

# Equestrian Statistics

The  
British  
Horse  
Society



**Equestrianism is an extremely popular and healthy activity for people of all ages. It is a diverse and family-friendly sport and is one of very few sports where men and women compete on an equal footing. It extends from amateur and community participation to international success.**

**The equine industry includes anything and everything to do with horses, ponies and donkeys. Equine businesses include riding schools, livery yards, competition yards, trekking centres, breeders, trainers, welfare charities and freelance services and also veterinary services, farriers, feed merchants, tack and clothing manufacturers, shows and event services.**

The most recent British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) National Equestrian Survey (2010-11) indicated that<sup>1</sup>:

- 3.5 million people (six percent of the GB population) have ridden a horse at least once in the past 12 months
- Seventy three percent of riders are female, although there has been an increase in the number of male riders over the past 10 years
- In 2010, eight percent of riders considered themselves disabled in some way
- A quarter of all GB riders are below 16 years old; 20 percent are above 45 years old
- Leisure riding is the most common equestrian pursuit, although riding lessons and non-affiliated competing also increased in 2010-11



- Of riders who ride once a week or less, 46 percent cited access to safe off-road riding as a factor that would increase their riding opportunities
- The estimated GB horse population, including both private and professional ownership, is just below one million horses (988,000)
- The estimated cost of the upkeep of horse is £2.8 billion – £3,105 per horse
- Other indirect consumer expenditure associated with equestrian activity is estimated at £557 million

## International Equestrian Competition

At the London 2012 Olympic games, Team GBR won<sup>2</sup>:

**Eventing Team Silver** – Mary King, William Fox-Pitt, Nicola Wilson, Tina Cook and Zara Phillips

**Dressage Team Gold** – Carl Hester, Charlotte Dujardin and Laura Bechtolsheimer

**Dressage Individual Gold** – Charlotte Dujardin

**Dressage Individual Bronze** – Laura Bechtolsheimer

**Showjumping Team Gold** – Nick Skelton, Ben Maher, Scott Brash and Peter Charles



At the London 2012 Paralympic games, Team GBR won<sup>2</sup>:

**Para-dressage**

**Team Gold** – Lee Pearson, Sophie Christiansen, Sophie Wells and Debbie Criddle

**Freestyle Gold (Ia)** – Sophie Christiansen

**Freestyle Bronze (Ib)** – Lee Pearson

**Freestyle Gold (II)** – Natasha Baker

**Freestyle Silver (III)** – Debbie Criddle

**Freestyle Silver (IV)** – Sophie Wells

**Individual Gold (Ia)** – Sophie Christiansen

**Individual Silver (Ib)** – Lee Pearson

**Individual Gold (II)** – Natasha Baker

**Individual Silver (III)** – Debbie Criddle

**Individual Silver (IV)** – Sophie Wells

In 2012, in the eight FEI disciplines, Team GBR (including senior and Youth teams) won<sup>2</sup>:

16 medals across Eventing, Dressage and Showjumping

11 medals in Para-Dressage

Four medals in vaulting, one endurance medal

Six medals in Driving

One medal in para-driving

In 2009, GBR reining won its first ever medal at the European championship winning a bronze, behind Germany and Belgium. Reining was approved as an FEI discipline in 2000 [3].

## National Societies and Associations

**The British Horse Society (BHS)** – The Society has more than 77,000 members

There are 33,000 British Riding Club (BRC) members

There are 133 BHS Equestrian Access Groups and 221 volunteer Bridleways Officers

There are currently 975 BHS Approved Centres in the UK, Ireland and worldwide

There are 2,115 registered BHS approved instructors

In the period September 2012 to the end of August 2013 approximately 12,000 candidates sat BHS examinations, ranging from Stage 1 through to BHSI, including the BHS Riding and Road Safety Test, Work Based Diplomas and SVGs.

BHS Welfare Officers responded to more than 1,300 reported welfare issues in 2012

By the end of 2012 the BHS had issued 33,119 horse passports

**The Pony Club** – The Pony Club, a national youth charity, has in excess of 345 branches and 600 centres in the UK; in 2012, it had 30,674 members

In 2009 The Pony Club celebrated its 80th Anniversary. It is now the largest Youth Equestrian Organisation in the world<sup>4</sup>



**The Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA)** – The Riding for the Disabled Association has 500 volunteer groups across the UK, and 18,000 volunteers helping 28,000 people take part in riding, carriage driving, vaulting and showjumping activities each year<sup>5</sup>

**British Showjumping (BS)** – British Showjumping manages more than 4,200 shows each year, providing in excess of 4,350 days of competition for its members<sup>6</sup>.

**British Eventing (BE)** – British Eventing regulates, as well as schedules, more than 180 events throughout Britain that cater for nearly 94,000 entries per season (Mar-Oct). British Eventing has more than 11,000 members<sup>7</sup>.

**Endurance GB** – Endurance GB provides and manages well in excess of 100 competitive events a year for its members, as well as many social and pleasure rides to encourage non-members<sup>8</sup>.

**The Hurlingham Polo Association (HPA)** – The Hurlingham Polo Association is the governing body for 100 affiliated polo clubs and associations in the UK and Ireland and 32 overseas. In 2012, there were just below 3,000 members registered with and handicapped by the HPA<sup>9</sup>.

**Horseracing** – The total economic impact of British Racing in 2012 was £3.45bn with a tax contribution of £276m. There are an average of 13,716 horses in training with 8,215 owners. Direct, indirect and associated employment in 2012 was 85,200. Racing is the second best attended sport in Britain after football, and in 2012 accounted for four of the ten highest attended sporting events (excluding the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games). The peak Channel 4 audience for the 2013 Grand National was 8.9m<sup>10</sup>.

## Equestrian Trades

The British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) represents more than 800 member companies, covering a wide range of businesses including not only retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers, but also agents, dealers and many service based businesses<sup>11</sup>.

There are still at least 40 manufacturers of saddles and bridles in Walsall and it remains an international centre of leather manufacturing, serving a worldwide market<sup>12</sup>.

There are around 2,800 registered farriers. All working farriers in Great Britain (excluding the Highlands and Islands of Scotland) must be registered with the Farriers Registration Council<sup>13</sup>.

## Legislation

Since 2005, all UK horses and donkeys are obliged to have a unique passport. There are more than 70 authorised passport issuing bodies in the UK.

Unlike the rest of the European Union, in the UK, the horse is not considered to be an agricultural animal because we do not consider them to be a food animal.

## Equestrian Events

5.58m people went to the races in 2012<sup>10</sup>.

In excess of 1.2million people attend the top ten shows hosting showjumping each year<sup>14</sup>.

## Off-road riding and carriage driving

The British Horse Society National Equestrian Route Network presently stands at 18,865km, 7,000km of which are available online



In 2026 all historic, non-recorded rights of way will be extinguished under the CROW Act 2000.

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 did not provide any new statutory access rights for equestrians in England and Wales.

In Scotland, under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, horse riders and carriage drivers enjoy a statutory right of responsible access to most land and inland water, which includes the coast and the foreshore.

## Road Accident Statistics

The BHS considers horse-related traffic accidents to be significantly under reported, a view supported by the Hospital Episode Statistics Online. The HES data concerning external causes of visits to hospital in 2011-12 reported 4,199 episodes requiring treatment in hospital for 'animal – rider or occupant animal drawn vehicle injured in transport accident'<sup>15</sup>.

There were 183 Road Traffic Incidents reported on [www.horseaccidents.org.uk](http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk) in 2012. These included<sup>16</sup>:

- Two rider fatalities
- 12 severe rider injuries
- 14 horse fatalities
- Three severe horse injuries

## Sources (correct as of October 2013)

<sup>1</sup> BETA survey 2010-2011

<sup>2</sup> [www.equestrianteamgb.co.uk/content.aspx?strPage=Team-GBR-Medal-Tables](http://www.equestrianteamgb.co.uk/content.aspx?strPage=Team-GBR-Medal-Tables)

<sup>3</sup> [www.britishreining.co.uk/team-gbr/](http://www.britishreining.co.uk/team-gbr/)

<sup>4</sup> [www.pcuk.org/index.php/about/history/](http://www.pcuk.org/index.php/about/history/)

<sup>5</sup> [www.rda.org.uk/about-rda/](http://www.rda.org.uk/about-rda/)

<sup>6</sup> [www.britishshowjumping.co.uk/page/About-Us](http://www.britishshowjumping.co.uk/page/About-Us)

<sup>7</sup> [www.britisheventing.com/asp-net/page.aspx?section=21&itemTitle=About+British+Eventing](http://www.britisheventing.com/asp-net/page.aspx?section=21&itemTitle=About+British+Eventing)

<sup>8</sup> [www.endurancegb.co.uk/html/aboutus.html](http://www.endurancegb.co.uk/html/aboutus.html)

<sup>9</sup> [www.hpa-polo.co.uk/about/index.asp](http://www.hpa-polo.co.uk/about/index.asp)

<sup>10</sup> [www.britishhorseracing.com/resources/media/publications\\_and\\_reports/](http://www.britishhorseracing.com/resources/media/publications_and_reports/)

EconomicImpactStudy2013.pdf

<sup>11</sup> [www.beta-uk.org/pages/about-beta.php](http://www.beta-uk.org/pages/about-beta.php)

<sup>12</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walsall\\_Leather\\_Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walsall_Leather_Museum)

<sup>13</sup> Annual Report 2012 - <http://www.farrier-reg.gov.uk/about-us/annual-report/>

<sup>14</sup> [www.britishshowjumping.co.uk/page/Facts-and-Figures](http://www.britishshowjumping.co.uk/page/Facts-and-Figures)

<sup>15</sup> [www.hscic.gov.uk/searchcatalogue?productid=9161&q=title%3a%22hospital+episode+statistics%22&sort=Relevance&size=10&page=1#top](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/searchcatalogue?productid=9161&q=title%3a%22hospital+episode+statistics%22&sort=Relevance&size=10&page=1#top)

<sup>16</sup> [www.horseaccidents.org.uk](http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk)

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