntsman and countryman Ben Turpie was an army farrier under

Richard, as was Dan Ravenscroft, who also attended the dinner and came hunting — and put two shoes back on during the day.

They were joined by Major Harry Wallace, frequently of these pages in various guises, who was on his way to undertake a submarine escape course in Poole, which, given the recent inclement weather, is possibly something we

all should think of doing.

I had prepared myself for a drenching and wore as many clothes as I could fasten my coat buttons up over, but really, it wasn't too bad — gusting winds and a few chilly showers, but perhaps this winter has toughened us all up. The meet fell close to the 15-year anniversary of the bringing into force of the

Hunting Act 2004, and George Lyon-Smith, former master and huntsman of the Mid Devon hounds and now a bold and intuitive field master, was interviewed by a crew from ITV.

A field that represented all four packs — it was nice to see former Dartmoor master Amelia Eyston again, and to meet that pack's new master and huntsman, Harry



Dartmoor master and huntsman Harry Gosling with Mikela Griffiths and Jessica Mortimore

Gosling — clattered up the road and off on to the rough country behind the Cherrybrook hotel and Powdermills. It is noticeable how far from their huntsman hounds fan out to draw in this sort of country.

Duncan said: “It takes trust for them to do that — draw 500m to 1km away from you — and it’s taken the best part of four seasons to get them to draw Dartmoor in the way I think they should. You need control at long distance; you must have that magic thread, because you can’t gallop across a bog to get to them.”

Independence and confidence doesn’t mean wildness, however.

“When you need them to, they’ve got to react and come back to you,” he said. “But hounds are in heaven here. You never have to stop them and there’s only one road in our part of Dartmoor.”

A GOOD CRY

HOUNDS picked up a trail in the newtake (a walled-in bit of the

moor), their cry drifting on the wind towards us.

“You need a hound with as much voice as possible here so that they can hear each other and get up together when it’s blowing a hooley, and then get away together,” explained Duncan.

Voice is one of the reasons that he likes some fell blood — the others being their lightweight build, which contributes to longevity, their good shoulders and their hare-like feet, which cope better with the granite rocks that litter Dartmoor.

“And I find on the moor that the fell hounds are very good on hill sheep, which smell totally different to in-country sheep. It’s in the fell hounds’ DNA and I never have an issue with them,” he said.

“I have three very good second-season doghounds — the best I’ve ever entered — called Gilbert, Gideon and Gidly, who are out of Mid Devon Gossamer, who goes back to Heythrop Gooseberry,

and their topline goes back to Ullswater Farmer. I’m using them on all my bitches this year.”

Duncan hunts a mixed pack for the deeper voices the doghounds add to the bitches, but he likes the dogs to be athletic and not too big, so they can keep up with their female counterparts.

“If they overrun in such an open country, the doghounds act like a handbrake and keep the hunt flowing,” he says.

They have a little old English from the Warwickshire mixed in, and he brought some modern

lines with him from the South and West Wilts, where he spent three seasons as kennel-huntsman to James Andrews.

FINGERS IN THE BREASTPLATE

THEY crossed the River Dart at speed and hunted up to Stannon Tor before dropping downhill and out to Caroline bog, along the side of the road (the brief, undreamt-of relief of tarmac beneath me) to the Warren Inn, across a bit of the map where it says “disused mines” and into the big forestry block called Soussons. As I’ve said, I mostly had my fingers in the breastplate and my eyes on the ground, but there was the occasional — blissful — pause as hounds cast themselves across the high moor to recover the line.

Duncan doesn’t have a whipper-in, but Crispin Alford, a former master of the Lamerton who has “hunted everywhere on Dartmoor” rides wide for him, and riding up with Duncan was 13-year-old Jack Jordan, whom he says he is “slowly turning into his whipper-in.”

Jack’s mother Rebecca, who does a lot of excellent hunting writing for *H&H*, was out, laughing at how far out of my riding comfort zone I was, and his father Robert, vice-chairman of the Mid Devon, appeared later riding Duncan’s second horse.

This trail, which hounds had hunted so well and covered considerable distance in doing so, petered out in Soussons, and



Mid Devon joint-master Phil Heard



The Mid Devon’s former master and huntsman George Lyon-Smith leads the field across tricky Dartmoor terrain



Joint-master and huntsman Duncan Hume with the hounds at the end of a good day



Left: Rosanna and Africa Lambert attend the meet on their ponies



Duncan took them on to the late Colin Irish's Grendon Farm. Here they hunted a trail through the gorse, and the field were able to see their persistence and watch Duncan's patient, quiet way with them.

We then headed to a covert called Snaily House that dropped vertically down to the Dart below. Coffee-housing ceased as the valley was flooded with hound music as clear and loud as bells. They had hit a line off before the covert and hunted like rockets into it, then up and down it in a long loop. Startled, a couple of huge red stags trotted up towards us, neatly hopping the wall that separated the covert and the moor.

Hounds came uphill and away from us across Riddon Ridge, and we set off behind them. This ground was easier to cross — and maybe I was relaxing and worrying less about where my clever horse would put its feet — and we sped off behind George Lyon-Smith and Phil Heard.

It had the makings of another good hunt, and the terrain allowed us to go at a faster pace, but all too soon it came to an end in heavily cattle-foiled ground on Cator Common. The light was going, it was cold and hounds and horses were tired, so Duncan blew for home.

He says he has "always had the bug for Dartmoor", after spending a season here in 2000 before joining the Army, and that to hunt hounds on Dartmoor was the whole aim of his hunting career.

"Every year I learn how to hunt it better and how, in different weather conditions,

to get a hunt going," he said.

As I sped back up the M5 towards the green, pleasant, hemmed-in and overpopulated land of the Cotswolds, I considered Dartmoor's attractions. No shooting on the high moor, nothing to stop hounds in any direction, hardy, passionate hunting people, and a wildness that sings to the soul. **H&H**

IN KENNELS

Joint-masters: Duncan Hume (huntsman), John Lightfoot, Phil Heard

Kennel-huntsman/countryman: Ben Hastie
Hon secretary: Fiona Jeffery, secretary@middevonhunt.co.uk

Haven't had enough hunting this season? The Mid Devon don't finish until the middle of April, so if you live up-country and your season has been cut short by the wet, head down to Dartmoor — but hire a local horse.

Quote of the day: while in the Household Cavalry, Duncan groomed for Richard Waygood when the latter was eventing at top level, and then attended the advanced military equitation course at Melton Mowbray before joining the riding staff under Richard's wing. Richard said: "I was heartbroken when Duncan left the Household Cavalry as I really rated him — as I still do. I was very proud of the way he allowed the hounds to work it out themselves while gently nudging them in the right direction when needed. He is a great credit to the Mid Devon."

Bridging the gap

If there was anything to coax you through the final hurdles of school drudgery, it is the prospect of a whole year hunting. *Madeleine Silver* finds out how to get your gap-year fix on the hunting field

WHEN the north-easterly Yorkshire wind was blowing at the Middleton, an 18-year-old Luke Tomlinson briefly let himself imagine his fellow school leavers lying on a Thailand beach.

“But I was living the dream really,” says the England polo player, who arrived to help then-master Frank Houghton Brown in the summer after finishing school nearly 25 years ago, staying for the season. “The weather up there was obviously pretty tough, but it was magical when you had a good day’s hunting.”

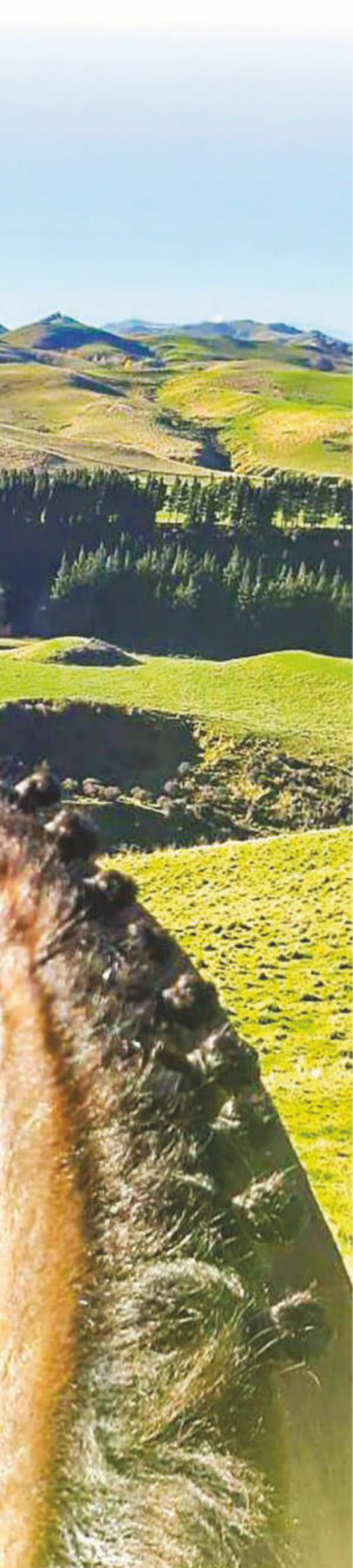
While spending a gap year volunteering with a hunt isn’t official training, “it is extremely good work experience for the future if someone either wants to go into hunt service or hunt their own pack of hounds”, says the Hunting Office’s Alice Bowden. “You are usually given accommodation, a good square meal every now and then and hunting — which a lot of people would think is brilliant. It’s an unofficial arrangement, but it is an invaluable one.”

For Frank, who had a rolling intake of gap-year students when he was at both the Middleton and the Tyndale, making sure they fitted into the same schedule as the hunt staff was critical.

“If they were given preferential treatment, then they wouldn’t have been accepted, so they got up at 6am, did the kennels, and then went and looked after their own



‘You’d pitch up at a 70,000-acre farm and you could go wherever you liked,’ enthuses Roddy Bannister of his gap year spent hunting in New Zealand



horse. After that they went off doing whatever jobs were needed, whether it was building fences in the country or painting the kennels,” says Frank.

“They usually just did the hunting season with us, but we did have some who stayed longer; Otis Ferry came to me from Marlborough College and ended up staying for four years. Everyone who started hacked it, but I think the first couple of months for some of them was pretty tough. It’s hard work, but the harder you work, the more fun you get out of it.”

For Luke Tomlinson, his new-found work ethic as a teenager was the most valuable lesson from his time at the Middleton.

“We had half a day off a fortnight and it was probably the first time I’d worked that hard, for that long,” he remembers. “Frank was a hard taskmaster, but that’s good, because you learn more.”

‘IN THE BIG WIDE WORLD’

WHEN Heythrop master Charles Frampton spent his gap year with the Exmoor, before going to the Royal Agricultural College, he spent 144 days hunting.

“I even went hunting on my day off,” he remembers fondly. “I turned up there thinking hunting was what I wanted to do, and by the time I left, the experience had confirmed it for me.

“I think the gap year is a life-changing time for a lot of people — you’re in the big wide world all on your own. The deal that I’ve always done [with school leavers] is that I sort out the accommodation and we’ll look after a horse for them, and they have to look after themselves.

“A lot of them have never had to cook, clean and run their life on a budget before, and so they learn how to be a grown-up,” he says.



‘I’ve never done so much work in my life,’ says Bertie Alexander of his time at the Heythrop

“I also think most of the people we’ve had have gone away having made a lot of friends; they learn to talk to everyone, whether it’s farmers or subscribers. And for somebody who actually wants to go and hunt a pack of hounds, doing it for their gap year and being very much part of the team is certainly a good thing.”

Having hunted the beagles at Stowe School, Bertie Alexander arrived at the Heythrop for his gap year the day before the puppy show in 2017.

“I’ve never done so much work in my life,” he remembers. “For autumn hunting I was up at the



Otis Ferry (right) learnt from Frank Houghton Brown during his extended gap year

crack of dawn and sometimes wouldn’t get back in until 7.30pm.



Awe-inspiring: having the chance to hunt in different countries is an incredible experience not to be missed

HUNTING

But I loved it — it was one of the most enjoyable times of my life.”

A chance meeting with the master of the Oaklands hunt in Victoria, Australia, at a dinner party while at the Heythrop, enabled a stint whipping-in down under from the May of his year out.

“I was kindly given horses to ride and we hunted two days a week in their never-ending rolling pasture that was teeming with foxes. There was almost nothing to get in your way apart from the dense Australian bush surrounding the farmland,” he remembers.

“It was a great feeling not having the abundance of roads, railways and modern farming methods getting in the way. And best of all, hunting is legal there!”

‘The country is epic — there’s miles and miles’

RODDY BANNISTER ON HUNTING
IN NEW ZEALAND

Bertie was able to make contacts to spend days hunting with other Australian packs, as well as going deer and pig hunting, before catching the end of New Zealand’s hunting season ahead of returning for university.

“I started in New Zealand by staying with an Englishman called Guy Marriner, who hunts an incredibly smart pack of harriers just outside Auckland,” says Bertie. “There are no foxes in New Zealand, so they only pursue the brown hare, and like Australia you never once leave pasture.



‘I was living the dream, really,’ says Luke Tomlinson of his gap year spent hunting and working in kennels

The space you have to hunt is far beyond that of most packs here.”

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

FELLOW Cirencester student Roddy Bannister was similarly in awe of the space available to hunt on his gap year in New Zealand. Having initially emailed a handful of packs while at school, a New Zealander came to stay at his family home in Yorkshire and invited him to stay with the Brackenfield on the South Island.

Once there, Roddy swiftly fell into a routine of doing kennels,

skinning, exercising horses and trying to earn some money on the side by doing odd jobs in the afternoon.

“The country is epic — there’s just miles and miles of it,” says Roddy, who was able to hunt twice a week having bought a horse for the equivalent of £600. “Our country was pretty similar to the size of Northern Ireland; you’d pitch up at some farm and it would be 70,000 acres, and you could go wherever you liked.”

For Megan Bliss, who is married to the Blackmore and

Sparkford Vale’s joint-master Ryan, time wasn’t on her side when she decided to take up her place at Trinity College Dublin straight after school — but she still managed to shoehorn in a summer with the Blue Ridge hunt in Virginia, America, opening her eyes to a different (and warmer) kind of hunting.

Having met its master Anne McIntosh through a contact at the Blackmore and Sparkford Vale, Megan spent her time there exercising 20 different hunters, and was able to catch the start of the season.

“They have such a nice quality of life there. They’d go out for dinner really early, so you’re in bed by 9pm, there was a really sweet country club where I’d play tennis, and it was lovely weather. They finish [a day’s hunting] much earlier and because you’re not freezing cold and covered in mud, you can leave your horse in the trailer and go in for tea.

“The hunting is really different there,” adds Megan, who returned each university summer holidays and swiftly sparked the idea of running Blackthorn & Brook, a hunting holiday business to draw Americans to this side of the pond. “I realised that all of these Americans love the English horses and the idea of getting dressed up; they’re much stricter about etiquette than we are.”

Drumming up business on a visit after finishing university wasn’t all plain sailing, however.

“I fell off on the second day and broke my pelvis,” says Megan. “But actually, it was quite a good publicity stunt because everyone heard about it — and I certainly learnt how to go car following that year!” **H&H**



Megan Bliss enjoyed her time with the Blue Ridge hunt in Virginia, America, exercising 20 different hunters

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HUNTING *Farquhar's diary*



Capt Ian Farquhar hunted the Duke of Beaufort's hounds from 1985 to 2011. He retired from the mastership at the end of last season.



Well worth a visit

Capt Ian Farquhar finds the Essex and Suffolk to be an 'impressive show' on his first trip to the region, as hounds run well with a really good cry

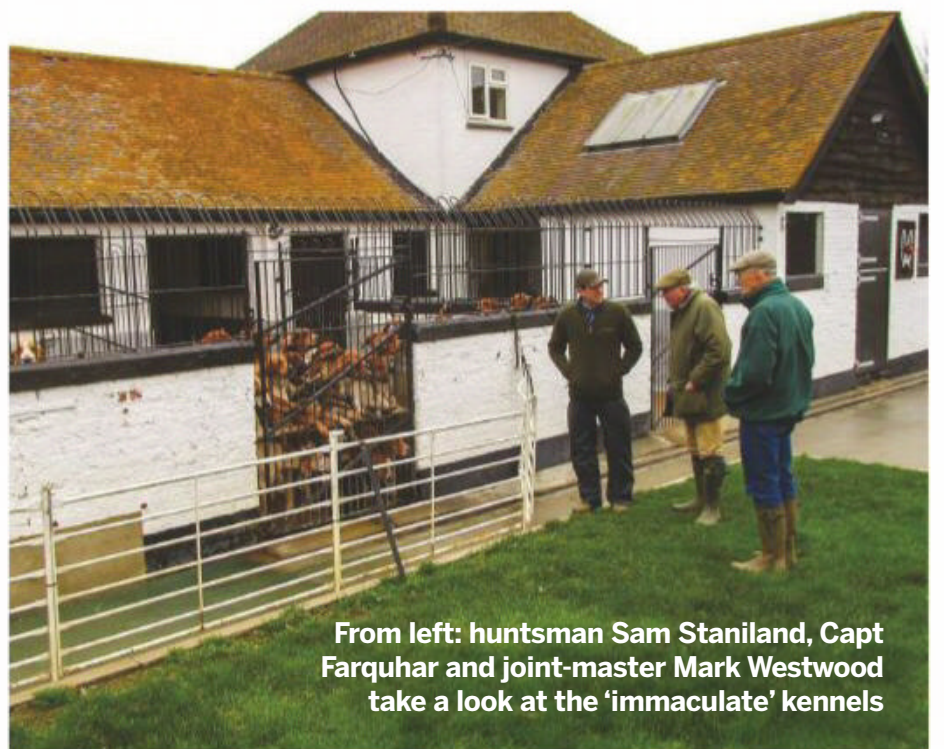
RINGING the changes, it was fascinating last week to go to East Anglia for the first time. I will confess I have never hunted in Essex or Suffolk before; somehow it seems not to be on the way to anywhere else. But recently I had been told firmly by friends that the Essex and Suffolk is a well-organised and efficiently run hunt that has some wilder country than you would expect, and that in addition the kennels were a very good set-up and worth seeing.

So, leaving in plenty of time, we set off early last Friday to stay with one of the joint-masters, Gillie Cranfield, whose husband Richard happens also to be the very effective hunt chairman. They have a lovely house and

the most charming Bedlington terrier/lurcher who I was informed spent too much time asleep — not a family failing!

The hunt's origins go back to Sir William Rowley, master from 1791-1800. The Essex and Suffolk were united until 1921, when they split. During World War II the Essex part of the country ceased to operate, while the Suffolk half carried on; the two packs reunited in 1946 when they moved into the kennels at Layham, where they still are today.

The country is approximately 25 miles north to south and similarly east to west covering an area from the Clacton/Frinton coastline in the south, north up to Debenham, Ipswich to the east and Sudbury to the west. It



From left: huntsman Sam Staniland, Capt Farquhar and joint-master Mark Westwood take a look at the 'immaculate' kennels



The Essex and Suffolk hounds are a mixture of orthodox, with a bias towards old English, but plenty of bone and size

is mainly plough and light arable and has always been very well supported by major landowners and farmers including the Aldouses, the Pauls and more recently the Buckles.

During a delicious dinner that evening, I was delighted to find how many friends and acquaintances one had in the neighbourhood, and it was fun to catch up with James Buckle, joint-master since 1994, and to reminisce of the time when we both served on the MFHA committee prior to the ban.

I admired his forthright views and sound judgement and always felt we had quite a lot in common as to our feelings regarding the management of the day.

It was also a delight to chat to Bridget Chamberlain, field master for the coming day. She is a granddaughter of the legendary Vecta Mitchell, a huntsman and master during World War II and daughter of George Paul, who hunted the hounds in the late 1970s and '80s.

Mark Westwood collected us early the following morning to go to the kennels just down the



The hunt enjoy great support from landowners and farmers; the country is mainly plough and light arable



Proud as punch: huntsman Sam Staniland with his partner Shelbie McCulloch and their two-week-old baby Oliver

road. Mark has been joint-master since 1998 and for some time has been the master in charge of the kennels and the hounds.

I enjoyed saying hello to Sam Staniland, the present professional huntsman. The last time I saw him he was standing in as huntsman at the Meynell and South Staffordshire and making a fair fist of it. It did not surprise me, therefore, to find that the kennels were immaculate and the hounds looked fit and well.

At present, Sam looks after the whole set-up mostly on his own, with a little help a couple of days a week from David Trotman, a retired professional huntsman. Sam used to be helped by his partner Shelbie, who is now somewhat busy with a new two-week-old baby.

Looking after more than 40 couple of hounds and hunting around 80 days a season is taxing work, so Sam is looking forward to the arrival of a new whipper-in at the beginning of May, who will live in accommodation at the kennels. The hounds are a mixture of orthodox with a bias towards old English, but with plenty of bone and size.

RIDING ON A GATOR

WE met at the White Horse in Tattingstone. Sam was joined by two amateur whippers-in, Hamish Golding — a local who has helped for some years — and George Westwood, son of joint-master Mark.

I was also delighted to be introduced to George Paul, whom I had not come across for some

years. A striking figure in his 80s, he insisted we should be ferried about by his son Stuart, an equally patrician figure in a most impressive conveyance called a Gator that seemed to go anywhere bar actually jumping fences.

It was also a bonus to see Sam Watkins at the meet — he won the Farquhar Cup for the best young handler of foxhounds at Peterborough last summer. It is good to see the youth of today taking such an interest. I also welcomed a chance to talk to Liz Reid, another joint-master, again.

The first draw was woodland owned by Lady Aldous, who was also at the meet, and for a time early on hounds ran with a

‘The hounds looked fit and well’

CAPT FARQUHAR

really good cry, although slightly hindered by the proximity of the London-Ipswich railway line.

As the day progressed we were based mainly on land belonging to the Paul family, with amazing views over the tidal River Orwell with Ipswich in the distance. A nasty easterly wind did somewhat curtail sport, but we heard hounds had a flyer a few days later.

We came away with the overriding impression of a happy and well-run hunt, with a popular new huntsman and an impressive mastership who all got on.

A couple of times they said, “We are all getting older, we need new blood.”

They certainly did not look old to me. And continuity is so important. A really impressive show. **H&H**



'I've aimed him at some quite strange things and he never says no'

Kingsmere

The Quorn's Joss Hanbury sings the praises of the 'genuine' racehorse who knows which job he's doing and always behaves 'immaculately'

HUNTING a racehorse can be hairy if they think only of getting their nose in front, but Kingsmere knows the difference between the races and the hunting field.

"He is unique," says Joss Hanbury, senior joint-master of the Quorn. "You can't hold most racehorses, but he could race and then go hunting. He knew where he was."

The Hanburys have a surfeit of great home-bred horses, but Kingsmere's ability to excel in two spheres clinched his place

on this page.

Kingsmere was born in 2005, by King's Theatre out of Lady Emily, a half-sister to top-class hurdler Mighty Man.

"We put him into training with Henry Daly when he was five," recalls Joss, "when he had already won a point-to-point and been autumn hunting."

He has a decent record, running 32 races under Rules over six years and accumulating two chase wins and two hurdle wins, including a handicap hurdle at Cheltenham in 2014.

Every season, he would have

a hunting sabbatical.

"He preferred hunting, I think," muses Joss. "I field mastered the Quorn and I'm now hunting the Atherstone hounds from him."

He likes hard ground, so he would go hunting when it got soft.

"He has a lovely action, but got bogged down racing."

Only just 16hh, Kingsmere goes in a plain snaffle: "He doesn't pull and has always behaved immaculately."

The exception is out hacking: "He tanks off at home, he thinks he's racing then!"

He had perhaps a couple of falls racing, but never hunting.

"He's not the scopiest horse, he wouldn't do a huge gate, but he'll tackle hedges, ditches, rails, wire. He's as good a wire jumper as any I've had and he'll take a single strand of electric wire. I've aimed him at some quite strange things and he never says no."

He's not to everyone's taste: "He jumps very fast, but

accurately. You have to have confidence. I never steady him, just leave him alone."

At the meet, he "stands like a donkey — he takes it all in his stride". He loves the hounds, too: "They go under his belly, they can do anything with him."

Kingsmere enjoys being at home, where everyone loves him: "Some like the routine of a racing yard, but he likes being here."

Compact and well put together, he "has never even had a leg. He's incredibly sound."

Turned out with the rest of the Hanburys' horses in the summer, he usually "keeps himself to himself". He's a "star, extraordinary. He's never missed a day's hunting and just wants to please." Joss speaks with more authority than most when he says the "genuine" Kingsmere is "how you'd like every horse to be". **H&H**

**NEXT
WEEK**

**Robert Moffatt,
huntsman of the
Royal Artillery**



Hunting by car

H&H hunting editor *Catherine Austen* finds herself swapping hooves for wheels, but realises that she has a lot to learn before she becomes a successful car-follower



time talking to two very senior MFHs, who also happened to be car-following, about the future of hunting and What Can Be Done, and other interesting topics. Then we all came across two very senior retired MFHs, who had a bootful of booze (as senior retired MFHs tend to do). The end result was that hounds hunted a trail away from us at speed, but we had no idea where they had gone. I gave up and came home.

Like the majority of hunts, we have a sizeable posse of regular car-followers. Some of them do it very successfully and are practically hunting the hounds from their cars, doing three-point-turns in the blink of an eye and accelerating off with a screech of their wheels. One or two of these attain the unofficial role of Chief Car-Follower and are sometimes given a radio — the pinnacle of car-following and a high treat, as it takes away some of the eternal guesswork and you might hear the huntsman giving someone a bollocking if you're really lucky.

Others bumble along contentedly in a pack, and some park up in a spot where they once saw a fox in the 1960s, then stare patiently into the middle distance, blissfully unaware that hounds are three villages to the right. All socio-economic groupings are represented, and all are having a thoroughly nice time and getting out of the house, which is what the field are doing as well, after all. Dare we say that the antis are, too...?

'Today, I mostly got it wrong'

CAR-FOLLOWING is a difficult thing to get right. To do it really well — and see a lot of the hunting — you have to concentrate, which is not nearly as convivial as chatting and picnicking. I have learnt this because the great Molly Austen is confined to her stable and eating her head off with an injury to a check ligament; I am therefore on four wheels, not four hooves.

Last Saturday, I think I did quite well. I saw lots, made reasonably good decisions when hounds were hunting out of sight and rather enjoyed myself. Today, on the midweek day that I normally hunt, I mostly got it wrong.

I know that bit of country pretty well when I am on a horse, but you can hardly nip over that hunt jump, go down the left-hand side of the covert and get into the next field in a car. It was a beautiful, sunny day, and I spent a long

MOST impressive are those intrepid souls who walk all day with a mounted pack. They must have almost Olympic levels of fitness — as do their dogs — as they go like the clappers. On our light land in a dry winter, I can almost see the attraction, but struggling up sodden fields and bridleways reduced to sludge by a field of horses this season holds no appeal whatsoever.

I'd like to go beagling before the end of the season, though — I know, I've been saying that since November. Although our local pack are stunningly brilliant and hunt like trains, the trails they hunt are at least laid in circles — big ones — so you can take a punt at standing on a hill and waiting for them to hunt back past you. If I followed a pack of foxhounds on foot I doubt I'd see them after the meet.

SOMEONE asked me what my favourite hunting book is recently. I felt I ought to say something improving and worthy, such as Beckford's *Thoughts on Hunting*, Daphne Moore's *Book of the Foxhound*, or any number of very well-written volumes by *H&H* hunting correspondents past and present. But actually it's a slim, American novella called *The Huntsman at the Gate*, by Almet Jenks.

It's an eerie, melancholy tale of a huntsman who has a terrible fall jumping a wire-topped gate in the dark in an attempt to stay with his hounds. When he comes around, he finds himself at a house with some half-familiar, formally dressed strangers. Over dinner he realises that he was killed in the fall — and his companions turn out to be all the foxes he has hunted. It's quite peculiar but utterly enthralling. **H&H**

‘She had a cherished Porsche, which was in storage for some time as it was deemed too hot with the police’



Anne Wilson

THE last member of a ‘great hunting dynasty’, Anne Wilson died in office after a 20-year mastership that was only the tip of the iceberg of her connection with the Barlow.

Anne Wilson

With a penchant for driving fast cars and her close family links with the Barlow, ‘shy’ but ‘daredevil’ Anne Wilson was revered by those who knew her

“MISS ANNE”, as she was called by those who knew her, was the last of a great hunting dynasty who were huge patrons to hunting in general, especially the Barlow.

The Wilsons made their money milling snuff in Sheffield. It was the longest running and most profitable business of its kind in England, the snuff widely used for the congested chests of all the local steel workers.

The Barlow hounds were trencher-fed until Anne’s grandfather, William Wilson, took the mastership in 1878 and rebuilt the kennels. Anne’s father, Major William Wilson, took over the reins of the hunt in 1900 and was sole master for a staggering 56 years.

In 1907, he changed the hounds to a foxhound pack from

harriers that hunted fox and hare.

The Major’s unmarried twin sisters May and Violet, known to most as “the twinnies”, spread their wings from the Barlow country and became joint-masters of the Woodland Pytchley during the war years and then of the Cotswold and High Peak Harriers. Latterly they became well-known personalities in Leicestershire where they hunted with the Cottesmore.

Anne’s brother was tragically killed in the last week of World War II and so it was her elder sister Elsie who took over the mastership from her father in 1956, a position she held until her death in 1988.

On Elsie’s death, the family estate at Horsley Gate was left to the hunt. With kennels, houses and in excess of 1,000 acres of grass farmland in this beautiful

piece of old England, the Barlow were immensely grateful for this game-changing legacy.

Anne Wilson was brought up at Horsley Gate and educated by her governess. She had the good fortune to whip-in to the famous huntsman Ted Hill, who had been in that position since 1953, only the fourth huntsman of these hounds since 1878 when the Wilson family took the hounds.

Ted had served in the Royal Tank Corps in both the Middle East and the D-day landings. As a huntsman, he was particularly known for his brilliance on the hunting horn, winning the horn-blowing contest at the *Horse & Hound* ball in London on two occasions.

The Wilsons bred their own hunters and most of the horses ridden by the huntsman were home-bred at Horsley Gate.

Despite being a shy lady, Anne was surprisingly daredevil. A National Hunt enthusiast who owned several chasers, she was also keen on driving fast cars, as anyone who travelled as a passenger with her would testify. She had a cherished Porsche, which was placed in storage for some time as it was deemed too hot with the police.

When she was too old to ride, Miss Anne still never missed a day with her beloved hounds and would follow in the car with all the neighbouring hunts.

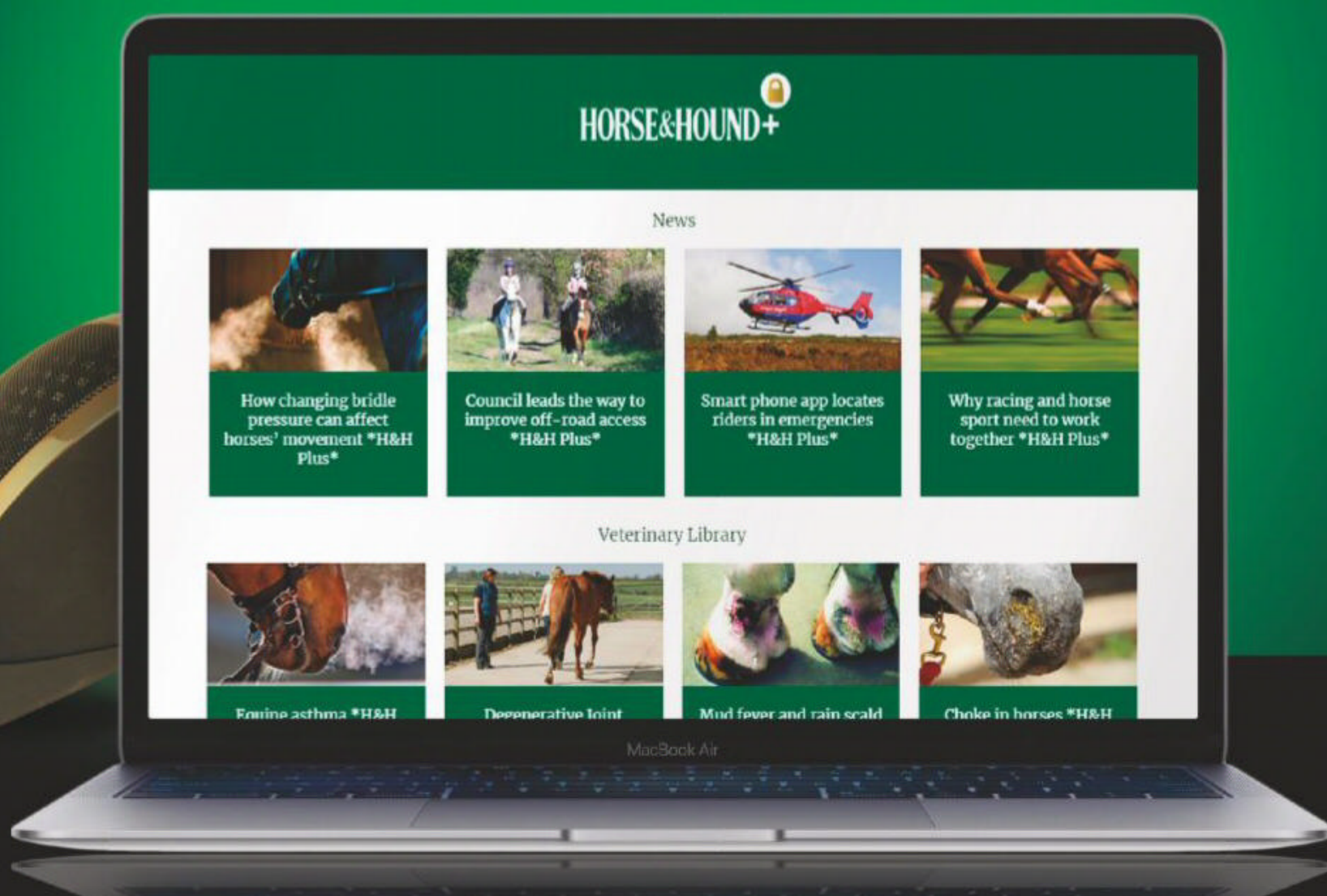
She inherited Highlightley Farm from her aunt in 1963, and lived there until her death in office in 2009 at 89 years old. An inveterate hoarder, she had moved into a caravan that tragically caught fire due to a gas leak. She sadly died intestate, the last of this great hunting family. **H&H**

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Northern stars

Becky Murray

investigates the health of breeding in Scotland, and finds there is much to be excited about

WHILE Scotland is known for its beautiful landscapes and as the home of golf and, of course, the Shetland pony, should we be adding sport horse breeding hotspot to its accolades? With several studs having grown from small family farms in the heart of Scotland to breeders of top international horses, it seems the country has made a significant mark on the breeding map.

Nestled in Aberdeenshire on the north-east coast is Caroline and Gordon Ironside's Moray Firth Stud (MFS), breeders of eventers, showjumpers and dressage horses. Caroline

says they launched the stud, which was established in 1996, as "hobby breeders".

"We had just a couple of horses back in the day, and — knowing what I do now — the quality we had then was really riding club types," says Caroline. "In 1999 we went to the VDL Stud in the Netherlands and looked at more than 300 colts. We picked one and they told us to take care of him as he was going to be a good one."

It was that KWPN colt, MFS Royal Geneve (Silvio II x Ahorn Z), who became the foundation of the stud's breeding programme. The stallion achieved grading with the British Bavarian and Scottish Sport Horse studbooks, showing a promising future in dressage with rider Jo Barry, but sadly died in 2006 following colic surgery.

Over time Caroline grew the stud, seeking quality mares in the likes of Elegan-Zitchy (Jazz x Ferro), Willisa Rosa (Emillion x Damiro B) and full sister to KWPN stallion Vivaldi, Chirana-Utopia (Krack C x Jazz). As Caroline retained fillies along the way, the stud

has an established herd of 18 mares, alongside Hanoverian stallion MFS Don Aqui by Don Bosco x Gardeulan II, and Holstein stallion MFS Cayden HH by Contender x Caretino.

"We're at the stage of breeding and keeping our own young mares because they are, we hope, of good enough quality," says Caroline.

"Every year I have the Oldenburg studbook evaluate our foals, and this year we had a 100% strike rate. It's nice to get an independent view on what you're breeding from the judges in Germany because they're assessing your foals with the same high standards that they're looking at there.

"People have asked why we don't go with British studbooks but we have used British Hanoverian and the Anglo-European studbook; we do things based on what the client wants — and some will want a Dutch or Oldenburg passport."

The farm spans 70 acres of good-quality ground, allowing the stud to grow its own haylage.

"We have lots of arable farmers based here



because the ground is so good,” says Caroline. “We analyse what we grow and use local feed firms to make up feed to complement that, so we know our mares and youngsters are getting the right nutrients.”

This careful production and nurturing has served MFS well as they count US grand prix dressage rider Katherine Bateson Chandler among their clients, as well as returning customers including Al Asayl Showjumping from the United Arab Emirates.

“I think Scotland is being taken more seriously for breeding; there are some really good studs here producing high quality, and clients come back because of that.”

Caroline says the success has been a dream come true. With horses such as W Diva Rosa

but she adds finding the right rider is just as important.

“You can breed the next Valegro, but if you don’t get Charlotte Dujardin to ride it then that horse could be a happy hacker or do riding club. It’s down to the riders and getting horses into those homes,” says Caroline.

MARY TURNBULL, who established Ashton Stud in Fife with husband John in 1989 at the third-generation 120-acre family farm, agrees finding the right rider is part of the success.

The stud counts showjumpers Hello Whisky Mac IV, Uptown Girl and former advanced eventer Argosy among their top achievements. But there is no overlooking the

‘I think Scotland is being taken more seriously for breeding; there are some really good studs’

CAROLINE IRONSIDE

MFS making her mark in World Cup qualifiers, representing Sweden in the Nations Cup and being crowned the British Hanoverian showjumping horse of the year 2019 at the British Horse Foundation Awards, the goal is to see one of their own at the Olympics —

2014 world number one mare Ursula XII who, after being produced by Mary’s son Mark, was campaigned by Tina Fletcher before Scott Brash took on the ride in 2012 for owners Lady Harris and Lady Kirkham.

“I knew Ursula was going to be special,” says

Stallions at stud in Scotland



- **Moray Firth Stud:** MFS Don Aqui (pictured; Don Bosco x Gardeulan II)
- **Romanno Stud:** L'Espoir (Lord Loxley x Warkant)
- **Ladykirk Equitation and Stud:** AC Activate (Cornet Obolensky x Grandilot)
- **Balcormo Stud:** Jumped Up Z (Jos Van D'Abdijhoeve x Voltaire)
- **Hollrock Sport Horses:** Jannan S (Kannan x Numero Uno)
- **Milnfield Park Stud:** Shamazing (Serano Gold x Omni Star)

‘The horses do very well here,’ says Reay Campbell of Caledonia Dressage Horses, located in beautiful surroundings an hour north of Inverness

Mary. “But she had Scott, so that helped.

“Some people do think we’re very far away in Scotland, and have thought if it’s bred here, ‘Can it be that good?’ We’ve built up a reputation now but we do need to have horses out competing to show what they can do.”

Mary says Mark and daughter Katie are key to producing their youngstock up the ranks. With that in mind, and with no staff, the stud breeds five to six foals every year.

“We never had a lot of horses; we looked at the mares and improved them over time,” she says. “Our growth is down to the research we’ve put in; all our broodmares are broken to ride

‘The biggest challenge was marketing, because we don’t have the opportunity to take foals to shows’

REAY CAMPBELL

and we get a feel of what they’re like. It is hard work; we’re handling the foals, backing them, taking them out — it’s a long process. Ursula was 10 years in the making.”

With Katie favouring dressage, and campaigning Ashton Solitair at advanced medium, one of the six foals expected this year is by the dressage stallion Fidertanz.

“We get some nice movers but Mark usually snaffles them up for showjumping,” Mary laughs. “We have some young horses in the pipeline who we are excited about but I don’t want to jinx them!”

NEW ZEALANDER Reay Campbell, who booked a one-way ticket and settled in Scotland, launched Caledonia Dressage Horses 20 years ago. Tucked away in Bonar Bridge, an hour north of Inverness, the stud sits on her husband Pete’s family farm.

“Where we’re based is not the ideal place you would think to breed horses, but that’s where we live and I thought, ‘That’s where I’m going to do it,’” says Reay. “It has lots of advantages, it’s very good free-draining land with shelter — the horses do very well here.”

The stud began breeding two foals a year, with a mixture of showjumping and dressage



Caledonia Dressage Horse’s Reay Campbell with Donner Dancing, one of three Don Schufro daughters bred and owned by the stud

bloodlines, but Reay says she found dressage foals “more interesting”, and success came early by way of Don Caledonia, currently competing at inter II with Hannah Biggs.

“Of the first foals we bred we kept the only filly, and then her first foal was by Don Schufro — that was Don Caledonia. I spotted Don Schufro early in his career and we’ve used him a lot in our programme,” says Reay.

“It’s been challenging to find mares of top quality but I’m very proud of our collection. One of them, U-Dancing Caledonia, is by Uthopia, out of Valegro’s full sister Weidyfleur II. I also have Loretta Live, who is the half-sister of Diamond Hit and Sandro Hit.”

Despite early success, Reay says it was a visit from a famous face in 2015 that made her realise she was really on to something.

“Olympic trainer Conrad Schumacher

visited and was hugely complimentary — he was pivotal to me thinking I can do this,” she says.

Reay explains that although Caledonia Dressage is geographically isolated in the Highlands, distance hasn’t put buyers off making the journey to Scotland.

“The biggest challenge was marketing, because we are so far out of the mainstream and don’t have the opportunity to take foals to shows. However, as the stud gained reputation, that became less of an issue,” says Reay.

“We export around 50% to Europe and the majority do come and meet the foals here. People think we must be difficult to visit but you can fly to Inverness and then buyers usually stay with us. It helps them get a feeling for what the Scottish Highlands and our horses are about.” **H&H**

SCOTTISH-BRED HORSES TO WATCH IN 2020

● **MFS Don Junior:** the 10-year-old by MFS Don Aqui is competing at 1.45m in the United Arab Emirates.

● **Ashton Dakota:** the Turnbulls’ 12-year-old by Lupicor is campaigning 1.40m in the UK.

● **Graffite:** eventer Eilidh Costelloe’s home-bred seven-year-old by Grafenstolz is aiming to step up to three-star this season.

● **EV Amore Mia:** Lindsay Moffat’s home-bred eight-year-old by Amour G is doing medium dressage with new rider Claire Moore.

● **Happy Talk:** the Balcormo Stud-bred eight-year-old by Talan was sold to Australia as a showjumping World Cup prospect.



The 12-year-old Ashton Dakota is one to watch this year, currently campaigning at 1.40m

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Aireworth Vets	W Yorkshire	01535 602988	Milbourn Equine - Hawkshurst	Kent	01580 752301
Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group	Northumberland	01670 897597	Nantwich Equine Vets LLP	Cheshire	01270 628888
Anchorage Barn Equine Clinic	Norfolk	01485 528437	Newmarket Equine Hospital	Suffolk	01638 782000
Ardene House Vet Practice Ltd	Aberdeenshire	01224 740700	Newnham Court Equine	Kent	01622 737884
Auburn Equine Clinic	Co Antrim	02894 453621	North West Equine Vets Ltd	N Yorkshire	0808 1685580
Avonvale Equine Practice	Oxfordshire	01295 670501	Oakham Veterinary Hospital	Rutland	01572 722647
B&W Equine Vets	Gloucestershire	01666 880501	Oaklands Veterinary Centre	N Yorkshire	01642 760313
Bell Equine Veterinary Clinic	Kent	01622 813700	Page & Gunstone Equine Vets	Cheshire	01948 800407
Bellevue Veterinary Clinic	Somerset	01373 836186	Paragon Veterinary Group	Cumbria	01768 483789
Bishopton Equine Vet Services	N Yorkshire	01765 602396	Paterson Equine Clinic Ltd	Herefordshire	01432 00380
Blaircourt Equine Clinic	Essex	01245 429025	Paton and Lee Ltd	Essex	01376 513369
Bourton Vale Equine Clinic	Gloucestershire	01451 820137	Peasebrook Equine Clinic	Worcestershire	01386 853884
Buckingham Equine Vets	Bucks	01908 560789	Penbode Equine Vets	Devon	01409 255549
Calweton Veterinary Group	Cornwall	01579 383231	Penmellyn Veterinary Group	Cornwall	01637 880307
Cheshire Equine Clinic	Cheshire	01829 770999	Pump Lane Equine Vet Clinic	Bucks	01628 477219
Chiltern Equine Clinic	Berkshire	01344 891888	R D Owen Equine Clinic Ltd	Denbighshire	01745 584516
Chine House Veterinary Hospital	Leicestershire	01509 812445	Ridings Equine Vets Ltd	Yorkshire	07747 771182
Churchfield Veterinary Centre	South Yorkshire	01226 763542	Rosevean Veterinary Practice	Cornwall	01736 362215
Cinder Hill Equine Clinic	West Sussex	01342 811335	Rosssdales LLP	Suffolk	01638 663150
Cliffe Equine	East Sussex	01323 815120	Rufford Veterinary Group Ltd	Lancashire	01704 821204
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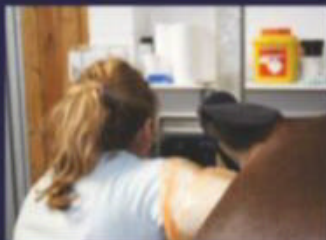
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Liam (left) and Kieran Kennedy with Coolballyshan Stud's 'grand old man', the 28-year-old Quick Star son OBOS Quality 004

★
SPORT HORSE
SPECIAL
Part 1

A Quality family

The Kennedy family stand seven stallions including OBOS Quality 004, sire of Burghley winner MGH Grafton Street, and breed 60 foals a year. *Pippa Roome* visits them at home in Ireland

KIERAN KENNEDY'S interest and pride in his stallions is obvious on arrival at Coolballyshan Stud. His wife, Natalie, sweeps me into the long, covered yard and Kieran opens a stable door to show me the hugely popular and successful stallion OBOS Quality 004.

"OBS", as the family call him — and this is very much a family affair — is 28 now and his record speaks for itself: he was a Nations Cup showjumper under Denis Coakley and Dermott Lennon and his progeny include last year's Burghley winner MGH Grafton Street, ridden by Pippa Funnell, and the 2015 European showjumping team bronze medallist Castlefield Eclipse, piloted by Paul Estermann for Switzerland.

Kieran is bubbling with enthusiasm as his brother Liam brings out the stud's other six stallions, including the Olympic showjumper Vivant, a neat, powerful-looking horse even at 22 and now the stud's flagship stallion.

In an open-fronted barn, yearlings poke their heads through the bars to eat their fill of haylage. Nearly all by Vivant, they appear virtually identical, but Kieran and Liam know the personalities and pedigrees of every one, even though they breed some 60 foals a year.

German powerhouse breeder Paul Schockemöhle bred OBOS Quality 004, selling him to Ireland's Marie O'Brien as a four-year-old. He is by the multiple grand prix winner Quick Star — whose other stallion sons include Rio 2016 Olympic champion Big Star — with jumping lines also through his dam Reichsdame, by Domino.

"We saw a lot of his young horses jumping in the five- and six-year-old classes, so we approached Marie," says Kieran.

An injury in the stable ended OBOS Quality's jumping career when he was 13; the Kennedys bought him two years later, in 2007.

"He was busy the first year — he had 80 mares, then 120 the next year. Then he had three Nations Cup showjumpers in Lisona,

Sinead Kennedy, — who runs the family's original equestrian centre alongside her parents, rides Lagans OBOS Quality



Castlefield Eclipse and Mark Q, who put him on the map," says Kieran. "He was always very fertile, loved his job, was sound and easy to handle."

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Six-year-old Lagans OBOS Quality caught the Kennedys' attention as 'a cracking foal'



Vivant, 22, who competed at two World and one Olympic Games, is now the stud's flagship stallion

"A lot of the mares were 1.10m mares — careful and cute — and he put bravery on them to jump bigger fences, more scope, more canter. He gives rideability too; they come down to the fence and don't go left or right. If they crash and burn, the next time they come down and jump it, they won't nap or get too careful."

Liam adds: "He stamps his stock. We've had stallions who could throw 10 different types, but you could look at an OBS foal in the field and know them."

Kieran agrees: "Their movement is obvious and they are muscly, strong horses."

OBOS Quality's stud fee is £1,000 via frozen semen from Stallion AI Services. There are around 5,000 straws of his semen, with an unlimited life expectancy.

"It costs a lot of money to get frozen semen, but Tullis Matson has the best process for freezing in the world," says Kieran. "I haven't been really pushing it because I don't want it all gone in one year; it could bring in £30,000 or £40,000 a year."

THE Kennedys' business is a multi-yard, multi-generational operation.

"My parents, Bill and Anna, started the whole thing. My dad is horse crazy: he'd go to a show and the grand prix could be on, but he's so into young horses, he'll sit all day and watch three- or four-year-olds," says Liam.

"He has a photographic mind for pedigrees and horses and he invested in the sport horse industry when no one else was doing so."

Kieran adds: "He was a dairy manager, but his pleasure was horses. He sold horses for a lot of money, but because he had an income, he didn't need to sell."

"For example, he had KEC Maximum Joe [who jumped for the Netherlands and Ireland in Nations Cups] and he wouldn't sell him, he wanted to stand him at stud."

The stallions at Coolballyshan Stud are primarily Kieran's responsibility, while Liam leads on producing the young horses. The pair run two yards 5km apart in Adare, Co. Limerick, while their younger sister Sinead manages the original Kennedy Equine Centre in Tralee, Co. Kerry, alongside their parents.

Their oldest sibling, Oonagh, teaches at a university and also has a tack business, while their older brother, Cormac, runs his own teaching and importing yard in the USA.

This is a hard-grafting family and they believe in investing back into their business.

"A lot of stud businesses have opened in Ireland in the past 15 years," says Liam. "The first year they buy new stallions, the second they're going to change the whole breeding industry; by year four they've gone out of it."

"They don't realise the amount of man hours and headaches and work — and work

Coolballyshan Stud's stallions



OBOS QUALITY 004
BREEDING: Quick Star x Domino
IN A NUTSHELL: 28 this year and available via frozen semen, OBOS Quality 004 is the grand old man of Coolballyshan.

Sire of a raft of top-level eventers and showjumpers, including Burghley winner MGH Grafton Street, the smart five-star horse Class Affair (ridden by Zara Tindall) and Nations Cup showjumpers Lisona, Castlefield Eclipse and Mark Q.



LAGANS OBOS QUALITY
BREEDING: OBOS Quality 004 x Cavalier Royale
IN A NUTSHELL: son of the stud's grandee stallion, a beautiful

six-year-old who won the three-year-old potential event horse at the Dublin Horse Show in 2017.



VIVANT
BREEDING: Fuego Du Prelet x Landino
IN A NUTSHELL: a compact 22-year-old former showjumper who contested two World Equestrian

Games and the London 2012 Olympics; progeny include 1.60m showjumper CP Argento and five-star event horse Virgil.

Continued overleaf...



Liam and Kieran's sister Sinead exercises KBS Apple Juice, a six-year-old by OBOS Quality 004 out of a KEC Maximum Joe mare, in the stud's all-weather arena

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Alert yearlings in the barn — group living encourages good temperaments. Coolballyshan produces around 60 foals a year, most of whom are sold as four-year-olds

and work, and then more work. In the stud season, Kieran is at the yard at 7am and he doesn't leave until 10pm every night, seven days a week for five months."

Kieran believes in owning all his stallions outright. He says: "We get fellows approaching us from the Continent asking us to take a horse for two years, but it's a waste of time. If I earn a thousand quid, I can put that into my pocket, but if I do your horse, I'll have to give you half of it and you're over there doing nothing at all."

Aside from stud fees, the brothers' income comes from selling horses. The sale of a six-year-old by OBOS Quality to European champion showjumper Martin Fuchs enabled the purchase of Vivant, who competed at the 2010 and 2014 World Equestrian Games, finishing eighth at the latter with Cassio Rivetti.

'You could look at an OBOS foal in the field and know them'

LIAM KENNEDY

The pair are also excited about six-year-old Lagans OBOS Quality, who has already served decent books of mares via artificial insemination. The son of OBOS Quality was bought when he was six days old from breeder Peter Rice, who had sent his dam, a Cavalier Royale mare, to be covered again.

"She's the best-looking mare who comes into the barn every year," says Liam.

"He was just a cracking foal," adds Kieran. "He had swagger and exceptional movement and a real attitude. My sister Sinead will showjump him in Ireland this year and in September he'll probably go to Shane Breen.

He's neat, he's careful, he has a lot of scope and he's very willing."

A PART from the odd special one and the fillies who are kept to refresh their mare band, the Kennedys sell the youngsters as four-year-olds. They believe in raising the young horses simply, and that keeping them in groups encourages good temperaments.

"The weaned foals are fed on oats and haylage and then they get as much haylage as they can eat and mineral blocks," says Kieran. "If they get too heavy, they have wind and heart problems, and it leads to bone problems which show up on X-rays.

"All our farms are on limestone so they grow great bone density — you very rarely get little hairline fractures or compound fractures."

The Kennedys sell 80% of their young horses to Britain, Ireland and the USA, with Chris Hunt at Global Event Horses and Richard Sheane of Cooley Farm among their clients. They are realistic that not every one will be a superstar and some will be "middle of the road four or five grand horses", but they hope to achieve €20,000-30,000 (£16,730-25,100) for most four-year-olds.

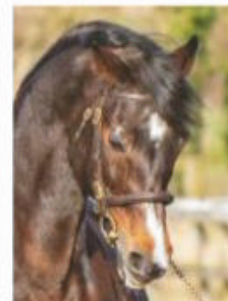
"That way, we're making a living and paying the bills, whereas if you keep them until they're five, you have to go on tour to Spain and you can be spending €5,000 to €10,000 a week to keep going, rather than €1,500," says Kieran.

"It isn't our scene to be among the fancy boys that go to all the shows. We'd rather jump a four-year-old and get it sold to keep the business going. We've seen so many businesses close down because they had massive ideas and they had money today and nothing tomorrow."

With a long history in breeding, a selection of exciting stallions and a philosophy of reinvestment, the Kennedy family will be in business for many years to come. **H&H**

Anna and Bill Kennedy with their grandchildren Georgia, Conor, Amy and Christian. 'A couple of families have been raised out of this business,' says Liam

Coolballyshan Stud's stallions



CHACOA
BREEDING: Contender x Landgraf I

IN A NUTSHELL: a 24-year-old Holstein stallion with a good record for throwing event horses —

"they're tall, elegant horses, good types," says Kieran; progeny include One Two Many, a European eventing team silver medallist with Nicola Wilson.



BARELY A MOMENT
BREEDING: Gilded Time x Danehill

IN A NUTSHELL: a 19-year-old thoroughbred who was a three-time Group One winner in Australia, he covers

both National Hunt and eventing mares by natural covering only.



FUTURE TREND
BREEDING: I Need You x Grannus

IN A NUTSHELL: another veteran at 20, the Oldenburg jumped at 1.50m himself. "He breeds good-looking horses

who are easy to ride — showjumpers, lots of eventers, show horses and all-rounders, and hunter jumpers for the American market," says Kieran.



CONTICCO
BREEDING: Chacco-Blue x Continue

IN A NUTSHELL: new to Coolballyshan Stud this year, the 10-year-old jumped at 1.40m level before suffering a career-

ending pelvis injury. The Kennedys believe he'll be ideal for adding power and size to "little blood mares who are short of scope and size".

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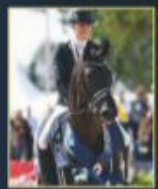
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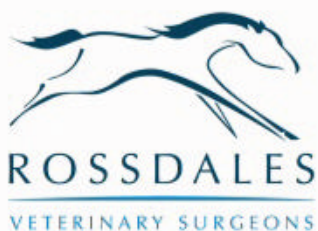
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Taking breeding

Across the Atlantic, an ambitious jumping stud with British and Irish links is pushing boundaries in a bid to revolutionise US breeding, writes *Nancy Jaffer*

SPY COAST FARM is far more than a breeding operation, even though it hosts around 250 horses on 400 picturesque acres in the heart of Lexington's Bluegrass region, nestled close to the Kentucky Horse Park.

Owner Lisa Lourie, a former nurse who has a master's degree in health care management, only runs at full throttle. She uses her abundant energy to make her farm and its 60-strong staff a focal point for all kinds of activity to enhance the breeding business. That includes a sophisticated rehab and fitness centre that opened in the spring of 2019, a quarantine facility, a brand-new education centre as well as facilities for training Spy Coast progeny from the breaking in stage right up to grand prix jumping. Spy Coast regularly welcomes tours, and even has a gift shop.

"It's all part of agri-business, another profit centre," explains Lisa, who is part of Wellington Equestrian Partners, the holding company that owns the Winter Equestrian Festival's home in Wellington, Florida. It is managed by impresario Mark Bellissimo, who calls Lisa "very principled and very passionate", noting she has "a strong vision for equestrian sport".

Lisa is also a partner in the Bellissimo-managed entity that owns the Tryon International Equestrian Centre in North Carolina, where the FEI World Equestrian Games were held in 2018. She has a small farm in Tryon and one in Wellington that is leased out to top Irish rider Shane Sweetnam, who has been Lisa's business partner since 2004. But it is the Kentucky property and all its facets that serve as the base of her operations.

LISA began riding at the age of 42, after her daughter Julia became involved with showjumpers, and set up Spy Coast in 2003 with her then husband Robert Lourie. The original farm is located in a section of Long Island, New York, where George Washington commissioned a spy ring during the Revolutionary War. As a result, the area became known as the Spy Coast.

A year after Lisa and Robert purchased the Kentucky farm in 2009, Julia's horse, Werly Chin De Muze, was so badly injured that vets wanted to put her down. But Lisa's nursing experience kicked in and, after assessing the mare, a daughter of Nabab De Reve, she decided to keep her for breeding. Werly became the dam of Derly Chin De Muze, the 2012 Olympic ride of Canadian Eric Lamaze.

Werly was bred to Amaretto D'Arco, a



There are around 250 horses on the picturesque 400-acre Spy Coast Farm, which is near Kentucky Horse Park

to a new level

spectacular stallion who was bought by Spy Coast in 2008 and died in 2016. The pairing produced Kirschwasser SCF, a 2010 Belgian warmblood gelding who has been a winner at Tryon and the Hampton Classic.

During the 2019 Winter Equestrian Festival, Shane competed Kirschwasser in his first Nations Cup on the second-placed Irish team. Kirschwasser and his full-brother, Kir Royal SCF, who finished second at Tryon when his sibling won, were born by embryo transfer just months apart.

Kirschwasser belongs to “our first true foal crop,” Lisa points out. His success is “huge for Spy Coast’s name, especially with the Europeans. They see we’re not just breeding them, we’re actually producing them, too.”

Shane and Lisa started working together when he began helping Julia, and Lisa liked his approach.

“I was looking for a trainer who was going to be upfront with me. All three of us clicked,

and the rest was history,” she says, explaining Shane helped her keep the farm going after her split from Robert in 2013.

Lisa has a special affinity for Ireland. The family of her mother, whose maiden name was Durkin, came from the same area as Shane. So it seemed natural for Lisa to support Shane’s efforts with the Irish team. That squad’s gold medal in the 2017 European Championships — its first in 16 years — was boosted by crucial clear rounds from Shane and Spy Coast’s Chaqui Z.

“It was great for Ireland, great for us and Chaqui Z,” Lisa says about the son of Chacco Blue, a Dutch-bred Zangersheide stallion. “For Spy Coast to be on the winning European team — we made it, Shane and myself. We had arrived.”

WHAT attracted this dynamo to the breeding business in America, where most top-level jumpers are imported from Europe?

The British connection

MARES with a link to Britain have worked well for Spy Coast, for example Rolette (pictured), Ben Maher’s 2008 Olympic ride.

Robert Lourie, Lisa’s ex-husband, bought Rolette after the Beijing Olympics and the horse’s biggest success with Spy Coast has been as a broodmare. She produced 14 foals for Spy Coast from 2010 to 2019. One of her first foals, Kimmel SCF, a 2010 gelding by the late Amaretto D’Arco, was sold to an amateur and jumped at 1.50m level with Timothy Hendricks and Joie Gatlin. She has several promising jumpers in the pipeline, including Madagascar SCF, a 2012 gelding by Diktator VD Boslandhoeve.

The farm has less experience with Billy Bianca, bred by the Billy Stud in Britain. Ridden in competition by Laura Kraut and Richard Spooner, the British-bred mare’s oldest offspring is a 2016 mare by Diktator VD Boslandhoeve, who has now been started under saddle. Billy Bianca also has younger progeny by Cardento and Tangelo VD Zuuthoeve.



SPY COAST FARM

"I think because it's unlimited; there's a lot of room for growth," Lisa muses, at the same time observing that trying to get Americans to buy US-bred horses instead of shopping abroad can be compared to "moving a battleship. You are incrementally changing people's opinion".

As Shane notes: "It's hard to make that break, because people do want to go on their trip to Europe. The young horse market in America isn't massive, because most of the clients are amateurs or juniors. Mostly the horses have to be ready-made for them, so five, six- and seven-year-olds are usually a bit too young for them."

Lisa's solution is to provide more opportunities to bring on young horses, such as a developing jumper series and young horse shows. Spy Coast presented a highly successful edition of the latter's finals in November, bringing more than 100 horses to the Tryon facility.

"There's always something else to do," says the down-to-earth Lisa. "It's the creative process that's merged with management and education. I love figuring out how to solve a problem creatively."

The process with each horse starts with another Irish rider, Ciaran Thompson from the eventing world. He backs the horses before they go on to David O'Brien, another Irishman, who continues the training in Kentucky and may do some competing before Shane takes over the top prospects.

"I made the decision not to sell our yearlings, two- or three-year olds," says Lisa, who believes clients should buy only after the horses have their lead changes and are started over fences.

"I wanted to prove our system. If Spy Coast is going to be a centre of excellence, I can't be selling horses to people who may not know how to train or finish that horse."

LISA has her own style when it comes to matching mares and stallions.

"All the breeding I do is based on performance," Lisa explains.



Chaqui Z put the stud on the map, winning team gold at the 2017 Euros with Shane Sweetnam



Shane Sweetnam rides Kirschwasser SCF

"I don't just pedigree-match. I look at what people want and ask, 'How do I breed that?' For example, if it needs more blood, who would add blood but still give a good mouth?"

Lisa has patience, a quality that is invaluable for those who want to succeed in the breeding game.

"Some people are motivated by the win, and that's fine, but I am not. I'm motivated by the process," she says.

"My VIP table by the international ring at the Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington is my office. That's where my clients come and ask me breeding questions, such as could I take a mare or what should they do with a stallion? I sit there and they come to me. I'm not a sales person, I don't solicit anything."

By listening, she has gained a sharp insight into what her clientele wants. She also has help from Shane and David, who works with Spy Coast's young horses.

"My primary goal is to breed for amateurs. In the US, that's 99% of the market," she says, noting Spy Coast specialises in jumping bloodlines.

"If I get a great grand prix horse, that's terrific, but they should still have a good brain and be able to be handled by an amateur," she explains.

INFLUENCED by her nursing background, Lisa says she runs her barns more like a hospital than a stable. Everyone who comes to work for her signs a confidentiality agreement. People who have high-end horses don't want anything about them revealed, she points out.

"Nothing goes beyond these walls," she says firmly. "No owner names go on the stalls."

Innovation in breeding is welcomed at Spy Coast. For example, intracytoplasmic sperm injection — an in vitro fertilisation procedure involving injection of a single sperm cell into the cytoplasm of an egg for transplant into a surrogate — became a boon in the often difficult effort to get foals from older mares.

Lisa stresses she doesn't consider Spy Coast to be in competition with European breeders.

"I want to promote the industry. As far as I'm concerned, that includes them. I would love it if a couple of big breeders would come over here and set up shop." **H&H**

'I hopped on that crazy train'

DR MODESTY BURLESON (pictured, far right with Lisa), who has been Spy Coast's resident vet since 2010, is viewed by Lisa as "sort of my second-in-command — she always takes up the slack".

Modesty came to Lexington for a one-year internship at the prestigious veterinary practice Rood & Riddle.

"I planned to go home, but I met my husband here," says Modesty, "and then Dr Tom Riddle asked me to be resident vet at Shadwell Farm," which is owned by Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum. She then stayed on as a Rood & Riddle associate.

One day, the clinic received a colic emergency call from Spy Coast. Everyone else was at Keeneland for the thoroughbred sales, so even though she was fourth on the call list, Modesty wound up handling the situation and doing the follow-up.

After that, Spy Coast's manager and Lisa decided they wanted a resident vet, believing Modesty would be perfect for the job. She had to tell them, however, that she was employed by Rood & Riddle, and could only do work for Spy Coast through that practice.

Then Robert Lourie, to whom Lisa was married at the time, "flew down with a blank cheque and bought my non-compete contract", recalls Modesty, who was only three years out of vet school at the time — as she pointed out to Lisa.

"That was why I wanted you; you had no ego and were willing to learn," she tells Modesty.

"When I started, there were 10 to 15 horses and maybe half a dozen employees," recalls Modesty. "I hopped on that crazy train and this place has just grown and unfolded since."

Modesty and her husband also run a farm, where they breed 150 thoroughbreds a year.



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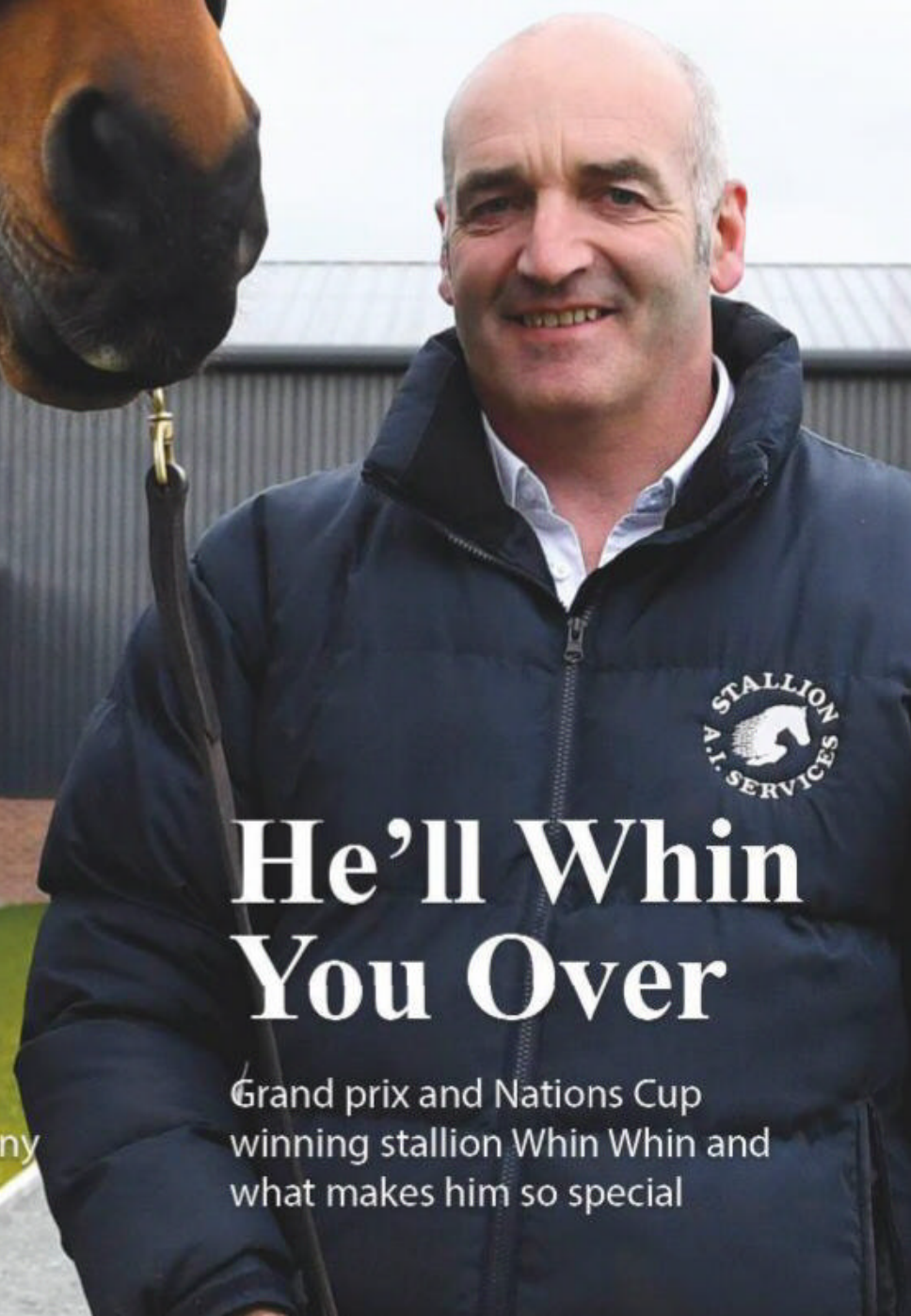
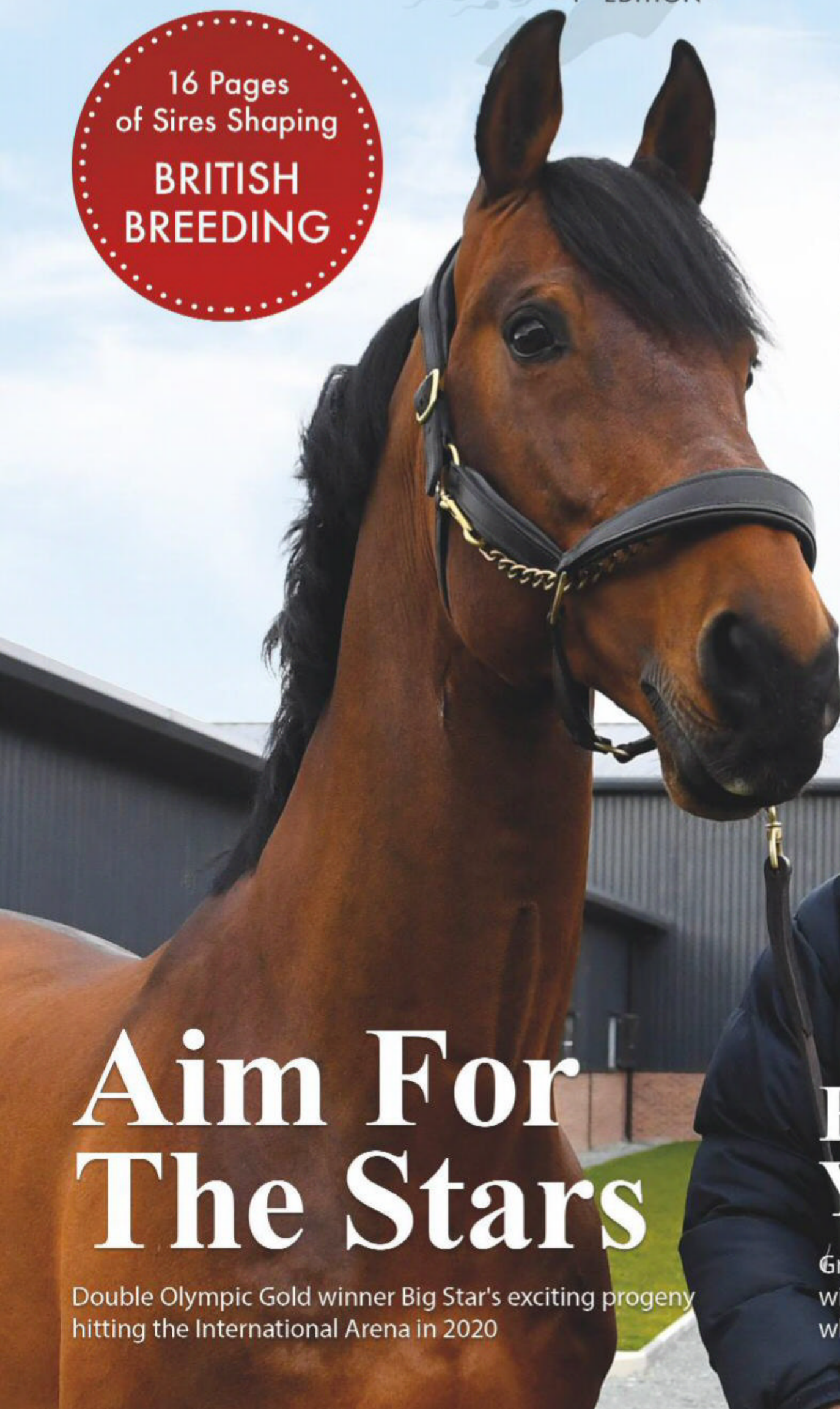
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LUIDAM

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FROZEN

International Grand Prix stallion, Luidam, is famous for his outstanding showjumping performance and also for his talented progeny.

Luidam competed with Ireland’s Billy Twomey in Nations Cups, European Championships and World Championships. Billy describes him as ‘one of the best horses I have ever ridden’. Luidam is a HSI5* rated stallion. Luidam’s sire Guidam was KWPN ‘Stallion of the Year’ and was granted KWPN ‘Keir status. Guidam is by the legendary showjumping stallion Quidam de Revel. Luidam’s dam, Eljenohve, was awarded the title of Preferent Elite by the KWPN, and from this damline, descend Orsini (international at CSI2* 2016), Watermill Scandic, & Chaman, one of the world’s most successful show jumpers. Michael Whitaker described Luidam as ‘one of the most exciting and promising new stallions to breeding programmes in many years’. Luidam has definitely been a highly influential stallion in show jumping, whose progeny jump internationally at top level. Luidam was one of the most consistent performers on the European circuit. His progeny tend to have good scope, a level headed temperament and athletic movement.

GUIDAM			QUIDAM DE REVEL	JALISCO B
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			FOUGERE	VENUTARD
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ELJENOHVE			AKTEUR	AMOR
				JONKVROUW
			POLINE	LUCKY BOY XX
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PROGENY

Luikan Q – CSIO5* winning Nations Cup teams – Rome, Aachen and Hickstead - Angelie von Essen
Candy du Nantuel - CSIYH1* 1.40m Thomas Rousseau. 4th most used sire in France in 2016.
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Blue Angel - Competing at CSI4* & CSI5* - Kent Farrington
Ard Ginger Pop, topped the Goresbridge Supreme Sale of Showjumpers at €95,000.
Loughnavatta Indigo – CSI3* - 5* 1.50m J. Corrigan

RESULTS

- 2006 - 6th World Equestrian Games Aachen
- 2004 - Double clear in the Nations Cup in Dublin to help the Irish team retain the Aga Kahn Trophy
- 2004 - 2nd in the Grand Prix RDS Dublin
- 2004 - Shortlisted for the Athens Olympics
- 2003 - Won the La Baule Grand Prix
- 2003 - Part of the winning Nations Cup team in Aachen and St Gallen
- 2003 - 5th at the European Championships

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Stallions' wellbeing is a constant priority for all who work there. You'd expect a barn containing 14 elite sport horse stallions to be full of testosterone, akin to a rowdy group of lads, but instead what greets you in the stables is a wave of tranquility — other than the background murmur of the radio, the only other sounds to be heard in the spacious, well-ventilated barns are the pulling and munching of hay and soft, contented snorts. The stallions who live in this five-star luxury — under 24/7 CCTV their owners can log into and watch at any time — do not just make up a number; they are treated as individuals and staff care for them as if they are their own. This level of care extends to the collection process, where every single detail is carefully honed

to produce the best possible sample for each individual stallion.

"The stallions' welfare is paramount; however, as a small business, we mustn't let cost make semen collection a nonviable option for owners — often this is a commercial venture for them," says Stallion AI Services stud manager Kate Ashmore. "With this in mind, our team work with owners to calculate realistic budgets based on their individual requirements in order to maximise their stallion's stay with us."

At Stallion AI Services, the semen collection process is treated with the same respect as jumping a 1.60m grand prix. Stallions are always warmed up in advance in accordance with their individual needs, whether this takes the form of a lunge session or time on the horse walker. It's not uncommon to see a stallion under the solarium receiving a pre-collection treatment from the in house sports massage therapist.

"A proper warm-up is essential to prevent injury during what is a very physical process," explains Kate. "We have worked incredibly hard over the past 10 years to ensure that the collection process is as safe as possible. Whether he's a native pony or an Olympic gold medallist, our stallions are treated like Premier League footballers — only the best will do."



WHILE the stables exude a peaceful air, back in the state-of-the-art laboratory, a team of experts at the top of their field are hard at work, putting into practice the very latest procedures and technology. Blink and you may have missed the development of a new pioneering technique, from specialised mediums to ensure the very best semen quality, to the salvage and preservation of semen from the testicles of a stallion, rushed in following complications during surgery.

New to the British breeding world in 2019 was the concept of semen sexing, with Stallion AI Services the only centre in the country to offer this groundbreaking service whereby owners can choose whether they get a colt or a filly. The centre also continues to lead the way when it comes to frozen semen quality, always working to close the gap in fertility rates between a chilled and frozen product.

"Our quality-control process is unrivalled," says Kate. "We use a comprehensive range of industry-leading assessments to robustly evaluate semen characteristics with regard to potential fertility."

"All semen frozen by Stallion AI Services must meet the minimum industry requirements before it is sold. For breeders, this means that although we can't guarantee



Stallion AI Services is the only centre in the country to offer groundbreaking semen sexing



'The stallions' welfare is paramount': top-quality care is provided at every step of the breeding process

'Our quality-control process is unrivalled'

STUD MANAGER KATE ASHMORE

fertility, we can offer them peace of mind through having set quality standards.

"One of the things that really makes us stand out is the broad range of techniques we are able to offer. We work closely with the best reproductive vets in the country to offer a really robust service," she adds.

Although less expensive options are available, the priority here shouldn't be about finding the cheapest centre to send your stallion, and Kate is quick to point out that scrimping on your stallion's needs more often than not turns out to be a false economy. Instead, she encourages owners to think in terms of value — and nowhere can offer you more bang for your buck, and peace of mind regarding your precious horse, than Stallion AI Services.

The glittering names of some of the centre's current and former residents speak volumes — Big Star, Arko III, Jaguar Mail and Je T'aime Flamenco — but Tullis and his team are also passionate about preserving rare breeds, such as the Suffolk Punch, as well as having a real drive and focus on treating stallions with subfertility issues.

It all comes down to experience: understanding the varying reasons behind poor semen quality, whether due to stress, poor diet or other aspects of stallion management. And with many top sires inevitably being well into their teenage years, Stallion AI Services knows exactly how to manage these stallions to keep them happy and healthy throughout their breeding careers.

"We really drill into the specifics of what each individual stallion requires," says Kate. "It's the same with any athlete — you get out what you put in. We work closely with Spillers nutritionists, too, monitoring all the stallions' diets and regularly weighing them to ensure optimum condition is maintained."

Tullis Matson adds: "There are many small changes we can make in stallion management, semen collection and processing that individually can seem insignificant but collectively can make a huge difference."

Stallion AI Services is, quite simply, a cut above the rest, offering unbeatable service and top-quality care at every stage of the breeding process. And isn't that what your stallion deserves? **H&H**

5 REASONS TO CHOOSE STALLION AI SERVICES



1. With substantial and ongoing financial investment into facilities and equipment, no stone is left unturned, from the temperature-controlled laboratory, fire-resistant frozen semen storage unit and unrivalled stallion livery facilities.

2. It is the home of the breeding industry's most groundbreaking techniques, from sex selection to the most advanced freezing methods.

3. "SAIS Freeze" is an in-house extender better than any other commercial medium available, produced and used exclusively at Stallion AI Services.

4. Each member of the Stallion AI team boasts a wealth of experience and expertise in their particular field, from the skilled collection team to the highly trained lab technicians. Staff treat every stallion as an individual, as if he were one of their own.

5. After-sales care is important to Stallion AI Services, where the team understand that a stallions' commerciality goes hand-in-hand with marketing. Stallion AI Services will guide you through the process, offering advice and support in developing the right promotional package for each stallion.



● For further information, visit stallionai.co.uk or email sales@stallionai.com


STALLION
AI SERVICES

ARKO III



16.2hh | 1994 | Bay | Oldenburg
WFFS Negative

FROZEN

Arko's earnings to date are over 1 Million Pounds, & he was the Number 1 horse in Europe 3 years running in 2004, 2005 & 2007

Arko has impeccable breeding and is by the prestigious, world famous Argentinus who was Champion Oldenburg and Hanoverian Stallion of the Year 2005. His dam line is equally impressive. Unika, who was the number 1 show jumper in Europe for 5 years and was voted the number 1 in the World for 2 years, also produced Arko ESI, full brother to Arko III who achieved the highest price for a foal sold through a German auction at 130,000 Euros. Unika's sire, Beach Boy, placed 6 out of 52 stallions with 127.01 index, 5th in jumping with 127.91 and 15th in dressage with 113.20, in his Oldenburg licensing.

RESULTS

- Represented GB at the 2004 Athens Olympics
- British Team Member 2005 European Championships
- Won the richest competition in the world with the Calgary CN Grand Prix 2008

PROGENY

Argento – In 2015 he topped the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses World Rankings list, won over 16 Grand Prix's, ridden by John Whitaker, won the 1.55/1.60m - GCL Team Competition Round 2 at the CSI 5* at Chantilly 2018.

Aristio currently jumping internationally with Anthony Condon. Won the CSIO5* 1.60m Grand Prix at Hickstead 2018.

Shark - Won the \$25,000 1.45m Classic at Tryon Equestrian Centre 2018.

STUD FEE
£750 per dose



ARGENTINUS	ARGENTAN	ABSATZ
	DORLE	WORMS
UNIKA	BEACH BOY	DUDEN II
	UNIQUE	WINTERROSE
		ZEUS
		SEFANE
		ONYX
		MONIQUE-UTOPIA

RUSSEL II



16.2hh | 1995 | Grey | Holstein
WFFS Negative

FROZEN

Russel II an approved Elite AES stallion from the Holstein Stamm line 4232. This stallion's allure lies in his versatility & ability to adapt & win at different levels.

His sire Corofino I competed successfully internationally for Italy & is himself out of the well-known Corrado I, who was German champion in 1994 with Franks Sloothank, himself quoted saying 'that Corrado is good in a second generation breeding paper', which is exactly the role he plays in Russel's breeding. His dam Adele bred 5 international show jumpers, including Coupe de Coeur, who was 3 times German champion with Ludger Beerbaum. Russel II combines great temperament with huge scope & good looks.

STUD FEE
£500 + VAT LFG or £200 pr dose no terms



COROFINO I	CORRADO I	COR DE LA BRYERE
	VALESKA IV	SOLEIL
ADELE	LINCOLN	FERNANDO
	KOLIN	OPTION
		LANDGRAF I
		ZITA
		URIOSO
		WYK

RAMIRO B

16.3hh | 2000 | Bay | BWP | WFFS Negative



FROZEN

Sire of CSI 5* winning 5* Eventers, and Nations Cup level 1.60m Showjumpers, Ramiro B is one of the most popular eventing stallions in UK.

Sire of Cooley Master Class – Dual winner of the Kentucky CSI 5*, he was the first horse to be made an ambassador with the BWP studbook due to his phenomenal breeding record. With multiple progeny competing at 4* and 5* level, Ramiro B is undoubtedly a proven sire of top level event horses as well as showjumpers. Ramiro B has ranked as high as 2nd in the WBFSH rankings. He is No. 3 on the top sires in 2018 based on BE points. Bred in Belgium and produced in Ireland, he won up to International Grand Prix level with Irish show jumper Edward Doyle. Ramiro B was noted for his consistency in technique, rideability and scope. Known to stamp his stock very well, his attributes are seen in his progeny. By Calvani, a son of Caretino, one of Germany’s top sires of all time, Ramiro B passes his jumping ability, movement and temperament on to his progeny. Ramiro B works exceptionally well on quality/blood mares, and is a superb stallion to improve a sharp mare, without losing ability or athleticism.

CALVANI	CARETINO	CALETTO II
		ISIDOR
	WENDY III	SILVESTER
		ROTRAUT
LILLY	WENDEKREIS	WENDEKREIS
		WAHLGÖTTIN
	BLANKA	SAYGON
		JOKE

PROGENY

EVENTING: Cooley Master Class - Winner Kentucky CCI5* 2019 & 2018 (CCI4*) with Oliver Townend. Cooley SRS - 2nd Badminton CCI5* & 12th Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials CCI4* 2018 with Oliver Townend. Cooley Ramiro (CSI 5* top 25). Cooley Again (CSI 4*). Cooley Earl (CSI 5*). Noble Bestman (CSI 5* Top 20). **SHOW JUMPING:** Ramiro Cruise campaigned at CSI 5* level with Edwina Tops-Alexander. Heracross successful CSI5* Nations Cup horse with Paris Sellon. Samgemjee IHB approved stallion to 1.60m. **RECENT SALES:** MBF Ramiro 3yo Goresbridge Go for Gold - €41,000 Ramiro B gelding 3yo €36,000 MBF Desert Dancer sold for €30,000 to World no. 1 rider Oliver Townend.

RESULTS

- BWP Ambassador 2016
- 1st Indoor Champs Spring 1998 4 year old finals
- 1st R.D.S. Dublin 4yo Championships Summer 1998
- 1st Cavan 5 year old class 1999
- 1st Cavan 6 & 7yo class 2001
- 1st North Wexford Grand Prix 2002
- 2nd Dun Laoghaire Horse Show Grand Prix 2002
- 2nd Kerrygold Dublin Horse Show Grade A
- 1st Italian Grand Prix Pontedere 2002

STUD FEE : £850 + VAT LFG

Rewriting a legend

As pioneers in equine reproduction, Stallion AI Services is offering breeders the extraordinary opportunity to tap into genetic potential that was once feared to be lost

IN the luxurious stable barn at Stallion AI Services in Shropshire lives a grey stallion. At first glance, the nine-year-old looks like any other horse, munching his hay and calmly observing the goings on of the yard, but Murka's Gem is, in fact, far from ordinary. He is a clone, a genetic replica of one of the most successful and revered showjumpers of all time, the great Gem Twist.

A double Olympic silver medallist and winner of more than \$800,000 (£620,000) in prize money, Gem Twist (Good Twist x Noble Jay) was considered one of the finest horses ever to have lived and was named "world's best horse" at the inaugural World Equestrian Games in 1990. He may well have gone on to become one of the world's most esteemed jumping sires before his death in 2006 if it wasn't for one crucial shortfall — he was a gelding.

The idea of equine cloning should no longer be viewed as something from a sci-fi novel. The concept and techniques involved in the procedure have developed beyond recognition over the past two decades — now British breeders have the extraordinary opportunity to access elite genetics that would otherwise have been lost forever.

"We're just starting to get a glimpse of what could have been possible had Gem Twist been a stallion and it's an exciting time for breeders to have access to what we thought was lost," says Kate Ashmore, stud manager at Stallion AI Services.

THE cloning procedure begins with taking a tissue sample from the donor horse. The DNA from the tissue is then transferred into a recipient egg cell whose own DNA has been removed. The egg is then stimulated to divide and develop



Murka's Gem is a genetic clone of Gem Twist

in a process that mimics fertilisation before being implanted into a host mare. The mare then carries the foal to term as she would a natural pregnancy.

While the clone may not look exactly the same as the original horse — white markings, for example, are not defined by genes — they hold an identical genetic profile, meaning that putting your mare to Murka's Gem will give you the exact genetics as if you were breeding from the legend Gem Twist himself.

"An exact biological replica to Gem Twist, Murka's Gem boasts full thoroughbred breeding and holds the same genetic profile behind his originator's successes, which included 21 international wins across both Europe and the USA," says Kate, who explains the stallion is an ideal choice for jumping and eventing breeders, those wanting to add more blood to their breeding lines and those wanting to access a proven and previously untapped pedigree.

While cloning is still a rare practice in sport horse breeding, it is another story in the world of polo. In 2016, the world number one player, Argentina's Adolfo Cambiaso,



'It's an exciting time for breeders'

KATE ASHMORE OF STALLION AI SERVICES

hit the headlines not just for his 13th victory of the world's most prestigious tournament, the Argentine Open, but because he played six clones of his legendary mare, Cuartetera, whom he rode alongside one of her clones in the final of the same tournament in 2014.

To date, Adolfo has bred well in excess of 100 clones in partnership with Alan Meeker of Crestview Genetics. But outside polo, clones are more commonly used for breeding purposes to capture and recreate the genetic fraction of an animal's performance.

While there are obvious environmental factors, such as training, rider ability and overall husbandry, that influence how an animal ultimately performs, starting with a foal that has a proven genetic basis provides breeders with a notable headstart in recreating a top performer. In fact, knowing what worked for the original horse provides the opportunity for environmental optimisation for their clones, thus enabling them to reach their full genetic potential.

With his pedigree already proven, Murka's Gem won't be aimed at competition. However, at home, he is showing scope, trainability and talent over fences.

MURKA'S GEM FACT FILE

YEAR OF BIRTH: 2011

COLOUR: grey

HEIGHT: 15.2hh

STUDBOOK: AES

BREEDING: Good Twist x Noble Jay

STUD FEE: £800 + VAT with live foal guarantee





Murka's Gem won't be aimed at competition, but is showing scope, trainability and talent over fences at home with rider Paul Sims

"He's a fast learner and an athlete; sensitive to ride and has a good work ethic," says international eventer and showjumper Paul Sims, who is Murka's Gem's current rider.

Murka's Gem, who is owned by Olga White — long-time backer of British Olympic gold medallist Peter Charles — is the second Gemini CL clone to have been born. The first, Gemini CL, is now 12 years old, currently standing in Europe and the sire of several progeny already out on the showjumping circuit. Among them is the seven-year-old Nibali Van Het Eikenhof, a licensed stallion jumping at 1.40m level with Germany's Tobias Meyer. Another, Gem's Clooney, who sold for €32,000 (£26,800) at the 2015 Elite Zangersheide Foal Auction. Unsurprisingly, the semen of Gemini CL comes at a cost, with a stud fee of €1,200 (£1,000) plus VAT.

With hundreds of breeders in Europe embracing Gemini CL, British breeders have the extraordinary opportunity to use Murka's Gem, right on their doorstep. His semen is already being exported worldwide, recently selling out in the USA. If you're looking to capture proven genetics of the past and create your own star of the future, here is your chance. **H&H**

● For further information, visit stallionai.co.uk or email sales@stallionai.com



MURKA'S GEM TESTIMONIALS

"I THOUGHT Murka's Gem would be a good match for my mare for a number of reasons. He's thoroughbred, I love his quick athletic jumping technique and my mare has scope in body and jump. Plus, some of my young horses go to the USA, so his relationship with Gem Twist can only help [his commerciality]," says International event rider Eric Smiley.

Thomas Conlon, breeder of four-star eventer Tregilder (Royal Concorde x Hand In Glove) says: "I used Murka's Gem as I wanted to introduce his thoroughbred jumping genetics into my breeding programme, to make an interesting cross with Hand In Glove lines. The goal is to breed and retain fillies from Murka's Gem."



ARISTIO



16.3hh | 2006 | Bay | AES

FROZEN

A regular on the Irish Nations Cup team with his rider, Anthony Condon, AES Elite stallion SFS Aristio is proven at international competition level.

Anthony speaks highly of Aristio saying ‘What can I say about this horse. He absolutely loves his job and gives his all every time. SFS Aristio jumping the 5th 5* Nations Cup double clear of his career, I don’t think there are too many other horses that can claim that accolade.’ Regularly placed in the Top 5, Aristio is a consistent performer at 1.50 / 1.60m classes and has attained a very respectable 5 double clears while competing on 5* Nations Cup Teams. In 2019, he was placed in the Top 5 at Vilamoura, Vejer de la Frontera, St Tropez and Hickstead, including achieving first place in the CSI4* 1.50 in St Tropez. Aristo was a key member of the Irish team who finished in second place in the Nations Cup at Hickstead. In 2018 at Hickstead, he was the star performer whose round clinched the trophy for the Irish team. He won the CSI2* at Chantilly in France. He was in the top 10 placings at Liverpool International CSI4*.

Aristio’s sire, the famous Arko III, was the Number 1 horse in Europe for 3 years and winner of over £1 million. He represented Great Britain with Nick Skelton in the 2004 Athens Olympics. Aristio’s dam, Leidy, bred the Grand Prix stallion, Picasso Z. Her sire, Voltaire, has over 30 approved sires in Europe, amongst them Concorde & Kannan.



ARKO III	ARGENTINUS	ARGENTAN DORLE
	UNIKA	BEACH BOY UNIQUE
LEIDY	VOLTAIRE	FURIOSO II GOGO MOEVE
	FUNNY GIRL	JASPER ROSITA

STUD FEE
£1000 LFG

POWER BLADE



169cm | 1991 | Brown | Thoroughbred

FROZEN

**“This is the ultimate Thoroughbred sire for quality & performance, with super conformation & temperament”
Oliver Townend**

Power Blade showjumped to 1.30m before retiring to stud. He was the Croker Cup Champion at the Royal Dublin Horse Show in 2005. He has sired over 200 foals that have excelled in eventing, showjumping and in the show ring and he has made a strong contribution to British Breeding. Power Blade’s sire is Fine Blade, a show jumper, whose offspring include 5* event horse The Wexford Lady. His damsire, Forties Field is also damsire to 5* event horse Westwood Mariner & 4* event horse Brookfield de Bouncer.

Power Blade has sired international advanced eventers, as well as international show jumper Shantonagh. Power Blade’s son, Springpower, won the 8/9 year old Advanced class at Wellington & came 7th in the 8/9 YO CIC3* class at Blenheim in 2017 & in 2018 won the OI at Oasby & finished 2nd in the 8/9 YO CIC3* class. Power Blade is a prolific sire of show horses, including Northern Pride, winner of 4 year old Ridden Hunter Championship 2018, Hitman, & Springfield Ronda & Woodfield Indo. Great choice for breeders wanting to refine heavier mares, adding quality & lightness to the frame without losing movement or jumping ability.



FINE BLADE XX	FORTINO XX	GREY SOVEREIGN RANAVALO
	CURSORIAL XX	CREPELLO NONE NICER
FIRST FIELD	FORTIES FIELD XX	PETINGO MERRY MADCAP
	GRETTO XX	FURRY GLEN ALLEGRETTO

STUD FEE
£350 + VAT, LFG

CASCO BAY

167cm | 2011 | Bay | Selle Francais



FROZEN

Casco Bay, ridden by Laura Kraut is an international show jumper who competes in Nations Cup CSIO5* and in the Global Champions Tour CSI5* classes. Casco Bay, previously named Berdenn de Kergane regularly jumps clear and finishes in the Top 10.

He is an outstanding example of a modern show jumper, combining the best of French show jumping bloodlines. This exciting young stallion was the top lot when sold at auction in 2014. He impressed the audience with his scopey, powerful jump, exemplary technique and three elastic paces.

Sire: Quaprice du Bois Margot, is by the great Quidam de Revel, and is also the sire of 1.60m horses Don Vito, VDL Groep Quatro and VDL Baltic. Dam: Rosiere de Kergane is by Flipper d'Elle, who amongst other achievements, took part in the 2005 European Show Jumping Championships and the 2006 World Equestrian Games and whose offspring include Royal des Bissons and Glock's Prince de Vaux.

QUAPRICE DU BOIS MARGOT	QUIDAM DE REVEL	JALISCO B
		DIRKA
ROSIERE DE KERGANE	WELLA	LORD
		LYRIK
	FLIPPER D'ELLE	DOUBLE ESPOIR
		PAVLOVA DES MALAIS
	MASCOTTE DU MANOIR	DIAMANT DE SEMILLY
		DEESSE DU MANOIR III

This up and coming stallion is a great option for breeders looking to instil lightness and exemplary technique into their youngstock.

PROGENY

Casco Bay's youngstock are not yet under saddle.

RESULTS

- 2019 - CSIO5* Nations Cup final in Barcelona
- 2019 - 4th CSI5* Global Champions Tour, St Tropez
- 2019 – Won CSIYH1* (8yo) in Brussels
- 2019 - 6th in the CSIO5* Nations Cup in Dublin
- 2019 – 2 nd CSIO5* Aachen
- 2019 – 2 nd CSI2* Valkenswaard
- 2018 competed successfully in Young Horse classes with top five placings in Vejer de la Frontera, Opglabbeek and Valkenswaard

STUD FEE : £650 LFG



Whin Whin is an outstanding stallion, with an amazing temperament as well as talent

He'll Whin you over

Dreaming of a stallion who ticks all your breeding boxes? Look no further than Whin Whin

THESE aren't many showjumping stallions who would barely break rhythm when their reins snap mid-championship round. But Whin Whin isn't just any stallion.

"I was last to jump for the British team at the 2014 young rider European Championships in Arezzo, and my rein broke just before the last line of fences," remembers Dom Webb. "While still cantering towards the line, I leant forward, pulled the bit out of his mouth and made a knot around the bit with the rein. We carried on, and jumped clear."

It may seem an unlikely story, but those who have met Whin Whin (Chin Chin x Wolfgang), wouldn't be surprised — this is a stallion with a temperament and talent to die for.

Since 2013, the scopey 17.1hh chestnut has racked up numerous international top-10 placings with Dom, including in the Hickstead Derby trial in 2014 and the Spanish Sunshine Tour, plus Nations Cup team appearances. His career is packed with sporting highlights, but it was his very first grand prix that particularly stands out for Dom.

"We were first to go in the 1.50m young riders grand prix. We jumped clear and it turned out to be the only clear in the whole competition. We won the class outright," recalls the rider, whose success with Whin Whin helped him land a role sourcing horses for one of Europe's most important dealing stables, Ashford Farm in Belgium.

But it's not just his results that set this outstanding stallion apart from the rest — it's his temperament, arguably the most important aspect to consider when breeding.

"When people meet Whin Whin, they always want to use him on their mares, because he is just such a nice horse," explains Kate Ashmore, stud manager at Stallion AI Services, where Whin Whin is currently standing.

"We encourage people to give real thought as to why they are breeding a horse, and what they want out of it. Most people, amateur riders and professionals alike, want a straightforward horse with rideability — and Whin Whin will give you that. He's a real hidden gem."

QUALITY JUMPING TECHNIQUE

FOR Dom, this stallion's standout attribute was his "never give up" attitude.

"He would always look after me no matter what distance, stride or angle we come to the fence on, and would always give 110%. He was a fighter, always wanting to do his best. He used to get excited whenever we would put the stud girth on — he knew he was going jumping," said Dom, explaining that Whin Whin was bought unseen after his former trainer David Quigley heard about him in Denmark.

"What really stood out was the fact that he is such an incredible model, and his endless scope. His technique over a fence has such quality — he brings his knees up to his ears for maximum scope, and is careful too."

'What stood out was that he was such an incredible model, with endless scope'

Whin Whin's talent should come as no surprise when you bear in mind his excellent pedigree — this is a son of the renowned Holstein jumping stallion Chin Chin. With Mexico's Jaime Azcarraga, Chin Chin finished sixth individually at the 1988 Olympics, also competing at the Barcelona Olympics four year later, and was placed in two consecutive World Cup finals, in 1989 and 1990.

In turn, Whin Whin's dam Rettina is by Wolfgang, a son of the Preferent stallion Farn and sire to Michael Whitaker's Handel II — winner of more than £300,000 in prize money during his illustrious career.

A lovable character with scope to burn, excellent semen quality and a truly world-class pedigree, Whin Whin is a stallion who should not be overlooked. And with his current stud fee of £650 plus VAT set to soar as more of his progeny prove why he is so special, 2020 is the year to Whin yourself a bargain. **H&H**

WHIN WHIN FACT FILE

- YEAR OF BIRTH:** 2003
- COLOUR:** chestnut
- HEIGHT:** 17.1hh
- STUDBOOK:** KWPN
- BREEDING:** Chin Chin x Wolfgang
- STUD FEE:** £650 + VAT with live foal guarantee



● For more information or to meet WhinWhin in person, visit stallionai.co.uk or email sales@stallionai.com



JE T'AIME FLAMENCO

16.3hh | 2000 | Bay | BWP | WFFS Negative

SEXED
SEMEN

AVAILABLE
2020



FRESH / CHILLED FROZEN

Je T'aime Flamenco has excelled throughout his career as an International Grand Prix showjumper

Ridden by Billy Twomey, Je T'aime Flamenco was a regular member of the Irish team throughout his career. They were successful in age classes and together they won seven of the world's major Grand Prix including HOYS, Belfast, Amsterdam, Barcelona and Valencia. Team GB Member, Michael Whitaker said of Je T'aime Flamenco, he is "One of the most exciting stallions to be available in the UK – a major winner of International Grand Prix. A stallion who has performed consistently through all the grades." Je T'aime Flamenco's sire is 2009 BWP Stallion Ambassador, Flamenco de Semilly, son of influential stallion Le Tot De Semilly who won 22 international and 63 National Grand Prix. Flamenco de Semilly has several Grand Prix progeny, including Molly Ashi's Vicomte D, Gregory Wathlett's Willem, Wonder Boy and Je T'aime Flamenco. Je T'aime Flamenco's dam, Quansie Van De Halhoeve, won at 1.50m level in Belgium. Her sire is Landetto, by Landgraf, who is by Lady Killer, giving the dam a great jumping bloodline. Landetto's offspring include Undercover Agent and Utah Van Epicon, whilst Landgraf's include Burggraaf and Libero.

FLAMENCO DE SEMILLY	LE TOT DE SEMILLY	GRAND VENEUR
	QUENOTTE DU CHEMIN	VENUE DU TOT
QUANSIE VAN DE HALHOEVE	LANDETTO	ST BRENDAN XX
	KORINA VAN DE HALHOEVE	GAVOTTE
		LANDGRAF I
		ODETTA
		WESTWORLD XX
		DORINA

PROGENY

Ballypatrick Flamenco - winner of the 2016 Irish Breeders Classic with Greg Broderick
J'adore Flamenco - winner of Scope 4 yo British Championship, Arena UK 4 yo Final & Northcote 4yo Final Sold at the Goresbridge "Go For Gold" Sale for €130,000.
Kimba Flamenco - CSI5* ridden by Billy Twomey, 1.60m
Quick J'aime - CCI3* ridden by Laura Varty
J'adore Salsa - CCI4* ridden by Tyler Cassells
Je T'aime Aramis - CSIYH1* 1.35m, ridden by Alison Barton
Roma V - CSI4* 1.50m, ridden by Alison Barton

RESULTS

- 2011 - Won at Valencia CSI5*
- 2010 - Won CSI5* Barcelona & Won CSI5* Amsterdam
- 2009 - Won CSI5* St Gallen & Won CSI5* Amsterdam
- 2008 - Won CSI3* HOYS & Won CSI3* Belfast
- 2007 - Won 7yo BSJA National Championships
- 2007 - 3rd 7yo Championship HOYS
- 2006 - 3rd 6yo Championship HOYS
- 2006 - 2nd Int. 6yo Championship Mauberge
- 2009 & 2010 - The leading money winning sire in the UK & Ireland

STUD FEE : £900 LFG

Aim for the stars

Olympic champion Big Star has captured hearts across the world, and with his progeny starting to flourish, there has never been a better time to breed from this star stallion

BRITISH breeders are lucky enough to have many excellent stallions standing in this country, but none more so than the mighty Big Star, standing again this year at Stallion AI Services in Shropshire.

The horse who carried Britain's Nick Skelton to team gold in 2012 at the London Olympics and individual Olympic gold four years later, Big Star truly is a stallion like no other. Having bred sparingly before his sport career took off in earnest, the KWPN "horse of the year" for 2012 is now proving himself to be as stellar a sire as he is a showjumper. And with some super four- and five-year-olds coming through the ranks, 2020 looks to be an especially exciting year for breeders to get some of the Big Star magic for themselves.

Personal recommendation and trusted testimonial should never be underestimated in the breeding world, and there can be no more trusted opinion than that of Paul Schockemöhle, Olympic silver medallist, triple European champion and breeding maestro, whose stallion station in Germany is renowned across the world. When asked in an interview with Horsetelelex in 2018 for his three favourite "newer" stallions, the first name he gave was Big Star.

Those who have used the Quick Star x Nimmerdor son wouldn't be surprised; he has already attracted many return breeders due to his superb semen quality and unrivalled commerciality, earning £1.7m in stud fees



Ashdale Goldstar is a four-year-old by Big Star, and is already showing great promise

in just his first year at stud.

"Commercial breeders in the UK need to keep two things in mind to stay at the top of their game. First and foremost comes breeding for potential success in their sport, but as important for a commercial breeder is sire selection based on trends and who's in fashion. Big Stars sell!" says Kate Ashmore, stud manager at Stallion AI Services.

"Big Star has been bred to some of the very best mares in the world, and the next few years are going to be very exciting for him as his popularity gains even more momentum."

IF anyone can vouch for the quality of Big Star offspring, it's his rider, British Olympic hero Nick Skelton, who has showed no hesitation in breeding several times from his great partner.

"At the moment the oldest Big Star offspring we have bred is two years old, and



Nick Skelton rides Big Star to individual gold medal glory at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio

looks to be a very nice type — well balanced with a good temperament," says Nick. "We also have a couple of yearlings, who are all looking nice for their age, and two more foals on the way."

Nick's brother Michael has also been impressed by the quality of these Big Star youngsters.

"Firstly they all have Big Star's amazing temperament — they are easy, very nice friendly horses and always aiming to please," he explains.

"They appear workmanlike in appearance, but they all have so much quality, with Big Star's amazing canter, and so much power from behind. They're bold and brave and thoroughly enjoying jumping, although if they didn't make it to the top in showjumping they could also excel in other disciplines," he adds.

"Anyone wanting to breed a good-quality, genuine, lovely horse would not be disappointed with a Big Star offspring."

DAVE QUICK of Ashdale Sport Horses is another breeder who has been hugely impressed with Big Star's progeny so far. He has four of the great stallion's offspring at the stud, ranging from three to five years old, and another due this year.

"Big Star has put a very good stamp on all

BIG STAR FACT FILE AND NOTABLE WINS

YEAR OF BIRTH: 2003

COLOUR: bay

HEIGHT: 1.72m

BREEDING: KWPN by Quick Star x Nimmerdor

STUD FEE: £3,500 + VAT (fresh/chilled)
£900 + VAT per straw (frozen)

OLYMPIC INDIVIDUAL GOLD: Rio 2016

NATIONS CUP VICTORY: Dublin 2013

FIVE-STAR GRAND PRIX VICTORY: Aachen 2013

FIVE-STAR GRAND PRIX VICTORY: Rome 2013

OLYMPIC TEAM GOLD: London 2012





‘They have so much quality and power’

MICHAEL SKELTON ON BIG STAR PROGENY

ONE TO WATCH

AS more of Big Star’s progeny come of age, it’s an exciting time as these youngsters start to hit the competition circuit. One to keep an eye on in particular is the five-year-old Kostar (pictured), a Big Star son out of the Argentinus mare Lady Arko — a full sister to Arko III. Owned by Lisa Hales of Shaw Farm Stud and ridden by Britain’s Daniel Moseley, Kostar made his international debut in January 2020 in Oliva Nova, Spain, picking up two fourths among other top-10 placings.

“We’ve gone quite steady with him so far, but he’s a really good future prospect,” says Lisa, who hopes Kostar will compete at this year’s young horse championships at Bolesworth. “He’s quite a big horse, like Big Star, and very scopey, with extremely good conformation and a great brain.”



of them — they’re brave with big strides, bold paces, a lot of blood and the same character in the stable, always being the first ones to the door to see what’s going on outside,” explains Dave.

“They’re all showing serious talent for jumping — the two four-year-olds, Ashdale Goldstar and Ashdale Allstar, are jumping small courses now and are two of the best four-year-olds we’ve had, being very athletic and scopey. They’ll all be aimed at the world young horse championships at Lanaken,” says Dave, explaining that Goldstar was named as such as he was born within 24 hours of Big Star winning gold at the Rio Olympics.

“Big Star has lots of commercial appeal and on top of that his semen is so good,” Dave adds. “We’ve never failed to flush an embryo, which is one of the many reasons we’ve continued to use him.”

Four years on from his Olympic gold, Big Star is still making waves as he starts to produce the next generation of world-beaters. And with top breeders both at home and abroad taking full advantage, isn’t it time you joined them? **H&H**

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Silvio I x Forrest xx
165cm | 2002 | Dark Bay | Hanoverian

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Future perfect



A small, select band of colts are worthy of being kept entire — *Andrea Oakes* finds out how to tell if yours is one such gem, and if so how to manage him

IF you plan to keep a colt entire for breeding purposes, it's clear that he has to be something pretty special. But how can you tell if he really is a cut above the rest? And even if he does have the necessary wow factor, what are you letting yourself in for if you choose not to have him castrated?

Spotting stallion potential requires skill and experience, according to

breeding consultant and former West Kington Stud manager Tessa Clarke, who explains that a likely candidate should stand out from the crowd at an early age.

"Of several mares and foals in a field, he'll be the one that takes your eye," she says, referring to that "look at me" presence that is born and not made. "It goes without saying that good conformation and movement are

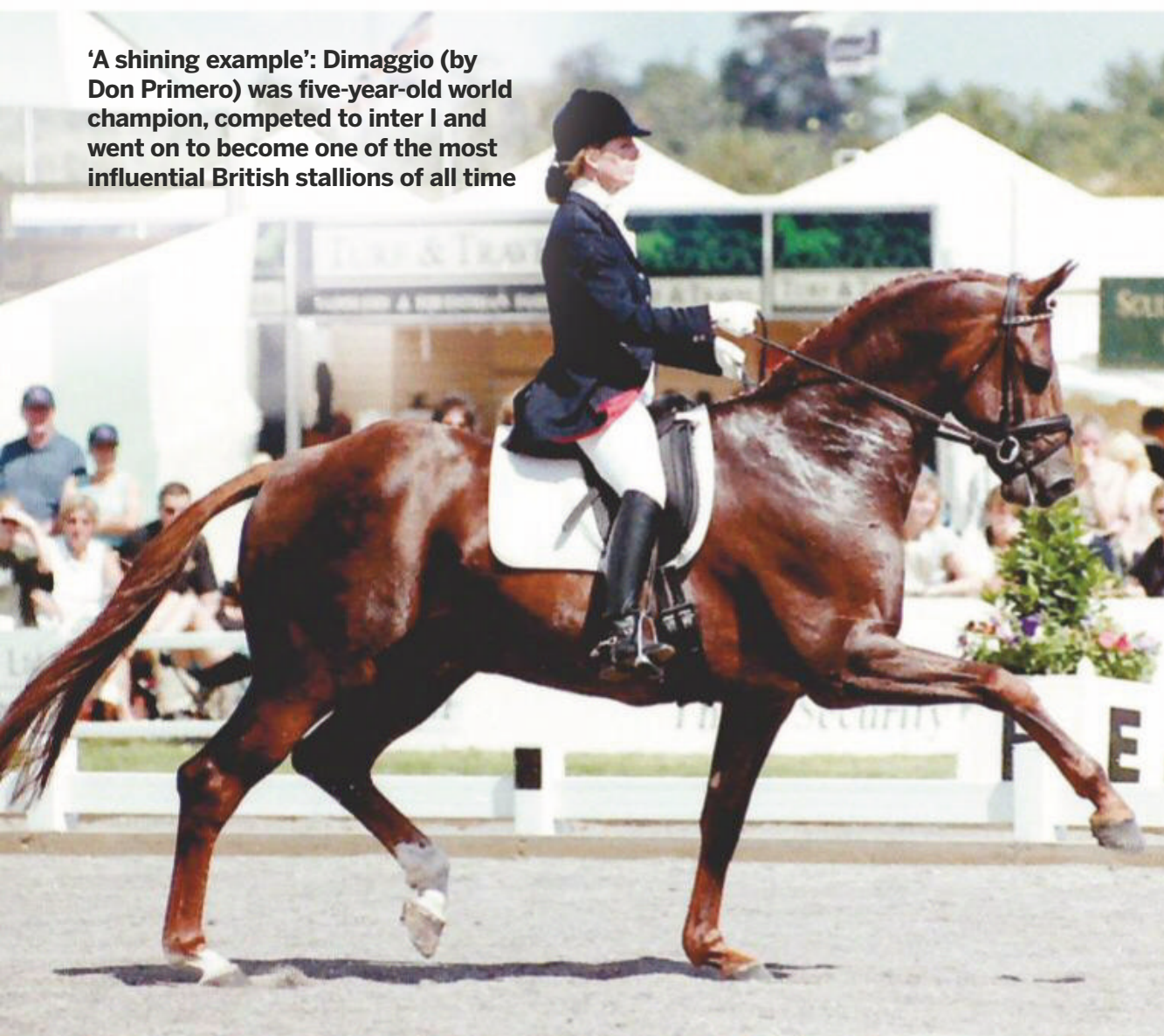
key, and are usually evident early on. He also needs the right temperament. This may change as he becomes more hormonal, and often depends on how he is handled, but an unpleasant foal is unlikely to improve with age."

Tessa emphasises the need for an honest and objective appraisal. A foal who is the apple of his owner's eye may not be viewed with such enthusiasm by a wider audience.

'Grading is an expense that pays dividends': having been champion of the SHB(GB) grading as a three-year-old, Timolin (by Totilas) has gone on to become a popular dressage and eventing sire



'A shining example': Dimaggio (by Don Primero) was five-year-old world champion, competed to inter I and went on to become one of the most influential British stallions of all time



"Very few colts are really worth preserving as a stallion," she explains. "A youngster must have something extra, such as unusual bloodlines, which may be significant with a native breed, or rare genetics for colour. He'll need successful relatives; ideally, being out of a mare with a good competition record. And as a sport horse he'll be expected to build his own success in future years — British Showjumping grade B, British Dressage small tour or British Eventing three-star, at least. Going BE100 is not enough."

Lorna Wilson, of Newton Stud in Devon, adds: "No-one should aim to breed 'average'. A stallion must be a shining example of conformation, movement, type and pedigree,

as a horse should only be kept entire to progress breeding and — in the case of sport horses — equestrian sport."

If you feel that your youngster ticks all the boxes, Lorna recommends putting him under closer scrutiny in a different setting.

"A lot of foals are born each year at our stud, so it's easier for us to compare them," she says. "Some stand out immediately as extremely high quality. If you have only a few, it's important to take them to an event such as the Elite Foals UK registration tour to benchmark and assess them against other similarly bred foals."

"Anyone thinking of standing a young stallion is also advised to see a series of

stallion approvals across Europe, to compare theirs back at home with the many hundreds presented," adds Lorna. "It's important to take off any rose-tinted glasses to make sure that a potential stallion is of an equal — or better — standard."

YOU may well have some good raw material to work with, but there are logistics to consider.

"Stallions do need experienced handling," says David Dixon, whose role as manager at Stanley Grange Stud in North Yorkshire involves working with some of the UK's leading sires, including advanced eventer Up With The Lark. "They vary a lot in temperament but are usually a product of their environment. It can be difficult to provide a suitable environment at home."

"A stallion will require plenty of exercise and lots of free time and turnout," explains David. "He shouldn't be cooped up 24/7, or he may get crotchety and develop bad habits. You'll need the facilities, the right regime and the patience, and you'll have to keep your wits about you. If I'm honest, amateurs and stallions are not always the best pairing."

"Most horses are happier gelded," adds David. "Figures show a graded stallion receives, on average, just five mares a year — and some will see none. It's not the nicest lifestyle for him if he's never used."

Making the numbers stack up is another issue. Many stallion owners will hope for some return on their investment, but is there much money to be made?

"Not only are there are a lot of good stallions in UK, but breeding is now global, meaning that the stud market is very competitive," says David. "A stallion must be worth breeding from. Up With The Lark has been very busy, but he's 20 this time and his mare numbers have dropped from a peak of 76 to around 36 as other stallions have come along."

"Think about where you'll stand your stallion or whether you'll opt for a walk-in semen collection service, considering both the costs and how this will fit in with your lifestyle," he adds. "For semen collection on site, you'll need to make him available as and when necessary throughout the season. While

To cut or to keep?



THERE are alternatives for colt owners who prefer to keep their options open, as Georgie Belton of Gemini Stud explains.

"The idea behind gelding grading is that it's usually much easier to get a good tune out of a gelding under saddle than a stallion," says Georgie. "A colt with stallion potential may be kept entire up to a point, before his semen is collected and frozen to preserve his genetic material. He is then gelded and competed, until he reaches a stage in his career when he becomes marketable as a sire."

"SHB(GB) is now grading geldings that were previously stallions, provided that they meet the strict grading criteria," adds Georgie. "Careful planning is necessary, however, to assess how much semen to store. Not all semen freezes and offers sufficient post-thaw fertility, while many mare owners will only use chilled or fresh. Expect to incur costs in the region of £7,000 to have the stallion trained on the dummy mare and his semen collected, tested and stored, along with ongoing annual storage expenses."

"A second option is the 'stand one, run one' route, where one horse competes while his full brother fulfils stud duties — as in the case of showjumping stallion Cassini I and his sibling Cassini II," adds Georgie, who explains that the competitor is usually gelded and acts as a showcase. "Gemini Stud's SHB(GB) graded stallion Classic Opera [pictured], himself a Horse of the Year Show Cuddy in-hand finalist and a BE90 winner, has a full brother eventing at BE advanced and CCI4*: Steve Revell's gelding The Classic Composer."

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natural cover can take place at any time of the day, chilled semen for AI must be ready for the post or courier — which makes this option a way of life rather than just a hobby.”

It’s worth remembering that most of the breeding costs are fixed, regardless of the stallion’s popularity and stud fee. Factor in extras, such as veterinary expenses for the annual blood tests, vaccinations and pre-breeding swabs needed to stand him at stud, plus the cost of marketing your sire or grading him with the appropriate stud book.

“Grading is another expense, but one that pays dividends in the long term,” explains David, who is also chairman of Sport Horse

explains that congenital abnormalities such as cryptorchidism, where only one testicle descends, will rule out breeding. “Most horses are not physically or sexually mature until they are between three and five years old, though this can depend on the breed. Once he can be trained to mount a dummy mare, his semen can be collected and assessed.”

While it may be tempting to delay the decision to geld your colt until you’ve had a glimpse of what he might grow into, this “wait and see” approach has its drawbacks.

“Gelding a horse as a foal or up until he is four is reasonably straightforward,” says Charles, who emphasises that even a

‘The global stud market is very competitive; a stallion must be worth breeding from’

DAVID DIXON

Breeding (GB). “All SHB(GB) stallions must have at least a three-generation pedigree of verified breeding, confirmed by DNA testing, and we insist on a five-stage vetting to ensure soundness and to identify any hereditary health conditions.

“We have a list of graders who are willing to cast an eye over a two-year-old to assess his potential for grading,” he adds. “I would also suggest that an owner visits our spring or autumn gradings to see what they entail, as a certain standard of conformation, movement, athleticism and manners is expected.”

HE may have the looks, the personality and the pedigree, but how do you know that a colt can do the business?

“There is no real test to ascertain a yearling’s fertility, but it is possible to check early on that he has the correct reproductive anatomy,” says Dr Charles Cooke MRCVS of Equine Reproductive Services (UK), who

yearling can impregnate a mare and should be separated if not castrated. “From five years upwards it’s a more involved operation, which is generally carried out under general anaesthesia rather than with the horse standing and sedated.”

A stallion can flourish in the right hands and may successfully combine his breeding duties with a competitive career — even in eventing, as Nick Gauntlett’s Party Trick, by Chilli Morning, is proving. It’s rare to find a horse that happily excels at both, however, and even harder to spot that longer-term ability in a hairy youngster.

“A stallion won’t get by just on his looks,” says David, who reminds us that any sire is only as good as his stock. “He has to deliver the goods, but this will only become apparent once his progeny hit the ground.”

When done well, however, there’s no doubt that standing a stallion can bring rewards, with success breeding success. **H&H**

Standing your stallion



Boarding a stallion at a stud or centre such as Stallion AI Services ensures he is in experienced hands

FULL BOARD

YOUR stallion stays at stud for all or part of the breeding season, for semen collection and/or servicing mares on-site.

Pros: he’ll be in experienced hands at his most hormonal time and can focus on the job in hand, with ready availability to meet mare owners’ needs.

Cons: a more expensive option, which may interrupt competition plans.

Consider for: an older, more established stallion in popular demand.

WALK-IN SERVICE

YOU take the stallion to stud as and when needed, for semen collection.

Pros: this can fit in around a stallion’s competition schedule, with the added bonus that he won’t associate home with breeding duties.

Cons: requires organisation and transportation, for frequent visits, with good biosecurity at the stud.

Consider for: a younger stallion not yet at his competitive peak.

‘A walk-in service allows you to fit breeding in around competing’

STANDING AT HOME

YOUR stallion stays at home, where you organise semen collection or live cover.

Pros: you can control costs and logistics, with no disruption to his routine.

Cons: requires expertise, facilities and experienced, hands-on help. From marketing and paperwork to meeting strict biosecurity standards, it’s all down to you.

Consider for: a pony stallion, especially if he runs with mares in a herd.



Some stallions can combine breeding with a successful ridden career — Nick Gauntlett’s eight-year-old Chilli Morning son Party Trick is winning at intermediate



Piggy Marches on

Last year's
Badminton
winner scoops
three wins at the
only horse trials to
beat the weather
on the season's
opening weekend

Isleham, Cambridgeshire

PIGGY MARCH (néé French) picked up where she left off at the first event of the 2020 British Eventing season. From her eight rides over the weekend, she scooped three victories, two

By GEMMA REDRUP

second placings and one third.

The best of those wins came in the open intermediate (OI) aboard Jayne McGivern's 10-year-old Calling Card, where they added 9.6 cross-country time-faults to a 25.2 dressage.

"I'm absolutely delighted with him — I really felt today that he was my friend," said Piggy, who took over the ride from Aoife Clark at the end of 2018. "I've always thought a lot of him, but there have been certain areas I've thought we're not quite on the same wavelength, but I'm really excited about him after today."

Piggy hasn't had the most straightforward of winters with the inclement weather and a foot operation.

"I haven't schooled on grass anywhere and I had an operation on a bone spur in my foot in November, which has taken forever to heal," she explained. "I don't feel particularly fit — my team at home have done a great job getting the horses in and ready. I was using today to blow away the cobwebs and I actually felt quite rusty."

"When I came out of the operation they said I had a lot of tendon damage, too, but that I would be back on a horse in three weeks," Piggy continued. "But after three weeks I still wasn't

walking properly, let alone riding, as I was in absolute agony. It's taken a long time to recover and I was still having to ride in wellies up until a week ago as I couldn't get my boots on."

Piggy was second to herself in the same section, riding Jennifer Saunders' Cooley Monsoon, who hadn't been out eventing since May 2019. The 12-year-old posted a section-leading dressage of 22.7, but an unlucky four faults in the showjumping and 10.4 cross-country time-faults, meant he finished 2.3 penalties adrift of his stablemate.

"We gave him last summer off as Jennifer had plays to do and he doesn't love running on firm going," said Piggy, who along with many other competitors was quick to praise the organisers of

'I wasn't walking properly, let alone riding, as I was in agony'

PIGGY MARCH ON RECOVERING FROM A FOOT OPERATION

ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

'What does the future hold?'

Between coronavirus and the rain, Mark Phillips is less positive than usual

I NORMALLY think of myself as a positive person. However, as we start to come out of the wettest winter ever and with coronavirus dominating the news day after day, I'm struggling to be confident about the upcoming season, Badminton and the Tokyo Olympic Games.

I write from America where we never hear about anything that happens in Europe. But 2020 is different! Hearing Switzerland is cancelling events of more than 1,000 people, airlines are calling off flights, the money markets are taking a dive and there is the possibility of the virus killing millions worldwide, you can't help wondering what the future holds.

On a brighter side, I hear the virus likes cold weather and that it will become less virulent as the weather warms up.

On the home front it is no surprise that Aston-le-Walls,

OPINION

Epworth and Moreton all cancelled last weekend, and Pontispool and Stafford later in the month are already off. Surely this is the tip of the iceberg unless it stops raining soon?

On the farm at home, we haven't turned a wheel in weeks as the ground is completely waterlogged and we are 600 feet up in the Cotswolds. So I really feel sorry for those organisers struggling to get their fences out on their cross-country courses, never mind actually running their event.

In good news, riders seem to be broadly happy entering events via British Eventing's website, though there have been delays as entry secretaries struggle to get sections sorted and times out.

One scenario that the system won't allow is for riders to enter a horse at different events on the same weekend, hedging their bets against a cancellation, for example in the hope of getting their pre-Badminton runs. Those people will have to



"phone a friend" at Stoneleigh for help.

RIDER RESPONSIBILITY

MUCH of my winter has been spent rewriting cross-country guidelines both for America and the FEI and working on a new frangible standard for the FEI, which will inevitably follow on into America and Europe.

The overriding principle is to try to dramatically reduce the number of rotational falls.

The good news is that later this year we will have a different-coloured MIM clip for a front rail jumped on an angle,

for instance at corner fences, which should be more effective with the different forces here.

However, no system will ever be infallible and we will always have some unlucky riders when a frangible breaks when it should not, and others who are unluckier when a device does not break when it should.

The overall principle is that frangible fences must always be safer than if the fence was not frangible. However, the bottom line is that it is still the rider's responsibility to give their horse the best chance of jumping every fence cleanly.

In the meantime, let's hope that everybody Badminton-bound can get enough runs for their horses and that new director Jane Tuckwell and her right-hand man Andrew Tucker can have a great first event.

Beyond that, talk of cancelling the Olympic Games seems inconceivable. Let's hope it stays that way and the Brits can bring back team gold for the first time since 1972. **H&H**

Former Olympic team gold medalist and four-time Badminton winner Mark Phillips is one of the world's leading cross-country course-designers.

NEXT
WEEK

New columnist
Andrew Nicholson



'I'm absolutely delighted with him,' says Piggy March of her OI victor, Jayne McGivern's 10-year-old Calling Card — one of three wins for Piggy at this fixture

Isleham for near-perfect going. "We were then bringing him back into work to take him to Boekelo, at which point he niggled a splint. He has to get very fit as he's not a speedy horse and I have to give full credit to my sister Nini for doing all of his fitness work, which has included going hunting."

WAY TO GO

BEN WAY made his first trip to Isleham a winning one when taking the sole intermediate section. He jumped double clear aboard Sarah Van Vegchel's nine-

year-old mare Ringwood Madras, adding 13.2 time-faults across country to a 34.3 dressage.

"This mare really operated for me today," said Ben. "We'd like to get to Blenheim for the eight- and nine-year-olds, as she didn't get in for a lack of FEI points last season, and then to go to Boekelo"

Anthony Clark was second with his own eye-catching Baskin Wicked Game. The eight-year-old added 22.4 cross-country time-faults to a 36.4 dressage.

"Nicola McGivern has helped me a lot over the winter with my dressage — we've worked

on lateral suppleness and head carriage," said Anthony, who is aiming "Jimmy" for the Blenheim eight- and nine-year-old class.

"I bought him from some showjumping people who sent him to me on livery as he was a bucker and wouldn't jump, but he's now jumping 1.30m classes with showjumpers trying to buy him from me," he laughs.

"I felt like I was in the clouds today and I think he'll be a proper one. I also purchased a Theraplate at the end of last year, which I think has improved all of my horses physically." **H&H**

RESULTS

OI. — 1, Calling Card (P March) 25.2,0,9.6=34.8; 2, Cooley Monsoon (P March) 22.7,4,10.4=37.1; 3, Crambamboli (A Clark) 32.1,4,12=48.1.
int. — 1, Ringwood Madras (B Way) 34.3,0,13.2=47.5; 2, Baskin Wicked Game (A Clark) 36.4,0,22.4=58.8; 3, Mr Bing Bong (A Clark) 38.6,8,49.6=96.2.
ON. — 1, Fire Fly (T Jackson) 30.8,0,2=32.8; 2, Dargun (P French) 31.0,4.4=35.4; 3, Brookfield Quality (P March) 31.5,0.5,2=36.7.
nov. — 1, Hendrix (H Needham) 34.4,0=38; 2, Irene Leva (R Smith) 29.4,5.2=38.2; 3, Annsfort Quality (J Wise) 32.5,0,7.6=40.1.
BE100open. — 1, Black Jacko (A Price) 24.3,4,0=28.3; 2, Sycamore Lad (M Spratt) 31.5,0,2=33.5; 3, Ive Dun Talking (H Lloyd-Townshend) 30.5,4,0=34.5.
BE100 sec D. — 1, Cooley Goodwood (P March) 23.3,0,0=23.3; 2, Mexikann (H Smith) 24.8,4,5.6=34.4; 3, Killaloe Quality Lad (A Clark) 28.5,4,2.4=34.9.
sec E. — 1, Prince Ted (A Marshall) 26.5,0,1.2=27.7; 2, Swell Touchdun (A Clark) 30.5,0,0.4=30.9; 3, Kingston David (O Nicholls) 32.3,0,0=32.3.
BE90open sec C. — 1, Cooley Kan Do (P March) 25.3,0,3.6=28.9; 2, Loris Concerto (R Wheeler) 29.0,0,4=29.4; 3, Flemensmix (P Buckley) 25.8,4,0=29.8.
sec K. — 1, Dawn Chorus (J Hales) 24.5,0,0=24.5; 2, Hero Harvey R (T Rose) 29.8,0,0=29.8; 3, Ballyneety My Fernhill (I Vaughan-Jones) 30.5,0,0=30.5.
BE90 sec A. — 1, Shaunlara Gold (G Bowett) 29.8,0,0=29.8; 2, Beatrix (L Prior) 28.3,4,0=32.3; 3, Boolagh Gypsy Joe (A Hyde Parker) 33.3,0,1.6=34.9.
sec B. — 1, Cassino Valeroyale (K Marlow) 25.0,0=25; 2, Moylaw Patcheen (J M Wright) 30.0,0=30; 3, Quite A Compliment (I Stagg) 26.5,4,0=30.5.

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'He thrives on coming down that centre line' — Jazzed Up claims PSG and inter I titles with Lara Edwards

Edwards moves on Up

Lara Edwards secures two titles for the second consecutive year on board the talented Jazzed Up, and team Hayler collect six wins between four riders

Bishop Burton Winter Regional Championships, East Yorks

By HELEN SCOTT

LARA EDWARDS and the Milners' 11-year-old Jazz son Jazzed Up lifted the prix st georges (PSG) and inter I titles just a few days after returning from the CDI in Le Mans where they secured three top-three placings.

"It's been a bit mad," admitted Lara. "We were keen to go to Le Mans as he hadn't competed since last year. Fortunately, he thrives on coming down that centre line so we hoped it would work out, and it did."

"I couldn't have done it without my back-up team, particularly Jess Martin Smith, who's my groom, nanny, organiser and best friend rolled into one."

Their foot-perfect PSG test produced a score of 73% — almost 7% ahead of the second-placed combination — and Lara was hoping to better that in the inter I. However, a gust of wind and

banging distracted Jazzed Up at the end of his extended trot across the diagonal, he performed a 360° spin, and then Lara briefly forgot where she was going.

The gelding is well established at the level and the harmonious, correct test he then produced pulled it out of the fire, giving him another clear win on 71.05%. Last year he headed the advanced medium and the PSG at this show.

"Training with Rhett Bird means I've learned how to get him working through his whole body so he's soft, and although he's sharp, he usually knuckles down in a competition," Lara added.

Team Hayler was on fire, with Paul taking three titles, his daughter Bobby one and clients adding another two to the haul.

Bobby opened the batting with a good win in the medium gold section on FJ Veyron, owned by

racing driver Fiona James.

The gentle giant, home-bred by Fiona, used his scope to cross the diagonal in medium canter in fewer than average strides.

"He comes round the corner and feels almost out of control, but he does always come back to me. We had a little misunderstanding in the simple change, but he's just beginning to find his strength and balance as we've waited for him to grow and mature," said Bobby.

Her father Paul was next up,

taking the advanced medium gold on Da Vinci 299, a horse Bobby found in Germany for Janine Snape and her seventeen-year-old daughter Lottie. Lottie will take over the competitive reins on the elegant nine-year-old Don Schufro gelding later this year.

"He had done very little in Germany so I'm just getting him established. He's a lovely, willing, talented horse," said Paul.

Two more titles, the novice and elementary gold freestyles,

Former eventer Edmonton ELS triumphs at elementary under Emma Corner





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BEATING STORMS, INJURY AND 'MAN FLU'

HEATHER HOPKINSON and Brackenspa Houdini almost didn't make it as far as Bishop Burton after their yard on a Holmfirth hillside was battered by the storms.

"He was frightened by the wind and he knocked himself in the stable, so I spent the week icing it and not daring to let him out. The day before I just sat on him for a few minutes as we had 50mph winds. My husband James had 'man flu' and then gave it to me, so it's a miracle we made it at all," said Heather.

The pair won the novice silver and the novice freestyle silver, with new music that Heather had painstakingly put together herself.

AGAINST THE ODDS

"The judges had commented that the vocals on my previous music was distracting, so I put together an orchestral track myself. I'm a technical numpty so it took me ages, but at least I knew it inside out!"

were garnered by the Haylers' home-bred Samurai Jubilee, a Showmaker seven-year-old. Paul recycled his *War of the Worlds* music for the novice, saying "it's very now", and used Latin music for the elementary.

"He qualified for the nationals last year, but I didn't take him as he was croup high. I'm glad I've waited with him as I feel we've had a breakthrough in the past few months," he said.

Pupils Fiona Boddy (Krafty Saratoga) and Charlotte Cundall (LJT Simply Red) became prelim champions and advanced medium silver freestyle winners, respectively.

"Days like these don't come

along too often and it's a boost to all the team that we've all had such a great show," Paul added.

REROUTED EVENTER TRIUMPHS

EMMA CORNER was at her wits' end when her three-star eventer Edmonton ELS (Ed) lost his confidence cross-country after a successful career.

"We tried everything but I could see he was getting worried, so I rerouted him to dressage last autumn. My trainer Natalie Widdowson backed us all the way and stayed on to warm us up after she'd finished riding, but no one was more surprised to win than me," said Emma, a secretary at



Paul Hayler and the home-bred Showmaker son Samurai Jubilee take two freestyle titles



Charlotte Cundall and LJT Simply Red take the advanced medium silver freestyle

Rainbow Equine Hospital.

The pair won the elementary silver with Ed's breeder Carole Rolph on hand to watch.

"It was special because Carole was there to support. She tracked him down after I'd had him a year and has followed him ever since," said Emma.

Patsy Bartram rode Donisbroc

for Sarah Gibson to win the straight medium silver and the freestyle, riding the second test to new bouncy tunes from musicals.

"It's uplifting music and he did a good correct test," said Patsy. "He's not a full-time dressage horse as he loves to hack round Cannock Chase with his owner. He just comes to me for a tune-up before he competes."

Patsy also gained a ticket with Greenacres Cadiz, coming second in the elementary gold freestyle.

Chemistry teacher Sophie Young, who trains with Sophie Wells, qualified her two horses. The tricky 11-year-old Ergane (Skippy) won her first championship in the elementary silver freestyle, and her faithful 15-year-old Atos was second in the medium silver freestyle.

"I've had Skippy seven years and she's been hard work, but I've stuck with her. The judges loved her *Pirates of the Caribbean* music," said Sophie. **H&H**

RESULTS

KBIS Equestrian prelim 17 (C Elvin, H Bradley, M Coultas).— 1, Krafty Saratoga (F Boddy) 72.13; 2, Langaller Get Set (V Pye) 69.89; 3, GF Dupuis (L Olsen) 69.71. **Prestige Italia nov 37 gold (T Trotter, C Ballantyne, H Hutchinson).**— 1, Tom Cruz (M Schleicher) 70.37; 2, Dark Diamond (J Minion) 68.89; 3, Iggy Pop BEK (H Esberger Hancock) 67.84. **silv (H Hutchinson, C Ballantyne, T Trotter).**— 1, Brackenspa Houdini (H Hopkinson) 69.94; 2, Igor B (K Hall-Jackson) 69.32; 3, Frisco VI (S Wastall) 69.26. **Baileys Horse Feeds nov FSM gold (H Bradley, C Elvin, S Staines).**— 1, Samurai Jubilee (P Hayler) 75.19; Iggy Pop BEK 74.26; 3, Wred Willow (H Lowe) 70.93. **silv (C Ballantyne, C Elvin, L Smith).**— 1, Brackenspa Houdini 72.31; 2, WS Jackson (L Geraghty) 72.04; 3, Flauris (D Kaye) 70.28. **Equi-Trek elem 59 gold (F Lace, H Hutchinson, T Trotter).**— 1, Benito

Dorato (V Maw) 73.7; 2, Livanu (H Esberger Hancock) 71.2; 3, Samurai Jubilee 70.99. **silv (A Hessay, T Trotter, F Lace).**— 1, Edmonton ELS (E Corner) 70.21; Gilles-S (G Atkin) 69.69; 3, Brohedydd Miss Moli Mia (A Doherty) 68.59. **Suregrow elem FSM gold (C Elvin, L Smith, H Copeland).**— 1, Samurai Jubilee 74.49; 2, Greenacres Cadiz (P Bartram) 72.44; 3, Benito Dorato 72.12. **silv (C Ballantyne, C Elvin, L Smith).**— 1, Ergane (S Young) 68.97; 2, Brohedydd Miss Moli Mia 68.53; 3, Wintermann (C Peatfield) 67.69. **Theraplate med 75 gold (T Trotter, CJ Tupling, C Elvin).**— 1, FJ Veyron (B Hayler) 70.95; 2, Inocencio DHI (M Chapman) 67.7; 3, Belli Blue (V Maw) 67.48. **silv (C Elvin, CJ Tupling, T Trotter).**— 1, Donisbroc (P Bartram) 69.23; 2, Coniston Nadal (L Stephenson) 67.48; 3, Atos (S Young) 66.67. **Spillers med FSM gold (CJ Tupling, H Bradley, C Havis).**— 1, Ghita Fille De Zita S (F Quin) 69.78; 2, Belli Blue (V Maw) 68.56; 3, Forever Young (A Laurie) 65.5. **silv (C Havis, H Bradley, C Elvin).**— 1,

Donisbroc 70.28; 2, Atos 68.11; 3, Woodcroft Hirtentanzlerin (D Birtwhistle) 66.06. **Charles Owen adv med 98 gold (C Havis, CJ Tupling, C Ballantyne).**— 1, Da Vinci 299 (P Hayler) 69.21; 2, TCE Happy Boy (M Chapman) 67.89; 3, Z Flemmenco (L Payne) 66.05. **silv (CJ Tupling, C Havis, C Ballantyne).**— 1, Bocelli V (A Brown) 68.55; 2, Fiderstan (J Martell) 68.25; 3, Expo (E Littlewood) 68.03. **Nupafeed adv med FSM gold (CJ Tupling, C Ballantyne, H Bradley).**— 1, Freddie Mercury (L Davison) 70.78; 2, Z Flemmenco 70.667; 3, Kings Advocate II (M Schleicher) 66.56. **silv (C Ballantyne, H Bradley, C Elvin).**— 1, LJT Simply Red (C Cundall) 70.83; 2, Expo 70.72; 3, Bocelli V 70.39. **Magic PSG (C Elvin, H Bradley, CJ Tupling).**— 1, Jazzed Up (L Edwards) 73.06; 2, Ellison (H Hutchinson) 66.36; 3, De Galles (L Davison) 66.32. **Superflex inter I (CJ Tupling, C Ballantyne, H Bradley).**— 1, Jazzed Up 71.05; 2, Breit Crusader (L Megginson) 67.32; 3, Balero II (P Hayler) 66.8.



Despite being 'short of match practice', Dannie Morgan and the Jazz son Knox's Figaro claim titles at PSG and inter I

DIVA IN THE MAKING

DANNIE MORGAN'S High Hoes Estelle is a true dressage diva in the making. Wellington was her eighth show and she added the novice gold freestyle to the novice gold title she won at Merrist Wood.

In the 11 tests Dannie and Estelle have completed they have never scored less than 71% and they have two scores of 80% and above. They should be very competitive at the winter championships in April.

Estelle is owned by Dannie and his breeder, Nicky Callam. Nicky bred Estelle from a Laudabilis mare, Liza Minnelli, and she is by the top German grand prix stallion Escolar.

"She was a huge foal," recalled Nicky. "Her legs just kept coming out and I wondered if there was a body at all. At two years old I saw her trotting round the field and I thought I had something special."

Because of her size (17.2hh) she wasn't backed until she was five.

"We're aiming for the top end, not the bottom, so she'll have plenty of time to get strong."

ONE TO WATCH

Morgan's mega treble

Dannie Morgan claims a hat-trick, while horses and riders from Headmore Stud clean up across the levels

Wellington Riding Winter Regional Championships, Hants

By HELEN TRIGGS

DANNIE MORGAN added to his growing tally of titles with three here. He put his tactful riding skills into play to ease Knox's Figaro to prix st georges (PSG) and inter I victories.

In Friday's PSG, Fig, who finds busy warm-ups nerve-racking, didn't show his usual softness in the ring. However, the Jazz x Krack C gelding, owned by David Knox and Lisa Morgan, is a such a quality horse that his performance was still good enough to finish top.

The next day, Dannie rode a more forward inter I and the fluency was restored for a second win.

"We haven't had the best preparation for the regionals," explained Dannie after the inter I. "We had planned to go to Addington but he had a bruised foot so he's a bit short of match practice. He went into himself in the PSG, so I was pleased to be able to come back today and have another go. Nicky Barrett, who trains us, helped in the warm-up and told me to use my corners and transitions to help his balance and keep him loose.

"We have taken things slowly with him as he was weak behind. He's very expressive and when we get the throughness I can ride

him with more expression. He's a very talented horse but a bit of a sensitive soul."

Dannie also won the novice gold freestyle on his own and Nicky Callam's High Hoes Estelle (see box, above), bringing his regional title haul for 2020 to five and his total since 2016 to 19.

However, he has some way to go to catch up with Alice Oppenheimer who recorded her 45th regional title when she and nine-year-old Headmore Dionysus won the gold medium freestyle and gold advanced medium titles.

At medium, the Sara Green-produced *Cats* music was a perfect fit for "Dillon", who showed expression and fluency to earn

more than 76% to win. With qualifications in the straight medium and advanced medium freestyle, too, plus titles for Headmore Bella Ruby at Merrist Wood, Alice and her home-breds are going to be busy at the championships.

AN EMOTIONAL WIN

THE good news for Headmore Stud didn't stop there. Andrea Kirby gave Sarah Oppenheimer an emotional hug when Headmore Dramatica, owned by Sarah and ridden by Andrea, landed her second Wellington regional title, in the novice silver freestyle. Drama, nine this year, is by Dimaggio out of the Oppenheimers' grand prix mare, Headmore Boadicia (by Belissimo M).

Andrea and Drama were both new to dressage competition when they started two years ago.



Alice Oppenheimer brings her regional title tally to 45, with victories at medium and advanced medium on Headmore Dionysus

“Sometimes I have to pinch myself at how well we’ve done. I got stage fright in my straight novice class so all I wanted to do was get back in the arena,” said Andrea. “I wanted to do well for Sarah as I wouldn’t have this opportunity without her. Sara Green put together a new music programme, using music by Sibelius. It’s uplifting and powerful — it really suits her.”

Headmore connections

were back on the podium when Maeve Morris and Headmore Footloose won the elementary silver freestyle. “Eric” was bred by Maeve’s stepmother, Nicky Morris, and is by Florencio out of a Dimaggio mare. His score of 76.6% included a massive 80% from Jennie Loriston-Clarke.

“We enter to the song *Footloose* and as soon as he hears the music he’s ready to go,” said Maeve.



‘Sometimes I have to pinch myself at how well we’ve done’: Andrea Kirby lands the novice silver freestyle with Headmore Dramatica

Eric’s music programme was also composed by Sara Green, as was that of the last winners of the show, Georgia Davis and British-bred Keystone Diego (DiMaggio x Weltmeyer). They rocked round the arena in the advanced medium silver freestyle, hitting the beat in all three paces.

“The test felt lovely,” commented Georgia, who bought Diego as a foal. “The canter work was pretty flawless. I didn’t make

boards. Corinne and her Wish Upon A Star home-bred Fourstar Struck won the prelim silver, and fit in their dressage around competing at BE100 level.

“Doing affiliated dressage has made me more competitive in eventing,” said Corinne.

Roberto won the advanced medium silver on Debbie Stibbe’s Dancier x Londonderry mare, Coco Chanel II. He started riding her six months ago and this was

‘As soon as Headmore Footloose hears the music he’s ready to go’

MAEVE MORRIS

the floorplan too complicated as he’s big but there’s enough to give him something to think about.”

Corinne Roberts and Roberto Scalisi are both event riders enjoying time between the white

their first regional final.

“I’m an event rider but I think I may be converted,” he said. “I enjoy riding her every day so for the judges to love her too means even more.” **H&H**

RESULTS

KBIS prelim 17A silv (L Waller, H Ashley, I Auty).— 1, Fourstar Struck (C Roberts) 71.49; 2, Grannoushka (N Akers) 70.8; 3, Hugo X (J Clark) 70.57. **Prestige Italia nov 37A gold (S Andrews, J Surr, F Wilson).**— 1, King IV (J Palmer) 74.07; 2, Identiek HB (D Deutrom) 72.96; 3, G Star (M Frost) 72.46. **silv (C Gardiner, S Lanning, D Lush).**— 1, Furst Pheonix (J Davies) 73.45; 2, Full House (C Arnold) 72.71; 3, Moelview Prince Consort (S Roberts) 71.42. **Baileys nov FSM gold (S Andrews, S Petty, R Baldwin).**— 1, High Hoes Estelle (D Morgan) 76.11; 2, Pauldarys Tiger Two Sox (L Wickes) 75.55; 3, Blousey Brown (J Palmer) 73.79. **silv (A Duck, S Lanning, S Cumine).**— 1, Headmore Dramatica (A Kirby) 73.42; 2, Salsa D’Amour (E Jenkins) 71.75; 3, Moelview Prince Consort 71.48. **Equi-Trek elem 59 gold (S Andrews, S Petty, R Baldwin).**— 1, DJoe DiMaggio (K Bailey) 73.64; 2, Woodlander Booker T (L Wollen) 71.61; 3, Woodcroft Fireball (H Roswell) 71.51. **silv sec A (L Waller, A Keen, R Baldwin).**— 1, Kelsons Fantasy (S Sweet) 71.77; 2, Serendipitous (T Gormley) 70.41; 3, SOS Sealpoint (K Oppenheimer) 69.32. **silv sec B (N Goodman, F Wilson, D Lush).**— 1, Spellbound II (N Kalderen) 69.01; 2, Diamond R (A Carthy) 68.59; 3, Centaurus (M Hackett) 68.54. **Suregrow elem FSM gold (J Loriston-Clarke, K Ratcliffe, C Trendell).**— 1, Woodcroft Fireball (H Boswell) 75.51; 2, Harnells Erasmus (M Graham) 75.44; 3, Woodlander Booker T (L Wollen) 73.01. **silv.**— 1, Headmore Footloose (M Morris)

76.6; 2, Pauldarys Tiger Two Sox 73.91; 3, Stantaii Ashbank (A Dane) 71.28. **Theraplate med 75 gold (N Goodman, S Petty, J Rooney).**— 1, Hawtins Barolo (C Whitworth) 73.24; 2, Headmore Dionysus (A Oppenheimer) 72.52; 3, Amo II (S Williams) 69.64. **silv (L Wall, C Ballantyne, S McMahon).**— 1, Loxleys Optimism (C Speer) 70.4; 2, Sir Wilfred (S Lawrance) 69.68; 3, Royal Reflection (S Homewood) 68.73. **Spillers med FSM gold (N Goodman, J Loriston-Clarke, L Whetstone).**— 1, Headmore Dionysus 76.16; 2, G (K Seaby) 68.83; 3, Pepperwood Casanova (K Shepherd) 67. **silv (A Duck, F Turner, J Harris).**— 1, Armada Danubio (L Laughton) 74; 2, Loxleys Optimism (C Speer) 73.33; 3, Tiger Tim (D Rhodes) 70.66. **Charles Owen adv med 98 gold (M Horn, J Surr, S Cumine).**— 1, Headmore Dionysus 72.85; 2, Helga (M Frost) 71.62; 3, Rayban (K Cowell) 71. **silv (M Horn, S Lanning, J Harris).**— 1, Coco Chanel II (R Scalisi) 68.8; 2, Albertho B (K Lewis) 68.24; 3, Farhills Flaminia (N Hodge) 67.54. **Nupafeed adv med FSM gold (A Duck, S Lanning, S Cumins).**— 1, Helga (M Frost) 75.5; 2, Headmore Dionysus 74.11; 3, Horatio VCG (B Bainbridge) 72.27. **silv (L Waller, L Whetstone, S Lanning).**— 1, Keystone Diego (G Davis) 73.44; 2, Albertho B 71.38; 3, Virtue V (A Towle) 68.5. **Magic PSG gold (N Goodman, S Phillips, C Ballantyne).**— 1, Knox’s Figaro (D Morgan) 72.14; 2, Summerhouse Delano (M Frost) 71.93; 3, Rudy (L Amy) 71.79. **Superflex inter I gold (N Goodman, L Whetstone, S Phillips).**— 1, Knox’s Figaro 71.62; 2, Timolin (E Murray) 68.86; 3, Bohingus W (S Williams) 68.5.



Maeve Morris pilots Headmore Footloose to an elementary silver win



'He felt absolutely mega,' says Sophie Christiansen of her gold grade I champion Innuendo II (by Last Minute)

Christiansen cleans up

Sophie Christiansen scores a one-two, as riders aim to impress ahead of the upcoming Tokyo Paralympics

Equissage Pulse Para Winter Championships, Myerscough College, Lancs

HIGH scores were set as the crème de la crème of British para dressage gunned for places at Tokyo 2020 in the first major showdown of the year.

Sophie Christiansen claimed both first and second place in the gold grade I championship with two relatively new exciting rides.

The 13-year-old Last Minute gelding Innuendo II scored a huge new personal best of 78.13% to be crowned champion, with the seven-year-old mare Die Furstin also producing a smart test to finish runner-up on 75.36%.

"I wasn't expecting it because he is still pretty new to me and he was quite fresh," said Sophie. "We have been working on a new warm-up with my trainer and he was bubbling on the edge, so I had to ride for my life in there — I thought: 'Just relax,' and it worked. He felt absolutely mega."

By LUCY ELDER

Sophie added she's been working with Anna Miller and Anna's trainer, Damian Hallam, as well as Jason Webb, which has been a real help over the winter.

"I didn't quite know what to expect as we haven't really been

out since October. I haven't had that sort of score since 2016," Sophie said, adding it is nice to show what she can do as a trainer as well as a rider.

"My horses have never had para riders before, I was really starting from scratch with these two and that makes it even more special.

"There is still a lot of work to do and the standard out there is really high now, but it is a great start to give me confidence going into the year."

Veronica Bower was the winner of the director's award for inspiration alongside her silver grade II championship and freestyle victories.

"I came out of the arena after the championship test and said, 'That's it, I've blown it,'" said Veronica, who has been runner-up in her previous two championships and was regraded from grade III to grade II last year.

"I was back at the lorry when my daughter came in and said, 'You've only gone and won it!'"

Veronica's daughter, dressage rider Tracy Ormrod, found Game Over (Daisy) in the Netherlands as a four-year-old.

"She's been a dream — she's nine now, we've been competing together for about three years and I love her to bits," said Veronica, 73, who trains with her daughter and with Sarah Rogers. "There isn't enough money to part with her.

"So many people dismiss older riders and especially older disabled riders. For me it was wonderful winning the award as it shows riders that you don't have to give up competing."

Sophie Wells and her multiple medal-winning ride C Fatal Attraction were on blistering form with a hat-trick of plus-80% wins, including the championship with a plus-13% margin on 82.44%.

Marcelle Ward and her long-term ride Dornroeschen proved indomitable, with a clean sweep across all grade IV gold sections,



Sophie Wells pilots the consistent C Fatal Attraction to a hat-trick of plus-80% victories

RESULTS

Gr II nov A silv (G Lewis).— 1, Game Over (V Bower) 70.22; 2, Criminal Girl (J Phillips) 68.26; 3, Just River (E Stevens) 63. **gr III nov A silv (G Lewis).**— 1, Mallmore Ardahan Lad (I Slack) 69.2; 2, Vygo-w (G Cook) 67.4; 3, Wavere Springs Rubieux (V Nurcombe) 66.6. **gr IV nov A silv (G Lewis).**— 1, Wonnacott (T Dyer) 69.31; 2, Parsley II (S Bates) 67.93; 3, Aegrus Ophelia (A Griffiths) 62.76. **gr V nov A silv (G Lewis).**— 1, Giant SQBS (E Skerrett) 69.22; 2, Zorra Verte (E Skerrett) 67.19; 3, Prototype II (S Pedersen) 62.66. **gr I team test gold (S Leitch, G Lewis, J McGarel-Groves).**— 1, Strong Beau (G Blake) 71.37; 2, Lebensfreude (M Durward-Akhurst) 70.18. **gr II team test gold (S Leitch, G Lewis, J McGarel-Groves).**— 1, The Gingerbread Man (A Cole) 68.03; 2, Game Over 64.85. **gr III team test gold (S Leitch, G Lewis, J McGarel-Groves).**— 1, Mallmore Ardahan Lad 63.97. **gr IV team test gold (S Leitch, G Lewis, J McGarel-Groves).**— 1, Dornroeschen (M Ward) 69.21; 2, Woodcroft Garuda K (L Gulliver) 68.67; 3, C'est La Vie 11 (K Radzik) 67.38. **gr II ch nov A silv (K Mhyer, C Gardiner, S Leitch).**— 1, Game Over 67.83; 2, Soensminde Sylvester (A Turner) 65.58; 3, Criminal Girl (J Phillips) 63.55. **gr III ch nov A silv (K Mhyer, C Gardiner, S Leitch).**— 1, Sheepcote Catkin (D Smith) 65.2; 2, Vygo-w 60.27. **gr IV ch nov A silv (K Mhyer, C Gardiner, S Leitch).**— 1, Tango VII (S Bates) 68.16; 2, Wonnacott 66.55; 3, Aegrus Ophelia 66.32. **gr V ch nov A silv (K Mhyer, C Gardiner, S Leitch).**— 1, Et L'Amour (H Hayward) 66.56; 2, Namibian (J Frizzell) 64.84; 3, Tyler II (U Treadgold) 62.14. **gr II test 10 brnz (S Edwards).**— 1, Just River (E Stevens) 66.76; 2, Nikita (L Hughes) 66.18; 3, Tuckers Surprise (L Hughes) 62.35. **gr III test 21 brnz (S Edwards).**— 1, Storm (C Harrison) 70.28; 2, Highwood Easter's Surprise (K Reilly) 60.56; 3, Vygo-w 60. **gr V intro brnz (S Edwards).**— 1, Tyler II 66.19; 2, Rosslyne Tudor Rose (A Stewart) 63.1; 3, Scarlets True Skyfall (D Rooney) 62.38. **gr I FSM gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, Strong Beau (G Blake) 71.88; 2, Lebensfreude 71.67. **gr II FSM gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, Sugarbabe (G Wilson) 71.37; 2, The Gingerbread Man 69.3. **silv.**— 1, Game Over 66.22. **gr III FSM gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, LJT Diamond Crusador (E Orford) 77. **brnz.**— 1, Highwood Easter's Surprise 58.67. **gr IV FSM gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, Dornroeschen 73.2; 2, Woodcroft Garuda K (L Gulliver) 70.81; 3, Fine-Time (R Collins) 70.72. **silv.**— 1, Parsley II 66.64; 2, Aegrus Ophelia 66.11; 3, Stanbeck By Request (K Squires) 64.28. **gr V FSM gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, C Fatal Attraction (S Wells) 82; 2, Don Cara (S Wells) 74.22. **silv.**— 1, Namibian 67.5. **brnz.**— 1, Scarlets True Skyfall (D Rooney) 58.1; 2, Prototype II (S Pedersen) 55.44. **gr I ch brnz (K Mhyer, S Edwards, S Leitch).**— 1, Trust April (S Lingfield) 66.04. **gr II ch brnz (K Mhyer, S Edwards, S Leitch).**— 1, Rubin Ryella (J Inchley) 67.06; 2, Soensminde Sylvester 65.69; 3, Just River (E Stevens) 62.25. **gr III ch brnz (K Mhyer, S Edwards, S Leitch).**— 1, Storm 65.09; 2, Vygo-w 60.65. **gr IV ch brnz (K Mhyer, S Edwards, S Leitch).**— 1, Koko Pop (L Scott) 70. **gr V ch brnz (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, Tyler II 69.17; 2, Greenvale Angelica (D Charlesworth) 65.71; 3, Scarlets True Skyfall 64.4. **gr I indiv gold (S Leitch).**— 1, Die Furstin (S Christiansen) 74.82; 2, Innuendo III (S Christiansen) 71.25; 3, Strong Beau (G Blake) 70.54. **gr II indiv gold (S Leitch).**— 1, Sugarbabe 74.56; 2, Divinity (J Payne) 70.88; 3, Sweet Caledonia (N Adkinson) 68.38. **gr III indiv gold (S Leitch).**— 1, LJT Diamond Crusador 74.85; 2, Keystone Dawn Chorus (N Baker) 74.26. **gr IV indiv gold (K Mhyer).**— 1, Dornroeschen 71.1; 2, Woodcroft Garuda K 70; 3, Ferrari (N Naylor) 69.63. **gr V indiv gold (S Leitch).**— 1, C Fatal Attraction 81.55; 2, Don Cara 73.69; 3, LJT Simply Red (C Cundall) 69.88. **gr I ch gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, Innuendo III 78.12; Die Furstin 75.36; 3, Strong Beau 71.96. **gr II ch gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, Breezer 111 (L Pearson) 74.34; 2, Pandora 73.16; 3, Sugarbabe 71.47. **gr III ch gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, Keystone Dawn Chorus 76.54; 2, Remi II (A Shirtcliffe) 69.78; 3, San Quentin QOS (J Lishman) 68.68. **gr IV ch gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, Dornroeschen 71.71; 2, Woodcroft Garuda K 71.04; 3, Del Piero (N Naylor) 70. **gr V ch gold (K Mhyer, S Leitch).**— 1, C Fatal Attraction 82.44; 2, LJT Simply Red 68.69; 3, Et L'Amour 66.13.



'I LOVE LEARNING AND IMPROVING'

DEFENDING champion Sara Bates went home with victories aboard both of her two home-bred mares, as well as a clutch of other placings.

Last year's summer and winter grade IV silver champion Tango VII (pictured; Arkida x Diamond Rock) retained her title with a score of 68.16%.

Meanwhile Parsley II, bred out of Sara's former point-to-point mare Rainy Miss by her own stallion North Col, danced her way to a freestyle win to the sound of Coldplay as well as soundtracks from *Beauty and the Beast* and *Frozen*.

ONE TO WATCH

"The last movement was medium canter and we went for it," said Sara. "I thought, 'If I can turn at the end I'm doing well!' It's just about having fun and I love learning, taking the comments on board, trying to improve and just keeping going."

including the freestyle and championship.

Natasha Baker and Keystone Dawn Chorus topped the grade III gold championship on 76.54%, with Sir Lee Pearson (Breezer III) taking the grade II championship on 74.34%.

'I WASN'T EXPECTING TO WIN'

RIDERS across the levels were full of praise for the championships and the format of having bronze, silver and gold riders together.

The 300-mile journey proved worthwhile for Jason Inchley, who won the bronze grade II title with Rubin Ryella on 67.06%.

This was just the third affiliated show as a combination for the partnership, which formed in September.

"When I first saw her, I fell in love with her — when you know, you know," said Jason, crediting his mother for finding her and Lakefield Equestrian Centre for the help they have given him with the 10-year-old mare.

"She's come on really well; Mark Cunliffe and Becky Monk have done a great job getting her a lot stronger. She felt amazing and was so calm. I've been working on straightness with her and those halts, and we got a really good score for those.

"I was so surprised and wasn't expecting to win at all — I just planned to go out and do our best."

Ursula Treadgold put a tricky start behind her to win the bronze grade V championship with the 17-year-old Tyler II. A problem with the brake calipers on her horsebox meant she had to abandon the first attempt to travel up to Lancashire, before her trainer Lindsey Dawes came to the rescue with her lorry.

Tyler and Ursula are both fairly new to the para dressage world — Ursula bought him 18 months ago and she competed in her first para competition last May, winning the bronze summer championships and finishing sixth at the prelim nationals in September. **H&H**

ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

'Bad memories for a good story'

Carl Hester advises on how to help journalists turn you into good copy

WHILE in Florida recently at the Adequan Global Dressage festival at Wellington, I was amused to turn the tables and interview war correspondent turned dressage journalist Kenneth J Braddick, who has often asked me for quotes.

British Dressage provides media training for up-and-coming riders, but even after all these years, having that conversation gave me an insight into how we as riders can prepare to give a positive perception of our sport in the media whether it's the "on side" specialist titles or mainstream.

There's a BBC guide that advises a reply of 30-40 seconds to a question. Basically, if you're shy, you need to stretch, if you talk too much, you need to shrink. I've been lucky to have horses with their own stories — Legal Democrat whose career started through a magazine competition, and Nip Tuck who was, let's say, inexpensive.

One of Britain's greatest dressage riders and trainers, Carl Hester MBE is an Olympic gold medallist and multi-medallist at European and World Championships.

OPINION

Remember the small things — parts of your own, your horse's and owners' journeys. Some international riders might travel from Gothenburg at 1°C to Wellington at 37°C — the story is it wiped you out for a day, but you came back to win.

It's not necessarily the journalist's job to ask us interesting questions. They may not know your back story or the sport. To answer directly, with a sense of humour, and play off each other with fellow riders helps makes for better quotes.

A bit of confidence and a few trips round the block helped me, but for younger riders a few little special anecdotes will break the ice and nerves, even if they don't make it to print.

THE BEST STORIES

IT was interesting to talk to a US-based journalist and hear that riders can be afraid to say too much, to be controversial, in case it affects their scores. Does that happen here when so many opinions are voiced in *H&H*? I don't know, but I agree with



Kenneth's opinion that judges are purely interested in what they see in the arena and that riders are kind to their horses.

Thirty-odd years ago when I started out, reports were opinion, almost always written by judges or riders and they could be harsh. That changed thanks to the legendary *H&H* editor Michael Clayton, who like my interviewee in Florida came from mainstream media and war reporting into equestrian reporting.

Currently, people want instant information and results, and there's the "real life" gossip angle, which can be unpleasant

if not handled correctly.

What I really took away, though, from interviewing a journalist was that he took on board that people in our "little" sport work hard to make ourselves and our horses as good as they can be.

As exciting as covering wars? Kenneth answered maybe not, but it's real people doing something incredibly difficult and in so many cases just giving their whole heart, soul and bank account to doing so. It was good to hear, but he is married to a dressage rider!

It's not always easy being interviewed, and probably the funniest stories don't come from the winners on that day. But save those memories because one day the story of how Prince was a total toad and exited the arena on seeing a snake (a bit of hosepipe), which led to elimination, will be priceless when he wins his next championship. People will remember him, and you, when you get to on to the team. **H&H**

NEXT WEEK

London 2012 medallist Laura Tomlinson

Butler amps up the power

By ANDREA OAKES

Hunters Equestrian, Glos

AMIEK C cruised to an 81.97% advanced medium win with Lara Butler, after an extended break from competition.

"He was mega," said Lara, who last competed "Ampy" at the national championships in 2018, before she had her son Jack. "We've been working with him at home, building him up for small tour, and the training has paid off."

"Ampy has such a big engine, so we've been helping him learn to control that power and use it in the right way," added Lara of the Ampère 10-year-old. "I've never sat on a horse like him. His extended canter is amazing — you really feel the power beneath you."

Pippa Hutton scored wins at prix st georges (PSG) and inter I with her mother Pammy's Vivaldi stallion Enjoy K.

"We've had him since he was three, but I refused to ride him in the past as he scared the life out of me," said Pippa, who recently took up the reins with the 11-year-old and hopes to take him to grand prix. "He's a cheeky horse, one of the funniest I've trained, but it's nice to have something after Duella [Pippa's former young rider team partner]. I'm a nervous jumper but we've been jumping 1.35m, which has really strengthened our bond."

Pippa was also placed at novice with Lisa and Mike Kirkwood's seven-year-old mare Idorijke.

Landea notched up plus-76%

'The training has paid off': Amiek C returns from a break to claim an advanced medium with 81.97% under Lara Butler



wins at novice and elementary, impressing Robert Barker with her rideability.

"She's a kind and loving mare

with great paces and a good personality," said Robert, who has backed and produced the six-year-old Landtanzer daughter

for US rider Katherine Bateson. "She's out of Katherine's grand prix mare Dea II. Apparently, the two are identical."

RESULTS

HUNTERS EQUESTRIAN

23 Feb: prelim 15 gold (M Philpott). — 1, Denby Du Ritz (O Cooper) 71.8. **silv.** — 1, Charming Ideaal Barones (L Hughes) 60.4. **brnz.** — 1, Lynwood Twenty Twelve (V Ingles) 65.4. **prelim 17A gold (S Cumine).** — 1, Denby Du Ritz 74.48; 2, Stanley Grange Heir Supreme (E Dunkley) 71.72. **silv.** — 1, Charming Ideaal Barones 61.03. **brnz.** — 1, Lynwood Twenty Twelve 68.45. **nov 23 gold (M Philpott).** — 1, Just Magic BH (O Cooper) 71.67; 2, Idorijke (P Hutton) 67.71; 3, Iris Nobile (M Norris) 65.42. **silv.** — 1, Stanley Grange Heir Supreme 66.04; 2, Iris-Mere (D Hodson) 63.54. **brnz.** — 1, Whiskey Opposition (A Page) 66.88; 2, Dunkerrin Boy (L Pinder) 63.54; 3, Jannes Link (J Norman) 62.29. **nov 37A gold (S Cumine).** — 1, Landea (R Barker) 76.67; 2, Just Magic BH 73.33; 3, Idorijke 69.07. **silv.** — 1, Rudgeway Highlander (G Silvey) 63.89; 2, Iris-Mere 62.04. **brnz.** — 1, Dunkerrin Boy 63.33; 2, Top Grey (I Milner) 59.63. **elem 43 gold (J Surr).** — 1, Landea 76.03. **silv.** — 1, Helixa (N Jones) 68.1; 2, Dimna (M Sears) 66.21; 3, Sunshine V (K Hudd) 62.76. **elem 57 gold (G Leverett).** — 1, Ambassadors Disguise (C Price) 70.

silv. — 1, Sunshine V 71.25; 2, Dimna 68.93; 3, Lila's Girl (C Wiederkehr) 67.68. **med 61 gold (J Surr).** — 1, Tangaluna (C Pickles) 64.31. **silv.** — 1, Morrison (A Peternell) 68.28; 2, Lila's Girl 67.93; 3, Armada Danubio (L Laughton) 67.76. **brnz.** — 1, Donna Ravallino (W Hudson) 63.79. **med 75 gold (G Leverett).** — 1, Findatie Bracken (C Pickles) 66.22. **silv.** — 1, Gerento (E Willett) 67.97; 2, Whalton Gladrags (I Platts) 64.86; 3, Morrison 64.73. **brnz.** — 1, Donna Ravallino 56.22. **adv med 85 gold (J Surr).** — 1, Improvise (C Pickles) 70.44; 2, Becky W (S Rahmatalla) 69.85; 3, Findatie Bracken 66.91. **silv.** — 1, Delius I (P Parker) 68.53; 2, Pikador (A Foster) 66.32. **brnz.** — 1, Enzo SR (Z Golding) 69.26. **adv med 98 gold (G Leverett).** — 1, Amiek C (L Butler) 81.97; 2, Fuerteventura (H Boswell) 74.21; 3, Improvise 68.55. **silv.** — 1, Pikador 66.05; 2, Lets Twist (K Applin) 65.39. **brnz.** — 1, Enzo SR 65.92. **PSG gold (J Kidd).** — 1, Enjoy K (P Hutton) 68.16; 2, Folt (H Boswell) 66.58; 3, Belmondo III (V Campbell) 60.66. **silv.** — 1, Zidane I (F Douglas) 64.08; 2, Apollo III (C Green) 63.68; 3, Hillgrove Rockwell (H James) 63.55. **brnz.** — 1, Delius I 62.76. **inter I gold.** — 1, Enjoy K 67.5. **silv.** — 1, Quinet Du Buisson Z (J Morris) 66.32.

'He's one of the funniest I've trained': Pippa Hutton and Enjoy K post wins at PSG and inter I



‘He’s such a trier’

STRIKING coloured stallion Hiawatha made a splash at Parwood EC, Surrey, where he took the elementary 57 outright with a plus-75% score.

“He’ll be lovely when he learns to be brave,” said Anna Miller, who rides “Bo” for Liz Wenman and is helping the Harmony-sired eight-year-old build confidence. “He’s hot and responsive, but not spooky or silly, and such a trier that he tends to panic if he gets something wrong.

“We think he’s special,” added

Anna, who trains Paralympic star Sophie Christiansen. “He’s a loose, easy mover and he’s suddenly finding gears at trot that I knew were in there but he didn’t. For the first time in competition, we produced the medium trot we can do at home — for an 8.5.”

Anna then rode Finland to a double medium win.

“He’s moving forward more positively and finding his groove,” she said of “Woody”, Danielle Murdoch’s 10-year-old Dutch-bred gelding.

‘Lovely’ Denver triumphs

“DENVER deserved a better mark than I did,” laughed Chloé Jacques after an advanced medium 98 win with the Oldenburg gelding — despite a small rider error — at Step Aside Dressage, West Sussex.

The French rider, who co-owns Denver IX with Agnes Sommain, is working with David and

Angela Jones at Highview Stables in West Sussex and sometimes trains there with Vicky Thompson-Winfield.

“Denver is not the most courageous horse I know, but he’s lovely,” said Chloé of the German-bred Dresemann son.

“I want him to be strong enough to find things easy and enjoy it, so we’re training to build his confidence at PSG and inter I,” she added.

‘I want him to enjoy it’



Nicky Heale and 13-year-old Welsh cob Retanach Request complete their first grand prix together

‘SO GENUINE’

ALISON CAHILL’S 11-year-old mare Estpoint is regaining form after a year of health niggles. The Westpoint daughter, who sustained an injury and then developed ulcers, headed the novice 38 at Bury Farm, Buckinghamshire, building on some consistent results.

“She can be quirky and sharp, but in the arena she’s a professional,” said Alison, who bought “Eva” from her owner. “She is such a jolly character and so genuine.

We’ve built a nice bond and I’m keen to see how far she can go.”

ONE TO WATCH

‘Time to show off’

Tillyoch Equestrian, Aberdeenshire

“IT’S been an amazing journey,” said Nicky Heale after completing her first grand prix with Retanach Request. “Now we can go out and show off a bit!”

Thought to be one of only a handful of Welsh cobs worldwide to have reached the level, the 13-year-old gelding has risen through the ranks with Nicky after a difficult start.

“I bought him as a blank canvas,” said Nicky, explaining that the nervy five-year-old had started to mistrust humans after developing an infection when he was gelded. “I couldn’t get near him in the stable, but once I was on board he felt super-safe.

“I still can’t catch him,” she said of 14.2hh “Rocco”, who lives out and brings himself into his stable.

“He’s scared of his own shadow, but he produces such nice work.”

Nicky credits her long-term trainer Pammy Hutton with Rocco’s meteoric rise.

“This will be the seventh year he has made it to the winter championships,” said Nicky, who taught Rocco piaffe from YouTube, and earned a respectable 61.5%.

Scottish British Dressage (BD) chairman Sharon Lindop took another step forward with her Spielberg gelding Spielbanker, heading both the PSG and inter I.

“The way he coped in the wind showed a new level of maturity, as last year he might have used that as an excuse to be cheeky,” said Sharon, who has produced Spiel over six years.

“The aim has always been grand prix, but realistically we’re looking at inter II by the end of the year.”

RESULTS

TILLYOCH EQUESTRIAN

23 Feb: prelim 17A gold (E Gammie).— 1, Lonsdale Legend (A Watson-Anderson) 66.55. **prelim 19 gold.**— 1, Lonsdale Legend 68.13. **nov 23 brnz.**— 1, Glyncoch Red Rascal (A Gray) 70; 2, Sheeuan Magpie (A Fernandes) 62.71; 3, Golden Delicious (E Maguire) 62.29. **nov 38 brnz.**— 1, Golden Delicious 65.48; 2, Sheeuan Magpie 63.23. **elem 45 silv (G Peters).**— 1, Jolijn T (A Pullem) 66.03; 2, Tempelton Temptress (H Lawson) 63.79; 3, Balhagarty Royal Dhu

(M Booth) 63.45. **elem 53 silv.**— 1, Jolijn T 68.24; 2, Gideon II (S Duncan) 66.18; 3, Tempelton Temptress 64.85. **med 61 silv.**— 1, St Antine (F Maxwell) 64.48. **med 73 silv.**— 1, Solaris Amoureux (A Mackenzie) 68.53; 2, St Antine 64.26; 3, Macklin Royal (C Stott) 60.88. **adv med 85 silv.**— 1, Solaris Amoureux 67.21. **adv 102 gold.**— 1, Bali Dancer (S Turpitt) 65.88. **PSG silv.**— 1, Spielbanker (S Lindop) 69.74; 2, Sonnersted (V Gladwyn) 66.45; 3, Don Pasco (J Sim) 65.92. **inter I silv.**— 1, Spielbanker 68.42; 2, Don Pasco 64.34. **brnz.**— 1, Sonnersted 67.76. **GP gold.**— 1, Retanach Request (N Heale) 61.5.



Spielbanker shows Sharon Lindop ‘a new level of maturity’ on their way to wins at PSG and inter I

More 'oomph' wins through

EFFORTS to inject some energy into their performance paid off for Florence Human and her Westfalian gelding Fulgencio, who scored four medium wins in a fruitful weekend at Tall Trees Arena, Cornwall.

"He's a laid-back character, so we've been trying to make it all a bit more exciting," said A level student Florence. "Our canter was nice and pretty, but he wasn't using himself enough. We've

worked on moving the canter forwards, using lots of transitions within the pace and then taking that into trot.

"We were both well rested for day two," added Florence, whose freestyle to a soundtrack from *Hamilton*, her favourite musical, earned 73.33%. "He came out with more oomph."

Right: Florence Human and Fulgencio scoop four mediums



Samba Dancer's hot, hot, hot

AFTER 17 months out of action, Samba Dancer bounced back with a 75% inter II win at Stourport RC, Worcestershire.

"As soon as the judge rang

the bell, he got really excited," said Kate Cowell, who rides the 14-year-old son of Samba Hit II for Chris Richards. "It was as if he got his competition hat back on

and rolled up his sleeves. He has obviously missed it."

"Sammy" was established at grand prix in 2018 when he was sidelined with a soundness issue.

"We gave him time off, which seemed to take forever," said Kate. "The break has done him good, as he's come back hotter in the piaffe and more reliable in the tempi changes and canter pirouettes. The best thing was that he did it with such a smile on his face."

A NEW PAIR PROSPERS

THE promising new partnership of Rose Hugh-Smith and Ulyssa claimed the PSG at Wellington Riding, Hampshire, with 72.5% — their fourth victory at the level since they teamed up late last year.

"She's a fun horse to work with," said Rose of Ian McRobbie's nine-year-old Utopia mare, a former British Dressage small tour PSG champion with Lizzie Murray. "We'll be developing her natural paces a little and will see where the season takes us."

ONES TO WATCH

Rose, who trains with Emile Faurie, received confirmation earlier this month that she and "Sasha" are in the British young rider squad. Despite being in the midst of her second year at University of Warwick,

studying politics, philosophy and law, strikes by teaching staff are freeing up extra time for training.

"We don't have so many lectures at the moment," said Rose, who is preparing to ride Sasha at Keysoe CDI later this month.

Josephine Clewlow scored a medium silver freestyle win with Bon Jovi AKW, despite a glitch with her disc, before heading the advanced medium freestyle outright.

"Joey, as he is known at home, is really just an 'average Joe,'" revealed Josephine's mother, Vanessa. "He isn't a big, flashy mover, and he often struggles to maintain a clear four-beat walk. But with such a willing, trainable horse, perseverance from the rider and a bit of luck on the day, it is possible to pick up some small victories here and there."

'His work is starting to come across in a much more presentable way': Alex Chick and nine-year-old Giovanni BM top a medium



Cool, calm and collected

A MORE relaxed approach in the arena earned a high-scoring medium 76 qualifier win at Solihull EC, West Midlands, for Giovanni BM, Alex Chick's nine-year-old Apache gelding.

"He's settled down and is so much calmer and more rideable in the tests," said Alex, who rides for Paul Friday and bought "Gee" as a five-year-old from Brightwell's.

"We've been at medium for a while now, consolidating his changes. While he's talented and has always found the work quite easy, it is starting to come across in a much more presentable way." **H&H**

Wilton leads British charge

Spencer Wilton is back and nets two wins, with his compatriots close behind



Spencer Wilton kicks off his Tokyo campaign in style with the British-bred 17-year-old Super Nova II

Lier CDI4*, Belgium

SPENCER WILTON made a winning return to the circuit, taking a double victory with Super Nova II at his first international show since the World Equestrian Games in 2018.

Spencer is aiming for Tokyo Olympic selection with the 17-year-old De Niro gelding, who was on the British team from 2016 to 2018. They made the a

great start to their campaign with victory in the 44-strong grand prix class — despite an 8% discrepancy in their scores across the five judges, which Spencer said was “frustrating” — before topping the special with 76.81%.

“He was really nervous, and we had a costly mistake in the one-time changes in the grand prix, but I’m delighted that he is back,” said Spencer of “Neville”.

“We had a blip at the end of the two-times in the special due to him looking up at the first-floor gallery, but it’s amazing that at 17 he can continue developing, learning and strengthening.”

The Olympian also admitted to asking Emile Faurie for help refreshing his memory of the special floorplan.

“I couldn’t remember the last time I rode a special — it was in 2017!” he laughed.

It was a great show for the British contingent, as they filled the top three places in the special, and three of the top four in the grand prix. Sonnar Murray-Brown recorded international personal bests with the 13-year-old Erlentanz, finishing second to Spencer in both classes with over 74%. Meanwhile, Gareth Hughes and KK Woodstock also achieved their best score yet in both the grand prix and special.

Dwyer flies the flag

A part-bred Shire gelding posts a winning personal best in Doha

By POLLY BRYAN

Commercial Bank CHI Al Shaqab, presented by Longines, Doha, Qatar

KATE DWYER’S debut trip to Al Shaqab proved fruitful for the Irish rider, when she scored the biggest win of her career with Snowdon Faberge. Kate and “Fabio” claimed a well-deserved victory in the grand prix special, with their first score over 70% in a straight international test.



Kate Dwyer and Snowdon Faberge top the grand prix special

The 14-year-old gelding, by Foxcourt Fabelhaft and out of Snowdon Daisy, was bred in Wales, but boasts Shire blood. Fabio pulled off a smart, consistent performance here, scoring a seven or above for every movement in the test.

“I chose to ride the special here because I need to practise it more ahead of the Olympics, and I need that technical score. I actually

enjoyed the test,” said Kate, who was a member of the Irish European Championships team in 2019 that secured the country’s first-ever team dressage place at the Olympics. She is now aiming for Tokyo 2020 selection.

“He hasn’t got the biggest extended trot but it is rhythmical and harmonious, and he has a good passage, so the test showed off his strengths,” she added.

Sweden’s Patrik Kittel claimed a double victory, topping the grand prix and the freestyle, the latter with just under 80% on his trusty campaigner, Delaunay OLD. This is the third time Patrik has won here in Doha, having also triumphed in 2015 and 2016, although it’s the first time with the 14-year-old Dr Doolittle gelding.

“I’ll never forget the first time I saw the stadium here — I said then that if they invite me to ride here again, I’d be the first on the plane,” said Patrik, adding that although he is aiming his European team bronze medallist Well Done De La Roche CMF at Tokyo, Delaunay is likely to be his reserve ride.

In para ranks, each grade was dominated by a single combination. Norway’s Jens Lasse Dokkan won all three tests in grade I with Aladdin, while Pepo Puch debuted a new ride, Fürst Chili, and scored three wins for Austria in grade II. Dutch rider Rixt van der Horst claimed a grade III hat-trick with Findsley NOP, as did Brazil’s Rodolpho Riskalla and Don Frederic 3 at grade IV. All three grade V classes went to Belgium’s Ciska Vermeulen and Rohmeo. **H&H**

'She has a lot of blood and always wants to go' — Daniel Deusser and Killer Queen VDM head a field of 41 in the grand prix



Killer Queen hits the high notes

Daniel Deusser's upcoming ride proves herself at the top level as Brits perform well but just miss the winning places

Commercial Bank CHI Al Shaqab, presented by Longines, Doha, Qatar

DANIEL DEUSSER proved just why he is ranked third in the world when he came out on top of a nail-bitingly tight jump-off to claim the Commercial Bank CHI Al Shaqab grand prix, pocketing a tidy €135,000 (£105,000) for his efforts.

His winning ride, the Eldorado VD Zeshoek x For Pleasure mare

By POLLY BRYAN

Killer Queen VDM, is still only 10 but is accelerating her way to the top of the sport, and is now tipped to be Daniel's Olympic ride.

"She has developed so much in the past six months, and if she can continue to improve as much in the next six months, she'll be my number one horse come the summer," the German rider said after his win.

The spectacular stadium and facilities at Al Shaqab, plus the chunky prize pot, always attract some of the world's top riders and this year was no different, the final evening's grand prix sizzling with expectation. Of 41 starters, 17 riders completed Louis Konickx and Quintin Maertens' first-round course on a clear score sheet, and were joined in round two by Jur Vrieling, on a single time fault. With the fences at maximum height, and the time allowed

proving deceptively tight, it took a while for the first clear to come. When it finally did, it was courtesy of Germany's Maurice Tebbel on his big-jumping stallion Don Diarado, and he was eventually joined by seven others.

Britain's Scott Brash made the massive course look easy on the 11-year-old Carambole gelding Hello Senator, cruising round to secure a ticket to the jump-off. Fellow Brit Jack Whitaker had a tougher time, though; the 18-year-old, making his debut at Al Shaqab, jumped a foot-perfect first round aboard the grey Cardento 11-year-old Elucar V E, but two rails in the second ruled him out of the final round.

Time was the deciding factor in the eight-horse jump-off, with only two combinations incurring jumping faults. The course featured several long gallops, interspersed with three influential turns, and it was those who maintained a forward stride into every fence that reaped the reward.



Austria's Max Kühner became the man to beat, hardly taking a pull to set a target of 39.39sec with Elektrik Blue P.

Several riders came within half a second, including France's Roger Yves Bost, who put in a gutsy attempt aboard Sangria Du Coty. Fellow Frenchman Julien Epailard, already a three-time winner this week, clocked the fastest time but at the expense of a pole.

Scott Brash looked on track to take the lead as he set sail with Hello Senator to the rousing sound of the James Bond theme tune. The pair drew gasps as they thundered down the first line, making light of the 270° turnback from the second oxer to the vertical at three. Scott took a speedy inside line into the one-stride double, jumped in — then suddenly pulled out before the oxer.

"I upped the pace and he just got a little bit keen with me. He was a bit surprised by the double and backed off, and I would certainly have had a big fault if I'd jumped out," explained Scott, who went on to finish the course clear. "It's just one of those things and a

'He was surprised by the double and backed off'

SCOTT BRASH ON HAVING TO TAKE EVASIVE ACTION ABOARD HELLO SENATOR

shame a three-round grand prix finished like that, but the horse jumped fantastically."

Daniel admitted that as he entered the stadium, there was really "nothing to think about apart from to go fast". He and Killer Queen met every fence on a perfect stride.

"It was good for my horse that there was a long way between fence one and two as she could be quicker there than others," he assessed. "Then on the turn after the double into the second last fence I was able to let her go forward again and leave some strides out."

Indeed, Daniel was half a second up on the clock during the latter half of the course.

"She has a lot of blood and always wants to go," Daniel added of Killer Queen, who was bought as a seven-year-old by Stephex Stables and enjoyed plenty of success as a younger horse.

"She has lots of scope and doesn't care what the arena is like



Julien Epailard claims three wins, including two on the 11-year-old stallion Virtuose Champeix, who jumps barefoot

or what surface she's on. She can compete with the best horses I've had."

'I LOVE THIS ARENA'

THE rest of the show was dominated by France's Julien Epailard, who enjoyed a hat-trick of victories with his pair of speedy chestnuts. With the 11-year-old Rubins Des Bruyeres stallion Virtuose Champeix, he topped the showcase classes on both Thursday and Friday evenings, as well as heading Thursday's opening two-phase with his grand prix ride, Alibi De La Roque.

"This is my third time here and I just love this big arena as I can really gallop my horses — the style

of arena suits the way I ride," he commented.

Julien also revealed that both his horses here jump barefoot.

"It's better for their blood flow, the natural articulation of the foot. The owner has been doing this for years with fantastic results," he explained.

It was a case of so near, yet so far for the two British riders in Doha, with Scott collecting a second and third with the 11-year-old Stolzenberg x For Pleasure gelding Hello Shelby, who was on flying form. In fact, Scott did not have a fence down throughout the show with either of his horses, boding well for next week's Global Champions Tour

'SOME THINGS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR SPORT'

THE rapidly escalating threat from coronavirus was on everybody's mind during this show, with several riders expressing concern over possible event cancellations and travel restrictions. The Shanghai leg of the Global Champions Tour, due to take place on 8-10 May, is at particular risk of cancellation.

"We have to see how things happen over the next few weeks — this could have a real impact on shows, as they won't take place if there is too much risk," said Austria's Max Kühner, who is on the board of the International Jumping Riders Club. "It might mean riders miss out on rankings

TALKING POINT

points, but some things are more important than our sport."

(GCT) at the same venue.

Jack Whitaker impressed with his mature riding, picking up two top 10 placings with the 10-year-old mare Scenletha at just his second five-star show. He will also stay on in Doha for the GCT. **H&H**



'On flying form' — Scott Brash and Hello Shelby collect two podium places with a second and a third

Bunbury Conquest conquers

A triple clear seals the deal for 128cm victor Emily Irvine, an early qualifier maintains their winning form and Tabitha Kyle coins it with a handful of wins

By MARGARET SHAW

**Richmond EC Small Pony
Premier, Yorks**

AFTER being placed in their two previous qualifiers at Keysoe and South View, Emily Irvine and Bunbury Conquest (Questy) made it third time lucky when winning the meeting's second winter 128cm second round.

"We qualified first time out last year, so I'm relieved to get our ticket this time — to win the class and on a triple clear for the first time was extra special," said Emily, one of five combinations through to the third round.

"The course was tricky, with fences coming up quickly, but it felt easy for Questy."

The 10-year-old rider took over the reins of the youthful Bunbury Figero 19-year-old after Horse of the Year Show in 2017, where he finished fourth for Charlie Atkinson.

Emily beat second-placed Flo Marriott on Gelvin Castle Grey (Ozzie) by just three-tenths of a second. Flo had missed out on qualification at South View and in spite of going triple clear at Keysoe, was still seeking her ticket at the third time of asking.

"We've not had the luckiest run, and this course was quite challenging, but Ozzie was spot on everywhere," said Flo, who secured her first ticket to Hickstead.

TICKET TO RIDE

LARA BOMAN and My Little Liesel won the winter 128cm second round at Morris and took top spot again here in the opening qualifier.

Lara is entering her third season with Liesel and the pair finished ninth in the 128cm

'To win the class and on a triple clear for the first time was extra special,' says Emily Irvine of her winter 128cm victory aboard Bunbury Conquest

Hickstead beckons for Eve McCoy as she claims her ticket with Misty Bay II



championship last July.

“Liesel knows her job and she just goes into the ring and does everything I ask,” said Lara, whose sole rival in the third round was four-faulting Sarah Proudley riding Painted Lady IV. Sarah took over the ride on the exuberant coloured pony from older sister Rachel last year.

“Lady is always lively and she bucks through her round, but I’ve got used to it now. I turned back too tight to one fence and she just touched it,” explained Sarah, who secured her return

ticket to Hickstead with this second place.

Tabitha Kyle added another six victories to her enviable winter small pony premier record. The Leicestershire rider dominated the winter 138cm second rounds by winning both qualifiers, riding Mister Proper and Playboy Van De Zoetewei (Bugsy).

Five combinations contested the third and final round in the qualifier on day one and Tabitha took the top two places riding Mister Proper and Bugsy.

“I had gone first on Bugsy and

thought I was quick, but I just managed to sneak into the lead with Mister Proper,” said Tabitha. “He is a bit of a character and can throw in a buck that can put us off our stride, but we had no problems here.”

Producing a triple clear and finishing third to take her ticket to Hickstead was Eve McCoy, who is six months into her partnership with Misty Bay II.

“We’ve really got it together now and Misty gives me a lot of confidence,” she said. “He’s a really quick pony and fences

came quite fast, but we managed all the turns.”

BUGSY TAKES HIS TURN

AFTER finishing second the previous day, it was Playboy Van De Zoetewei who posted the winning time in the second winter 138cm qualifier to add to Tabitha Kyle’s tally.

“It was Bugsy’s turn today and we kept tight to the wings everywhere,” concluded Tabitha.

Although still to be confirmed by British Showjumping, the second Hickstead ticket in this qualifier went to seventh-placed Xante Anstee-Marriott riding Printers Assassin (Arya).

Xante is having her first season at this level and after having a nice

‘Misty gives me a lot of confidence’

EVE MCCOY

run in the springboard and special handicap classes, she has stepped Arya up to the second rounds.

“Arya is sensitive, so you have to keep him on side, but this is only our second qualifier,” said Xante.

As winds battered Yorkshire on the opening night and threatened to damage the stables, everyone was full of praise for the team at Richmond for making sure everything was battened down.

“I don’t think anyone slept a wink that night,” said Helen McCornick, one of a number of bleary-eyed pony parents. **H&H**

FIRST QUALIFIER, FIRST TICKET

MAKING her debut in winter 138cm second rounds on the opening day, Millie Lawson was pleased enough to finish seventh on Noahs Lady (Nora) and collect her first ticket to Hickstead. But it was an even better result a day later, when they produced a triple clear to finish runner-up in the second qualifier.

Millie, 12, found the mare tricky at first but, after four clinics with Ludwig Svennerstål and Anthony Condon, everything fell into place.

“Nora always wanted to rush her fences, but after the clinics she now listens to me and reacts better to my leg

and hand. This weekend has given me much more confidence,” said Millie.

ONE TO WATCH



RESULTS

21 Feb: 128/138cm.— 1, Mister Proper (T Kyle); 2, Monkey Munchkin (S Proudley); 3, Lennon Prince (S Campbell). **Royal Highland 128cm Q.**— 1 & 3, Bylands Music Man Koda (P Calderbank); 2, Little Miss Millie II (T Hogan). **22 Feb: 90cm.**— 1, Buttons Two (L Watchman); 2, Cefn Sweetlife (B Wild); 3, Farchyns Sienna (B Harland). **BS 11yrs & under.**— 1eq, 14 tied. **Graham Heath 128/138cm.**— 1 & 2, Lissduff Royal & Mister Proper (T Kyle); 3, Noahs Lady (M Lawson). **winter 128cm sec rnd.**— 1, My Little Liesel (L Boman); 2, Painted Lady IV (S Proudley); 3, Just Dandy (M Snowden). **winter 138cm 2nd rnd.**— 1 & 2, Mister Proper & Playboy Van De Zoetewei (T Kyle); 3, Misty Bay II (E McCoy). **BS 128/138cm h’cap special.**— 1, Printers Assassin (X Anstee-Marriott); 2, Ballyhannon Celtic Grey (A Baxter); 3, One In A Million VI (O Burgin). **23 Feb: Graham Heath 128/138cm.**— 1 & 2, Mister Proper & Lissduff Royal; 3, My Little Liesel. **winter 128cm 2nd rnd.**— 1, Bunbury Conquest (E Irvine); 2, Gelvin Castle Grey (F Marriott); 3, Toorboy Tommy (R Campbell). **winter 138cm 2nd rnd.**— 1, Playboy Van De Zoetewei; 2, Noahs Lady; 3, Quest Du Buhot (R Barr). **11yrs & under.**— 1eq, 15 tied. **BS h’cap special.**— 1, Another Barney (T Kyle); 2, In The Moment (B Wild); 3, My Boudicea (O Wrathall).

Chilli is on fire

The mare continues her meteoric rise

CSI4* Sunshine Tour, Vejer de la Frontera, Spain

NOW rising eight, Tom Williams' prolific mare Chilli has graduated from young horse classes and is stamping her name in the big league.

The German-bred daughter of Colestus x Colorit was the world five-year-old champion in 2017, runner-up as a six-year-old and took the 2018 newcomers championship at Horse of the Year Show. Chilli made her

international debut with new jockey Jessica Hewitt, 21, at the start of the year and on Sunday the pair won the medium tour grand prix.

"She's a machine! Yesterday she was third but I was really saving her for today," said Jessica. "She's especially clean — if she has a fence down, it's my fault".

This ended a successful week for Jessica, who also topped a 1.35m and a 1.40m with another new ride from Tom Williams, the eight-year-old Hot Bluebird.



Above: Jessica Hewitt and Chilli land the medium tour grand prix

British rider Kayleigh Watts continued her winning ways in the big tour riding Harley, and Alice Watson landed a 1.45m on Saturday riding her great partner Billy Lemon.

There was a trio of British winners in Sunday's small

tour classes — Charlie Jones (Crocus La Sillardiere), Adam Taylor (Annabel Z) and Kathryn Fanshawe (Raphaella Von Berkenbroeck). **H&H**

IN BRIEF

IRISH HOT ON THE USA'S HEELS

IN Wellington, Florida, the \$150,000 (£117,000) Nations Cup went to the USA, with Ireland (David Blake, Darragh Kenny, Paul O'Shea and Billy Twomey) taking the runner-up spot, ahead of Australia. Darragh also won a speed class in the week with Carthano.

Britain's Alexandra Thornton was presented with this week's leading lady rider

award after finishing third in the grand prix riding Charielle.

KIWIS' 'SPECIAL PLACE'

NEW ZEALAND claimed their second-ever Nations Cup victory, when beating Egypt to the top spot in Abu Dhabi. Host nation UAE and Syria qualified for this year's final in Barcelona. New Zealand's first win came at the same venue two years ago.

"This is a special place for us," said Daniel Meech, who jumped the only double clear.

Ireland's Jack Ryan won the CSI2* grand prix with Colmar, while Georgia Tame was also successful at this week's show riding Evita.

BOURDON JUST PIPS WHITAKER

JOHN WHITAKER and Unick Du Francport finished runners-up in the CSI3* grand prix on Sunday during the Vilamoura Atlantic Tour in Portugal. They finished just 0.7sec behind French victor Mathieu Bourdon (Bigouden Du Tertre) after a six-way jump-off in which Guy Williams (Rouge De Ravel) was fifth.

ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

'A massive step in my career'

Jack Whitaker takes us behind the scenes as he begins an exciting venture

I PAID my first visit to Al Shaqab in Doha, Qatar, last week (report, p94) and what a fantastic show it is — as riders we couldn't ask for better facilities. The arena is huge and the surface is perfect — that sand and fibre mix works very well. We can ride on the gallops as well as in the various rings, and the stables are fantastic — air conditioned and really big. It makes such a difference not having to worry about the horses staying in rickety, older stables.

I'd seen videos of the venue before I came here, and my father Michael Whitaker had told me about it, but it was still different to what I expected — the stadium is massively open. There's not so much atmosphere

Eighteen-year-old Jack Whitaker is one of the country's most exciting young riders and will this year be competing on the five-star Longines Global Champions Tour circuit for the first time.

OPINION

in the arena here though; you have to remind yourself that you're jumping for quite a lot of money!

I brought my current two best horses to Al Shaqab. Scenletha is very new to this level and Friday night's 1.55-1.60m class was the biggest she has ever jumped, but she took it in her stride. My other horse, Elucar V E, is probably my best horse at the moment and is a bit more confident, so I saved him for the grand prix, which was very big.

'WHAT I'VE BEEN AIMING FOR'

BEING here and competing in my first Global Champions Tour next week at the same venue is a massive step in my career. I was quite nervous when I was first selected to ride in the Globals, where I will be representing



Cascais Charms in the Global Champions League, but it soon turned to excitement. It's what I've been aiming for since I first started riding — to get to the top of the sport — and I'm just hoping I can prove myself.

Everyone knows me because of my name, but being a Whitaker doesn't put any extra pressure on me — unless I let it! I'm very lucky to have been born

into this family and it's a great advantage for me.

It's nice to have my father with me in Doha. He doesn't give me too much advice just before I go into the arena, but reminds me to stay focused. Our groom, Amanda Steele, is great to have with us, too. It's actually very nice to have just the two horses here, as ordinarily at a show at home I'd have seven or eight. That said, I haven't had a chance to see much of Doha yet, although I have been jet-skiing.

I've already spent a few weeks in this part of the world this year, jumping in the UAE — these events are great for the sport in the Middle East. Next up for me is Miami and Mexico; I'm so lucky to be able to travel to and compete at all these places and I'm very thankful for the opportunity. **H&H**

NEXT WEEK

William Funnell gives insight from the Sunshine Tour



Youth shine over sticks

BSPS Area 5, Arena UK, Leics

By ALEX ROBINSON

A NEW combination made their mark on their first outing together. Twelve-year-old Lilly Rodgers and Roseberry Little Diamond (Pearl) won the novice 133cm working hunter class on route to the championship. Pearl was scouted out for the worker circuit by Lilly's mother Hannah in September.

"Lilly is out of nursery classes now and we wanted something to jump the open tracks with this year," said Hannah. "We bought Pearl off Tammy Heathcote at the Roseberry Stud. Lilly loves producing the novices. Our plan is to do some eventing as well."

Brooke Pickering and 143cm winner Kyle Spartacus (Connor) were placed reserve.

"We bought Connor just from a picture from Rach Robertson at the end of October," said Brooke's mother Claire. "He's everything and more she said he was."

The mini working hunter pony accolade went to nine-year-old Bea Bailye-Hawkins and the 13-year-old gelding Green Syke Sonny Boy. The partnership has only been together two weeks.

"Bea was asked to ride him in the championship at the BSPS [British Show Pony Society] summer championships on

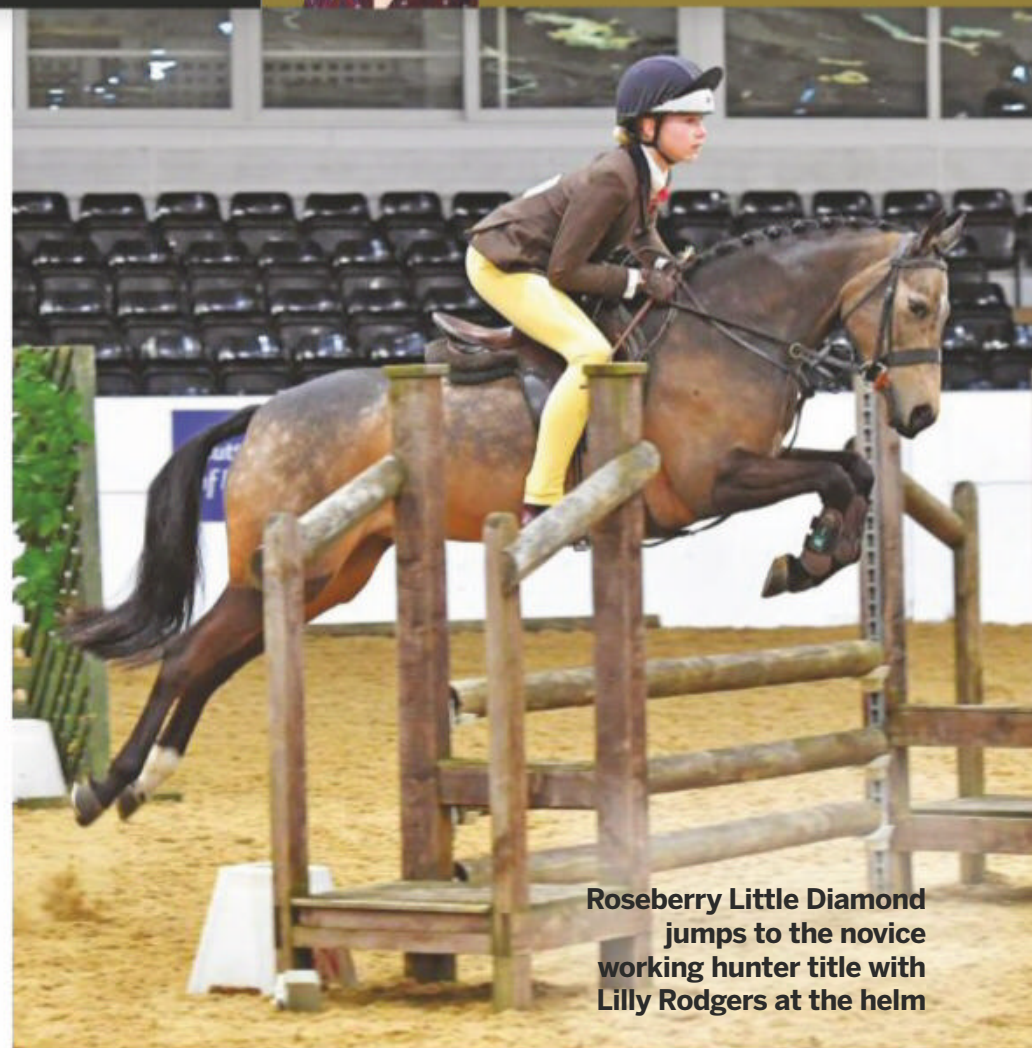
behalf of Darcy Shaw as her new pony was in the same class," said Bea's mother Rachel. "When the opportunity came to buy him recently we jumped at the chance."

The mountain and moorland (M&M) cradle stakes honours went to eight-year-old Ava Lambert and her flying Welsh pony Greendown Ozzy. The duo picked up an impressive third in the open M&M workers at the Royal International (RIHS) last year, and Ava has her sights firmly set on a Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) ticket in 2020.

"She is desperate to qualify," said her mother Sarah. "But there is no pressure. Ozzy and Ava's partnership is just unreal, both in and out of the saddle."

Thirteen-year-old Exmoor Moonpenny Aquarius headed the open/restricted worker championship with Debbie Barker-Runiewicz. The versatile pony returned to Arena UK the following day to contend the flat classes with Debbie's daughter Molly Barker in the saddle, and the pair won both the open small breeds and junior ridden.

Aquarius' son Moonpenny Delphinus kept up the family form by winning both his novice worker



Roseberry Little Diamond jumps to the novice working hunter title with Lilly Rodgers at the helm

and flat classes.

"Delphinus is nine but he's a late starter," said Debbie, who co-owns him with his breeder Mary Rose Bryant. "He can be quite spooky but enjoys his ridden work, even if his overenthusiasm for life doesn't make things easy for me."

The reigning RIHS Welsh section C and D winner Lantau Supernova was crowned novice M&M working hunter pony champion on his first attempt at a competitive track.

"He absolutely loves his jumping," said owner Jodie Haywood, who also rode "Novi" to be second at HOYS on the flat

in October.

The novice M&M ridden accolade went to Ollie White and his six-year-old Waxwing Money Talks, who was also victorious over sticks the previous day.

"We purchased Money Talks as an unseen unbroken three-year-old," said Ollie's mother Samantha. "Ollie has done all the hard work, breaking her in and producing her himself."

TEAM YOUNG ON FORM

EDWARD YOUNG and his team came with a lorryload and picked up wins with each.

The prolific lead-rein Barkway



Nicola Smith's Dali Rosabelle (Natasha Dolman) stands intermediate champion



Bea Bailye-Hawkins pilots Green Syke Sonny Boy to claim the mini working hunter pony accolade



Rotherwood Spot On wins on his first outing with Lexy Laurens

Moonshine consolidated his credentials as a first ridden as he picked up the mini championship with Maisie Kerry-Oates, who was making her debut off the lead.

Maisie's older sister Hallie rode Rotherwood Another Peep to claim the part-bred Arab title. This is Hallie's second season of

affiliated showing and this was her first outing on the previous HOYS-winning pony.

Lexy Laurens won respective mixed height novice show hunter and show pony classes on two well-prefixed ponies, Stanley Grange Distraction and Rotherwood Spot On.



Ollie White and his six-year-old Waxwing Money Talks land the novice M&M ridden accolade

"We bought Spot On direct from the stud," said Team Young's Collette Mcgoldrick. "He's taken some time to mature so we've taken it slow with him."

Home-producer Natasha Dolman and Nicola Smith's seven-year-old chestnut mare Dali Rosabelle were crowned

intermediate champions. The family bought her as a two-year-old after spotting her at the stud in Tregaron, Wales.

"She's by the Welsh cob stallion Danaway Desert Storm out of a mare by Mount Diamond Flag," said Natasha. "This was her first affiliated show so I'm delighted."

Jara proves she's a future star



Georgia Darlington and Jara impress on their working hunter debut to land their section title

BSPS Area 15A, The College EC, Beds

GEORGIA DARLINGTON made a stellar working hunter debut on her new intermediate Jara. The six-year-old mare was purchased last September.

"I've been showjumping her up to newcomers over winter and if she'll go across country I'll definitely event her," said Georgia.

Producer Lucy Glover also rode two debutantes to victory, including Ryan and Dawn O'Donnell's novice intermediate Brindlebrook Future Illusion.

Lucy's own Welsh section B Hilin Bedwyr headed the novice small breeds, while Matilda Masters was on board Sonia Cooper's winning 138cm show pony Ecclesbourne Byron Bay.

Reserve for the intermediate crown was Liberty Taylor-Hopkins and the show riding type Walton Good Gracious.

Team Holder was in the ribbons with their clutch of mini contenders. They took both champion and reserve in the mini M&Ms with Janey Godfrey-Faussett and Weydown Royal Consort leading the way after

winning the first ridden. Reserve was Freddie Finlayson-Briant and lead-rein Sharptor Bellissima.

The Holders also took reserve in the mini show pony championship with Posy Lindsey riding Treowen Sapphire, but pipping this pair to the post was the new combination of 10-year-old Poppy Baxter-Davies and first ridden Roxairs Aphrodite.

The 143cm show hunter pony Lindeth Whistleblower and his producer Charley Baxter headed the novice part-bred championship. Owned by Nicola Bentley, the classy bay is intended

for her son, 12-year-old Sam, to ride in open hunter pony ranks. They achieved a credible second here on their debut.

"I'll take the part-bred ride this year to give him some mileage," explained Charley.

Connemara Crusheen Shadow took the open M&M ridden title with Bibi Pincock. After a stellar 2019 season which included a fourth at HOYS, Shadow has been hacking and schooling with e dressage trainer Sam Turner.

"He's just a pleasure and we're totally home-produced," said Bibi's mother Claire Smalley.



Weydown Royal Consort (Janey Godfrey-Faussett) stands mini M&M champion



Springwater Tactician clinches the novice mini accolade with Charlotte Wilson in the saddle



'HE'S A DIFFERENT PONY'

DANIELLE GARNER'S Connemara Manor Winnie's Comet and Kinvara Garner launched their partnership by taking the Heritage spoils at BSPS Area 6 held at Onley Equestrian Centre.

The seven-year-old and Kinvara will be hitting the junior circuit this coming season.

"He won the breed show as an in-hand stallion but we had him cut," said Danielle. "He's a different pony, I wish I'd done it years ago!"

ONE TO WATCH

High hopes for Thriller and Tactician

BSPS Area 1A, Northallerton EC, North Yorks

CRAIG ELENOR and his team took two novice native charges and secured two championships. Their Welsh section C stallion

Thistledown Thriller captured the novice ridden title with Sara Parrott. The nine-year-old was broken at the end of last year.

"He had previously run with mares at the Thistledown Stud and has some super stock on the

ground," explained Sara. "He is on lease to us for the season. He's taken to it all like a duck to water."

Nicola and Phillip Tyler's four-year-old Dartmoor Springwater Tactician and Charlotte Wilson clinched the novice mini accolade. This was his first ridden outing

after being shown in-hand last term as a stallion, where he was supreme at National Pony Society Area 4.

"He was then gelded and broken in over winter," said Sara. "He's an absolute pleasure; we're very excited about him." **H&H**

ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

'The most influential person'

Stuart Hollings discusses losing the icons who teach us, and timely advice

I, ALONG with over 300 other people, travelled to the East of England Showground in January to pay my respects to an icon of the old order, Davina Whiteman, who sadly passed away a month earlier.

One could argue that she was the most influential person in my life, steering me away from a possible legal career into the wacky world of showing.

Apart from introducing my brother Nigel and I to this discipline at the highest level, she also opened our eyes to many other equestrian avenues — hunting, racing, showjumping, dressage and eventing.

More importantly, Davina taught us so much about life, including sportsmanship, appreciation of our animals and particularly respect for our elders.

As mentioned in Tricia Johnson's letter (23 January), the gathering was like a

OPINION

school reunion with devotees swapping affectionate "Davina tales" and treasured memories.

Someone reminded me of the time we played Scrabble with her during the Christmas holidays. The theme was famous ponies and Davina ultimately declared herself the winner with Gems Cygnet. However, my brave brother argued that the correct spelling was Gems Signet with five less points.

Always known for having the last word, Davina retorted: "I should know dear, as I won Horse of the Year twice with his grand-dam [Pretty Polly]." And that was that.

LOSING THE NATIVE SPIRIT

THE topic of conversation over my Christmas lunch focused on the Heritage final at Olympia three days earlier, where my brother co-judged performance.

Even though I watched from my first-floor ringside seat in contrast to being in the middle of the ring where it



matters most, our observations were not far apart.

Some competitors tried too hard to impress and their rides performed like dressage ponies rather than true natives. What a pity Welsh section C Lynuck The Showman blotted his copybook with fellow columnist Rebecca Penny. He entered the ring like a winner with a most impressive walk, something rarely seen these days.

When I judged there in 2014, the first and second ponies featured in the top four with each judge. This time, one judge had the victor Dyffryngwy

Sir Picasso in seventh spot and another placed runner-up Benbreac Of Croila only 15th.

The final line-up did produce a stellar cast, though, proving that this unique and exciting four-judge system does really work. And interestingly, three stallions bowed out at the top afterwards — Benbreac (fourth-placed), top Dartmoor Shilstone Rocks North Westerly and my favourite, Welsh section B Cadlanvalley Buzby, who finished sixth.

I rarely allow the 1981 Olympia winning rider Phil Judge — whom I've decided is Michael McIntyre's stunt double — to have the final say. However, he hit the nail on the head at Davina's celebration of life assembly when advocating that showing is like one big family, and by all means be competitive in the ring, but always remain friends outside.

Coincidentally, Harvey Smith echoed this same sentiment in the Broome vs Smith story (Sporting rivalries feature, 6 February).

Good advice indeed as we embark on yet another showing season. **H&H**

Stuart Hollings owned and produced over 30 HOYS winners and has been at the foal end of four HOYS-winning broodmares. He has also judged the in-hand final there.



Evie's Pride stands overall ridden champion with six-year-old Scarlett Sharp in the saddle

Thor "love the spotlight".

"My mum bred him and sold him as a youngster," said Megan of the 12-year-old skewbald who is produced from home.

"About three years ago I saw a Facebook post and recognised the pony in it straight away; it was Thor. I messaged his owner at the time, Elizabeth Canton, and said if she'd ever loan him I'd love to have him."

Scarlett began her partnership with Thor when she was just four years old. Thor has recently joined the family on a permanent basis as Megan purchased him at the start of the year.

"Scarlett started doing more first ridden last year but as she has really clicked with the job, we did the open RIHS qualifier here," continued Megan, who has also watched the pair take on hunting and mounted games. "Thor has such a lovable character. He is completely obsessed with food and rarely stays in the field; he's even snapped a fence post in half as he decided there was more grass on the other side."

The mother-daughter team of Megan Thompson and Rachel Cowan are behind the production of the ultra-consistent plaited horse So Sweet. The elegant mare has been with the family for five seasons and has been a Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) and RIHS finalist on multiple occasions.

Megan was riding the novice horse champion, the coloured gelding Inkwel Little Mark, who was making his first appearance in hack ranks.

"Unfortunately there were a couple of judges who had connections with him," said Megan. "So we decided to have a go in the hack classes and he exceeded all expectations. He went beautifully for both myself and the judge."

PINT-SIZED SUCCESS

THE TRAMP — or Barry as he is known at home — secured

As proud as punch

A Shetland and his six-year-old jockey gallop to triumph, while a £100 traditional brings it home for his family

By ALEX ROBINSON

BSPA Festival of Showing and Winter Championships, The College EC, Beds

THE smallest ponies on show landed the biggest accolades, proving that size really is irrelevant if quality, performance and star quality shine through.

The super Shetland Evie's Pride (Thor) and her six-year-old

jockey Scarlett Sharp nailed their supreme performance to claim the overall ridden title.

After qualifying for the Royal International (RIHS) in the traditional ponies earlier in the day and standing reserve to the eventual ridden horse supreme So Sweet (Megan Thompson), the mini marvels returned to impress overall judges Julian Walters, Emma Payne and Janet Smithers.

According to Scarlett's mother Megan Halsall, both Scarlett and



Livie Smith pilots Idyllic Spartacus into top spot in the RIHS small breeds junior ridden class, before going on to take the section title



Paula Hughes' three-year-old The Beswick Boy stands youngstock champion and reserve supreme, handled by Sid Proudfoot

Megan Thompson takes home a host of wins, including the novice horse title with Inkwell Little Mark



back-to-back ridden and in-hand victories before being called forward to take the in-hand supreme.

Mandy Leek's 12hh traditional gelding — who has strong British Skewbald and Piebald Association (BSPA) form — clearly thrived off the atmosphere as he once again rose to the occasion and beat his rivals to the top crown.

Seven-year-old Barry was purchased by Mandy as a two-year-old for the modest sum of £100.

"Mandy had been looking for a mini traditional for about

"I'd been looking for a while and a friend forwarded me his advert," said Paula. "Everything was spot on so I bought him unseen as I didn't want to risk losing him."

"Smurf" is a son of Valentino and is handled by Paula's good friend Sid Proudfoot.

"He'll keep showing and then do his stallion gradings next season," said Paula.

Caroline Ward's classy two-year-old filly Popenhoe Precocious — co-bred with Sally Lister of the Brackenspa Stud — trotted into first reserve position.

'Popenhoe Precocious is bold as brass and eager to do any job'

CAROLINE WARD

two years and saw him online," explained Mandy's daughter Rachel, who steered Barry to the home-produced/amateur title and stood reserve supreme under saddle.

"She instantly knew he was the one she wanted even though I wasn't so convinced he'd be good enough. But she's proved she's got the eye for a diamond in the rough.

"I take the ride in the ring and my partner, Aaron Calver, shows him in-hand. He's totally home-produced and has only ever been shown by the family. At home he's a saint of a pony and has been ridden by my son in fancy dress, lead-rein and showjumping."

The youngstock championship and reserve supreme was Paula Hughes' The Beswick Boy. The three-year-old — who stands at just under 11hh — was another spotted on an online advert.

The skewbald by Grafenstolz out of Astoend Loco Lady was shown by her producer Kevin Cousins.

"She's only been back with Kevin for a week after spending the winter out with her 2019-born sister," said Caroline. "I would love



'He's a saint of a pony': The Tramp is crowned in-hand supreme for Mandy Leek



'THIS WAS HIS FIRST EVENING PERFORMANCE'

TARA BUCKLEY'S five-year-old traditional pony Follywood Lewis Hamilton (pictured) impressed en route to winning his novice class with Tara's daughter Maddy Vaughan. The 14.1hh gelding by The Scoundrel was bought last year from Mary Hoare and Aimee Devane's Follywood Stud.

"I bought him for myself but I've been having problems with my shoulder so Maddy took the ride here," said Tara, who directs her own construction company.

Lewis will be having a novice season during 2020.

"I don't like to rush them," added Tara. "This was his first evening performance and his first sash. Giving him time is starting to pay off and I was proud watching him in there with no calmer or ear plug; I completely trusted him to take Maddy round safely. I think it's all about trust and building a good relationship with your horse; we have a great bond with him."

ONE TO WATCH

to see her go on under saddle as a Pony Club eventer; she's bold as brass and is eager to do any job."

Precocious' tally includes taking reserve supreme at the British National Foal of the Year Show and she was also coloured champion at Royal Norfolk last season. She was also awarded a gold premium when evaluated in the eventing section in the British Breeding Futurity.

BACK AFTER NEC WIN

ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD Livie Smith had a successful season debut on her HOYS-winning first ridden Idyllic Spartacus (Johnny), netting a competitive RIHS small

breeds junior ridden class full of fellow HOYS ponies as well as the section title.

Johnny — who was bought after HOYS 2018 — spent last year between Team Hillyard's base and the Smith's family home.

As well as having his centre line moment at the NEC, Johnny was also fourth in the open and 10th in the juniors at the final.

"HOYS was a dream come true," said Livie's mother Kate. "Our DVD came the other day so it was lovely to relive it. We'd love to get there again this time."

Livie is set for another busy season as she will also pilot the show pony Kouros Mayfia, hoping to gain a HOYS ticket and perhaps advance on last year's second place.

Connemaras also took home early tickets as bay gelding Crusheen Shadow and Bibi Pinnock won the large breeds and stood reserve, while Megan White and her home-produced dun gelding Thunderbolt Fairy Robin Bambi took the amateur qualifier.

Ellena Thomas and last year's champion Kaybrook Midnight Comet headed the intermediates.

RIHS tickets for miniature horses were also on offer, and top of the championship was the winning yearling Model Farm UK Night Fever, owned by Lisa Taylor and handled by Harriet Miller. **H&H**



Red will Definitely win

A trainer sticks his neck on the line with a bold prediction about his winning horse and a decision pays dividends for jockey Brian Hughes

Kelso Racecourse, Scotland

DEFINITELY RED “will win the Grand National” was the bold prediction of trainer Brian Ellison, after his popular chestnut ran out a comfortable winner of the

William Hill Leading Racecourse Bookmaker Premier Chase at Kelso on Saturday, 29 February.

The 11-year-old has already had a couple of spins around Aintree. He was pulled up at the ninth in the One For

By MARCUS ARMYTAGE

Arthur-winning National in 2017 after being brought to a standstill at Becher's Brook, but had a better experience in December when 14½ lengths behind Walk In The Mill in the Becher Chase. However, he still doesn't come across as an Aintree specialist like the winner of that race.

Nevertheless, for a horse who was verging on Gold Cup class, he has a nice weight of 10st 10lb at

Aintree. The Kelso race has been a good trial for the National in the past; winners Auroras Encore and Ballabriggs both used it as a prep race for the big one and neither of them actually won the trial.

“I've always thought he would win the National,” said Ellison. “You need luck but he jumped brilliantly when he finished fourth in the Becher Chase. He's a great stayer and has everything going for him. All I need is good-to-soft ground, not bottomless. Today was not his ground and it's not



'I've always thought he would win the National,' says trainer Brian Ellison of Definitely Red, who partners jockey Danny Cook to triumph in the Premier Chase

his track, so that was grand. He'll have an easy week — he's not a horse that takes a lot of galloping."

'IT WAS A BOLD SHOUT'

NOW that Richard Johnson is back from injury and trying to close down what was a 20-winner deficit in his bid to land a fifth champion jockey title, Brian Hughes is going to need every winner he can get to stay in front. Clondaw Caitlin, the Ruth Jefferson-trained progressive mare, provided him with one of two winners over the weekend in the valuable William Hill Premier Novices' Hurdle.

The way Clondaw Caitlin travelled, Jefferson can have few doubts that the decision to go to Kelso rather than wait for the



Although 'not straightforward at home', Clondaw Caitlin defies her reputation to score in the novices' hurdle with Brian Hughes

'EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME'

MAXIMUM SECURITY (pictured during exercise, right), a four-year-old colt by New Year's Day and part-owned by Coolmore, won the world's richest race on Saturday, 29 February, when he beat the filly Midnight Bisou a hard-fought three-quarters of a length to land the \$20m (£15,647,060) Saudi Cup at Riyadh in Saudi Arabia.

Dirt races don't always do it for me but this was actually quite a good one with Mucho Gusto, winner of the Pegasus Cup on his previous start, leading until 100 yards out, when Maximum Security stayed on past him. Midnight Bisou came with a wet sail from a long way back, but jockey Mike Smith's innumeracy earned him a fine of around \$200,000 (£156,480) for excessive use of the whip after he hit the horse 14 times.

Maximum Security was first past the post in the Kentucky Derby, before being controversially disqualified for interference and placed 17th.

However, he has had the last laugh, having now taken his earnings to £9m in prize money. He is expected to head to the next biggest thing in terms of pot, the Dubai World Cup.

Benbatl, Godolphin's globe-



trotting money spinner, finished a good third on what was only his second start on dirt.

"I can't believe it — it's going to take a week for it to set in," said Maximum Security's trainer Jason Servis. "It's been the experience of a lifetime being able to train him. I'm a little superstitious and don't like to talk too much before a race, but when he breezed in the last few days, he covered the ground beautifully — he had a presence about him."

Jamie Osborne was the most successful British trainer on the evening at King Abdulaziz's racecourse, when his Mekong finished 2½ lengths behind Freddy Head's Call The Wind in the Longines Turf Handicap, picking up £375,000 for his efforts.

TALKING POINT

mares' final at Newbury was the right one.

"It was a bold shout to come to Kelso. It was Ruth's decision and it paid off," said Hughes.

The trainer added: "Clondaw Caitlin would have been nearer

top weight than bottom in the mares' final, so with the mares' allowance and soft ground here, I thought I'd let her have a go. She wasn't loving the ground but she had it in control. The further she goes the better she goes, and

the better the ground the further she will want. We might look at Aintree and there's mares' day at Cheltenham. She will only run once more this season. She's not straightforward at home but she's very professional in a race."

Captain Chaos lands ahead of the field as he goes on to take the Grimthorpe handicap chase by 54 lengths under Harry Skelton

An emphatic win

Heavy ground suits victor Captain Chaos under Harry Skelton

Doncaster Racecourse, S Yorks

CAPTAIN CHAOS has been knocking at the door for a long time, but it finally opened for him when he won an attritional 888Sport Grimthorpe Handicap Chase by 54 lengths at Doncaster

on Saturday, 29 February.

During a normal winter, the ground at Doncaster is usually a degree or two better than it is anywhere else in the country. But the legacy of the River Don bursting its banks earlier this winter meant it was heavy for

this year's Grimthorpe and that was right up the nine-year-old gelding's street.

Harry Skelton, who had been due to ride at Newbury but switched after it was abandoned and jocked off wife Bridget Andrews, set out to make the most of Captain Chaos' stamina and made nearly all the running.

But it all started to happen behind him at the 14th fence when

Fortified Lad pulled up, and the novice Aaron Lad fell and brought down Ascot De Bruyere, who had been at the back all the way but was by no means out of it. Cesar Et Rosalie also called it a day a little while later, by which stage it was questionable whether Worthy Farm and Yalltari — the eventual second and third respectively — would even make it home.

"He's been second in two

'If he wasn't sparkling, I wouldn't run him again'

TRAINER DAN SKELTON

Rehearsal Chases, second in a Rowland Meyrick and second in the Warwick Classic," said trainer Dan Skelton. "He's a bit of a nearly horse and to win a nice staying handicap is great. He's come back as bright as he went out, which is unusual in those conditions."

He added: "One race I've got an eye on is the bet365 Gold Cup at Sandown Park, as I think the ground will be too quick for the Scottish National. However, if he wasn't sparkling, I wouldn't run him again." **H&H**

Paddy Brennan (in the spots) steers Gino Trail to triumph in a handicap chase



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An easy win

Rose Loxton-trained Chameron claims the big one despite less-than-ideal conditions, while Phil Rowley enjoys a double

By HANNAH LEMIEUX

Combined Services, Larkhill, Wilts

JOCKEY Angus Cheleda landed his biggest win between the flags when claiming the day's feature race, the Coronation Gold Cup.

The seven-runner mixed open contest was a classy affair, with former under Rules horses Ptit Zig, Fixe Le Kap and Chameron among the contenders. The Rose Loxton-trained seven-year-old Chameron took the honours.

The pair fended off Green Winter (Zac Baker) to secure an easy victory by 12 lengths. The son of Laveron was making a winning return to Larkhill having won nicely at the track in January.

"The conditions weren't ideal

for him today because the ground was a bit dead," said Angus of the gelding who is owned by Paul Nicholls, John Bolton and Harry Cobden. "But he ran brilliantly and jumped great. He travels well and isn't too keen — you couldn't ask for a better horse really.

"We kicked on quite early up the hill and went a bit quickly, but otherwise the race went smoothly. His aim is the Cheltenham Foxhunter Chase next year."

Only two horses went to post for the ladies' conditions, and for a while it looked like Captain Buck's (Natalie Parker), had the race in the bag. But a late challenge at the penultimate fence from Faraway Star (Paige Topley) resulted in a photo finish at the line, having jumped the final fence upsides.

It was the Tracy Williams-owned and trained Faraway Star

who held on by a short head.

The Christopher Barber-trained Famous Clermont (Will Biddick) asserted a strong lead of about 20 lengths during the maiden conditions contest. However, the gelding started to idle in front and this allowed Alex Edwards and the Phil Rowley-trained My Bobby Dazzler to take

didn't change gear but the horse in front just idled.

"He's a nice horse and I'm sure he'll win a few more races for us. He's still a baby, but is very straightforward."

Trainer Phil Rowley enjoyed a double on the day courtesy also of Ballykan, who won the opening novice riders' conditions race,



Chameron, ridden by Angus Cheleda, claims the Coronation Gold Cup with 12 lengths to spare

'We were never travelling'

ALEX EDWARDS ON MY BOBBY DAZZLER

the lead and win by 1½ lengths.

"We were never travelling from the start, so I was worried," said Alex. "When I rode him at Larkhill before he travelled well, but he didn't really travel to the first fence today — so I was a bit surprised to win if I'm honest. He

under Ben Bromley.

The open maiden for five-year-olds and over was won by the Michael Kehoe-trained Happy Larry, under Sam Lee. The six-year-old son of Stowaway is owned by Joy Tetley and Harry Dolan.

'HE LOST HIS WAY A BIT'

AFTER a "disappointing" season last year, Rien Du Tout (pictured) bounced back into the winner's enclosure when victorious in the restricted, under Will Biddick.

The eight-year-old son of Curtain Time is owned by The Morenmore Racing Club and was purchased at the Ascot sales by his trainer, Charlotte Budd.

"He was formerly trained by Mark Wall and we liked the look of him at the sales," said Charlotte, who was the first woman to ride in the Grand National in 1977.

"This is his third season with us, but last year he was rather unlucky and lost his way a bit. He likes the top of the ground and doesn't like getting his feet wet. Will said he lacked confidence at the start of the race but he flew the last two."

Charlotte trains two pointers at her base near Taunton and gets her horses prepared for racing thanks to plenty of woodland hacks and using the gallops of nearby trainer Kevin Bishop.

ONE TO WATCH





Edited by Hannah Lemieux
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A milestone victory

Jack Andrews has a landmark victory and partners the 'best £800 ever spent'

Cambridgeshire with Enfield Chase, Horseheath, Cambs

JACK ANDREWS' 100th career victory and a double on the day at a bright but blustery Horseheath means he now joint-leads the jockey championship with Alex Edwards, on a running total of 14 victories. It seemed only fitting that one of those victories came aboard the mightily impressive five-year-old Fumet D'Oudairies, who came home two lengths clear in the intermediate ahead of the promising The Three Off The Tee Partnership's Getting Closer (Charlie Marshall).

Purchased at the end of last year for just £800, the son of Della Francesca has now won all four of his starts for The Ice And A Slice Racing Club and trainer Tom Ellis.

"I get on him now and just think, 'You are a good horse.' He's the best £800 we've ever spent," said Jack, who said connections had concerns about him getting through testing going as his previous runs were on better ground.

"He did it so easily and cantered around. He got a little bit idle to the last, but that was my fault for getting to the front too soon. I think we'll look after him now and aim him for the restricted final at Stratford."

The second part of Jack's double came aboard the Stuart Morris-trained Minella Wizard in the restricted, who won comfortably for owner Judy Wilson.

"I'd say he'll be a proper horse

By GEMMA REDRUP

and I think he's improved again from his win last time out at Thorpe," said Jack. "It was quite a good race and he's dispatched them pretty easily."

'I THOUGHT I WAS WINNING EASILY'

THERE was further success for the Andrews family when Gina came out on top in a close-run battle in the open maiden riding Mammoth, trained by her husband Tom, with a winning distance of just a short head.

"If I was beaten it would have been all my fault as I thought I was winning easily going to the

last and then she started getting a bit lonely in front — I wouldn't have wanted to go another stride," explained Gina. "We had some serious steering issues last time out at Thorpe, where she hung badly to the right. So we've gone right-handed today and she's much better thanks to a new bit called the Triabit, made especially for horses that hang, which was recommended to us by [fellow jockey] Claire Hardwick."

Despite the ladies' open only having three runners, it was the fastest run race of the day, with yet another exciting finish. This time, Izzie Marshall just got in front of Gina to win aboard the Cranfield Family's Back Bar for trainer Alan Hill.

"Although there were three runners, it was a hot race and he dug deep after the last," said Izzie, who studies at the University of Reading and quipped: "I probably ride out for Alan and Lawney Hill more than I go to lectures."

Wick Green was first past the post in the men's open for The Shy John Partnership under trainer/jockey Peter Mason. "He didn't massively enjoy the ground, but he put his head down and got through it," said Peter.

'He dug deep after the last'

IZZIE MARSHALL ON BACK BAR



A victory on Fumet D'Oudairies counts towards Jack Andrew's impressive running total of 14 wins so far this season

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS

CAMBRIDGESHIRE WITH ENFIELD CHASE, HORSEHEATH

Saturday, 29 February
Intermediate.— 1, The Ice And A Slice Racing Club's Fumet D'Oudairies (J Andrews) T Ellis. **PPORA Club members' conditions race for novice riders.**— 1, G Peck's Groundunderrepair (C Butler) E Peck. **men's open.**— 1, The Shy John Partnership's Wick Green (P Mason) P Mason. **ladies' open.**— 1, The Cranfield Family's Back Bar (I Marshall) A Hill. **restricted.**— 1, J Wilson's Minella Wizard (J Andrews) S Morris. **open maiden.**— 1, W Wales, N Bloom & T Moore's Mammoth (G Andrews) T Ellis.

COMBINED SERVICES, LARKHILL

Sunday, 1 March
Novice rider conditions.— 1, A Bromley's Ballykan (B Bromley) P Rowley. **restricted.**— 1, The Morenmore Racing Club's Rien Du Tout (W Biddick) C Budd. **ladies' conditions.**— 1, T Williams'

Faraway Star (P Topley) T Williams. **The Coronation Gold Cup mixed open.**— 1, P Nicholls, J Bolton & H Cobden's Chameron (A Cheleda) R Loxton. **maiden conditions.**— 1, B Barrett's My Bobby Dazzler (A Edwards) P Rowley. **open maiden 5yo&up.**— 1, J Tetley & H Dolan's Happy Larry (S Lee) M Kehoe.

DERWENT, CHARM PARK

Sunday, 1 March
Hunt conditions.— 1, S Easterby's Panthers Creek (W Easterby) W Easterby. **restricted.**— 1, J Teal's Dynamite Kentucky (J Teal) J Teal. **Jockey Club & RoR veteran horse conditions 9yo&up.**— 1, Mr & Mrs C Milburn & P Kench's Six A Side (W Milburn) W Milburn. **mixed open.**— 1, S Easterby's Black River (W Easterby) W Easterby. **2m4f conditions.**— 1, P Clifton's Burrenbridge Hotel (J Teal) J Teal. **open maiden (div 1).**— 1, G White's Franks Fancy (J Andrews) S Grant. **div 2.**— 1, I Crane's Caviar D'Allen (W Easterby) C Crane.

CHARLOTTE BUTLER

THE 16-year-old jockey got off the mark on her second attempt when winning the novice riders' by a whopping 30 lengths aboard Groundunderrepair.

"I can't believe it — he's an absolute star," she said of the nine-year-old by Milan, who

previously ran over fences under Rules for Warren Greatrex.

"My mum, Emily Peck, trains him throughout the week for me while I'm studying and this is something I definitely want to do more."



FIRST WIN

Double triumph for Teal

Jockey and trainer scores twice to continue a winning run, and another rider takes home a treble

By PETER BURGON

Derwent, Charm Park, N Yorks

JACK TEAL scored a double on Dynamite Kentucky and Burrenbridge Hotel, both trained at his Malton yard.

Dynamite Kentucky tracked the pace-setting Lucky Hit (Huw Edwards) on the final circuit in the restricted before finding a bit



Dynamite Kentucky (left) wins for owner/trainer Jack Teal

extra to score by a neck.

"He was bought privately last year from Co. Kildare-based farrier Liam O'Donovan," said Jack. "I was always confident he would get there and I'll continue stepping him up in grade, with an intermediate next on the agenda."

Burrenbridge Hotel, a three-time winner under Rules for Henry Oliver in 2017, got his career back on track by landing the 2m4f conditions on his first outing for Jack's yard. Patiently ridden, the nine-year-old was delivered with a perfectly-timed challenge to hit the front after the last and beat Monbeg Chit Chat (Christy Furness) by 1½ lengths.

Owner Paul Clifton's first pointer, Kilkenny Gorge in 1988, "wasn't very good" but it encouraged him to buy another one (Speakers Corner) who took him to Aintree and Cheltenham.

"Bloodstock agent Mark Gichero sourced Burrenbridge Hotel for me four months ago. Jack has done a great job and the shorter trip was ideal," said Paul.

William Easterby's purple patch in the saddle continued with a treble on stablemates Panthers Creek and Black River, plus the Charlotte Crane-trained

gelding Caviar D'Allen. Panthers Creek followed up the previous week's restricted victory with a pillar-to-post success in the hunt conditions contest.

"He's enjoyed hunting twice this week and could be an ideal candidate for the valuable Heart Of All England maiden hunter chase at Hexham," said William.

After steering his other Sinnington winner, Black River, to a half-length success over Dark Mahler (Joe Wright) in the mixed open, William added: "When your

'The shorter trip was ideal'

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horses are right and the ground is decent, you just have to keep running them."

Caviar D'Allen was a first winner as a trainer for William's girlfriend, Charlotte Crane. In a first-time hood, the eight-year-old jumped superbly and galloped his rivals into submission — crossing the line as runner-up Miss Charlton (Will Milburn) was jumping the last fence. **H&H**

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'A difficult time for everyone'

Darren Edwards reflects on frustrating times, and holding over entries

SITTING and reflecting on what should have been a busy February, it's hard not to get a bit disheartened by the relentless poor weather that meant I only went racing on two days of the month.

As a jockey, the overriding feeling is one of frustration at not being able to get out and do what we love doing — racing horses. This frustration is by no means confined to the riders though, with trainers, owners and horses all having their plans disrupted. There is nothing worse than getting

Darren Edwards has ridden over 250 winners and works full-time as a partner at property consultants Fisher German. Darren is a Point to Point Owners & Riders Association (PPORA) committee member.

OPINION

all dressed up and having nowhere to go.

A lot of credit must go to the race meeting committees and organisers who, in conjunction with the Point-to-Point Authority, have in most cases been very clear in their decision-making and swift in their communications over abandoned, postponed or rescheduled meetings.

In past seasons, this hasn't always been the case — often fuelled by inaccurate going descriptions and false hope — and only adds to the frustration at what is a difficult time for everyone. Being proactive does at least give people the chance to make new plans.



THE BENEFIT OF REOPENING ENTRIES

ONE thing that I think should be revisited is the holdover of entries for postponed meetings. Currently, when a meeting is called off and rearranged for a week later, the entries stand and carry over. This is

completely understandable and in my experience most trainers and horses simply wait until the next week and run at the rearranged meeting — unless they happen to hold other entries at a different meeting.

However, where a meeting is rearranged for two weeks into the future, I think it would benefit the sport if entries could be reopened.

Yes, it creates extra work and potentially exposes a race meeting to extra costs (for example, where racecards have been printed or car passes issued), but nevertheless it creates another option for trainers and horses, who may not have placed an entry at that meeting first time around for a legitimate reason. **H&H**

16.3hh
& over

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saskiastrickland@live.co.uk



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14.3hh
-15.2hh

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Height: 16.1hh
Age: 12 years
Price: £9000
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eleanorfrancis98@gmail.com



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-16.2hh

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s.ritson@virgin.net



14.2hh
& under

Mr Stanley 14'2

Height: 14.2hh

Age: 21 years

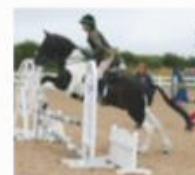
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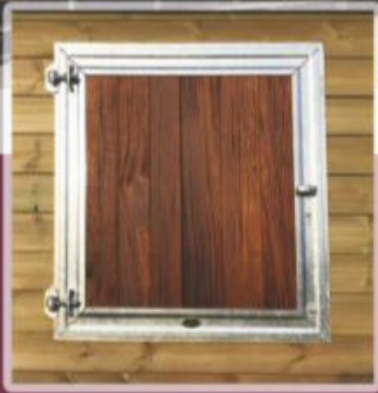


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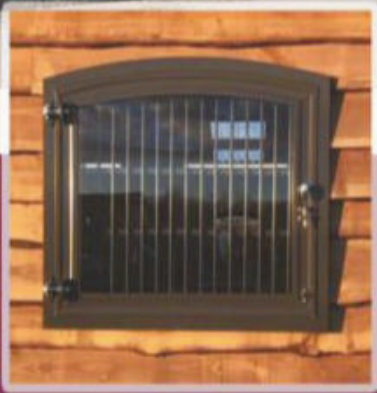
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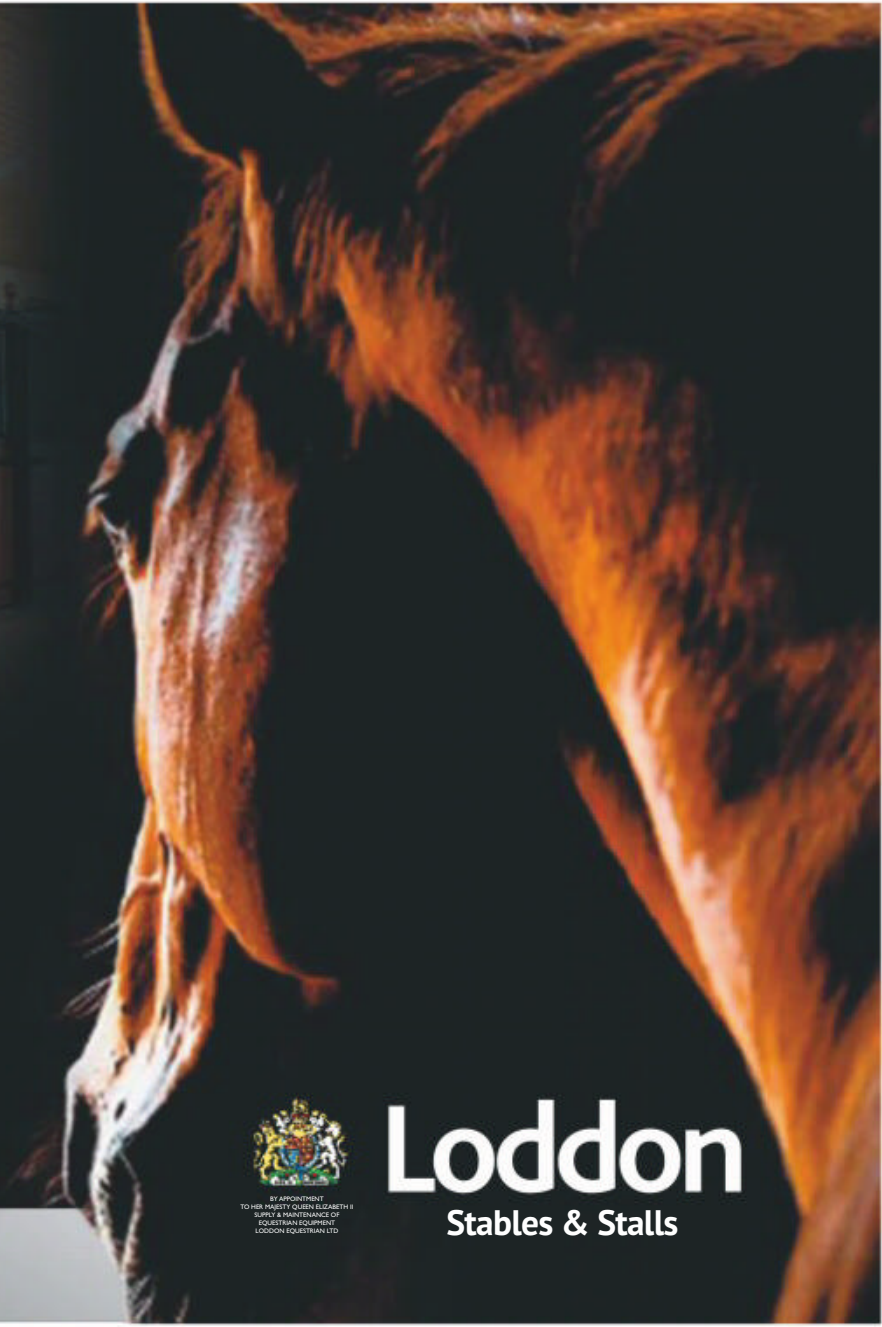
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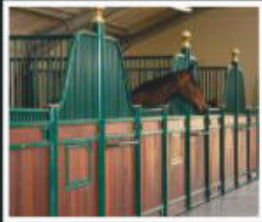
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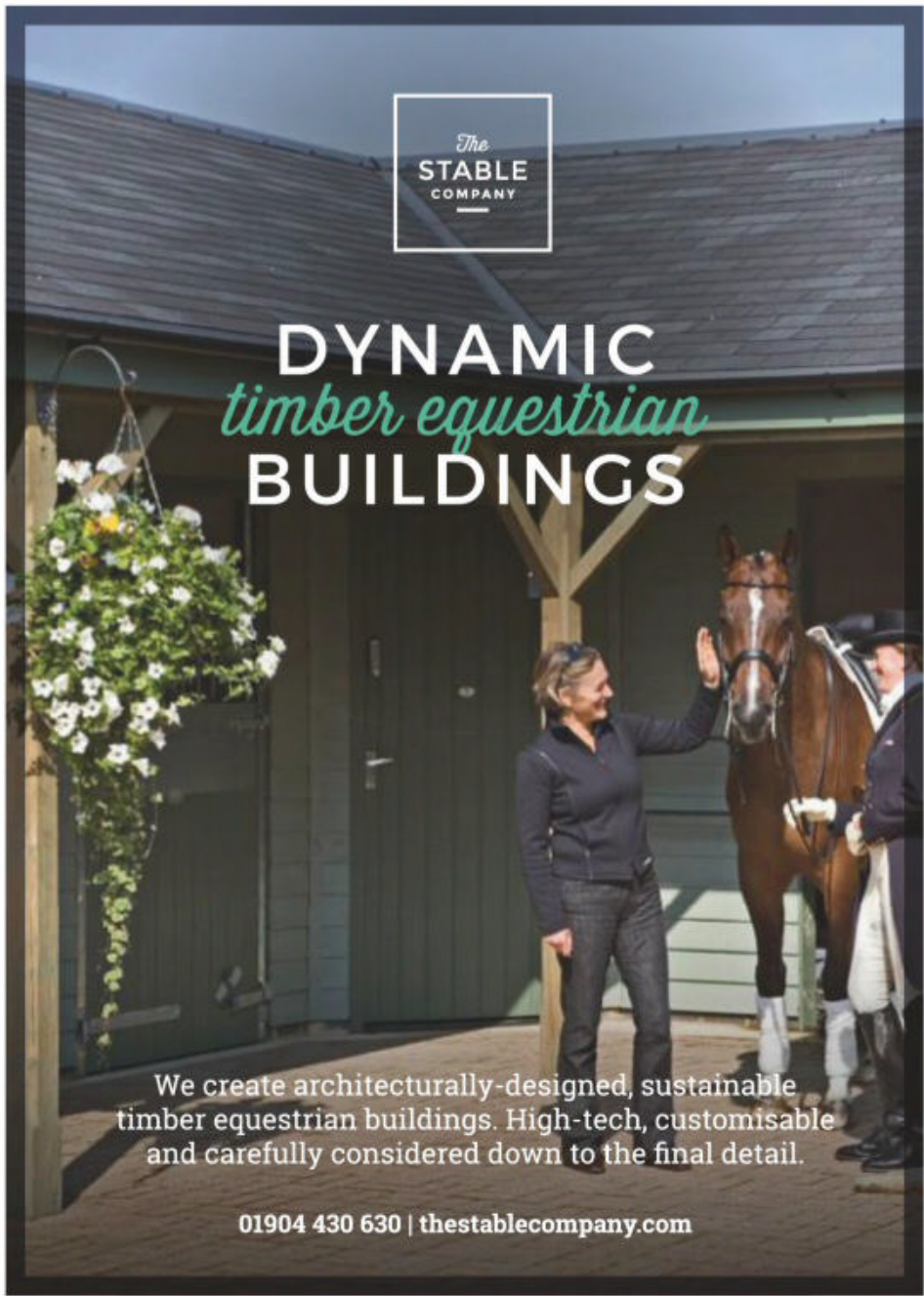
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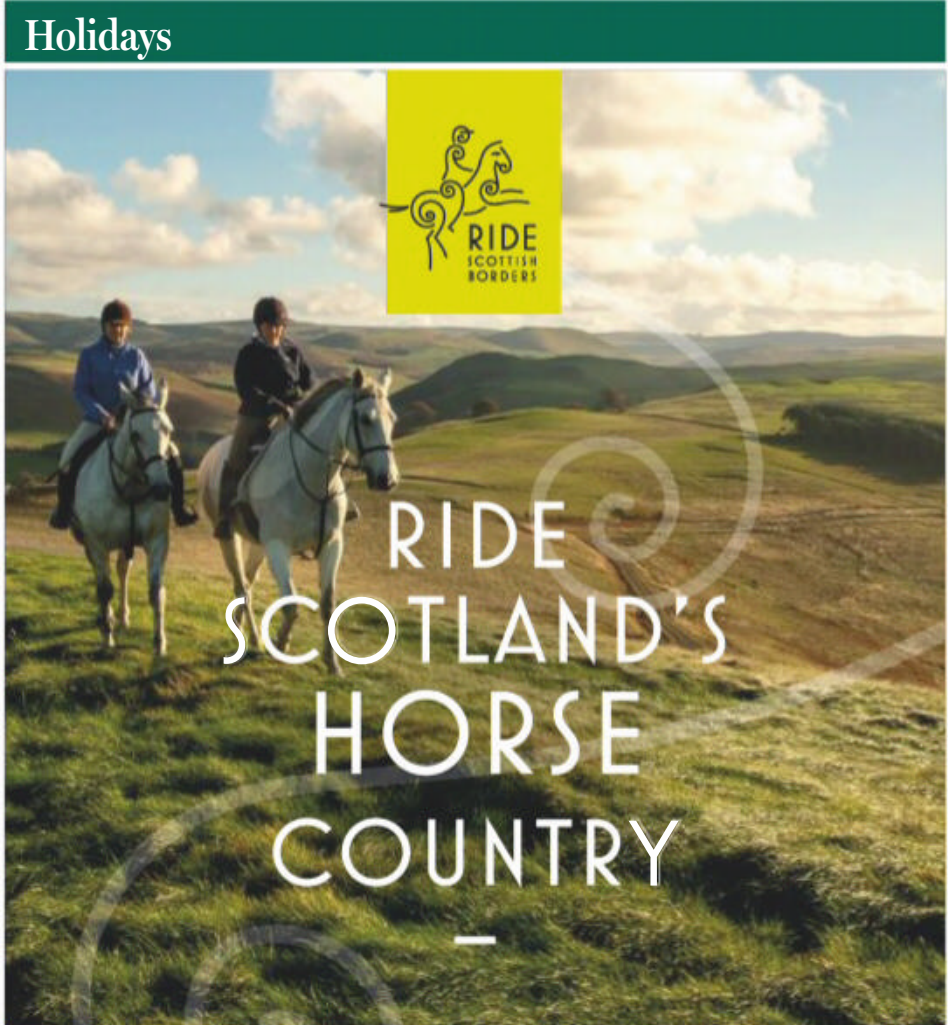
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Trailer seeks quieter life



Tessa Waugh contemplates a new job for her beloved ancient trailer, after a series of misadventures eventually culminates in a loud bang and a missing door en route to a meet

WHEN our ancient trailer arrived three or four years ago, I was thrilled. We'd just got hold of some ponies for Alec and Mary, needed something to drag them around with, and that old, green trailer — which towed my own ponies around aeons ago — symbolised freedom of the most exhilarating kind. Seeing it there in the yard felt like passing my driving test all over again.

My father dragged it up from Wiltshire — a torturous journey made worse due to a detour via the Taunton Vale kennels to collect a horse for Adam and a couple of hound puppies from our friend Guy, who was a master there.

Back in Wiltshire, the old trailer had been in semi-retirement after being replaced by a swankier version in the 1990s. For 20 years it only came out on high days and holidays if more than two people in the family were hunting on a day. Up here it was suddenly required to do hard labour: turning out in all weathers, sometimes three times a week. And it received a lot of abuse.

'I had visions of the trailer door taking flight and decapitating an old lady'

I was a novice tower at first, insanely stressed with the novelty of introducing two children to riding. I took the mudguard out on a bend one day, and towed it with the ramp down on another. There was one misadventure after another.

ON one occasion the jockey wheel slipped down on the way home. "Mummy, there's smoke coming out of the back of the car," a child cried.

We'd been over a couple of cattle grids before anyone noticed and when I got out to inspect the problem, the remains of the tyre were close to catching fire. Alec and Mary

obediently rallied to the task of sloshing water over the smoking parts to diffuse the toxic smoke and were laughing their heads off. You can't say we don't have fun here.

Recently, despite some tweaks with the welder, the old trailer has been feeling her age. Travelling to the meet on Tuesday, the door above the front ramp finally separated from its frame (something it's been trying to achieve for years) in the high winds.

There was a loud bang and Jim and Rusty were revealed, looking somewhat puzzled as their heads were exposed to the elements, while the door flapped in the wind like a sailing boat mid-tack.

I had visions of the whole thing taking flight and decapitating an old lady on the village high street. Fortunately, it didn't come to that and I've made another temporary repair with binder twine.

If you're looking for a trailer to convert for the festival season — falafel stall, champagne bar — I have just the thing. **H&H**



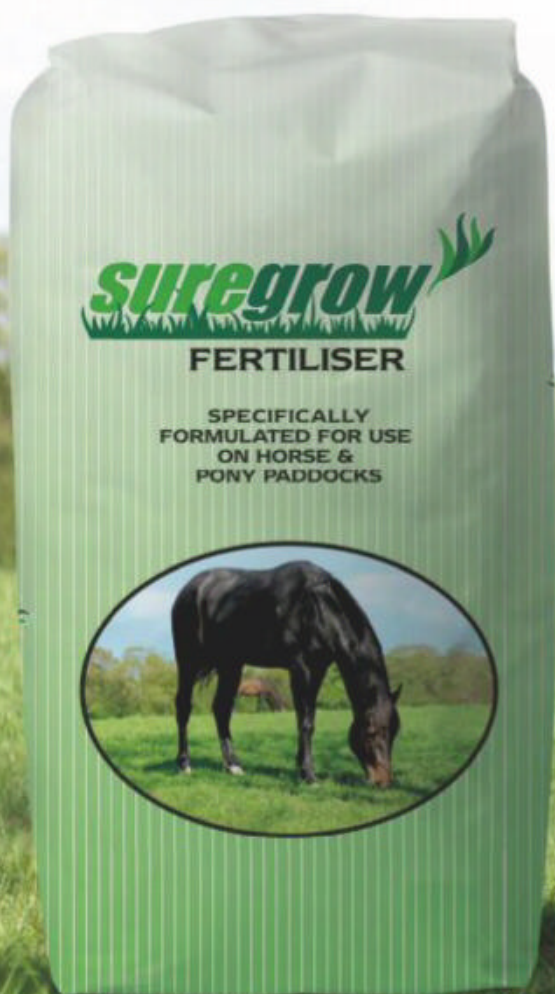
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