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Oliver Townend Eventers Challenge Ch

For the second year running Redpin Publishing Ltd, publishers of All Horse, were one of the sponsors of the Oliver Townend Eventers Challenge with the final, this year, being held at Aintree Equestrian Centre in Liverpool, during the weekend 12th – 13th December. Over 200 competitors turned out for the two day festival, all vying for the top spot which assured them of a training day with the legendary eventer, Oliver Townend, this year's winner of Badminton, Burghley and the inaugural Express Eventing.

A new set of questions were posed at the final by a brand new set of specially commissioned jumps built in record time by OTECC's new jump sponsor, Classic Showjumps. The course was designed to allow a flowing round which included some very testing fences such as the new 'U' shaped brush, deep-waved planks, which caught many a rider out and a hanging gate atop of a simulated ditch.

The event was summed up by Cheshire based Gemma Kippen, winner of the D2 class, 3' to 3'3" for the over 20s, who said:

"Naturally it was such a thrill to win the class, especially with so much stiff competition. The course was well designed and the combination of cross country and show jumps created an interesting and testing event. The whole show was so well run and enjoyable, with such a friendly atmosphere. I really do hope to enter next year."

The organisers of the event were lucky enough to have the Country Channel TV agree to film every round and a 30 minute programme was aired on SKY 171 in January. For the riders who did not appear in the final programme, Country Channel TV consented to allow all riders the opportunity to purchase a DVD of their own round, which proved immensely popular amongst the competitors.

The tour of the OTECC ran from the beginning of October until early December and took in most of the country from Kent to Cumbria, Wales to Yorkshire. About 3,000 competitors entered, many of them several times.

Similar to the 12 regional events the final had eight classes, divided into four different heights. Each height had an age restricted class and an open class. The lower heights were jumped on the Saturday and the higher ones on the Sunday.

Many of the competitors entered the Joker class, which preceded the main championship, and treated it as a warm up class. Competitors were given a minute to jump as many fences as possible, each with a given number value. The idea being to accumulate as many points as possible. The