

Oliver Townend dominates, winning the CIC3* on MHS King Joules (pictured) – “the trickiest horse I’ve ever ridden across country” – and the CIC2* with Cillinbradden Evo



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Townend talks the talk

Owen Pugh Burgham (2),
Northumberland

28–31 July
By Sue Polley

BURGHAM was all about Oliver Townend. The straight-talking Yorkshireman often divides opinion, but there was no denying the display of skill, determination and, quite simply, sublime riding that resulted in him convincingly winning both the Owen Pugh CIC3* and the Howard Russell Construction CIC2*.

“Yes, I’m happy,” he conceded, despite not looking it. In all fairness any “winning glow” he had was washed away in the torrential downpour which coincided with the playing of the national anthem at the prize-giving. Oliver got drenched while spectators and fellow prize-winners dived for

cover in the hospitality tents.

Oliver’s CIC3* win came courtesy of Tom Joules’ MHS King Joules. A clear showjumping round elevated the pair to third, having been slightly off the pace after

dressage on 43.3. MHS King Joules is a notoriously strong horse and Burgham’s long, galloping stretches enabled the son of Ghareeb to open up across country. The pair streaked home over perfect

ground under the time, a feat not replicated in the class.

“He’s probably the trickiest horse I’ve ever ridden across country as he is so strong,” said Oliver. “But I have to accept that’s the way he is and work with him. He’s unbelievable though and I’d be more than happy to have a yard full of horses like him.”

Oliver also finished third with another of Ghareeb’s progeny, ODT Ghareeb.

“I tried to win on him, but he lost a shoe early on and was slipping a bit,” admitted Oliver, who was shaving blades of grass to get the “racing line” to his fences. Despite their best efforts the pair added 4.8 time-penalties to their dressage score of 42.6.

Nicola Wilson and her parents’ Annie Clover separated Oliver’s duo. Like Oliver, Nicola had her game face



Flora Harris is excited about her eight-year-old CIC2* runner-up, Billy Bandit