

## Horse world

# Bobbysocks is horse of the year

A Riding for the Disabled (RDA) pony has been named the most special equine in the UK.

The British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) ran a competition to mark the Chinese Year of the Horse.

Bobbysocks, a 26-year-old pony, who was won nominated by RDA volunteer Susan Tomkin, stood out from the crowd.

In his younger days, he hunted and competed at regional and national level but, on retiring from competition, he has taught countless children with disabilities to ride.

The 12.2hh pony lives with Dawn Whitmore-Kirby, who runs the Meadow School of Riding, in Woodhouse Eaves, near Loughborough, Leicestershire.

They have chosen a specially commissioned portrait of the pony as a prize.

"Bobbysocks really deserves this award – he is such a character and ever so cheeky," said Dawn. "If ever there is any trouble in the field, it's never down to him, but he's always there!"



## Veterinary

# Freak accident tests first-aid skills

A yard owner put newly learned first aid skills into practice when a horse lost his tongue.

Jack Beeson-Smith believes tips he picked up on a course run by XL Equine enabled him to stay in control and keep the injured horse calm.

"Initially there was just a small amount of blood," said Jack, who attended the course 24 hours earlier. "However, when we opened his mouth his tongue was completely missing!"

The tongue was found in the field, but the vet was unable to reconnect it. It is thought the horse damaged the organ by treading on it.

"The good news is he made a full recovery and has adapted to life without a tongue" said Jack.

For a list of similar courses around the country, visit: [www.equineskills.co.uk](http://www.equineskills.co.uk).

## TREC

# Rescue horse is an international star

A rescue horse that was left to die in terrible conditions has competed for her country in a European championship.

Coloured mare Jigsaw and her rider Lynne Mabbitt travelled to Italy to take part in the TREC European Championships, where they were placed 33rd out of 67 riders.

Aged three, Jigsaw was rescued by the RSPCA after being found in an emaciated



Photos: Meredith Baker; Bransby Horses

state with a yearling foal still suckling her and a two-year-old colt.

With proper care, Jigsaw thrived and was rehomed with Derbyshire-based Lynne, via charity Bransby Horses, in 2004.

"Jigsaw is a lovely horse and the right size and build for TREC," says Lynne of the now 14-year-old mare. "She's calm, and confident, which helps in all phases of the competition.

"It was an amazing experience and I hope we are chosen to compete on the team at the 2016 world championships."

● Another TREC championship competitor is this month's Equilibrium Products Rising Star finalist – see page 54.

## Horse world

# Heroic win

A loving mum has been hailed a hero for an idea which enabled her daughter to enjoy riding.

Jacqui Edwards, of Stamford, Lincolnshire, has been voted an Alltech Equine Hero in a Facebook poll.

Her horse-mad daughter, Alice, was born with only one functioning hand. To enable her to ride, Jacqui designed a special type of rein.

Jacqui went on to set up a company called Alice Reins, which is popular with people who have a lesser grip, such as arthritis sufferers or those that have had a stroke.

"I am so passionate about what I do and to see smiles on riders' faces is just priceless," said



Jacqui. "I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to everyone who voted for me." To nominate your hero, visit: [www.EquineHero.com](http://www.EquineHero.com).

## Charities

# Pair sentenced for cruelty

A judge has branded a father and son "not fit to be anywhere near animals" after 16 horses, ponies and donkeys were found emaciated and suffering.

David Bickell, 45, and William Bickell, 17, both from North Creake, Norfolk, pleaded guilty to a number of offences under the Animal Welfare Act.

Bickell senior admitted 14 charges and was sentenced to four months' imprisonment – the maximum term, in light of his guilty plea – and disqualified from keeping animals for 15 years.

World Horse Welfare field officer Jacko Jackson said the animals were in a "truly terrible" condition.

"One colt, a piebald yearling named Eric was very emaciated and had a body condition score of



zero," he said. "Eric was quiet and weak and had to be put to sleep for welfare reasons."

Other ponies have made a good recovery.