

GOOD^{AS} GOULD

Andrew Gould made his name as a successful young rider, but a decade later found himself in the media spotlight as Katie Price's trainer. **LESLIE BLISS** visits the Goulds at their new home

The good news is that Andrew Gould hasn't changed. Despite having been through the proverbial tabloid mill, the 31-year-old is as charming and open as ever.

"You have to remember, those journalists are just doing their job. The tabloids needed someone to blame for Katie's marriage breakdown. Initially, it was Spencer [Wilton], but then they realised it wasn't going to work. So I was next in the firing line," says Andrew.

Newspapers and magazines hounded him for interviews.

"I was advised not to talk to the press, unless it was in a controlled environment, where I could check what they planned to print before it hit the press! That period is all a bit of a blur, to be honest. We don't talk about it any more; we've moved on," he says.

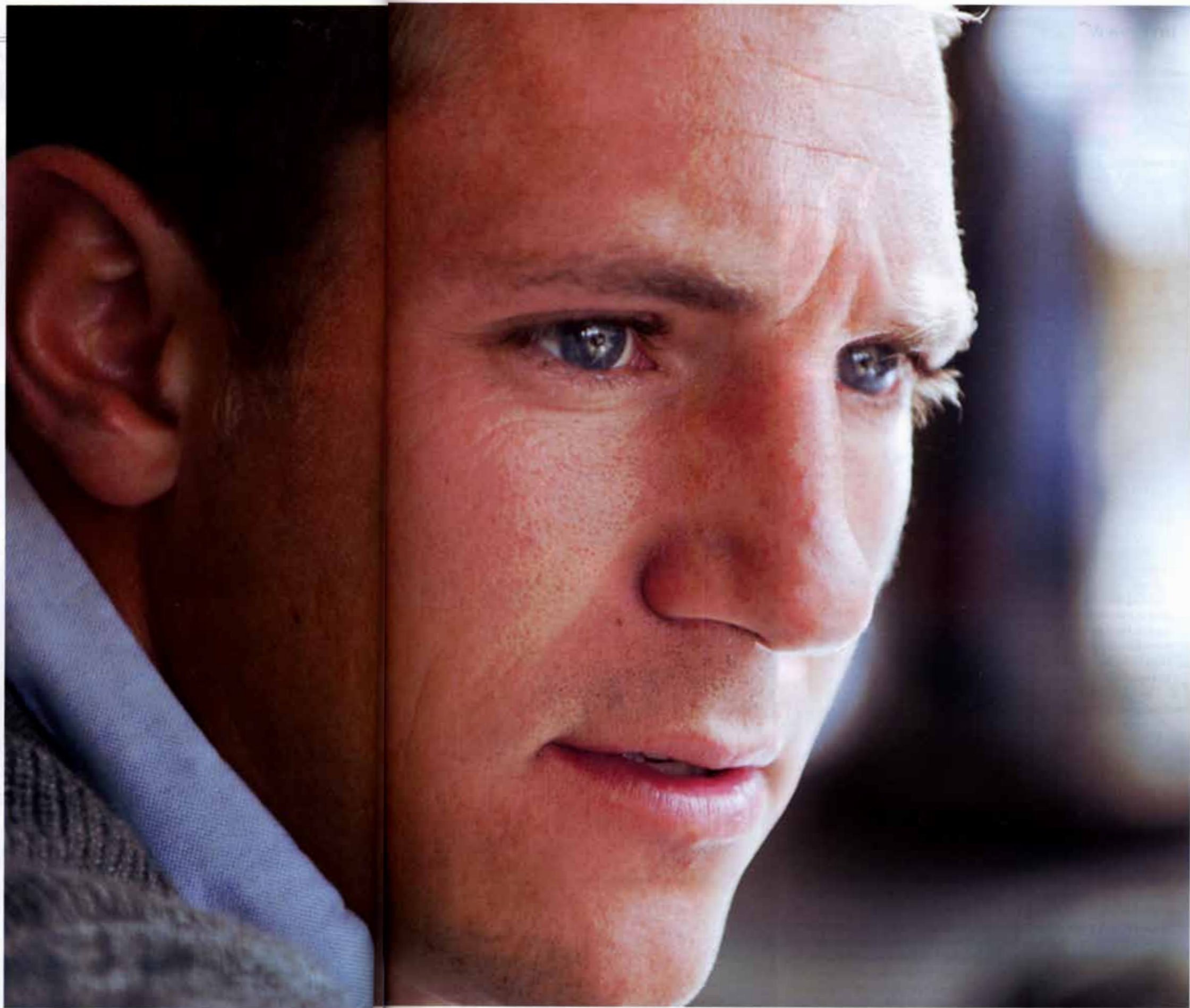
Andrew's wife, Polly, gives an idea of what it was like living through the media frenzy two years ago: "At one point, they camped outside our

front door for a week. You couldn't just open the door and say 'no comment' because that would be the next day's headline."

Polly, who has been with Andrew since they were 17, explains: "It went on for about a year, on and off. The front of our house is just yards from the pavement, so you'd be trying to get the kids to school with them saying 'we have evidence your husband has done this, so you might as well tell us', offering money, all in front of the boys. It got to the point where we had to seek legal advice."

Their sons, Oliver, aged seven, and Louis, four, have obviously been shielded as much as possible, but fame is something they will be growing up with as Andrew and Polly continue to be very good friends with Katie. Andrew has one of Katie's horses in training and still teaches her when Katie's busy schedule allows.

Polly is also the PR agent for KP Equestrian, Katie's equestrian >>



INTERVIEW

clothing range, as well as looking after the Official Jordan's Closet on eBay, which sells items from Katie's wardrobe, with profits going to charity.

Home life

Although Andrew is keen to encourage his children away from horses, ideally towards football, as he is a big Liverpool supporter, they have their own ponies and are Pony Club members.

"Spending the day at a Pony Club event is not really having a break from work," says Andrew, who played football regularly until last year and wouldn't have minded being a professional footballer.

Polly is quick to interject: "I wouldn't have minded being a WAG. Then I would be wearing Louboutin's instead of Dubarry's!"

It certainly would have been a completely different life.

Born in Twickenham, Andrew shared his first pony, Miss Ellie, with his older brother, Gary, now a Tesco store manager, as well as cousins. Mum Jacqui gave up riding when Andrew started.

"She was my groom and used to drive the lorry until I was old enough," says Andrew, who quickly ended up spending all his spare time at a showing yard in Windsor, aged 12. He then moved with international rider and trainer David Hunt to his base at Lisa McAlpine's Uplands Stud in Surrey.

"I used to watch David ride and then he started to give me lessons. He decided my Pony Club pony was not good enough and that 'the boy' should have Koffee Break, a horse my aunt had bought as an unbacked three-year-old two years previously. 'Kofi' was not the easiest ride. I did not like him and did not want to ride him as I had no intention of being a dressage rider. The decision was taken out of my hands, though. One day my old pony was there, the next he wasn't," recalls Andrew.

"Today you would not entertain the idea of putting a 13-year-old on a 16.3hh five-year-old nutcase. My feet only just reached below the saddle flap. I hated him for years – until I was 18."

However, it was with Kofi that he ended up representing his country at the European Junior Championships and, for the ensuing four years, at the Young Rider Europeans, resulting in a team bronze medal in 2000 on UK soil.

Family sacrifices

It was a few years beforehand, aged just 15, that Andrew decided he wanted to work with horses rather than go to college, and he became a full-time employee at David Hunt's yard at 16.

Koffee Break was supposed to be sold for family financial reasons. However, the fact that he was so difficult to ride and used to bolt with strangers, meant Andrew kept the horse that took him all the way to senior grand prix level.

"Everybody in the family used to put £30 a week into this coffee pot to help pay for his keep," says Andrew, who has not forgotten the sacrifices various relatives have made to support him.

Yard owner Lisa McAlpine was another person to play an instrumental part in Andrew's life, introducing him to Polly, who kept her ponies at her friend's yard nearby.

"I ended up teaching her and used to walk two miles to meet her as I didn't have a driving licence at the time. I wouldn't do that for anyone now!" says Andrew, with a smile as he strokes Addy (short for Addington), the 14-year-old mongrel who was just 12 weeks old when they met.

"That's another story," he starts. "I always wanted a dog and my parents fobbed me off with various things, such as goldfish. We had so many deals; if you beat this German at that international we will buy you a dog. Then, one day, I did win, but they still refused. Then, out of the blue, this parcel turns up at the yard, this cage with a tiny puppy inside and a note attached saying 'please look after me'. I asked David if it was down to him, but he denied it. I suspect it was my aunt, but she, too, denies it to this day."

Aged 19, Andrew decided it was time to make it on his own.

"I deliberately started small, renting eight stables, four for >>

MAIN PHOTO: Family ties – Andrew and Polly with their much-loved 14-year-old mongrel, Addington. **TOP RIGHT:** Helping client and friend, Katie Price. **RIGHT:** Andrew and Wild Angel competing at small tour level at this year's nationals



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Top horses

- CORTAFLEX VARISTO (Billy), nine-year-old gelding by Jazz, owned by Sara Green and Ian Gould
- WILD ANGEL (Chuckles), 10-year-old mare by Donnerschlag, owned by Andrew and Mandy Crouch
- MITCHELL'S SANTORINI HIT (Santa), nine-year-old gelding by Sandro Hit, owned by Natasha Mitchell
- HABANERO XLI (H), 12-year-old Andalusian stallion by Desnudo, owned by Naomi Vance-Webb

liveries and used the other four for horses I bought and sold on," he says. "We moved in with Polly's parents in Haslemere, as I no longer had my staff accommodation."

Ups and downs

After a year, they were ready to expand and moved to the Priory Equestrian Centre in Frensham.

"It was a massive step with more than 30 stables, an indoor school, 30 acres and staff. Everybody thought we were silly, but Polly was 100% behind me. We are both fairly impatient, always wanting better and bigger, not that bigger is always better, or more profitable. A lot of people were surprised how well it went, but I couldn't have done it without Polly, who runs the business side of things and deals with all the paperwork."

Their time at the Priory ended abruptly as the landlord decided to sell up due to his wife's ill health.

"We found a lovely place in the little hamlet of Hascombe, near Godalming. It was another big step, but half the size we needed, so we invested our life savings to build stables, put down a new arena surface and built staff accommodation. It was beautiful, but after four years, we had to move as we could not afford to

stay. The rent was double our previous place, staff wages had shot up and we were out of our depth. We lost everything.

"It was Dane Rawlins who baled me out and his brother, Craig, built some stables, so we had our own yard. That's when I first became involved with Hickstead," recalls Andrew, who has worked every year since 2003 as a volunteer at the international July meeting, manning the grandstand.

"I don't understand why more people don't become involved. It is so rewarding," says Andrew, who helped out as usual this year, despite moving to his current base, Ebbisham Farm in Walton-on-the-Hill, the day after the show ended.

“
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”

Meeting Katie

It was while he was based at Dane's that he had a call from Katie: "I had no idea who she was; I never read newspapers and certainly not magazines, which was a good thing in hindsight, as I never treated her as a celeb."

After four years based at Dane's, he was on the move again, this time to Katie's yard, where he has just moved from, as he had run out of stables.

"We may end up moving back there, but Katie is, quite rightly, prioritising developing the house," says Andrew.

ANDREW'S ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1997** Junior European team member
- 1998** Young Rider European team member from 1998 to 2001, winning team bronze in 2000
- 2004** Shearwater Young Horse Champion
- 2011** Won first international, Intermediate I Kür, at Compiègne CDI

In addition, Andrew won three national titles at novice, PSG and inter I levels, was the winner of 11 regional titles, and is BD Scottish, Central and Southern Regional Trainer



Andrew with Mitchell's Santorini Hit, with whom he won his first international class this year

BELOW: Dressage days – Andrew's new base at Ebbisham Farm in Surrey



PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARLIE BEST, BEX FEATURES

Andrew begins his day at 9am, riding and training about 10 horses, before teaching in the afternoons. Having evented for a season in 2009, Andrew is building up a reputation as a trainer of event riders, including rising star New Zealander Jonathan Paget, who finished fifth at Burghley this year.

Incredibly, Andrew has stayed with one 'coach' throughout his career: "There is a big difference between a trainer and a coach. A coach will talk you through every episode of your life. I can pick up the phone to David and ask his advice about a training problem with a horse or a private matter."

Another person Andrew and Polly pick up the phone to on a regular basis is BD rules & fixtures director Sara Green, who is best friends with Andrew's mother.

"We don't need a rule book, we just ring Sara. She's great.

She's always done my music for my freestyles, too. She's helped me financially and I couldn't be where I am now if it wasn't for her. We don't think of her as a client [Andrew trains her horses], but as a member of the family, and she spends Christmas Day with us every year," he says.

However much support you have, it's tough to find and keep hold of the quality horses. With four advanced rides, it has been a good year and has seen Andrew win his first international. Usually, when you ask a rider what they would like to achieve, the Olympics crops up. Not this time.

"I have every ambition to compete internationally – that is my ongoing goal – but our dream is to have a place of our own," he says. Having had five different bases so far, this is not surprising and, bearing in mind Polly and Andrew's drive, it is a lot more feasible than most dreams. □