

RDA East Region



Instructors Information Pack

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The Association is divided into 18 Regions.
This is the East Region and includes the Counties of
Beds, Cambs., Herts., Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk.

THE WAY WE WORK IN THE EAST REGION.

REGIONAL OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

The Regional Committee comprises Regional Chairman, Regional Instructor, Regional Physiotherapist, Regional Treasurer, Regional Publicity Officer, Regional Driving Representative and all County Chairmen.

THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE
meets twice a year and is chaired by the Regional Chairman.

THE REGIONAL & COUNTY INSTRUCTORS COMMITTEE
(comprising Regional and County Instructors, Regional Physiotherapist and Regional Chairman)
meets twice a year and is chaired by the Regional Instructor.

COUNTY OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

County Committees comprise County Chairman, County Instructor/s, County Physiotherapists, County Treasurers.

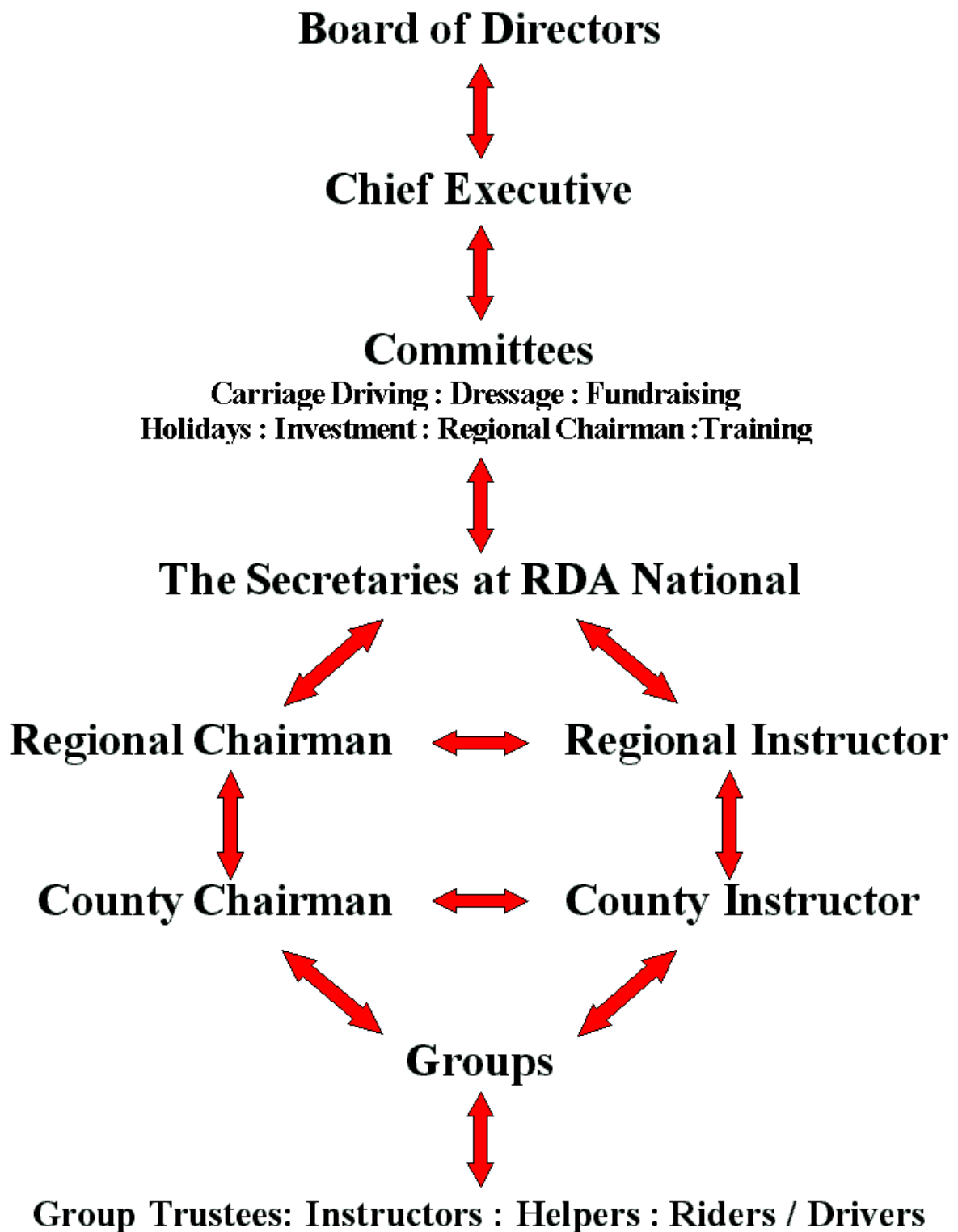
GROUPS

All Regional and County Officers are appointed to assist the Groups in whatever way required.

GROUP INSTRUCTORS' SHOULD ASK FOR ADVICE OR HELP, ON ANY MATTERS OF TRAINING AND SAFETY, FROM THEIR COUNTY OR REGIONAL INSTRUCTOR WHO WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH COUNTY & REGIONAL PHYSIOTHERAPISTS.

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK!

Lines of Communication



SD 11/2004

RDA GROUP INSTRUCTORS LOG BOOK

The RDA Group Instructors' Log Book will now contain the following:

- Notes for RDA Instructors and Helpers on Medical Conditions in RDA Riders and Drivers

- Health and Safety Guidelines

- Guidelines for Mounting / Dismounting Riders

Log Books may only be obtained through your Regional or County Instructor.

F. RDA GROUP INSTRUCTOR PROFILE

(also for Assistant Group Instructors)

1. Main Purpose

The Group's Instructor is required to work with the County Instructor, County Physiotherapist, Group Officials and Group Physiotherapist (where applicable), Helpers, Teachers and Parents to ensure that an acceptable standard of instruction is maintained within their Group as required by the Training Committee.

There should be an ongoing assessment of all Instructors to help them to gain their RDAGI, which will qualify them as Group Instructor for their named Group and session(s), as laid down by Health and Safety Regulations. They will be recorded on a list at RDA National Headquarters.

2. Specific Responsibilities

- (a) To hold an up-to-date Log Book with records of all assessments, teaching hours and all training days.
- (b) To be prepared to attend a wide variety of training days, both RDA and others that will help to improve their instructing and riding knowledge.
- (c) To attend at least one Regional or County Training Day each year, to be recorded in their Log Books.
- (d) To hold regular training sessions for Helpers within their Group, to understand how to involve Helpers in their lessons and to be sympathetic to any difficulties that may arise with Riders and ponies.
- (e) Work within the RDA Health & Safety Guidelines.
- (f) To have a thorough knowledge of the disabilities of the Riders within their Group.
- (g) To assess Riders and ponies and be able to match them, so that Riders have the most benefit from their riding sessions.
- (h) To monitor and keep records of the progress of all Riders and to ensure safety at all times.
- (i) To be responsible for the content and conduct of the ride,
- (j) To ensure that Riders want to continue riding by providing happy riding conditions for them.

3. Requirements

- (a) To be at least seventeen years of age.
- (b) To communicate with their Group Committee, County and Regional Officers and to know where to turn for help, when in difficulty.
- (c) To have real understanding and knowledge of horses and an ability to communicate with disabled people.
- (d) To understand the basic principles of teaching a group of riders and to be able to prepare a progressive plan suited to their disabilities.
- (e) To have a sound knowledge of safety requirements and of accident procedures.
- (f) To be able to assess Helpers, and fit them into the Group Team, ensuring that they are adequately briefed and trained for their specific role.
- (g) To be able to assess and agree realistic goals for each of their riders.
- (h) To have up-to-date copies of the 'Manual of Horsemanship' and the Instructors Handbook and to be familiar with the RDA Membership Manual.
- (i) To be prepared to work towards the RDAI Examination, with guidance from their County and Regional Instructors.

4. Method of Appointment

- (a) By initial consultation as laid down in section 5(b)(ii) A, Log Books.
- (b) Accompanying the County Instructor on visits to established Groups and after recommendation from the Regional Instructor.
- (c) Ratification by County and Regional Chairman.

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RDA COUNTY INSTRUCTOR PROFILE

1. Main Purpose

The County Instructor is required to work with the County Chairman, County Physiotherapist and Regional Instructor to ensure that an acceptable standard of instruction is maintained within their Groups as required by the Training Committee.

2. Specific Responsibilities

- (a) To ensure, by the Regional Assessment Programme, that every Group riding session has a competent Instructor and Assistant Instructor, properly trained Helpers and sensibly selected and properly equipped and schooled horses and ponies.
- (b) To keep records and advise the County Chairman accordingly.
- (c) To ascertain whether all Log Books have been kept up-to-date.
- (d) To check that all new information from the Regional Instructor or Training Committee has been disseminated.
- (e) To ensure that every Group's Instructor and Assistant Instructor is in possession of an up-to-date RDA Log Book with completed assessment records.
- (f) To request a counter-signature by the Regional Instructor on satisfactory completion of the Assessment Sheet so that the Instructor may be awarded the RDAGI by the Regional Instructor after registration at RDA National Headquarters.
- (g) To develop and improve instructional standards within their Groups by visiting and by demonstrating new ideas and training methods to Instructors.
- (h) To encourage Group Instructors to take the Instructors' Examination and, with this end in view, to train them up to the required standard.
- (i) To assist Instructors to hold regular training sessions for Helpers within their Groups, encouraging open discussion at these sessions to promote more involvement with the Helpers as a team with the therapists and school-teachers.
- (j) To liaise with their Regional Instructor, to whom they should submit a programme of their local training days.
- (k) To identify and assist inadequate RDA Instructors to improve their awareness and responsibility regarding the instruction of disabled riders.

To revisit, as necessary, with the County Chairmen or Regional Instructor, as appropriate, and inform the Instructor if instruction is not of the required standard or cannot be considered safe and/or consistent with the objects of the Association.

To recommend the disbanding of the Group if the situation remains unsatisfactory and no suitable replacement Instructor can be found to take over.

- (l) To arrange First Aid training days so that the Groups can meet the First Aid requirements laid down in Section 5(d)(iii)
- (m) To advise during the formation of a new Group.

To be present to assist the new RDA Instructor during the first few sessions.

To visit the new Group subsequently with the County Chairman and Regional Instructor.

- (n) To advise on horse and pony welfare, in conjunction with the Regional Instructor.
- (o) To assess the suitability of any horse or pony that may have been offered to a Group and to report back thereon to the County Chairman and/or other appropriate RDA personnel.
- (p) To attend the Regional and County Instructors' Conference at least once every three years.
- (q) To show that they are endeavouring to increase their personal knowledge and expertise through attendance at relevant Regional and National training days/courses.

3. Requirements

- (a) All newly appointed County Instructors should either

have already passed the RDAI Examination (formerly the RDA Group Instructor's Examination)

; or

satisfy their Regional Instructor and Regional Physiotherapist by their Log Books and/or personal interview and observed teaching that they understand and are competent to demonstrate all aspects of the RDAI syllabus.

A County Instructor that is appointed under these criteria and subsequently fails the RDAI Examination may continue in post subject to the approval of the Training Committee. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and if necessary the Training Committee may set conditions or limitations for continuance.

- (b) Where a County does not have a willing volunteer of this calibre the Regional Instructor, in consultation with the Regional Physiotherapist, may appoint an 'Acting County Instructor' who may hold office temporarily.
- (c) Where geographical areas are large, there are many Groups, or where time is limited there is no objection to the proposed appointment of a 'joint' or 'assistant' County Instructor, provided that the agreed criteria are applied to both persons.

4. Method of Appointment (for an initial period of three years)

- (a) Assessment by the Regional Instructor
- (b) Ratification by the Regional Committee

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RDA REGIONAL INSTRUCTOR PROFILE

1. Main Purpose

The Regional Instructor should ensure that the training needs of the Region are identified and met by the most appropriate means, in conjunction with the Regional Chairman and Regional Physiotherapist.

The Regional Instructor has a close working relationship with County Chairmen and with County Instructors and is responsible for liaison with the Training Committee on behalf of the Region.

By consultation with the Regional Chairman and County instructors formulate a Regional Assessment Programme as required by the RDA Training Committee. Submit the programme to the Training Committee for ratification.

2. Specific Responsibilities

(a) To select, appoint and develop qualified County Instructors.

(b) To carry out assessments of all County Instructors in their Region as defined in the Region's assessment programme, who are actively teaching in a Group.

To ensure that their Log Books are properly maintained (to comply with Health and Safety requirements).

(c) To assist County Instructors in the selection, appointment and training of Group Instructors.

On approval of recommendations made by County Instructors to countersign all RDAGI qualifying assessment sheets.

To apply thereafter to RDA National Headquarters for registration of the Group Instructors concerned.

To award the Badges and Certificates when received.

(d) To assess the training needs of Groups and Counties in the Region and to meet those needs by the provision of Regional / County Training Days.

(e) To ensure that County Instructors visit Groups regularly and that, when they are making these visits, they are passing on all new information from the Training Committee.

(f) To advise the Regional Chairman, in conjunction with the County Chairman and County Instructor concerned, as to the suitability of any Group applying for membership - taking into account Regional consistency in Health and Safety and Training Standards and the ability of existing Teams to service new Groups.

- (g) To act as the representative of the Training Committee in interpreting and applying agreed Training Policy.
- (h) To attend all Regional Instructors' Meetings and to attend the Regional and County Instructors' Conference at least once every three years.

3. Requirements

- (a) All newly proposed Regional Instructors should either
 - have already passed the RDASI examination; or
 - satisfy the Training Committee by their Log Books, CVs and / or personal interview that they are working towards the equivalent level and have a sound understanding of all aspects of the RDASI syllabus.

A Regional Instructor that is appointed under these criteria and subsequently fails the RDASI Examination may continue in post subject to the approval of the Training Committee. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and if necessary the Training Committee may set conditions or limitations for continuance.

- (b) Where a Region does not have a willing volunteer of this calibre the Regional Chairman, in consultation with the Training Committee, may appoint an 'Acting Regional Instructor' to hold office temporarily.
- (c) Where geographical areas are large, there are many Groups, or where time is limited there is no objection to the proposed appointment of a 'joint' or 'assistant' Regional Instructor, provided that the agreed criteria are applied to both persons.

4. Method of Appointment

Letter of recommendation, to be addressed to the Training Committee, from the Regional Chairman.

Submission of a CV to the Training Committee.

Approval by the Training Committee (which is subject to having previously served as a County Instructor and having attended at least one Philip Gell course prior to the submission of the application).

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LESSON STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

1. Establish rapport (brief helpers).
2. Decide on starting point for assessment.
3. Mount.
4. Safety check, dress, tack, area, horses.

ASSESSMENT

1. Safe procedure. Establish authority.
2. Assess capabilities of riders (and helpers).
3. Decide on subject for lesson, improvement or new work.

LESSON

1. Outline plan.
2. Continuous re-assessment.
3. Finish on a positive note.

CONCLUSION

1. Debrief riders, (and helpers).
2. Dismount safely.

FORWARD PLAN

1. Complete lesson reports.
2. Set short / long term goals.

THE RDA SESSION- IT'S A TEAM EFFORT!

(See H &S Guidelines)

PRACTICAL NOTES FOR PRODUCING A SAFE, PLANNED AND PURPOSEFUL LESSON FOR DISABLED RIDERS.

PERSONNEL INVOLVED

1. THE ORGANISING TEAM

Responsible for the background management and smooth running of the whole Group.

2. THE INSTRUCTOR

Responsible for safe riding in safe places. The Instructor is responsible for everything at all times within a session. (See H&S Guidelines)

3. ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR/DESIGNATED HELPER

Available to - help individual as required by the instructor supervise specific areas - e.g. mounting take charge in an emergency if required.

4. HELPERS/LEADERS

Work as a team with the horse to develop the rider's ability under the guidance of the instructor.

5. THE HORSE

Should be suitably trained for RDA and matched to the rider. Must be handled with knowledge, consideration and understanding, as his behaviour and performance are vital for the progression of his rider.

6. FIRST AID PERSON

Must be identified at the start of every session.

Qualified to give First Aid in case of accident.

Knows what First Aid equipment is available and where to find it.

7. OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Physiotherapists, Teachers, Speech Therapists, etc., work with the instructor to give information on rider's ability - advise or demonstrate on how to help with individual problems and any 'risk' areas.

THE STRUCTURE OF A LESSON

(The Instructor is responsible for everything at all times within a session. (See H&S Guidelines))

Each lesson should be planned as a complete unit. Like an essay it should have a beginning, middle and conclusion. A main theme should be planned as a progression, with achievable goals, to extend through several lessons. The number of lessons will depend on how easy or difficult the major theme is to present to the riders in each particular session. Each lesson should refer back to the last one by reminding and revising at least a part of it before moving forward.

Lesson plans are important, but flexibility is essential to take into account unusual situations or moods - of riders, horses, helpers or indeed the instructor! Lessons should be planned to start gradually, build up to a climax and then come down to a quiet, calm - and balanced - finish.

PREPARATION

Pre lesson Risk Assessment which should include all RDA requirements. Organiser has Membership Manual, equipment, hats, etc., riders records, accident book, first aid box, weight charts ready, Wall chart to check Volunteers' Green Card responsibilities, maximum weight allowance for horses and ponies, First Aider identified. Lesson Plan ready, props ready.

BRIEFING

Allocate helpers & riders to ponies, ask leaders to check ponies/horses and tack, then loosen up horses/ponies round the school on both reins.

Instructor consults with physio/teacher/escort/parent while helpers fit hats, check clothing & footwear. Instructor gives preliminary briefing to helpers, re-checks ponies, tack, helpers' clothing, etc.

MOUNTING

Placing of block assessed. Supervision of mounting by Instructor, Assistant Instructor, Physio, or other trained person. All mounting/moving and handling in accordance with 'Paper' in Log Book.

PRE LESSON ACTIVITY (Maximise riding time as this is really important. Plan to Include activities related to Proficiency Tests and the National Curriculum.)

Move from block to check stirrup length, girth, special equipment, position of rider - supervised by Instructor, Assistant Instructor or other Log Book Holder, with Physio if available. Re-allocate helpers, if necessary, and move into planned and briefed activity relevant to disability, reinforcement of previous skill taught or need.

DEMONSTRATION OF CLASS LESSON PLAN

If considered possible or relevant.

CLASS LESSON

Brief de-brief of Pre lesson activity from riders and helpers by Instructor as they form a ride. Theme of lesson announced. This should be achievable, keep it simple but progressive (original plan may have to be

changed - flexibility is important). Include various changes of rein to improve balance of riders and horses/ponies. Include reference to Horse Care wherever possible. Include and involve helpers wherever possible. Instructor maintains safe position, in contact with all riders. Maintain an ongoing risk assessment of the lesson, with changes and modification whenever necessary.

RELEVANT ACTIVITY OR GAME

End on a high note with planned reinforcement of lesson and previous lessons. Extend riders to maximum individual potential and achievement. Beware of irrelevant activities which do not exercise the riders and could negate the benefits of the lesson.

CONCLUDE AND DISMOUNT

Wind down riders into relaxed, happy, quiet balanced positions. Move into straight line, reward horse/pony, thank helpers, give appropriate praise. Dismount appropriately as occasion and riders' disability allows.

DEBRIEF, MODIFY, RECORD AND PLAN FOR NEXT LESSON

De-brief helpers on their rider's performance within the session. Encourage & make all helpers feel valued. Briefly discuss lesson with physio/teacher/escort/parent. Complete Pupil Reports - make notes recording progress & points to consider for next lesson.

THERE ARE FIVE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF ANY LESSON

MOTIVATION - CONTENT - PRESENTATION - FEEDBACK - MODIFICATION

BUT NEVER FORGETTING

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR

SAFETY, FUN AND ACHIEVEMENT

SUGGESTED RDA PRE LESSON RISK ASSESSMENT SHEET

(To be posted visibly for reference by all members of the Group, referred to and acknowledged in a box as part of rider records before each lesson. Copy of this sheet also to be kept in instructor's rider record file)

1. ADMINISTRATION CHECKS

- ! Rider application forms
- ! Helper application forms and green volunteer basic training record cards . Log Books
- ! Pupil Reports
- ! Accident/Incident Book
- ! First Aid Certificates with First Aiders identified
- ! Emergency procedures

2. INSPECTION OF RIDING AREA

- ! Is the area clear of jumps and other obstacles?
- ! If jump wings are being used in the lesson, are cups removed?
- ! Are there articles, ie coats, mugs, etc., left on the surround boards?
- ! Is the surface acceptable and safe?
- ! Are all gates, doors, barriers closed or able to be closed?
- ! Is there any unusual noise/occurrence nearby - ie heavy plant and machinery?

3. WAITING AREA AND SUPERVISION BEFORE RIDE

- ! Is it marked off with poles, cones, other?
- ! Is it sensibly situated well away from horses/ponies?
- ! Are there enough chairs for the riders?
- ! Are there enough adults to supervise behaviour?
- ! Are the adults in charge supervising behaviour?
- ! Is the hat fitting organised satisfactorily? Correct standard?
- ! Are stirrups adapted in case of unsuitable footwear? Is suitable clothing worn by all involved and jewellery removed?

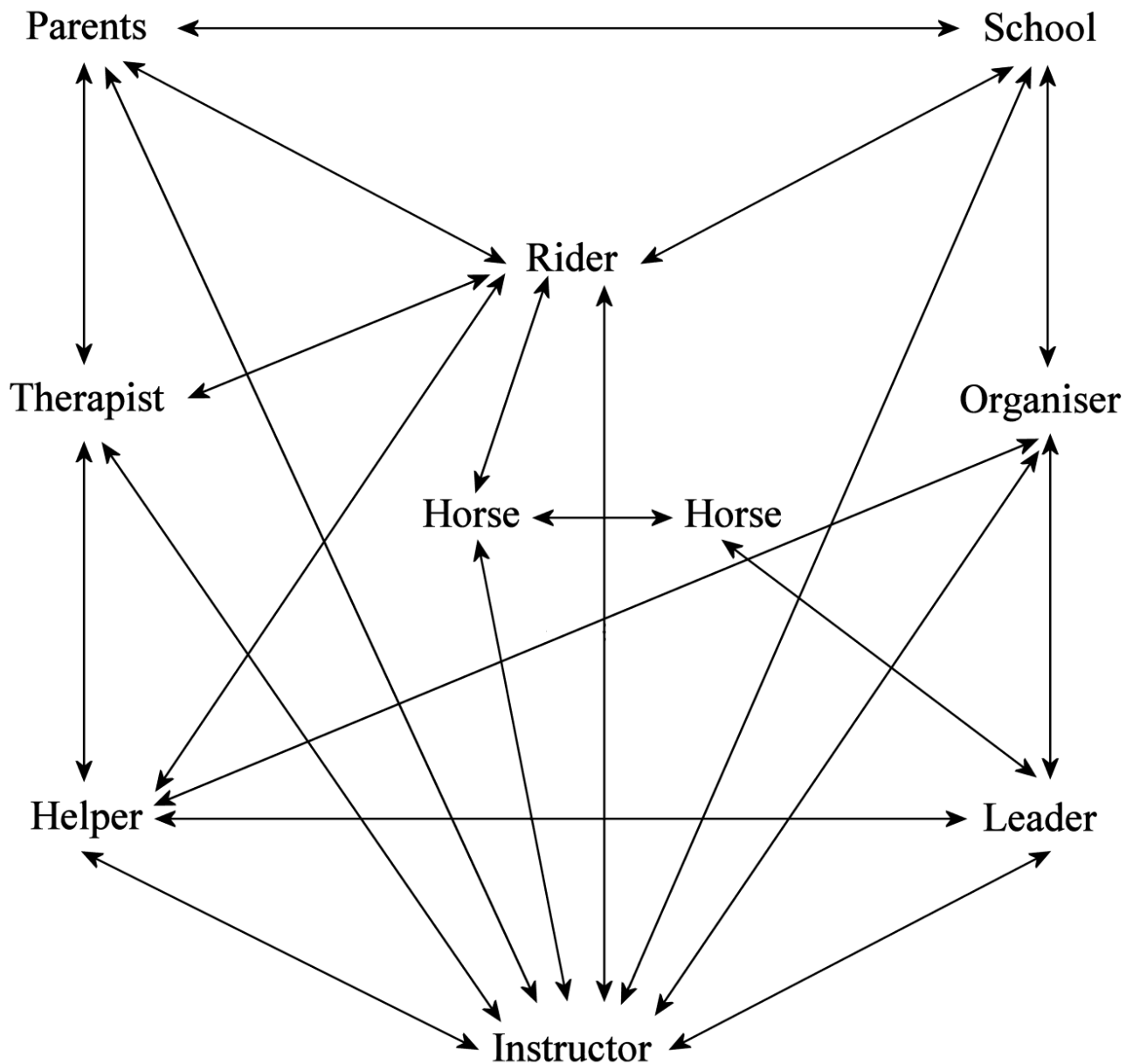
4. MOUNTING FACILITIES

- ! Are notes readily available for each rider?
- ! Is the Mounting Team aware of each rider's method of mounting?
- ! Has the Physiotherapist/Teacher/parent been consulted?
- ! Is block/ramp/hoist suitable and stable - no sharp edges, non-slip?
- ! Is the block/ramp well positioned, recommended gradient, handrail?
- ! Is approach to block/ramp/hoist sensibly and safely organised?

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ARE ALWAYS HAPPY TO HELP.

Communication Patterns

required to operate an RDA riding session, in order to achieve maximum benefit for all concerned.



Mounting And Dismounting

(Please also refer to RDA Manual on Mounting and Dismounting)

POINTS FOR LEADERS/HELPERS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MOUNTING RIDERS.

(If in doubt, always ask the Instructor, who is in overall supervision of everything that goes on in an RDA Session: or ask the delegated Mounting Team)

1. The horse/pony should be correctly tacked up and comfortable.
2. The stirrup length should be adjusted to approximate length for your rider.
3. Assuming this is sensibly placed plan how to approach the mounting block/ramp, etc.
4. Make allowance for your horse/pony to approach the block/ramp in a straight line. A cones should be placed to encourage this.
5. Decide whether to approach the mounting block/ramp with the stirrups down and ready, down but placed over the withers or run up to be pulled down at the block. All are acceptable depending on circumstances, which must be considered as part of a risk assessment.
6. Either lead up to the block/ramp from the near side and turn facing the pony/horse when you get into position; or lead to the block from the offside.
7. Consider whether to wait until the rider is on the block before you approach it or get yourself into position before the rider is there.
8. The off-side helper briefed should be ready to step in towards the pony /horse as he approaches into position.
9. The leader is now facing the horse/pony/rider, and thus aware of possible problems, holding the reins loosely each side as well as the lead rope.

WHEN THE MOUNT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

1. Make sure that the rider is in balance, aware and ready before you move away from the block. Encourage him to say "walk on".
2. Make sure you walk away from the ramp/block in a straight line before turning. No sharp turns.
3. Either adjust the stirrup length at the block or move away so the next person can approach the block and adjust them elsewhere. This saves time.
4. Make sure the Instructor has briefed you on Open Order exercises for when you are ready to ride.

DISMOUNTING

1. Encourage the rider to take his/her feet out of the stirrups on his/her own.
2. Make sure the rider leans over the withers to the off-side before swinging his/her leg over the back of the saddle.
3. If he/she cannot do this unaided, the offside helper should help manoeuver the leg, the rider is then placed in a position of balance before sliding down.
4. Make sure whether wheelchairs (if used) should be brought to the pony/horse or vice versa.

ALL THESE MOVEMENTS MUST BE THOUGHT OUT, AND RESOLVED, BEFORE BEING CARRIED OUT. THIS WAY THE BEST POSSIBLE SITUATIONS WILL BE REACHED. EACH RIDER NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND INDIVIDUAL PLANS MUST BE MADE AND LAID!

COMMUNICATION - TEACHING RIDERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.

Introduction.

An **Instructor, in a Group Session**, may have children or adults who comprehend language and express it at varying levels. The Instructor needs to make him or herself clear to the helpers, as well as the riders - and it is, therefore, often the Helper's responsibility to know the rider's level of language - and interpret the Instructor's commands at the appropriate level. This is often at a **TWO-WORD LEVEL** supported by sign and/or touch.

Appropriate communication is all important to enable the child/adult to respond to instruction and make the riding session a learning activity, as meaningful and enjoyable as possible. Appropriate communication enables the riders to get the maximum out of any activity and helps to avoid potential difficulties, such as frustration leading to behaviour problems. Appropriate communication means that unrealistic demands are not made on pupils. NB. **All pupils are individuals and it is important to know what is appropriate for each person.**

Some children/adults cannot easily respond to language through verbal instruction alone. Many children are taught language through a signing system, such as Makaton or Signalong. Good communication with schools and centres is essential so that **Instructors** and **Helpers** can be aware of individual levels of language acquisition. Helpers, as well as Instructors, should be able to use the necessary signs, always remembering that signing should be accompanied by **ORAL** language.

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS THAT COMMONLY OCCUR.

- (a) Difficulties in understanding words (vocabulary), sentences (syntax) and long sentences (length of utterance).
- (b) Unintelligible speech.
- (c) Poor attention, easily distracted by things going on around them.
- (d) Poor sequencing abilities i.e., when told it's time to dismount might dismount before stopping the pony/horse, having failed to recognise that 'dismount' involves a sequence of movements:- (1) Stop pony, (ii) feet out of stirrups, (iii) lean to offside, (iv) leg over back of pony, (v) slide down gently to ground.
- (e) Poor memory, especially auditory memory, i.e. can't remember things they hear.
- (f) Poor discrimination. That is to say the small differences may cause confusion, ie wash and watch, cat and hat might sound the same.
- (g) There may be additional handicaps, ie visual or hearing problems.

C1/5 October 2004

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

(This applies to Helpers as well as Instructors' particularly when helpers are relaying/modifying instructions from the Instructor.)

1. Don't shout. Shouting only serves to confuse and upset.
2. Speak slowly and clearly. Simplify sentences into easily manageable units, e.g., 'make pony walk' instead of 'now I'd like you to make your pony walk on' (on what?!). 'Ball in bucket' instead of 'Can you take a ball from the basket and drop it into the bucket'.
3. Accompany speech with gestures if possible.
4. Choose vocabulary carefully - **and stick to it**. If you call something 'big' one moment, don't call it 'large' the next. Don't use 'stop', 'halt' and 'whoa' randomly.
5. Simplify the number of words used to the essential ones carrying the meaning.
6. Make sure you have attention before you start to speak. This can be achieved by saying the child/adult's name, or touching them prior to speaking.
7. Go for face to face communication with eye contact whenever possible. This enables the child/adult to get maximum clues from your facial expression and for you to see if they have attended and understood what was said.
8. A new skill will need to be done many times before it is really learned. For these riders it is not boring to be repetitive. This is called 'overlearning' and is essential if skills are to be retained.
9. If errors occur correct these in a positive way with a practical demonstration where possible. Don't talk too much in your explanation as this can confuse, ie., not 'Don't keep turning round and looking at Jack' - but 'Look between pony's ears' and gesture forwards.
10. Some individuals will be slow processors. Allow time for the 'penny to drop', and a response to be formulated.
11. If sequencing problems are present then tasks will need to be broken down into stages in the learning phase (see Section (d) overleaf7).
12. Teach little and often, bearing in mind the individual's attention span.

GENERALLY THOSE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES HAVE DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Negatives.** 'DON'T throw that toy' may be heard as 'Throw that toy'.
2. **Prepositions.** The words 'behind', 'in front', 'beside', etc are often not understood.
Comparatives & Superlatives. The forms big, bigger, biggest are often confusing.
3. **Time.** The concept of time is generally poorly developed. Children/adults with learning difficulties often live in the 'here and now' demanding immediate gratification. Don't say 'If you're good you can play grandmother's footsteps later' because they will want to do it NOW!
4. **Number concepts** are often poorly developed. Children/adults with learning difficulties can often count by rote but have no sense of number value, i.e., but won't know the meaning of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, last, pairs, etc.

Children/adults with learning difficulties often have a literal understanding of our language, i.e., 'kick your pony' may be understood in terms of football. Phrases like 'hopping mad' will be interpreted literally. A 'pair' is a fruit you eat! 'rein' comes down from the clouds and 'run up' your stirrups is a very confusing request!

C1/5 October 2004

THE IMPORTANCE OF A BALANCED SEAT

(S.C-G'S view. March, 1998 - not definitive!)

A BALANCED SEAT

means sitting with weight distributed equally. Instructors should always walk behind the horse to make sure the rider is sitting square.

BALANCE IS ABOUT MOVEMENT AND WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION.

When the rider sits straight, both rider and horse are more comfortable.

THE BASIS OF ALL RIDING AND BALANCE IS THE RIDER'S SEAT.

The rider must sit in the centre (the lowest point) of the saddle close to the centre of gravity which varies according to the conformation of the horse and the rider.

The saddle must fit rider and horse and be appropriate to needs.

THE SEAT

- HEAD ABOVE SHOULDER - SHOULDER ABOVE WAIST -
- BODY UPRIGHT ABOVE HIPS, PELVIS. THIGH -
- LENGTH OF LEG VARIES - SO STIRRUP LENGTH VARIES -
- FLEXION OF KNEE IMPORTANT -
- TOP HALF OF THE BODY MOBILE - LEGS STILL -
- HANDS IN CORRECT POSITION -

(If hands are rested down, body can be pulled forward, then stiffen - mobility lost)

BALANCE IS ABOUT FEEL, CALMING, CONFIDENCE, CONTROL AND CO-ORDINATION. BALANCE IS ABOUT FLEXIBILITY, NOT JUST POSITION

(and this is difficult with some of our riders.)

Exercises and activities as well as the movement of the horse will encourage our riders to move off balance, then regain an upright position.

Let them do this and let them regain their best posture themselves.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RIDING AT WALK

(S. C-G)

So much can be achieved at walk
(providing this is an active walk, which includes many changes of direction).

Beware thinking that the aim of every session is to include a trot.
Trot is something to work towards when a balanced position and confidence has been attained.

So often our riders are asked to trot as a culmination to lessons only to find that they lose the related, flexible, balanced
seat we have achieved.

Then they go into spasm just before they dismount to get into the bus and the benefit of the first part of the lesson is
lost!

So make use of the walk to relax, encourage flexibility, self-righting abilities and other very real riding skills such as hand
dexterity with balance in,
and aids for, transitions - halt - walk - halt -

ALL OF THESE MAY BE PRACTISED IN RDA HORSE/PONY & RIDER AND WORKING PONY & RIDER ACTIVITIES.

Look up and use RDA horse/pony & rider courses - obstacles which will include more fun and therapy to improve and
reinforce your lessons.

TRAINING

Ponies (care of pony/horse and tack) Helpers (leaders and Side Walkers)

LEARNING A SKILL

RIDERS (sitting in balance, riding in a straight line, co-ordination, first attempts at steering,
more advanced steering, bending and stretching, regaining balance, progression in all skills)

THERAPY

Balance, co-ordination, confidence, self esteem, concentration, enjoyment.

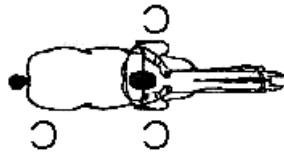
RIDING SKILLS COMBINED WITH THERAPY

Improvement of overall agility and mobility, sense of well being, achievement independence.

SPORT/RECREATION

FUN - INDEPENDENCE - COMPETITION - SUCCESS - MORE FUN!
BUT IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE COURSE - DESIGN YOUR OWN!

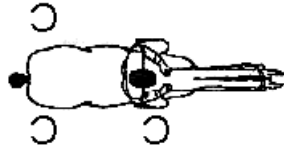
ILLUSTRATING THE STRIDE OF A HORSE AT WALK, HOW THIS AFFECTS THE MOVEMENT OF ITS BACK - AND THUS THE RIDER



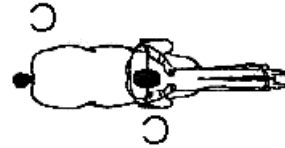
1. THREE LEG SUPPORT



2. TWO LEG LATERAL SUPPORT
ROTATION



3. THREE LEG SUPPORT



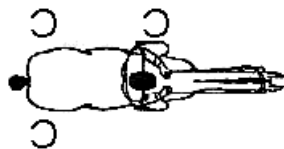
4. TWO LEG DIAGONAL SUPPORT
PELVIS PUSHED FORWARD



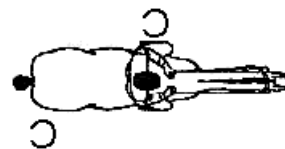
5. THREE LEG SUPPORT



6. TWO LEG LATERAL SUPPORT
ROTATION



7. THREE LEG SUPPORT



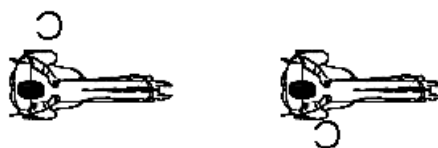
8. TWO LEG DIAGONAL SUPPORT
PELVIS PUSHED FORWARD

(SEQUENCE REPEATS)

Hind Legs - as weight changes from one hind leg to the other rider feels upward thrust.



Fore Legs - as horse lowers one foreleg and raises the other pelvis is pushed back.



SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Items not covered in this section - leading reins, couplings and headcollars hopefully covered in other workshops.
Mounting blocks ramps and pits ditto.

WHY - THE REASONS FOR USING SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

1. A PERMANENT AID TO OVERCOME A "HANDICAP"
e.g. Western Saddle, Australian Stock saddle Ladder reins.
2. A TEMPORARY AID TO ACHIEVE AN AIM
e.g. Foam pad, dog clip reins, neck strap saddle handle.
3. PROTECTION OF THE RIDER
e.g. Sheepskin pads, grass reins padded stirrups.
4. PROTECTION OF THE PONY
e.g. Dog clip reins, neck strap
5. SAFETY PRECAUTION
e.g. Devonshire beets, elastic bands, neck straps, safety stirrups.

LEADING REINS, COUPLINGS AND HEADCOLLARS HOPEFULLY COVERED IN "TACK"

WHEN - ONLY WHEN NECESSARY, BE PREPARED TO PHASE OUT SPECIAL EQUIPMENT WHEN THE RIDER CAN MANAGE WITHOUT IT but when safety or protection are in question always err on the conservative.

e.g. Be aware of the dangers of pressure sores. Poor circulation, diabetes and many other medical conditions can mean very thin vulnerable skin and grazes and rubs can "ulcerate".

HOW - criteria for good special equipment

IT MUST

1. Be Comfortable
2. Be suited to rider's age and temperament and physique

IT MUST NEVER

1. Tie rider to pony
2. Interfere or restrict rider's balance or movement or contact with pony.
3. Irritate pony, cause discomfort or risk injury.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

Many items used by RDA Groups are available from, or can be made by. your local saddler, eg. ladder reins, rainbow reins, breastplate/neck straps etc.

SPECIAL SADDLES etc.

Remedi Saddles made by Thorogood send for a list of stockists, widely available.

Seeta Saddle Covers.

Seeta, Cappers Lane, Betchton, Sandbach, Cheshire. CW11 2TW
Phone: 01270 883927
Fax: 01270878545

Tonga Saddle Covers

Stephen W Lane, 26 Nursery Lane, Leeds, LS177HN
Phone: 01132687429

DEVONSHIRE BOOTS

Detachable

Don Camey. 17 Catherine Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire. SK11 6ET
Phone: 01625430570
Mobile: 0421 341659
Fax: 01625 502663

Fixed

Dapps - widely available through saddlers

MOUNTING AIDS

Portable Mounting Blocks

Martello Plastics, Unit 11, Ross Way, Shorncliffe, Kent, CT20 3YD
Phone: 01303 256848
Fax: 01303246301

CAM Equestrian, Earsley, Hereford. HR3 6BR
Phone: 01544 327611

Hoists

Westhorne Ltd, Newcombe Street, Elland, Halifax. HX50EG
Phone: 01422 377623

Chiltern Medical Developments (Equipment) Ltd., Chiltern House, Wedgewood Road, Bicester. Oxon. OX6 7UL

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT ADVISER:

Miss D Whitmore RDASI, The Stables, Main St., Stanford on Soar, Loughborough, Leics.. LE12 5PY
Phone: (01509) 263782 (office hours only)
Mobile 07860 245675 (office hours) / Fax: 01509 218882
Email: dawnwhitmore@aol.com

PROPS

GOOD RDA PROPS ARE:

APPROPRIATE
COLOURFUL
EASY TO STORE

SAFE BECAUSE THEY ARE:

ROBUST
STABLE
QUIET
BLUNT
SOFT
WITHOUT BOUNCE!
PONY FRIENDLY

POSSIBLE USES:

practise halts

practise steering

changes of direction

exercises and games to improve:

balance,
mobility,

co ordination,
spatial awareness,

to teach practical riding skills in a safe place e.g. bending forward under trees before you go into the woods!

A much repeated exercise can be hidden in a game with a prop.

Colours help memory and can be used instead of letter markers and schools like colour matching (pre reading activity).

Novelty wakes up helpers!

DON'T LOSE TRACK OF THE AIM OF THE ACTIVITY. FOR EXAMPLE. IF YOU SET A SCAVENGER TRAIL THE RIDER SHOULD DO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE - LOOKING AROUND, DECIDING WHERE TO RIDE TO, PLANNING THE ROUTE, ASKING THE PONY TO WALK ON, STEERING, APPROACHING THE HALT AT THE RIGHT ANGLE, ASKING THE PONY TO HALT, REACHING FOR THE ITEM. REGAINING A GOOD POSITION, TAKING UP THE REINS AGAIN.

A PLEA FROM A COUNTY INSTRUCTOR, SPELL THIS OUT TO YOUR HELPERS, DISCOURAGE THEM FROM JUST DRAGGING THE PONY AROUND WITHOUT MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY FOR THE RIDER'S SELF DETERMINATION.

The Language of Instruction

Distance	riders should maintain a distance of about half a horse's length between themselves and the horse in front unless told to do otherwise by the instructor
Half a horse's length	distance of approximately four feet, the rider can see the top of the tail of the horse in front of him between his own horse's ears
Horse's length	able to see the hocks of the horse in front of him between his own horse's ears
Correcting distance	a rider who has lost distance should regain his correct distance by cutting across the short end of the school, i.e. turning before reaching the corner, if getting too close the rider should ride a little deeper into the corner.
The Track	direction taken by the rider, normally just inside the markers of the schooling area.
Outside track	just inside the markers, the ride always remains on this track unless told to do otherwise.
Inside track	about five feet inside the markers.
Going large	riding round the outside track of the schooling area. Further means an individual rider should cease the exercise he is carrying out and return to the track in the pace of the rest of the ride.
Leading file	person at the head of the ride - responsible for setting and maintaining the pace.
Rear file	rider bringing up the rear of the ride.
Single file	the ride follows one another behind and in the track of the leading file.
In succession	the riders perform an exercise one at a time, usually starting with the leading file.
Whole ride	the exercise is carried out by each member of the ride simultaneously.
Right rein	the rider is riding round the schooling area in a clockwise direction.
Left rein	moving in an anti-clockwise direction
Changing the rein	changing the direction of movement.
Pace	should remain constant until told to vary by the instructor - any irregularity of pace or speed by one member of the ride will affect all those behind.

SELF ASSESSMENT IS IMPORTANT TO IMPROVE YOUR ABILITY AS AN INSTRUCTOR.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO BE OBJECTIVE SO ASKING YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MIGHT BE HELPFUL. *There is a lot to think about and check before the session even starts!*

1. Before the session started did you remind yourself of the profiles of all the riders, their abilities and disabilities, aims and goals? Have you made a lesson plan? Did you check last week's records in case modifications to your lesson plans are necessary?
2. Did you ask for the ponies/horses to be led round the school to give them time to loosen up and settle - and time for you to check that they are properly tacked up (with any special equipment needed), comfortable, sound and happy? Are the helpers correctly/safely dressed?
3. Did you allow time to brief your helpers on their rider's disabilities, long term goals, the short term aims you have for the rider during the session and the help that will be needed to achieve this? Did you brief the helpers on any foibles the ponies/horses may have?
4. Upon the arrival of the riders, did you speak to the teacher/therapist/ escort to find out if there was any information on any of the riders that might be necessary for you to know? (e.g. sick on the bus, epileptic fit, change of drug, unacceptable behaviour on the bus, etc.) Did you pass this on to the helpers who would be with the rider?
5. Was the mounting block sensibly placed? Was all the equipment necessary for the lesson set out or readily available? Was the First Aid box in place. Was the waiting area for the riders marked off behind a guiding line? (e.g. poles, cones) Was everyone not involved in the lesson asked to remain within this marked area?
6. Was each rider's hat size and approximate stirrup length written on a chart. Was an up to date weight chart for the ponies/horses visible?

The session.

1. Bearing in mind that the Instructor is in overall charge of any R.D.A. session, did you:
 - **either** delegate a well briefed, trained, experienced Assistant Instructor, physiotherapist or team to supervise the mounting process whilst you kept an overview of those already mounted making adjustments or involved in Open Order activities, as briefed.
 - **or** did you delegate an Assistant Instructor to maintain an overview of those already mounted whilst you supervised the mounting yourself?

-THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT -

AN R.D.A. INSTRUCTOR MUST BE ABLE TO POSITION HIM/HERSELF IN SUCH A WAY AS TO BE AWARE OF EVERYONE TAKING PART IN THE SESSION ALL THE TIME, OR APPOINT A DEPUTY TO MAINTAIN AN OVERVIEW WHEN, FOR EXAMPLE, ONE-TO-ONE BRIEFING OR INSTRUCTION IS NECESSARY DURING A SESSION.

2. Did you check with the helpers that they had discussed between themselves any emergency dismount procedure for their rider - in case an accident/incident occurred when it might be necessary to act quickly, on your instruction. Do you have an action plan for such occurrences?
3. When everyone had completed their Open Order activities, did you ask them for feedback on what they had achieved? Did you make suggestions/modifications for next week?
4. When/if you moved into a Class Lesson, did you manage to make ongoing individual suggestions for progress and improvement whilst maintaining the movement, theme and extension of the class? Did you include a variety of changes of rein in the lesson?
5. Did you finish the session by including a game or activity relevant to the theme of the lesson. Was this fun for everyone involved? Did it end on a high note of achievement?
6. Did you involve the helpers throughout the session, using them to relay your instructions, when necessary, in order to make it more interesting and fun for them as well as the riders? (Helpers need encouragement as well as the riders' If they are bored, they will chat amongst themselves with negative effect on the riders who have so little time).
7. Did you remind the riders to make much of their ponies and thank their helpers?
8. Have you trained your helpers to dismount their riders safely, correctly and in accordance with their disabilities whilst you maintain an overview of this - only helping when necessary? Did you feel any of the helpers needed advice or training? If so, did you give this quietly and tactfully? Do you hold regular training sessions for your helpers?
9. Did you ask the helpers for comments on the rider's achievements during the session? Did you speak to the teacher/therapist/escort at the end of the session in case they had anything to add to your view of the lesson?
10. Did you complete the riders' records with suggestions for a lesson plan towards personal goals for the following week - and make note of any difficulties encountered to be discussed with teacher/therapist/escort? Were the helpers and ponies/horses well matched to the riders?
11. If you do not have a Group therapist present every week, do you make every effort to ask the school/centre therapist to communicate with and work with you regarding their patients/clients in order that they may obtain maximum benefit from the riding experience?
12. Do you have a written up to date Risk Assessment attached to your Log Book? Do you make ongoing risk assessments (not written) before and during the session you are in charge of? (making a mental check of the environs, riding area, equipment, the ponies/horses, their lack and equipment, the riders' dress, the helpers' dress, mounting arrangements, etc.. etc.).
13. Did you feel satisfied that you got the most out of the session? Was progress made in riding skills including therapeutic benefit and social enrichment? Did you include cross curricular academic themes for children? Was the session enjoyable and fun for everyone concerned? Will the helpers look forward to coming again as well as the riders?! Do you feel enthused and happy yourself that you 'did a good job?'

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO INSTRUCTORS LIKE YOU- THANK YOU!

GUIDELINES FOR R.D.A. HELPERS

The aims of riding are to :

- Learn a skill.
- Increase self confidence and boost morale.
- Improve muscular power, balance and co-ordination.
- Stimulate circulation and the alimentary tract.
- Widen boundaries of experience and social contact.
- HAVE FUN (Last but not least !).

Without helpers there would be no R.D.A. The job is vital. How well that job is done makes all the difference to the success, safety and enjoyment of the riders. The ultimate success for helpers is to become redundant!

Helpers are there to provide support to enable the rider to ride and carry out the commands of the instructor. Helpers should give the minimum help necessary and let the riders make the maximum possible effort. There are two separate jobs, the LEADER and the HELPER.

The Leader

Is in charge of the pony - totally, partially, or as a supervisor, depending on the skill of the rider. This means :

1. Preparing the pony for the ride - check girths, stirrups, bridle, special equipment.
2. Keeping the pony still while being mounted.
3. Leading the pony correctly, using the rope from the headcollar with both hands on rope (no trailing ropes please and do not wind the end round your hand). Keeping yourself level with the pony's neck/shoulder. (Do not pull the pony from in front and never look back at him).
4. Controlling the pony during the ride - BUT letting the rider do the maximum possible. Keeping the correct pace, distance (one pony's length) and direction.
5. Being aware of your rider at all times and being ready to stop at once for emergencies. In emergencies the whole ride should stop. Keep clear of the other ponies. If you are not involved, keep control of your rider and pony and make sure they're safe.
6. Stay on the track in the school unless told otherwise, but if you have to stop during the ride, eg to alter stirrups, turn in off the track so that you do not disrupt the ride and rejoin - **IN YOUR CORRECT PLACE** - when ready.
7. Try to provide a smooth ride. No sudden starts, stops, turns or head down to eat grass, that might unbalance the rider.

8. Remember during games - or anything competitive - the rider is the competitor, not the leader. DONT LOSE YOUR RIDER through over-enthusiasm or usurp his role.
9. If you are in the lead, watch your pace. Don't leave the rest of the ride behind or allow bunching up of all the ride.
10. At the beginning and the end of the ride " STRAIGHT LINES please line up to wait for mounting and dismounting. Keep people clear of the pony's hind legs.
11. BE ALERT AT ALL TIMES. YES, ITS HARD WORK AND NEEDS FULL ATTENTION. YOU CANNOT CHAT AND BE AN R.D.A. HELPER AT THE SAME TIME ! But when out for a ride, do talk to your rider about the pony, riding, stable management, etc. ?

The Helper(s)

Walks beside the rider and gives physical and moral support. This should be the minimum possible. One or two helpers may be needed. If only one, it is easier to be on the opposite side to the leader. Remember at all times the rider does the maximum possible work and helpers do the minimum necessary. HELPERS PREVENT THE RIDER FROM FALLING - THEY DO NOT HOLD THE RIDER ON!

1. Help should be given as much as possible by VOICE.
2. The position of the side helper should never be further back than the rider's leg.
3. The rider should aim to take up the correct riding position - or as near as possible. This should be balanced, comfortable and stable with properly adjusted stirrup lengths.
4. Position of legs and feet are most important. If the feet stay in the right position, the rider cannot fall off. To achieve and maintain the correct position a hand on the ankle, heel or foot may be needed. Perhaps a flat hand on the rider's thigh just above the knee may be all that is required. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL ADVISE ON THIS.
5. Physical help to keep the trunk in position is not constructive. Use Voice to get the rider to right himself . NEVER hold a handful of anorak etc.
6. The secret of the whole balance problem is the head. The head should be in the middle of the shoulders, like a ball on a tray. If the balls rolls, the tray tips. Eyes are also an aid to balance. Suggest a point of focus.
7. In a group lesson, the Helper re-enforces the Instructor's commands. Remember that the Instructor usually has a better view of the riders and possible dangers than the helpers.

Hints for Helpers

(Illustrations by John Tickner)

5(d)(i) Sept2003



A Helper is one of the most important members of an RDA Team. Without people like you RDA would not exist.

Throughout the country thousands of adults and children with physical and learning difficulties look forward to their regular riding or carriage driving sessions. To enjoy these to the full - and reap the great benefits offered - they, and RDA, rely on YOU, the helpers. Thank you for coming !

This section has been designed to help you to help the riders and to reinforce all you will learn first hand at riding sessions or on an RDA course. If in doubt at any time don't be afraid to ask your Group Instructor, Organiser, or an experienced Helper.

We have outlined here some of the qualities of the 'Ideal Helper'. This will help you to become a confident member of the Team and we hope that you will enjoy coming to RDA just as much as the riders, and share their pleasure in achievement.

You may be asked to LEAD THE PONY



Not like this

First make sure that you have completed your RDA New Volunteer's Form and have been issued with, and have signed, your Basic Training Record Card.

To lead the pony correctly, lead from the pony's shoulder, one hand as close to the headcollar as necessary, the other hand taking up the looped length of rope. Do not wrap the rope round your hand.

Hold the pony while your rider is mounting - stand directly in front of the pony's head holding the reins from either side.

Check the girth before and after mounting. Adjust the stirrups to the right length.

Listen to the Instructor at all times and make sure your rider and helper are ready for any change of pace or direction.

Keep the pony's movements smooth.

Keep a safe distance from the tail of the pony in front of you.

Remember games are for the riders. Keep to a suitable speed with no sudden turns or stops.

Be prepared to stop if your rider becomes unbalanced or has a problem. Any adjustments should be made off the track to allow the ride to continue.

You may be asked to **HELP THE RIDERS...**



If there is one helper, plus leader, it is easier to walk on the opposite side to the leader. If there are two helpers - one either side.

You are there to prevent your rider falling off. Don't hang on although you may have to help them maintain balance by placing a hand on their thigh or lower leg, or as directed by the Instructor - particularly when trotting.

Help your rider obey the Instructor and make sure commands are understood.

When it is time to dismount, check your rider has both feet out of the stirrups and do not allow dismounting until you are ready to help.

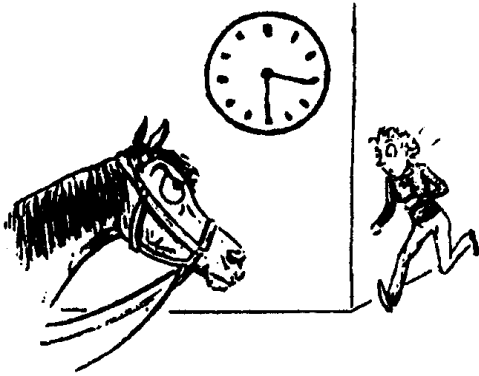
Find out about your rider's problems so you will know how best to help.

Try to keep track of what your rider does each week so you can help them to make progress.

You are there to give confidence and prevent accidents. Allow riders as much independence as possible intervening only when necessary so that they gain the maximum benefit from each session.

THANK YOU

THE IDEAL HELPER...



Don't be late!

- S is always on time, at least ten minutes before the session begins, and finds a suitably trained replacement if unable to attend.
- S is armed with 100% concentration, forgetting all everyday problems, and is suitably dressed.
- S is prepared to do ANY job that they are capable of from tacking up ponies, unloading riders from the bus, taking to the loo, chatting to a nervous rider or welcoming a new helper.
- S is always alert when mounting riders, ready to give a helping hand if needed but never too much. Most riders prefer to struggle and achieve rather than be man-handled into position. Help, if needed, should be given with kindness, humour and dignity.
- S is always aware of the rider's abilities, temperament and mood. Someone who has a hard time coping with a new drug, treatment or the pressures of exams will appreciate an understanding approach.
- S is aware of what the Instructor wishes to achieve for the rider, always concentrating on the Instructor's words and quietly reinforcing the message.

- REMEMBER
- i Sympathy without sentimentality
 - i Alertness without anxiety
 - i Unlimited patience
 - i Interest in the rider as a person
 - i Allow independence
 - i You are an important member of the team

WHATEVER YOUR ROLE, YOUR HELP IS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED.

SOME SELF ASSESSMENT NOTES FOR HELPERS.

Ask yourself these questions during or after each session.

If you need help with answering any of them ASK YOUR INSTRUCTOR, THERAPIST, TEACHER OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL.

1. Do you know the problems that your rider has to cope with? How do they affect his riding? What level of comprehension are you dealing with? Do you know his home background? Is the school /centre backup good? Does the Group hold - and communicate to you - any physiotherapy information?
2. Did you arrive in time to check the tack on your pony? Are you aware of any idiosyncrasies the pony might have? Did you check if your rider needs any special equipment? Did you ask to see last week's notes on the rider? Did you feel you were properly briefed on the aims for your rider within the session? Did you measure an approximate stirrup length before mounting the rider? Did you try the girth before mounting the rider?
3. Do you feel you have been sufficiently well briefed to have a good understanding of the short and long term aims and goals for your rider? If not, did you ask for them? Did you manage to achieve any? If you felt they were unachievable, did you discuss this with the instructor?
4. Did you feel the mounting procedure was well planned and under control? Was it carried out quickly and in a dignified manner? Did you make a risk assessment? Did you decide who was to be the spokesman? Was your rider given a chance to strive for independence? Did you check that your estimate of the approximate stirrup length was correct?
5. In open order, did you and your rider have a clear idea as to what was expected? Did you think the exercises set by the instructor were relevant to your rider's problems and aims? Did you feel that any significant progress was made? Were you asked to report back to the instructor before the start of the class lesson?
6. During the class lesson, did your rider understand the instructor's commands? If not, did you explain them again? Were they clear? Was he paying attention?
7. During the class lesson did you feel your rider was trying? Did he achieve? If not, what was holding him back? Can you think of a way to motivate him more? If he tried, were you quick enough to praise him? Did the effort tire him unduly - either mentally or physically?
8. If there were any rest periods did you teach him anything? Was he too tired? Was he interested? Did it include stable management, horse care, or colours, parts of tack?
9. Did the lesson end on a good note? Was there a sense of achievement? Was enthusiasm high? Did you remind the rider to thank his pony - by name! - and his helpers?
10. Did you remember to report to the instructor so that the aims for the next lesson might be planned and /or modified?

PROFICIENCY TESTS

(grey items can be obtained from the Membership Manual)

(Apply to RDA National for up-to-date syllabi and Guideline Leaflet for Schools & Centres)

- A. Guidelines for Groups
- B. Guidelines for Instructors
- C. (Guidelines for Examiners)
- D. (Arrangements for Tests)
- E. (Procedure for Appointing Examiners)
- F. Syllabus
 - 1. Grade 1 (Blue)
 - 2. Grade 2 (Red)
 - 3. Grade 3 (Green)
 - 4. Grade 4 (Yellow)
 - 5. Bronze
 - 6. Silver
 - 7. Gold
- G. (The RDA Certificate of Horse Knowledge)
- H. Endeavour Awards
- I. (Sample Application Forms)

A. GUIDELINES FOR GROUPS

[5 (b) (iii) Sept03]

1. Arrange the date and time for tests well in advance. Allow enough time for each candidate (approximately 8 Grade 1 or 6 Grade 2 or 4 Grade 3 in one hour, dependent on riders' disabilities). Consult with their Instructor.
2. Send address of venue and details of candidates to examiner.
3. Do not include extra candidates at the last minute.
4. Provide equipment relevant to test.
5. Have sufficient badges and certificates available (from RDA National HQ). Remember there are separate badges for riding and horse care.
6. Grades 1-4. Proficiency Test Examiners are appointed by the Regional Committee. Your Regional Chairman and Regional Instructor will have an up-to-date list or a National List of Proficiency Test Examiners is available from RDA National HQ.
7. Bronze. Apply to RDA National Headquarters for an Examiner (an application form can be photocopied from this Manual) at least 8 weeks prior to proposed date of the examination. The Examiners will be appointed by the Training Committee. A fee of £10 (or £7.50 per section) per candidate is required to help to cover expenses.
8. Silver & Gold. Two examiners are required and the examination is wholly arranged by RDA National Headquarters (an application form can be photocopied from this Manual). There must be a minimum of three candidates per examination and a fee of £30 per candidate (or £20 per section) is required to help to cover expenses. Please apply for details.
9. Please offer to pay for the Examiner's expenses.
10. Cost for hiring of the venue, horses or equipment is the responsibility of the Group.

RDA CERTIFICATE OF HORSE KNOWLEDGE

This test has been designed for riders whose degree of disability prevents them from taking further RDA Proficiency tests. Apply to RDA National Headquarters for a syllabus and application form.

B. GUIDELINES FOR INSTRUCTORS

[5 (b) (iii) Sept02]

1. Prepare candidates for tests well in advance (this should be part of your teaching plan).
2. Ensure that you have an up-to-date syllabus of all tests.
3. Give your Test Organiser for each candidate
 - S Full names (and name known by)
 - S Age
 - S How long they have been riding
 - S Nature of their disability (e.g. spinal injury, epilepsy, partially sighted).
4. If you are asked to provide equipment, make sure that it is correct, adequate and safe.
5. Do not enter candidates for tests unless they have a reasonable chance of passing.
6. Be sure that the ponies are capable of performing all movements required in the test.
7. Train helpers in advance. They must allow the candidate to answer the questions, perform movements on their own and demonstrate their skills.
8. Introduce the examiner. Reassure the candidates and give them time to relax.
9. Ensure riders are smartly and correctly dressed/attired and on suitable, correctly tacked-up ponies.
10. Consult with your County or Regional Instructor over standards for Bronze, Silver and Gold Tests.
11. Candidates entering Silver or Gold proficiency Tests must first be assessed by their Regional Instructors.

F. SYLLABUS (Revised 1994)

5 (b) (iii) F Sept02

Candidates may take either Horse Care or Riding at all levels and will receive a certificate for each part successfully completed.

Grades 1-4 will also receive a badge for each part.

Bronze, Silver and Gold will receive their badge and a shield on passing both parts of the test.

Candidates for Bronze, Silver and Gold are recommended to read the appropriate parts of the Pony Club 'Manual of Horsemanship'.

Grade 1 (Blue) p.38; Grade 2 (Red) p.38; Grade 3 (Green) p.39; Grade 4 (Yellow)
Please see following pages for syllabi; these can be copied as required.

GRADE 1 (Blue) **RIDING**

1. Be able to sit happily, maintaining a balanced position, with help as necessary at halt, walk and changes of direction.
2. Demonstrate any simple exercise that the candidate has learnt.

HORSE CARE

1. Have a simple knowledge of the points of the pony/horse (eyes, ears, mouth, neck, mane, tail, hoof, leg).
2. Know some parts of the saddle and bridle (reins, bit, throat lash, browband, noseband, girth, stirrup iron, seat, pommel, cantle).
3. Know how to approach a pony/horse correctly.

Pass marks: Riding 50% Horse Care 50%

Examination by RDA approved examiner not working with the Group

Candidates may take either Riding and/or Horse Care and will receive an RDA Certificate and Badge for each section passed.

Further information is available in the RDA Membership Manual, Section 5(b)(iii) held by the Group Organiser, County & Regional Instructors.

Syllabus Revised 2001

GRADE 2 (Red) **RIDING**

1. Attempt to maintain correct position at walk or trot, with help as necessary, and as far as disability allows and demonstrate this by riding a line of bending cones and halt between two poles on the ground.
2. Demonstrate some exercises that the candidate has learnt.
3. Know how to run up the stirrup irons.

HORSE CARE

1. Have a basic knowledge of points of pony/horse (those in Grade 1 plus withers, dock, forelock, elbow, knee and back).
2. Know more parts of the saddle and bridle (those in Grade 1, plus cheek piece, headpiece, stirrup leather and skirt).
3. Know some of the main colours of ponies/horses (bay, chestnut, grey, piebald and skewbald).
4. Know some of the markings of ponies/horses.
5. Recognise basic grooming kit (dandy brush, body brush, metal curry comb and hoof pick).

Pass marks: Riding 50% Horse Care 50%

Examination by RDA approved examiner networking with the Group

Candidates may take either Riding and/or Horse Care and will receive an RDA Certificate and Badge for each section passed.

Further information is available in the RDA Membership Manual, Section 5(b)(iii) held by the Group Organiser, County & Regional Instructors.

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GRADE 3 (Green)

RIDING

1. Ride unaided at walk in an enclosed space, showing control of the pony/horse.
2. Demonstrate changes of rein.
3. Demonstrate exercises while moving on a leading rein.
4. Maintain position at trot, rising or sitting, on a leading rein, with help if necessary.
5. Walk a 20m circle unaided or trot over a ground pole showing a forward position.

HORSE CARE

1. Have a basic knowledge of the needs and care of a pony/horse at grass (feeding, watering and grooming).
2. Recognise simple equipment (headcollar, haynet, bandage and rug).
3. Recognise and demonstrate how to use grooming kit (dandy brush, body brush, rubber curry comb, sponge, hoof pick and metal curry comb).
4. Know how to pick up and pick out a pony/horse's hoof.
5. Know more points of the pony/horse (Grades 1 and 2 plus frog, wall of hoof, sole, crest, shoulder, flank, hock, fetlock and muzzle).
6. Know more parts of the saddle and bridle (Grade 1 and 2, plus saddle flap, gullet, waist and stirrup bar).
7. Run up the stirrup irons after dismounting and know how to lead the pony/horse.

Pass marks: Riding 50% Horse Care 50%

Examination by RDA approved examiner networking with the Group

Candidates may take either Riding and/or Horse Care and will receive an RDA Certificate and Badge for each section passed.

Further information is available in the RDA Membership Manual, Section 5(b)(iii) held by the Group Organiser, County & Regional Instructors.

Syllabus Revised 2001

H. ENDEAVOUR AWARDS

5 (b) (iii) H Sept01

The purpose of these awards is to provide recognition to those of our disabled riders/drivers whose efforts are limited by their disability. They are **NOT** a substitute for proficiency awards nor are they something to be regarded lightly.

The award consists of a badge and certificate which is available from RDA National Headquarters. Any number of Endeavour Awards can be given to an individual rider /driver for progressive endeavour.

These awards are entirely optional and Groups should establish what constitutes endeavour in their own circumstances. In the interests of fairness and consistency, Groups are recommended to keep records of any such awards and to endorse the rider's record card with the reason for the award.