

Petplan Area Festival Championships

Elite shows he's in a class of his own

Competition is fierce as horses and riders galore converge on Hartpury for the Petplan Championships. Madeleine Hill reports



IT was a bumper year for the Petplan Championships. For the first time, the elementary classes were run in the same way as the prelim and novice classes — with two rounds — meaning more than 250 competitors competed in the three classes, giving many grass-roots riders their first championship experience and granting five their first championship win.

In six of the classes winners scored 70% or more, with the top three scores in the preliminary championship all starting with a seven.

Winner 15-year-old Jodie Wong and her home-bred gelding Samurai II achieved the highest score of the area festival championships — 77.73% — and one of the highest scores of the whole competition (see box).

Alice Krasno and Helen Timpany's 15-year-old gelding Elite III (by Wolfgang) won the prize at their first visit here.

"It's fabulous to win here," said Hampshire-based Alice, who fits in riding and looking after Elite around studying for her A-levels. "We've had our ups and downs. He's 90 per cent perfect and 10 per cent mad. We've had issues with him being tense in the arena, but he's starting to relax now and trust me."

Fame and fortune

THE advanced medium open crown was claimed by Claire Ballantyne and her own and Judy

Even at four she had this electricity about her. She wasn't expensive but she had the right feel

Claire Ballantyne on finding her advanced medium open partner

Smith's 13-year-old Florestan-sired mare Fame. Claire, who runs Heart of England Equestrian in Staffs, in Staffordshire, bought the mare at the Westphalian sales at Aachen in 2002.

"Even at four she had this electricity about her. She wasn't expensive, but she had the right feel," said Claire, who trains with David Pincus.

In the restricted section at the same level, it was a first championship win for Emma Jablonski and the Chellano Z son Corr IV Z.

Emma runs her own equine massage company in Nottinghamshire and found Corr on a trip to Holland.

"He was just out of the field and stood out because his movement was so loose and straight. He's quite short and compact so I've had to work on keeping him supple," said Emma, who trains with Rhett Bird.

Whatever the weather

CARMEN GAMMIE'S 14.1hh gelding Champagne Bubbles is becoming something of a championship specialist. This was his fourth visit here and his fan club cheered vociferously in the medium open prize-giving.

Carmen, 14, is on the GB Pony Squad with Bubbles.

"We've been working hard at developing cadence in the trot and in his lateral work," said her mother Elizabeth, who rode Bubbles here two years ago.

"The trotwork was fabulous in the tests, especially the medium," agreed Carmen, who rides outdoors every day, no matter what the weather.

Lucy Baker and Shirley Tibbs' Llancloudy Phantom Menace were the only pair to break 70% in the medium restricted.

Phantom Menace, an Irish draught mare by Roma Diamond Skip, hunts and does riding club



A-level student Alice Krasno leads the way in the PSG with '90% perfect, 10% mad' Elite III



What a Talented Boy: Kelly Turner takes the first round and follows it up with novice open honours

activities with Shirley.

Lucy, from Newton Abbott in Devon, works in a bank part-time and rides "Millie" twice a week.

"She felt well balanced and accurate the whole way through today," said Lucy. "She has an active and powerful hindleg."

Ida de Fouw and her eight-year-old Dutch-bred gelding Willem Van Oranje were elementary open winners. Ida, who works as a regional sales manager for an animal health company, imported the horse as a three-year-old from Holland. He is kept at live-in

Saffron Walden in Essex.

"He's very straightforward," she said. "I've recently put him in a double bridle and haven't looked back since. He's so big it's been about keeping his core stability — and mine — because I often sit in a car all day."

It was another successful championships for 14-year-old Lucy Pincus, who confessed she uses last year's oversize prize-winner's rug as a bedspread. She won another rug this year with her 14.2hh pony Sheepcote Sandmartin, by Wurlitzer, who

also sired the reserve advanced medium restricted champion Woodlands Prelude.

Lucy and Sandmartin scored 71.72% in the elementary restricted: "He felt good. He went well in round one, but in the second his trotwork was better, much more fluent," she said.

**A multi-talented boy** KELLY TURNER and Talented Boy, her 11-year-old gelding by Voltaire, scored 70.34% to win the novice open having headed the first round. Kelly, a "full-time

single mum", bought the horse from a friend to event when he was four, and the pair compete at BE100 level.

"The second test was good. His medium canter was beautiful, the best he's ever done," she said.

Alison Cahill and Egano came from second place in round one to win the novice restricted class. Alison, who runs Potten Farm Equestrian near Watford, Herts, bought Egano as a three-year-old to sell on, but decided to keep him for herself.

"He's got a good walk and

canter and, when he gets it right, his mediums are good," she said of the seven-year-old Belgian warmblood. "It was his first big show so he was tense and lit up, but he relaxed more in the second round."

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

"THIS is what this competition is all about," declared judge Linda Whetstone of the preliminary championships.

"This was a lovely class to judge with a real variety of horses and riders. A lot of hard work had gone into the tests."

Fellow judge Gloria Leverett concurred: "The standard was really high, the top three were all very good riders. The winner was in a class of her own though," she added of Jodie Wong and Samurai II.

Jodie, who used to ride a 13.3hh pony, has got the measure of the seven-year-old home-bred gelding by the German Sandro Hit son Sunny Boy out of a Fulton mare.

"We breed our own horses because we can't afford to buy what we want," said Jodie's father Adrian. "We couldn't afford to buy Jodie a pony so we stuck her on one of our horses!"

"It was a lovely partnership," added Linda. "A really thoughtful test. They had balance, energy and scope. This is a horse and rider combination that could go all the way."

FINAL SCORES: PETPLAN CLASSES

Final position	Rider	Horse	Score
Preliminary	1. A Krasno	Elite III	67.24
	2. S Fish	Gunstone Iwondo D	65.39
	3. A Howard	Phoebus II	65.26
Advanced medium open	1. C Ballantyne	Fame	70.00
	2. L Dulson	Broadstone Canberra	67.50
	3. W Lightbrown	Slyvano V	66.47
Advanced medium restricted	1. E Jablonski	Corr IV Z	65.29
	2. H Thomas	Woodlands Prelude	65.00
	3. N Allton	Rubens II	65.00
Medium open	1. C Gammie	Champagne Bubbles	71.21
	2. H Reed	The Merchant Of Venice	67.12
	3. M Rowley	Undygo	65.00
Medium restricted	1. L Baker	Llancloudy Phantom Menace	70.45
	2. S Cullen	Wind Dance	68.33
	3. D Busbridge	Regal Destiny	68.33
Elementary open	1. I de Fouw	Willem Van Oranje	68.79
	2. J Kirby	Flammengold Floker	66.55
	3. L Passantino	Tamino	66.55
Elementary restricted	1. L Pincus	Sheepcote Sandmartin	71.72
	2. A Readman	The Grafter	69.83
	3. A Hellings	Dublin	66.72
Novice open	1. K Turner	Talented Boy	70.34
	2. J Blanchard	Fatila	68.97
	3. C Parker	Donnimo	67.24
Novice restricted	1. A Cahill	Egano	69.48
	2. J Watson	Volansky	66.38
	3. T England	Coady Bay Artique	66.03
Preliminary	1. J Wong	Samurai II	77.73
	2. G Somers	Glen Lomond	72.50
	3. N Grimshaw	Zwan	70.00



Jodie Wong and Samurai II enjoy their lap of honour after posting 77.73%, the highest Petplan score

Pictures by Kevin Sparrow



Advanced medium open champion Claire Ballantyne and Fame, who are trained by David Pincus