

# Sunshine Tour Championship 2018



## Champions come from All Walk of Life

Champions don't have to have the best bloodlines, or the best starts in life, love and hard work is all that is needed to turn our loyal friends into our champions. No matter what your champion looks like the chance to participate and compete for is open for all at The All England Jumping Course at Hickstead. For the fourth year in a row, there will be many Champion titles to claim in jumping, dressage, showing and eventers challenge. Many competitors have already qualified and have booked 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> September 2018 into their calendars. If you would like to find out how you can take part and get on the Road to Hickstead, please visit [www.sunshinetour.co.uk](http://www.sunshinetour.co.uk)

Here are some stories from past and future competitors who are looking forward to the Sunshine Tour 2018.

## From a Chicken Shed to Hickstead

Having been found stood knee deep in muck Badger had also suffered burns from the ammonia and wasn't in good condition. However, Rebecca Gardner rescued him and worked tirelessly to turn him into the beautiful 14.2hh piebald cob he is today. Rebecca's partner Leigh Hunt-Smith, who had only been around horses since Badger came into their lives entered with Badger in several in-hand qualifying classes for the Sunshine Tour in 2017. The pair brought home many champions and reserve champions, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5<sup>th</sup> place rosettes at the Sunshine Tour Championships at Hickstead. A Complete credit to Rebecca and Leigh.



Leigh Hunt-Smith with Badger

## Nothing will hold Theo back

Last October poor Theo had to have a tumour removed from his neck, with a little rest and recuperation the 18yr old 15.3 thoroughbred cross came 4<sup>th</sup> in his first outing since his operation in January. The pair were delighted to qualify in the 75cm and 80cm classes at Tophorn Arena, Essex. Toni Arlett-Johnson stuck by his side and managed to also qualify for the arena eventing meaning that the duo will be back at Hickstead for the Sunshine Tour "another year doing what he loves!".



Toni Arlett-Johnson and Theo

### Horses have nothing on this pony



16yr old Shannon Winter, owner of Freddie who she broke in at a young age have gone from strength to strength. This 13.2hh has picked up many rewards at the Sunshine Tour in 2016 and 2017 including an amazing reserve supreme champion in show jumping. Despite the “massive challenge” of breaking in Freddie, he is now flying round 1m classes competing against the much bigger horses and always “tries his heart out”. Shannon said that Freddie loves to “raids her [mum’s] bag” for the all important mints at the end of their round.

Shannon Winter jumping Freddie

### Like a duck to water

Cairo the 4yr old 13hh Connemara x dun pony was “the best £400 I have ever spent” said Kirsty Judd mother to Summer Judd. Summer and Cairo “have an amazing partnership” and hope to qualify for the Sunshine Tour 2018 at Hickstead doing dressage. Having had to go separate ways with her loan pony who had big shoes to fill, Kirsty saw Cairo up for sale and there was “something about him” that drew them in. “Summer took to him like a duck to water” and despite only being 4yrs old the Connemara x won them over.



Summer Judd riding Cairo

### Proud Mummy

Stacey Gott bred Skye herself out of her own mare that she had for 16 years. Skye tries her very hardest for Stacey having never made it to a championship before, on their first show of the year in 2017 they qualified 3 times and the pair finally got to go to an exciting Final at Hickstead. Stacey said that “she was desperately hoping for at least a nice photo to bring home but we came home with a 7<sup>th</sup> place out of 47 entries in the 75cm championship. I couldn’t have not been more proud than I was that day!”. A very proud moment for both Stacey and Skye.



Stacey Gott with Skye at Sunshine Tour 2017

### Hard work pays off



Jo McKeown with Amigo

For Jo McKeown and her “special horse” Amigo, a 16.2hh Dutch Warmblood gelding hard work is paying off and is reflected by their journey through dressage. Over the past three years they have gone from prelim to elementary and that is only credit to both of them “working hard and putting in lots of effort”. Having already competed at The Sunshine Tour, Jo told us “we absolutely bursting to get back to the Sunshine Tour in 2018. The two days away are really special to our family and we look forward to each year. We stay in our little campervan it’s a really good occasion to get together for lots of laughs, family time and great horse time too! I’m so proud to be able to bring him and take part in such a special event”.

### Pony of a lifetime

Caitlin Clark and her partner in crime, Rummy, are aiming for that all important ‘Champion’ title at the Sunshine Tour in 2018 having reached a 3<sup>rd</sup> podium position in the dressage last year. The pair have worked up from Intro dressage to Novice and progress and accomplishments have been recognised and have thus received a training bursary from Brook Farm Training Centre, Essex allowing Caitlin to receive coaching from BD List 1 coach Kim Ratcliffe. Caitlin said “this is a fantastic opportunity to contribute to preparing for the Sunshine Tour 2018 as we step up to Novice level classes at this years championship. Bring on Sunshine Tour 2018!”



Caitlin Clark competing in dressage with Rummy

### Strength to strength

Leanne McDonald brought her noble steed from the Irish Moors as a 4-year-old and worked with him and later backed young Bobby. Having come 9th in Mountain and Moorland championship at



Leanne McDonald enjoying jumping with Bobby

the Sunshine Tour last year Leanne was also hoping to take part in the show jumping arena this year and is very excited that she has qualified in 65cm show jumping first time out in 2018. She’s looking forward to show how “this amazing pony” with a “fantastic temperament” has only gone from strength to strength.

### Rescued pony gets show ready

Seren, a welsh pony was rescued off of welsh Common of Celfn Goula with her new born foal in January 2017. Seren was re-homed by Martine Stiles and her family later that year. Since then, with a lot of ground work, handling and backing Seren and Martine have come a long way to win the in-hand brood mare class at Hall Place Equestrian Centre in August 2017. Martine and her daughter have also taken part in lead-rein dressage and are also hoping to qualify for the Sunshine Tour dressage this year.



Rescue pony Seren with the Stiles family

### Only happy tears

Having decided to retire from the horse world in 2012, when Jessica Grove stumbled upon an advert in “project horses and ponies” she soon changed her mind. Buying Millie for meat money in 2016, there was a long road ahead. Millie was “lame, underweight and in general really poor condition” and it soon became apparent that at some point Millie had been in an accident. However, Jessica persevered and ultimately, she qualified for Sunshine Tour 2017. Jessica said “The next thing I know



Jessica Grove competing in dressage at Sunshine Tour 2017

my husband pops up from the gallery holding a blue rosette and a sunshine tour qualifying card. Well...I cried. I hugged Millie so hard. My husband gave me a hug and the tears were well and truly flowing. He even has to ask if they were happy tears.” It just goes to show that hard work pays off and luckily for Millie, Jessica didn’t give up on her. The partnership are now looking to qualify in the prelim and novice dressage and get to The Sunshine Tour Championships for another year.

### Quality Fudge

11-year-old Grace Kelly’s dream came true when she qualified for the 50cm, 60cm and 70cm show jumping at the Sunshine Tour at Eaglesfield Equestrian Centre on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018. A 9-year-old 14.1hh bay New Forest gelding ‘Fudge Man’ is my “absolute dream pony” said Grace “I only got him in August last year and it was love at first sight”. Grace was lucky enough to compete with her old pony Holly Brooke Voyager at last year’s Sunshine Tour in 55cm show jumping championships. She came 4<sup>th</sup> and qualified for the supreme championships in which she came 7<sup>th</sup>. “it was definitely the best experience of my life and I loved every minute of it! I am so excited and really looking forward to being back at Hickstead on the Sunshine Tour with Fudge in 2018!”.



Grace Kelly with ‘dream pony’ Fudge Man