



Group Holiday Information Pack



Introduction

Everybody loves a holiday. Each year RDA holds holidays for people with disabilities who have a passion for horses and are a member of an RDA Group.

Riders and Drivers benefit immensely from a holiday with like-minded people. Along with enhancing equine skills, social skills are improved; many take part in activities that they wouldn't have usually done in their Group environment.

For example;

A rider at an RDA Group is very unsettled and can be disruptive in sessions. Most of the sessions are either in the indoor arena or the outdoor arena. There is an autistic rider who does repeat phrases/sentences or songs. At most sessions there is a mention of "branches".

One session, the last of the day, the Group coach planned to take the group across the fields. The rider was chatting and talking away to one of the side walkers until they all entered into the woods. The rider was silent, taking in the environment, trees and their branches. It was amazing to see how different environments influence people's emotions and attitudes.

This is just one example of how being in a different environment can benefit a participants experience of riding.



Should you require any help then please contact:
Marisa Bretherton-Mackay
01926 405973
marisa@rda.org.uk



Top 10 Holiday Tips!



- 1. Plan well in advance.**
- 2. Prepare to be flexible.**
- 3. Never decline help.**
- 4. Have a plan B.**
- 5. Remember to enjoy it.**
- 6. Keep costs as realistic as you can.**
- 7. Ensure all relevant documents are to hand.**
- 8. Pre-brief participants, carers and helpers before activities.**
- 9. Remember to enjoy it and have fun.**
- 10. Think about the next one!**

*P.S. It's worth
looking at the
weather forecast a few
days before the
holiday!*

Time away with the RDA!

Accommodation

Onsite accommodation where you will be riding/ driving would be ideal. If this is not possible then try and find suitable accommodation no further than a 10 min drive to the riding venue.



You do not have to just ride or drive.

There are plenty of other non-riding activities, some of which are below:

- ☀ Outdoor bowling
- ☀ Darts, bingo, pool, snooker
- ☀ Quiz, jigsaw puzzles
- ☀ Arts & crafts
- ☀ Skittles
- ☀ Outside visits
- ☀ Wildlife parks
- ☀ Adventure parks
- ☀ Zoo
- ☀ Country homes
- ☀ Swimming
- ☀ Musical evening

Shops/Hospitals



Locate the nearest supermarket and hospital and get to know the area as much as you can before the holiday to ensure you are confident should you need to drive to top up food/drinks.

Participant Story

I was lucky enough to attend the Escrick Carriage Driving Holiday last August. I have been a rider with the Riding for the Disabled for the last 34 years and I have always fancied having a go at carriage driving. Therefore going on an RDA driving holiday seemed like a really good way for me to develop my skills and have fun doing something a bit different.

The holiday was based at Queen Margaret's School in Escrick who are lucky enough to have their own equestrian facilities and extensive picturesque grounds. We also had full use of the neighbouring Escrick Park Estate which was also perfect for driving. All of the volunteers on the holiday were very friendly and most were experienced drivers themselves. We had four specially selected driving ponies and we had the opportunity to drive not only with a different pony but also with a different RDA whip. This was a good way to get to know the other people on the holiday but also gave an opportunity to pick up driving tips from different people. The pony that I enjoyed driving the most was a lovely little bay mare called Sweetpea. She well and truly lived up to her name and was rather nippy going through cones.



In this picture I am just about to set off on one of the drives with Sweetpea.

We would drive once or twice a day either driving round the grounds and woodlands or an obstacle course. On the last day we had a competition round an obstacle course which was fantastic fun and brought out my competitive streak which is usually saved for my dressage.

An added bonus of the holiday was daily use of the school's swimming pool. This was not only a great way to unwind near the end of the day, but also lead to some more team bonding through playing our own version of water polo. We had a life guard on hand to assist people in and out of the pool so no one was excluded from this activity.

Our accommodation was within the student's halls of residence and was very comfortable. The riders had the choice of having their own room (as I did) or to share with their helpers or carers. We had the use of a lounge and the school's canteen where we met for mealtimes and for socialising in the evenings.

Continued Overleaf ->

Some nights we had organised activities. One evening that stands out was a visit from the local dog dancing display team. All the dogs were adorable and some were more committed to the dancing than others which was in itself entertaining. On our last night we had a barbecue. My parents live in West Yorkshire so my Mum came to watch me drive on our last day. She was



invited to stay for the barbecue and enjoyed it so much that she ended up staying over and said that she would like to attend the holiday next year as a helper.

I have been on quite a few RDA holidays now I have made some lasting friendships through them and who wouldn't want to spend a whole week surrounded by horses. The Escrick Driving Holiday is definitely one of the best and I would gladly recommend it.

LINDSEY TRICKETT
Participant - Abingdon RDA

“That was the best
day I have had all
summer, thank you
Patsy!”

Driver – Stirling holiday

Duke of Edinburgh Award



Are you short of volunteers to organise time away?

How DofE helps me run my RDA holiday

"The smooth and even seamless running of a holiday is one of the secrets when ensuring ALL have a fun time, and on the final day, we have happy holiday guests and a happy support team. One of the vital 'musts' is adequate helpers for the duration.

As holidays fall in a period when many regular RDA helpers have personal holidays or children within the family to consider, it is useful to know of an alternate source of young, enthusiastic helpers.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme (DofE) has candidates looking for ventures such as ours to enable completion of their courses and can provide just the support we need. The candidates are enthusiastic, willing to join within a happy group in a hands-on practical way and may become potential RDA helpers of the future.

These young people are usually heading towards the end of their conventional education, so have the maturity and responsibility to take the necessary guidance given at the start of a holiday and to involve them as needed during the full period of a holiday. Those applying will know that RDA is directed towards providing access to the equine world to people not usually able to participate in the conventional manner. They will usually have prior knowledge of the world of horses and realise that our holidaymakers may need the input of enthusiasm as well as physical support to ensure the holiday fulfils their wishes.



Do consider a DofE candidate or 2, it will be of mutual benefit, giving candidates an opportunity to comply with the rigorous demands of attaining their certificates, and any shortfall you may have within the holiday will be covered and your 'team' will be able to enjoy the holiday just as much as our guests."

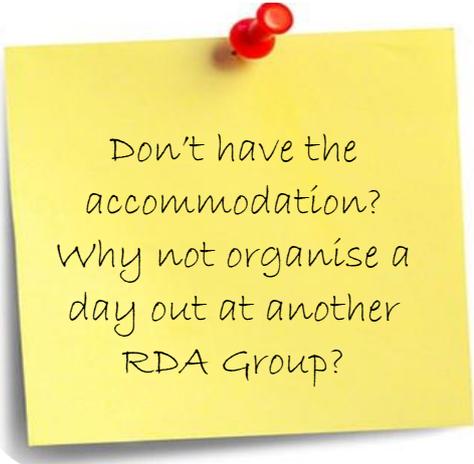
Susan Dudley-Smith

Clarke Granger – DofE Gold Candidate

I helped at Susan's Driving holiday held at Escrick Park in August 2014. The whole experience was an incredible insight into just a small part of the RDA and how everything was adapted to accommodate for every one's needs. Everyone was just so welcoming and I never felt out of place at all. The whole experience was beneficial to me as a person and opened my eyes to the challenges faced by the drivers and was great to see how these challenges weren't there when they were in control of a horse and carriage.

Contacting the RDA was simple and most places contacted offered me a place via email. Overall the experience was great and I will not forget the people that I met and helped.

A Day out with your RDA Group



Don't have the accommodation?
Why not organise a day out at another RDA Group?

Having helped to organise the week long, Northern Ireland Regional holiday for several years, organising an RDA Day out is literally "a walk in the park!"

Last summer I organised two days out, to which all groups from the Region could apply to send riders. Castle Leslie in Co Monaghan, our first venue, was quite a prestigious choice as it is one of Ireland's best hotels and was where

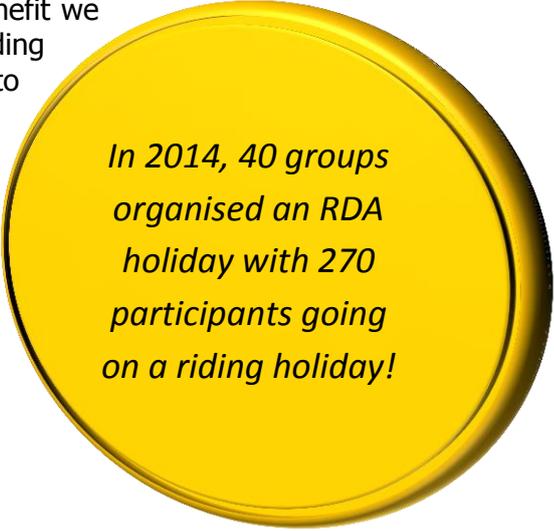
Paul McCartney married Heather Mills! Also with being "over the border" it had international appeal and we all felt as if we were on holiday! The equestrian centre had a great choice of suitable horses and ponies and we had access to the whole estate where our riders could experience paths and woodland tracks. The lake was the high point for most and the riders loved to see the helpers getting splashed – it was also a great spot for a photo shoot with the lovely castle in the background.

Our second venue was an equestrian centre that was home to four of our RDA groups. This had the advantage of well known, tried and tested RDA ponies and most volunteers were also familiar with the venue. As the silage had been cut, we were able to ride over all the fields and had access to the cross country course. Our riders enjoyed the treks across the fields with the water jump being the highlight for most and where we spent most of the time!

Planning for both started well in advance with all the paperwork and sorted long before the event- the Holidays Co-ordinator at National Office were always on hand for advice. We kept things very simple – all the riders were accompanied to the venues by their parents or carers and everyone brought their own picnics, hence saving on cost and avoiding food allergy issues. While we organised some entertainment, it wasn't really necessary as everyone was happy to socialise and chat. We could have used it as a fundraiser, but we just charged the groups the actual cost.

The main worry when organising any outdoor activities is of course the weather. Forests provide cover when it rains and we ask everyone to bring a change of clothes just in case. An indoor school as back up is an advantage but we try not to use that. A covered area for the picnic really is a "must" as this is when everyone, parents, riders and volunteers get to know each other.

While the main purpose of a "day out" is for the riders' benefit we found that they proved to be a real team building and bonding exercise for the groups and the Region. Additionally, going to a non RDA venue provided an additional plus point of being able to show other people what RDA is all about and to demonstrate what a professional organisation that we really are!



*In 2014, 40 groups
organised an RDA
holiday with 270
participants going
on a riding holiday!*

PLEASE KEEP ORIGINAL FOR YOUR RECORDS

HEALTH & SAFETY CHECK LIST FOR RDA HOLIDAY/DAY OUT ORGANISERS



Please contact the Holidays Co-Ordinator at RDA National Office if you have any queries

HOLIDAY

Name of Holiday Organiser		Telephone Number:	
Venue for Holiday (Address & Postcode)			
Telephone Number			
Dates of Holiday	From:	To:	
Number of Regular Helpers (Green Card Holders)		Location of Helpers Forms:	
Number of Regular Helpers (Non Card Holders)			

MEDICAL

Names of Current First Aiders			
Is a Nurse available ?	Location	Telephone number:	
Location of Telephone			
Location of Emergency Poster			

ACCOMMODATION

		Hostels etc.	Home
Is there suitable access ?		YES/NO	YES/NO
Health and Safety of Buildings		Responsibility of hostel	
Location of smoke alarms			
Date of Fire Drill for Helpers		Location of fire drill procedure	

HELPERS

Is there a briefing for residential programme ?	YES/NO	Briefing by:
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Is there a Swimming Life-Saver ?	YES/NO	Name:
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RIDING

Approved Coach(s) Name(s)	
What are the mounting facilities ?	
List of special equipment needed (Devonshire boots, seat savers etc.)	
Location of Accident Book	
Location of First Aid Kit	

CARRIAGE DRIVING	See Instructions for Driving Groups RDA Membership Manual Section 5(e)
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TRANSPORT

Insurance Details	
Is there a qualified Mini Bus driver ?	YES/NO
Are there Seat Belts, wheelchair clamps etc. ?	YES/NO

THIS LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE

THIS FORM SHOULD BE READILY ACCESSIBLE AT ALL TIMES

Safeguarding Checklist.



When planning your holiday it is important that you have taken all possible steps to insure the safety of your riders, drivers & volunteers. You may find this check list is a useful tool:

- Health & Safety Checklist has been completed.
- All Volunteers are Green Carded.
- All Volunteers have had a DBS check
- Emergency contact list created
- Designated Safeguarding Officer allocated.
- Ensure everyone is aware of who the Safeguarding Officer is.
- Sleeping arrangements
 - Females & Males on separate floors/blocks
 - Rooms for a Carer to sleep separate if necessary
 - Shared rooms available to share if needed
- Off-site Risk Assessment
 - 2 volunteers per car at all times
- Photo consent has been obtained
- The nearest Hospital has been located.

Useful Information & Contact details

Marisa Bretherton-Mackay – Holidays Co-ordinator
National Office – 01926 405973 marisa@rda.org.uk

RDA UK Holidays Committee

Judy Olby – Holidays Committee Chairman

Diana Brickell

Patsy Muir-Simpson

Trevor Farmer

Judith Taylor

Claire Pope

Claire Milican

RDA UK Holiday Organisers

Judy Olby

Patsy Muir-Simpson

Katie Lee

Margaret Brockie

Carolyn Brown

For the contact details of the above people, please contact Marisa Bretherton-Mackay at RDA National Office.