

Spring 2012 - Team chasers thrill in all weathers

The spring team chase season got off to a great start in glorious sunshine at the Worcestershire event, where many of the leading teams turned out to give their horses a run in the intermediate speed class in preparation for open qualifiers in subsequent weeks.

Relentless continued to dominate, winning this intermediate and the equivalent at the VWH two weeks later, but Art Hotel Chasers continue to snap at their heels, and now have a second team, Art Hotel Racers, to further challenge them.

Dougie Gittins, whose horses Bono and Philip (the latter piloted by Gloucestershire racehorse trainer Peter Mason) are the mainstay of the team's success commented: "These two horses work so well together, they live next door to each other and go galloping together, it makes it easy for us."

A freak snowstorm caused the abandonment of the spring's first open qualifier and all subsequent classes at the Berks and Bucks.

Tony Woodward of the Cunning Stunts, whose experienced horse Dan was among the fallers in the only two teams to attempt the open course before the class was called off, said: "You could not see the fences in front of you because the snow was coming down so fast."

The event had earlier – in rain and then sleet- featured an innovative hunt pairs relay with an 'Olympic Torch' baton handover, won with a storming round by a mixed team from the Berks and Bucks and Farmers Bloodhounds. The Bicester Ladies impressed many in this class by all competing side saddle.