



Oliver Townend and Ballaghmor Class cruise to victory in a CCI4*-S: "He didn't come here to win, just to remind him he's not retired"



OLIVER TOWNEND won both Howard Russell Construction CCI3*-S sections. Sally-Anne Egginton's experienced five-star horse Cillnabradde Evo led throughout to take section J, while a newer face took section K in Miss Cooley. Owned by Paul Ridgeon and by one of Oliver's favourite stallions in Ramiro B, the eight-year-old mare has been with the rider since she was four.

"We like her a lot, but she's taken a bit of time to come to hand," he said. "She has a lot of blood and feels like a Burghley horse, she has excellent stamina and is a real fighter. She puts her head down and ears back across country, she's keen and aggressive in the way she runs."

Oliver won section P of the Holme Dodsworth Metals CCI2*-S with another smart mare owned by Paul Ridgeon, the six-year-old Cooley Rosalind. Kitty was the runner-up on MHS Monbeg Junior, taking section Q at the same level on Adrian Sweet's Monbeg Hendricks. **H&H**

Townend's triumphant four

All sorts of records are broken as international eventing restarts in Britain, with five packed days of sport in Northumberland

By PIPPA ROOME

Burgham, Northumberland

OLIVER TOWNEND was the dominant force at Britain's first international horse trials of the restarted season, winning four of the seven international sections – the most ever won by one rider in one weekend.

The AW Jenkinson CCI4*-S sections boasted huge, incredibly high-class fields. Records tumbled as fast as the rain showers started and ceased, with eight of the 10 best four-star dressage scores at Burgham recorded this year. Oliver's 21.4 for a flawless test on Ballaghmor Class headed

section L from the start.

There were two favourites in this section, with 2018 winner Ballaghmor Class joined at the top of the billing by another grey in Kitty King's 2019 victor Vendredi Biats. But a couple of mistakes in the dressage, among excellent work, put Kitty fourth, and with a rolled pole in the showjumping and three seconds over the cross-country time, she finished fifth.

Meanwhile, Ballaghmor Class cruised to victory, accruing just a couple of penalised seconds in both jumping phases. At 13, Karyn Shuter, Angela Hislop and Val Ryan's son of Courage continues to improve.

"He's been ridden on the flat maybe half a dozen times since March, he's just been hacking about and under no pressure," said Oliver. "He didn't come here to win, just to remind him he's not retired. Between fences one and two, I thought I wouldn't go any faster and if it was good enough to win, so be it."

Oliver described the ground as "beautiful" and David Evans' track as a "top, top job". The courses were appropriate considering horses' lack of runs, but with enough to create a decent test, and 84.6% jumped clear in the four-star.

The last complex, the Voltaire Hay Rack (fence 19) and the Westgate Labs Final Test (fence 20abc), required adjustability late on with riders having to open up for the three strides to the bird at part c before closing down for

