

Taperz makes winning return to lucky



Paul Tapner with the Earl of Hopetoun, Penny Barker and Tom Murray of the sponsor

HOPETOUN

By Mel Horne

AUSTRALIA'S Paul Tapner notched up a CIC*** win after a year's gap when piloting Kilronan to victory at the Gillespie Macandrew Hopetoun International Horse Trials.

It was his speedy cross-country performance for just 10.8 time faults – one of the fastest rounds in this class of 31 – that sealed the deal and gave 'Taperz' a back-to-back victory at this West Lothian venue.

German runners-up Niklas Bschorer and Ballyengland Rebel finished in a different county, 15.4 penalties adrift of the Burghley-bound Kilronan, whose owner, Penny Barker, was there to pick up the prizes.

It had taken Paul eight hours to drive to Scotland from his base in Swindon and he said: "My boy was perfect. Kilronan ['Tom'] is a little sensitive and we have to make sure everything is just right for him. He's consistent and brave across country, though, and he's trainable in the show jumping and dressage. He's getting better all the time."

Paul, who was the rider rep at this venue last year, admitted



The victorious Kyles with daughter Tabitha

to being pleased to see some positive changes made to the course, which included making the end of the track easier and removing a tricky corner.

Paul also finished 12th aboard the Blenheim-bound stallion Wickstead Didgeridoo.

"I took 'Balloo' a bit slow and by the time I realised that he had lots of energy left it was too late," said Paul. "He has a great temperament and is very easy to do and he looks to be passing these traits on to his foals."

Charlotte Agnew picked up third place on Out Of Africa Two ('Zulu'), who was enjoying his first outing since Badminton, and she also finished on the outskirts of the top 10 with Longwood ('Woody').

Charlotte said: "Zulu was so bold and he was firing on all cylinders. Woody jumped brilliantly across country. He is so easy to ride he just pings the fences. We have been concentrating on his flatwork and using a Micklem bridle has resulted in an average of 15 marks improvement."

Mark Phillips's CIC*** course proved to be a stiff test over challenging ground. The most influential fence was number 19abc, the Seed & Co gate and corners, a three-part combination that consisted of a gate followed by a double of corners that came



Sian Davies-Cooke and Circus capture intermediate section C

after a long, hard gallop on rising ground. It produced a number of run outs and a couple of falls.

No competitor completed within the time, with Charlotte Agnew and Longwood coming the closest to the 6min 38sec optimum when they stopped the clock with 8.4 penalties to add.

Keeping it in the family

Leicestershire-based husband and wife team Mark and Tanya Kyle enjoyed a profitable outing, Irish international Mark and Step In Time II taking the top spot in a very small advanced class that boasted just four starters.

They were held on course for a while but Mark commented: "It



5 MINUTES WITH...

Jamie Innes



As well as cross-country steward at Hopetoun what other horsey roles have you had?
I've been Master of the Duke of Buccleuch and Jed Forest Hunts, I'm a steward and course-designer and I've organised Floors Castle for years. I also design and make portable jumps.

How long have you been involved in stewarding and organising?
For more than 30 years. I started off with team chasing, followed by hunter trials and I was a TA for BE for years, retiring at 70.

What has changed the most over the years?
Rules, regulations and Health and Safety. Pins and the designs of fences are much safer, the presentation is better and the standard of courses has

improved. The riding has also changed. There are fewer people who have experience of riding fast across country these days as not so many eventers go hunting.

What are the key ingredients for a successful event?
Efficient organisation and happiness within the team. The team leader and organiser need to encourage and inspire officials and volunteers alike.

What is next for you?
At 74 I still love it. I've remained vice president and ground maintenance manager at Floors and I will carry on stewarding. The portable jump business is growing nicely. If you're not busy you are almost 6ft under already.

Pictures by Melanie Horne Photography & Natalie Samuel



Daniel Scott and Look Forward, fifth in the CIC**

1 IN THE MONEY

NIKLAS Bschorer (right) didn't only finish second in the CIC*** aboard Christopher Bartle's Ballyengland Rebel, he also won the CIC* aboard Win And Love, an imposing 17hh eight-year-old mare who was previously campaigned by Niklas's brother, Tristan, in Germany.



venue

'When I hack Hutch around the park his feet fall on the rill that will be the novice coffin'



In the second part of her diary series, fledgling organiser **NATALIE SAMUEL**, a member of Thames Valley Police's violent crime unit, sees her pipe dream for an affiliated event at her family home Farley Hall start to take shape

IF this diary was charting my progress as an amateur owner/rider it would be a dull read. While I had planned a novice run, followed by a CIC*, followed by an intermediate, my mount, Afternoon Antics ('Hutch'), had different ideas. Minor check ligament strain, followed by infected off fore, followed by passing on the bad luck to his rider. With myself struck down by a hip injury (disguised as appendicitis) I have given up on eventing and Hutch will be the fittest horse on the pure dressage circuit.

Fortunately I've got other matters to attend to, such as judges to book and ground specialists to liaise with, plus a different tradesman every day at my new house to wire, garden, paint, plumb and plaster. Oh, and a pesky little thing called work. Do the fisticuff-minded inhabitants of Slough not know I'm busy?

I now have an even longer list of things I haven't done for Farley Horse Trials but I have walked the course with Andrew Hunter and Adam, Farley Hall's gardener and head of ground prep for the horse trials.

Adam's main experience of eventing is watching Greenwich last year and that was only because he didn't know how to use the red button to change to the rowing. However, his enthusiasm is unrivalled. If he can produce a useable putting green on the mountainous sides

of Farley's Bridgman gardens, he can scarcely be daunted by the task of delivering perfect going in parkland that hasn't been cultivated for 100 years.

Adam is also prepared to throw the weight of the garden staff behind the event. I'm worried about the number of road crossings as we walk the course and who will man them.

"The apprentices can do it for a day off in lieu," says Adam. Job done. I wonder if he can take on another 90 by the summer?

We also now have a detailed costing for the course. With the outrageous outlay on the livery yard's new indoor school I am hoping the estate manager will take the extra invoice on the chin. Perhaps I can get away with listing the £10,000-£15,000 water jump as plumbing for the new automatic drinkers. He won't notice.

In all seriousness, the water jump *is* expensive. We're using a large recess that caught our eye as a natural lake during the spring floods, part of the old canal system that was put under the park in the 1950s.

In theory we could open or shut a valve and it would fill with water — if only we knew where they'd buried the valve. However, it still needs work to bring it up to BE's standards. Even splitting the area in two means that it's a gargantuan space to dig out and line. I can't remember if it is 200 or 20,000 tonnes of stone that will be delivered to form the solid base. I do know that if our pumping



Farley Hall opens its gardens in aid of the Air Ambulance and receives more than 1,000 visitors

test reveals that water will stay in the hole to the right level for about 72 hours we will save £7,000 not having to use a butyl liner. Here's hoping.

The price tag for the rest of the two courses (BE100/novice) is less stomach churning. A portable costs between £500-£800 to construct and we can save money using the farm digger to create the permanent features (ditches/banks), as well as identifying timber from around the estate.

The advantage of this being a farm-run venture is that whatever money we put into the course we get the asset of the course in return. The scary part is when we start booking marquees, catering, etc, as the only way to recoup these costs is through entries and sponsorship and there's no guarantee how well we'll do on either.

There is a lot still to plan but the last few weeks have changed this from a pipe dream into a project. Now when I hack Hutch around the park his feet are falling on the rill that will be the novice coffin; the river-bank where competitors will check their watches and kick on; the road crossing where they will spot the marquee and gallop for home. In fact, he and other liveries may even be trampling on the show jumping arena.

Note to self: must purchase 'Keep Off' signs.

■ **Next month:** Owner Sarah Proctor on the thrills of watching her horses compete.



Adam the gardener and course-designer Andrew Hunter discuss the track

