

63% would do, so when I saw our score go up I thought 'wow,' she said.

Formerly an event rider, Katie has spent a decade taking her Danish warmblood gelding up the dressage grades.

"When we bought Harley as a just-backed four-year-old we hoped he'd get me as far as top hat and tails, which he well and truly has. He's a lovely horse to have and to ride," said Katie, who trains with Dan Greenwood and occasionally Adam Kemp. "We're working on getting more engagement and lift, and greater activity."

Theresa Smyth enjoyed a promising outing with Holme Grove Bernini, Penny Pollard's trakehner gelding. The pair teamed up just three weeks ago and took both novices.

"I seem to have clicked with him," said Theresa, who moved from Talland School of Equitation to ride for Peter Storr in May.

"Bernini's quite sensitive and a little sharp, so the first few weeks were difficult, but Peter has known the horse for a long time and is a great help."

"I've ridden a lot of horses in competition, but he's the only one who really knuckles down," she said.

SUMMERHOUSE EC, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 27 June

By Andrea Oakes

JENNA CAPEL and DHI Zee See Spot were triumphant on their first affiliated outing, taking the novice 33 with 70.68%. Jenna, 19, teamed up with 16.3hh "Spot" in November when Martine Reed bought the four-year-old gelding at Brightwells auction.

"We gave Spot the winter off and he's only been in proper work for two months," said Jenna's mum, Lesley. "He was a little excitable at the show and he does get a bit stressed as he's such a baby. But he learns really quickly, and he's gorgeous."

Welsh British Young Riders Dressage Scheme (BYRDS) member Jenna trains with Jan Evans, Islay Auty and Justine Sole.

Katie Stephens was prominent in the prelims with The Good Samaritan, the former one-star event horse she has borrowed from a friend.

"I'm between horses," explained Katie, who trains with Kate Carter. "I'm into dressage at the moment and 'Sam' has nice paces. I've not really had a horse to take up the levels yet."

Katie said she had crammed in a competition nearly every other day with Sam since taking him on a fortnight ago.

"We wanted to squeeze in regionals qualification," she said. "Sam's laid-back, he takes it all in his stride."

MEDSTEAD GRANGE, HAMPSHIRE 23 June

By Helen Triggs

CLAIRE MOIR'S new purchase, 10-year-old Thing's Trumf, delivered the goods by beating Cecilia Hawthorne and Maximus IV into second by one mark in the advanced medium qualifier.

"He was too big for her so I took him on," said Claire. "He's the real genuine article and had never been in the arena until April. We had to start at this level as he was imported and he really tried hard. I'll give him some match practice before going PSG at the end of the year."

Bookham Saddlery owner Helen Dart's stallion Donner Romeo is another 10-year-old who has only been lightly competed. He won at elementary with Melanie Breen.

"We've won seven non-qualifiers at elementary but keep missing the qualifier," said Helen. "He made it look so easy. He concentrated on Melanie and kept his rhythm."

Craig Rawlins' six-year-old stallion Korenbloem Varisto won the medium 73 under Andrew Gould.

"He's been with Andrew for a year and they have established a good relationship," said Andrew's wife Polly. "It's only his fourth competition and he was relaxed and coped well." H&H

Pammy Hutton Comment Looking after the VIPs



I'D like to see dressage "bus passes" for the over 70s to cover championships, judges' courses and conventions. Recipients should be people who have served on committees, overseen our sport's progress and, in particular, older judges. As well as repaying their goodwill, how beneficial it would be to keep all that valued and still very able experience on board.

There are already precedents. The International Equestrian Federation (FEI) Badge of Honour entitles holders to free admission to every one of its events during the year. Badminton director Hugh Thomas confirms that his event issues tickets to those who have served on various vital committees for 25 years or more, the invitations being extended to nearest and dearest.

The late Dick Stillwell used to say that Hugh, along with Douglas Bunn at Hickstead, set the best examples of looking after those who matter. The sad thing is there are still no contenders for ousting their fine lead. Even with a lunch or two thrown in, these gestures cost so little, yet mean so much. Come on, British Dressage (BD), lead on!

At the other end of the age scale, "putting something back" is to be encouraged. Georgie Spence, the highest placed young rider at Badminton, must have had the fastest ever gallop from Pony Club dismounted runner to competitor.

Offering Pony Club members reduced ticket prices at shows, including BD's national championships, would be a great membership incentive — and hugely inspirational, too.

Hunt follows Day

JILL DAY, BD's outgoing director of training, deserves huge praise for her self-effacing, diligent work — always delivered with passion. She has worked

“Georgie Spence must have had the fastest ever gallop from dismounted runner to Badminton competitor”

tirelessly to take regional development to a new level. David Hunt, now in her chair, is, of course, brilliant and we can look forward to some great input.

Gym and English

CAREFUL reading of test sheets is a must; and how I agreed with my only nine of the season, for immobility in halt. Usually I count "one elephant, two elephants"; but on this occasion it had been one puff, puff; two puff, puffs, with the puffs so elongated no wonder we stood still. More fitness work to do...

On the subject of reading, a show organiser has been complaining about the illegibility of entry forms, with many competitors needing a lesson in how to fill them out. And this was by no means aimed at the youngsters.

First impressions

JUDGES should never pre-judge, not even in their heads. One competitor reports trotting by the judge as she waited for the signal to start her test, only to overhear said judge exclaim: "Well, that's a six all day..." Or is that why I was always taught to ride around the arena in my most stunning pace?

To regional or to festival?

WHETHER to enter regional finals — in an attempt to qualify for the national championships — or area festivals, is a question I'm often asked at this time of year. With an increase in both quality and quantity of competitors fighting for places at the nationals, running at the festivals can be more fun, less stressful and less demoralising.

As we gear up for the all-important regionals, even this old hand's butterflies have started fluttering.

Time to shine?

AS you read this, the juniors and young riders have left for their Europeans in Portugal, ponies have their Euros the following week and the Olympic team has been finalised. All need a lot of luck. I'm doubtful if medals are achievable, but perhaps at last this year...

I'm thrilled that Anne Dunham has been selected for Hong Kong. A Paralympic rider with MS, this will be her fourth Olympics — a record. When I asked if we were proceeding to London 2012, Anne — who is soon to be 60 — replied: "To give up riding would be like giving up on life, I would go into decline, so of course, Pammy!" H&H