

Hunting helps French's

Piggy French and Seapack Dark Cruise top their OI section with the fastest round of the class



COURSE CHAT

EACH year Isleham raises money for charity, having donated in the region of £160,000 to date. This year's cause was Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust, chosen for two reasons — Clem Tompsett MBE, the event president, spent over a month in Addenbrooke's heart unit last year, while a member of the committee's child was also treated at the hospital. Proceeds will be split between the two units.

ALEX COLQUHOUN, chairman of the young rider selectors, was kept busy at the intermediate prize-giving, collecting no fewer than eight of the 30 rosettes up for grabs on behalf of riders already well on their way home.

ISLEHAM CAMBS 7-8 March

By Hilary Manners

NOT for the first time, Oliver Townsend and Piggy French divided the open intermediate spoils at Isleham on the opening weekend of the season.

Piggy French rode the eye-catching Seapack Dark Cruise to the top of the table in open intermediate section O, the fastest pair of their class, coming home seven seconds over time.

"He's a big horse who prefers softer ground so the plan is to have a busy spring and quieter summer," she said. "I brought him in earlier this year than previously so he's very fit. He's even done a few days hunting, which has really sharpened him up. He's definitely stronger on the flat and finding things easier, which in turn means that I can ask for more."



The best horse I've sat on: Laura Collett and Pamerio 4 claim second in an OI

It was Oliver's 13th successive attendance at Isleham, and his wins there are into double figures. This year it was ODT Ghareeb,

owned by Kathleen Wilkinson and Rachel Wood, who took the top spot in section N. He was the only horse to finish on his dressage score in an intermediate section,

and the only horse to make the optimum time. The pair finished bang on the 4min 46sec allowed.

"The older he gets, the better he gets, although he can still be very spooky," said Oliver. "His work gets more and more consistent. I just need to remember to ride positively across country; it's not