

Newsletter

February 2015

Elisabeth Curtis Centre

Riding for the Disabled

Charity No. 1137217; Company No. 7302917



Two volunteers at a Christmas party - can you guess who?



Editorial

I am pleased to be able to say that most of the news since our last Newsletter in November has been good!

Our staunch supporter, Derek Woods, has come up trumps again with a wonderful donation of £6,000. Such generosity is truly heartwarming. We are swamped by so much bad news these days, that when something like this happens it's a real WOW moment. Thank you so much, Derek, for continuing to help us.

The team from The White Horse in Newnham Avenue have also continued to support us in different ways. We were invited to their Christmas Fair in November and took a tombola which made £71.66. In December we went there for our volunteers' Christmas dinner and had a very pleasant meal as well as a topical quiz. There were a few arguments with Nigel over answers, but that's all part of the fun! Our generous volunteers also made us £109 on the raffle. A big thank you, also, to the people who donated some very nice prizes.

We were again invited to Sue and Nigel's "birthday party" to help them celebrate 10 years of being at the White Horse. The icing on the cake was when they gave us £1,000 which they had raised with their customers through various fundraising activities. Then there was a tantalising whisper that there might be more!

We arrived at the pub on February 11th wondering what this "more" might be. After a brain-rattling quiz which raised over £300, Sue announced a little surprise for us. They had put us forward for the Charles Wells Eagle Aid Award and got £700. They also had some money from selling our calendars and from their long running tombola. It came to a grand total of £1290.50! Not a bad night's work! Sue and Nigel will be leaving the White Horse in a few months time. I would wish them a restful retirement, but I don't see it somehow! They will be greatly missed and a very hard act to follow.



Sue and Nigel present Jan with more lovely lolly!

Editorial (contd.)

In December we held a collection at Sainsbury's in Clapham Road. Lots of our wonderful volunteers turned out, so that nobody was there for too long. Together we raised £836.43. Way to go, Team! Thank you all so much!

The only sour note to the year so far has been the break-in at New Year. We had bought some new garden tools to say thank you to Margaret, Caroline and Steve for all the hours they put in keeping our Sensory Ride beautiful and that is exactly what was stolen, along with a petrol strimmer. Through the generosity of our supporters we expect to be able to replace the tools shortly, but they will not be kept in the garden shed. They will be well hidden!

Jan
(Chairman/ Editor)

Other Donations

The Centre has been very fortunate in making some new friends recently who have all worked hard to raise funds for us. Val and Dennis from "Memory Lane" came to have a look round and gave us a wonderful donation of £500. They are a singing group and had raised this by singing at various community groups and old peoples homes. It's a win-win situation really. They like to sing, the old folks love to hear them and we are constantly in need of funds! Great! Many thanks to all at "Memory Lane".



Jan presents Val and Dennis of Memory Lane with a "thank-you" certificate.

Other Donations (contd.)

Strangely enough we also had a large donation of £350.70 from another singing group. Evelyn Sutherland had arranged a Christmas concert with her Unisong group which is based in Bromham and includes some people who know the Centre very well - Tina, one of our volunteers, Margarite, a former volunteer and Janet, mother of a former rider.

The singing and the bell ringing were delightful and the refreshments yummy! Many thanks to all who worked so hard to make this concert happen and thank you for donating the proceeds to the Centre.

We also raised £255 with a slightly less professional group. We went carol singing with some of our volunteers and our neighbours from the Parklands estate, together with members of the Bedford Brass group. We all tried very hard and it didn't matter if we missed a few notes as the band was very good - and loud! Many thanks to Parkland Residents Association for organising this and continuing to support us. Particular thanks must also go to Janet and Anthony for their hospitality afterwards.

This year Rick Barnsdale retired and had a bit of a "do". Instead of presents he asked friends and colleagues to make donations to the Centre, which they did and raised the princely sum of £255. I suspect this is by way of a thank you for keeping his lovely wife, Jenny, fully occupied working at the Centre so that he can go and play golf! Thanks Rick! It is very kind of you to donate your money and your wife!

Finally, a big "Thank You" to Ros who works hard in lots of ways for the Centre. She is a member of the Management team, as well as the Fundraising Group. She organises quizzes for us and makes lovely jewellery which she sells for us. She made £88 single-handedly at the Biddenham Christmas Fair. And she volunteers on a Tuesday morning! Not quite sure how you do it, Ros, but please keep it up!

Behind the Scenes: The Saddler by Pauline Evans

Early records show there was a Guild of Saddlers in London at least as early as 1160, which makes it one of the earliest of London's Guilds. Saddlery is recognised as a medieval craft that still flourishes.

Saddlery, called tack, should be kept clean and in good repair. All tack should be inspected periodically and minor defects remedied. Particular attention should be paid to stitching, which will rot or break before leather.

Tools: based on ancient designs, include smashers to smooth stuffed (with flocking) areas of saddles that wrinkle.

The saddle: should be shaped so that it assists the rider to sit in the central and lowest part. Saddles are made in a huge variety of types, shapes and sizes. They may have a full or a half panel.

Fitting the saddle: a correctly fitted saddle is a priority; an ill-fitting saddle can cause serious damage to a horse's spine. A saddler has to know about horse anatomy; the length of a saddle must not go beyond the last rib, otherwise it puts pressure on the kidneys. The weight must be evenly distributed on the back muscles; no weight on loins; no pressure on horse's spine (test with rider mounted), the cantle should hold the rider's weight without coming down on the horse's back, and the panel must be correctly stuffed to give support for the knee and be tilted to prevent the rider sliding backwards.

Our saddlers are Andrea or her Mum, Ros. They visit twice a year.

Procedure: the saddles are taken out of the tack room and put in the gallery by the grooms, Ann & Gayl, who help throughout; the ponies are brought into the school one at a time; the saddle, without stirrups, is put on to assess its length, how it sits and suits the pony;

the flocking may be adjusted eg. adding or taking some out using pliers to take out and a smasher to move the flocking up or down; Storm's was lumpy because it was synthetic, so Andrea replaced it with sheep's wool (synthetic has knots in it - lumps will affect the comfort of a saddle); the saddle is put back on, with stirrups.

Behind the Scenes: The Saddler by Pauline Evans (contd.)

Andrea then assesses the saddle when the pony is being ridden, walking and trotting on both reins, testing for comfort, stability, height and lift. I rode Lolly, Chunky and JJ, who had his saddle replaced that day. Gayl and Ann rode the other ponies.

A saddle is fitted to the shape of a horse; one side may have to be padded out more than the other eg. Muscadeu's right shoulder is bigger than his left, so Andrea put more padding in the left side of his saddle; and also if a pony has gained or lost weight.

Our ponies tend to gain weight during the summer break. Also, tweaking here and there to keep the saddle central.

Girths: a combination of matching the girth with a saddle, and maybe changed for a better fit

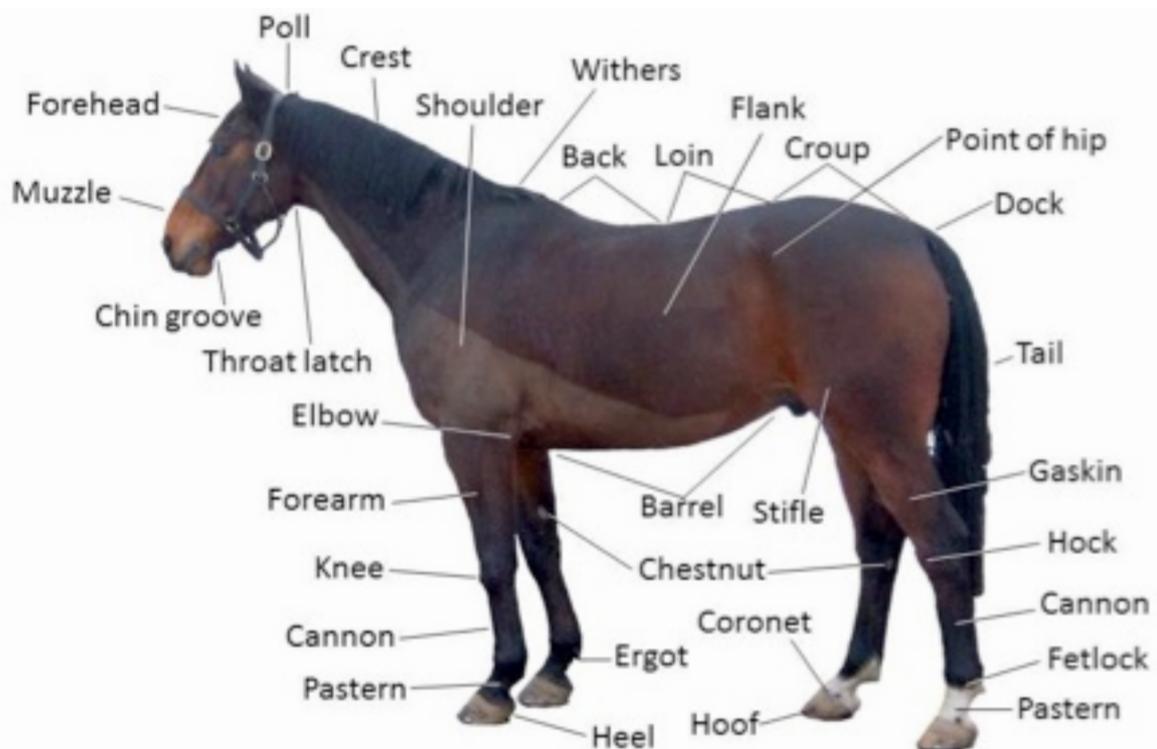
Numnahs: the thickness makes a difference to the height and lift of a saddle.



Andrea always carries a few spares!



Andrea re-flocking a saddle with sheep's wool.



Some homework for you - how many of these parts do you know?

Fundraising

Sat 15 November Christmas Fair at The White Horse,
Newnham Avenue. Tombola took £71.66.

22 November Quiz night. Total takings £306

Fri 5 Dec & Sat 6 December Collection at Sainsbury's, Fairfield Park. Took £836.43!

Sat 6 December Ros at Biddenham Christmas Fair. Takings £88.00 from jewellery.

Wed 10th December Volunteers Xmas Dinner at White Horse. Went very well and raised £109 from the raffle.

10th January Sue & Nigel's 10th Birthday party. Presented ECC with further donation of £1000 raised over the last year.

Wed. 11th February Quiz at White Horse, Newnham Avenue included:

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Sale of calendars | £20.50 | |
| WH tombola | £240 | |
| Raffle | £100 | |
| Quiz | £230 | |
| Eagle Aid | £700 | |
| Grand Total | £1,290.50 | Not a bad nights work!! |

Front cover question

*Did you guess the two Santa's?
They are Victoria and Lisa, Tuesday night helpers.*

Forthcoming Events

May Quiz Saturday May 2nd. Bromham Village Hall, Hall 2

Sat. 6th June Bromham Village Fete

13/20th June T.B.C. ECC Open Afternoon

Sat 27th June Kempston Church End Fete

Sat. 11th July - Wootton Fun Day

Sun. 9th August - Country Fete, St. John's Moggerhanger

Wed. 7th October - Quiz at White Horse, Newnham Avenue.

Term Dates for Bedfordshire Schools 2015

Monday 16th February to Friday 20th February - Half-term.

Friday 27th March - Spring Term ends.

Monday 13th April - Summer term begins.
(Monday 13th April - Bedfordshire Schools Training Day)

Monday 25th May (B.H.) to Friday 29th May - Half-term.

Friday 17th July - Summer term ends.

Thursday 3rd September - Autumn Term begins.
(Thursday 3rd & Friday 4th - Bedfordshire Schools Training Day)

Monday 26th Oct - Friday 30th October - Half-term.

Friday 18th December - Autumn Term ends.

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

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