

“ He was wild warming up. One man even asked me his breeding to make sure he never bought one by the same stallion ”

Anne Wilkinson on her fiery DCI Special Effects see page 60



## Team chasing New rules ban bridleless riders

THE fund-raising team chasers **Bridleless not Brainless** have fallen foul of new safety rules for the 2012 season, which stipulate that “all horses must be ridden in a bridle with reins directly attached to a bit”.

The change has been brought in as part of a safety review following the death of Jo Rugman (news, 10 March 2011).

Mrs Rugman, 37, was killed in a rotational fall at the VWH team chase. Her horse was wearing a bridle.

But members of **Bridleless not Brainless** — who ride in headcollars and raise money for breast cancer research — say they have been targeted unfairly, because their safety record is “second to none”.

Team captain Mark Smith told *H&H* that, in four years, **Bridleless** had completed 27 runs without a horse fall.

Mr Smith said there was nothing unsafe about his method, adding: “Riding in a headcollar sounds like an anomaly, but it is about showing people how to ride with their bodyweight, not grabbing at the bit.”

“With support for team chasing on the decline, you’d think they’d want to hang on to something that has generated so much publicity,” he said.



**The Bridleless not Brainless team chasers cannot compete under the new rules**

But James Buckle — who chairs the Masters of Foxhounds Association team chasing committee — said the issue had to be addressed.

“I don’t think there is any other discipline that would even let you warm up without a bridle. Imagine standing in front of a coroner, explaining why you had allowed someone to ride without one,” he said.

The review has resulted in new rules on hats and body protectors (news, 8 September 2011). It is also looking at course and fence design to report back this summer.

Mr Buckle stressed that the

review would not detract from the sport’s ethos.

“Jo’s death was a tragedy and we must take any lessons we can from it,” he said. “Having said that, team chasing is an extreme sport and we don’t want it to lose its essence.”

**Bridleless** member Belinda Shaw asked: “What kind of buzz am I going to get out of going round with a bridle?”

And Mr Smith — who captained 2007 national winners **Bollocks to Blair** — said it was doubtful the team would carry on with bridles.

“If we do, perhaps I’ll name it ‘**Bollocks to Bits**,’” he added. **FW**

## Horses in the news

### LEGOLAS

American dressage rider Steffen Peters debuted the grand prix horse at the CDN Thermal, California (13-15 January), scoring 80.213%.

Bought from Hof Kasselmann in Germany, the nine-year-old Westphalian gelding gained six 10s for his piaffe, passage and transitions.



### DANILO

This international small tour horse has a new owner-rider in British junior Claire Gallimore. Previously owned by Barbie Marceau and ridden by Daniel Watson, he will be aimed at junior and young rider classes.

### WHISTLE

Sally Mawer’s scurry pony has been put down due to liver problems. He won four Osborne double harness scurry of the year titles at Horse of the Year Show — one with **Touchwood**, two with **Flute** and last year’s with **Toot**.



### MISTATIGER

Charlotte Ridley’s home-bred former four-star eventer has died, aged 28. The pair were regulars at Badminton in the late 1990s before the horse retired to hunting. Charlotte’s former pupil Kelly Coulson said he was “big-hearted and brave”.



### ABDULAZIZ

Old Lodge has sent its home-bred **Diamant De Semilly** eight-year-old to John Whitaker to begin his international career.

“He’s been very well produced by Steven Franks, so I’m looking forward to riding him on the Spanish Sunshine Tour,” John told *H&H*.



## Industry

# Derby House in ‘strategic review’

EQUESTRIAN retailer Derby House is seeking agreement with its creditors as part of efforts to restructure the business.

The Lancashire-based company has been undergoing a restructuring programme since early 2011 — which has seen it sell off all but one of its stores — in order to concentrate on its web and mail order operations

(news, 30 June 2011).

Commercial director Mark Reeves, one of three new appointments to the board, told *H&H* that the changes would give customers an “enhanced experience”.

“It is absolutely business as usual for Derby House customers,” he said.

“Derby House has put in place solid foundations to take the business forward and

enhance our offering as a leading equestrian retailer brand.”

Mr Reeves said the company would now focus on expanding its growing online and mail order operations. The retail business will be handled through the flagship Derby House store at Wrightlington, Lancs.

All seven other stores were closed or sold last year. **FW**

Pictures by www.trevor-meeks-photography.co.uk and David Miller



### Dresses of ‘modest length’

Miniskirts are now being banned from the Royal Enclosure, strapless dresses and bare midriffs are a no-no in the grandstand

### Appropriate dress

“Ladies’ Day it certainly wasn’t last year,” says Lizzie “Anyone fond of racing will be delighted by the new dress codes”

### Men don’t escape

Suit and tie for the grandstand, top hats in the Royal Enclosure. “Don’t treat it as a daylight pub and dress for the nightclub,” says Lizzie. [www.lizzieshats.com](http://www.lizzieshats.com) **FW**

