

Pupils at [Polwhele House](#) School in Truro were treated this week to a master class in show jumping by local Modern Pentathlete Chris Harris.

Chris, from Perranwell Station, has recently been selected for both the Modern Pentathlon and Tetrathlon British Squads and was invited by school riding instructor Jo Lyall to come and showcase the school's brand new show jumps.

The [school](#) recently purchased five new show jumps ahead of making their first foray into Cornwall Schools' Show Jumping competitions.

Two of the jumps were kindly sponsored by a school family and by Stags Estate Agent which has strong equestrian connections.

Modern Pentathlon is a very demanding sport consisting of five disciplines: swimming, fencing, riding, and a combined run and shoot; Tetrathlon omits the fencing.

As Jo, who competed in Modern Pentathlon as a student at Cambridge University, explained:

"Not only are you training in five very different sports, the riding event is particularly tough as the athletes do not ride their own horse. Horses are provided by the organisers and allocated by ballot to each rider. It is a skill in itself to be able to get on a strange horse and, after a mere 20 minutes to warm up, jump a course of 4ft (1.2m) show jumps."

Chris, currently studying for A levels at Truro College, brought his horse, Dixon, to ride at the school; at an unusual 18.1 hands high he towers over even the tallest of the school's four ponies and was one of the horses provided for the Modern Pentathlon event at the London 2012 Olympics.

Despite his height and experience, Dixon jumped a more modest course of jumps at [Polwhele](#) House as Chris explained that the recent stormy weather and college work made finding time for training more difficult.

"Horses need regular schooling," he said, "and Dixon is no exception. He can be quite inconsistent when he's had a bit of time off."

Later this month Chris will be competing for Great Britain in an international Pentathlon against nine other European countries.

At just 17, he will be the youngest member of the home team and it will be a chance for him to build on some impressive results in 2013 including second place in an international Tetrathlon in Ireland against some much older competitors.

In July, Chris will be representing GB at the Tetrathlon Exchange in Australia, widely considered to be the World Championships of Tetrathlon.

Alongside the pupils, the event was watched by several parents and staff and Ben Stephens, a partner at Stags.

[Alex McCullough](#), headmaster of Polwhele House, said after the demonstration: "It has been a wonderful display of horsemanship and I'm sure that the children will be inspired by what they have seen. We are very grateful to Chris for finding time in his very busy college and training schedule to be here and also to Ben from Stags, and the Nicholas family for their kind donations."

[Polwhele House School](#) offers riding lessons to all its pupils from Nursery up to Year 8 and holds many riding events, including dressage, show jumping and beach rides, throughout the year, catering for all abilities.