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Vanessa Britton

Germany in dominant form at another huge Houghton event

The Germans were unbeatable at the EQ Life Houghton International Horse Trials.

Their domination began in the Nations Cup competition, galloping into the lead with a near 15-point advantage over the British. Only the French rider, Luc Chateau, seemed to disrupt the Germans' winning ways, taking the individual title in the CICO3* on his own stallion, Propriano De L Ebat which helped the French to third in the team competition.

British team riders also produced the goods, coming a close second to the Germans in the team competition, with best placed British rider going to team member Pippa Funnell and Billy The Biz in third.

The unaffiliated classes, which took place across the weekend, attracted yet again a huge number of entries as young or less experienced combinations flocked to Houghton wanting to compete in a world class environment.

Alec Lochore, event organiser, says the unaffiliated events are "huge" adding: "It's lovely how popular they are giving these riders a great thrill to ride at an event like this."

Abby Clark on her pony Neebro Bridesmaid, showed the pros how it's done, taking home glory in both the 70 and 90cm show jumping classes.

The affiliated British Showjumping classes were also a huge success - 15-year-old Isobel Staff, riding Just Malcolm, stormed into the lead in the pony British Novice and Discovery Open classes. Isobel, who attends Hethersett Academy, has had 16-year-old



■ Abby Clark on her pony Neebro Bridesmaid.

Picture: PAULS-PIX.CO.UK

Malcolm on loan from Ruth Gayton for six months.

Isobel says she relished the international atmosphere: "It's a really good experience to jump here and the atmosphere is great."

"There are also lots of very supportive people around. But it is a big show so I do get a bit nervous." Isobel went on to be a crucial member of the winning Hethersett

Academy team in the Inter Schools Showjumping held on the Sunday. The show jumping arenas were busy throughout the event, with affiliated and unaffiliated jumping classes providing plenty for the many spectators to watch near the trade stands.

Ruby Pointer jumped five horses at the show and enjoyed plenty of success, qualifying five-year-old grey

mare French Willow for the new championships at Stoneleigh later in the year, thanks to a triple clear. Ruby also won the Speed Class on Grade A mare Poppy.

"She just comes alive in the speed classes - she's a real twisty, turny horse," she said.

Poppy and another of Ruby's horses Kalinka II have also qualified for the Stoneleigh finals.