

Moat View win on a

Newly affiliated Moat View Riding Club put on a stunning display as Furious Angels to take top spot in the SEIB Quadrille of the Year.

Jennifer Gordon Smith reports from Olympia

IT was tight at the top in the British Riding Clubs/SEIB Quadrille of the Year with Moat View Riding Club's Furious Angels taking the title with just a handful of points in hand ahead of the New Forest Pony Enthusiasts' square-dancing Do Se Do'sers.

Moat View, established less than a year ago, fielded a team that included two members of last year's winning Faversham & District quadrille — and a third behind the scenes — bringing with them the same artistic flair and theatrical ability which helped them to victory in 2006.

"The standard has rocketed," said Julian Seaman, one of the three judges. "The turnout, costumes and routines — I was really impressed."

Last to go, the Kent-based foursome made a dramatic entrance with their sparkling costumes, gothic make-up, huge wings and Michael Jackson's *Thriller* filling Olympia's Grand Hall. Despite what looked like a foot-perfect display, incorporating some of the most technical movements of the morning, rider Frances Wilson described it as "the worst test we've ridden".

"I think the horses were shell-shocked by the atmosphere," she said.

The team ranged in experience from 19-year-old Limerick — competing in the final for the seventh time — to five-year-old Hortons Pink Panther ridden by newcomer Amy Williams, sister of Rosemary Williams, who was on her "real all-rounder" Old Park Rose. Liliane Widdows rode ex-show horse Hortons Connor.

Chef d'équipe Nicky Murrell owns Limerick and rode with Rosemary and Frances in last year's winning team, but decided to take a step back to manage the Moat View team this year.

"It feels odd not riding, but the worst bit is having to just sit back and watch," she said.

Sarah Williams, mother of Rosemary and Amy, enjoys amateur dramatics and designed and made the stunningly elaborate costumes in black, silver and "Cadbury's Dairy Milk purple".

"She got so carried away knitting the leg-warmers that she made nine instead of eight," said Nicky. "But I think the cat is making good use of the extra one at home."

The beautiful choreography was performed to a medley of music including *The Time Warp* from *The Rocky Horror Show* and Robbie Williams's *Angels*. The team brought their performance to life with their acting and rode some perfectly timed movements — interlocking circles across the arena and lateral movements down the diagonal.

"I felt like a judge on *Strictly Come Dancing*," said Julian Seaman. "I don't pretend to know anything about the foxtrot, but you can tell from



Winging it: Moat View's Furious Angels impressed the judges with their dramatic routine



Frills and thrills: square-dancing their way to second place are the New Forest Pony Enthusiasts

wing and a prayer



Worlington Riding Club deliver an electric performance as four ladies of the highway

the overall impression who should win and all the judges agreed."

Close behind in second were the New Forest Pony Enthusiasts who had learnt square-dancing in order to put together an authentic equine version for their Do Se Do's routine.

The team of natives — two geldings and two stallions, one of whom, the grey Farriers Fingerprint, competed in the ridden M&M championship the following day (see page 30) — were all making their Olympia debut.

"We're pleased as punch," said chef d'equipe Sarah Green, who was inspired by her favourite musical *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*.

"It's great fun but I don't think anyone realises just how much hard work is involved," she added.

The prize for the best supporters would have gone to the New Forest Pony Enthusiasts who were toe-

tapping and clapping in the stands, many dressed in cowboy hats. The club, who last competed at Olympia in 1994, impressed the judges with their musical medley and commentary which cued the dance elements, as happens in square-dancing.

The frilly-skirted female characters were "Annie Soakley" and "May Vest" with dancing partners "Jessie Jones" and "John Swayne". The country and western music suited the quick-striding ponies — all of whom compete in a variety of

disciplines and enjoy a bit of hunting. A perfectly executed rein-back, crossing in pairs over the centreline, received a huge round of applause as did some spectacular gallops down the arena accompanied by much whooping and hollering.

In third position were the Suffolk-based Worlington Riding Club dressed as "highway ladies" and riding to Adam Ant's *Stand and*

You can tell from the overall impression who should win

Judge Julian Seaman



The bear necessities: Swansea-based Southerndown Riding Club make their Olympia debut

THE TEAMS

MOAT VIEW RIDING CLUB

Furious Angels — A Dance Macabre
Frances Wilson on Limerick
Rosemary Williams on Old Park Base
Amy Williams on Harbours Pink Panther
Lilliane Widdows on Harbours Connor

NEW FOREST PONY ENTHUSIASTS

New Forest Do Se Do's
Weedy Adams on Bazley Branton
Sally Ann Pierson on Chester II
Martine Reeves on Farriers Fingerprint
Helen Campbell on Farriers Foxglove

WORLINGTON RIDING CLUB

Fine And Dandy
Gail Wynn-Rogerson on Miss Money Penny
Debbie Agambar on Harrington
Rebecca Davies on A Breeze
Heather Highton on Aquila

SOUTHERNDOWN RIDING CLUB

Goldilocks And The Three Bears
Carmen Bloxham on Hamish
Kath Chappell on Sosy Jim
Sarah Jones on Ceth Forest Taffy
Jenny Thomas on Vaguely Beautiful

Deliver. Their electric blue outfits won them the highest marks in the costume judging.

The performance began with a dramatic "ambush" and they, too, were unafraid to up the tempo in their routine, with one masked "Dandy Girl" galloping menacingly down the arena.

Three of the riders were in the final last year as toredors, where they also finished third.

"It's actually the third time we've come third," said chef d'equipe Linda Price. "But we got the bug seven years ago and we're not going to give up."

Sadly, the owner of one of the team horses, Harrington, died three weeks before the competition but her husband was there to see their performance.

Fourth-placed Southerndown had a seven-hour round trip from Swansea, but enjoyed their first visit to Olympia as Goldilocks and the three bears.

"It's been my ambition to get here for 18 years," said chef d'equipe Mary Morgan.

"Our mothers made the costumes," said Kath Chappell, who played the part of Baby Bear. "I think they may have gone on strike now, though." **H&H**

QUADRILLE FACTS

- This year's judges were BHS chairman Patrick Print, Badminton press officer Julian Seaman and British Dressage chief executive David Holmes
- The competition is judged in four sections: appearance (maximum 20 marks — judged in the collecting ring), content of programme (20 marks), performance (20 marks) and general artistic impression (60 marks)
- The qualifier is held at Addington in October from where four teams go through to the final at Olympia
- The winning team receives £500 and a trophy awarded by BRC/SEIB

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