

Heart definitely on fire

It's a battle of the best at the top of the working hunter line-up as a technical course sees a lack of clears

By GILL KAPADIA

Ashbourne, Derbys

STEPH CALLWOOD gave a flawless performance to take the Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) working hunter ticket with her home-bred Heart On Fire after being pipped at the post by just one mark at Garstang by Kelly Ward (report, 16 August).

Steph took the impressive grey, who is by her own showjumping sire, Heart Throb, through the grades before selling him to David Allsop after HOYS last season. David spent the winter hunting the nine-year-old gelding with the Meynell — Ashbourne's local pack — before returning him to Steph just one month previously.

"David has done a cracking job with the horse," said Steph. "This is only my third show since having him back and he felt fantastic. Hunting makes them brave, but rideable. You need to have control and that was key today."

David Norlander's track left no room for error; there were only five clears from some 25 starters.

"The course was really clever with some tough distances. It required a jumper but one that you could adjust," said Steph.

A BLISTERING GALLOP

ANOTHER owner returning from holiday to happy news was Lisha Leeman. Her home-bred Kellythorpes Obsession headed the lightweight hunters to claim



Steph Callwood takes the working hunter HOYS ticket on her own home-bred Heart On Fire

his first HOYS ticket, followed by the section championship, after executing a blistering gallop in the beautiful main arena.

Produced and ridden by Oli Hood, who was making only his second visit to Ashbourne, this five-year-old gelding's manners were a credit to his connections.

"We have done so much preparation with him," said Oli. "He only did a couple of shows as a novice and we didn't try for Hickstead this season as he wasn't ready. He will go out to a few different indoors before Birmingham, but I don't tend to blast them with music and banners. I keep everything low-key to give them confidence."

Obsession is out of Lisha's foundation mare, Meacham



Lisha Leeman's Kellythorpes Obsession (Oli Hood) tops the hunters

Pictures by AFL Photography



The heavyweight Jambalaya II stands cob champion for Jim McTiffin

Mambo No. 5 — who sadly passed away in 2015 — and by showing sire Kilvington Scoundrel.

"Our champion clinched it on the gallop; he was very uninhibited," said David Ingle who assessed ride, with Joanna MacInnes judging conformation.

"Some horses were unsettled by balloons at the side of the ring, which wasn't ideal but is a common hazard nonetheless," said David. "Many shows now take place on surfaces at purpose-built venues so horses don't see enough

before they come out to compete. It's all about preparation and, if you mess it up, they don't forget."

Reserve was amateur rider Lucinda Martin and the middleweight winner, Boss, a 12-year-old by Concorde, who was purchased five years ago from an advert in *Horse & Hound*.

"I was in the middle of my exams, but Mum insisted we had to go and look at him, and it was love at first sight," said Lucinda, who works in London during the week and travels home to

Welshpool at weekends. "He isn't fazed by anything apart from white butterflies, so the balloons were fine."

Boss began his showing career aged just two, when he qualified for the Cuddy final at HOYS. He still loves his job and always has a smile on his face, according to his rider, who also paid tribute to her mother Suzanne, who does all the work while Lucinda is in London.

The duo, who have finished amateur champions at Royal International (RIHS) twice, were contesting only their second weight class this season and collected their ladies' ticket at Stoneleigh the previous week.

Jim McTiffin took the cob championship with his own heavyweight winner Jambalaya II, who was adding the HOYS cob qualification to the coloured ticket awarded at Great Yorkshire.

"We've been knocking on the door for a while so it's great to get it in the bag," said Jim. "We had such a late start to the season due to the awful weather in the spring. I'm an amateur rider and work full time, so with snow on the ground I couldn't ride after work."

Jim bought the nine-year-old gelding, another with the moniker "breeding unknown" from Ireland, from Devon-based Paul Hosegood two years ago.

RED HOUSE STANLEY IN RESERVE

RESERVE was the lightweight victor Kavanagh's Red House Stanley ridden by Carly Darcy-Potts, owned by her father Ian

Darcy and produced by Charles le Moignan and his team, who had a cracking show. Carly is in her first season with the six-year-old Irish Draught gelding, who collected his HOYS ticket at Garstang.

The team also scored when Hannah Binks won the small hunters with her own Wycliffe.

Charles took the reins to pilot Claire Cooper's The Cob Lott to victory in the novice cob class and Jean Walsh-Wright's Beconsall Regal Ruby, who headed the small hacks before standing reserve champion. This eight-year-old mare, by Willowcroft Regal Bronze, is half-sister to Charles' former partner Beconsall Pickpocket and has only been with the team for three weeks.

"I think she is possibly the best hack I have ever ridden and the best that Jean has ever had," said Charles.

Hack champion was the multi-HOYS and RIHS winner Pearly King (Elvis) — now aged 10 — who took his large section ticket with Sarah Carey at this show, which was their seasonal debut due to Sarah's lorry being involved in an accident in May.

"I only got back from holiday last night and decided to come here at the last minute," said Sarah. "Elvis has been living the life of Riley this year, but Mum says he's an old fart who can't retire just yet, so here we are." **H&H**

QUALIFIER RESULTS

HOYS, hunter (D Ingle, J MacInnes) sml. — 1, H Binks' Wycliffe Oklund; 2, H Noble's Redshaw Slaney Malt; 3, C Hartley's Lenhalls Legacy. **1'wt.** — 1 & ch, L Leeman's Kellythorpes Obsession; 2, M Wilson's It's A Story; 3, S Rix's Coalition. **m'wt.** — 1 & res, L Martin's Boss; 2, R Shaw's Chadwicks Nebu; 3, J Bull's For Tune. **h'wt.** — 1, M Nicholas' Bowland Lucky Slipper; 2, R James' Alis Real Bright Spark; 3, C Elding's Papavers Romeo. **WH (R Thomas, J Llewellyn).** — 1, D Allsop's Heart On Fire; 2, B Dillon's Argentair UK Z; 3, A Birch's DG Converted. **cob (D Froggatt, A Fradley) 1'wt.** — 1 & res, I Darcy's Kavanagh's Red House Stanley; 2, C Tyrrell & L Gibbs' The Comedian; 3, M Hamilton's Mr Bear. **h'wt.** — 1 & ch, J McTiffin's Jambalaya II; 2, C Patrick's Kathleens Boy; 3, J Smithers' Wolf. **hack, sml.** — 1 & res, J Walsh-Wright's Beconsall Regal Ruby; 2, M McCluskey's Mount Stephen Hidden Gem; 3, A Miller's DPUK Nightdancer. **1'rg.** — 1 & ch, S Carey's Pearly King; 2, Y Jacques' Grandeur; 3, E Morris' Lindeth Psalm.

A PROGRAMME OF REFORMS

CHERYL SCOTT has been light horse secretary at Ashbourne for two years and has already introduced a programme of reforms. The layout of all the rings has been changed so that they are all flat and level, and there is plenty of working-in space for competitors.

"This year we have paid for extra parking and taken all vehicles off the showground," said Cheryl. "It's much better from a health and safety point of view as non-competitors don't have to go to the lorry park at all to watch their connections work in."

The committee has also introduced new classes for local riders so that there is something for everybody and not just those wanting to qualify for HOYS.

Cheryl shows native ponies and was a member of the Derbyshire Festival committee for three years. She is a British Show Pony Society, National Pony Society and Ponies Association (UK) panel judge.

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