

# French crowned Hartpury queen aboard WEG ride



CIC\*\*\* winner Piggy French drives runner-up Andrew Nicholson around the arena in her new car

her into third.

while a clean sheet for Tina Cook and Miners Frolic elevated them into fourth.

The cross-country caught out some experienced combinations and a number endured a wet end to their day, falling into the drink at fence 7, the Mitsubishi Lake. Lucy Wiegiersma (Simon Porloe), Nicholas Campbell (Trevanning), Lucy Jackson (Willy Do) and Coral Keen (Opposition Real Deal) all landed a little too steeply into the water and suffered harsh consequences.

However, it was the corner combination at fence 13ab that consistently caused problems due to the undulating ground and forward distance between the two elements. Bill Levett and Laura Collett both accrued penalties at this fence, although Bill's were later removed.



Helen West rises through the ranks to take CCI\*\*\* honours with her 'gentle giant' Mon Chapelle

since Bramham. This is a win for my team, not just me."

Piggy admitted to being "a bit twitchy" in the lead up to Hartpury as her father Wally and Michael Underwood's 12-year-old suffered a foot abscess that affected his competition programme. Nevertheless, Piggy tucked herself into a useful position on the leaderboard following the dressage phase to lie fourth on a score of 44.8.

Overnight leaders Sam Griffiths and Happy Times put in a head turning performance on the flat that was accurate and flowing and which gave them a three-point advantage over Bill Levett with One Two Many NJ and Laura Collett aboard Griggy Adian Killingshrub.

Adrian Southward's imposing show jumping track caused a smattering of dislodged rails but with kind related distances this phase was less influential than in previous years and just under 50% of the section jumped clear. Sadly Sam Griffiths was not one of these and two rolled poles dropped him right out of contention but Piggy's clear lifted

Mark Todd and NZB Campino, CCI\*\*\* winners, with ground jury members Sally Lidsey and Andrew Bennie



Photos by Helen Rensington & www.helenrensington.com

James Adams and Pebbly Aga Khan rise to third in the CCI\*\*\* thanks to completing on their dressage score



"I've never let him go at a one-day event before and I wanted to see what I found. He just impressed me even more – he's a class act," said an elated Piggy.

## Cruising to victory

Andrew drew compensation for this close defeat by sweeping past the opposition to take the top spot in CIC\*\*\* section D aboard Robin and Nicky Salmons' Mr. Cruise Control.

"He's learning to gallop now but he's only nine so there has been no hurry," said Andrew, who also finished in fourth place with Deborah Sellar's Nereo.

The 'Andrew and Piggy show' looked set to continue in this section too, with Piggy lying close behind in second place after the dressage phase on Flying Machine. However, she lowered a pole in the show jumping and accrued 8.4 cross-country time faults which left her in sixth place.

George Davies and Irene Graham and Anita Dalton's nine-year-old Orlando remained in third place throughout.

"He's just stepping up to the plate now," she croaked, with little voice left after a long weekend. "He's becoming much stronger on the flat and as a result so much more consistent. He has stopped at off-set houses before so I rode for my life into the ones at fence 21 but he seemed to work them out OK."

Another to show grit and determination across country was Kitty King, who drove Eliza Sangster's High Havoc up through the leaderboard to claim the runner-up spot. Eliza

finished eighth at last year's Junior Europeans on the son of Farringtons Spodulicks but as she is busy doing A levels Kitty has taken on the ride.

"He's not experienced at this level so I didn't know how he would cope today or whether he would be up for it," said his jockey. "He backed off the double of triple brushes [fence 4], so I gave him a smack, at which point he picked up the bridle and got better."

Mark Todd's transport to the event screamed to a halt just 45 minutes before he was due in the dressage arena on NZB Campino. He had raced from competing three horses at Aston-le-Walls where he had won a section and, clearly on fire, he went on to land the CCI\*\*\* with a show jump in hand.

"No wonder I've lost two buttons off my jacket – the stress of it all at my age!" he joked while grappling with a safety pin prior to the prize-giving.

New Zealand Bloodstock bought the eight-year-old Contender-sired NZB Campino from Germany at the end of last year for Mark to ride.

"He's done everything right. He moves well, is a reliable jumper and is straightforward to deal with. He just lacks mileage," said Mark, who rose from second place overnight when the long-time leaders Ludwig Svennerstal and Shamwari 4 rolled two show jumps and dropped to fourth.

Chris King took the runner-up spot with his own and Jane James' Miss Caruso.

"I've been beaten by Toddy yet again – this is beginning to become a habit," laughed Chris. "I'm thrilled with this mare, though, as she hasn't always been easy. She can be a bit of a lady and used to insist on going in a different direction to the one you were asking her to go in."

James Adams took third with Pebbly Aga Khan. The two-star track caused few problems and was encouraging for first timers.

## Rising to the occasion

An elated and surprised Helen West took top honours in the CCI\*\*\*, rising from 10th place to snaffle the boot on her own French-bred Mon Chapelle.

"I can't quite believe it," she exclaimed. "He's Mr Chilled

## SNIPPETS

### A TIMING ISSUE

PIGGY French's hold on course with Jakata was caused by a herd of local cows who escaped from their digs. The prize-giving for CIC\*\*\* section C was delayed by two hours after Andrew Nicholson contested the time keeping. "It's nothing against Piggy but her holding time was not calculated correctly," said Andrew.

After each fence judge's time had been reassessed, however, the order remained unchanged.

### LOTS TO CELEBRATE

HELEN West's parents can't bear to watch her compete but they attended Hartpury as a one-off so they could celebrate her father's 73rd birthday together.

"All they saw was me flying over the last fence with no stirrups," said Helen. "That'll be it now. They'll never come again after a fright like that."

### HOWE'S CLOSE SHAVE

GINNY Howe thought that she might have to negotiate more than just the water fence as a car was parked in front of the first element as she approached. The driver was alerted with only seconds to spare.

– a gentle giant who is great under pressure. We had one frightening moment when he left a leg at the second last. I thought to myself: 'Stick like Andrew Nicholson – hold on,' and we came through the finish with no stirrups."

George Spence also made a significant leap in the pecking order to finish second on KBIS Starlet with a display of faultless jumping.

After a month's drought Hartpury received half an inch of rain on Saturday.

"That's typical," said farm manager Peter Lord whose management system had impressed the riders. "We work on the going all year round and have selected a grass seed that produces more spring underfoot."

The team had watered the course for 10 days prior to the competition.

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