

**Transport** COVER STORY

## Iceland volcano disrupts the horseworld, too

It's planes, trains and automobiles as riders, judges and officials struggle to meet global commitments

**A**FTERSHOCKS of Iceland's volcanic eruption are being felt across the jet-setting world of horse sport. Following the disruption of UK flights, eventers Oliver Townend and William Fox-Pitt withdrew from Sunday's classes at Belton (report p32) and headed to Spain to pick up flights to America so they could ride at the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event (22-25 April). But their travel arrangements were markedly different. William hitched a lift to Spain on a private plane with his horse's owner,

Teresa Stopford Sackville, while Oliver took the train from Crewe to London and the Eurostar to Paris, to be faced by a French train strike.

Oliver, who needs a win at Kentucky to pocket the \$350,000 (£229,553) Rolex Grand Slam bonus, said: "I had to persuade someone to drive me to Madrid — my entire career has been building up to this and I'm not going to let it slip away just because of a volcano."

Fourteen hours and a £1,600 taxi ride later, Oliver arrived in the Spanish capital.

Lucinda Green is making an unscheduled



Iceland's ash is causing havoc

visit to Rolex and the World Equestrian Games test event after becoming stuck in the US following a teaching engagement.

The ground jury for the Kentucky CCI\*\*\*\* has changed because the UK's Sue Baxter and Anne-Mette Binder of Denmark cannot get to the US. Swiss Christian Landolt and American Marilyn Payne will step into the breach.

American eventer Phillip Dutton has rerouted his horse Woodburn to Kentucky instead of trying to travel to Badminton (30 April-3 May).

In other disciplines, Olympic dressage champion Anky van Grunsven drove from her home in Erp, the Netherlands, to Bökeberg, Sweden, to compete in the Sweden Championship Concours de Reining International (16-18 April).

And five members of the Japanese bloodstock fraternity, in Newmarket for the Tattersalls Craven Breeze-Up Sale (report page 76) remained stranded in the UK on Monday.

Showjumping course-designer Bob Ellis is marooned in South Africa.

And a shipment of 1,000 Team GB bracelets, due to be sold at Badminton to raise money for the team, is stuck overseas.

## Is the health of our horses in danger?

HORSE owners in Iceland have been warned to bring animals inside after fears of contamination of forage and water by volcanic ash.

But volcanologist, and trail layer for the Grafton hunt, Dave Roberts, has warned

UK horse owners that, while the risk to horses is minimal, they should watch for ash fall.

He told *H&H*: "We don't want to be alarmist, but if you do find your car has a fine layer of ash on it, keep horses in until it has rained.

"Ash causes lung disease and brings on asthma, so it's best to avoid putting a horse out, where they'll scuff up ash with their noses when grazing."

A Defra spokesman said: "We are keeping things under review with the Met Office."