

The 2009 season of eventing has flown by with the usual up and downs, including some spills, but on the whole it's been filled with some excellent results.

The highlights for me have been:

Four wins at Novice level

Winning the prize for the best mare in the 'Lycetts British Eventing Young Horse championships' (6yr old class)

Achieving my first 10 in a dressage test!

I've been very lucky to continue eventing the three mares Whistful, Definitely Blue and Royal Imp, as well as some new rides for part of the season With Love and Listen to me.

Whistful (owned and bred by David and Jenny Watts)

Whistful started the season with a good result coming 7th in her first Novice Event at Belmont Horse Trials. We had an unfortunate cross country fall at Withington Manor, but after experimenting with bits for cross country we found something that I had a bit more control in and that Whistful felt happy in. The highlight of the season was at Cleobury Mortimer Horse Trials on a seriously hot day which made the cross country very hard work, but Whistful tried her heart out and finished on a great score of 29.9 to win her Novice section. She continued her success with a 7th at Cheltenham and at Sapey where she did a very good dressage finishing 5th. Her show jumping has improved and she has gained 10 points over the season.

Definitely Blue (DB)- owned and bred by David and Jenny Watts

What can say.....this mare has excelled herself this season! She has won three Novice events including her very first Novice at Belmont. She won at Cleobury Mortimer Horse Trials with a lead of 5 penalties and to top it off she won the 6yr olds qualifier held at Brand Hall for the Lycetts British Eventing Young Horse Championships. The championships was held at Tweseldown and was a CCI* dressage test, Intermediate Novice show jumping and a big and technical Novice cross country, she did a good dressage and had a double clear. 10 time faults proved very expensive and took us out of the top ten placings, but never the less we came home smiling with the prize for the



best British bred mare. I was so excited to finish the season with a CCI* at Aldon Horse Trials, we started off with such high hopes having done a really good dressage test and she felt fantastic over the the cross country but at fence 8 we had a horrid fall taking us out of the competition. Both myself and DB were pretty sore but walked away from the accident. It was a very sad way for all of us to finish the season as everyone had put in so much hard work, but at least we were alright. DB has been on brilliant form this year and accumulated 22 points over the season, so is now out of Novice. What a clever girl!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Yo5NvOJBjU> (click link to view DB's dressage at Aldon CCI*)

Click on the below link to view Maisey Show Jumping at Aldon CCI*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec7bq9IRwyU>

Royal Imp (Maisey) – owned by Cressida Legge

Maisey came back in to the yard at the end of May. She's been consistently clear show jumping and very good cross country but the dressage has been difficult this year especially as she knows the jumping is coming up next and the fitter she's got the harder she has found it to relax. The real highlight for us all was at Aldon CCI*, although the dressage was very tense and the cross country was a big step up for her she really took it on to get a clear inside the time, and despite being tired the following day she tried her heart out to go clear show jumping ! She was one of only 8 double clears in the time, out of approx 94 starters, pulling her up 54 places!!!



Maisey xc at Llanymynech

With Love (Annika) – owned by Nicky Thomas

Nicky Thomas unfortunately had an accident, and was unable to ride for some time, so her horse With Love came to the yard for me to event. We started her off at Sapey where she was 7th in her first BE90. She continued her success with at 5th at Broadway, a 2nd at Cleobury Mortimer and a 10th at her first BE100 at Llanymynech. She then went home for Nicky to continue eventing, as she had recovered from her accident.

Listen to Me – (Murphy) owned by Maureen Aspinnall

Murphy originally came in to be sold but his owner Maureen changed her mind so we decided to try him at eventing. He is a very pretty 7 yr old 15.3 ex race horse. We didn't have a very good start with our first event as we were eliminated for leaving the arena, but things picked up from there on! Murphy proved himself a lovely ride cross country being very brave with a lovely rhythm. His dressage improved throughout the 4 events having the best dressage mark in two of them including a 19 at Rodbaston where he achieved a 10 and three 9's!!!! That's a dressage test I'll keep! He has been a bit green with his show jumping but by Mount Ballan it had improved so much that we came 2nd, which was brilliant.



Murphey sj at Cleobury



I really feel I've learnt so much this year and have been very lucky and privileged to have the rides on such lovely horses. William has been fantastic and taught me so much, I've loved working with him and feel very much part of the family! I'd like to say a big THANK YOU to all my owners who have supported me through the season and my parents who have helped grooming and driving the lorry and been there with the picnic and ice creams. And thank you to Alice and her video camera . Watch out for her brilliant videos on youtube.com you can find them by looking up 'Irishgoldlover'.