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# French flies again on history-making Wimbledon weekend

BARBURY CASTLE  
By Julie Harding

"IT'S the news we've all been waiting for; it's a British win..." announced commentator Mike Tucker. Barbury Castle's audience out on course missed a collective heart beat, anticipating the announcement that Andy Murray had won Wimbledon.

"...In section A," So no, this wasn't for Murray but for Piggy French who flew the Union Flag with Tinkas Time in one of two CIC\*\*\* sections at this sun scorched event sponsored by St James's Place Wealth Management.

Mr Tucker didn't even need to announce that Murray had beaten Novak Djokovic moments later, a roar from the sponsor's marquee enough to confirm that a Brit had indeed captured the most sought-after prize in tennis for the first time in 77 years.

"I heard a cheer for Murray while I was held. I've thought about him quite a lot today," said Piggy referring to the brief hiatus she experienced at fence 6 while medics attended to Mary King.

Mary had a close encounter with this event's turf just two weeks after her heavy fall at Saiperton (report, page 50). This time Imperial Cavalier left a leg at the exit fence to the St James's Place Hippo Water and while Mary walked to an ambulance



Dax Van Ternieuwbeke carries Izzy Taylor into fourth place in CIC\*\*\* section A. Izzy was also second aboard KBIS Starchaser and sixth in section B riding Orlando

CIC\*\*\* section B winner Tinkas Time was purchased by loyal owner Michael Underwood for Piggy French to ride after her London disappointments. 'I'm amazed he's come so good as quickly as he has'



the screens went up around a lame 'Archie'. Five minutes later, however, he emerged to rapturous applause, sound once again, a knock blamed by course-designer Mark Phillips for his few unlevel steps.

Piggy beat two on form contenders from North America – Clark Montgomery on Loughan Glen and Rebecca Howard with Riddle Master – and victory was sweet for the rider who has been conspicuous by her absence from blue riband events since a 2012 *annus horribilis* that included missing out on a London run.

Tinkas Time was purchased by her main owner, Michael Underwood, towards the end of last season and has exceeded his jockey's expectations. "Michael, who owns my Olympic horses, wanted something else to join them. I had gone off the boil and wasn't that interested but I liked Tinkas Time as soon as I tried him," explained Piggy. "He was really good fun and I thought if I could have a horse I enjoyed that would



CIC\*\*\* winner Andrew Nicholson and Avebury's owner Rosemary Barlow collect their prizes from host Penny Bunter and sponsor David Bellamy

top 15 (as in section A), ran in reverse order of merit. Three horses were retired and eight eliminated, the most significant being third-placed Mary King. Laura Collett and Noble Bestman, eighth, fell foul of fence 21, the imposing log into the AGRIL Arena Water, but an even more surprising sight was Andrew Nicholson on the deck, Viscount George dislodged him by running out at the St James's Place Olympic Tower fence at the entrance to the main arena.

"He saw a gap and locked on to that," explained the Kiwi. "I should have slowed down and he should have gone clear and inside the time but you can't have everything."

### Coming full circle

Not worry, though, Mr Nicholson didn't return home empty handed. Like last year, he steered Rosemary Barlow's grey Avebury to victory, this time by an extraordinarily emphatic mile wide winning margin (10.2 penalties) in section A over flying Brit Izzy Taylor and KBIS Starchaser.

The New Zealand winning machine who picked up a cheque for £5,000 in a boosted prize fund believed that this particular victory – his 10th at three- and four-star level over the last year – was down to his horse becoming ever more adept on the flat.

"He did the best dressage test he's ever done. He's established at four-star level now and coming back down to three-star means that he finds it very easy," said Andrew who explained that he hadn't applied the handbrake at the end of the track despite having plenty of leeway. "If you ride him slower he can be

## FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT... STONEDGE

- Stonedge was bred by accident when his sire, a two-year-old colt, escaped and found a Thoroughbred mare
- Rider Nicky Roncoroni bought him from Sean and Sally Parkyn who, in turn, had purchased him from his Co Laois breeders Paddy and Angela Mullahilly at three
- Sally Parkyn said: "He had his mane and tail on the ground and was somewhat uncouth. We backed him but despite being on the wild side he was very trusting"
- Rider Nicky Roncoroni loved him when she first saw him because: "He looked effortless over a fence"
- Stonedge loves to get himself noticed and is always banging on his stable door at home
- He was Scottish
- Novice Champion in 2010

naughty so I take him at a speed I know he will do what I want him to do and today he concentrated all the way round."

KBIS Starchaser has also upped his game on the flat. "He's got lovely paces but he can get nervous. This year has been a turning point, plus we've got brakes now so he's up where he should be," said Izzy who also picked up a fourth-placed rosette for Dax Van Ternieuwbeke, a big striding grey who held the cross-country lead for some time thanks to his speedy performance for just 0.8 of a fault. To cap Izzy's successful weekend Orlando was sixth in section B.

### ... OR TOO YOUNG

TOM Jackson proved that he can cut it with the big boys when finishing seventh in CIC\*\*\* section A with his regular partner Waltham Fiddlers Find. This feat earned the rider, who runs his own yard in Kent, a £500 prize from the Horse Trials Support Group for the best under-25 competitor.

"I hope we've done enough to get selected for the Europeans," mused Lucy (see News).

Mark Phillips believed that his track produced the right result even though it had the "minus" factor – "It could have been more difficult," he confessed. >



Tom Jackson and Waltham Fiddlers Find, seventh in CIC\*\*\* section A. Tom collected the HTSG £500 best under-25 prize

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## RIDER Revealed

**Imogen Murray**  
ON a day when Andy Murray won the tennis it was apt that another Murray did well at Barbury – in this case 19-year-old Imogen who was second in CIC\*\* section E with Wiseguy IV.

Having managed to persuade her parents that an academic career wasn't for her, Imogen set up MS Team, an eventing business that she runs with her brother, Ben. She currently has seven eventers to compete.

Imogen started riding aged four when her brother began to have riding lessons. After some success in the show ring she took up eventing in 2007 on a Highland cross pony called Juno. She was longlisted for the junior squad in 2011 but she broke her leg falling from a young horse the day before the final trial. This year she is in with a shout of a young rider team feat with Wiseguy IV. "Wiseguy is a real character. He's called Sreky Fred at home," said Imogen who bought the horse from Antoinette McKeown. "With Welt Hit II and Demonstrator breeding he's probably not your typically bred event horse but he's a cross-country machine who has given me the confidence to compete up to three-star level. We hope to do our first four-star next year."

The seven riders who were eliminated in section A probably disagreed, as did Laura Collett who retired her second-placed Rayef after he ran past the second angled house in the main arena and subsequently applied the brakes at the Verdun Grey Olympic Tower Hedge (24).

Antipodeans Tim Price (Wesko), lying third, and Paul Tapner (Kilonran), fifth, were also found wanting by the 27-fence track, their problems occurring at the influential skinnies triple brush that followed four strides after the Keyflow Key Hole at 5 and at the arena houses respectively.

### The Bounce factor

The common denominator that linked Saturday's trio of two-star winners was a clean sheet – Flora Harris, Nicky Roncoroni and Chris King all finished on their dressage scores to secure victory in these huge classes that



ABOVE Aaron Miller gets a soaking when Isle Valley Flips in the St James's Place Hippo Water (12) RIGHT Bonza Moorabinda decants Aussie Matt Ryan at the second fence, the Alan King Open Ditch FAR RIGHT Thornfield Jones runs out at a brush with Caroline Powell in the saddle



America's Clark Montgomery steers Loughan Glen clear around Mark Phillips's track for second in CIC\*\*\* section B

"I've had a tricky season and we've had a few run outs because of that," said Flora referring to blips at Belton and Burnham Market among others. She is now based in nearby Marlborough with Catherine Burrell.

"I'd also changed Amazing's bit to a chunky snaffle and that seemed to do the trick. She's the spookiest horse ever but we had a pretty smooth round today," added Flora.

The accolade of first-phase leader went to Andrew Nicholson and Zaron but the new addition to the Kiwi's string skipped out at fence 10, the AGRIL Bears Corner, for a lower order placing.

Nicky Roncoroni and Stonedge climbed from fifth following the first phase to take the top spot in section C ahead of Lucinda Fredericks and The Navigator whose 3.6 time faults cost them the class.

Bettina Hoy and Seigneur Medicott were way in front after the first two phases but the German rider withdrew before the cross-country.

Stonedge flew around Barbury's hills, stopping the clock bang on the optimum time and showing no signs of the

## RESULTS

**CIC\*\*\***  
(Sec A) – 1, Avebury (Andrew Nicholson, NZL), 34.4, 0, 0.8 = 35.2; 2, KBIS Starchaser (Izzy Taylor, GBR), 44.2, 0, 1.2 = 45.4; 3, Simon Porloe (Lucy Wiegiersma, GBR), 43, 0, 3.6 = 46.6. (Sec B) – 1, Tinkas Time (Piggy French, GBR), 36.4, 0, 0.8 = 37.2; 2, Loughan Glen (Clark Montgomery, USA), 34.2, 4, 0.8 = 39; 3, Riddle Master (Rebecca Howard, CAN), 42.8, 0, 3.2 = 46.

**CIC\*\***  
(Sec C) – 1, Stonedge (Nicky Roncoroni, GBR), 43.9, 0, 0 = 43.9; 2, The Navigator (Lucinda Fredericks, AUS), 43.1, 0, 3.6 = 46.7; 3, Shamwar 4 (Ludwig Svennerstal, SWE), 37.2, 4, 5.6 = 46.8. (Sec D) – 1, Billy Bounce (Chris King, GBR), 42.8, 0, 0 = 42.8; 2, Airtime (Colina Pickles, GBR), 43.1, 0, 0 = 43.1; 3, Dunbeau (Oliver Townend, GBR), 45.6, 0, 0 = 48.6. (Sec E) – 1, Amazing VIII (Flora Harris, GBR), 43.3, 0, 0 = 43.3; 2, Wiseguy IV (Imogen Murray, GBR), 45, 0, 4.4 = 49.4; 3, Fernhill Adventure (Aoife Clark, IRL), 41.9, 0, 8 = 49.9.



Colina Pickles and Airtime make light work of the water complex for second in CIC\*\* section D

injury that once threatened to end his career – a slipped stifle, the result of a fall on the flat last season, which left him on the sidelines for most of the year.

As in the three-star, the two-star track took plenty of prisoners, many at the corners, and still more at the Keyflow Key Hole, where horses glanced off the skinny triple brush that was so influential in the bigger class. ODT Quizzical with Oliver Townend aboard blotted his copybook here, as did Wembley III with Tim Price and Antoinette McKeown's A.