

By CATHERINE AUSTEN

that would be enough, but the atmosphere today really lifted him — he liked the crowd.”

Piggy French continued her run of top form with second on

Jayne McGivern's Quarrycrest Echo, completing on her dressage of 39.3.

“I'm very excited — this was his first CCI3* and my main worry was the distance across country,” she said. “But this was the perfect place to start because the terrain

isn't too tough, and he coped very well.

“He's getting so much better in his dressage. He has a fantastic brain and takes a great contact, so he does get the marks despite not having the best trot in the world.

“He spent the season with Tina Cook last year while I was pregnant and she did him a lot of good.”

Third was another CCI3* debutant, Willa Newton's Caja 20. Willa and the nine-year-old mare franked their 2016 Blenheim CIC3* win by finishing on their 43.6 dressage score here.

The two chestnuts — Quarrycrest Echo and Caja 20 — could not be more different in breeding or type. The former is by Clover Echo out of a Cavalier mare and is a stocky, traditionally Irish type, while the finer Caja is German-bred, by Carezzo, but both are exciting prospects for Britain. The same could be said for the grey Ballaghmor Class, a 10-year-old by Courage whom Oliver Townend rode into fourth



Piggy French (Quarrycrest Echo) scores 39.3 en route to CCI3* second