

## A DREAM COME TRUE BY Viv Gray

Picture a long, sandy beach backed by pine trees and sand dunes, a perfect winter's day, blue sky, sunshine, a soft breeze, waves gently lapping on the shore and the sound of hooves on wet sand. It has always been my dream to canter along a sandy beach and on December 4<sup>th</sup> 2005 my dream came true with the aid of my trusty driving cob, Kastro and the Bennington Fun Bug.

Early that morning the livery yard was buzzing with excitement as a group of us prepared our horses for the hour-long journey to Holkham Beach. Rachel and Bill Lewis had, as usual, made excellent plans for our Christmas Outing and they headed a convoy of horse boxes, trailers and my car, towing my Fun Bug. We wound our way to the north coast through picturesque villages where people stared at us with interest.

At last we arrived, paid our dues and parked. The shafts were quickly attached to the Fun Bug, Kastro was harnessed up and put to, calm as ever, and, after putting on our 'waterproofs' Claire and I climbed aboard. Kastro can always be relied on to enjoy any occasion without being



silly and this day was no exception. He eagerly followed Rachel with 'Daisy' in her Bennington Intro 4 as we passed through the gate onto the beach with 5 riders following behind. The horses were tingling with excitement as we breathed in the sea air and viewed the long stretch of sand.



We walked along the rear of the beach to give the horses time to settle down. After a while, as their steps were becoming springier, with general agreement we burst into trot. The Fun Bug wheels cruised easily over the hard sand as Kastro stepped out, determined to keep up with Daisy.



Before long we came back to walk and turned towards a break in the dunes and the sea. I wondered how Kastro would react to the waves. He's used to going through fords and

he eyed the waves with curiosity, stretching his head down to taste the water. Then we were off again, trotting along the edge of the waves, spray flying up

over us, sand in our mouths as Kastro's ears flicked back, listening to our laughter. After a while we stopped for a short breather as we met up with a group of walkers with dogs, husbands and friends from the



yard, and we posed for photographs. Then, off again, but this time with more energy and Kastro eased into his first canter between shafts. Wow! I was living my dream! The Fun Bug sailed smoothly along behind my gallant little horse as we enjoyed the freedom of this beautiful beach. Eventually, tired but happy, it was time to turn back to the dunes and make our way back to the trailer. The horses were untacked and rugged and then we all gathered to enjoy Rachel's homemade hot soup and rolls, while flocks of geese made their presence known in the adjoining fields.

It was a perfect end to a dream that I thought would never come true as two years ago ill health and a worried husband persuaded me to give up riding my Arab. Unable to contemplate life without a horse I bought Kastro, who had been 'rescued' two months earlier and was still in poor condition with numerous psychological problems. Together we progressed towards better health and mutual trust. I now find that I can have just as much fun driving Kastro in our Fun Bug as I did when riding my Arab.