



Angie Blackmore competing on field three at the Shabfest trials.

PICTURE: Suzy Frost

Packed weekend at Shabfest

POSSIBLY the first Continental-style sheepdog trials to be held in the UK took place in June at Shabden Park Farm. Three days of trialling on the beautiful north downs attracted many competitors from the UK and Europe.

Mark Banham, farmer at Shabden Park Farm, runs sheep on this beautiful spot in the North Downs. Orchids, vetches and many other wild flowers grow on this farm which has been managed under the countryside stewardship scheme since 1994.

Mark has been trialling dogs since 1986 and has achieved many wins including in recent years the south east championship. His love of trialling has also taken him abroad to compete.

Mark said the aim of running these new trials was 'to bring people from across Europe together who share a passion for sheepdogs, sheep, farming, countryside and to have fun'. The trials were nicknamed Shabfest.

The trials were run over three fields with a morning and afternoon trial on each. There were six trials planned for each day, totalling 18 trials over the three days. Each handler could run up to two dogs twice each day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Handlers and both of their dogs were placed in a group and competed against the other handlers in their group each day.

The group swapped field each session so no-one would compete on the same field twice in one day. The

six judges were assigned a field and time slot which they judged each day.

Handlers came from countries including Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland, as well as more locally from Wales and across England. With 38 dogs entered in each group this trial was an enormous undertaking with nearly 700 runs set to take place. Emphasising that these trials were in the UK the gates were each wrapped in a Union flag.

Field one was a large trial field that has regularly hosted trials for Surrey SDS. A long outrun of approximately 700 yards that takes in the valley's dip to collect sheep on the other side was a challenge but as usual caused few problems with plenty of space to either side and good sighting for the handler. The right hand drive went down into the valley with the cross drive running along the bottom before returning uphill to the shedding ring.

Field two was located further along the valley. The fetch was approximately 500 yards and came down on a level through the valley with the left hand drive going up on either side. A few hearing issues affected the driving and while the cross drive line was in front of the gates some handlers passed behind.

Field three was the least impressive but presented different challenges as the sheep were tricky to set out and caused issues at the top as well as eyeing the exhaust pen. They

were particularly tricky to pen on day one in the morning with many runs timing up. The field has a slight left hand drop away which means dogs go out of sight on the outrun this side. However, this side proved preferable to ensure a good lift.

Field one was judged in the morning by shepherd Ray Edwards, respected handler and England team member on numerous occasions, as well as experienced judge not only in England but also across Europe and North America. The afternoon trials were judged by local farm manager Andy Jackman, current English president of the ISDS as well as commentator on *One Man & His Dog*, who has judged extensively both at home and abroad including North and South America. Andy is also a founder member of the local Surrey Sheep Dog Society.

Mark Elliott and David Meek took the judges' seats on field two. Mark Elliott has judged many times in England as well as on the continent and America and his experience as a handler includes representing England. As a well-known trainer David Meek is known across the UK and has represented Wales several times at International level.

Paddy Fanning, from Ireland, was judging in England for the first time, but his experience includes judging on the continent at championship qualifiers as well as in the USA. He was judge on field three in the morning. In the afternoon it was John Marsh, a well-liked and re-

spected farmer from Sussex, who has served as chairman of Sussex SDS for many years. John has represented England at International level too and judges extensively.

As well as providing challenging courses, Mark also emphasised the social aspect of the trials. There was camping available with an evening barbecue on the Saturday night so handlers could stay on site.

The sheep were Mark's own mules, which ran well over the three days. They tested the dogs sufficiently but gave everyone a chance.

Fifteen of the planned 18 trials took place which meant each handler competed in five trials. Kevin Evans did particularly well winning all five times, three with Hybeck Blake and two with Preseli Ci and with no winning score below 92/100. Ci also placed second behind Blake and Blake was also second to Ci.

Nicolas Annaloro (France) took two wins in his group, one each with Pearl and Lynn – both on field one.

On day one Guillaume Josien (France) had a good first morning on field one with Gill and Jet as they took first and second on 85/100.

Nicolas Annaloro did the same with Lynn (93) and Pearl (91) on day one on field one in the afternoon as he took first and second. There were high points scored over the three days – the highest were scored by Jed Watson and Gwydr Zac on field three, day three when he won on 97.5/100.



Luca Fini competing on field three.

PICTURE: Suzy Frost

RESULTS

From Suzy Frost

SHABDEN PARK Continental Opens, Chipstead, Surrey, (Judge, Ray Edwards, England) Friday Am Field 1 (38 ran) I, G. Josien (France) Gill, 85 of 100 OLF; 2, G. Josien, Jet, 85; 3, R. Watson (England) Ace, 85; 4, J. Watson (England) Zac, 85; 5, K. Broad (Wales) Kinloch Cade, 83; 6, C. Mellin (England) Moor Lodge Ben, 82. (Judge, M. Elliott, England) Friday Am Field 2 (38 ran) I, K. Evans (Wales) Hybeck Blake, 95 of 100; 2, N. Watkins (Wales) Tanhill Alex, 93; 3, N. Watkins, Ben, 92; 4, L. Fini (Italy) Bob, 90; 5, K. Evans, Preseli Ci, 89; 6, J. Bowen (Wales) Tess, 87. (Judge, P. Fanning, Ireland) Friday Am Field 3 (38 ran) I, W. Van Dongen (Belgium) Quya, 97 of 100; 2, R. Games (Wales) Roy, 96; 3, C. Cassie (England) BaW Sean, 95; 4, M. Peeters (Belgium) Conquest Sweep, 93; 5, N. Matthews (Wales) Mari, 90; 6, J. Kristiansen (Norway) Yola, 82. (Judge, A. Jackman, England) Friday Pm, Field 1 (38 ran) I, N. Annaloro (France) Lynn, 93 of 100; 2, N. Annaloro, Pearl, 91; 3, J. Pluta (Netherlands) Meg, 85 OLF; 4, R. Games, Roy, 85; 5, M. O'Malley (Ireland) Jock, 84 OLF; 6, C. Cassie, BaW Sean, 84. (Judge, D. Meek, Wales) Friday Pm, Field 2 (38 ran) I, K. Broad, Kinloch Cade, 93 of 100; 2, A. Stern (Switzerland) Kody, 90; 3, J. Watson, Zac, 89; 4, R. Watson, Sally, 87; 5, J. Beeli (Switzerland) Becco, 86; 6, M. Zimmerman (Switzerland) Bree, 83. (Judge, John Marsh, England) Friday Pm, Field 3 (38 ran) I, K. Evans, Preseli Ci, 92 of 100 OLF; 2, S. Little (England) Buddy, 92; 3, N. Watkins, Tanhill Alex, 90; 4, W. Hurley (England) Chip, 88; 5, L. Fini, Bob, 87; 6, N. Watkins, Ben, 84. (Judge, Ray Edwards) Saturday Am, Field 1 (38 ran) I, K. Evans, Hybeck Blake, 92

of 100; 2, N. Watkins, Ben, 90 OLF; 3, K. Evans, Preseli Ci, 90; 4, N. Watkins, Tanhill Alex, 90; 5, S. Danek (England) Kay, 86; 6, L. Fini, Bob, 82. (Judge, M. Elliott) Saturday Am, Field 2 (38 ran) I, J. Saukkonen (England) Sango Gannon, 93 of 100 OLF; 2, K. Broad, Kinloch Cade, 93; 3, R. Watson, Sally, 92; 4, J. Watson, Ken, 86 OLF; 5, M. Simonelli (Italy) Moss, 86; 6, S. Manzi (Italy) Ras, 82. (Judge, P. Fanning) Saturday Am, Field 3 (38 ran) I, R. Games, Taff, 93 of 100; 2, M. O'Malley, Jock, 91; 3, M. O'Malley, Chip, 90; 4, R. Briggs (England) Fly, 90; 5, M. Peeters, Conquest Sweep, 89; 6, R. Briggs, Wendale Nell, 88. (Judge, Ray Edwards) Sunday Am, Field 1 (38 ran) I, N. Annaloro, Pearl, 91 of 100; 2, R. Games, Roy, 88 OLF; 3, M. Wessendorf (Germany) Nice, 88; 4, C. Rappeloni (Italy) Tom, 86; 5, R. Briggs, Fly, 84; 6, M. Rella (Switzerland) Kiana, 83. (Judge, M. Elliott) Sunday Am, Field 2 (38 ran) I, K. Evans, Preseli Ci, 97 of 100; 2, K. Evans, Hybeck Blake, 95 OLF; 3, N. Watkins, Ben, 95; 4, N. Watkins, Tanhill Alex, 93; 5, A. Blackmore (Leadbury) Moss, 93; 6, S. Wiemans (Netherlands) Bob, 90. (Judge, P. Fanning) Sunday Am, Field 3 (38 ran) I, J. Watson, Zac, 97½; of 100; 2, R. Watson, Sally, 94; 3, A. Games (Wales) Stripe, 93; 4, A. Sharpe (England) Sig, 92; 5, A. Stern (Switzerland) Kody, 90 OLF; 6, J. Watson, Kelly, 90. (Judge, A. Jackman) Sunday Pm, Field 1 (38 ran) I, R. Watson, Sally, 97 of 100; 2, J. Watson, Zac, 96 OLF; 3, K. Broad, Kinloch Cade, 96; 4, J. Watson, Ben, 95; 5, G. Josien, Jet, 93; 6, G. Bertazoli (Italy) Joe, 90. (Judge, D. Meek) Sunday Pm, Field 2 (38 ran) I, M. Rella, Kiana, 96 of 100; 2, N. Annaloro, Lynn, 93; 3, B. Weinrauch (Austria) Georg, 88 OLF; 4, R. Games, Roy, 88; 5, C. Nyssenredder (Switzerland) Lana, 87; 6, J. Pluta, Nick, 86.

(Judge, John Marsh) Sunday PM, Field 3 (38 ran) I, K. Evans, Hybeck Blake, 96 of 100; 2, N. Watkins, Tanhill Alex, 92; 3, L. Fini, Donna, 91; 4, W. Hurley, Chip, 89 OLF; 5, C. Rundle (Wales) Dan, 89; 6, L. Williams (Wales) Bet, 88. Best Sportsperson S. Danek (England) Kay.

June 8

Romney Marsh & District SDS Starter and Open, Torry Hill Starter class (Dave Thompson) I, W. Cole (Tillingham) Rheed, 53/80T; 2, J. Bastable (Tonbridge) with Suze, 51T, OLF; 3, L. Taylor (Betchworth) Holly, 51; 4, C. Cassie (Lutterworth,) Swift, 46T. Novice (Sarah Walker), I, F. Davies-Russell, Nellie, 80/100; 2, R. Hawke (Bishopstone) Chip, 69; 3, P. Davies-Russell (Tilford) Kirk, 59T; 4, R. Putnam (Kirdford) Mossie, 57T; 5, R. Hawke (Bishopstone) Mo, 53; 6, L. Taylor, Cant, 39.

Open (Sarah Walker) 34 ran, I, C. Cassie (Lutterworth) BaW Sean, 90/100; 2, T. Foster (Creaton) Cockburn Mist, 87; 3, F. Davies-Russell (Tilford) Nellie, 80; 4, W. Cole (Tillingham,) Mheg, 77; 5, T. Foster, Cockburn Molly, 74; 6, J. Marsh (Golden Cross) Quories Angie, 72. OLF award: Cathy Cassie Winner's cup: Cathy Cassie

June 16

Sussex Sheepdog Society Open Trial Firls Beacon, Sussex Judge: Jackie Marsh (Golden Cross) 25 dogs ran I, J. Marsh (Golden Cross) Hutch, 80/100; 2, P. Davies-Russell (Tilford) Kirk, 68; 3, J. Watson (Postbridge) Gwydr Zac, 64; 4, P. Griffiths (Glynde) Standen Roy, 63; 5, F. Davies-Russell (Tilford) Nellie, 60; 6, V. Powell (Cold Ashby) Tyke, 53. Novice I,

P. Davies-Russell, Kirk 68

July 21

Kent Championship, Romney Marsh & District SDS, Dean Court, Westwell Judge: Philip Davies-Russell (Tilford) 27 ran Open I, M. Banham (Chipstead) Rob, 83/100; 2, W. Cole (Tillingham) Rheed, 74; 3, J. Marsh (Golden Cross) Quories Angie, 70; 4, S. Walker (Stelling Minnis) Quill, 66; 5, M. Banham, Taff, 65OLF; 6, M. Banham, Shabden Ivy, 65. Novice I, W. Cole, Rheed, 74/100; 2, M. Banham, Shabden Ivy, 65; 3, G. Orlando (Chipstead) Tuma, 54; 4, J. Marsh, Star, 44. Winner of open Ernest Finn shield, Mark Banham, Rob. Highest placed farmer: President Cup, Mark Banham, Rob. Highest placed shepherd in open: John Jones coursing club cup, Sarah Walker, Quill Highest placed lady in the open: Kathmick trophy, Wendy Cole, Rheed Winner of novice: Cooper cup, Wendy Cole, Rheed Best pen of the day: Dave Thompson Anniversary round tray, Mark Banham, Rob Least commands OLF: John Gascoigne 'Silence is Golden' Cup, Mark Banham, Rob

August 4

Romney Marsh & District SDS Open Trial and Sweepstake held at Snargate Judge: Wendy Cole (Tillingham) 16 ran, I, S. Walker (Stelling Minnis) Quill, 75/100T; 2, Mark Banham (Chipstead) Rob, 66T; 3, Mark Banham, Shabden Ivy, 65T; 4, Alain Cools (Belgium) Jerry, 57T; 5, Nick Couwelier (Belgium) Bet, 51T; 6, Mark Banham, with Taff, 49T. Sweepstake, W. Cole, Rheed.