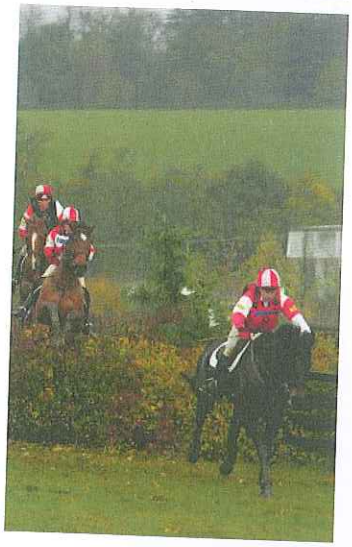
Relentless

Allen Brown from the Hair Raisers



The Hair Raisers

The Essex and Suffolk Team Chase

Boring Gorings

The Essex and Suffolk Team Chase, held at Semer near Hadleigh on 4th November, attracted a record entry with many competitors having a first go at this exciting sport. It is believed to be the only team chase in East Anglia and is developing quite a following.

Wet weather, which has blighted so many events this year, hit Manor Farm in the run up to the team chase and on the day itself, but few of this determined band of riders were deterred. The open course has been extended and new lines and approaches enhanced the challenge for the teams.

The friendly but testing event draws competitors from all over the country, with open teams hailing from as far afield as Yorkshire and Wales. Reigning national and team chase league champions Relentless won the Material Change British Team Chase Championships qualifier but in the tough conditions even their round was far from straightforward. With Mani and Coleorton Dane, piloted by Dickie Barrett and Rowan Cope up front, the team set off at a good gallop. Simon Coady's Alfie was unsighted by the new partnership of Will Grant and Cracker who jinked sideways and he ran out at the fourth. Rowan had to take a turn further up the same hedge line and soon Dickie was streaking away in the lead.

His team mates got back on terms through a new loop of hedges at the top of the course, although Will Grant was unseated over the Jewel in the Crown, a massive bullfinch with ditch in front. Galloping on down the hill to the water, Simon kicked on to reach the leaders, surviving a peck at the last from the tired Alfie. "It rode a lot better than it looked," commented Dickie, "It was wet but not too deep, and our horses were brilliant."

Point Two Top Spec Hair Raisers took second place with Allen Brown giving a strong lead on Max, Aly and Larry Brown kicking on in his wake. Paul Thomason glanced off the fourth on Tiny and then got into further difficulty at the top, but finally galvanised his mount to get back on terms.

Boring Gorings also put in a good round for third, with Fred French and Nick Fuller getting great runs from their fit horses. Nick and Socks raced ahead up the first hill, but they came back together for the big hedges on the top and over the final fences, Bryan Allen's speedy Bewley took up the running. Ellie Wass, who had travelled from Exeter, enjoyed a great run on her horse Podlet's open debut.

Art Hotel Chasers had a rare off day, with Dingbat hitting one of the smallest fences on the course to unseat Sarah Myhill, and Chris Davey tipping up with Mr P at the water, who then ran across Emma Beresford and Sarah at the final road crossing. Their early speed still took them to fourth place.

Barnsley Babes took fifth place and the first qualifying slot for the Material Change British Championships, with a strong lead throughout from Amy Meecham and Lucky. "It was tough out there but we were always aiming to go steady and try and qualify, so it worked well," she said.

Sixth place and the second qualifying slot went to the Stunts That Can't Be Made, running with just three members. Kate McKee ground to a halt at the first but she and Sarah Shoemark, in their first season in opens, kicked on behind Tony Woodward who tipped off at the first bullfinch. They made steady progress over the second half, and were clearly delighted with their horses at the finish.

With some of the established intermediate teams hitting problems, victory in the intermediate went to Essex and Suffolk Hunt team The Vicious and Delicious. Izzy Pile, Caroline March and Virginia Wells all work in local event yards, while Daisy Huxtable is a veterinary student. Izzy explained: "This is the first team chase we've done together, and we're not regulars on the circuit. We do it because it is great fun and to support the hunt and we're delighted to win." The novice (bogey time) class also went to a local hunt team, the Flying Foxes.

Barnsley Babes

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