

Newsletter

February 2014

Elisabeth Curtis Centre
Riding for the Disabled

Charity No. 1137217; Company No. 7302917



Sue & Greg receive the keys to their Skoda, prior to heading off on the Screwball Rally.



Editorial

Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2014. It is wonderful to see a bit of blue sky for a change and the spring flowers are getting ready to launch into colour. I know some people in Bedfordshire have had problems with too much rain and we have had more than our fair share of mud, but, looking at the bigger picture, we have got off quite lightly.

I would like to start with a plea from the Management Committee. We are a group of seven people who do all the work associated with the Centre that is not directly linked to riding sessions but without which the riding could not take place. We look after the insurances, Health and Safety Issues and various licences; we take care of the land and buildings, fundraising and paying all the bills. We are directors / trustees of the charitable company that is the Elisabeth Curtis Centre and ultimately responsible for all its dealings and assets. We are also a very friendly, hard working bunch of people who give up their time willingly because we believe in the Centre and the good that it does.

However, if there were more people on the Management Committee, it would make the load lighter for all of us. We meet at the Centre once every six weeks to discuss what needs doing and to assign tasks. All of us are computer literate which makes it easier to keep in touch. If you think you would like to join us, please have a word with one of the Trustees - Allan Bennett, Jenny Barnsdale, Julia Greenwood, Victoria Liston, Jan Tozer, John Tozer and Ros Ward.

On a personal note, I said when I became chairman that I would do the job for three years - I have now been doing it for six years. I think it is time somebody else had a go!

Jan

Chairman/Editor

The Tudor Feast - an apology to Ben

Last Autumn we held a Tudor Feast to raise funds. In my article I thanked everyone who had helped except one very important person. This is my apology to Ben Greenwood for forgetting to mention his virtuoso performance on violin and keyboard. He provided a delightful extra dimension to the evening with his authentic Tudor music which was greatly enjoyed by everyone. Sorry, Ben!

Jan



Ben Greenwood performing at the Tudor feast

A Special “Thank You”

Some of you may have noticed that two of the stables now have new brass plaques on them. These mark our special gratitude to two people who have made outstanding contributions to the Centre over the last five years. As most of you probably know the Centre relies largely on donations to remain solvent. We receive no government funding and the riding fees are heavily subsidised. So to have individuals like Derek Woods giving us in excess of £24,000 and to have Mrs Cynthia Dicker sending £19,000 our way, via The Stancourt Dicker Charitable Trust, is truly amazing! “Thank You” hardly seems to cover it, but that is all we can say - along with “Long may it continue!”





Pony Problems

Firstly, an apology to all of our riders for cancelling the first two weeks riding after Christmas. We know how much you enjoy your riding but it was a very difficult time for us, with three unfit ponies. Bonny is now fully recovered from her brush with ringworm, while Muscadeu is still resting after pulling his Suspensory Ligament. He should make a full recovery over the next few weeks.

Unfortunately, with Sunny, the news is not so good. It seemed that the more the vets looked at him the more they discovered was wrong with him. As a result, we are very sad to say that, after many years of loyal service to the Centre, our much-loved pony has had to be put down. His health had deteriorated in recent weeks and the prognosis wasn't good. After much discussion between the vets, the Riding Committee and the Management Committee it was agreed that it would be kindest to put him to sleep before his condition deteriorated further. Sunny was a very popular pony and played a full part in the Centre's activities. He was endlessly patient and unflappable. He was much loved by volunteers and riders alike and will be greatly missed.

Sunny

We are all saddened by the loss of Sunny. Caroline Bambridge found the following poem on the internet . She found some comfort in it and thought others might too.

*God looked at the little Angel
Standing by his side,
And smiled as he whispered
'You need a horse to ride'*

*So he looked the whole world over
For one he trusted dear,
But to our utmost sorrow
The one he chose was here.*

*Where God took this precious horse
There are pastures free to roam,
And on the wings of Angels
He took this great horse home.*

*Now on his back sits proudly
A little Angel strong and true
As they race the winds of Heaven
Just watching over you.*

Anon

Donations

We have made a great start to the year in terms of donations. There are some lovely, generous people out there.

Back in September Greg Warwick and his wife, Sue, (of Jeeves Hairdressers and Venus Ladies Hair and Beauty Salon) did some very interesting fundraising for us. They managed to persuade the Skoda garage to give them a car which they then smothered with pictures and information about Riding for the Disabled, as well as lots of Alice in Wonderland cartoons. Then they dressed up as Alice and the Mad Hatter and persuaded their customers, family and friends to pay them to drive all over Europe in their costumes and fairly outrageous car on the Screwball Rally. It took a lot of planning but I think they had a great time in the end. They then had to collect all the sponsorship money that had been promised! This took some time but, towards the end of November, they presented us with a grand total of almost £1,000. Many thanks to Sue, Greg, Skoda, customers, family and friends for making this happen.





The Saturday morning team sending Sue & Greg off on the Screwball Rally.

Donations (contd.)

Just before Christmas John and I were invited to dinner with Manor Court Lodge in Ampthill. As well as a four course meal, with entertainment, we were also presented with a cheque for £2,400. They were a very lively, friendly crowd and we had a thoroughly enjoyable evening. The cheque was just the icing on the cake! Many thanks to all the members of the Lodge who worked so hard to raise this money for us.

At the beginning of January, I received a note from Derek Woods, enclosing a cheque for £4,000. What a great way to start the New Year! I always enjoy getting letters from Derek! Thank you so much for thinking of us and for continuing to support us.

In February, we received a cheque for £2,500 from the Bedford Lions. Many thanks must go to Mike Lock and all the other hardworking Lions who have made this donation possible. We are now in a very good position to look for the two new ponies that we urgently need.

Donations (contd.)

We have also received a cheque for £300 from our good neighbours in the Parklands Residents Association. This was mainly raised by carol singing in December. They have been in touch recently to say that they are going to fundraise for us throughout 2014, so we are looking forward to hearing from them again!

We have also received about £350 in donations from lots of individuals since the beginning of December. They ranged from £15 to £200, but as I always say to people who apologise when they put pennies in my collecting tin - it all helps! Many thanks to each and every one of you.

The White Horse, Bedford

I seem to have spent rather a lot of time in the White Horse this winter! About 40 volunteers went there at the beginning of December for our Christmas dinner. It was a very enjoyable evening all round. The food was excellent value for money and service was good; the welcome was warm and we even had a quiz thrown in! I was there again in January for dinner with some of the Tuesday night helpers and then two days later had to go back again for Sue and Nigel's anniversary party!

They have been running the pub for nine years. During this time they have raised more than £184,000 for local charities and for the last two years they have been focusing on raising money for the Elisabeth Curtis Centre. On the party night they provided a buffet and entertainment for their regulars and made a wonderful presentation to us of £1,795-74!! They also said that they will continue to support for us for one more year! Thank you so much, Sue and Nigel. The funds you have raised and the publicity you have generated for us are hugely appreciated.

To kick-start the fundraising they are holding a quiz for us on 9th April. This will cost £6 per head for teams of up to six people, and includes a Ploughman's supper. Please contact Audrey to book a table - 01234 852391. Book early to avoid disappointment!



Sue and Nigel present Jan with a whole load of cash!

Christmas Cards and Calendars

Last year we sold packs of Christmas cards and RDA calendars to try to raise some funds. The cards sold very well but the calendars less so. Despite this we managed to make a small profit of about £100.

The comment that most people made was why hadn't we done our own calendar like last year. The answer is that it was a lot of work for one person - our very own photoshop expert, Mr John Tozer! However, I have managed to persuade him that he would like to do another one this year. The theme this year is fairy tales. The different sessions have been allocated a story and we are hoping to start taking photos as soon as the weather warms up a bit. So get your thinking caps on, let your imaginations run riot and let's have lots of amazing pictures full of humour, colour and ponies!



‘Boteti Zebras’ by kind permission of Kim Thompson, wildlife artist and illustrator.

Go to www.kimthompsonartist.com to see her full range of images.

Fundraising

23rd November Audrey and Ros took part in the Christmas Tree Festival at All Saints Church, Kempston rural. Half of proceeds went to ECC, £235.

Sat 30th November Christmas Fair at Bedford Girls school, Audrey and Pippa ran the stall. Toy shop took £95.00, Calendars £9, Xmas cards £10, Donated goods £18.00.

Thursday 5th December Volunteers Christmas Dinner at the White Horse, Newnham Avenue, Bedford. Raffle made £102.05. A very pleasant evening all round.

Fundraising (contd.)

Sat 7th December Christmas Fair at Biddenham Village Hall. Ros' jewellery made £83.00. Many thanks to Ros.

Sat 7th December Collection at Budgens. £238.00. Well done to all who took part.

Fri 7th & Sat 8th February Collection at Tesco, Cardington Road £408.74. Well done to all who took part.

Fri 21st & Sat 22nd February Collection at Tesco, Goldington Road £586.02. Well done to all who took part (and a special thank you to the kind man who gave £100!).

Forthcoming Events

Sat 1st March 2014 Quiz at All Saints' Church Hall, Kempston Rural. £7.50 per person including 2-course supper.
Contact Audrey to book (01234 852391)

Wed 9th April Quiz at The White Horse, Newnham Avenue, Bedford. £6.00 per person including Ploughman's supper.
Contact Audrey to book (01234 852391)

Sat 14th June Flitwick Carnival 12.00 - 4.00 p.m. Taking Toy Shop

Sat 21st June **ECC Open Afternoon** (subject to MC and RC approval)

Sun 22nd June Parklands Residents Association Open Gardens. Includes ECC Sensory Ride.

Sun 13th July Bromham Show. Taking Toy Shop.

Sun 10th August St John's Summer Fair at Moggerhanger. Taking Toy Shop.

Term Dates for Bedfordshire Schools

Friday 4th April - Spring Term ends.

Monday 21st April - Summer Term begins.
(Tuesday 22nd is a Bedfordshire Schools Training Day)

Monday 26th May - Friday 30th May - Half-term

Wednesday 23rd July - Summer Term ends.

Monday 1st September- Autumn Term begins.
(Mon & Tue (1st & 2nd Sept.) Bedfordshire Schools Training Day.)

Dates may vary according to session - please check with your Instructor.

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