

New record set at Ballinamona



■ Sally Parkyn

AS the recipient of last year's Eventing Ireland's 'Best Event' award, a mammoth entry at Ballinamona last weekend was not entirely unexpected. However, the Co Waterford venue drew a massive 383 runners, the biggest number ever recorded at an Eventing Ireland one-day fixture.

Logistics were stretched to the limit but, blessed by perfect weather and a band of dedicated helpers, the entire event was finished by 7.05 pm.

"It was a big ask of everyone, but we're delighted that riders are giving us their support," said organiser David Bogossion. The attractions of Ballinamona are multiple, but standing out are the beautiful cross-country tracks over perfect parkland turf. A little rain during the week had been a welcome addition, as was the fact that all four courses had been thoroughly aerovated.

To facilitate the early cross-country start at 11am, the two-star course had been tweaked to allow for a different finishing point. This, in turn, freed up more land for dressage and gave riders far more room to warm up.

The show jumping, meanwhile, took place, as usual, on both grass and on the all-weather arena. Run by the most patient and hard-working stewards, the two rings ran constantly and efficiently throughout the day. Noel Phelan's tracks on the roomy sand arena were especially influential, and also carried the



Sam Watson and Tullabeg Flamenco won the Connollys Red Mills Super League O/CNC** at Ballinamona

benefit of a championship set of show jumps.

While some riders felt the sand became a little loose as the day progressed, senior rider Michael Ryan commented: "These are event horses. They were lovely, well-built tracks with lovely distances."

SUPER LEAGUE

Fittingly, the day's top prize in the **Red Mills Super League O/CNC**** fell to former Ballinamona resident **Tullabeg Flamenco**. Piloted by Sam Watson, David Bogossion's dun was handily poised in sixth on the flat, before producing one of just two double clear rounds. Still only a seven-year-old, and with Le Lion d'Angers as the end of season target, the son of Tullabeg Fusion completed on his opening mark of 31.8.

"I am thrilled with him, and delighted for David," de-

clared Watson. "He has potential in the dressage to be really competitive in Le Lion, and I think he's a very exciting young horse."

To win in open company was an added bonus for the pair; who moved to the top of the leaderboard after jumping one of only four show jumping clear rounds.

The final phase, with its tricky lines, caught out several fancied contenders, including interim leaders Ciaran Glynn and November Night. The Killossery pairing lowered two, as did the well placed Joseph Murphy aboard recent winner Fernhill Frankie. With the door left open, Cathal Daniels moved into second with Rioghan Rua, from the demoted Glynn and November Night. It was an especially good run for Daniel's mare, who was making her comeback after fall-

ing at Tattersalls nearly eight weeks ago.

Possibly because of its design and the accompanying perfect going, the cross-country was rarely influential. Time altered the lower placings, but it was the show jumping that again proved significant in the following CNC**.

Just four of the 26 runners left the poles intact, including the winning duo of Dominic Furnell and **Ballycahane Lucy**. Only a six-year-old, and making her debut at the level, the daughter of Harlequin Du Carel had held fourth spot (27.3) on the flat before completing a fence in hand over Nicola Ennis (Fortmoy Cushla) and Geoff Curran aboard the clear but slower Bishops Quarter. This was a special win for Crecora-based Furnell, who had spotted his winning mare as a three-year-old.

"She was in a field of youngsters who were all headed for the factory the following morning," he explained. "It was almost dark, but I picked her out and have produced her myself. You could point her at anything. She jumps for fun and is clever like a pony."

Furnell attributed this win to recent show jumping forays to Raheen Na Gun, and also to Ronan Kinsella, who has helped him in the past few weeks.

Experience came to the fore in a competitive CNCJ** in which dual junior squad members Tessa Harley and **Catsky** headed the field of 18. As the show jumping played havoc with form, and none jumped clear, it was Harley's consistency that gave her the edge. The Co Kildare rider held fourth spot after dressage, and having produced a foot perfect round in the coun-

try, lowered just one rail in the final phase (30.8).

This was a rewarding result for the junior, who has only recently returned to competition following exam commitments. Now hitting form at the right time, and bidding for a third consecutive team appearance, the duo head for Camphire next weekend.

"We have decided to take a step up this year, and have entered the CCI**," explained Tessa's mother Julia. "This gives us a new challenge, and hopefully a young rider qualification for next year."

The order was turned on its head in the final stages, when leader Sam Micklem (Smart Spirit) had a show jumping round he would sooner forget. As a result, Stephanie Stammschroer, who enjoyed a super run with Tullabeg Horizon, filled second (35.8) from dressage leaders Alex Power and TLB Interactive (36.9).

Other under-age contestants hoping to impress were the pony riders who took part in their final CNCP** trial. All 18 zipped around the country in style, but the show jumping certainly tested nerves.

First up, however, was the dressage, and standing out to excite international judge Gillian Kyle was the subsequently selected Zara Nelson (**Millbridge Buachail Bui**) on 24.5 and fellow travellers Jenny Kuehnle with Penyffynon Ricochet on 26.9.

Ten marks ahead of the field heading out into the country, Nelson retained pole position despite dropping a pole (28.5), while sharing the same completion score the clean jumping Kuehnle picked up faults for time. Credited with the only other clear show jumping round, third team member Hannah Adams slotted into third with Mysall Ridge (38.5).

BALLINAMONA ROUND-UP

Dressage career pays off for DBS Corland

■ Sally Parkyn

A THREE-year foray into the world of dressage paid dividends for **DBS Corland**, who under Rory O'Hare posted a runaway victory in the O/CNC*.

Adding just time penalties to an outstanding flatwork mark of 17.5, the Co Kildare duo completed a distance ahead of Sadhbh McGrath and Bridgemans Cocoa Malt (39.0) as well as Michael O'Toole aboard new ride Cuffesgrange Kings Quality (40.1).

The Silvano-sired winner was making only his third event run since 2012, leading his rider to comment: "We did dressage up to advanced level, but eventually felt that it wasn't for us. He loves being back eventing again, and I think will go on on to make a top junior prospect."

timately proved costly for the CNC* leader Katie O'Sullivan (Templepatrick Cooley), but it did benefit Fraser Duffy, who posted a good win with **Fernhill Exchange** (31.5). Owned by Deirdre Lanigan, supplier of the mouth-watering Fernhill picnics, the gelding moved up from his opening second place, just ahead of the Rio-bound Camilla Speirs (LEB Lias Jewel) and Rory O'Hare with DBS Anchorman. All 30 completed without incident.

It was a similar story in the second sector, although victor Brian Morrison did have to survive a few hairy moments to win with his front-runner **Ex**.

The grey picked up a stride too soon at the ditch/palisade close to home but, remaining intact, the partnership held on to their opening placing (26.3) from Melanie Young with Sorbet (27.0) and Ron Shaefer and

Big Adventure.

In the CNCJ* Rebecca Coonan and **Jantar** cemented their promising partnership when landing their first one-star win under rules. Recording one of only five double clears (from a field of nineteen) Coonan turned the tables on dressage leaders Mary Smiddy (Silken Scully), while Ella Boyle (Killadeas) filled third.

It was a good day all round for connections, as Jantar's multi-tasking owner Jessie Harrington not only kept a close eye on the proceedings at Ballinamona but also saddled Bocca Baciata to win a Group 2 race at the Curragh.

Once again the cross-country proved straightforward, so it was surprising that two of the leading contenders bit the dust. Shannon Sheridan (Uisneagh Miss Douglas) took a heavy tumble at the offset roll

(Bluestone Jupiter) in third. Felicity Ward and **RCA Patron Saint** were among the form pairings for the RDS event horse title last week, and confirming that favouritism they added the first division of the EI100 to their three wins this year. The son of Grafenstolz produced a competitive dressage mark (27.8) and made up further ground after two immaculate jumping performances. As the young horses shone, Catherine Robinson filled second with Neil McCluskey's Carsonstown Calypso (29.8), from the older Neat Matakana (Kelley Hutchinson) in third.

Hutchinson also held third spot in the second sector with Sovereign Guy, leaving the top podium place to Bethany Burton and **Cooley Monsoon**. Leading from flag fall, the son of Ramiro B completed on his first phase score of 31.0, as did

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second-placed Jane O'Flynn and Marco Q.

Competing in Ireland as present because his usual rider Piggy French is awaiting the birth of her baby, Cooley Monsoon is owned by actress/comedienne Jennifer Saunders. Sharp-eyed readers will also note the connection in the name, which stems from Saunders' Ab Fab alter ego, Edina Monsoon.

Just three runners in the two sectors added cross-country jumping penalties to their scores, and it was a similar story in the following two EI90 classes. Co Wexford young horse producer Katie Prowse claimed the open division with the Kroongraaf-sired five-year-old **Xuantua**, while completing a good day for the Kuehnle family, young Brian scored back to back EI90P wins aboard Tinecarrig Boy.

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