

For Immediate Release

May 2008

THE EQUIMAX METROPOLITAN POLICE ACTIVITY RIDE

The Suffolk Show takes place this year on Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th May 2008 – half term week and this year is proud to have as a first time visitor to the Show the Equimax Metropolitan Police Activity Ride. This ride is a firm favourite at any show and will undoubtedly cause you to marvel at the training and commitment of both officers and horses as they perform their display in the Grand Ring.

What makes this one of the most incredible equine displays around is the fact that these officers and horses are all fully operational. This means that when they have finished at this show they will all be part of front line policing in the capital, providing high visibility patrols in neighbourhoods and managing crowds at high profile events. These horses are a regular sight at football matches, ceremonials, pop concerts and policing demonstrations.

The ride first wowed the crowds in the 1950's at the annual horse show held at the Mounted Branch Training School near Kingston in Surrey. It was designed to show off the incredible training of the horses in a fast moving display that requires perfect timing, total commitment and professionalism. Moves have been changed and added over the years and the ride you will see involves over 80 jumps, fast cross-overs, horses jumping through fire and a paper wall. The officers will remove their jackets, stirrups and saddles whilst continuing to jump and complete the manoeuvres. This is a truly spectacular display.

The Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch itself has a long and distinguished history. Sir John Fielding, a Bow Street Magistrate who wanted to stop highwaymen troubling residents and visitors to London as they travelled to and from the fast growing city, originally created Peace Officers in 1758. These were the famous 'Redbreasts', so called because they wore red waistcoats and they were very successful in curbing thefts and robberies around the turnpikes. The Metropolitan Police themselves were formed in 1829 and the Mounted Peace Officer became part of the Metropolitan Police in 1836. In the 1840's the Mounted Police were so successful in controlling crowds that

press release

Press Release

Subject: The Equimax Metropolitan Police Activity Ride
Page No: Page 2 of 3

this became a major part of their job. Their role has clearly developed since then but they still have a significant part to play in the work of the modern Metropolitan Police helping to keep London safe.

There is an intensive selection process for serving officers if they want to join the Mounted Branch. They must have served for at least two years before applying and they undergo a 4-week suitability assessment, a fitness test and interview before being selected. They then attend a 16-week Standard Equitation Course. This course covers all aspects of equestrianism where officers are assessed and examined every four weeks, and after passing the final exam, a pass out parade takes place in front of family and friends. Annual refresher courses continue the training and further national qualifications are available to all suitable officers.

The horses themselves undergo a four week trial at Imber Court and if suitable and showing potential, they are purchased. There is a three stage training programme ~ red, amber and green. This usually last about six months where the horses are exposed to and familiarized with all the hazards, sights and sounds they will experience as a London Police Horse.

The Activity Ride appears by kind permission of the Commissioner of The Metropolitan Police Sir Ian Blair and is led by Inspector Alan Hiscox, the Training Inspector at Imber Court. All riders use Woof Wear protective equipment.

The Equimax Metropolitan Police Activity Ride is just one more great reason to visit this year's Suffolk Show!

---- Ends ----

press release

Press Release

Subject: The Equimax Metropolitan Police Activity Ride
Page No: Page 3 of 3

For further information and images please contact Julie Podmore at the Suffolk Agricultural Association. Telephone 01473 707119 or email julie@suffolkshow.co.uk

Trinity Park, Felixstowe Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 8UH

press release