

# Piggy French

Guest editor Mary King is a big fan of this hard-working, talented eventer who reveals her taste in music, how she got a lucky break and where that name came from!

**My first pony was the most perfect pony anyone could ever wish for.** He was a little

grey called Sonny and I did everything with him from hunting to cross-country. A lot of first ponies have some serious quirks, but he was great! I certainly had a lot of quirky ponies after him though.

**I was a bit of a geek when I was younger.** I was

obsessed with horses and I used to love studying horsey books - I was mad for it and knew everything there was to know. But when it came to anything academic I wasn't interested, in fact I hated it - I just wanted to get home and ride. I knew from a very early age that there was no other career than an equestrian one for me.

**When I was younger I used to write regularly to Mary King and draw pictures of her horses.** She was my idol

throughout my childhood. She always used to write back to me and remember my name whenever I saw her at events. She's



Sonny was Piggy's dream first pony

such a lovely lady and she's achieved so much in her career.

**After London 2012 I've learnt not to be superstitious or rely on 'lucky charms'.** I

used to think if I saw a black cat or a pair of magpies it would bring me good luck and I thought it would mean I'd get to London. But after having my Olympic hopes dashed in 2012, following my horse's injury, I'll never be superstitious again!

I actively tell myself not to get carried away with superstition and just to focus on the reality.

**I'd never say never to a career in show jumping.** Although I event, I do love watching other equestrian disciplines, particularly show jumping. I really admire Ben Maher and I love to show jump myself, it's a sport I've always been really interested in and something I would perhaps like to pursue one day. It would take a lot of dedication and I'd need the right horse.

I also love racing, I really admire some of the jockeys, Ruby Walsh for one. I'm also a big Carl Hester fan and I enjoy watching him ride. I think any top rider in any discipline is worth a watch. A good horseman is a good horseman and you can learn a lot from them, whatever their discipline.

**The more successful you become the more pressure there is on you to win.** I'm very critical of myself and it's really hard when things go wrong. I'm thankful for the great people around me who help and support me in these situations. I think the more successful you are the more people expect from you, and this can make you put quite a lot of pressure on yourself. You have to learn to cope with it or it'd drive you mad and could hinder your performance. I'd like to think I'm still performing OK and although the build-up to a competition and the pressure can be quite horrific, once I'm on board and riding it feels great.

**I got my first lucky break when I was about 15 with a horse called Lloyds Gamble.** He was such a naughty horse when

Injury to her horse DHI Topper W ruled Piggy out of Team GB's 2012 Olympic line up

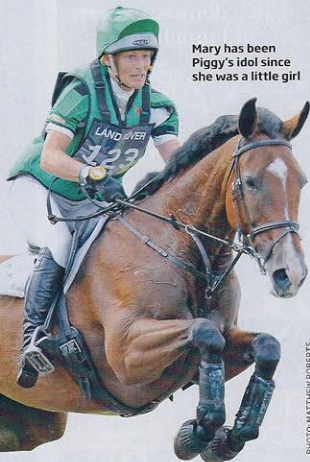


PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE

we first got him, he used to stop repeatedly at cross poles, but my mum liked his 'type' so we bought him anyway. I got real satisfaction from trying to 'improve' him, and we ended up competing to a high level in the Pony Club. Most of our naughty ponies were horrors, but he really came through and gave me my first taste of success and eventing. We sold him when I was 18 and I progressed up the levels with other horses.

**I love listening to Robin Thicke's album Blurred Lines.** I don't get too much down time, I'm always darting off here there and everywhere, but when I do, I love listening to music. I can never usually remember the names of the songs, but I do know Blurred Lines. I also love seeing my friends, I'm so useless due to my hectic schedule, but they're all so fantastic and understanding with me. I just love catching up!

**That name? When I was born,** my twin sisters thought I looked like Piglet out of Winnie The Pooh - and it's stuck! 🐷



Mary has been Piggy's idol since she was a little girl

PHOTO: MATTHEW ROBERTS