

Hampshire & Surrey Borders RDA

Riding for the Disabled Association

Welcome

Welcome to our Autumn 2018 Newsletter. After a very warm summer we are back at Four Seasons for the new school year, hoping the weather will stay kind to us.

Among the articles in this issue is an account of our fun day at the South Region Qualifiers, where our two riders acquitted themselves well and where The Rachel Plumbé Cup (see page 3) was awarded for the first time. Andrea Nunn, who used to volunteer for RDA Singapore, has written an article about RDA there and it sounds very similar to RDA UK. The same cannot be said for RDA in Russia where some of our old hats are being put to good use. We hope you enjoy reading these articles and the many other items of interest in this Autumn edition of our newsletter.

We are always seeking items for our next issue. Please send articles, of any length, and photographs, to lesley.bull@tiscali.co.uk.

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South Region Qualifiers

To qualify for the RDA National Championships riders need to take part in, and be successful at, their regional qualifiers. Two riders from our Tuesday group third ride took part in the South Region Qualifiers, held at Wellington Riding in May. The weather was beautiful, a taste of the great summer we had to come.

None of us knew quite what to expect: this was a first for us, but our riders took everything in their stride. There was a notable air of calm everywhere! We had hired a pony from the venue for both of them to share and the first thing we needed to do was go round to the stables to be introduced to Charlie D.



Saying hello to Charlie D

The boys took it turns to warm up in a large indoor arena before moving outside to take part in the Countryside Challenge - see the pictures on the next page. The RDA Countryside Challenge is a development of the skills acquired in RDA sessions. The course is focused upon school movements, both challenging and stimulating the rider, but with the focus being "fun".

During the course, riders have the opportunity to put their skills to the test through challenging tasks, going through the gate, into the farmyard encountering sheep and hens! Steering, balance and confidence are all put to the test. Charlie D was the biggest pony one of our riders had ever sat on but he rode the course confidently, both boys scoring mid-seventies percent for the Countryside Challenge.

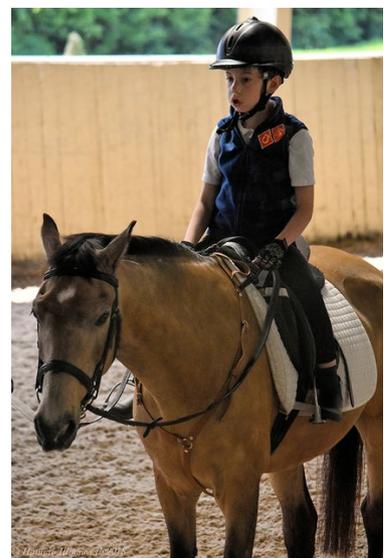
There wasn't much time to spare before we had to move back indoors to a large arena where they each rode a short dressage test, with Charlie D being led and the movements of the test being called out. Our riders coped very well riding a pony they weren't used to riding, in an unfamiliar environment, with judges and spectators looking on, both scoring mid-fifties percent for their dressage.

It was a fun day, a learning experience for us all! Would we do it again? Definitely!

Some pictures from the Countryside Challenge



**The
dressage
test**



The Rachel Plumbe Cup

Following the very sad death of our President Rachel Plumbe in March, it was suggested that a fitting way to honour her memory would be to donate a cup bearing her name to South Region. The cup would be presented each year to a rider for outstanding achievement at the South Region Qualifiers, and it was decided that the cup should go to the rider with the highest score of the day over all competitions.

The first winner was a young man from Newbury RDA who scored a very impressive 98.5% in the Countryside Challenge. A misunderstanding meant that the cup was not available on the day but the rider received due congratulations at the South Region Qualifiers prize giving which followed the conclusion of the day's competitions. A few days later, Rachel's husband Graham drove to a riding session at Newbury RDA and presented *The Rachel Plumbe Cup* to the winner in front of his fellow riders.

The winner with his rosette (left)
and the Rachel Plumbe Cup (right)



To Russia with love

Soon after our last newsletter went to press, with a story about how some of our hats, those we were no longer able to use because of a change in the regulations, had been gratefully accepted by Kenya RDA, I received another communication about more of our hats. Through a contact from Lambourne RDA, the larger-sized hats had found their way to Russia. Our hats had travelled far!

It has been difficult to find out more about Riding for the Disabled in Russia. It is not yet a big organisation, more a small group of enthusiasts whose needs are great and support very small.



The pink hat is not one of ours!

The pictures show our hats being put to good use. The riders had had no riding hats to wear before ours arrived.

Information from the RDA UK Head Office is more encouraging:

“RDA UK has a continued commitment to organisations overseas that offer therapeutic riding activities for people with disabilities. Every year RDA sends qualified instructors overseas to help set-up and improve their riding activities. Recently we have been involved with projects in Ethiopia, Bosnia, Kenya, Russia, Malaysia and Romania. RDA UK is also a member of the Federation of Riding for the Disabled International that was founded in 1980 to form worldwide links between countries and centres offering therapeutic riding and carriage driving and to assist in the development of programs in new areas of the world.”



Some of our friends - a few complete with hats - from the Russia RDA

RDA in Singapore

Singapore is a small island in South East Asia, with a population of around six million people. The RDA Centre is positioned just a couple of miles from the city centre and next door to the prestigious Polo Club. RDA is the only charity that provides equine-assisted therapy on the island and every year, around 20 schools & voluntary welfare organisations benefit. Riders include children and adults with intellectual, cognitive and/or physical disabilities.

Each session consists of 12 riders with special needs who undergo a 10 week course of horse-riding therapy. The special needs can range from physical disabilities such as Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, visual impairment, hearing impairment, CVA (Stroke) etc as well as cognitive or intellectual disabilities such as Down's Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The horses and ponies are of course the stars of the show. RDA Singapore is lucky to have approximately 20, ranging from ex racehorses, ex professional polo ponies, dressage horses and even a Lipizzaner! They are all chosen for their lovely temperaments and work really hard providing therapy and enjoyment to the children and adults. With high temperatures and humidity in Singapore all year round, sessions are either taken out into the shade of the jungle or in the arena, both of which are fun and exhilarating and of course very, very hot!!



Volunteers are key to the running of RDA Singapore and help in all areas from side walkers, horse leaders or coordinators to stable maintenance and grounds keeping. RDA offer on the job training throughout the year to volunteers as well as regular training programs every quarter.

RDA Singapore holds many fundraising events such as Race Days, Annual Ball, Charity Carnival, Road Show etc and volunteers are always needed to help organise the event, help with fundraising, photography, administrative work etc. There are lots of ways to get involved at RDA Singapore and of course have fun at the same time!

Andrea Nunn

Time for Tea

We cannot do anything at all without healthy, reliable ponies for our children to ride. We are therefore delighted to welcome the unusually named Tea to the team of ponies at Four Seasons available for us to use. This handsome pony has quickly settled into his twice-weekly role as an RDA pony. He is proving to be a star, as he can easily carry our taller children but is not too big for the smaller ones.



The Group's roots

Rachel Plumbe's contribution to RDA over 40 years, 17 of them as our Group Chairman (see Spring Newsletter), reminds us that Hants and Surrey Borders RDA, formerly Aldershot RDA, owes a great deal to the tireless efforts of the Group's previous foundation stone - Christine Pike.

We were delighted that, despite bad health, Christine was able to join us at the AGM on 12 July together with her husband Bruce. Christine was Organiser (later to be renamed Chairman) for 21 years from 1975 when she started the Group as we now know it. At that time, the loose club started in the early 1970s by Lance Bombardier Chris Livett was in a state of collapse, but an application to RDA had been made to admit us as a member group. Christine answered an ad posted in Fleet Library and attended the EGM which had been called. What followed is described in her own words.

"After the meeting closed Chris [who had been acting as organiser] explained to me that the Committee had no idea of the situation and the paperwork involved and the need to restart the Group from scratch, and he doubted I would manage it. I gave it a try, and we were up and running by the time we held the first AGM in [April 1977]."

"Early days as Organiser. Only about six Helpers able to return, no pony owners willing to help, too many Riders. Saddle Club horses and the Indoor School still available."

The full story as part of the Group's history (which has now been updated) can be read by referring to our website at http://www.hsbrda.co.uk/about_us.htm and then opening the link to History which appears at the end of the opening paragraph.

Graham Plumbe

Shirley Poole and Sue Hammill

We have been saddened this summer by the deaths of two long-serving Tuesday group helpers.

Shirley Poole was with HSBRDA for over 40 years. She worked with Christine Pike and Rachel and was a large part of what made our Tuesday mornings run smoothly. She organised the hats and boots every year and just knew where the right boots were for the right child and got them on! As a first aider she was quiet, calm and professional and those who attended Hart First Response first aid courses were often shocked at the very realistic 'heart attack' patient in front of them. Underlying all the professionalism, care and kindness was a sharp wit and an ability to keep us all on our toes. Shirley retired shortly after her 80th birthday and we miss her. It was a privilege to work alongside her.

Sue Hammill came to us 14 years ago. She also worked with Epsom RDA Group from whom she received a long service award. Sue was a talented and sympathetic pony leader and was able to coax the best out of any pony she led. She got on with getting the ponies ready for riding without any fuss and was quick with ideas about how to make things better for the pony, or indeed for the riders. Sue endured her ill health with incredible braveness and stoicism, coming on Tuesdays for as long as she was able. She had a quick wit and lovely smile that we will all miss.

Happy anniversary! Rachel, Pat and Christine cutting the cake at the group's 40th anniversary celebrations



Fundraising news

We are very grateful to the Lady Captain of North Hants Golf Club and both Gentlemen's and Lady Captains of Oak Park Golf Club who are raising money for Hants and Surrey Borders RDA during their year in office. We hope they will come and watch a riding session take place so they can see the great things their fund raising is helping to achieve.

We were delighted to receive an unexpected cheque from solicitors acting for our volunteer, the late Sylvia Hebdon, who bequeathed a substantial amount to us in her will.

Lesley once again attended a presentation evening where cheques were presented to many local charities, the proceeds of the Aldershot Rotary Christmas Collection. We thank Aldershot Rotarians for their continued support and intend to help with their Christmas collection in return.



On a very warm day in July we had a tombola stall at Zebon Copse Summer Fete. Thank you to Janet for again running the refreshment stall and to Fiona and all of her team for manning the tombola stall. The unusually hot weather had an influence on takings - I don't think Janet had much demand for tea and coffee! Many thanks to Zebon Copse Committee for their continued support.

For two consecutive years we have received a cheque from someone who volunteers with Windsor Lions at the Windsor Sponsored Ride and donates his sponsorship money to Hants and Surrey Borders RDA. Thank you very much Quinton. The picture below shows riders enjoying the lovely countryside of Windsor Great Park on the 2017 Sponsored Ride.

Don't forget you can support HSRDA, and be in with a chance to win a big cash prize, by buying a Hart Lottery ticket for their weekly draws. For every £1 ticket bought we receive 50p.

One of our volunteers recently won a Kindle Paperwhite. Perhaps you will be our next winner!



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RIDING FOR
THE DISABLED

We're on the web -
www.hsbrda.co.uk

AND FINALLY

Thank you to all Sponsors, Supporters, Volunteers and Helpers who make it possible for us to keep running, to keep helping local children and help to make a difference year after year - we really do appreciate you all.

Hampshire & Surrey Borders RDA

(Registered Charity No: 1074282)

For more information please contact Lesley Bull on 07858 694636
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can
do that counts



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