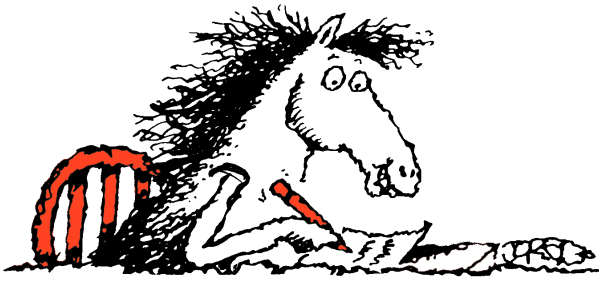


East Region Newsletter

Autumn 2005

No. 3





A Word From The Editor

Welcome to the third edition of the East Region's Newsletter - our biggest and (we hope) the best to date!

Thank you for your kind feedback on the last issue. It was very much appreciated, and don't forget that we always need fresh material, so please keep it coming in. E-mailed submissions are particularly welcome, since they cut down the production time dramatically! We always need:

- i competition results
- i proficiency test results
- i helpers news
- i items on gymkhanas/fun days
- i holiday news & photos
- i special features
- i adverts etc.

I hope you enjoy the latest issue.

Sue Diggins (Regional Chairman / Editor)

Old Thatches,
Rookwood Lane,
Preston St. Mary,
Lavenham, Suffolk. CO10 9LY
Tel. 01787 247810 / 0845 241 6308
email chairman@rda-east.org.uk

'PDF' copies of this newsletter are also available for download from our new regional website at: www.rda-east.org.uk - why not pay a visit and take a look around sometime?

Finally, special thanks (as ever) to Andrew Gourlay for his help and expertise in the production of this newsletter, without whom.....

Cover picture: Alastair Robinson, aged 9.

In This Issue:

3. Council Award For Essex County Instructor
4. Meet Gurtie!
6. Cambridgeshire News
7. The Times They Are a Changing
Preston St Mary Animal Service
8. Herts & Essex Picnic Ride
9. Broadland Group Awards
10. Surprise Blue Peter Visit
11. Side Saddle at Shelley
12. To Try Is To Risk Failure
Hertfordshire 'County' Retirements
13. Wimpole Art
14. Ode To The day
15. Wimpole Photos
16. Dicken's Diary
17. Shelley show
19. The Riding Competition
Training News
21. Broadland Holiday
22. Norfolk County Gymkhana
23. Pony Camp 2005
24. Simon Bows Out
25. The French Connection
26. Cambridgeshire Day Camp





Council Award For Essex County Instructor

In January this year we were informed that Joyce Truscott, one of our Instructors, was to be presented with the Female Coach, Coaching Disabled Sports people Award. This was part of Essex Sports Coach of the Year Awards 2004/5 presented by Essex County Council. The Upminster Group was founded in 1973 and Joyce joined the Group 2 years later. Joyce gives 100% to her riders, so we were proud and delighted at this well deserved award.

In March Joyce went along to the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford for the presentation, accompanied by her Husband and several members of our Committee. It was a very proud moment when the Award was presented by Councillor Chris Manning-Press, Chairman of Essex County Council. This was followed by a very nice buffet enjoyed by all.

As Councillor Press had expressed an interest in the Group we invited him to visit us at Colmar Farm, South Weald, our riding venue. He was most interested in what we do and, I think, quite impressed. Amanda Shuckburgh, our County Chairman, came along that morning also to present some Grades to some of our riders. It was a very happy morning, enjoyed by all.

The photograph shows Joyce with Councillor Chris Manning-Press.

JACE HORNER
Chairman - Upminster Group, Essex

Taken from the John Lewis WELWYN CHRONICLE, 23rd July 2005

Please note that this article has been scanned from a paper copy, so apologies for the image quality

Meet Gurtie: A very lovely and special horse

Did you know that J L Welwyn sponsor a Riding for the Disabled Association horse named Gurtie? We have recently received the following letter from 12 year old Charlotte Middleton, Gurtie's Minder to let everyone know how she is getting on.

Dear John Lewis

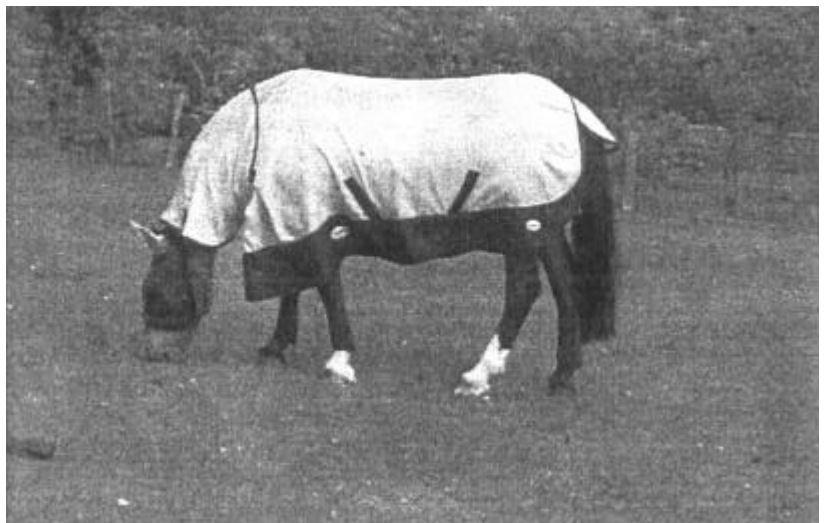
On behalf of Digswell Place Riding for the Disabled Association, thank you so much for sponsoring Gurtie, I am very grateful. My name is Charlotte Middleton, I am 12 years old and I am Gurtie's Minder - which means I am the one who looks after her, like mucking her out, grooming her and exercising her out of working hours (term time) ie evenings, weekends and holiday times.

This is an extract from Gurtie's weekly diary:

Well it is Tuesday today and I am waiting in my stable for a morning and afternoon of work with the RDA (Riding for the Disabled Association) students. I will have one group in the morning and a group from another school or college this afternoon. I might be expected to give a lesson to one or two pupils from each group. The RDA helpers will make sure I am clean and tacked up ready for my riders and will lead me into the school to assist the students to have their lessons. When I have finished I will have my jumpsuit put on (in winter I have a



(Gurtie visits Charlotte's nan's house on Christmas eve)



(Gurtie in her new jumpsuit)



(Charlotte on Gurtie and friends going out for a ride on Christmas Day)



(Charlotte and Gurtie (on the right) warming up for Wimpole)

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Middleton

(First published in the John Lewis WELWYN CHRONICLE, 23 July 2005)

New Zealand rug). A jumpsuit is a summer rug that covers me from my neck to my tail so that the midges can't bite me. I have a jumpsuit because I have a condition called

'sweetitch' which is a nasty reaction to a midge bite, this is why Charlotte puts lots of fly repellent on me. After that, I am turned out into my field for about 2 hours. Then, when Charlotte finishes school she gets me back into the yard and either does some schooling with me or hacks me out around Sherrardswood. I have to say I prefer hacking to schooling, but who doesn't! I do like schooling as well because Charlotte makes it interesting and does lots of warm up exercises and shapes with me. Well now after Charlotte's ride, I am turned out for the night, then in the morning at about 7am I am let into my stable and I can have my breakfast and a sleep or lie down before my day starts.

I hope that gives you an idea about what Gurtie gets up to and how important your help is.

Gurtie has to have a new jumpsuit each year to stop her getting too badly bitten, as well as all her feed and straw, so I am really pleased you have sponsored her.

I hope you enjoy these pictures of Gurtie. Some were taken at Wimpole Hall, where she and three of her mare friends and their riders from Oaklands College have qualified for the National Riding for the Disabled Association finals later this year.

RDA CAMBRIDGESHIRE

In May we held our annual County Gymkhana at Woodgreen Animal Shelter, which is always well attended with 100 children from all across the county. This event is made by those who kindly bring ponies and I would like to thank them all, especially to the Fenland group who bring so many. The rosettes this year were presented by organisers of the Hilderssharn and Balsham Cross Country ride who kindly made us a donation.

The Cambridgeshire RDA Polo team had some exciting events this summer. They went to the National Stud polo ground and the most improved polo player was presented with a wonderful large silver trophy by Mrs Christopher Oxley in memory of her husband who died fast year and used to come to the polo ground and help them. This year it went to Mitchel Scofield.



The team then went and paraded at the Beaufort Polo Club on the RDA Charity Day in July in the presence of the Princess Royal. The Beaufort and other members kindly lent them polo ponies and they walked out with the high goal players. Later they had the honour of meeting and talking to the Princess Royal, they were absolutely thrilled and it will be a day for us all to remember.

As a result of our day down there the Beaufort have kindly given us the loan of a lovely 15.1 chestnut mare polo pony, which is now at Brinkley and will enable them to continue playing polo.



THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING!!

Does anyone besides me remember the good old (bad old) days? One tends to look back with romantic nostalgia through rose-coloured spectacles! But was everything really better then?

In the good old days, there was practically no paperwork, very few forms and instructors didn't spend more time filling out bits of paper than they did teaching. Wonderful!! Definitely, the good old days!

In the bad old days, for this group, there was no arena, ponies were drafted in from all over the place. If the owner couldn't come for some reason, it usually meant there was no pony either. Sherrards Training Centre (the group I taught then), met outside the Centre. We used to mount the riders in the middle of Rectory Road! No mounting block either, a box if we were lucky and everyone else heaved on from the ground, often in a not very dignified fashion!. Not so good for ponies, riders or helpers!

Lakeside School used to ride on a patch of grass next to the school above the lakes right by a sign which said 'Horse riding strictly prohibited'! We used to provide hats but someone had to remember to take them. It's much easier to have them all in the clubroom on hand all the time and to be able to sort out the footwear properly as well. Would we want to go back to this or do we prefer to have some facilities, an arena, a mounting block and known ponies? I think I'll choose to stick with what we've got now!

Sue Jenkins
Digswell Place



Preston St Mary Animal Service

Two ponies from The Shelley Centre recently 'flew the flag' for RDA by attending an Animal Service at Preston St Mary, near Lavenham in Suffolk. This was a very popular event and stimulated considerable interest in the organisation. A collection on the door also raised £129 for The Shelley Centre..

Pictured left is Julie Davis with Camilla and Squidgey, who behaved impeccably throughout.

Many thanks to her, and all concerned, for making the event such a success.

Sue Diggins.



The Herts and Essex Border Group Picnic Ride

Thanks to the generosity of our newly retired chairman - now newly appointed president! - Ted Harvey, our group ran our annual picnic ride at Albury Hall Farm. On this occasion Sue Diggins joined us to present Ted with an award for thirty years service to R.D.A.

We refuse to be cowed by paperwork and Health and Safety and risk assessment, but have the bonus of having run these picnics for a number of years. This year we had a perfect day and fifty five children arrived at slightly staggered times. They came from four schools; one for severe learning and physical disabilities, a primary and secondary school for moderate learning disabilities and a school for epileptics. We collected together ten privately owned ponies as we usually use riding school ponies. In thirty years only one, possibly two ponies has ever proved to be unsuitable mostly, perhaps, because owners make a fair assessment before they lend them.

There was a nice grassy sward in front of the buildings where the children were sitting on straw bales, where the riders could mount in view, but well away from the onlookers. The ride took them through the woods and out on to the farmland where there were lovely views of the surrounding villages. We had



(Ted Harvey - President, Herts & Essex Border Group)

plenty of helpers and the children loved their new forward going ponies. We went in two groups of five to minimise the waiting time for mounting, had plenty of hats, thankfully, so everyone had had a ride by lunchtime. Meanwhile the barbecue had been prepared sausages, salads, crisps, drinks and ice cream.

It was not difficult to tell who had had what by the time the last rider returned! The schools



all brought activities for the children whilst they weren't riding and we have never had problems with behaviour. The staff thoroughly enjoy bringing their children and make a big effort to come even if it is not their usual riding day. This year the children had all left with a rosette each, a smile and a thank you by about two o' clock. The ponies may have given a huge sigh of relief, but as usual, they had all behaved beautifully. I had an instructor "floating" with each ride to watch out for any dramas, so when a horsefly bit a pony she was on hand to squash it! (I had not put this in my risk assessment either! I shall add it next year.) We had as usual, with all our wonderful helpers, a very successful and enjoyable day.

Sarah Baker (Chairman)

Broadland Group Awards



Each year the Committee decides which of our riders has shown the most improvement, and on the last day of term before the summer break we have a little ceremony when either the Chairman or Chief Instructor presents a medallion to the selected rider when he/she has finished riding. We keep it as a surprise for the rider(s) (telling only the carers/parents beforehand).



We have riding sessions on both Wednesday and Thursday mornings and this year it was difficult to choose between Aaron (Wednesday rider, pictured left) and Howard (Thursday rider, pictured right) so we awarded them both medallions. They were absolutely thrilled and proud that their efforts had been so recognised. Their pictures will be printed in our Christmas Newsletter.

Val Soame
(Secretary, Norfolk Broadland RDA Group)

Blue Peter Visit West Suffolk Group



The hot and sunny 22nd June, will long be remembered by a young rider from the West Suffolk Group, Courtney Reeve, who was referred to the Group by the CDC in Bury St Edmunds, in September, 2004. This was the day she had a huge surprise, and came face to face with Blue Peter presenter!

Courtney never misses Blue Peter, and loved Zoe, one of the presenters. Courtney wrote to Zoe to tell her about her riding sessions with the West Suffolk Group, under the expert guidance of her Instructor, Joan Southwould, and her team of helpers. Courtney asked Zoe to come and see her ride at Culford Riding stables where the Group hold their sessions.



Zoe was away, but Liz contacted the family and said she would be delighted to come to the Group session and present the badge herself, and asked that Blue Peter pony Jet be brought from Essex to the stables for the occasion. Ann Mitchell was delighted to bring him along, and he behaved impeccably in his new surroundings.

Courtneys School in Mildenhall were approached, and were pleased to help.

Imagine the delight when, during the ride in the outdoor arena, Liz appeared on jet, called to Courtney, and made the presentation. It was a

moment that Courtney, Mum Jo, Dad Chris and Granddad Kingsley, who were proudly watching, would never forget. In her excitement Mum had forgotten to use her camera, but there were lots of other cameras there to record this lovely moment.

It was a great day for all concerned, and everyone had worked hard to make the day a success.

Courtney had a wonderful time, and slept like a top with her favourite cuddly toy, Rory. It was school as usual the following morning, and what a tale she had to tell her friends when she arrived at The Glade School in Mildenhall.

Well done everybody!

Carol Hall (Suffolk C. I.)





Side Saddle At Shelley

It was at the RDA National Conference earlier this year than Lyn Bensusan, our stable manager at the Shelley Centre, met Rayna Matthews. She was inspired by the enthusiasm, courage and commitment of this very talented side saddle rider.

Lyn thought Rayna would be an inspiration to us and had in mind specific riders for whom astride riding was becoming difficult, because of problems including spasm and an advancing condition of tightening of the muscles in the thighs.

When in her thirties Rayna suffered a series of attacks of a polio-like illness that left her permanently disabled, but she never lost her interest in riding.

In 1995 she was offered an RDA place with the Wormwood Scrubs Pony Centre. But in spite of all the perseverance and help given it didn't work for her, as her legs in sitting astride kept going into spasm. After a chance meeting with a lady who was a founder member of The Side Saddle Association, Rayna decided this was the way for her to ride. With her husband's encouragement she found her own horse, instructor and saddle and in 1997 began to compete in the UK Side Saddle National Championships, in the Historical Costume Class, which she later won more than once.

In September Rayna conducted a clinic for us at The Shelley Centre. She showed a video of herself performing a dressage test in the UK National Championships, in the costume of The Countess of Mar. The costume was researched from a painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller, reproduced down to the last detail and made by

herself. She demonstrated training and explained the important elements of side saddle riding, to riders and helpers, finishing with one of her dressage routines. I had tears in my eyes as she ended this performance with the most wonderful extended trot down the centre of the arena.

The energy and enthusiasm she imparted was inspiring, after a whole day of giving so much she must have been exhausted. However the next week she offered to come back to us, from Portsmouth, and for a week rode 'Charlie' twice a day to assess his suitability for side saddle riding.

In her own words Rayna says 'I try constantly to persuade other disabled people to take up side saddle as I'm sure that many could find the same satisfaction I have'.

She has certainly inspired many of us at The Shelley Centre with her enthusiasm. With the help and interest from qualified able bodied side saddle riders and the determination of Lyn Bensusan, we are thoroughly exploring all possibilities in this area of riding. Maggie Bradley of the National Training Sub Committee is giving us guidance and of course we have the help and inspiration of Rayna herself.

It won't happen overnight, horses have to be trained as well as instructors and helpers, but we hope to succeed.

Next time Rayna comes to us, we hope to have more advanced notice to enable us to share the experience with those from other RDA groups.

Val Cadman

Top *Showing how symmetrical a side saddle rider can be, from seat to shoulder.*

Below *Rayna demonstrating a glorious extended trot.*



TO TRY IS TO RISK FAILURE

BUT RISK MUST BE TAKEN BECAUSE

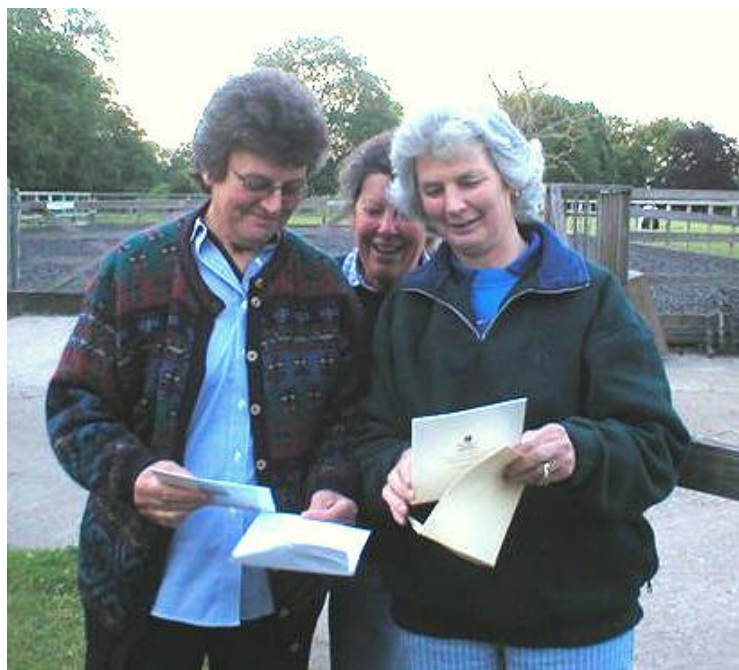
*THE GREATEST HAZARD OF LIFE IS TO RISK
NOTHING.*

*THE PERSON WHO RISKS NOTHING, DOES NOTHING,
HAS NOTHING, IS NOTHING.*

*HE MAY AVOID SUFFERING AND SORROW,
BUT HE SIMPLY CANNOT LEARN. FEEL, CHANGE,
GROW, LIVE AND LOVE*

" AND RIDE "

~~~~~



## Hertfordshire County Retirements

Pauline Ayling and Liz Wood, pictured at the Regional Training Day for Helpers, (Digswell), opening their cards of appreciation on their recent retirements as County Officers for Hertfordshire - County Instructor and Chairman respectively.

Pauline has also served on the National Training Committee, and her expertise will be greatly missed - as will their assistance at the annual Regional Qualifiers at Wimpole Hall!

Sue Diggins, Regional Chairman, is seen lurking the background!

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*



*There were many wonderful entries this year, but these are my personal favourites!*

# Art Competition



Left: Elliot Duston aged 9  
Mid Essex (1<sup>st</sup> 8-12yrs rider class)



'Mark' (10 year old rider)



Mark Stuman aged 10 - Thriftwood (3<sup>rd</sup> 8-12 rider)



Victoria James aged 5 - Stevenage (2<sup>nd</sup> 7 & under rider)



Emma Cain aged 6 - Digswell House  
(1<sup>st</sup> 7 & under rider and overall show winner)

# *Ode To The Day*

*(1<sup>st</sup> prize Wimpole Hall poetry competition)*

*An early start was made by all  
Getting the horses clean and tacked.  
Arriving on time at Wimpole Hall  
With the picnic in the back.*

*The health and safety lady said  
"Keep on the right side of the rope  
Riders will be looking straight ahead  
Competing at their best we hope."*

*Snort and Frosty, Mollie and Breeze  
Walked over the poles laying on the grass,  
Through the gate, past the bales  
In the qualifier class.*

*At lunchtime riders ate their lunch,  
The horses ate their hay.  
Paddy tried to nibble the hedge  
And Miss Matilda May!*

*Now we're out of words to write,  
The pace is slowing, the sun is too hot.  
The Classes are over, the prizes won,  
And needless to say we've enjoyed it a lot.*

*Brenda Jones  
Yare Valley*



# Wimpoles Hall 2005

Photographs by Andrew Gourlay

These shots, and many others, can be viewed on our 'News' page at:  
[www.rda-east.org.uk](http://www.rda-east.org.uk)



# Extracts From Dicken's Diary

It doesn't seem too bad here. I've got a good view from my accommodation. The gang in the field seem OK too. The top man is the little one called Barnse. He's only short but definitely in charge. Lots of people have come to say hello to me. I feel quite important. Two nice ladies fed me and took me out to see the gang. I've no complaints so far.

All my friends seem to go down to the school a lot with a load of hangers on. They all mill about and come out again. I've got a good view from where I am. They say I'm too young and green to go. I thought I was orange?

I'm told on Saturdays I have my lesson with the "bossy one". Sounds interesting. I asked the gang about it. Everyone says it's harder work than the rest of the week. They all have different advice. Barnse says: Do what you're asked, he's found it quicker in the long run. Ther says: If you puff a lot she gives you a break. Lady says: If you say you're old she'll give you a gentle warm up - no good for me then. Chloe says: Slow down and if that doesn't work fall in - to what? Flavia says: It's better to fall out - very confusing; it looks too well fenced to me. Gurtie says: If you can, stay behind the leg whose? Shady says: It's better to jump - at what? The posh one, Terri says: She saves herself for the last ten minutes and then shows off and everyone is so exhausted that they give her a pat and it's all over. As for Pedlar, next door, he says: He always makes sure he is out on a hack because the thought of it brings him out in bumps.

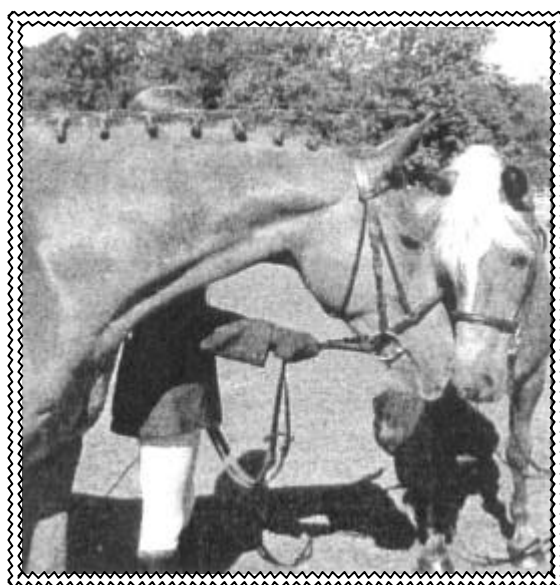
I had my first lesson today. They all watched me go in. The nice lady with glasses came to watch over the gate as well. I find it a bit tricky to balance with a rider. I wobble about a bit. So I tried going slowly, then quickly, but that was worse. The Bossy One said: Let's keep it simple and go back to basics like going forward and straight. I suppose I'll have to save my backwards for hacking.

In my lesson this week I showed off my going straight. I was on a circle and I went straight off it on the diagonal, as forward as I could make it. No one clapped. Apparently this is not what she meant!

I'm sick of the Posh One name dropping about Emile, John and Inger and talking about her days as a dressage horse. She uses strange terms like traverse and piaffe. I'll show her some fancy footwork in my canter this week. Apparently that's the wrong lead and going disunited. Why doesn't what I do have a foreign word for it?

Now I'm supposed to go straight and round at the same time!?! Then next week she says we're going to go sideways too. I think she's lost the plot!

OK I can do straight AND round AND sideways. Now I've got to leave the ground and jump.



I'm getting more advice... Chloe says: Unless the poles are wooden don't even bother, carry on as normal. Flavia says: If you wait until the last minute and then jump as high as you can, it often puts them off the whole idea. Tilly says: run in and out at top speed. Lady says: Start snorting as soon as they pick up the first pole. Gurtie says: She loved it in her younger years. Shady says: She still does. Thor says: He finds it works best when he gets all his legs to work together? The Posh One says: She can only do a little because she has to be careful not to jar her legs.

I'm allowed to do a weekday session at last. It's a bit confusing though. Today I was supposed to ignore what the rider was doing. But that's what I tried when I first got here! This apparently is different. Then I got patted for standing still!! The Posh One says she loves it. She says you can win a dressage competition without ever going out of walk! I think I'm going to like this much more!

I've done so well that after Easter I can start this RDA thing properly, (in walk and trot to start with). So does that mean I get a "Badge and Certificate" or a "Green Card"? Not green surely because apparently I'm not green anymore. In fact, officially I'm chestnut. Even the Posh One says I can do a half decent shoulder in and my walk to canter is perfect - praise indeed! I think she likes my muscles!

Diary notes kindly extracted by Mary Jones



# The Shelley Show



demonstration of side-saddle riding by three ladies beautifully dressed in their hand-made period costumes.

A welcome break for lunch was followed by the Working Pony and Rider competition. Again the riders excelled themselves and amazed their families and friends by their ability to negotiate the obstacles on horseback.

July 3rd was one of our hot summer days this year. Too hot to be wearing shirts, ties and jackets, but the fourteen enthusiastic riders arrived at The Centre looking splendid. The ponies and horses and helpers were equally well presented and so the Tack and Turnout classes were quite a challenge to judge.

The Dressage Tests were followed by a





The Prize giving ceremony showed a very hot, tired, slightly less tidy, but still smiling group of riders, who were justly proud of their achievements. Well done to them all.

This day is very special in our calendar at Shelley. The competitions provide a focus and a challenge for the riders. The familiar surroundings allow for more of the riders to compete riding off the lead rein, and their enjoyment and sense of achievement are a joy to share. Of course these events do not just happen. We appreciate the planning, time and enthusiasm that our helpers give to make the Shelley Show possible. We also appreciate those involved in the RDA who organise the Regional and National competitions. We are very grateful to all those volunteers who make such events available.

Photographs overleaf: Demonstration of side-saddle riding by Linda Dainton and Joanna Freeman. Rebecca Jackaman riding Moses, posting a letter in the Working Pony Class

Above: Champion Rider of the day - Sarah Mitchell riding Kerry in the Tack and Turnout Class 2.

Below: The Shelley Show Prizewinners.

(back row left to right) Dale Collins, Matthew Baker, Marie Filby, Sarah Mitchell, Ruth Snowling, Russell McRae, Matthew Worrall, Joanna Harris. (front row left to right) Jackie Gosling, Oliver Waters, Rebecca Jackaman, Shannon Smith.



*Inspired by the day, Matthew Worrall has kindly provided his account of the event - which is presented overleaf.*

# The riding competition

*When J was asked to take part in the competition J was very nervous and didn't think that J would be good enough. When Sunday came J was still nervous but a little more confident as we had done some practice over the past weeks. Everyone looked very smart when they arrived.*

*The Tack and Turn out took quite a long time as all the riders had to get on their horses - J got very hot in my jacket. J came 5th and got a rosette.*

*The Dressage was quite hard as you had to listen very carefully to Margaret and make sure that you did everything right. J couldn't believe that J came 2nd.*

*During lunch we watched a display of sidesaddle riding which was very good.*

*The Working Pony was my best event - J like opening the gates and trotting. Fortunately Kerry behaved himself and did not try to eat the grass. J was really surprised and very happy when the judge said that J was the winner. J got a nice trophy that J can keep forever.*

*J made some new friends and really enjoyed the day - thank you for asking me to take part.*

**Matthew Worrall**



## TRAINING NEWS FROM THE EAST REGION

2005 has been another very good year for training in the Region. It is very encouraging for those of us who arrange these training days when we seem to accommodate more and more delegates – thank you for coming, please encourage your friends too!

The first day arranged to be held in Essex in February had, unfortunately, to be cancelled due to the weather. This day was re-scheduled for 15th September, but in the end it was decided to postpone the day until next year.

The day in Norfolk, in April, where the main speaker gave us a talk 'Towards a Better Understanding of Autism' was very over subscribed and we had to turn down quite a few applications. This was disappointing – for us and for them! It was an excellent day and included a talk on the benefits of using elements from the Horse/Pony and Rider course to reinforce skills taught in our RDA sessions and also a very helpful presentation on record keeping, which is a 'must' these days.

The day in May at the College of West Anglia attracted over 100 delegates and including a talk by Ro Pudden, RDA SI from Warwickshire, on respecting the interests and comfort of our horses and ponies.





Julie Mountry from Somerset ran an excellent workshop on planning, improvisation and inspiration to help us make our lessons more interesting and our own Judith Walker reminded us all about the importance of good leading from Group to National competition level. Then in June we had a helpers training evening at Digswell Place in Hertfordshire followed by a BBQ. An evening had been requested as so many people now work during the day. It was very well attended and the BBQ was extremely popular! We managed to get a lot in to the two hours helper training and everyone seemed pleased with this new idea for timing. The October training day at Pettistree Hall Farm in Suffolk on the therapeutic value of a balanced seat was much appreciated by all the delegates. This important day was led by our Regional Physiotherapists, Pat Messam and Tish Woulds, whose expertise is of great benefit to all of us. What was discussed in the morning was put into practice in the afternoon with riders demonstrating, through a handy pony course, the benefits of a properly balanced seat. Finally for this year, there was a Dressage

Training day in Bedfordshire on 11<sup>th</sup> October. The day was led by Inge Bryant, a renowned dressage judge of both able bodied and disabled riders. It was an instructive and inspiring day and it was a shame that more delegates, than the 40 who attended, didn't take the opportunity of learning more about this discipline. Our thanks go to all the riders, including a paralympic rider, who so ably demonstrated the various tests undertaken.

All in all, a busy year! And this is quite apart from all the Training that goes on at Group level when they are visited by their County Instructors. Thanks to everyone involved.

**THE NEW AIM PLAN.** All Groups will have had details of this new system – which is a pilot scheme - where all instructors must be visited by a Training Adviser and reviewed according to the notes in the new Manual. The main change is that it is now the responsibility of the Groups to request a visit by a Training Adviser to make sure their instructors are covered by insurance. Please do remember this! In our Region, all our County Instructors, except Anne Mitchell in Essex, are acting as Training Advisers as well and are registered at National Office. Sue Diggins and I are also registered to do reviews. Judith Walker and Janet Abbott are available too, to help to carry the load. Groups may ask any Training Adviser to visit them for these Reviews but we would be grateful if you could maintain the usual contact with your County Instructors wherever possible.

County Instructors will continue to be available for training, as usual, and give out Log Books to new instructors. This includes Anne Mitchell in Essex. She has only declined the appointment of Training Adviser for the moment as she is fully occupied running the Barrow Farm centre.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY AND CHILD PROTECTION.** There seem to be more and more stringent requirements in every walk of life. We have dealt with some interesting requirements this year and, so far, all has ended well! I would just like to say that if, at Group level, you do have concerns about visits or are contacted by outside agencies, particularly to do with out of school visits, please do not hesitate to contact either me or Sue Diggins as we have had some experience recently with dealing with these problems. We suggest you do this through your County Officers. The great thing is that if Groups are following our H&S Guidelines and other RDA requirements as detailed in the Manual – there is no need to worry. All Groups are different but we all work within the same framework and that is the important bit! S C-G



# NORFOLK BROADLAND R.D.A.

## GROUP ANNUAL OUTING - WEDNESDAY 20TH JULY 2005

Each year at the end of the summer term, we invite all our riders, helpers and carers, to a half-day outing. This year we visited Fritton Country Park. Forty-two of us met there at 12 noon bringing our own picnic lunches, which we ate together in lovely sunshine before setting off in groups to explore the pathways, watch the owls and hawks giving their flying demonstrations, pat the farm animals and horses, or take boat trips on the lake. We had one short heavy shower during the afternoon, but there were a few places to shelter and nobody seemed to be the worse for the experience.



The carers bring the riders (who come from many different directions) in their own transport, which allows them to leave when they feel they have done enough, or if any problems arise, without bothering the others.

We usually negotiate favourable terms for entrance fees for the riders and helpers; and carers are normally allowed in free. We were very fortunate this year in that someone (who wishes to remain anonymous) paid the whole bill, so we did not have to dip into our Group Funds. The top photograph was taken by me during the afternoon

when we stopped for a cup of tea. We operate our riding sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and this outing is the only time everyone gets together socially. Everyone seems to enjoy these outings, and we are wondering where to go next year.

Val Soame  
Group Secretary





# Norfolk County Gymkhana

Norfolk County held a gymkhana on Tuesday 14th June at Red Hall Livery Stables, on the outskirts of Norwich.

Sadly we have found that our numbers have been declining over the past two years, mainly due to problems faced by the organizing source of our riders. Schools' find that stretched resources result in a lack of transport and available staff to bring their riders outside their normal riding times. This is in no way a criticism of schools, they themselves are frustrated and sad not to be able to be flexible enough for their pupils to come and enjoy all the fun of the day. We discovered the same kind of problem affected some of our adult riders, who come from residential homes or day care centers. The staff and transport are committed to a busy weekly programme of activities and anything out of sync causes them the same kind of problems. Just incase you are wondering, the date of the gymkhana is advised after the March county meeting and all groups remind their sources at the beginning of the summer term!

However the county received entry forms from three groups - Norwich & District, North Norfolk and Mid Norfolk, in total fourteen riders. Hoorah we said, we will run the gymkhana for those who are able to come and a really fun enjoyable morning we all had. The riders were organized into three groups; we had three lanes and four ponies - who took turns at resting. Each rider was mounted twice. The first time they competed in three games and the second time two games. So from the aspect of "time spent in the saddle" it was really good value. Every rider received four rosettes any more and we would have had to pin them on the rider's back! Points were accumulated for the County Shield, which was won by Peggy Holden to the great delight of herself, her parents and the Mid Norfolk Group. Afterwards everyone tucked into their picnic lunch in the field. Hilary, myself and our band of hard working helpers treated ourselves to a "wee glass of wine" to toast the success of the day and the enjoyment and appreciation of the riders and their parents.

Christine Stone

Photographs

Top: Jamie Abbott from Norwich & District Group punching the air in delight on winning a race. Also hugely enjoyed by Marcelle Pyne (leader) and Jenny Green (side helper)

Right: Peggy Holden in her Mid Norfolk Group polo shirt sporting two of her rosettes.





# Pony Camp 2005

**H**ello, my name is James Wright and I was very lucky to go to this years Pony Camp.

**DAY ONE** I done the tack and turnout in the rain. It rained and me and Cleo were soggy all day. We still practised our show jumping and cross country, and never complained ever because we were having such fun.

**DAY TWO** This was a lovely day with lots of hot sunshine. We both worked hard this day. Three hours of riding practising dressage and some help with my cantering before lunch, then more work after, but all great.

**DAY THREE** More rain today and very windy (the canopy blew away over the burger van, and had to be rescued) we did not do Fancy dress as it



was too wet and would spoil our costumes. Done more lessons today but as the wind was strong we done the Round Robin on foot. It was so much fun competing against the other teams. My team was called The Chestnuts.

## DAY FOUR ONE DAY EVENT

A very long and fun packed day for all of us. This is mum getting me ready for the dressage, which I got **FIRST**.

It was a long hard test and Cleo helped me to Win.

Show jumping was next and I missed a fence but I turned round and jumped it and completed a clear round. Cleo was well behaved and done everything I asked her to do.

Cross country was next and I was looking forward to this because I knew it would be fun. A few people got a little bit wet at the water jump and Cleo made very big splashes all the way through. I





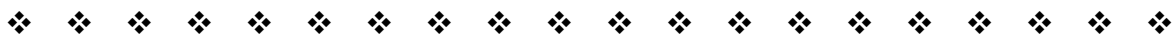
This is me and Cleo at the end of the day with our awards. There were 53 children there and I got 2nd in the 'One Day Event' and I got all the rosettes on her back. Cleo got the large trophy for 'Pony giving most confidence to rider'.

A big thank you to Julie who owns Cleo for letting me ride her all week and everyone else who helped me.

!!!!It was great fun!!!!

went over the smaller jumps because I wanted to. When I finished the course I cheered 'Hooray' with my arm in the air because I done well and enjoyed it.

The fancy dress was the last thing we did and I done it with my friend Simon. We went as 'The lone ranger and Tonto'. Mum made our outfits and Simon had to wear a wig. He did look funny. We had western saddles, and looked great.



## Simon Bows Out

After nearly a decade of service to the region, Wimpole Hall saw the retirement of Simon Brocklehurst, who kindly gave his services as Regional Treasurer.

Always a 'friendly voice on the phone', many groups benefited from his financial expertise and impartial advice.

Also pictured left is his wife Penny, who has been his stalwart aide during his time in office.

Whilst they may *think* they have stepped down, we still hope to see them in their usual roles as Scorer and Treasurer Hunt Organiser at next year's Wimpole!





# The French Connection

After being on the road for five months, covering on average 20 miles a day (resting every fourth day), two Camargue horses finally ended their incredible journey at The Magpie Centre on Tuesday 18th October.

Jakki Cunningham, chairperson of the SLL Charity and her nephew 17 year old James Portham completed the final leg of the journey arriving at The Magpie Centre at lunch time to an unexpected welcoming party of The Magpie Centre's volunteers and riders as well as children from Meadowgate School.

Jakki Cunningham founded the SLL Charity with the purpose of purchasing four Camargue horses to donate to special riding schools so that they might benefit children and adults with disabilities through therapeutic riding. As indeed her nephew James had benefited from his riding with The Magpie Centre.

The incredible journey started on the 1st May following a years planning and fundraising, including sponsorship from some of the leading equestrian brands. Following a blessing in Arles, Camargue, Jakki not having ridden for 40 years set off with her back up crew and four Camargue mares as what can only be described as an amazing adventure.

Jakki and her team were very often living each day to the next, sometimes only knowing of their destinations two days in advance. It could not have been easy trying to find accommodation for four horses, a trailer and a team of riders, but somehow Jakki always managed to do so.

The horses newly broken in were also finding everything new, but through their thousand mile journey they have bravely faced everything imaginable, including the centre of London, where

they were fortunate to stay with the household cavalry and have a mounted police escort through the city centre.

In July, The Magpie Centre's Rachel Long and Claire Couzins joined Jakki in Brittany and were fortunate to have the time to get to know the four horses and select which two they thought would be most suitable for The Magpie Centre and their future roles as RDA ponies. Nounnat and Noumba, both five years old with only two days between their birthdays were chosen for their temperaments, personalities and attitude to life.

At the end of July the horses were rested for a month in Brittany, following which two were gifted to a special riding school in Brittany and Nounnat and Noumba continued their journey to England.

On Tuesday the horses arrival brought with it not only a bright new beginning for the two little mares it also brought with it a sad end for Jakki Cunningham, for after five months, her challenge was completed, she has succeeded with what she had set out to do, but at the same time the close bond that had formed between herself, the back up crew and the horses had to be broken.

Both horses have settled in well and are enjoying relaxing in their new field. After travelling so far they are incredibly fit, but also tired, so a gentle exercise routine has been planned to enable them to be let down gradually.

West Norfolk RDA (based at The Magpie Centre) are truly grateful to Jakki and the SLL Charity for gifting the two Camargues to the centre and from what Rachel and Claire have seen already of the two little mares, experience tells them that Nounnat and Noumba will make excellent RDA ponies. They are unflappable, docile loving little horses that are full of trust and are a credit to Jakki.

Nounnat and Noumba will be starting their RDA training in the New Year.

(Claire & Rachel)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Cambridgeshire Camp

**On a fine and sunny day in August, 8 children and a good assortment of helpers assembled at Coach House riding stables in Chippenham, to enjoy another fun and challenging summer camp. This camp gives children an opportunity not only to ride but to care for their pony for the whole day, grooming and tacking up (under supervision), then being ably instructed by Jill in the arena in the morning, followed by a picnic lunch, games and an afternoon hack and treasure hunt. Coach House again provided a delightful selection of well-mannered ponies, and a thoroughly good time was had by all!**

## That's all for this year folks!

We hope that you've enjoyed reading our latest edition, and look forward to hearing from you - both with your feedback, and loads of 'copy' for next years issue!

One final bit of 'hold the press' news. It looks as though maintaining our old Freeserve website is going to prove rather more problematic than was originally envisaged. I would therefore recommend pointing your 'Favorites' or 'Bookmark' to [www.rda-east.org.uk](http://www.rda-east.org.uk) , and resetting my email address as [chairman@rda-east.org.uk](mailto:chairman@rda-east.org.uk) sooner rather than later.

With best wishes, *Sue Diggins*