

Elisabeth Curtis Centre Riding for the Disabled

Charity No. 1137217; Company No. 7302917



A Member
Group of

RDA



**It's what you can
do that counts**

From the Editor...

Well, what a lot of changes we found when we returned to the Centre after the summer break! The Centre itself had been refreshed in a big way (more about this later from Kyle Palmer). The few members of the Management Committee worked long and hard throughout the break, including one evening of moving wood, in 80 degree temperatures!

One of the biggest changes was that our grooms. Ann and Gayl had decided to retire on the 31 August. They have been replaced by two freelance grooms, Anna and Aleysha, until we can advertise for more permanent staff, which we hope to do in the near future. See separate report.

We had a worrying moment when G Moores told us that they were no longer going to continue in the skip business. Moores have been collecting our skip free of charge for many years and it looked as though we would have to pay another company for removal – adding quite a cost to the Centre. Luckily Moores informed us that they were keeping a vehicle suitable for our needs and, as our waste goes to an allotment, they would continue to collect the skip for free. They also donated the skip to us, should we need to find another company to remove it in future. We owe them a huge “Thank You” for all the years they have supported us, and continue to support us. The financial saving to the Centre has been substantial.

Other changes – Tuesday evening session has been

From the Editor...

covered by other coaches for the autumn term. From January onwards, Gina Dunn will be coaching, with Abbie Temperley assisting. Gina will continue to coach on Wednesdays, as before.

We were very pleased indeed that Cathy Titmuss was awarded her Group Coach Certificate and this was confirmed in her assessment with Bella Craven, our County Coach. Well done, Cathy!!

This year we decided we would hold a New Year Bash, rather than a Christmas Dinner. This will take place on Monday, January 31st. It is a one-off event – a January Jolly, a Jaunt – whatever you like to call it, but we really need someone to take the orders and payments for this, please. Could you do this for this one event? Please contact any member of the Management Committee, if you can help.

Our committees need you! The numbers involved are slowly dwindling. Many hands really do make light work. If you could offer to spare a few hours for Management, of Fund Raising, please do let us know – you will be very welcome. If you're not able to do that – perhaps you could help in another way – arranging one-off social events? If gardening is your thing, then how about joining our small team, on Wednesday and sometimes Friday. Administration – could you be the new volunteer organiser? Could you design a poster? Do you have a talent that could help us? Please do get involved.

Our fields took a pounding this year from the "Beast from the East", followed by a record long, hot summer,

From the Editor...

so we are resting them as much as possible, to allow them to recover and get them into condition for the coming year.

Gina Dunn is our new Pony Welfare Officer. The Centre has committed, this year, to follow new guidance rules on pony welfare. We were visited by our Area Pony Welfare Officer, Anne Mitchell, in September and took advice from our vets. We were already aware of the World Horse Welfare's (formerly ILPH) concerns about how ponies are kept, at an RDA AGM attended by Victoria Liston (Chairman) and Kirsty Brogden (Coach). As a result the ponies have had more spent on them, since start of term, in different feeds, a hay steamer, more tests to avoid unnecessary worming. They have also been micro-chipped, in accordance with the new Government regulations. See Gina's report for more details. I think everybody would agree that our greatest asset is our ponies and that money on their welfare is essential and well spent.

Gina is also advising at AB riding sessions for the good of the ponies. We are already seeing results from this and the ponies are enjoying their new rides and riders. Gina would welcome riders from our volunteers to help with these sessions. You would need to be a reasonably experienced rider, able to trot and canter and already knowing some of the basics of simple dressage, etc. Oh, and you need to weigh less than 10.5 stones, I'm afraid – RDA rules are that our AB riders must be consistent with weight limits for our disabled riders. If you can help, please contact your Coach, or Gina herself.

From the Editor...

In our last newsletter, we hopefully made you aware that Allan Bennett is no longer going to be our Treasurer from the end of this year. Allan has done a superb job in this role and will be a very hard act to follow! However – if you have the necessary skills and qualifications to take this role, we'd love to hear from you. Allan gives us a run down of the Centre expenditure later in the newsletter.

In summer we have to change the surface of our indoor school. To comply with fire regulations we are changing to a surface based on waxed sand. This will have lots of advantages – it will need much less harrowing, it will be virtually dust free and it is much easier for volunteers to walk on (although ponies may take a little time to adjust). The only drawback is that any liquid stays on the surface for much longer before it is absorbed so if the ponies pee.....! Barrow Farm has taught their ponies not to pee on their surface, but they are in a different set-up, where ponies walk outside from their stables to the school, so they have an opportunity to pee then. We're hoping we can persuade our ponies to pee in their stables, but some of them, understandably, hate that idea!

And the other BIG difficulty is that the surface will cost £20,000!! We are going to have to fund-raise hard to cover this cost. If you know of anyone who has membership, or influence, in Lions Club, Round Table, Foresters, and any other of these wonderful bodies who might donate towards the cost, please let them know. Some Companies may also give a one-off donation towards a capital cost. We are already applying for

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some grants and may look to raising money on the internet, through crowd-funding, if necessary. If you can arrange a fund-raiser, then why not let our Fund Raising Group know and they may be able to provide you with collecting boxes, information, etc.

We'd also be interested to hear from anybody who would like to buy our old surface (suitable for an outdoor manège) which would include arranging and paying for transportation to their site.

If there is anything you would like to know about, which is not covered in our newsletters, then please let us know, so that we can consider future inclusion. Drop an email to elisabethcurtiscentre@gmail.com or put a note in the top right hand tray on the desk.

We're hoping to go to press and get the newsletter to you before the Centre closes for the Christmas holiday and so we do wish you all the best of the season and hope to see you in January, refreshed after your break and looking forward to the return of longer days.

Lastly – my grateful thanks to all the contributors to the Newsletter and to Kyle Palmer for the layout.

Kirsty Brogden

Editor



From the Chairman...



Since the last newsletter, things have continued to be busy at the Centre. A team from Santander, along with a number of volunteers from the Centre spent time over the Summer painting and updating the hallway, office, waiting area and the stables. I hope you will agree that it is a great improvement and my thanks to everyone involved for their hard work.

Sadly, over the Summer, our two grooms, Ann and Gayl, left the Centre. My thanks to them both for their many years of service to the Centre, and my best wishes for the future. To cover the role, we have welcomed Anna and Alyesha to the Centre, I want to thank everyone who stepped in to support them while they were settling in.

Keeping the Centre running is a real team effort, so I want to say a huge thank you to our many volunteers, our coaches, the members of the Management Committee and the members of the Fundraising group for all you have done for the Centre.

We are always keen to welcome new volunteers to the Centre, so if you know anyone who would be interested in helping, either on one of the riding session, or with fundraising or helping with the day to day running of the Centre, please do ask them to get in touch.

Victoria Liston

Chairman

From the Treasurer...

Over the past 7 months , from 1 April to 30 November 2018 we have incurred total costs of just over £59,000. This is £14,000 higher than in the same period last year. This significant additional expenditure was required to enhance, and make safe the infrastructure of the Centre.

We have spent £9,000 on repairs and replacement of fences around our fields, £2,560 in funding work to stabilise the earth bank at the rear of the stables which was in potential danger of collapsing, and £2,500 putting down hardcore to ensure all weather access to the hay barn and fields at the back of the Centre. In addition, we have purchased a hay steamer, on veterinary advice. This purifies the hay, kills off bacteria and spores, and will improve the respiratory health of the horses. This has cost over £1,800.

All this expenditure has been financed from our reserves, which consist of grants and donations received in earlier years. We still have reserves amounting to over 1 years finance of our total costs, but we have significant expenditure planned early in the next financial year, to replace the existing surface of the school in order to meet enhanced fire regulations.

We are already and will therefore be looking for additional donations/grants to finance this expenditure over the next few months.

Allan Bennett

Treasurer

Santander helps re-fresh the centre...

Employees from Santander's Grafton Gate Head Office in Milton Keynes (and from across the UK) attended over the summer to re-paint and re-fresh the centre.



The activity, which was part of the bank's Discovery Days scheme, saw 16 volunteers help refurbish the entrance hall, office, waiting area and stables at the centre. Santander contributed to the cost of the refurbishment and continues to donate furniture to the centre to replace our older office equipment.

Richard Owen, Director of the Transformation & Support at Santander who organised volunteers, said: *"It was great to see what a difference our staff was able to make by the end of day. We had a big task ahead of us but the whole team got stuck in and it was great to work alongside centre volunteers and learn about the great work they do. I hope the riders truly enjoy the refreshed and modernised facilities for years to come."*

Kyle Palmer

Project Manager, Santander / Trustee, ECC

Thanks to Ann and Gayl...



Ann and Gayl had been with us as grooms for 18 years. As Liz Riding said in her speech on the day of their leaving, Ann was first to join us. She had previously worked in a local showing yard and had her own horses, so she was very skilled at turnout. Ann had been calm, reliable and cheerful – not always easy with horsey

volunteers who all have their own opinions and when we have to abide by RDA guidelines.

Ann was followed by Gayl shortly afterwards. She had also worked in a local showing yard, had her own horse and was a keen show jumper. She also had a BHS1 qualification. Gayl had been a volunteer for some years with the Willington group and also helped in our sessions as a volunteer. Both Ann and Gayl agreed to cover days off, holidays, etc, between them, which was immensely helpful to the Group. Ann worked evenings and Gayl, mornings, but this often amalgamated into helping each other and then walking their dogs together, which sometimes caused confusion with volunteers, who thought they were both “full-time”.

Ann and Gayl worked well together as a team and at times more than their required hours. They were

Thanks to Ann and Gayl...

reliable in their attendance and were there for appointments of farrier, vet, saddler, and physio and would come back to check on sick horses and also helped to prepare ponies for training days, competitions.

They (and their families) had been very involved with the work of the Centre, often giving freely of their spare time to help at special events, pony viewing, etc, which was much appreciated by us.

We had many happy times with Ann and Gayl, over the years and a collection for them raised £250, which they decided to spend on accommodation and entry to a dog training seminar, which will be no surprise to those who knew their love of dogs and "Doggy Dancing" which they displayed at one of our Summer Fairs, using 2 of our grey ponies with the dogs.

We are certain that everyone who knew Ann and Gayl would like to thank them for their contribution to the Centre and wish them well in the future.

Liz Riding

Coach Trainer

Can you help us?

We are looking for new volunteers to help us in a number of ways including admin, D.I.Y, fundraising, finance, leading and side helping with our ponies and riders during sessions. The minimum age to volunteer is 14yrs and training is provided.

If you'd like to know more you can contact us on
01234 824469 or email
elisabethcurtiscentre@gmail.com
www.elisabethcurtiscentre.co.uk



Pony Welfare Officer updates...



September 1st saw me stepping into the role of Pony Welfare Officer. The care and welfare of animals has always been a passion of mine, and I was therefore very happy to accept this role.

These past three months have been exceptionally busy. We have made some changes within the care of our ponies, to enable the Centre to keep in line with best practice, and to fulfil requirements of new regulations. We sought professional advice to support us through these changes.

Anne Mitchell, the RDA Regional Equine Advisor, paid the ECC a visit in September. This was a very informative and successful visit, attended not only by some Coaches and members of Management, but also our County Chair, Veronica Bradley.

In October, the vet visited the ECC to weigh all the ponies and give them a general health check. The vet also removed a piece of broken tooth from Muscadeu. During this visit, five of the ponies were microchipped, the other three having already been chipped. This is to ensure that we comply with new legislation coming into effect in October 2020.

The Osteopath paid us a visit in October. The ponies all seemed to appreciate their treatment, and the

Pony Welfare Officer updates...

Osteopath left us with some new exercises to help the ponies feel more comfortable.

The saddler visited in November to adjust some of the saddles.

Following these visits, we have initiated some changes in the routine care of our ponies. There have been some adjustments to the ponies' feeds, so that they are now tailored to each pony's individual needs. The ECC recently purchased a hay steamer which enables us to provide the ponies with healthier, dust free hay. In line with best practice, the ponies are now having their weights recorded weekly. We have also introduced regular worm counts and saliva tests, to ensure that worming treatment is only administered to those who need it. In order to adapt to the general changes in our weather system, we have made adjustments to the rugging regime.

The ponies continue to be exercised by experienced able-bodied riders, to promote their fitness and suppleness. The ponies are really enjoying having more variety in their work.

As we approach the end of term and look forward to the Christmas holidays, we plan on giving the ponies a second clip during the break, ready for the start of the new term.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Gina Dunn

Pony Welfare Officer

Fundraising: The Autumn Fair...



The days leading up to Saturday, 17th November were pretty hectic! The Fundraising Group descended on Audrey's house with boxes of donated goods for use on the ever-popular Tombola, Craft and Knitted items, Bric-a-Brac and Book stalls. By the time we had finished, all the items were sorted and stored in appropriately labelled cases and boxes ready for the big day!

Saturday dawned and a convoy of cars headed for All Saint's Church Hall laden with boxes. Tables were quickly positioned; we had one hour to transform the hall into our Autumn Fair. In the kitchen, preparations were being made for tea, coffee, home-made soup, sandwiches and cakes to be served – again very popular at our events! At 9.55am we were ready and waiting for our first customers.

We had three raffles on the go: - a luxury hamper, 'Name the Teddy' (donated by the Bambridge's) and a 'Horse Sculpture' by Susannah Oliver (donated by Ros). Tickets will be sold at the Centre for these prizes until the Draw, just before Christmas.

Ros and her friends brought their beautiful home-made jewellery and the workshop, where youngsters can design their own creations. Thanks have to go to Tudor Rose, especially Mrs. Kitchen, for the knitted items and also to Julie from Bromham, who provides home-made cards for us to sell.

Fundraising: The Autumn Fair...

There was a steady flow of visitors throughout the day; we would have liked a larger number as we had advertised widely as well as using the local press. All the stalls did well, which was evident when we packed up and were left with empty bags and boxes.

It was a success, thanks to everyone who helped before the event, by making and donating items, to those who helped on the day with stalls and refreshments and, of course, everyone that came and spent or donated money! A big Thank You!

We made the magnificent sum of £788.65 which was made up as follows:

Donations—£105.00
Refreshments—£123.25
Tombola—£99.00
Cakes—£117.00
Jewellery and Workshop—£58.00
Crafts and Knitted Items—£113.00
Bric-a-Brac and Books—£58.40
Raffles—£107.00
Marble Game—£8.00



Pearl Farr

Secretary/ECC Fundraising Group



Our Fundraising Group & What's coming up...

Although we are quite a small team, we have taken part in several local events over the year, including the Young Farmers' Country Fair in May, the Bromham Show in July, the Biddenham Show in September and of course we held our Summer Fair in June.

Fundraising is always so rewarding, is sociable, fun and very importantly tells people in our local community about our charity and what we do.

If anyone has any ideas or thoughts on fundraising or would like to join our jolly little team, please speak to any of the following:

Caroline Bambridge, Audrey Carruthers, Pearl Farr, Pippa Parker, Ros Ward

Here's to a fabulous Fundraising 2019!

Events coming up in 2019 so far:

- Thursday 28th Feb 2019- Quiz Night at the White Horse- details to follow



Framed Print of our Horses available now! **All proceeds go to the Centre.**

Please complete the order form from the folder in the gallery. Any Queries? Speak to Ros (Tues am)

Christmas Dressage...



The "in house" Dressage event at the Centre on Sunday 2nd December 2018 went very well. The ponies, riders, and volunteers looked very festive with their tinsel, ribbons and Christmas jumpers.

Some of the competitors have experienced equine competition before but for others it was their first time and all of them should be proud of their achievements.

Some ponies were a bit slow, but safe, and they usually go into the arena with their pals, so perhaps were a bit reluctant.

I think the day showed how much progress can be made with our riders riding skills over time. Some riders haven't been coming to the Centre for long, whilst others have been with us for over 10 years. It was good to see riders progress off the lead rein.

Comprehension of the tests isn't easy for some of our riders to



Christmas Dressage...



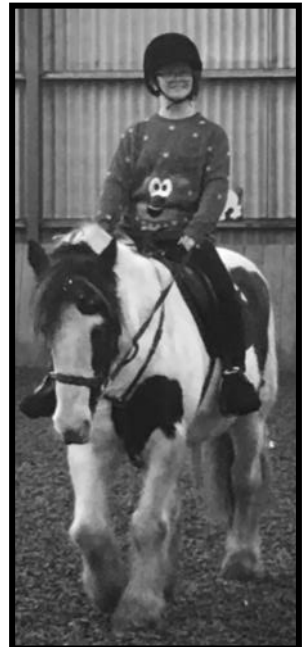
follow i.e. circle at "A" may be taken literally as starting your circle there but you should start it after "A". Very confusing for all. As I said on Sunday, the more you can practise the better. Some riders need to practise steering the pony onto the outside track nearest the boards) when they are going round.

Quite a few corners were being cut off. More use of the inside leg as well as gentle control of reins - a bit like rubbing your tummy one way and your head the other! Anxiety can also interfere with what you are trying to do - add to that ponies that have a mind of their own can make it very difficult sometimes. There was some really good control of ponies and I don't think I have ever seen Muscadeu so relaxed, which must have meant his riders were not too tense.

Thanks go to all competitors and their families, coaches, volunteers, tea makers, scorer, writer and to Abbie for organising the event. Well done to all.

Liz Riding

Coach Trainer



Chris Bradley: Volunteer and Independent Rider



Chris Bradley has been a volunteer with us for some years, now on Wednesday afternoon, first with Liz Riding as coach.

He has been a very reliable member of the team and is especially good at equine handling. Chris is sometimes in a lot of pain which his condition

causes but does what he can on these days.

Chris is lucky to have his own horses. He competed for the Special Olympics successfully as there were no RDA classes for the LD's/ID's riders. This changed and Chris was able to join an RDA Group where he could train with other privately owned horse/rider combinations and a little internal rivalry! He is now with the Cambs College Group.

Qualifying for the Championships on his horse Quintus, Chris did really well. Show-jumping Level 4 he gained 4th position, Dressage ID Canter - 12th out of 22 riders. Dressage, Freestyle to music. ID canter - 2nd. He WON "Search for a Star" which is a fairly new showing competition.

Chris qualified for the SEIB showing final on 6th September and participated in the RDA inaugural ID Dressage Championships on 1st September.

All these competitions need the support of both his mother and father with driving to events and helping Chris as grooms on the day. Well done, Chris and we wish you every success in the future. *Liz Riding*

The Elisabeth Curtis Centre Needs You!

Would you like to become more involved?

The management committee don't know the skills you have and would welcome further volunteers!

- ⇒ Does helping with the Newsletter appeal to you? How about writing an article for the newsletter, or helping to produce the newsletter?
- ⇒ Perhaps fund-raising appeals to you? New suggestions are always welcome, as is help at our events.
- ⇒ There are plenty of other opportunities. Any help, in whatever form, will be greatly appreciated!

If you can give us any help, please contact a member of the Management Committee

Make A Difference



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