



# Flint Curtis shows his rideability

**POPLAR PARK, SUFFOLK**

14-15 March

By Martha Terry

WHEN Flint Curtis finished third at Badminton during his first season with Oliver Townsend three years ago, he was earmarked as a future star. But it was not until last November that the grey really fulfilled his potential, winning the £100,000 Express Eventing competition. On his first run since that historic victory, Oliver guided the 13-year-old to lead Poplar Park's advanced intermediate (AI) on his dressage score of 30.8.

The pair trailed Andrew Nicholson's dressage by 1.6pen, but although Andrew was quick on new ride The Light Fandango, Flint Curtis showed his Express Eventing win was no fluke with the only round inside the time.

"He's come out better than ever this season," said Oliver. "His jumping has been good, and I've been more impressed with his dressage."

Oliver puts Flint's new-found submission down to their lengthy partnership.

"I know him inside out and, although it's taken ages for us to get established, I hope we're there now," he said. "He has actually won this class before [and finished second twice], but he won it better this time. He felt fresh, but rideable."

In contrast to this long-term partnership, The Light Fandango has been in Andrew's yard for just one month. Tiny Clapham produced the nine-year-

old, winning 85 British Eventing points.

"He's a good horse — I was very impressed," said Andrew. "Tiny has done a good job, and hopefully we'll qualify for Bramham at Burnham Market."

Lucy Holliday steered High Times into third from 16th after dressage, with a double clear and four time-faults. Although the cross-country fences did not test these AI competitors — just two failed to go clear — time-faults correlated directly to placings, with the top eight clocking the eight fastest times in order.

The show jumping track proved exacting, with four-fifths of the field rolling at least one pole.

## Business as usual

NO East Anglian event would feel right without Piggy French landing a big class. Here she duly obliged by taking the open intermediate, but possibly not on the horse she expected. She led after dressage on eventual third Chase The Moon (28.2), with her second ride Lemington Lets Dance also ahead of Alvescot Prada. However, the latter stole ahead of his stable-mates



Oliver Townsend keeps a clean sheet to win the advanced intermediate on Express Eventing winner Flint Curtis

with the only double clear inside the time.

"He's very quick, and improving all the time," said Piggy. "At 17hh he's a bit of a boy and you have to get his brain on your side."

Sandwiched by Piggy's two prize-winners, Oliver Townsend franked his form on Imperial Master. Often Oliver treats the runner-up spot as first loser, but he seemed genuinely chuffed.

"He's had a chequered history, but he is classy and this was fantastic," he said. Pippa Funnell suffered a fall in this section from Ensign at the step down to the narrow brush and, although not seriously injured, she gave up her remaining rides.

Andrew Nicholson coasted to what looked like an easy intermediate win on Jack Green. But it was far from plain sailing.

Midway through the course, Jack Green buckled after the drop into water and as "Mr Stickability" stuck tight, the horse knocked his rider's glasses overboard.

"When it's getting dark, as it was then, I don't need glasses as much as when there is a lot of colour," said Andrew. "And Jack Green is a good horse — he's probably still a five-year-old [born in 2003, so officially six this year] and this was his first intermediate."

Runner-up Andrew James was a shade unlucky not to win on his 15.2hd unis, in common with the other section winners, he was the only rider in this section to finish on a clean sheet. But at sixth to last after phase one, he had too much ground to make up.

Penny Lawn took third

on King Of The Hill III.

The event was marred by the death of BE90 horse Ti-Nanon in the show jumping on Saturday. H&H

## Results

**AI (sec O)** — 1, Flint Curtis (O Townsend) 30.8.0.0-30.8.2, The Light Fandango (A Nicholson) 29.2.0.2.8-32.3, High Times (L Holliday) 41.7.0.4-45.7. **OI (sec N)** — 1, Alvescot Prada (P French) 33.6.0.0-33.6, Imperial Master (O Townsend) 32.7.0.2-34.7, 3, Chase The Moon (P French) 28.2.4.5.6-37.8. **Int (sec M)** — 1, Jack Green (A Nicholson) 33.2.0.5.8-40.2, Glendun (A James) 42.3.0.0-42.3, King Of The Hill II (P Lawn) 32.7.0.0-42.5. **IN (sec H)** — 1, Flying Machine (P French) 25.0.5.8-30.6, 2, Flara II (C Smyth) 22.3.4.8-34.7, 3, Wild South (P French) 33.6.0.1.6-35.2. **OH (sec O)** — 1, Croft Play Boy (M Gordon) 31.4.0.3.8-35.4, 2, Jack Dancer (N Taylor) 39.0.0-39, 3, Bally Ard (J Atkinson) 39.5.0.1.2-40.7. **JON (sec G2)** — 1, Strike A Pose (E Stoddart) 40.0.0-40.2, 2, Inspector Frost II (R Caltor) 43.0.6-49.3, Swiftbrook Billy (P Annan) 38.0.1.1.6-49.6. **nov (sec E)** — 1, Thistle Do (C Greenlees) 30.0.6.4-36.4, 2, Duett II (N Quantrell) 35.5.0.8-40.3, 3, Sun Covert Rock (P McGuckin) 35.0.6.8-41.8. **(sec F)** — 1, Treights (E Clark) 34.4.0.8-38.8, 2, Willem (M Gordon) 33.5.4.1.6-39.1, 3, OOT Ballinlover (O Townsend) 36.4.2.4-42.4. **BE100pen (sec L)** — 1, Romeo 2 (S Hunt) 34.0.0-34.2, 2, Mephisto (N Young) 34.5.0.0-34.5, 3, Project Vimar (A Hawley) 34.5.0.0-34.9. **BE100 (sec I)** — 1, Mister Mistoffeefe III (G Rodwell) 29.0.3.6-32.6, 2, Lancashire Warlock (K Barnett) 34.0.0-34.3, Captain Jack (P Baker) 35.5.0.0-35.5, 3, 5, Smoke Blue (C Winchester) 29.0.0-29.2, George Boy II (P Frost) 29.0.0-29.3, 5, Parks Fioranda (S Hutchings) 29.5.4.0-29.5. **(sec K)** — 1, Bouclier (D Buckland) 31.0.0-31, 2, North Astor Beau (G Davies) 30.0.2.8-32.8, 3, Flypast Chicha (S Bullmore) 27.4.5.2-36.2.

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Oliver Townsend on Flint Curtis



Penny Lawn takes third in the intermediate on King Of The Hill III, a stallion by Rock King