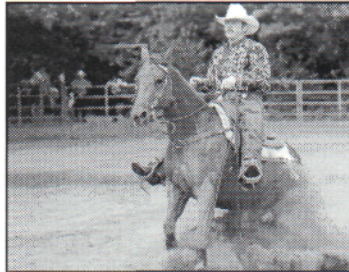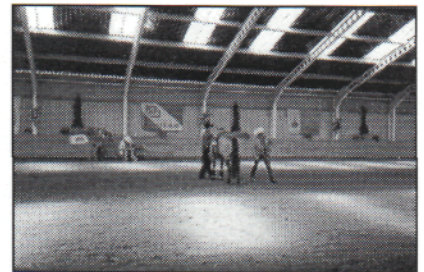# In Conversation With "The Horseman"

Founder of the Belgian Reining Horse Association and looking forward to the next Olympics, Anthony Ward trains horses in a specialised discipline. A day in the life of Anthony Ward.

You've got to be up early to be up before Anthony Ward, which is probably why he's so ideally suited to his role as Safety and Security Assistant. If you have an access card, Anthony will have processed your application and issued the card to you. Sitting behind reception, surrounded by CCTV screens, Anthony explains why he gets up so early, whether or not he's working.

"I train Reining Horses, which not many people have heard of yet. It's one of 17 different Western equestrian disciplines and is based on the skills that Cowboys needed to do their job of rounding up cattle. It is now a separate discipline which no longer really has much to do with what people think of as 'cowboying', just as show jumping has little to do with its origins in hunting," smiles Anthony.

"The aim of the sport is that the horse should be 'willingly guided on a loose rein'. In other words, all its movements should be dedicated to the task in hand and horse and rider should move as one. There are 8 different manoeuvres that each horse and rider must master, such as fast circles, flying lead changes and sliding stops. There are 10 different patterns or programmes in which they can be combined, a bit like Ice Dancing. In competition, the judge will announce which pattern the riders have to follow, so you need to know all the patterns as well as all the manoeuvres."

"As I mentioned earlier, not many people know about Reining Horses, but hopefully that will change next year when it becomes a demonstration event at the World Equestrian Games in Barcelona. We're also hoping to have it included in the next Olympics," says Anthony. Anthony's involvement with Reining Horses goes back 18 years and he was the founder of the Belgian Reining Horse Association. He has made quite a number of major contributions to the sport, including masterminding a pan-European agreement which allows riders to compete in different EU countries without having to become members of each national association. He is also a European Continental Judge appointed by the sport's World governing body, the National Reining Horse Association, which allows him to judge in all European countries including Israel!

"At home, we have space to host up to 11 horses at a time. We have a maximum of 3 horses in training at any one time. Over the years, I've developed my own style and training methods by reading about training and also through visiting the US and seeing how other people do it. In the past, I've run training clinics at home, nowadays I tend to travel to give them. I've recently given clinics in Norway and Finland and I'm looking forward to going to Denmark soon. Reining is quite a small world and it's funny how one's reputation spreads. I recently got a call from someone working for ExxonMobil in Dallas asking me about finding a good trainer for his horses. What was really funny was that he used to work here at Machelen and neither of us knew that the other was interested in Reining Horses when he worked here, and I've been here for 25 years!" laughs Anthony.

" Little River Quarter Horses"

Anthony and his wife, Peggy, run their stable " Little River Quarter Horses" in Opvelp, near Bierbeek. Although he has lived virtually all his life in Belgium, Anthony is a British citizen which until recently, had never been a problem. "Having founded the Belgian Reining Horse Association and having spent a great deal of time and energy in getting the sport accepted at international level, I was looking forward to competing internationally," smiles Anthony. "However, there's a problem. You see, as a British citizen, I'm not allowed to compete for the Association I founded! If I want to compete in the World Equestrian games or the Olympics, I'll have to ride for Great Britain, although I'd be allowed to do so on a Belgian horse! Ironic, isn't it?"

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