

# The main talking points from Musselburgh's Scottish Cheltenham Trials

Musselburgh Racecourse recently staged the biggest trials for the 2024 Cheltenham Festival. Its trial meeting is the pinnacle of Musselburgh's jumps season, attracting many of the best National Hunt trainers in Britain to put their prospects to the test. The Scottish Triumph Hurdle and the Scottish Champion Handicap Chase attracted the most interest, with £40,000 and £75,000 prize funds, respectively.



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The trials have seen many a runner advance to the Cheltenham Festival and land a big win, including the Paul Nicholls-trained Frodon.

Nicholls was back at Musselburgh Racecourse with horse Liari to enter the Scottish Triumph Hurdle during this year's trials. Nicholls and Liari went on to win the race, handing the trainer his fourth win in the juvenile race, with the

horse justifying his odds-on price. After Liari's victory, his odds to win the Triumph Hurdle at the 2024 Cheltenham Festival have been cut from 20/1 to 12/1 with bet365. The Stoke-on-Trent-based bookmaker is considered one of the [top three candidates for Cheltenham free bets this year](#), with oddschecker describing it as one of the leading betting sites for the festival over many years.

Let's run through the other major talking points from the Musselburgh Scottish Cheltenham Trials, including more dominance from the Nicholls yard.

### **Nicholls and Cobden clean up at Musselburgh**

Following the success of Liari, Nicholls and jockey Harry Cobden joined forces once again in the Never Ordinary at bet365 Handicap Chase. Beau Balko was the pre-race market leader but by no means had the race all his own way. In the end, it was a heads-up battle between him and 9/1 shot Mint Gold, who ran Beau Balko close before the favourite inched home by a length-and-a-quarter. In the post-race discussions, Nicholls said that Beau Balko's jumping was much improved on his last run and benefited from the race's electric pace.

It was starting to look like the Nicholls and Cobden show at Musselburgh, with the duo teaming up for a [third successive win in the Scottish Supreme Novices' Hurdle](#). Cobden was on board 11/2 shot Panjari, who raced prominently throughout the course. As the race entered the closing stages, Panjari began to find even more momentum, maintaining a narrow lead over Bertie's Ballet and Titanium Moon.

In the bet365 Handicap Hurdle, the Alastair Ralph-trained Welsh Charger romped to victory with Johnny Burke on board. Meanwhile, there was immense controversy in the bet365 Open NH Flat Race. Getagin, trained by Sandy Thomson, looked in complete control of the race with a matter of seconds remaining. However, he went inexplicably wrong with Ryan Mania

on board, opening the door to Nicholls and Cobden again, with the pre-race favourite, Wicked Thoughts, on hand to take full advantage.

In the official report from the race stewards, Getagin was still given second place as Mania didn't make contact with the ground until after the finishing post.

Looking at the rest of the racecard, Curley Finger displayed tremendous heart and led for most of the way to land the Pertemps Network Group Handicap Hurdle. With Nathan Moscrop on board, Curley Finger went off at a strong pace and, heading into the final stages, it looked like the rest of the field were hunting down the front runner. However, he found more in the closing stages to keep joint favourite Springwell Bay at arm's length to win by a neck.

### **Lucinda Russell entered the Scottish Champion Chase winner's enclosure**

In the Scottish Champion Chase, the main event of this eagerly anticipated meeting, Lucinda Russell's Corrigeen Rock looked in great nick to take the victory in style. Jockey Derek Fox handled the seven-year-old well and inched them closer into the front after the fourth jump. Thunder Rock, who was heavily fancied pre-race, came on strongly in the final furlong, but Corrigeen Rock held firm to win by two clear lengths.

It was another great day's racing at Musselburgh, Edinburgh's premier horse racing venue. For those who've not yet experienced a race meeting at Musselburgh Racecourse, it's just six miles north of Edinburgh city centre, with direct transport links by rail, and there's even courtesy shuttle buses running from Wallyford and Newcraighall railway stations.