

15 Dec 2020

RAFEA Chef d' Equipe

### **WINTER SHOWJUMPING ONLEY GROUNDS EQUESTRIAN CENTRE 3-7 DEC 2020**

Onley Grounds Equestrian Centre was host to the Winter Classic 3-7 Dec 2020. Sadly, COVID Tier restrictions prevented some riders from attending; however, for those that could travel to the event, it was an excellent opportunity to compete. The schedule covered 5 days of showjumping, ranging from 90cm – 1.45m, with numerous qualifiers for future shows across the UK.

The benefits of riding in a competitive environment creates an atmosphere that is difficult to replicate 'at home'. In addition, back to back classes over the 5 days, enables horse and rider combinations to ride, review and adjust within a short timescale. The RAF was represented by FS Keeley Martin and Wg Cdr Laurie Tostevin. Both had been training in the months leading up to the event and this was an opportunity to consolidate their hard work.

FS Martin rode her own Rachan Wind Dancer and benefitted from 3 days of training starting with a confidence building round to produce a double clear in the British Novice (BN 90cm-1m); attaining another qualification towards the British Show Jumping second round. Keeley went on to ride 4 more double clears over the next 2 days in the BN, Discovery and the 1.05cm. Wg Cdr Laurie Tostevin attended on Day 3 riding her own Ellatine; like Keeley she employed similar tactics to consolidate learning by competing in the 1m and finishing on a double clear in the 1.05cm.

Both competitors rode exceptionally well around technical courses with the additional challenge of limited space in an indoor arena. Moreover, as this was an affiliated event, every double clear attracts 5 points in the British Showjumping Bronze league table. This was an excellent conclusion to a difficult year and both riders were invited to reflect on the event:



*'I think it's been a difficult year to get out and compete or sometimes even ride our horses. We have made huge improvements over this year, but the lack of competitions does have an impact. This was a great opportunity to get back out and build confidence, for me personally the 3 days was just what we needed to get back to a place we were almost a year ago (in terms of confidence for class heights).'*

**FS Keeley Martin**

Photography courtesy of [www.emmpix.co.uk](http://www.emmpix.co.uk)



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*'We are very grateful to the RAFE and Sports Board for their continued support that has enabled us to compete within the Tier System'*  
*'I am thrilled that all the training (and falling off) during lockdown has led to success out at Olney'* Just proves perseverance is worthwhile!  
**Wg Cdr Laurie Tostevin**

Following their success at Olney Grounds Equestrian Centre, both riders intend to return in the New Year, joined by other members of the team, COVID restrictions permitting.

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