



Oliver Townend maintains his CIC3* form at Burgham, claiming the title on last year's Burghley winner Ballaghmor Class



Townend is Mr Consistent

True to form, Oliver Townend features highly in the top placings at Burgham, winning his third CIC3* at this event

Burgham, Northumb

By SUE POLLEY

SOME things in the eventing world are givens: there will be hills at Blair, a lake at Badminton and rain at Burgham. And so it came to pass. After weeks of no sign of the wet stuff and temperatures akin to those on a Greek island, wind and rain dominated proceedings at the event which has now firmly established itself as one of the north of England's premier horse trials.

Another given at Burgham is that Oliver Townend will feature prominently in the CIC prize-givings, and Oliver is nothing if not consistent. Rounding off what had been a very successful week, he headed north from Osborne House on the Isle of Wight to add the Newton Hall CIC3* and Howard Russell Construction CIC2* titles to his Burgham bounty.

This was Oliver's third CIC3* win at the event and his partner this year was Val Ryan and Angela Hislop's reigning Burghley champion Ballaghmor Class. Their 1.2 cross-country time-penalties, added to a dressage score of 27.8, not only proved that the pair's blip at Aachen was just that — a blip — but also maintained another Burgham statistic of the CIC3* winner never having lowered a showjump.

This was no mean feat as Di Boddy's track proved as influential as the cross-country. A combination of up-to-height fences, changing ground conditions, a very tight optimum time and numerous dog-leg turns meant that only 10% of those attempting it came home without jumping or time-faults.

The world number one's

two-star win was with Stephen and Victoria Hazeldine and The Mitchell Fox Group's Tregilder, an eight-year-old who, like fourth-placed Treloar ridden by Michael Jackson, was bred by Vin Jones' Preci-Spark stud. Oliver has had the son of Royal Concorde in his yard for the past four years and

admitted that he has been "treated as a superstar" since day one. "He has a lovely temperament, a lot of blood and a whole heap of gallop," he commented.

Oliver's gratitude regarding the going (see box, top right) was also echoed across the board.

"The ground is fantastic," he said. "They've worked so hard on it and it's done nothing but get better as a result of the rain which has enabled riders to run more



Bella Innes Ker and seven-year-old Guidaro finish third in the CIC*