



An Exciting But Challenging

John Periam catches up with Irish showjumper Shane Breen at his new yard at Hickstead.

Time Ahead *For Shane Breen*

It was in 2007 that top Irish and International showjumper Shane Breen married Chloe Bunn and made the move from Cashel in Southern Ireland to Hickstead. Two years on they have a wonderful daughter Lorna, who is already riding her 17 year old pony 'Flash' (real name African Magic), Chloe is expecting again and the date is 14th July which falls between both major Hickstead events – as one would say good planning!

I visited them at their stables that are situated at the back of Hickstead where they have 34 boxes, which are full all the year round with show jumpers, eventers and hunters.

"It is important to look at the overall situation particularly in the current

Shane gets in some practice for the World's Strongest Man contest.



top Irish rider David Simpson is based here and has already been selected for the Irish Team for Lisbon this year. Edward and Julia Bunn's daughter Lucy is now riding full time at Shane's yard alongside Ukrainian rider, Konstantin Pysarenko and both are showing a great deal of talent.

"We are both very lucky in that we have Susan Elwood, who came to work for Dad in 1979, and was his head groom right through until 1996. Susan, in fact, taught me to ride and has become very much part of the family now and helps to look after Lorna," said Chloe.

The yard is pristine and is a hive of activity all under the watchful eye of head

economic climate," said Shane. "Not only do I ride, but both Chloe and I felt it was right to look at training other riders as well as breeding other horses from our brood mares, hence we are trying to cover all aspects related to the equestrian fields we are involved in," he added.

"Recently we have just completed one of our 'Horses for Courses' training sessions at Hickstead and have more planned. Yes, we are lucky in that we have two all weather arenas giving us the opportunity to run these all year round. During the winter Arena Polo plays an important part at Hickstead and these arenas have helped no end at both the International events held here each year,(he was referring to the terrible weather in 2007)."

Walking around the yard I could see that Shane is dedicated to the sport and his love of horses comes across to all involved in working with him. Currently

groom Catherine Wood who has been with Shane for 13 years having moved over from Ireland when he did. "She is a real asset to everything we do here and has a wonderful way of working with horses. Currently she has a working pupil from Ireland, Louise Larkin, who is also an invaluable help whilst learning all she can from Catherine," added Chloe, who had just returned from the local stationers having run out of some envelopes.

From what I gather Chloe does all the administration – accounts – planning whilst being a very active mum to Lorna. Douglas Bunn lives next door as do most of the family members, hence they all get involved in the running of Hickstead and are currently planning the British Jumping Derby Meeting and The Longines Royal International Horse Show.

Shane plans to enter more of the County Show events this year, as the prize money is very attractive now. "Sadly my top horse 'World Cruise' had



Ireland's David Simpson prepares his horse for schooling.



Lorna riding Flash while Susan Elwood, Shane and Chloe watch closely.



Jumping tuition time for Stephanie Finetto.



Shane, Lucy and Simon returning from exercise.

a slight injury in 2008 and is still out of contention. However, I have a young team of horses which have been doing very well in many of the three and four star events and I plan to participate in some of the five star shows during this season," he said.

"Falcon Feeds sponsor me along with Stübben Saddlers and I really do appreciate the support they give. It would of course be nice to have a major sponsor but in the current climate it is not easy. Although the credit crunch was inevitable I think we were prepared for

it and have cut our cloth accordingly," Shane added.

"The breeding operation is still relatively small, but seems to be growing year by year. Currently we have six brood mares here at Hickstead and a further six in Limerick with my cousin, John Griffin. The most successful offspring to date are Buddy Bunn and Cos I Can, the winner of the British 5 Year Old Championship at the Hickstead 2008 Derby meeting. We have four stallions including Royal Concorde and Carmena Z, who have frozen semen currently available. The

two very promising younger stallions, Cor Della Rossa Z and Camblin, will hopefully be available to use in 2010. We are also very lucky in that we have the excellent services of Ed Lyall MRCVS of the Arundel Equine Hospital, who has supported us with all the breeding technicalities."

Driving down to the all weather arena, I watch Shane put up his own practice jumps (see image – world's strongest man!). He was giving instruction today to Stephanie Finetto who drives down from London twice a week for personal tuition. "English riders I teach listen well and are very keen to learn," he added with a smile. I watched as he made sure Stephanie was doing the correct thing and every now and then he stopped her to give that little bit of advice, this is what the personal touch is all about.



The Irish way of life still plays an important part in both their lives. Many of the owners of the horses he rides like to pop over to watch him compete and with more involvement in the County Shows one can expect more visitors this season. Chloe added a comment with a smile, "They call Hickstead Mickstead now, don't they Shane?."

In the winter months Shane still manages to pop over to Ireland most weekends to ride with the Scarteen hounds (The Black and Tans). An early morning flight from Stansted and a return flight to Gatwick makes it very easy. He added, "It is also a good base at Hickstead for us to travel to events and likewise for those that wish to attend my training courses."

Shane and Chloe are determined to build up a respected and established business and, by looking at their website www.breenequestrian.com, one can see that a great deal of effort is going into doing just that. Chloe explains: "All of the horses are, at all times, FOR SALE! We are here to make a living so please don't hesitate to ask any questions?"

Shane has done a lot since he moved and has stuck to his promise to develop and build a successful equestrian business in one of the worlds most well established show jumping venues. Before you ask though – no, he does not ride into the main arena late at night to check the Derby Bank out – it's strictly out of bounds!

He has a dedicated interest in the sport, has the respect of other riders, is happy to pass his knowledge onto others via his in house courses and has started to run his own breeding programme. Although

he now lives in the UK he is very loyal to his Irish heritage and his aim is to ride for his country again as soon as he is able to. Judging by his activities I have a feeling that wont be far off.

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6-year-old mare Tobaia, sister of the famous Buddy Bunn whispers to Shane.

Horses and their Owners

Carmel & Dermot Ryan

Carmena Z (Winner of Queen's Cup 2008)
 Royal Concorde (Winner of Speed Derby 2008)
 Cherubini Z

Vinnie & Sandra Duffy

World Cruise (Part of Irish World Championship team Aachen, 2006 / 4th British Open 2008)

Keith Prescott & Regina Hamel

Mullaghdrin Gold Rain (Winner of Eventer's Grand Prix 2006)

Ayumi Kotani

Leon Da Vinci
 Cor Dela Rossa Z

Fidelma Kehoe & Andrew Nolan

Bluebai

Old Lodge Stables

Fahad

Konstantin Pysarenko

Dorada (Winner of Hickstead Speed Grand Prix 2007)

Damien Doyle

Camblin

James Breen

Outlaw

John Griffin

Cosican (Winner of British 5yo Championship, Hickstead 2008)



Julia Bunn rides out of the yard for a morning hack.