

Newsletter

June 2017

Elisabeth Curtis Centre

Riding for the Disabled

Charity No. 1137217; Company No. 7302917



Masonic
Charitable Foundation

300 charities
£3 million
300 years

*Remember to vote
for the Elisabeth
Curtis Centre!*

mcf.org.uk/vote

*.....and you can help to raise up to £25,000 for the Centre!
See page 5 for details.*



RDA

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

Chairman's Report

It has been a busy few months since our last Newsletter.

On the 20th March, I was invited to attend the Extra Mile Challenge Reception and Charity presentation evening. The Centre was nominated as one of the Organiser's Charities, and at the evening I was presented with a cheque for £6,600 for the Centre. The Extra Mile Challenge is an annual 500 mile relay cycling challenge in Europe. The Centre was nominated by members of the Bedford Park Rotary Club, and we are extremely grateful to them for nominating us.

The Centre has been fortunate enough to received sponsorship money raised by teams completing the challenge in previous years. Having had the opportunity to learn more about the Challenge, I have a huge amount of admiration both for the teams who complete the challenge, and for the team of volunteers who arrange the challenge each year.

This year's challenge is being held in Brittany, and details can be found on the Extra Mile Challenge website:

<http://www.extra-mile.org.uk/>

We have received another incredibly generous donation of £3,000 from Mrs Dicker. Mrs Dicker has been a long-term supporter of the Centre, and we really appreciate her continued support.

We have also received a donation of £2,000 from the Bedford Lions, who are also long-term supporters of the Centre. Many thanks to all who help raise this money and long may it continue!

On 21st April, the Centre hosted a County Training Day for Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. The Centre was a hive of activity in the lead up to the event, and my thanks go to everyone who was involved in arranging the day, getting the Centre ready, and who helped on the day. We have received some lovely comments from those who attended.

On the 21st May, we held our annual Summer Fair. Luckily the weather was kind to us, and the event was very well supported. My thanks to everyone who was involved, especially the members of our Fund-raising group. The event raised a total of £1072.14 after expenses.

Victoria



Donations

To all readers,

Recently we have stopped recording the actual amount of donations with our list of people we want to thank, as not everyone who made a donation wanted the amount to be published. We have decided that we will continue to name people or organisations, if they are happy for us to do so, but we will only include the amount if the sum involved is over £1,000. We hope all of our supporters will understand that all donations are important to us and not be offended by this decision. A few small donations soon add up to worthwhile sums, and we continue to be very grateful to the large number



Elinor Ashby, President of the Bedford Lions, (centre, with other Lions members), presents a cheque for £2,000 to the Centre, in the presence of some Saturday morning riders & helpers.

We have been incredibly fortunate to receive the donations listed below. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has been kind enough to make a donation to the Centre.

- **Cast Iron Catering**
- **Barbara Bellamy**
- **Roy Boness**
- **Joan Marvin**
- **The Hyperion Foundation**
- **Bedford Harriers**
- **The Wakefield of Hythe Chapter**
- **Bedford Morning Rock Choir**

East Region Training Day:

'Promoting the independence of our riders'

On the 21st April, the Centre hosted a combined training day for Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. The day included a number of different sessions including;

- The 3 stages of leading
- Achieving a balanced position
- Leading and side-walking correctly for dressage, show-jumping and the Countryside Challenge.
- Working as a team within a group session
- Endurance – explanation and application of the principles.

Coaches and volunteers from the Centre, along with two of our riders, Tara and Roisin, participated in the different sessions.

We have received some lovely feedback from those who attended the day.

From East Region Chair, Gay Redman:

"Thank you so much for hosting the Training Day and including Cambs. You do have a wonderful Centre and it was lovely for everyone to see it, they all appreciated the day, and went away with new ideas."

From Lynda Murphy, Cambridgeshire County Chair:

"I just want to say a very sincere thank you to all the volunteers at Elisabeth Curtis Centre. You all put a tremendous effort into making the County Training Day work so well. You have a super facility of which you can be very proud."

Victoria

Tara and Roisin preparing to demonstrate how well they can ride.



Vote, Vote, Vote!

Do you remember in the February Newsletter I was asking you to look out for a chance to vote for the Elisabeth Curtis Centre to win some money? Well, the time has come!

Voting will open on Monday 12th June and remain open until Monday 31 July 2017 at mcf.org.uk/vote

Also, following more conversations with the Masonic Charitable foundation, I have discovered that we are eligible for more money than we thought previously. We could be in line for up to £25,000!

So get on line and vote for us! Tell all of your friends. Go on Facebook and Twitter and tell everybody that we need their help! Just think what amazing horses and ponies we could buy with that sort of money!

Jan



Unsung Heroes!

We all know about the amazing work done by our volunteers but there are those who seem happy to go the extra mile! I would like to highlight the work done by the Tuesday morning team. Every half term they have a really good clean up of the seating area, the toilets, the office and tack room. Probably nobody notices the work you do, but they sure would if it wasn't done! So, many thanks to the hard working Tuesday morning team. Your efforts are much appreciated.

Jan



Jessica Ralph at the 2017 Regionals by Pauline Evans

Jessica has featured in our Newsletter before. Her dad, Andy, wrote an article for the June 2015 edition about her and Storm, who he once owned. She is also a 2017 calendar girl; she and Lolly feature in February. The same photograph has pride of place on the front cover of our 40 year history, "A Brush, Shovel and Lead Rein."

Jessica rode on Wednesday afternoons from May 2015 to January 2017. She now rides with the Stevenage & District RDA group.

On Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th May, Liz and I helped at the Regionals at Cambs College, Milton. On Saturday we helped set up the countryside challenge course and dressage arena. I also prepared the score boards. I was pleased to see Jessica's name in the non-competitive class of the entry list. By coincidence, Suzanne, one of the other helpers, is Jessica's Coach.

Sunday was dry, warm and sunny; perfect conditions for an outdoor event, if not for the cakes in the marquee! By chance I bumped into Jessica and some of her support team when they arrived. She was keen to meet Bonnie, the Cambs College pony her group had hired for her. Bonnie bore a passing resemblance to Storm, but her brown markings were darker. Team Jessica was complete when her family arrived. Her smile was lovely to see.

When it was time for Jessica to get ready to ride, she donned her smart purple Stevenage group sweatshirt. Liz and I watched her ride a very good countryside challenge round. She followed instructions, performed the small tasks required and used her reins well. At the end, she was given a rosette for taking part. The look of delight on her face was a picture. Is this not what RDA is all about?

"It's what you can do that counts."

(contd.) →



Jessica in her younger days at ECC, riding a very hairy Jack, with Rosemary Martin and Charles Stock.



Summer Fair 2017

Some people might think that the Summer Fair only lasts for one day but for the people who are organising it, it lasts a lot longer than that!

I have had my spare bedroom heaving with cuddly toys and tombola and raffle prizes for months. My greenhouse has been bursting at the seams with plants to sell and yes, I did go a bit mad with the tomato plants this year. I know this has been happening in lots of households in recent months. This is the wonderful thing about the Fair - so many of our lovely volunteers throw themselves into it wholeheartedly and we just can't thank you enough.

Once again the weather was kind to us and the day was bright and sunny. Attendance was good with lots of friends, old and new, turning up. The cakes and refreshments were yummy as usual. Many thanks to all who provided them and helped to sell them. Lots of people had a go on the Adopt-a-Cuddly stall despite desperately trying to clear their children rooms of excess toys!

(contd.) →

Summer Fair 2017 (contd.)

The doll was won by Eamonn, a Monday volunteer. I hope this didn't cause problems at home - Eamonn has two daughters! The large Dalmatian dog was won by Ros much to her surprise. She didn't know a friend had bought a name for her until she was presented with her prize. The dancing dog was won by one of our disabled visitors. She was thrilled to learn that Banana the Boogie Beagle was hers.

Overall, it was a pleasant afternoon with lots of good natured fun and we just happened to make over £1,000 towards Centre funds. I am looking forward to next year already!

Jan



A Farewell to JJ

Most of you will be aware by now that regrettably we had to have JJ put to sleep in the Spring of this year. He had been with us for 13 years and during that time had worked hard for us, being rock steady with smaller riders. Over the years he had probably given us less trouble than the rest of the crew put together. He was rested during the Summer of 2016 but when brought back into work in September showed a distinct wobble in his hind quarters. We thought that the young horse that we had given to him to befriend was a little too full of life and was making JJ run about too much. But Joey went and the wobble didn't. We rested JJ until Christmas when we decided that professional advice was needed. The vet thought that he had arthritis but the simple truth was that he was very old, possible 30 - a good age for a horse. He was also concerned that JJ was so weak that he might fall on someone or he might go down in the field and not be able to get up again which would have been very distressing. We kept him until March to let him have a taste of Spring grass. On his last day the sun was shining warmly so he was able to enjoy a roll without his rug on.

His gentle ways will be greatly missed by everyone at the Centre.

Jan

pp The Trustees

My bond with JJ by Hannah Molyneux

When I first joined RDA I remember, like everyone else at the centre, adoring all the horses I was introduced to with all their fun personalities. However, it wasn't until I met JJ that a truly lovely bond was formed. Those who know me well will understand I never like to have favourites with animals and particularly with our horses, but as I got to know JJ and spent a



lot of time with him, I realised how much I loved him and how much we understood each other. As someone who owns, has worked with and studied various animals, this is nothing new, but the bond between myself and JJ was definitely undeniable.

I will never forget those looks he would give when he knew he was being naughty (he knew I wouldn't let him get away with anything.....maybe on the odd occasion I would!) and when he was being good he was a lovely pony and always will be.....Those eyes said a lot! As my Tuesday morning group know we were never short of photos of him (as

shown left -one of many I captured over the years) as I enjoy photography and couldn't resist taking pictures when the opportunity arose, many showing his brilliant character that made everyone laugh!

When I was told that he was going to be put to sleep I was very upset but had prepared myself already as I knew he was very old so I knew the inevitable would happen. I miss JJ very much but I know he is in a better place without any pain. One pony I shall always love and never forget.

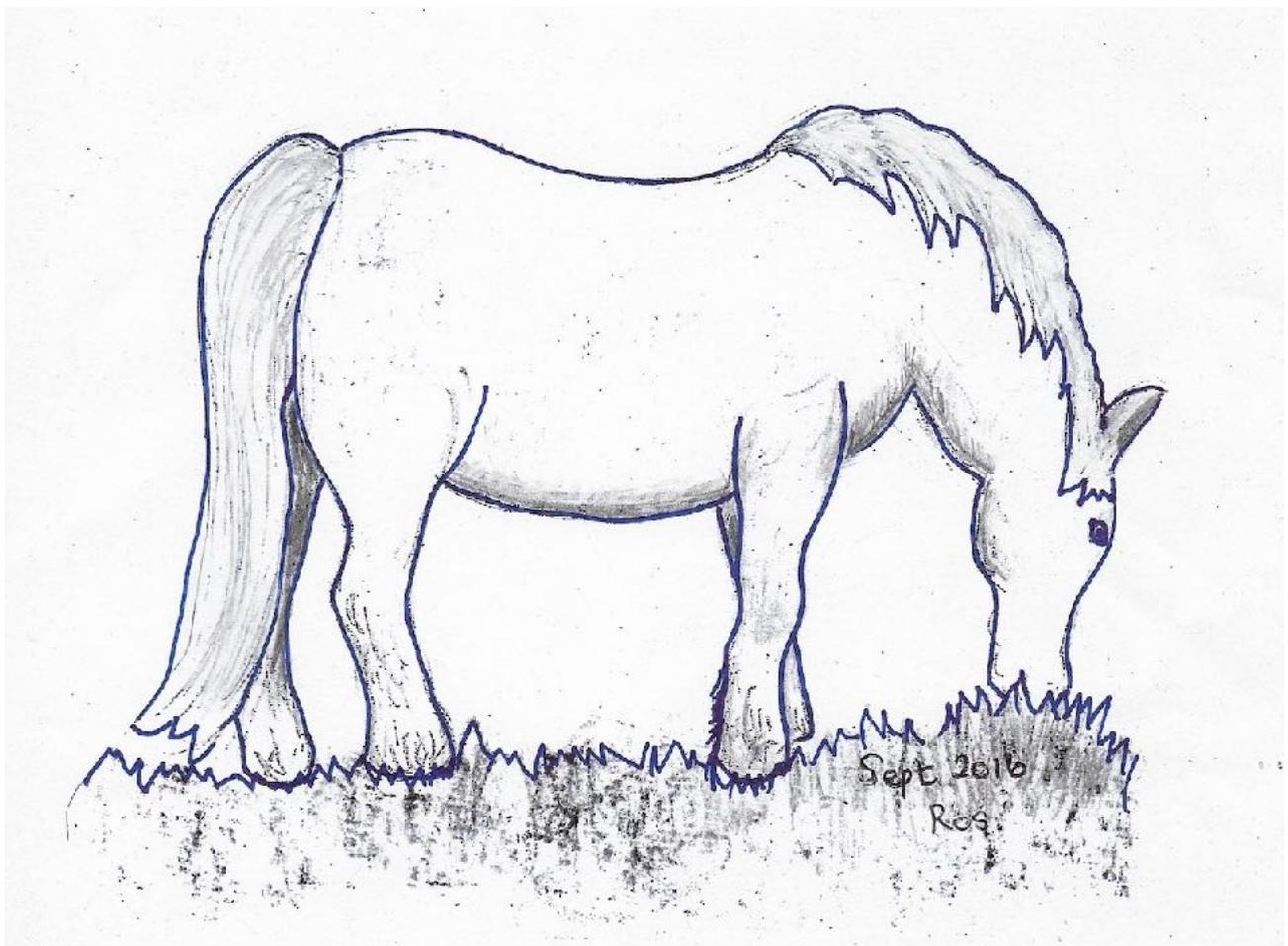
Remembering our JJ by Ros Ward

Sadly, but aptly, on a sunny day in March, JJ was put to sleep after many years with us at the Centre.

A Haflinger breed, he was true to character - a friendly nature, docile, adaptable, hardworking and long lived. A lovely boy who just wanted to please.

Thank you JJ, you brought a lot of happiness to many; you were a joy to be with.

You are very much missed.



Fundraising

ECC Summer Fair 21st May 2017: Total raised £1072.14

Open Farm at Brown's of Stagsden 11th June 2017

Took plants, jewellery and quilt raffle. Raised a total of £86. A big thank you to Brown's of Stagsden for inviting us, and to Ros, Caroline and Jan Bambridge for their donations to fundraising.

Raffles Update

Handbag raffle.

Before Christmas a beautiful blue tote bag was donated to us by Tusting, makers of luxury leather goods. The raffle was won by Diana Jones, a Thursday volunteer. She was delighted and very aware of what a bargain she'd got for her £2 ticket. Check out their website and see! The bag raised £92 for the Centre. Many thanks to Tusting for their continued support.

Easter Egg Raffle

The Bedford Lions gave us a large Easter Egg to raffle as part of their fund raising efforts for us this year. It made £100 and was won by Oliver Daniels, a Saturday morning volunteer. I am sure his family were very happy to help him dispose of all that chocolate!

Clown Raffle

One of the customers of Tudor Rose Patchwork, the craft shop in Oakley, knitted an amazing clown. Calling him a toy didn't seem right - he was more like a knitted sculpture. The detail was so intricate. He raised £36 and was won by Ros Ward, volunteer extraordinaire! She is a Tuesday morning helper, fundraiser and Trustee. The clown couldn't have gone to a nicer home!



Forthcoming Events

Saturday 24th June	All Saints' Church Fete.
Saturday 8th July	Wootton FunFest.
Sunday 9th July	Bromham Show
Wednesday 19th July	AGM at Bromham Village Hall, Hall 2
Sunday August 13th	St. John's Country Fayre 11.00 - 4.30
Sunday 10th September	Biddenham Show, 12.00 - 4.00.
Saturday 7th October	Quiz night at Kempston, Church End.
Saturday 9th December	Budgens Christmas Collection.

Contributions to the Newsletter

We always welcome articles and suggestions for the Newsletter, maybe you would like to share what you enjoy about coming to the Centre? The Newsletter comes out in February, June and November, so if you could let me have any contributions by the middle of the preceding month....

Victoria



Term Dates for Bedfordshire Schools 2017

Friday 21st July 2017: Summer Term ends.

Monday 4th September 2017: Autumn Term begins.

Monday 23rd October - Friday 27th October: Half-Term

Tuesday 19th December: Autumn Term ends.

Wednesday 3rd January 2018: Spring Term begins.
(Tuesday 2nd January Bedfordshire Schools Training Day)

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

Edited and compiled by Jan & John Tozer

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36 Singer Way
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Beds.
MK42 7AF

Tel: 01234 840125
www.trycopykatz.com