

Pippa Funnell MBE, 55
GBR

British Olympic rider Pippa Funnell (55), who is based near Dorking in Surrey, is a former three-time winner of Badminton and winner of Defender Burghley in 2003 (Primmere's Pride) and 2019 (MGH Grafton Street). Also in 2019, with Maja's Hope, she was a member of the British team that won silver at the European Championships in Luhmühlen – 20 years after her first senior team appearance. She etched her name into the eventing history books at Burghley when, in 2003, she became the first winner of the \$350,000 Rolex Grand Slam of Eventing (for consecutive wins at Kentucky, Badminton and Burghley).

After leaving school aged 16, she based herself with trainer Ruth McMullen. In 1987 she became European Young Rider Champion with Sir Barnaby, who gave Pippa her first ride at Badminton the following year. She has won team Olympic silver medals in Athens (2004) and Sydney (2000) and was crowned European Champion in 1999 and 2001. As a result she was voted the 2003 Sunday Times Sportswoman of the Year and was in the top five of the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards. In 2005 Pippa received an MBE.

During a few years out of the limelight, Pippa helped establish the Billy Stud with husband international show jumper William Funnell (married in 1993) – who won team gold at the 2013 European showjumping Championships and this year took his fifth Hickstead Derby title – and breeder Donal Barnwell. In 2009 she returned to the top, winning Bramham and gaining selection for the 2010 World Equestrian Games in Kentucky with Redesigned, where they finished in fifth place. In 2013 she was back in the British team again and competed at the European Championships with Mirage D'Elle. She also won the Tattersalls three-day event with Billy Beware. In 2015 she was a member of the British team that won silver at the European Championships and was eighth individually (Sandman 7) and the following year was a member of the team for the Rio Olympic Games (Billy The Biz).

Pippa is also a renowned producer of young horses, having won a record number of Defender Burghley Young Event Horse Finals, and now helps to produce and compete young showjumpers for the Billy Stud. She also competes in international showjumping classes.

Pippa has also written and had published a series of 22 children's story books. She is a patron of the charity World Horse Welfare and a mentor and trainer for The Wesko (formerly Windrush) Equestrian Foundation.

Pippa trains with husband William Funnell, Carl Hester and GB squad trainers.

MCS Maverick (Mill Law-Aroma) is an 11-year-old bay British Sport Horse gelding owned by Nick, Olivia and Sarah Ross and bred by Mrs M Watson. He was produced by Helen Wilson up to CCI4* level, and Pippa – with whom Helen has had a close connection – took over the ride at the start of 2023. The new pairing quickly won the CCI4*-L at Bramham that June, and tackled their first CCI5* at Pau, France at the end of the season, finishing 11th. They were ninth at MARS Badminton in the spring of 2024. This is MCS Maverick's first Burghley.

Majas Hope (Porter Rhodes-Brown Sue (Flagmount King)), owned by Marek Sebestak and rider, is a 17-year-old Irish-bred Irish Sport Horse gelding. He has been ridden by Pippa since 2015, having been produced by former junior European champion Anna Wilks, who previously produced young horses at the Billy Stud. He was 12th in his first four-star at Burghley in 2018, and finished sixth here last year. He has also been placed at Badminton and Kentucky.