

Newsletter

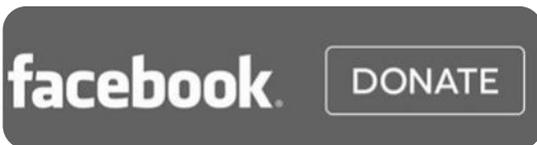
October 2019

Elisabeth Curtis Centre Riding for the Disabled

Charity No. 1137217; Company No. 7302917



Greeting the Lions



A Member
Group of

RDA



It's what you can
do that counts

Editor's Note

Welcome back!! What a busy time we've had at the Centre. The Summer Term and holidays were full of activities and tasks – it hardly seems a minute since we broke up, to some of us. You will read lots about it in this issue of our termly newsletter and it needs no further comment from me, but on behalf of the Centre and on somewhat more serious note, I would like to issue this reminder:

RIDING IS A RISK SPORT! PLEASE BE AWARE.

You are informed of this on the Rider's Application form, signed for each rider, but we do, of course, make it as safe as we can for our riders, volunteers and staff. We provide hats and helmets to the current RDA standard, which are renewed according to the national guidelines. We are, however, dealing with animals, whose behaviour can never be 100% certain. We also often ride in changing conditions, which can affect our ponies.

Editor's Note

The old standard of BSEN1384 was no longer usable for RDA riding from January 2017. All our helmets are to the current standard of PAS015 and we will now be checking the personally owned helmets and hats of our riders this term. If a hat does not reach the current standard, then the rider will be asked to use one of our hats, for safety. Current acceptable hat standards are:

PAS015 (1998 or 2011) and must have the BSI Kitemark,

ASTM F1163 (2004a) and must have SEI Mark,

SNELL E200, or VG1.

It is recommended that personal headwear is renewed every 3 to 5 years.

If you decide to provide a Body Protector for a rider, this must be fitted by a trained professional with certificated proof, please, to be acceptable for our work.

From the Chairman...

A lot has happened at the Centre since our last newsletter, so hopefully I will manage to cover everything in this note.

In July we held our AGM, this is an opportunity to reflect on the last year and take stock of where we are. We recognised the long service of a number of our volunteers by presenting them with certificates. I think it is important that we have this opportunity to report to our members on the events of the year, reflect on our achievements and recognise the forthcoming challenges.

We welcomed Alison McEwan, Cathy Titmuss and Eileen Nash to our Management Committee, and are really pleased to have them on board. I want to thank the members of the committee for all their hard work, and for the lovely flowers that I was presented with at the end of the meeting.

Our financial situation continues to be more challenging than it has been which is why we had to make the difficult decision to increase riding fees again this year. We have also been looking at other ways to generate funds, and have been able to secure grants from the Harpur Trust and One Stop to help with the cost of our

From the Chairman ...

our new surface. We have also been lucky to receive donations from our Honorary Life President, Derek Woods, long term supporters Mr and Mrs Harradine and M and J Group (Construction and Roofing Ltd), from High Noon CMC, Richard Ward and Bedford Lions as well as numerous other donations.

I would also like to thank our neighbours in Parklands who support our fundraising events and a number of whom have set up regular monthly donations to the Centre. Having regular donations is a real help to us as our other income varies through the year. If anyone is interested in setting up a regular donation, please let us know and we can let you have our details, or you can use our new Virgin Money Giving page to donate.

Sadly, earlier in the year, Sam Jewsbury, one of our coaches, resigned from the Centre. Sam contributed a huge amount to the Centre and is very much missed. I want to wish Sam all the best for the future.

In September, we welcome our two part-time grooms to the Centre. The recruitment process took a bit longer than we expected, but we are all looking forward to Anna and Kristina starting their new roles. Anna will be a familiar face to the Centre as she has been covering the role on a freelance basis, so I want to thank Anna

From the Chairman ...

to thank Anna for being so flexible in covering while we worked through the recruitment process. I also want to thank everyone who has helped to provide cover and support through this process.

10 of our riders competed at the Regional Championships at Milton College, with 2 riders, Roisin and Mary, qualifying for the National Championships. It is a huge amount of work taking ponies to these competitions, so my thanks to all involved, particularly Abbie and Gina.



Sophie Williams at the Regionals

From the Chairman ...

At the end of term, we held our own Countryside Challenge competition. We had 13 riders competing, including some riders who hadn't entered one of our competitions before, so it was really nice to have them join us. My thanks to everyone who helped on the day, and in the preparations, especially Liz for all her support and advice as this was the first time I had organised an event like this.



Roisin on Conker

From the Chairman...

Finally, in celebration of RDA's 50th anniversary, we have been collecting 50 pence pieces, we have already raised £76, so if you are able to help, please do pick up one of our collecting boxes.

I will end this note with a final thank you to our amazing team of coaches, trustees, fundraisers, and volunteers. We couldn't run the Centre without everyone's contributions.

Victoria Liston

The Elisabeth Curtis Centre Needs You!

Would you like to become more involved?

- ⇒ 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. Including becoming our next treasurer. Any help, in whatever form, will be greatly appreciated!

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

Pony Welfare Officer's Report

The summer term was very busy for all at the Elisabeth Curtis Centre. As usual, our ponies have done an amazing job for all riders. Alongside the usual riding sessions, we also had competitions. 19th May we took 4 ponies, Huggy, Muscadeu, Conker, and Dixie, to the RDA East Region Regional Qualifier. This was a new adventure for Dixie, and he needed time to become accustomed to the different environment. We were pleased to watch Dixie relax and grow in confidence throughout the competition. The ponies behaved beautifully and did very well in all their classes.

We then took Huggy and Conker to the RDA National Championships 12th – 14th July. Both ponies were fantastic, and it was a great experience for Conker who was making his debut at the Nationals.

These competitions are a wonderful opportunity for riders, and it's great for the ponies to do something different.

We held a Countryside Challenge competition at the Centre on 20th July, which was thoroughly enjoyed by many of our riders.

Pony Welfare Officer's Report

A great deal of work goes into preparing for competitions, both at the Centre and shows we travel the ponies to. There is much bathing, brushing, and trimming of ponies, cleaning of tack, checking we have all the necessary equipment. Additionally, there is all the admin, managing entries, co-ordination of volunteers, arranging transport for the ponies when attending RDA competitions. These are just some of the tasks involved. Although it is hard work, it's also great fun, and I would like to say a very big thank you to everyone who helped, we really couldn't do it without all our wonderful volunteers. And a huge thank you to our amazing ponies, who do a fantastic job and bring great pleasure to riders and volunteers.

Mary Hallam Saunders - Regionals



Pony Welfare Officer's Report

While the ponies enjoy a well-earned rest during the summer break, there are many tasks to be completed. These include thoroughly cleaning and painting the stables, cleaning, oiling and repairing of tack, cleaning and reproofing of turnout rugs, bathing of ponies, and cleaning grooming kits. The summer break is an opportunity to catch up on many jobs, whilst continuing with the daily care of the ponies. There have been work parties poo picking the fields, hard work but very beneficial for the grazing. Once again, many thanks to all volunteers who have helped.

I have been looking forward to the new term, to seeing old faces and new, and to getting back to the wonderful that work we do.

Gina Dunn

Pony Welfare Officer

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



RDA Competitions

On the 19th May this year we took nine of our riders to the **RDA Regional Qualifiers** in Milton, along with Conker, Huggy, Dixie and Muscadeu. Our talented riders competed in Countryside Challenge and Dressage, with lots of successful performances and great fun had by all. Congratulations to everyone who took part. The ponies were all superstars; though Dixie being the baby of the group found things a little overwhelming to start with, he soon settled down and got over his fear of the Countryside Challenge cow!

Tara Hill at the Regionals.



RDA Competitions

Results were: **Senior Dressage**, Roisin on Muscadeu, and Mary Saunders on Huggy came 1st in their class, Charlotte Roomes was 2nd. Richard Crabbe also competed on Dixie. **Junior Dressage**: Kiera Dwyer on Muscadeu was 2nd in class. **Countryside Challenge, Seniors**: Tara Hill on Huggy came 3rd, Leigh McInnes on Dixie, 4th. **Juniors**: Luke Quigley on Huggy, 4th, Ethan Cameron on Dixie 5th, Roisin Mcloughlin was 2nd in her class and Sophie Williams on Conker 4th.

Two of our riders qualified for the **National Championships**: Mary, who rides on a Tuesday evening and Roisin, who rides on Saturday morning. On Friday 12th June we took Huggy and Conker on the long trip to Hartpury College where they settled in to their lovely stables for the weekend. On Saturday, Mary rode a fantastic dressage test on Huggy, and came 6th in her very competitive class. Huggy gave a lovely test, only becoming a little overexcited and breaking into a trot when he wasn't supposed to... he does like the spotlight! Many congratulations to Mary, who has competed 8 times at the Nationals but not for many years before this occasion.

RDA Competitions

On Sunday, Roisin competed in the Countryside Challenge where she came 2nd, and in Dressage where she came 3rd in her class. Roisin did a wonderful job of keeping Conker cool, calm and collected, despite his being very nervous on his first big outing with the Centre, and even being frightened by a loose horse on his way to the arena! Congratulations to Roisin on her super performance.

These RDA competitions are a wonderful way for our riders to challenge themselves and test their riding skills in a new and exciting environment. If you'd like to get involved either as a rider or as a volunteer please let us know. Regionals are held in May and Nationals in July each year.

Lastly, thank you so much to everybody who helped prepare for the competitions and support our riders on the day. These outings are great fun but hard work, and we couldn't do it without our brilliant, dedicated volunteers. Thanks also to the Management Committee for their ongoing support for our attending these events.

Abbie Temperley (Tuesday eve and Saturday Coach)

A Fundraising Update...

Since the last Newsletter, our small but enthusiastic team of Audrey, Pippa, Caroline, Pearl and Ros have been Involved in the following events:

At Easter we had a raffle for 2 hampers, which raised £86 and also a Bedford Lions Easter Egg raffle which made £40. The Bedford Lions regularly give donations to the Centre and visited recently to give us £500 towards the purchase of riding hats (see article).

On 28th April, we held an informal Coffee Morning at the Centre with a demonstration by some of our riders. The demonstration was much appreciated and this was an enjoyable morning raising £93.25.

The Bromham Duck Race took place on 27th May; this went well despite the weather! And we raised £142.50.

Open Farm at Brown's of Stagsden, was on 9th June. This is always well attended and we were kept busy on our stall, the Marble Game and Tombola were very popular. We made £183, which was excellent. Thank You to Brown's of Stagsden for their continued support.

Our Summer Fair was on 23rd June. This was a great success raising over £1000 and donations are still coming in. A Big Thank You to all who helped and supported this- Good Teamwork.

A Fundraising Update...

On 14th July, we attended The Bromham Show and had a stall in the Crafts Marquee. We talked to lots of people and our Marble Game was popular again! We had a good day and raised £76, a big improvement on last year.

We fundraise in many other ways and are very fortunate to have such talented and generous volunteers and friends who, throughout the year, donate home-grown produce and a variety of handmade items.

Two budding artists have produced packs of notecards and these are selling really well.

We are working on producing an ECC Recipe Book of volunteer's favourite recipes, which will go on sale to raise funds. **There's still time to get your recipe included – contact Ros and if someone is skilled in putting together a cookbook, electronically, then please do offer your services to anyone connected with Management, or Fund Raising.**

We have also been promised a Diamond Embroidery Picture to be raffled later in the year.

We plan to hold our Autumn Fair on November 16th and a Coffee Morning to Celebrate 50th Anniversary of the RDA, on Sunday 13th October 10am- 12. There will be some stalls, including Tombola and Handmade Crafts and plenty of cake of course!

Speaking of crafts – old items of jewellery for our work are much appreciated, please.

Bedford Lions

Fundraising is fun, sociable and very rewarding, any ideas for events etc. will be considered. Don't be shy, let us know if you would like to join us, you will be most welcome.

Our friends from Bedford Lions' visited recently to present a cheque for £500, to help towards the cost of replacing our riding hats. RDA recommends that hats are replaced every three years and 2019 is the due date. Hats that get damaged through being dropped are replaced straightaway!

President of Bedford Lions', Eddie Burry, visited during a Monday session; two of our riders proudly lined up to be photographed with Eddie and volunteers to receive the (big) cheque, now prominently displayed in the viewing area.

Over the years, we have been fortunate to receive donations from Bedford Lions, for which we are most grateful. A huge 'thank you' for this latest donation; greatly appreciated!

Pearl Farr

Make A Difference



ECC Countryside Challenge

"In House" Countryside Challenge - 20th July 2019

We were so lucky with the weather, which was kind to us, unlike on the Friday before when Victoria and I were tweaking the course.

On the Thursday before there had been a team making sure the grass was cut for spectators and where the riders would be demonstrating their skills.

All coaches, most of management, our groom and a few ardent volunteers were at the Centre early to ensure all the ponies were groomed and ready for the first rider at 10.00a.m. The urn was switched on ready for teas and coffees.

We had a mixture of abilities and ages in the riders. They all seemed to enjoy themselves even if a few were understandably a little nervous about the competition.

The ponies all behaved well apart from one or two stopping to relieve themselves. Can't be helped - needs must.

Some of the riders had good control of their ponies, some a bit sharp/heavy handed with the reins but carried out the small tasks very well. Some didn't really hold the reins but were able to hold a letter or the apple/ball. Some forgot what they were supposed to be doing at times and needed prompting but they were allowed 2 tries at the obstacles before having to move on to the next one.

ECC Countryside Challenge

The seven obstacles at random distances proved no problem although a few riders could have given the ponies more space to negotiate round them. A few of the leaders forgot they were supposed to stay on the left of each obstacle so that the judge could see how much steering the rider could do .

Due to H&S our arch was not as defined as in previous years to many riders forgot to lean forward under the overhanging branch of the tree that was supposed to be the arch. Riders were supposed to choose one barrel/cone to circle round but some did a really big circle round both. They may have got some marks for a good shape.

The picking up of the apple/ball in one hand and dropping it into opposite bucket with the same hand caused a bit of confusion, as it can! There were some really good active walks down to the road where the riders had to halt their pony for 6 seconds at the junction. This was mostly done very well.

The active walk up the bridleway presented no real problems, not the bridge or serpentine loops round the pond and sheep pen. The only other difficult task was the gate where all eventually got safely through and were presented with a rosette by the "farmer" for completing the course.

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ECC countryside Challenge

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On the scoring side of things if you have 2 or more riders with the same total you add up the collective scores at the bottom of the sheet to decide the winner. If again they add up to the same you take the highest marks the rider has been given by the judges.

I would like to reinforce how important it is for all to really know the course and read the directives.

I think it was so good to see some of our less able riders enjoy the competition they all tried so hard. Sadly not all could stay for the presentation of prizes and rosettes by our County Chairman, Veronica Bradley.

Our thanks go to Victoria (ECC Chairman) for organising the event, timings rosettes and lovely trophies, all those who groomed the ponies, set up and dismantled the course (in record time), assisted with the mounting of the

ECC countryside Challenge

riders, led the horses, side helped, operated gates, checked tack, made teas and of course the scorers.

A lot of work was put in to the day but I'm sure everyone will agree it was very rewarding for all.

Results were:

Juniors under 16 years of age:

1st **Amy** on Rupert, 2nd **Annie** on Huggy, 3rd **John** on Muscadeu and 4th **Amelia** on Conker.

Seniors over 16 years of age:

1st **Leigh** on Rupert, 2nd **Richard** on Lolly, 3rd **Charlotte R.** on Muscadeu, 4th **Pasha** on Conker, 5th **Rebecca** on Dixie, 6th **Susan** on Lolly, 7th **Charlotte E.** on Rupert, 8th **Chris** on Huggy and 9th **Max** on Dixie.

Overall placings mixed Juniors and Seniors to 6th place:

1st **Amy** on Rupert, 2nd **Leigh** on Rupert, Joint 3rd **Richard** on Lolly and **Annie** on Huggy, Joint 4th **John** on Muscadeu and **Charlotte R.** on Muscadeu, 5th **Amelia** on Conker and **Charlotte R.** on Muscadeu and 6th **Pasha** on Conker.

Liz Riding

Our New Surface



Dates for your Diary

13th Oct – RDA 50th Anniversary Coffee
Morning

18th-27th Oct - Half Term

16th Nov – Autumn Fair

11th December Volunteers Christmas
Dinner. Prince of Wales, Bromham

* * * *

Christmas Dinner and Christmas Carols:
Please look out for posters

CAN YOU HELP US?

⇒ We are in need of help for a number of tasks including:

- Fundraising
- Admin work
- Finance/Treasurer
- Help needed on all riding sessions for leading and side helping.
- And much more

If you have any spare time to give please contact a member of the Management Committee.

elisabethcurtiscentre@gmail.com



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