

Townend posts a one-two-three

Brymor Ice Cream Richmond (2), North Yorks

28-30 August

By Helen Scott

OLIVER TOWNEND, who has taken over the ride on Cillinabraden Evo, the horse Andrew Nicholson fell with at Gatcombe, quietly slipped him into the open intermediate (OI) on the morning of the competition and cruised to an impressive win.

Sally-Anne Egginton's nine-year-old was not injured in the fall – unlike his former jockey who is out for the season after suffering a serious neck injury. Oliver substituted him for Samuel Thomas II, who held an entry here but is likely to be one of his Burghley rides.

"Andrew is a good mate and gave me the full low-down on this horse, how he goes and how to ride him," said Oliver, who clearly wanted this ride to be under the radar. "Andrew didn't have the best of luck with him but we both think he can be a very good horse, and I'll now go away and think about where we go next."



Oliver Townend steers former Andrew Nicholson ride Cillinabraden Evo into pole position in the open intermediate, with an efficient and confidence-giving round

Oliver gave the horse a round to build confidence, finishing on their dressage score of 27.7.

With Oliver having five rides in the OI it was always likely to be a Townend whitewash, and he took the top three spots.

Karyn Shuter's Black Tie II made his seasonal debut to lead the section on a 24.1 dressage. He appreciated the going and skipped round, adding a handful of time-faults to finish in second place. Oliver rode the 14-year-old gelding at last year's World Equestrian Games, where he didn't handle the conditions well. He has had a quiet year, but may now be aimed at Pau CCI4*.

In third was Andrew Cawthray's Colonel Joe, who will head to Ballindenisk for the CIC3*.

Consistency rewarded

LOCAL rider James Adams headed intermediate section B on Jessica Powell's Stainsby Alberto, who was making amends for missing a fence at Somerford CIC2* the previous weekend.

"I let him down at Somerford," said James. "He's been mega consistent this year with double clears and his dressage is improving, so we're aiming at Bramham CIC3* next year."

Sam Hobbs, who rides for Vin Jones' Preci Spark operation, was bridesmaid in both intermediate sections, coming second with Tretawn and Tresoke. But she was not disappointed.

"There was good competition and I got to share the podium with Piggy French," she said.

AGAINST THE ODDS

'Three years in a field'

DRYFE ROYAL CAVALIER, described by his owner/rider Sonya Cunningham as 15hh on a good day, had three years out with unexplained lameness.

He posted his best result to date with a third in intermediate section A, clocking up the day's fastest cross-country round and earning himself a tilt at advanced level at Allerton Park in a few weeks' time.

"The vets could never diagnose what it was," said Sonya, who works in the financial sector. "He had heat in a hip joint but never anything treatable, so he spent three years in a field."

"He was bred to be a show pony, but when I picked him up again he proved to be talented. I've worked very hard on his dressage and through lessons with Jill Grant we've found a real trot which isn't ponyish, and that was reflected in our marks today."

Piggy headed intermediate section A on Jayne McGivern's Cooley Top Cat, by Creaveagh Ferro Ex Siebe, the same sire as Cillinabraden Evo. Piggy described the seven-year-old as one of the best horses she has ever ridden. They added a few time-faults to a 23.6 dressage.

"His dressage was much better today. He's been all neck and knees before and needed to take a deep breath," she said.

She was also third in section B with Jump Jet III. **H&H**



James Adams and the 'mega consistent' Stainsby Alberto top an intermediate