



Oliver Townend remains unbeaten on Cillinabraden Evo, leading from the outset in the CCI2*

TALKING POINT

The director's challenge

AMONG the attractions, event director Stuart Buntine had organised a gate jumping competition and the director's challenge, which turned out to be blind plaiting. It was won by Colina Pickles' groom Harriet Dickin, but the most surprising sight was to see Craig Barr (below), who rides for Dasset Eventing, finishing sixth.

"Since he started working here he has claimed he has an allergy to plaiting bands," said Lauren Hammond, Dasset Eventing's travelling manager, who herself finished second.

"He must have thought it was a good opportunity to impress the girls with his blindfolded skills!"



Evo gains redemption

Osberton, Notts

1-4 October

By Jo Prestwich

OLIVER TOWNEND led from start to finish to win the CCI2* at Osberton riding Sally-Anne Egginton's Cillinabraden Evo. The result was never really in doubt once the nine-year-old set foot inside the dressage arena. His mark of 26.3 was a cool six marks ahead after the 107 starters had come in front of the ground jury, Anne Marie Taylor and Jan Cottam.

The cross-country had a new look, the long-standing second water had gone, but the owl hole combination at 13abc caught out 17 horses including the one lying second after the dressage,

Sobys Des Champs ridden by Stanislas De Zuchowicz.

His mistake left Oliver with two fences in hand going into the showjumping and he never looked like needing them.

Cillinabraden Evo, by Creevagh Ferro Ex Seibe, is the horse who gave Andrew Nicholson his serious fall at Gatcombe in August. Osberton was Oliver's second outing on him following a win in the open intermediate at Richmond six weeks previously. It was a win made even more impressive as Oliver had a crunching fall at the corner at 17 on an earlier ride in the section.

"I was feeling the effects of that yesterday, this morning and now, but to win is one of the best anaesthetics there is," admitted

Oliver, who'd come to Osberton fairly confident of a good showing with the gelding. "He's very nice to ride, naturally a good jumper and I hoped he would be there or thereabouts - I'm just lucky that Andrew and Sally sent the horse to me."

William Fox-Pitt finished second on the Fox-Pitt Eventing Partnership's Ramdam De Mons. The 10-year-old gelding came from France last year after William had first heard of the horse while competing at Pau back in 2013.

"A friend had seen him and ridden him and told me if he was younger he'd buy him for himself," he said. "I did tell him I was getting old too!"

Among the prizes on offer this

year was the Peter AD Guthrie Trophy for the best home-bred horse in the two-star and it was fitting that it went to the third-placed Ngong Hills, a horse Peter bred with his wife Gillian. The 10-year-old was a winner at the recent Allerton Horse Trials and, as there, was foot perfect throughout.

"He's a seasoned campaigner at this level and we had a great spin round," said Nicola.

King moves up to take CCI*

IF the two-star was a procession, then the CCI* was the complete opposite. The top five after the dressage were still the top five after the cross-country, but the showjumping proved influential. Eventual winner Kitty King