



OFFICIAL RIDER BIOGRAPHY
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Anna Ross-Davies

Date of birth: 30 July 1972.

Lives: Gaddesden Row, Herts.

Major achievements: Anna's biggest successes have all been achieved with Liebling II. She competed in her first international, the World Breeding Championships, in 2003. The following year she became the Elementary Freestyle National Champion. She took the runner-up slot in the 2005 Intermediaire II National Championships and went on to win her first grand prix at national level in 2006 at Dressage at Hickstead.

Anna won her first international grand prix during the 2007 Spanish Sunshine Tour and made her British team debut at the 2007 Saumur CDIO. She was picked as reserve for the 2007 European Championships. Less than two weeks before the competition, she found out she was on the team and went on to achieve the highest British placing. She finished 10th in the freestyle and was the only British rider to go through to the final stage.

In 2008, she won the inaugural Dressage Personality of the Year, which was voted for online by British Dressage members.

Current competition horses:

- Duchess IV, a 17.1hh bay mare by Dolany out of Havanna XIII, born 2003 and owned by Donald McTaggart.
- Aramist T, a 17hh chestnut Rheinlander mare by Abanos out of Utharin v h Wolfharthof, born 2002 and owned by Judy Firmston Williams.
- Pegasus MK, a 16.2hh dark bay gelding by Elcaro out of Candine, born 1997 and owned by the Bowles family.
- Anna also rides a host of youngsters.

First competitive experience: "I rode a horse called Bunbury in a dressage test at the age of 22. Adam Kemp [who was working at Talland School of Equitation in Gloucestershire at the time] encouraged me to have a go. The owner had been bucked off and broken both her arms. I didn't win, but at least I stayed on with both my arms in tact."

Trainer: "Germany's Ulla Salzgeber and when I'm in England, Judy Harvey."

Most admired riders: Ulla Salzgeber, para rider Lee Pearson and the Queen, who is still riding in her 80s – I think it's smashing."

Qualities looked for in a dressage horse: "I like 'hot' horses, ones which are forward going. I don't mind being bucked off as long as it isn't too often!"

Favourite dressage venues: "Pachetts Equestrian Centre in Hertfordshire, which I run. What else could it possibly be!"

What other career would you have chosen: "I used to be quite good at making sandwiches when I worked at a sandwich bar or I would run a nightclub."

Favourite meal: "A nice hot curry."

Favourite drink: "Champagne and I'm partial to a Gin and tonic."

Anna started having a lesson once a fortnight at her local riding school aged nine, which led to her becoming a helper.

"It meant I got to ride lots of naughty ponies," she says.

When she started to take her BHS exams, she came across Sue Payne, who suggested she go to Talland School of Equitation in Gloucestershire, where many top riders have started their careers. She was 22 when trainers Pammy Hutton and Adam Kemp spotted her talent.

"I was working in a bar at the time in the evenings and riding during the day. Pammy and Adam offered me a scholarship. Until then I never thought I could be any good."

After a couple of years, Anna returned to her old riding school to run it. She started competing a large variety of riding school horses ranging from an Anglo-Arab to a Danish Warmblood stallion. She also trained a Cleveland Bay called Mr Bojangles up to intermediaire I level.

It was while she was competing at Patchetts Equestrian Centre in Hertfordshire that she was approached to ride a horse the centre's owner, Donald McTaggart, had recently bought. It was a sharp four-year-old called Liebling II. The Holstein gelding made good progress and they ended up at their first international competition in 2003.

Dressage judge Judy Firmston-Williams also noticed Anna's talent and offered her another ride.

"Judy has given me a lot of opportunities and has been a brilliant, supportive owner."

In 2004, Anna watched top German rider Ulla Salzgeber at a competition. She was so impressed with her riding style, she sent Ulla an email asking her for help with Liebling. Anna now spends half her time training in Germany and the rest as a freelance trainer and manager of Patchetts.

"Ulla is an inspirational teacher; I knew 'Lenny' could be a grand prix horse if we had the right help."

Anna's diary of her training with Ulla during 2006 was published in *Horse & Hound* magazine.

