

Victorious Fredericks really does put up a Flying Finish



Tim Price celebrates his CCI*** victory with Wesko – 'I came here to win'

Lucinda Fredericks, who was returning to Blair after a 13-year absence, triumphs in a class CCI*** section aboard Flying Finish – 'I wanted a fast run on hills to improve his fitness ahead of Pau'



BLAIR CASTLE

By Sue Polley

STRANGE things were afoot at the Barclays Blair Castle International Horse Trials. The event ran in predominately sunny conditions with the usual energy-sapping mud conspicuous by its absence. Competitors also enjoyed the best going for years and consequently all three CCI sections were on sur dressage scores – a phenomenon rarely seen here.

The cross-country did, though, exert more of an influence in the 60-strong CCI*** class with just three combinations stopping the clock inside the 10min 6sec optimum.

Lucinda Fredericks' whoop of delight as she cleared the final fence with her own and Richard Ames's Flying Finish pretty much summed up her reaction to her win. The pair led throughout and, with the top 15 running across country in reverse order after the dressage and show jumping, the pressure was on to come home less than 12.5 seconds ahead of nearest rivals Ruth Edge and Carnaval Prince II. But with the latter opting for a slower clear, Lucinda's 5.2 time penalties were easily good enough for victory ahead of Lucy Wiegiersma and Mr Chunky. Nicola Wilson



Time Machine leads the CCI*** on pillar to post with new jockey Ruth Edge in the saddle

and Opposition Buzz, twice winners of this class, were third. "I went for the time but I didn't know if we could go fast enough," beamed Lucinda, the new Scottish Open Champion, after a round which had involved a sticky moment going into the Lochan.

A winner of the 2000 CCI*** with Tina's Gold when she was pregnant with daughter Ellie, Lucinda had been absent from Blair for 13 years and she returned determined to do herself and her horses justice after her "hard slog" to return to form following her confidence-crushing fall at Tweseldown (1).

"I'd forgotten how good everything is here," she enthused. "I deliberately brought Flying Finish and Prada as I wanted fast runs on hills to improve their fitness and speed ahead of Pau."

Runner-up Lucy Wiegiersma was a woman on a mission as just an hour after her cross-country round on Mr Chunky, an eight-year-old who she described as having no weak phase, she was heading off to Malmö via an overnight stop at Tom McEwen's yard.

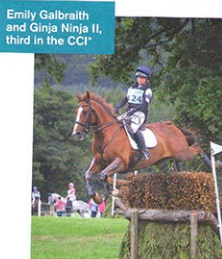
Nicola Wilson had an equally busy day but one which didn't get off to the best of starts when her first ride, Beltane Queen, somersaulted at fence 8, the Event Scotland Barrels and Ditch.

"I'm not sure what happened," said a bemused Nicola who admitted to "a lovely whizz round on Buzz who was a joy to ride as ever. He was a bit wild in the show jumping warm up but I was delighted by his clear round."

Nicola also piloted the Blenheim and Boekelo-bound Annie Clover into sixth and found that riding the mare off the snaffle rather than both reins of her gag meant that she pulled less than during previous runs.

William Fox-Pitt and Running Order, another to have a sticky entry into the Lochan, took fourth, while the jockey stuck to his plan of retiring Parklane Hawk, second after the dressage, at the top of the hill, professing that he had "done enough" to prepare for Burghley.

Kevin McNab didn't have the best of visits to Scotland, the Aussie unseated from Kelecygn Cognac at the gate element of the Mitsubishi! Complex at fence 6. A loss of impulsion at the water at fence 12 resulted in



Emily Galbraith and Ginja Ninja II, third in the CCI***

Bill Levett and Silk Stone lead the CCI*** dressage but drop to third when they finish the second phase two seconds adrift of the optimum



Brookfield De Bouncer grinding to a halt at the B element, which was also the site of the 20 penalties accrued by Lucy Wiegiersma and Grannetvka Prince. Bill Levett and Shannondale Titan were deemed to have jumped the wrong side of the white flat at 22b and were later eliminated.

Small is beautiful

The CCI*** was a small but select affair with just 19 starters, all of whom completed bar Willis Oakden and Greystone Midnight Melody who suffered a horse fall at fence 23.

Bill Levett and Silk Stone led the dressage but they 0.8 of a time penalty across country proved costly and dropped them to third behind the winners Tim Price and Wesko and runners-up, 18-year-old German Niklas Bschorer riding his boss Christopher Bartle's Ballyengland Rebel. This pair came home 15 seconds inside the 10min 6sec optimum time.

"I came here to win," said Tim. "Wesko is a class horse and if things don't go right it's invariably my fault. This will have taught him that he's more than capable."

Bill and Niklas both confessed to having "hair moments" going into the first brush element of the Lochan (6). Set on a downhill approach, this proved to be the most influential fence on the track and the site of stops for Gary Parsonage aboard Looks Similar, Jane Emma Riley (Mystic Promise) and Kirsty Short aboard Cossan Lad.

"If only I'd gone a couple of seconds faster," rued Bill. "The ground was excellent and there were some good questions, such as the tricky corner [fence 10, where he took the long route] but overall I thought the course was slightly softer than it has been in the past."

A resounding win

Marlborough-based Kiwi Lizzie

Brown was in the enviable position of having two show jumps in hand for victory in the CCI*** with Henton Attorney General but she didn't need either cushion as a clear round ensured a commanding win over Nicky Roncoroni and Watts Burn. Marilyn Little and new ride Tabasco TSF took third.

"This is my first ever visit to Scotland and we'll definitely be back," said 25-year-old Lizzie. "Eric Vanduser recommended we come here and Attorney General has loved it. He's been relaxed ever since we arrived. I think he thinks he's back in New Zealand."

A winner at three-star level in the Southern Hemisphere, the 13-year-old by Anamour had been off colour since arriving in the UK in 2012, losing a lot of weight, but a change of feed and a trip north seems to have been the tonic needed.

"He tried his socks off," was Nicky Roncoroni's summary of Watts Burn's performance. "He got a bit tense in the dressage so our test was a case of damage limitation and I was disappointed with our score of 51.7."

This left the pair in equal 12th so to rise to second was a feat Nicky didn't imagine possible.

"The cross-country was a proper Blair track and I was so pleased that he went clear as he can get a bit distracted," said Nicky.



Niklas Bschorer survives a sticky moment early on the course to not second in the CCI*** with Ballyengland Rebel

IN THE NEWS

CALLING IT A DAY

BLAIR'S 2013 cross-country tracks were course-designer Roland Alexander's last. He has been designing here since the venue staged its first international way back in 1989. The 2014 course will be designed by event director Alec Lochore.

NEARLY LEFT BEHIND

HANNAH Bate's CCI*** runner-up Watson III nearly didn't make the start line at Blair as the 10-year-old by Manhattan was initially left at home when Hannah and partner Paul Sims commenced their seven-hour trip to Scotland.

"I ran him at Somerford in a bid to qualify for the two-star at Weston Park but we managed to cross our tracks. I then tried to get into Blair but there were no spare stables," explained Hannah who bought the 16.3hh gelding just prior to Barbury from Janine Jansen.

Amazingly Jansen withdrew a horse at the eleventh hour and Hannah received a call from Blair saying that there was a space when she was an hour into her journey.

"We turned around, my working puppy's mother threw Watson in a trailer and met us on the motorway," smiled Hannah.

owner Joanne Kearns who had contested BE1000Open classes with him. Joanne had purchased him through Susie Pragnell after he had been produced to one-star level by Leonard Goerens.

Sally Johnston was taken to hospital with a broken femur after falling from Fomhill T. Scarlett at fence 15 on the CCI*** track. The horse was uninjured.



Kiwi Lizzie Brown's first visit to Scotland ends with a CCI*** victory aboard Henton Attorney General