



Dromgurrirhy Blue puts in an excellent three-phase performance to net the CIC3\* with Oliver Townend on 43.7



# Townend's Blue is on red-hot form

Owen Pugh Burgham (1),  
 Northumbs  
 25-27 March  
 By Sue Polley

**“Y**EAH, it was OK I suppose,” was Oliver Townend’s typically low-key response when asked how he felt after riding four of his seven rides across the CIC2\* and CIC3\* sections into the top 10.

Best-placed was Michael McGrath’s Dromgurrirhy Blue, who won the Owen Pugh CIC3\*. The pair had lain in second place after dressage and what was a very influential showjumping phase, a menacing 0.2 of a penalty behind Pippa Funnell and Billy The Biz on 41.5.

After the latter collected eight cross-country time-faults to drop to eventual third, Oliver knew exactly what he had to do and pushed the four-star son of

Puissance on over David Evans’ unanimously praised course to collect just two time-penalties and complete on 43.7.

Oliver took over the ride on the strong Irish sport horse from Harry Dzenis last year after being recommended to the owner by former jockey Michael Ryan.

“Dromgurrirhy Blue is not a comfortable horse to ride, however he is very genuine and wants to go between the

flags,” said Oliver, who also finished fourth in this section with ODT Ghareeb.

Second place went to an ecstatic Tiana Coudray (see box, right) while Pippa was equally delighted with Billy The Biz, a nine-year-old she rates very highly and is looking to qualify for Rio as a back-up to Sandman 7.

“He’s the nicest person and just loves life,” she smiled. Despite a seven-hour