

Riding for the Disabled Association Incorporating Carriage Driving
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RDA East Region Newsletter

No 7.

Spring 2010





Welcome to the 7th edition of the RDA East Region newsletter.

We are about midway through our 40th Anniversary year, which is a time to take stock of how far we have come in delivering an experienced and professional service to our participants and plan for what we would like to achieve in the future.

Many groups participated in the Biggest Riding Lesson in the World, which was the start of our celebrations. Ten people from the Region went to the reception at St. James' Palace and met our President, The Princess Royal. I know some groups and counties are planning their own 40th celebrations, I wish them luck and a happy time and we hope to read about their event in the next edition of the Newsletter.

We will be holding a Supra Regional Conference in Newmarket on Wednesday the 3rd November in the Bedford Lodge Hotel. You will shortly be receiving a flyer to inform you about this and I do hope many of you will be able to come and enjoy the day.

There have been many events and achievements during the last year some of which you will read about in this magazine, but I would particularly like to congratulate three East Region Instructors, Anne Mitchell, Sarah Moreland and Mel Thomlinson, who were the first three in the Country to achieve their UKCC Level 2 exam. All three came to the National AGM in London to receive their certificates from HRH The Princess Royal. Well done.

I wish you a happy summer with safe riding and driving

Christine Stone
East Region Chairman

Cover photo - The Princess Royal at The Magpie Centre (p8)

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Many thanks to all that have contributed!

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION AT ST.JAMES' PALACE



As part of the 40th Anniversary celebrations RDA National hosted a reception at St. James' Palace. Several volunteers from the East Region attended. Numbers were very limited and the lucky few were selected by pulling names out of a hat! Everyone had the opportunity to meet and talk to H.R.H. The Princess Royal who also addressed the company during the occasion. A very good evening was had by all.

Christine Stone, Sally Campbell-Gray, Amanda Shuckburgh, Sue Diggins and Jackie Meredith also received invitations to the event. Sorry we don't have photos of all that attended!



Attendants (clockwise)

*Val Parker
Eileen Nash
Carol Hall
Bernard Rolfe
Emma Harris*





Strikey the Superstar set to raise £10,000 for charity!

Left: Strikey being lead by his owner, Linda Redlich, with Isabel Plummer riding.

Below: The Sky film crew with Strikey at Shelley.

Strikey is a 23 year old Haflinger gelding, and has been on loan to us at The Shelley Centre for the past 15 years, from his owner Linda Redlich. He is a great favourite with the riders and helpers and was unanimously chosen to represent the Shelley Centre for the RDA's 40th Anniversary Pony Competition in 2009. His nomination was supported by pictures and comments from several of his riders, all showing what a special pony he is, how much he means to them, and what a difference he has made to their lives. Over the past 15 years he has provided around 8,000 riding opportunities for disabled adults and children. From all the nominations nationally Strikey was chosen at the National Championships in July.



Together with this honour comes the prize of Strikey being immortalised as a Breyer model. Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) has partnered with Treasure Trove - the exclusive UK and Ireland distributor of Breyer model horses – to celebrate its 40th Anniversary with a new addition to the Breyer model collection. These are now on sale on 'the web' and can be purchased through the RDA shop (www.rda.org.uk click on 'shop') which links with the Happy Happy Sue website, which has an exclusive agreement to sell



Strikey for £24.75 (RRP £29.99) with a £4 contribution for each sale going to RDA. Treasure Trove's Business Development Director, Kim Carter, commented: "We are expecting to raise more than £10,000 for the RDA with the Strikey model".

"We are delighted with the new 'Strikey', and urge anyone with an interest in horses, Breyer models or the RDA to go and buy one," said RDA Chief Executive Ed Bracher. "This support from Treasure Trove has provided a real boost to our 40th Anniversary celebrations, and it was great to have the opportunity to find out about so many of the dedicated and much-loved horses and ponies working for our 500 groups nationwide."

In early February a Television crew visited The Centre on behalf of Sky Television to film Strikey with his special riders. Their 4 minute film - which took 5 hours to shoot on a bitterly cold day! will be broadcast on Sky One at the end of May/June as part of their Animal Nation series. We will publish the exact day and time on our Web site when we know - www.rda-east.org.uk/shelley.html



Inger Bryant

Training Day at Barrow Farm

Once again this year we held a dressage training day for our riders who were keen to compete in the qualifying tests for the National Championships.

We were very lucky to have Inger Bryant judge and give some individual coaching to each rider. Everyone who attended did well at the Regional Qualifier.



Sally Campbell-Gray Becomes Vice-President

At the National AGM last November, Sally Campbell-Gray our Regional Instructor was made a Vice-President of the Association. Sally has put in so much work for RDA, not only in the East Region but for National as well. So much of the fundamental structure of running an RDA session has originated from Sally's typewriter. This honour is so well deserved.

RDA says goodbye to Jane and welcomes new Chairman

Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) has elected a new Chairman as Jane Holderness-Roddam stands down this year. Sam Orde, who received unanimous support at the charity's AGM, will officially begin her Chairmanship in April. Jane has served three terms as Chairman of the charity, during which time she has played a vital role championing disabled riding, inspiring participants and volunteers and helping to drive the strategic direction of the charity.

"It has been a great privilege to have been able to chair RDA National over the last 9 years," said Jane. "I cannot emphasise more highly my gratitude to all Trustees, our Chief Executive, staff and the army of volunteers and supporters who have made my term so worthwhile and enjoyable.

"I am delighted that Sam is taking over, she has been a wonderfully supportive and hard working Deputy and her wide knowledge of RDA, plus the existing expertise on the Board, will ensure the Charity is very well placed to face the challenges of the future."

Incoming Chairman Sam has been Deputy Chairman of RDA since 2006 and has been actively involved in RDA for over ten years. She has held a range of positions including Instructor, Northumberland County Instructor and North Regional Chairman. In addition to her commitment to RDA, Sam is a keen and experienced horsewoman. She represented Great Britain as a junior rider at

eventing, and continued to advanced level as a young rider. For the last six years Sam has been a joint master of the Morpeth Hunt and she has close ties with the Pony Club as both an instructor and committee member.

"I am delighted to be taking on the role of RDA Chairman," said Sam. "I am looking forward to visiting more of the 500 RDA groups around the country. Having been involved with RDA for more than 12 years I know how much benefit and enjoyment RDA gives its 18,000 riders and drivers. In our 40th anniversary year we are not just celebrating RDA's achievements, but looking forward to helping even more riders, whether they are at an RDA Group or heading for the RDA Championships or even the Para Olympics."

Chief Executive of RDA, Ed Bracher, commented: "Jane has been an inspiring and dedicated Chairman who has given her unswerving support to individual Groups and to the charity as a whole. We will miss her enthusiasm and commitment, and her willingness to roll up her sleeves and do whatever necessary to help others.

"Sam has been a huge support to Jane during her time as Deputy Chairman, and has been a tireless volunteer for RDA for many years. She comes to this new role with great plans for RDA: to help us increase the number of opportunities to ride and carriage drive, to offer Groups the training and support they need to meet the challenges for the charity moving forward and to make sure we can build on our strengths and continue to deliver the best possible experience for our participants. We welcome her as our new Chairman and know she will be a real asset to the team."

PAT STONE, 1932 - 2010

With the passing away of Pat Stone, RDA has lost one of its greatest supporters in the East Region. Pat helped RDA virtually from its foundation, firstly in Bedfordshire and then, when she moved to Suffolk, she set up the Millfields Group at Stetchworth, nr. Newmarket. Pat was the Group Organiser for over 30 years, overseeing the Group's moves to Worlington and Chippenham. Pat also helped with other local Groups, Wickhambrook and West Suffolk and helped every year at the Regional Gymkhana held at Towerlands. Despite being very busy running the popular Star Inn at Lidgate with her husband John, Pat also found time to hold many enjoyable fund raising evenings for the Group and for several years she organised for the riders to have a summer holiday by the sea in Norfolk, which was greatly enjoyed by everyone taking part.

Pat was a very special person, as was shown at her funeral service held in January at Lidgate Church, (where she sang in the choir) - her enthusiasm and presence will be greatly missed.

ME

PAT'S PHILOSOPHY

Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, champagne in one hand, strawberries in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming Woo-Hoo - what a ride!



An early photo of Pat (pictured fourth from the left) and the Group at Millfields.

The Princess Royal Visits the Magpie Centre

Extract from an article in the Eastern Daily Press - 20.01.10

The Princess Royal started at the West Norfolk Riding for the Disabled Magpie Centre in Runcton Holme - a riding school specifically for people with disabilities - where she met disabled riders, volunteers and fundraisers.

Young riders demonstrated mounted party games to an audience in the indoor ring, before performing a short musical ride.



Princess Anne also cut a birthday cake for one of the centre's ponies, Heidi, who was celebrating her 26th birthday.

Izaak Chesney-Beales from East Walton greeted the princess outside the centre stables as she arrived in Runcton Holme, and Rhiannon Croft presented the Princess Royal with flowers (bottom right).

Ten-year-old Izaak said: "It was really cool. I saw the helicopter land. It was really exciting."

His mother Rae said: "She asked him how long he had been riding, which of the horses he rode. She asked us if we thought it was a good therapy."

She added: "He comes every week. It has been very good therapy for him."

The princess left the Magpie Centre by helicopter and then went to the Sense resource centre in Dereham.



Photos by
Ian Burt

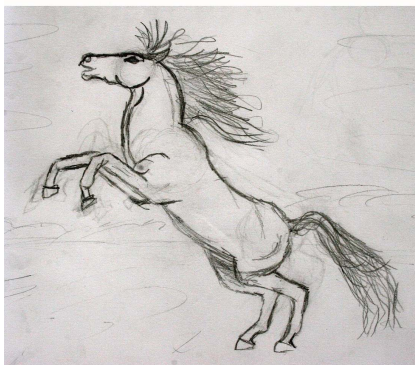
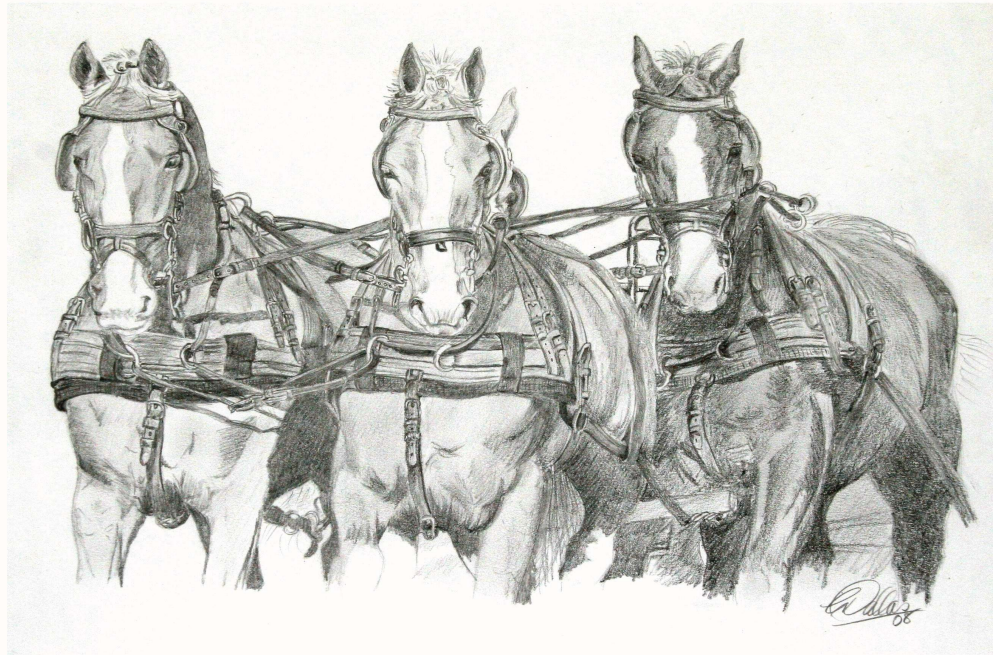
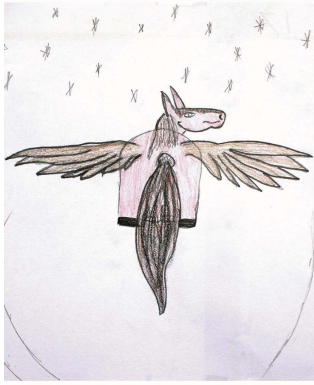
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OAKLANDS COLLEGE





Oaklands Art - the editor's choice



Cambs College Fun Evening

Our Group decided to organize a fun evening for our volunteers, riders and families so we rang up Jane Hood who competes at Olympia each year and she came to our rescue.

With help from the riders from the Saffron Walden Riding Club they organised a wonderful evenings entertainment for us.

Wood Green Animal Shelter kindly let us use the indoor arena on Wednesday 2nd December, 2009 from 6.30 - 8 p.m. Philly emailed all the Groups in Cambridgeshire and about 65 people came and thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

First Jane Hood, Vicky Palmer, Clare and Suzanna Engleman did a quadrille to the theme the Ride of the Vulcaries - It was brilliant - no wonder they have won so many times and we were surprised that they were only second this year - it was so well thought out.

Then Ida Defoux did a super dressage display for us on her young horse. Afterwards she answered questions which was interesting.

Then Espe Ansley and Jane Hood did a pas de deux on their horses dressed up as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Pippa Scott was Snow White on her feet and Mitchel Scofield was one of the dwarfs leading a mini pony. It was very amusing and fun.

Ida Defoux then did another dressage - lovely to watch and they finished up with the quadrille in the most wonderful floating costumes.

It really was a great success and as long as Jane and her team can compete we hope to make it a yearly event ending with mince pies and a hot drink.

We cannot thank them enough.

Gay Redman



HOLIDAYS 2009

The year was a quiet one on the holiday scene. There were no riders from the Region sent on a National holiday. Do always let me know if you are sending a rider on one

of these super holidays. However, there were several Groups who organised Day Camps/ mornings/afternoon. Cambridgeshire, Essex and Norfolk all arranged these. They are tremendous fun for riders who usually only get their one hour per week session, so do consider whether your Group could do this. If you need advice or help just call me on 01277 822902.

I thought you might like to see a Report sent to me by Sugarloaf Group, Essex who took a Group of riders to the Clwyd Special Riding Centre, Wales. Although not an RDA National Holiday, it is a very much approved venue. As you will see, it was a huge success. Should you be interested, or just want to know more about this super venue, just give me a call (number above).

Keep me informed of your holiday plans and happy holidays for 2010.

Jace Horner, Regional Holiday Rep.

Local Pony Club riders team up with Disabled Riders for Birthday Show!



Gaddesden Place Riding for the Disabled Group celebrated 40 years of RDA and Flamstead Pony Club celebrated their 80th Birthday. The Birthday Show put together 23 teams consisting of one Pony Club and one RDA rider.

The show was organised by James Dickson, the District Commissioner of the Pony Club and his committee, assisted by the trustees of Gaddesden Place RDA.

On the morning each rider performed a dressage test. After lunch Pony Club riders completed a showjumping round and delivered a party invitation to their RDA team mate. The RDA rider then completed a Handy Pony type obstacle course to assemble the ingredients for a birthday cake!

At the prize giving RDA National Chairman Jane Holderness Rodham congratulated the riders and mentioned that her own pony had taken her from Pony Club competitions to the Mexico Olympics! She then presented medals to the winners, but there were rosettes and slices of birthday cake for everyone!

In first place were Sarah Marshall and Alex Hill, followed by Hayley Tallantire and Molly Dickson with Jordan Uphill and Jess Duffield in third.

Gaddesden Place RDA Chairman, Lizzie Roberts said "Without our fantastic team of volunteers we could not organise events like this. This is a real celebration of what can be achieved with teamwork and it has been a wonderful experience for our riders to team up with the Pony club riders. Many thanks to everyone who helped to make the day a success!

SUGARLOAF RDA GROUP

Holiday at Clwyd Special Riding Centre

The group were able to take five riders with nine helpers and carers to the Clwyd Special Riding Centre for a short break in October 2009. We decided to travel in four vehicles and took most of the food as the nearest supermarket was about twenty minutes drive from the centre. The journey was the only disadvantage as the drive took about five hours although some found the return trip longer as they were held up on the M6 near Birmingham.

On arrival at Clwyd we were shown round the accommodation and the kitchen area :- clean comfortable bedrooms, four bathrooms, sitting room with tiny kitchen for making drinks and a drying room complete with a tumble dryer! The main kitchen with a large dining room attached was a short walk across the yard under the same roof as the indoor school. Our two volunteer cooks were very happy with the facilities especially the dishwasher!

Understandably we were given a short talk on the fire drill and other safety precautions and then the riders and the helpers working with them were asked to go to the indoor school dressed ready to ride, to meet the horses and learn the routine. The school had a dampened sandy surface which was good for walking and riding. Our horses were waiting tethered to some of the rings with string of course, along the side of the school. Each rider had been assigned a horse to ride for the five days and they had to collect the tack, bring me horse in from the large paddock, remove the rug, groom and then tack up to ride. After riding they untacked, put rugs on and then led the horses back to the paddock where they lined up and removed the head collars at the same time to ensure everyone's safety. They then returned to take the tack to the tackroom where it was cleaned before being put in the correct place. Everything was very clearly marked so that it was easy to do this. All the grooming etc. was carried out in the safety of the indoor arena with the horses attached to the strings on the side of the school.



Only one rider had a problem with his pony as it was much too wide for him but this was sorted very quickly and a slimmer one was provided. We had a short lesson that day but we were all tired after our drive so we put the horses out - everyone had to wear a hat to do this even the helpers- and then we were able to unpack and relax.

Apart from showing us where we could ride, and explaining the routine the friendly staff left us to do what we wanted although they were always around if we needed them We could ride up to four hours a day if we wished but that would have been too long for our riders as they are only used to riding about an hour a week! However we did ride for an hour and a half most days so we made good use of our time. The all weather track was covered with cut up rubber and extended over a large area with various paths including a water splash which was great fun after the heavy rain! We did leave the centre once to ride along the bridle way but we were then accompanied by two of the staff as we were riding off their property There was also an outdoor arena and on one lovely afternoon we were able to have a jumping lesson which everyone enjoyed as we do not have the horses to do this at our usual venue.

The horses were all very well behaved and all our riders improved their riding as well as learning new skills with regard to the care of the horse and the tack. A great time was had by everyone and the area was lovely if a little isolated but we also managed some sightseeing and had a lovely meal in the village pub on the last night.

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ASDAN ?



For those of you who want to know more, or haven't heard. The link between RDA and ASDAN actually began in 2005.

It is a fantastic Educational Programme which is now used by many RDA Groups across the UK. Not only does ASDAN offer a more focussed approach to our riding sessions – it can also be used as evidence of rider's achievements, for OFSTED inspections at our schools and colleges.

In the East Region, there are currently 5 Groups who have been working very successfully with ASDAN and whose riders are finding it not only rewarding and interesting, but also fun to do. Hopefully next year, with the new enquiries I've had this number will have risen to 8.

The two awards which these groups are presently working on are Transition Challenge and Towards Independence. Both these programmes run alongside our own RDA Proficiency Tests and when completed, each rider possesses a Folder and achievable Certificates they are proud to own.

All of our riders can achieve these awards – the Transition Challenge can be done by riders aged from 11 years and Towards Independence can be used by younger riders of 6 years, there is no upper age limit for either!

ASDAN is particularly useful if you have riders who have been coming to you for some time, have gone as far as they can with Proficiency Tests and want a new challenge.

I am ASDAN's Education Co-Ordinator for the East Region, so please find out more about ASDAN by giving me a ring on 01277 202979 and I'll be happy to explain how easy it is to get started!

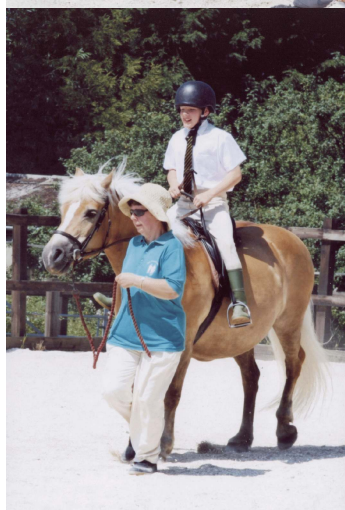
Kath Hatwell

Cedar Hall and Mid-Essex News



This year has been very successful for Cedar Hall and Mid-Essex Groups and we have a new rider for Sadlers Farm Group at Birches View

Our annual get-together and competition was held in glorious weather on 2nd July. Our theme this year was Austria and so our Haflinger ponies competed in a working pony competition with rings of sausages to place on a pole, small cheeses to throw in a basket, a cow bell to ring and bending cones bearing pictures of Mozart, maps etc. In the treasure hunt the children found Austrian chocolate and after their exertions they had sandkuchen and strawberries.



Mid-Essex and Sugarloaf Groups, both qualified riders for the national championships at Hartpury. Both riders had a great time - Kirsch was exceptionally well behaved - and Aaron from Sugarloaf Group achieved 6th place in the combined training.

Mid-Essex Group were also in the finals of the musical ride competition with our version of the Spanish Riding School.

In the summer holidays one of our Cedar Hall riders, Jamie, was chosen to attend the Essex Union South Pony Club junior camp. He had an absolutely brilliant four days of dressage, show jumping, and cross country tuition and competition and we are very grateful to the EUSPC for offering this very exciting holiday to one of our very disadvantaged riders.



We have lots of photos and DVDs to record all our achievements and next year we will be trying even harder as Mid-Essex will be celebrating their 40th anniversary.

Janet Abbott

Harpenden Group

Members of Harpenden Group (along with Antonia McKinley, Hertfordshire's County Chairman) braved the elements to man a bucket collection at Huntingdon Racecourse in November 2009. Well done to all involved!



Liz Riding brings news from the Elisabeth Curtis Centre:

Some visitors for Muscadeu

When I arrived at the Centre on a Thursday before Christmas, I was informed that Jakki and Luke were going to pop in to see Muscadeu, our Carmargue horse. Jakki was the organiser of our gift horse and Luke was the young lad who'd been chosen to ride Muscadeu from the Camargue to the Centre. Obviously when you are spending nearly 24 hours a day together for 3 months you form a strong bond. Luke learned to ride on Muscadeu and has been lucky enough to spend a few months working with Monty Roberts since.

He has developed into a confident young man through his experiences with our equine friends. He was talking to me in the gallery area during the ridding session. On passing us Muscadeu's ears pricked up and he turned his head towards us as he went by. He then proceeded with the rest of the ride but his ears were twitching back and forth all the time, listening for Luke's voice. At the end of the sessions Luke led him quietly round and you could feel the intense bond that these two share.

I never thought horses remembered that far back but Muscadeu almost had a smile on his face. I do feel that since that day he seems more settled and has been used on more of the sessions. He seems to be maintaining his weight better now as well. Maybe it's just coincidence but I don't think so.

Sometimes Luke and one of the other lads slept out under the stars in the horses' field. Muscadeu would play a "wake up" game by putting his hoof on Luke, then when Luke stirred he would run away - but was never any bother to catch. He used to come to Luke's whistle. I didn't ask him to demonstrate this when he came to the centre!

Luke has been very fortunate to have had this opportunity. He said that because of Muscadeu his life has been turned around and he is determined to help others through the horse.

At the moment he is working in Yorkshire at Sandra Krutz therapeutic riding centre and loving every minute. He has obviously learnt a great deal from his experiences. I felt privileged to have met Luke and hope he and Jakki will be able to pop in from time to time to see how Muscadeu is progressing. He (Muscadeu) now has a fan club at the centre but obviously some riders are too heavy for him.

Bonnie

Christine Stone very kindly went to look at Bonnie a Norwegian Fjord horse for us. We thought it might save us a really long journey if she wasn't suitable. Christine gave us all the ifs and buts and we decided one bitterly cold Sunday to take a trek to the wilds of Norfolk to look at her. She has settled in really well to the work and can carry a good weight. Her temperament is really good and provided the leader relaxes with the lead rope she is everything you could wish for in an RDA horse. We are very grateful to Christine who as you all know is a very busy lady.

RDA - A Poem

By Mel Tomlinson RDAI
West Norfolk & Wisbech

RDA

Recommended Daily Allowance,
How do you get yours?

Riding, Driving, Art and ASDAN one of which you know
“we all can”

Coaching, Leading, Side walking, Participation,
Teaching,
Simply Talking

All of the above are very pleasing

RDA my daily reading

Oaklands, Hartpury, HRH, N O, SCG and Clwyd,
Familiar faces, horses, ponies, Familiar places.

Friends and Equines, Rosettes and Prizes
Faces full of excitement, anticipation and surprises

Empowerment, Enable “You know you can do it”
Taking part “Participation”

Driving home in Gary’s lorry, Ponies aboard, Fed.
watered content, our tired feet, feeling sorry!
Was it worth it? Was it ever!

RDA my passion, RDA my daily Ration.

Double success for Harris twins

From an article in the Eastern Daily Press by Hayley Gibbs (October 2009)

Twin sisters Amy and Emily Harris enjoyed a double success at the Buckenham House RDA fun family show.

Amy and Emily were supreme ridden champion and reserve supreme in-hand champion respectively with their ponies Bureside Autumn Mist and Waxwing Rigmarole. Remy Farrant on Heritage Softail won the Norfolk final of the Marriage's Riding Club Pony of the Year.

The show was held at North Farm, Snetterton by kind permission of Mr and Mrs D McInnes-Skinner. Ridden classes were judged by Miss S Campbell and in-hand classes by Mrs A Thomas, while the fun horse events were judged by Mrs A Fuller and the dogs by Mrs C Tonkin. The show was well attended and raised £2,300 for the group.

Buckenham House RDA is a volunteer run group providing opportunities for therapy, achievement and enjoyment, improving health, wellbeing and self-confidence, and benefiting mobility and co-ordination for disabled children and adults. In the year to March 31, 2009 they provided 487 rides for 31 riders.

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Pudsey Bear Visits The Magpie Centre

Pudsey Bear called in to say 'hello' and present a cheque to the Magpie Centre in January 2010 (immediately after the Princess Royal's visit) and took to the arena riding 'Dot'.

BBC's "Children in Need" funded their evening programme so Pudsey came to ride and meet all the other children.

The children riding in the session (pictured right) were from Meadow Gate school and Wisbech RDA, who use Magpie Centre's facilities on a Wednesday.



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That's all for this year folks!

Keep the material coming in, and we'll be back with edition number 8 in 2011:
sdiggins@rda-east.org.uk