

# PLANNING AHEAD

*New rider diarist  
Flora Harris  
introduces herself  
and reflects on  
her successful  
2015 season*



I AM based in Baydon and run my yard alongside Charlotte, my head girl, and Sophie, my apprentice. We are very lucky in that we have some amazing facilities and a very exciting group of horses.

2015 was certainly full of ups and downs, but overall the highs generally outweighed the lows. Our most notable result was winning Bramham CCI3\* with Rebecca Salt's and my mother Caroline's Bayano. This, along with Bayano's double clear and eighth place at Blenheim Palace CCI3\*, also earned us second place in the Fairfax Britannia League, generously sponsored by Nigella Hall and Fairfax Saddles. My other horses undeniably all stepped up, with Caroline Paul's Cooley Lord Lux beginning to make his mark at three star level and the very exciting Billy Bandit and Monarts Masterpiece showing what promise and class they have for the forthcoming season with plenty of top 10 finishes.

An obvious low point for me was my de-selection for the Longines FEI European Championships at Blair Castle. Bayano and I had a disappointing performance in Aachen and after some

investigation it was discovered he was suffering from a small, but nevertheless significant, issue with his bloods. Having been selected for both Aachen and the Europeans, we had worked exceptionally hard in our preparations identifying fitness as a key area, especially given the nature of Blair's notorious hills. We identified this temporary problem as 'over training syndrome', which, in layman's terms, is a condition caused by a training and recovery imbalance. In hindsight we quite simply overdid things and paid the ultimate price, but as everyone who is associated with horses knows, none of us can ever stop learning and it is certainly a

mistake I will never make again. Bayano enjoyed being freshened up and we learned a lot more about keeping him optimally fit as we finished the season in fine style. He has now enjoyed a winter holiday and we are busy making plans for next year.

So far our winter has consisted of the inevitable end-of-season jobs around the yard, including pressure washing, painting and general tidying. It's amazing how much 'stuff' we seem to accumulate throughout the year, so it's great to finally have some time to get things organised. The colder months enable me to get on top of admin and paperwork, and really focus on developing my business. Having just returned from a three day management course at the British Racing School in Newmarket, courtesy of the UK Sport National Lottery-funded World Class Programme, the need to professionalise every aspect of what we do as riders is becoming all the more apparent.

I am really looking forward to welcoming a few new faces to the yard ... some very talented young Irish horses will be making their way across the water after a busy time away at Monart sales and Cavan show. I always enjoy producing the babies and I honestly think we have found a few gems, so watch this space!

I am forever grateful to my loyal Owners and sponsors, and alongside the invaluable support we receive from UK Sport and the National Lottery, I genuinely feel we have the team and structure necessary to push forward with our training in the next few months and achieve our aims for next season.

Wishing everyone the best of luck for a peaceful winter and successful 2016! 🐾



*Our most notable result  
was winning Bramham  
CCI3\* with Bayano*

