Six of the best!

TWO across-the-card trebles in three days in mid-August gave a healthy boost to the yard’s winners’ tally for the month. At Catterick on August 8 Christopher Johnston’s Pumblechook, a four-year-old gelding by Dalakhani, carried 10st to victory under Joe Fanning in a handicap over a mile and six furlongs. His previous run had been at Newbury, where he appeared to find the combination of two and a quarter miles and good-to-soft ground too much for him.

The early running was made by Be Perfect, the winner of the race two years ago. Joe was able to track the leader, racing mostly in third on the rail. As the six-strong field approached the home bend, Be Perfect began to struggle to hold his position and Joe had to angle Pumblechook out as Bulas Belle led into the straight. Joe drove him out to score by two and a half lengths from Ingleby Hallow, with Bulas Belle keeping on for third, beaten a further half length.

Assistant Trainer Charlie Johnston said: “It was too far for Pumblechook last time at Newbury. We weren’t sure that he would like this ground, but Joe said that he loved it.

At Leicester, at least 22mm of rain had fallen overnight, and with steady rain during the day, conditions were testing. Peach Melba had shown on her previous start at Chepstow that she could handle soft ground, and here she was sent off the warm favourite to land a seven-furlong handicap which had cut up to just five runners on the withdrawal of three horses on account of the going.

Stretching

PJ McDonald took the mount on Peach Melba. The Dream Ahead filly was looking to build on her Chepstow win for owners, Lowther Racing and Partner, and she had been raised 3lb for that success.

Here, as Vroom made the early running, Peach Melba travelled sweetly for PJ and looked likely to succeed from a long way out. That said, she was made to work hard for her win by the recent Newbury winner Childesplay, before stretching clear in the closing stages to score by two and a half lengths.

Interestingly, Peach Melba’s dam, the Hurricane Sky mare, Nellie Melba, also scored over seven furlongs at Leicester and two of her three career wins came at that distance. Peach Melba is a half-sister to the prolific winner Bosun Breese, by Bahamian Bounty.

The treble was completed at Nottingham’s evening meeting, where The Passionate Partnership’s Dream Ahead colt, Book of Dreams, was making his debut in a novice median auction stakes over six furlongs.

Nine went to post for the race, and the early running was made by Diamond Dougal, with Book of Dreams pressing the leader a little to his outer. The race took on a different complexion approaching the two-furlong marker when, no doubt through greenness, Book of Dreams hung badly left across the course. When Framie Norton switched his whip through to his left hand, the colt then hung sharply right, with perhaps a furlong and a half to run.

Clearly, Book of Dreams was still in contention to win the race, so when he began hanging to the left again in the closing stages, Franny’s main concern was to maintain the momentum of his challenge. He crossed the line on the far side of the course, just as Qianlong and Speak In Colours flashed past the post on the nearside.

When the result of the photo-finish was called, Book of Dreams was named the winner in a finish of short-heads.

Purchased by Mark for €21,000, Book of Dreams is another winner for the Ballylinch Stud stallion, Dream Ahead, whose Al Wukair won the Prix Jacques Le Marois at Deauville last month. Based on this performance, he looks a decent prospect.

Three days later it was another three winners at different tracks, covering a geographical spread from Brighton on the south coast to Musselburgh on the Firth of Forth.

Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed’s Lake Volta, a Raven’s Pass colt who had made his racecourse debut at the Qatar Goodwood Festival, faced six rivals in a six-furlong novice event at Brighton. The colt was quickly away in the hands of Silvestre de Sousa and soon had a two-lengths’ advantage on the rest of the field, and at no stage was that gap bridged. Indeed, inside the final furlong Lake Volta strode out well to score by four and a half lengths from Tapolo.

“It was very different ground first time out at Goodwood,” said Silvestre.

“Lake Volta hit the gates and was straight on the bridle, doing it with confidence all the way.”

Lake Volta’s win made it four winners from four runners for Kingsley Park in juvenile races at the track this term, the other successful horses being Starlight Mystery, Cardsharp and Royal Liberty. Yorkidding has been a great servant to owner Paul York, and the five-year-old turned in a first-class display when landing the feature event at Musselburgh’s card, the Archerfield Cup Handicap, over a mile and three-quarters. The Dalakhani mare was last seen out in the Northumberland Plate where, although finishing 13th, she was beaten by only five and a quarter lengths.

Brilliant

At Musselburgh she faced just four rivals, but turned out to be a smashing race. Sebastian’s Wish made most of the running, closely attended by Yorkidding with Joe Fanning up. Turning for home, all five runners were in with a chance, but Joe sent his mare into the lead with just over a quarter of a mile to race, and she battled on bravely to score by a length and a half from Great Fighter, notching up an eighth career win from 38 races.

“She’s had a great season.” Assistant Trainer Jock Bennett told the Klarion. “The return to quick ground was the key here. She’s tough, but she has a bit of class too. You can see why Joe Fanning has ridden so many winners round here, as he was just brilliant.”

The treble was completed by three-year-old Titi Makfi in a mile handicap at Newmarket in the hands of James Doyle, winning her fifth handicap of the season for owners Paul and Clare Rooney.

Titi Makfi was sent off the favourite of the five runners, but fellow Middleham raider, the hat-trick seeking Seduce Me, looked a tough nut to crack. Flying North made the running, allowing James Doyle to position Titi Makfi just in her wake.

Shortly after the three-furlong pole, Flying North began to beat a retreat, leaving Titi Makfi at the head of affairs. Jim Crowley produced Seduce Me to challenge ... the Makfi filly held on well to score by a neck, with Seduce Me finishing a length and three-quarters back in third.

Lake Volta’s hit the gates and was straight on the bridle, doing it with confidence all the way.”

Yorkidding and Joe Fanning

INTERESTINGLY, this mile trip on the July Course was the shortest – distance over which the filly has won. She has stamina in addition to speed and she has won over an extended mile and a quarter.

Titi Makfi’s great run has seen her official rating rise from 70 at the end of last year to 96, and in all probability, connections will be looking for an opportunity to see her earn some black type.

Sheikh Hamdan’s Lake Volta hit the gates and was straight on the bridle, doing it with confidence all the way.”