

A large photograph of a male rider, Jack Whitaker, in a dark blue competition jacket and white breeches, jumping a white horse over a white fence. The rider is wearing a black helmet and is in a jumping position. The horse is white with a dark mane and tail, and is wearing a dark fly sheet and blinkers. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

Left: "I probably had better horses when I started jumping than I do now, apart from Valmy De La Lande!" – Jack Whitaker, here aboard Valmy, knows well how his family has helped him



Riders born into successful equestrian families look to have a head start. But is it always an advantage to have such a legacy? *Catherine Welton* explores what it's like to grow up as a member of "equestrian royalty"

JACK WHITAKER first started to get an inkling that he came from a famous equestrian family when he was about nine years old.

"We used to go to London Olympia and Dad [Michael] and John used to get a big cheer when they went in the ring," he recalls. "You couldn't get anywhere because of people taking their photo."

Seeing his family's success made Jack want to pursue a career in showjumping.

"You see Dad and the rest of the family winning week in and week out, then, when you get that first taste of winning, you want to replicate that feeling," he says.

Born in the saddle