

Martys Mission one for diehards

IT WAS one for the diehards. A chill wind made an already cold day seem even more biting and with a further 9mm of rain falling overnight – some 45mm in total having hit the track since Friday – already testing conditions became gruelling on what can best be described as a 'proper' jumps day.

Andy Stewart, used to the warmer climes of the Caribbean, passed over the delights of Folkestone for lunch at the Derby Awards, but was soon on the phone to trainer Richard Rowe after his **Martys Mission** landed the 2m4½f novice hurdle under Tom Scudamore at odds of 9-4.

Rowe said: "He's a real nice horse, more of a chaser than a hurdler, but he has won this well enough."

"Although he has no problem with this ground, he is a Zaffaran, and strangely enough I think he would probably want better ground."

Sam Thomas found himself hitting the turf at the last again when he parted company with the tired Ballyveaney in the 2m6½f handicap hurdle, which went the way of Lady Clarke's **Midnight Chase**. The winner was sent off the 100-30 joint-favourite for Neil Mulholland and Robert Thornton.

Unbelievably, Thomas's luck went from bad to worse as he fell from favourite Zacharova just as that one looked likely to pick off **The dream still alive** at the second-last in the 3m1f handicap chase. Having been left well clear, the Jim Old-trained eight-year-old



Tom Scudamore: mission accomplished with Martys

came home 18 lengths to the good under Jason Maguire.

Biggest cheer of the day came from the six-strong **The Con Club** after their **Enroblim Trop** came from a seemingly impossible position to run out a convincing winner of the 2m5f novice handicap chase.

The club, which comes from

» Star performance

Stars were thin on the ground, but **Martys Mission** could go on to better things after winning here

» Day to forget

As if things were not bad enough for Sam Thomas, he suffered falls from both his rides, including favourite Zacharova just as that one looked ready to play a big part in his race

» Which handicap hurdler should soon be going one better? Page 63

Port Milborne – the winner's name backwards – managed to recoup their losses on the 6-1 winner, having backed him when he ran out early on at Towcester on his previous start.

Winning rider Joe Tizzard said: "He is pretty immature and he jumped carefully, but he picked up very well and if he can learn from that experience I think he could be an okay horse."

The opening race for amateurs, staged to mark the twinning of Folkestone racecourse with French track Pompadour, set the scene for things to come as the five runners came home at wide intervals, despite the riders going a sensible pace on the testing ground.

Victory went to the Dan O'Brien-trained **Doctored**, a 3-1 chance, for French rider Cyril Coste.

The 32-year-old, who had ridden nine winners over jumps and three on the Flat before, said: "That was my first winner in England on my first ride."

"I'm very happy, particularly as the conditions were very difficult out there."

Don't Be Bleu jumped to the lead two out in the 3m1f mares' beginners' chase before pulling clear to win by nine lengths at the rarely sighted SP of 85-40.

Tom O'Brien, who carried Gabriel O'Gara's mud-spattered colours to victory, said: "I'm very happy with that. She jumped beautifully and saw it out well."

After a series of wide-margin wins, **Keltie Clehe** got the better of **Prophets Honor** by a short head in the bumper.