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## Emma Sheardown

- Date of birth:** 29 January 1985
- Lives:** Barkston, Lincolnshire.
- Major achievements:** In 2006, Emma and Slightly Welton won all three grade 1a tests at Saint-Lo CPEDI. In 2007, Emma won grade 1a tests at Kristiansand CPEDI riding Aldi.
- In 2009, Emma has enjoyed great success with Purdy's Dream. The partnership won the grade 1a team, individual and freestyle tests at Moorseele CPEDI and was placed third in both the grade 1a team and individual tests at Hartpury CPEDI.
- On the strength of these results Emma and Purdy's Dream were selected to compete as an individual at the 2009 Para-Equestrian Dressage European Championships in Kristiansand, Norway, their first call up to represent GB in a championship team. They pair excelled, winning gold in the individual freestyle and silver in the individual competition.
- Current competition horses:** Purdy's Dream, (aka Eddie), a 16.3hh bay British-bred gelding, born 1998 and owned by Emma
- First competitive experience:** "An RDA 'handy pony' competition in 1993. My first competitive dressage competition wasn't until I competed in the RDA National Dressage Championships in 2002."
- Trainer:** "Karen Thompson, but I also train regularly with Angela Weiss."
- Superstitions:** "None really although I do like to be organised & have everything in its right place."
- Most admired riders:** "Lee Pearson – he doesn't let his disability stop him from being a great horseman and his achievements are something to aspire to!"
- Qualities looked for in a dressage horse:** "Being a grade 1a rider, the two most important qualities for me are a good walk and a good temperament but trainability is the key."
- Favourite dressage venues:** "International wise I love competing at Moorselle in Belgium. Nationally it has to be Vale View it's my local venue and I've seen the facilities grow over the years into a super competition centre."
- What other career would you have chosen:** "I have a National Diploma in Animal Management, so it would be something to do with animals. I always quite fancied Animal Behaviour."
- Favourite meal:** "Christmas dinner – roast turkey and all the trimmings!"
- Favourite drink:** "A cup of tea"

Emma started to compete in dressage in 2002 with the RDA - it was at an RDA competition that she met Chris Porterfield who she says pointed her in the right direction. In 2004 Emma was accepted onto the World Class Start squad, from here she has progressed to the World Class Potential Programme.

"I love being able to work closely with the horses and build a partnership with them. When you do well at a competition, like winning a medal at the Europeans, all the work that my team and I put in to that horse is rewarded. I also love being part of a strong team with great camaraderie!"

Emma has Cerebral Palsy which affects her balance and the co-ordination of all four limbs. The main challenge she faces when riding is organising her body to respond quickly to the horse and give clear hand/leg aids.

"I use looped reins as I find it difficult to hold conventional reins; my reins on my double-bridle are split reins so that I only have one rein to hold. On my stirrups I have toe-stoppers to help prevent my foot from sliding through the stirrup. I also have two hand-holds, one on each D-Ring of the saddle, to help keep my hands under control and enable me to keep a steadier contact. I've also started to use the new bendy whips – they mould around my legs and so are easier to use."

Emma rides Eddie [Purdy's Dream] five days a week and occasionally other horses as well. She goes to the English Institute of Sport (EIS) at Loughborough University once a week for strength and conditioning work and has a daily home-based exercise regime. Before she rides she also makes use of a horse simulator to work on her position.

