



Piggy French and Seapatrick Dark Cruise head their open intermediate section

phases, which is a rarity," said Oliver, who had planned to take the horse to Saumur until a cut leg ruled him out. "It worked in my favour though. If that hadn't happened I wouldn't have gone to Luhmühlen with Black Tie and be heading for WEG [World Equestrian Games]."

For Piggy French, winner of open intermediate (OI) section F

Pictures by Jo Prestwich



with Seapatrick Dark Cruise, heading the class was a bonus.

"I really came for a bit of a jolly before he does the advanced at Wellington, as the ground and the tracks are always so good," said Piggy. "The hills are useful for bringing them on, fitness-wise. It's a must on anyone's calendar."

Holly Woodhead and DHI Lupison showed their liking for the venue, winning the young rider final trial and clinching selection in the process (see box, above). Three years ago the pair won their first intermediate here, missed out 12 months later as Holly was sidelined with a knee injury, then finished third in last year's young rider trial.

"It's my favourite event, you can't fault it," she said. "We should all push them to run a CIC3*!"

It was a thought echoed by Chris Burton, who made the four-hour trip up from Godalming to win intermediate section D with Sue Lawson and Carolyn and Anthony Townsend's Nobilis 18. The German-bred nine-year-old gelding is by the Argentinian thoroughbred stallion Nobre, and was bought through Dirk Schrade a couple of years ago.

"It's my first trip up here and it won't be my last," Chris declared.

Andrew Nicholson won section C of the intermediate with Paul Ridgeon's Swallow Springs. The six-year-old came from Donal Barnwell 18 months ago, upgraded to advanced on his last outing three weeks ago at Cholmondeley and is likely to head for the young horse championship at Le Lion D'Angers to finish his season. **H&H**