

Newsletter

November 2012

Elisabeth Curtis Centre

Riding for the Disabled

Charity No. 1137217; Company No. 7302917



Terri doing what she loved best

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

Editorial

As Christmas looms, I can only think what a year of contrasts 2012 has been - some amazing high points but also some low ones. I remember sitting having lunch in the garden in March and revelling in the warm sun, little realising that this was the beginning of a drought which was to kill a favourite tree - a conifer, the first Christmas tree I bought in this house over 25 years ago. Then we had the Summer - at least I think we had a Summer. I know we had a few hot days when we were working in the indoor school enclosing the seating area, but for most of the time it just seemed to be rain, rain, rain!

Lots of outdoor events had to be cancelled due to conditions underfoot. Those of us that went to the Bedfordshire County Show would probably not have been very upset if it had been cancelled - if we had known what it was going to be like! Liquid mud covered everyone's feet and it was very slippery. Lots of people displayed signs that they had taken a tumble - i.e. mud all up the back of their jackets and jeans. Ann, our groom, had entered her little white poodle, Mollie, in the dog show. Mollie turned into a piebald within minutes, even though she had been carried to the show ring! But at least we were spared the life-changing floods that hit so many unfortunate people this year.

I hope you are enjoying the newly refurbished seating area. It should be warmer for more people this Winter, rather than just the three who managed to get the prime spots directly under the heaters! Our thanks go once more to AK Civil Engineering and, in particular, to Martin the carpenter. Many thanks also to Ruud, Jenny, Victoria and John for their painting and decorating skills!

Despite the weather, we had a pretty fabulous Summer in many ways. The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations were spectacular, with the river pageant being my particular favourite. And then we had the Olympics and the Paralympics - so many amazing feats of skill and strength. As someone with just a passing interest in horses (!), the equestrian events were the highlights. Then we came to the Paralympic Dressage. We sometimes struggle to get our ponies to do what we want them to do; how do they get those huge, prima donnas of the horse world to dance for them?

Summer passed and soon it was September and time to get back to "work". For Liz Riding this has meant sometimes doing four sessions a week to cover for Terri who had to leave the Centre in the Spring due to ill health. I am sure Liz will not mind if I say that she is not in the first flush of youth and has been finding the extra work tough. Other instructors are helping where they can and we have some trainees who will be qualified in the not-too-distant future, but for now, everyone at the Centre would like to say a huge "Thank You" to Liz and please hang in there - it will get better.

In October we had the very sad news that Terri Cornner had died. She was a prominent member of the Elisabeth Curtis Centre team for about 20 years. She started as a helper but trained hard to become Group Instructor for Monday, Wednesday and Saturday mornings. She was our treasurer for a number of years and chairman for six years. All this at the same time as being in employment, a wife, mother and grandmother. Her energy and enthusiasm for the Centre were outstanding. She was the inspiration behind the creation of the Sensory Ride, formerly a nettle patch, and a driving force in taking riders to RDA shows. She made a significant impact on the lives of many disabled people and will be remembered fondly by those who worked closely with her for many years.

We have planted a copper beech tree in the Sensory Ride, in her memory.

Jan (Chairman / Editor).



Pete Corner and daughters, Rachel and Zoe, at the Tree Planting ceremony.

Remembrances of Terri

From Gayl Sadler:

“I have been at the Elisabeth Curtis Centre for a good few years now and Terri was here before I started so I have known her as a volunteer, treasurer, and chairman. But my best memory from my association with her is as an instructor. She was very well thought of by her helpers, parents and carers of her riders. I think this was probably because she was so good with her riders; she had empathy and time for them and so they felt she understood them and really wanted them to benefit and enjoy their riding. So for them in whatever way they could express it I would just say Thank you.”

Gayl

From Kyle Palmer:

“Terri Corner. Well what can I say! As many people know I am not normally stuck for words, but in this case I cannot find enough words to describe the enthusiasm, inspiration, kindness and commitment Terri brought to RDA and to our Saturday ride

From the moment I started coming 5 years ago I was made welcome in the group, and I could see the kindness she had towards both rider and helper alike. Her enthusiasm and commitment saw us entered into RDA competitions, and the enjoyment of her lessons continued even when there were five of us attending the final lesson of the winter at -10°C. She has inspired many, both from the Riders she taught and Sabrina, Felicity and me on embarking on our instructor training. I'm sure some parents/carers who made the journey to get here every Saturday come rain or shine or snow were also inspired by Terri. In the five years I have been here she never missed a lesson at all, which I cannot say I have done.

contd.→

From Kyle Palmer (contd):

Her dedication to her family and the Elisabeth Curtis Centre was commendable! She will never be forgotten, and with the planting of a tree and placing of a plaque in the Sensory Ride, her enthusiasm and commitment can be remembered in the place she wanted for the riders, and pushed for as Chairman."

Kyle x

That Calendar!

The Elisabeth Curtis Centre Calendar is now on sale, priced £6.50. Please ask the volunteers on your session if you haven't collected yours yet. Most were pre-ordered but there are a few spares if you didn't get around to ordering one. We are pleased with it but would like to mention that there are considerable computer skills involved here! We didn't really take the ponies to a ball for New Year, Huggy and Bonny were not alone in the Sensory Ride and JJ can't really breathe fire!

The Committees

As you probably know the Centre is run by the Management Committee, with the Riding Committee and the Fundraising Group. The Management Committee is very pleased to welcome two new members, Sam Jewsbury and Victoria Liston. Victoria is now our Secretary and Webmaster. As a Trainee Instructor, Sam also acts as liaison between the two committees. This brings the number of members of the Management Committee to seven. However, if there is anyone who would be interested in helping to run the business and legal side of the Centre, we would be very pleased to see you. We have four vacancies! And when we fill those vacancies, we can co-opt people for particular tasks!

The Riding Committee is made up of the instructors, their group organisers and trainee instructors. They are responsible for the actual riding sessions and for the health and welfare of our horses and ponies.

The Fundraising Group **urgently** needs some help at the moment. Due to people moving house and health problems we are now down to four, of which three are also members of the Management Committee. If you would like to know more about the fundraising group please get in touch with Jan, Jenny or Ros via Tuesday evening or morning trays.

Fundraising

17 June Chili Fiesta at Old Warden. Toy Shop £88.05; Donated goods £7.00 (Ros' jewellery)

23 June: ECC Open Day. Made a fantastic profit of £967.56!

30 June: All Saint's Fete. Toy Shop takings £75.08. Profit from Toy Shop £37.54, Tombola £25.30, Cards £9.00 = £71.84

8 July Bromham Show. Profits £36.47 (after deduction of £10 stall fee), mostly as a result of a children's tombola, selling Ros' jewellery and Denise's cards. However, Bromham show committee made us a donation of £50 from their takings.

18 August St. John's Summer Fair at Moggerhanger.

Toy Shop takings: £10.15. Plants £29.00 profit. Bracelets £23.00 profit. Collecting box £12.31

1 September Equestrian Car Boot sale. Made £444.46 profit from sale of donated tack!

19 September The White Horse, Bedford ran a Quiz in aid of Rotary Club Charities (includes ECC). Made £600.

20 October Quiz at Church end, Kempston Rural. Made £339.30. Very good event, well attended (capacity booking, about 100!).

21 October Apple Day at Bromham Mill. Toy shop took £156.25; jewellery made £29.50.

27 October Charity Fair at Bromham Village Hall. Tombola £17.50; Denise's Cards £17.00; Ros' Jewellery £16.50 Total £51.00 minus stall fee of £9.00 = profit of £42.00.

1 November White Horse, Newnham Avenue Christmas Fair. Made £23.05 from sale of donated goods.

Forthcoming Events

1 December Bedford Girls' School Christmas Fair. Taking Toy Shop.

5 December Carol Singing around Parklands, arranged by Parklands Residents Association. Meet at 7.30 at Rainbow School. All welcome!

13 December ECC Volunteers' Christmas Dinner at Prince of Wales. 7.30 for 8.00 pm.

15 December Tesco Collection, Riverfield Drive. In costume if you can! Watch for sign-up sheet!

16 February 2013 Quiz Night at All Saints' Church Hall, Church End, Kempston Rural.

Donations

Despite continuing difficult times for many people, we are still receiving donations large and small. We have had a number ranging from a couple of pounds in a small money box to £100, and some larger ones from people who have been fundraising for us.

Anne and Keith Harradine have been supporters for many years, sending us regular donations. This year they decided to hold a garden party and raised an amazing £500, mostly from members of their Masonic Lodge in Amphill. I don't know how they managed to pick a sunny day but I think everyone must have been in good spirits, as they were so generous! Many thanks to all who helped to make this day so successful.

Another lodge, The Lovells Bury Lodge also raised funds for us and made us a wonderful donation of £700. Mike Blair and Phil Steele came to present the cheque and "do the tour." They fell in love with Bonny, but we said they couldn't take her home. She was worth more than her (considerable) weight in gold to us, as she has proved to be so good at her job!

Those of you who read our website will be familiar with Matthew Doyle. We first met Matthew's family many years ago when his sister, Catherine was a Tuesday evening rider. Catherine loved her riding and insisted on coming even when she was blue with cold! This year Matthew ran the London Marathon in Catherine's memory and along with donations from family and friends raised an amazing £1,618.

We must also mention the people who donate goods which we can sell to raise funds. Denise and Ros have continued to donate cards and jewellery, both of which are very popular, as are the books and plants. We recently sold some stamps for £20 and we are building up a stack of spare tack ready for the next equestrian car boot sale. The one we went to in September raised very nearly £450.00. Many thanks to all of you who are willing to go the extra mile for us.



"Hello" by Kim Thompson

(www.kimthompsonartist.com)



Two recent presentations: on the left, Jan presents Matthew Doyle with a certificate commemorating his "marathon" effort of £1,618, and on the right Mike Blair from Lovells Bury Lodge presents Jan (and Bonny) with a cheque for £700 (Jan apologises for her over-exposure!)

Term Dates for Bedfordshire Schools

Friday 21st December 2012 - End of Term

January 7th 2013 - Spring Term begins (N.B. Monday 7th January is a Training Day and may affect riding - it is probable that riding will not start until Monday 14th - check with your instructor)

Monday 18th February to Friday 22nd February - Half Term

Thursday 28th March; Spring Term ends.

Monday 15th April - Summer Term begins (N.B. Monday 15th April is a Training Day and may affect riding - it is probable that riding will not start until Tuesday 16th - check with your instructor)

Dates may vary, according to session. Please check with your instructor.