

## Introduction to Eventing

Although eventing is considered one of the toughest equestrian disciplines it is not just for experienced riders who have ridden since childhood. Malcolm Benson, who recently competed in his first BE affiliated event at the age of 58, is one of the many people who have taken up the sport at a later stage in life and combines his riding with a full time job.

When Malcolm Benson, a member of Winchester Riding Club, rode for the first time on a weekend away with his wife 15 years ago, he could not have dreamt that one day, not only would he be competing in the challenging sport of eventing, but also training with one of the world's most accomplished event riders and coaches, Lucinda Green MBE.

Initially, Malcolm's riding was confined to hacking and then hunting but having been bitten by the bug and realising there was a great deal more to learn he decided to have some lessons. As part of this more serious approach to riding, he bought an event horse with BE points but it turned out to be the wrong horse for him. After persevering for a season and a half and on the advice of his trainer he decided to cut his losses and sell the horse.

His wife had a dressage horse that she had competed to Medium level but as the mare was not expected to go further, Malcolm was given her to event. She proved to have a great jump and together the partnership competed for two seasons up to Novice. When the mare became lame Malcolm decided to find an eventing schoolmaster to buy – "something that could help show me the ropes."

Despite these good intentions, after looking at several horses he decided on an inexperienced five year old. Now six, Chucky (Horace the Horse) is a 16.1hh Irish Sport Horse. "He has a great nature, loves his job but is still green. When we first got him he couldn't canter or lunge so we took him right back to basics – it's not easy because we are teaching each other," he says.

Malcolm, who has attended seven Petplan Equine Lucinda Green X-C the Safe Way Clinics on five different horses, credits this training for helping to develop his confidence and cross country technique. He did his first clinic on his old hunter: "I had decided I wanted to have a go at eventing and I didn't have a clue what I was doing," he says.



“Lucinda Green’s clinics are an inspiration because she is such a great trainer. She talks a lot of sense. I am confident that with Lucinda’s technical help and the tips from her great experience and success, I can develop the confidence and know how to help establish the partnership with this young horse going forward. She gives us plenty of things to practice at home. I will definitely be coming back to do more clinics to help me bring this young horse on,” he enthuses.

As a man who runs several businesses Malcolm has to fit horses into his very busy lifestyle, as he explains: “I get up at 4:30 every morning to ride before work. I am determined to produce Chucky to Novice level – probably not this year because he is still quite weak – but that is the aim.”



**For more information on Petplan Equine Lucinda Green X-C the Safe Way Clinics visit [www.petplanequine.co.uk/events](http://www.petplanequine.co.uk/events).**