

Snapdragon puts up a fiery performance

Anya Dewey Clarke amasses RIHS tickets and a catch ride gives a Guernsey rider plenty to celebrate

By SARAH RADFORD

Onley Grounds Small Pony Premier, Warks

ANYA DEWEY CLARKE had already secured three tickets to the Royal International (RIHS) but continued a consistent run by taking first and second place over two days of 128cm qualifiers with Kilcreene Snapdragon.

Anya started riding “Snappy” in December and was only jumping her second show of 1.10m classes on him, having qualified at Aintree.

“He jumped amazingly. I love riding him,” said Anya, who also has her other rides Jim and Toplines Royal Wonder to choose from for the Hickstead final.

“His canter is really smooth – he can get a bit excited, so you

have to sit quietly with him.”

On Saturday, just two riders made it through to the second round, with Anya producing the sole double clear, while Zachary Bradshaw took runner-up with four faults on Carrowvilla Izzy.

Sunday’s class made it to three rounds, with three combinations getting through – Anya claimed second place with the fastest time but lowered a pole.

“They were quite technical tracks,” said Anya, who is looking forward to the final this year having qualified last year but missed out as her pony wasn’t quite right.

It was Freddie Hodges and 15-year-old Welsh section B Durley Hall Medici who won on Sunday with the sole faultless round.

Freddie trains with his cousin Ronnie Lee Jones and



Above: Anya Dewey Clarke jumps the sole double clear on Kilcreene Snapdragon to top the first 128cm Hickstead qualifier. Left: “She’s a lovely pony to ride,” says Lacie Williams of her 138cm qualifier joint-winner Jessie Mae Harmony

was on only his second attempt at qualifiers, having tackled his first big tracks at South View.

“The course was tough, especially round the corners and to the treble. We have been working on getting the pony rounder between fences to have more control,” Freddie said.

“I thought we would be stepping up but not this soon. He’s actually got easier as the fences have got bigger.”