

How I got started

Lucinda Green

Did you come from a horsey background?

My father was in the cavalry and played polo before the Second World War and my mother went hunting when she was young.

What made you want to start riding?

I was always drawn to horses and my father once said that seeing me with a pony was like watching someone calming a lion. I never really understood what he meant as it was a natural feel to me. I started going to our local riding school twice a week when I was four years old riding pillion on my wonderful Nanny's bike – until the local policeman said that was illegal – even in those heady days – and we then had to take to the bus.

What was your earliest riding experience and how old were you?

When I was four, riding an old pony called Lavender that we had for short while at home. She didn't go very fast and we just pottered about in the field.



What was the name of the first pony you learnt to ride on?

Apart from Lavender the show ponies at the riding school which belonged to the renowned show legend, Betty Skelton. Glyn Rose was the first pony that I was allowed to take to shows.

Where did you learn to ride?

Harroway House, near Andover.

Who was your first riding teacher?

Mrs Skelton at Harroway House (no relation to Nick).

When were you given your first pony / horse and what was its name?

I was eight years old and he was a New Forest pony called Jupiter. He didn't jump very willingly and was lazy but very safe. I was only allowed to have a pony if I carried on with my lessons at the riding school.

Were you a member of a pony club? If so, which one?

Royal Artillery Pony Club on Salisbury Plain - it was invaluable.

Did you have a horsey hero when you were growing up and if so who was it?

As a child I always liked horses more than people and Merely-a-Monarch was a particular favourite. The riders I admired most were Mary Gordon-Watson, Peter Robeson and Eddie Macken (both such stylish riders).

What was your first competition experience?

My first major show was Richmond Royal Horse Show at the age of seven on a pony called Tudor Star. It was such an earth moving moment that seven became my lucky number.

Who was your greatest inspiration / influence as a young rider?

Mary Gordon-Watson. I relied on advice picked up from a number of experienced and generous riders but she was the most encouraging.

Was there a point when you knew you wanted to be a top rider? How old were you?

All I ever wanted to do was to see how far I could go - I have only ever been able to deal with the pressure of trying my best rather than setting myself goals and my parents supported me in that.

What has been your greatest moment?

Winning Badminton for the first time in 1973 with Be Fair, a horse I had taken, with huge help all the way through, from Pony Club to the highest level. Things like that happened to other people, not to me - it felt like a fairytale.

What has been your lowest point?

Badminton in 1975 when Wideawake dropped dead on his second lap of honour after winning. I had ridden him from a novice and found him very difficult but we finally clicked at Badminton that year. It epitomised what you have to deal with in life.

Was there ever a point at which you considered giving up?

In 1975. I had five falls in five international three-day events and felt that I was useless and a disadvantage to the horses I was riding. Then Wideawake went very well over a difficult course at Ledyard Farm in the USA and I decided maybe I could carry on.

What do you like most about eventing?

The mental connection that you need to have with your horse.

If you were not an event rider what would you have been?

Doctor or actress.

What advice would you give an aspiring event rider?

Have a career as well. It is very hard to make a successful career out of eventing nowadays and it is better to enjoy it as a time consuming hobby – certainly to start with.