

Newsletter

November 2010

*Elisabeth Curtis Centre
Riding for the Disabled*

Registered Charity No. 1137217



Our latest arrival, Tom



Improving lives
Registered Charity
No.244108

Editorial

It is a long time since our last Newsletter in June, but I am very pleased to be able to say that the Elisabeth Curtis Centre is still ticking over nicely. Lots of our new helpers are still with us and more are still coming. We have been able to offer places to a number of new riders this term; some of them liked it, some of them didn't, but they have had the opportunity to find out for themselves.

The Summer holiday was quite restful - even for the Management team, compared to last year when we had the builders in! We have had 35 tons of sand removed from the school and we are watering regularly, which has improved walking conditions for volunteers and ponies.

We were hoping to have a large portion of fencing replaced in the holiday but the ground was too hard to get the posts in. Now we are keeping everything crossed that we will be able to get it done before the ground gets too soft!

We do have a couple of new things. One is **a new Fire Assembly Point**. It is the grassed area in front of Rainbow School. In the event of an emergency evacuation of the Centre your instructor will tell you which exit to use. Whichever gate you use turn left when you get to Chestnut Avenue and walk about 100 metres to Rainbow School. I think most people know where the main gate is, but some of you may not be familiar with the small pedestrian gate in the Sensory Ride which is used if you need to leave the arena by the rear exit. Please try to make time to go and look at it and perhaps to walk up to Rainbow School.

Finally, a much nicer new thing! We would like to welcome **Tom** to the Centre. Tom is a grey gelding, aged about nine and 14.2 hands high. He is a lovely chunky pony and has a good temperament. Lots of things are new to him at the moment but I am sure he will soon realise that the Elisabeth Curtis Centre is a very good place to be.

Jan



Gayl and Tom get acquainted.

RDA East Region Supra Conference, November 3rd

This year four of us went to the Conference in Newmarket. Sharon, Denise, Kirsty and I were going to see two of our former riders being presented with their ASDAN Award certificates. This is a scheme which allows riders to demonstrate their increasing knowledge of riding, horses and horse care. Each rider works at their own level, making records of their learning in pictures and/or words.

We were delighted with the work that Annick and Charlotte had produced and thrilled when we learned that the awards were being presented by HRH The Princess Royal, Princess Anne. We were also a little surprised to discover that the four volunteers were being presented to the Princess as well!

I wonder which of us was the most nervous. As it turned out I needn't have worried at all. Annick and Charlotte were wonderful. Annick did a beautiful curtsy and said "Thank you, Your Royal Highness" as she took her certificate. You would think she met princesses every day! Charlotte looked delightful in her pink tartan outfit with pink tights and a big pink rose in her hair - yes, Charlotte likes pink! Like Annick, she seemed totally untroubled by meeting the Princess and chatted away to her with ease.

Riders from other groups were presented with their awards and then it was time for the volunteers to meet the Princess. I was a bit worried about the protocol of the whole thing and convinced I would stutter or dry up altogether when I was introducing the others. Happily, the Princess is an expert at putting people at their ease.

We were grouped at the edge of the stage waiting to meet her, when she strolled over to us and started chatting! I know we talked to her for some time because the organizer was glaring at me behind her back, but the time flew by as if we were old friends.

Other speakers talked about early days of RDA in Russia and the birth of the Pegasus Centre in Northumberland, a large group with 16 horses. Both were very good speakers and gave us lots to think about! The venue was very nice and the food fresh and tasty. A good time was had by all!

“Over and Above” Awards

Every year RDA National invites groups like Elisabeth Curtis Centre to nominate people for their “Volunteer of the Year” Award. Runners-up for this award may be given an “Over and Above” Award to recognise their special contribution to the RDA or to their group. This year two of our volunteers were given this award. The first was Sharon, one of the Tuesday evening instructors. Sharon has been a part of the Elisabeth Curtis Centre for 25 years, since joining us at the tender age of 14, and for the last seven of these she has been an instructor. For the past five years she has been battling with a major illness, requiring a lot of very debilitating treatment. During all these dark days she has remained cheerful and hasn't missed a single lesson. We are very proud to have such a courageous person as part of our team and hope that she will continue in this role for many years to come.

The other person to receive the “Over and Above” Award was, I am very embarrassed to say, yours truly.

All I want to say is that, while I am very pleased to receive the award, everything that I have done has been as part of a team of skilled and generous people who think nothing of giving up whole days of precious time to help keep the Centre running. Our volunteers are all special people.

Jan



A very surprised Sharon and Jan, receiving their “Over and Above” awards, accompanied by their long-suffering husbands Keith and John.

The Murray Mint!

Many of you know Rod Murray, a Tuesday night helper. In his day job, Rod is an Event Photographer and kindly has an ECC collecting box on his stand, which travels all over the country. Recently he decided to have a clear-out in his garage and was surprised to find two collecting boxes lurking in a dark corner. There was £155.75 in them! So, if you have nothing better to do this weekend, CLEAR OUT THE GARAGE! You don't know what you might find!

Fundraising

12 June	Sainsbury's collection made £501.46	
13 June	Manor Farm, Stagsden - pony rides	made £106,
	Toy Shop took £125.45	
19 June	Olney collection made £295.56	
26 June	Llama Launch, Turvey - Toy Shop took	£54
27 June	Parklands Open Gardens - plant sales	made £34.50
3 July	ECC Open Day made £688.45	
11 July	Bromham Show, Toy Shop took £21.20, sale of greetings cards made £8.50	
10 September	Hunter Trials at Carlton £3,416.88	
9 October	Quiz night made £222.95	
6 November	Bromham Charity Fair, Tombola made £57.50	

This list of figures really only tells half of the story! It doesn't show the months of preparation that went into some of these events or the huge amounts of time that went into advertising, organising and running the event on the day. Lots of our volunteers and supporters were involved in raising vital finances for the Centre and **we just can't thank you enough!**

Term Dates for Bedfordshire Schools

17 December - end of term
5 January 2011 - term starts
(Many instructors choose to start back on 10 January.
Please check.)
21 -25 February - Half Term
8 April - end of term

Forthcoming Events

Sat. 20th November Christmas Fair at Dame Alice School. Jan and John are taking the Toy Shop. Would anybody else like to help out? It is an afternoon event.

Sun. 21 November Wootton Craft Fair at Wootton village hall. Would anybody like to learn how to run the Toy shop? The fair runs from 10.00 - 4.00.

Sat. 27 November Race Night at Bromham Village Hall. 7.30 for 8.00. Tickets are £10 per person, to include buffet. We have only five races left which are available for sponsorship, but we still have lots of horses left to sell. Winning owners get 40% of the tote, with 40% going to people who bet on the winner and 20% going to the Elisabeth Curtis Centre. You don't have to go on the night to sponsor a race or buy a horse - we will collect your winnings for you, should you be lucky. The odds are good; there are only eight horses in each race! The bar will be open and if a crowd of friends go together it can be a fun night out.

Please help us to sell as many tickets as possible by giving one of our mini flyers to anyone who might like to come. We will also need help on the night with catering, running the tote and the raffle. Please talk to Audrey, Kirsty or Jan if you are willing to help.

Sat.11 & Sun.12 December Collection at Budgens in Bromham.

Fri. 25 & Sat. 26 February 2011 Collection at Tesco, Goldington Road.

Look out for the sign-up sheets for the above collections!