

Newsletter

November 2016

*Elisabeth Curtis Centre  
Riding for the Disabled*

Charity No. 1137217; Company No. 7302917



*Meet Sam - our new arrival.*



**RDA**

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

## **Chairman's Report**

Since the last newsletter we have received the very sad news that Barbara Middleton has passed away. She will be very much missed by all at the Centre.

Sadly we also have to share the news that Paul Draper, a Tuesday evening rider, passed away suddenly. Paul rode at the Centre for nearly 30 years, and was a real character who will be missed by everyone on a Tuesday evening.

Our sincere condolences go to the families of Barbara and Paul, whose obituaries follow.

On a happier note we would like to thank our Honorary Life President, Mr Derek Woods for his extremely generous donation of £5,000. The Centre is very lucky to have Derek's continued support and generosity.

The Centre was also fortunate to receive a £5000 Discovery Foundation Grant from Santander, my thanks to Kyle and Jan who both put a lot of work into the application for this grant.

On Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, we celebrated the group's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. Volunteers, riders, supporters and friends of the Centre old and new joined us to share memories. We also presented long service awards to Huggy, Rupert and JJ. My thanks to everyone who joined us on the day, and to everyone who helped to make the day possible. My particular thanks to Angela for making our special celebration cake.

The Centre has been incredibly lucky, as we have been chosen as charity of the year by The Bedford Young Farmers Club. They are celebrating their 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday this year, so it is a very special year for them too. Two of their members volunteer with us on a Saturday morning. We are very grateful to them for choosing to support the Centre this year, and look forward to being able to welcome them to the Centre soon.

Two of our Saturday volunteers have chosen to raise money for the Centre as part of their NCS course. They have already held a coffee morning, and our thanks to them, and the members of their group for their support.

The Pulloxhill Gardeners Club raised £520 for the Centre at their Open Gardens Event. Our thanks to Sally Aspinall for nominating the Centre to receive this donation.

The Kimbolton Flower Club raised £620 for the Centre, we were their chosen charity for last year, and were nominated by Barbara Middleton who was a member of the group.

We would like to welcome our new pony, Sam, to the Centre. Following a successful trial period, Sam has now been bought by the Centre. My thanks to Kirsty and all involved in the search for new ponies, and also to our grooms Ann and Gayl for everything they have done to care for our new arrivals.

Our thanks to the Bedford Drama Company for donating tickets to their recent performance of Dracula to the Centre. We raised £213 from tickets sales. My thanks also to Ros for selling the tickets on our behalf.

On a personal note, I would like to welcome Jan and John back to the Management Committee, we are very glad to have you back.

The Centre often receives kind donations of tack for our ponies. To raise some extra funds for the Centre, we have recently taken some of the items that weren't able to be used by our ponies to some

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equine car boot sales. Following one of the sales, we received some further donations from other kind stall holders. Over the Summer we have been able to raise just over £300 through sale of donated items. My special thanks to Lisa, Sam, Denise, Ann and Gayl for your help with the sales, and to everyone who has donated tack.

## **Donations**

In addition to the donations mentioned in my report, we have also been incredibly fortunate to receive the donations listed below. We are very grateful to everyone who has been kind enough to make a donation to the Centre.

- The Ship Inn, Bromham Road, £57.70
- Central Pharma Contract Packing £150
- Lloyds Bank £160
- Orange Peel Intellectual Limited, via the French family £250.00
- 1<sup>st</sup> Polhill Guides £20
- Mr C Elliott £50
- Molly Canning £22.20
- Ted Sadler £47.50
- BT £50 towards the paint for the stables
- In memory of Fred Nash £40
- Hilary O'Dell £500
- Donations in memory of Paul Draper £226.77
- Donations following Liz's Golden Wedding Anniversary £110

## **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

## Obituary - Barbara Middleton

Barbara Middleton initially became involved with the Centre when she brought her daughter Joan along as a volunteer for the Wednesday afternoon session. Joan had learned a lot about horse handling skills from Barbara who had a wealth of equine knowledge. Much to our delight Barbara decided she may as well stay and help rather than go home.

Barbara was brought up with horses and backed (broke in for the uninitiated) Pearl Lawson Johnson's young thoroughbreds.

She later ran a mixed livery yard with her husband, Cliff. She had always been involved with the local hunt and had quite a few hunt liveries.

She was able to find a good home for one of the Centre's horses, Booma, who didn't enjoy our work. Booma is loved by her newer owner, fit and well, still galloping around the countryside near Rushden some years later.

Barbara had a lovely calm, quiet, understanding way about her which was always useful with both the horses, riders and volunteers. She was much liked and respected by all.

She and Terri used to long rein some of our horses for exercise and getting them used to going from the voice.

Barbara took over the Weds. a.m. St. John' School session where the riders progressed and gained their Grades.

She contributed much to the Centre over the years, assisting at pony rides, looking for new horses, taking riders to the qualifier and Championships and contributing at the Riding Committee meetings.

Her sudden illness left a huge void. Our thoughts are with her family.



*Liz Riding*

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## Obituary - Paul Draper

Paul has been riding with us for many years and it was a shock to us when he died. He was riding one Tuesday evening, didn't come the next one and died later that week.

I well remember the first time Paul came to the Centre. He took one look at the hairy beasts and declared "I am not getting on that". So we thought, how about watching the other riders, some of whom Paul knew from going to the Youth Club. We persuaded him to sit on a chair (in those days we didn't have a gallery, just a row of chairs in the corner), leaving the end one free and Emma arrived with Oscar in tow. They sat quietly beside Paul and eventually he decided he could maybe stroke Oscar. We thought it would be better in the mounting block as he would be more on the level (yes, you've guessed it and easier to get on if he wanted to). He stroked Oscar and when we asked would he like to sit on the pony he said yes but it had to stand still. We got him on board and after a few minutes said would he like to move out of the block so we could make him more comfortable. He agreed to this and we eventually managed one circuit of the school and said that was enough. We dismounted Paul and asked if he was coming back next week. He said "Probably" and so began his long career in riding.

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Paul was always cheerful and polite. He knew his left from right but couldn't make decisions. If I asked him if his stirrups were alright his reply would invariably, with a smile on his face, be "Well you are the instructor you should know".

He loved doing the competitions at the Regionals and often qualified for the Nationals. His parents Mary and Derek would bring him down to Gloucestershire and he would enjoy the day.

Paul usually told us about his activities, where he had been in the week and what was happening next.

Paul was certainly an asset with our riders on a Tuesday evening and he is sadly missed.

*Eileen Nash*



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## **Summer Holidays at ECC**

Some of you may think that the Summer holidays are a relaxing time at the Centre. It is true that there is no riding but there are lots of jobs that have to be done when there are not too many people about.

Our wonderful grooms work just as hard throughout the Summer. The ponies still need checking every day to make sure they are in good health and that they have enough grass, but not too much! Boundaries have to be walked every day to make sure the fences are still in one piece. Scratching seems to be a favourite activity among equines during the Summer and when you are as big and strong as, say Lolly, it doesn't take much to break a fence rail. Ann and Gayl always carry binder twine in their pockets for emergency repairs!

The stables get a thorough clean in the Summer. This involves clearing out all bedding then scrubbing and disinfecting all walls and floors. Not an easy task, but the grooms, ably assisted by Jenny, take great pride in doing a proper job. Then the stables are painted. This year we were very lucky to receive help from a group of volunteers from BT's legal department. This was the same group who did some "jungle clearance" for us last year. It was great to see them again. I wonder if we will be able to persuade them to come back for more painting next year?

Summer is always the busiest time of the year for the fundraising group as we go to lots of village fairs. I think we only got rained off once this year. Not bad for an English Summer. Some of the volunteers, including our Chairman, Victoria, have also been going to Equestrian car boot sales trying to turn unwanted tack into useful cash. The gardeners, Margaret, Caroline and Steve, are busy as usual during the Summer. Can you imagine what the Sensory Ride would look like if they decided to take six weeks off?

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This Summer we also had a visit from possibly our next generation of volunteers. A group of Guides came to learn about the work that we do and to be given the basics in horse care. I wonder if some of them will come back when they are 14?

Summer is also a busy time for our coaches, as we must now call our instructors. They have spent a lot of time this year looking for new ponies and have managed to find us Conker and Sam. We another horse, Ava, on trial at the moment. If she suits us, we will have a full compliment, nine full stables. Perhaps the coaches will have an easier time on the horse hunting front next year??

One thing that doesn't ever seem to get easier is the paperwork. The Summer holiday is when they make sure that all their records and reports for last term are complete and ready for filing, before they start on the next lot. They also have to contact the volunteers and the riders to make sure that everybody knows what is happening in the new term.

Another job that can only be done in a holiday, is the cleaning and repair of tack. All saddles and bridles are taken to pieces and thoroughly scrubbed before being oiled or saddle soaped. Head collars and numnahs go through the washing machine and very noisy loads they make! Then it all has to be put together again!

We are so lucky to have such dedicated people involved with the Centre. There is so much more to running the Centre than what people see during a riding session.

*Jan*

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## 40th Anniversary Tea Party - Sunday 2nd October 2016

This was an informal event to celebrate just over 40 years of riding for the disabled in Bromham. It brought together 50+ people, mostly former and current helpers. Several riders from each of the five days on which we ride, came with their families. Bella Craven and Veronica Bradley, our County Coach and County Chairman elect were also there.

For "old" / former helpers it was a chance to meet again, to share memories of their joint or separate experiences, to be at the Centre again after an absence (in some cases a long one), and to see it thriving. They also met some current helpers and all our ponies. Several pioneers were present: Janet Barbour, Mildred Frossell and Ann Dew. Other key figures, including Sue Brown and Judy Davies also attended. It gave new helpers, like Hazel Steele, Julia Cox and Katrine Redman, an idea of the organisation they have joined.

Three ponies, JJ, Huggy and Rupert, were each presented with their RDA Long Service Awards for 10 years hard work for the ECC.

All our riders are to receive a special rosette.

Angela Norris, the mother of Becky Norris, a Monday morning rider, made a special anniversary cake in our colours of white and green. An icing rosette with 40 at its centre was the main decoration. Many thanks to Angela and all those who contributed cakes and savouries. Many thanks also to those who helped to organise and run the event.

*Pauline Evans*



*(L-R) Julie Randlesome, Judy Davies and Sue Brown enjoying a chat at the party.*

#### **40th Anniversary - The Book.**

One of our volunteers, Pauline Evans, loves to write. So when she suggested that she would like to write a history of the Centre, the Management Committee were happy to go along with her. Initially, it was thought that the book would be like one of our Newsletters, but as soon as Pauline started to do research it became obvious that there was more information than a simple newsletter-type publication could handle.

Pauline has spent hours interviewing the surviving "founder members" and reading archive material. Collating the information has been difficult and time consuming. The book is currently on version four but is very close to completion. Thanks to the very kind support of a sponsor, the book should be available, free of charge, by Christmas. It is called " A Brush, Shovel and Lead Rein". Be sure to look out for it!

*Jan*

## Riding Competitions at ECC

This September we held our own Dressage and Countryside Challenge competitions at the Centre. For various reasons a number of riders dropped out of the Dressage competition at the last minute which left Amy Williams, Tuesday Evening, as the only rider in the junior class. She performed her test well on Conker and Judge Liz was happy to give her a first place rosette.

In the senior class, Charlotte Daniels, Saturdays, was on Conker and Becky Norris, Mondays, rode Storm. It was a close-run competition with Charlotte just out-scoring Becky to win. Charlotte was very pleased with her rosette but Becky was equally pleased when Liz Riding said that was " the best she had seen Becky ride".

The junior class of the Countryside Challenge had three riders, all from Saturday. Roisin won on Muscadeu, with Maddie second on Lolly and Abigail third on Storm. Storm was a "silly boy" (Liz), for Abigail.

Four riders competed in the senior class. Three were from Tuesday evening and one from Wednesday afternoon. All the Tuesday riders were on Storm. Leigh McIness came fourth, Richard Crabbe came third and Max Porter-Price was second. The winner was Heidi Stear. After a particularly difficult week of medical appointments, she did extremely well just taking part. To win was a significant achievement. Well done, Heidi.

In fact, well done to all who took part and many thanks to all who worked so hard to make it happen.

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### *For Our Younger Readers.....*

*This is a short story written by Audrey Carruthers (Tuesday a.m. organiser) for her granddaughter Holly, pictured here aged 8 years. She is now 14.*

### **Last One in Bed is a Lemon!**

"It's you again, Grandma, you're the lemon!"  
"Yes, because every time I get in bed I have forgotten my tablets".  
"Shall I tell you a story Holly?"  
"Yes please Grandma".

"Well, once upon a time..."  
"NOT THAT ONE GRANDMA!"  
"There was once a little girl..."  
"NOT THAT ONE GRANDMA!"  
"There was once a little boy..."  
"NOT THAT ONE GRANDMA!"

"Well, Holly, we will have to go through the door.....".  
"O.K, if we have to"



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There is a stream running through a meadow and a grey pony is having a drink. He is all alone. Does he have someone special in his life?

Of course he does, he has Rosie, but she is far away. He is always thinking of when she was small. She rode him bareback, groomed him, fed him and made him feel secure. Does she still love and think about him?

Yes, because when you have something or someone special in your life they are always in your thoughts and in your heart.

It was a beautiful summer's day - there was a slight breeze; all the scents of daisies, clover and fresh grasses were in the air, and the pony, by the way called Gypsy, had sensed something special.

He galloped to the top of the hill. In the far distance he saw someone running towards him. Who was it? Who could it be? As the figure came closer there was quite a breeze, and amongst the fragrance of wild flowers there was a very special scent. "I know who that is" thought Gypsy. Yes, it was his beloved friend Rosie. He lifted his head, neighed with delight and galloped as fast as he could to greet her.

When they met she threw her arms around his neck,

"Oh Gypsy, Gypsy, I have so missed you, I will never go away again. Can I jump on your back and ride you like I did when we were younger?"

Gypsy was so happy, he neighed to her. She leapt on his back and they trotted all the way home. He hadn't felt this happy for such a long time!

*The End*

*Audrey with Holly and Jenny, painting kicking-boards in 2011.*



## Fundraising

**25 June** All Saints Fair, Kempston Church End. Did not attend due to threat of thunderstorms.

**9th July** Wootton Fun Day . Donated goods £17.50, Quilt raffle £69.00, Tombola £35.50. Total £122.00. We usually do better at this event! Very windy day, stall poorly sited.

**10th July** Bromham Show. Quilt raffle result combined with Wootton Fun Day (above).

**5 Dec 2015** Handbags & Gladraggs Sale at The Ship, Bromham Road, with collection box, raised £57.70.

**14 August** St John's, Moggerhanger Summer Fete. Tombola £225.50, quilt raffle £7.00, jewellery and plants £66.10. **Total £298.60**

**11th September, Sunday** Biddenham Show. Jewellery and workshop, quilt raffle and knitted goods £142.02, tombola £87.50.

**29th October** Charity Bazaar, Bromham Village Hall. Tombola £74.00

## Raffles Update

Thanks to our supporters at Tudor Rose Patchwork and their customers, we have been given lots of handmade quilts to sell or raffle. Some have been purchased, but most have been raffled, and the latest proud winner is Hannah, one of our supporters. Her Mum was very pleased to collect the quilt on her behalf.



*Hannah's Mum, looking highly delighted with her daughter's prize!*

Tusting, a local luxury leather goods producer, has also generously donated another of their handmade leather tote bags to us. This one is in blue suede and will be raffled in a similar way to the quilts, i.e. only 100 tickets to be sold at £2 each.

This Designer handbag retails at £185.

## **Forthcoming Events**

**12th November** Quiz night at Church End, Kempston. BYO supper.

**Contact Jan on 01234 297456 to book a place.**

**3rd December** Church Fair, Village hall, Biddenham.

**8th December, Thursday.** Christmas Dinner for Volunteers at Great Denham Golf Club.

**13th December, Tuesday Tesco collection.** Christmas Collection at Goldington store. Look out for sign-up sheet!

### **Term Dates for Bedfordshire Schools 2016**

Friday 16th December - Autumn Term ends.

Wednesday 4th January 2017 - Spring Term begins  
(Tuesday 3rd Bedfordshire Schools Training Day)

Monday 13th February - Friday 17th February Half Term

Tuesday 4th April - Spring Term ends.

Wednesday 19th April - Summer Term begins.  
(Tuesday 18th April 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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