

Ginny Elliot Clinic

On the 5th of August, Chucky, Mum and I made way to Primrose Hill Cross Country Course at Gawcott for an hour and a half's training session with Olympic coach and former European eventing champion, Ginny Elliot.

When Ginny arrived, we told her our names and what level we competed at. I told her that I was doing Aston Le Walls BE and she told me all about it quickly. We warmed up our horses/ponies and then Ginny popped us over a couple of fences. We then threaded a few jumps together, the last one being a trakhener. We were asked where we thought we were supposed to look when approaching it, and the majority of us said beyond it, however Ginny said look AT the fence, she used the example of a tennis player and if they looked beyond the ball... they would completely miss! Next Ginny set us off on a mini course consisting of a corner, a step up/ down and a step up to a rail. Another participant on the group of 5 said that she had been having problems with corner fences so Ginny soon stepped in to help! She told us that when jumping corners across country we must create an imaginary line on the fence of the part you are going to jump, and beyond the fence of what angle you are going to approach it on. She also taught us to choose an object in the distance to line yourself up with in order to get straight and a good stride to produce a good jump. At the step up and rail fence (which Ginny was very excited about!) we were asked again, where we would look if a question like this came up in a course, again people mostly said beyond it or the rail fence after the step. We were wrong! Ginny explained that if you look at the first element of the combination (the step up) and focus on it, the one stride to the rail would come nicely because the jump up the step was good, which she then reminded us of the many problems the owl hole combination at Badminton Horse Trials caused because the riders were focusing too much on the Owl hole and not the step beforehand.

Then lastly, we did a bigger course to finish, consisting of a ditch with a palisade fence, a hanging log, a combination of a rail to a ditch to a rail, a log pile, a roll top and the water complex which a few horses were having a wobbly at! Ginny told us all that the palisade was bigger and had a giant ditch, so she said to me, to keep my leg on him and even if I thought he was taking off to jump... that I shouldn't believe it – because the bigger and scarier the fence, the more the horse should naturally back off and use his hind to produce a bigger jump. At the end of the session, mum went to talk to Ginny about the bit we had Chucky in for Cross country and what her opinions were on it and she told us she thought it was a nice bit and helped to keep him back on his hind end to lift himself more and she gave us more useful advice about the bit.

I would like to thank Ginny for a great lesson and I will certainly be using the tips and tricks when we compete at Aston Le Walls on Saturday! I would also like to say a big thank you to Kirsty and Herts Hunt PC for selecting me for the clinic, and a very big thank you to Mr & Mrs Strangman for hosting the clinic - and the tasty homemade muffins and orange juice afterwards!

