



Spot light on West Mercia Regional Instructors

As a Region, West Mercia is very proud of our two Regional Instructors. Doug Smith and Anona White have served RDA and West Mercia well over many years and have recently been rewarded with awards for their work.

Doug Smith was made an Honorary Life Vice President at the recent RDA AGM in London. The highest Honour the association bestows is in recognition of his outstanding support to RDA over many years.

Doug was a mounted Policeman who retired after a double spinal fracture in the course of his work in 1995. When competing at Horse of the Year Show in the late '80's he came across the RDA and has been involved ever since. Doug was part of the Police Display team at Hartpury College in 1994 for the Para Dressage World Championships. He was in Atlanta in 1996 for the first ever Para's, Yard Manager in Sydney in 2000 and games maker in The London Paralympics. Doug was Chairman of the RDA National Championships until retiring after 10 years in 2012. He was also a Trustee Director of RDA National for 9 years.

Doug is now Joint Regional Instructor, a Training Advisor and New Group Liaison Officer for the Region as well as Chairman of the newly formed RDA Equine Committee. He has worked closely with BS & other organisations to bring show jumping to RDA as a competitive discipline. Doug has also been involved in bringing RDA & the Special Olympics into partnership to allow Riders with Intellectual Disabilities greater chances to compete. Doug ran Special Olympics Equestrian in Leicester in 2009 and co ran them last year at Hartpury College in Gloucestershire

Anona White was presented with the RDA Fellowship Award - the highest accolade for RDA Instructors - at the recent Regional Instructors meeting having qualified as a Senior Instructor in 2010

Anona became involved in RDA in 1984 when her husband was abroad. Throughout her involvement with Aldershot, Reindahlen in Germany, Lincoln, Fen End, Perry and Loppington House Groups Anona was noted for her dedication, commitment and positive approach, and for raising the bar and stretching boundaries whenever possible.

In her roll as County and Regional instructor as well as a Training Advisor and RDA Coach Examiner, Anona has energised and promoted teaching standards and the development of volunteering and Groups generally. She is also a member of the National Dressage committee and Regional Show Jumping Committee both of which she champions with equal enthusiasm. Anona is also very active with The Pony Club both in Northern Ireland and Shropshire working particularly hard training and supporting their teams

Through typical meticulous planning, drive and selfless commitment Anona masterminded The RDA showcase of talent before The Queen at Shropshire's Diamond Jubilee Celebration at RAF Cossford in 2012 and the West Mercia, North West and North Wales Regions' Supra Regional Conference in the presence of Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal in 2013 Both these events were an outstanding success.

West Mercia is very fortunate and grateful to have such capable people at our disposal!

Thank you both.

Celia Baker
West Mercia Regional Chairman