

RDA East Region Magazine

No. 15

Summer 2018





Welcome to the 15th edition of the RDA East Region Magazine. A big thank you to Sue Diggins, and to Andrew for producing it.

We have had some very successful training days Christina Grieve from Gaddesden Herts has now taken over from Sue Diggins as Regional coach with Kath Hatwell from Essex. Sue has been wonderful over the years and is now show jumping rep and still a training advisor

The days were well attended and I would like to thank the organisers and all those who came one always comes away with some useful information.

The Regional Qualifier and Countryside Challenge was held for the second year running at the College of West Anglia at Milton in Cambridgeshire. Our thanks to the College for kindly lending us their premises. It was well supported this year with 49 riders and 28 qualified for the National Championships at Hartpury which is fantastic. For those that have never been to Hartpury it is a real achievement and it is the most wonderful setting. None of this would have been possible without our marvellous volunteers helping on the day and putting up and taking down the equipment a big thank you to you all.

Eleanor Currington from Cambs College joined riders from Chigwell to compete in the East Region Para Team in Nottinghamshire which was very exciting and

she even warmed up with Lee Pearson. They did very well and came third.

After the wet winter we are now having a heat wave and I hope some of the groups are having an end of term shady picnic after their fun and games.

Gay

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A Royal welcome to Woodbridge and District Group's new home in Suffolk

An eighteen-month search for Woodbridge & District Group's new home is finally over and their fabulous new site, at The Bays in Clopton, has wonderful facilities. There is a large indoor school, an indoor viewing area and an outdoor ménage. The 24 acre site is now fully operational and has eleven horses and ponies, running sessions six days per week, ably supported by a team of amazing volunteer helpers and instructors.



The Bays was officially opened by Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, President of RDA National, on 19th December 2017. She thoroughly enjoyed a riding and driving demonstration on the day then met and conversed with clients, volunteers and horses, unveiling a plaque to commemorate the visit and staying well beyond the time originally allocated to the Group.



Suzanne Hammond Trustee for the Group said “We are absolutely delighted that our new home was formally opened by Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal. This meant so much to our riders, carriage drivers and volunteers. Everyone has worked so hard to make our new home possible. We are so grateful and the visit was really the icing on the cake”.

The land and old farm buildings at the Groups’ new home, ‘The Bays’ at Monewden Road in Clopton, has been provided on a long-term lease by local landowners, the Chamberlain Family. The family said “This is a wonderful charity to be associated with and we are sure that the Group’s activities will benefit everyone involved”.

RDA have been teaching riding and driving to children and adults with disabilities in the Woodbridge area for over 30 years.



Doubtless inspired by the royal visit, on Tuesday 24th July Woodbridge and District Group featured ‘The Royal Ride’, consisting of My Lady Jane, Princess Catherine, Queen Jean and King John. All passed their Grade 2 Riding and Horse Care with flying colours. Well done to them all!



John White

6 October 1936 - 16 January 2018

It is with deep sadness that we have to inform you that our friend and colleague, John White, passed away in January. John was Wood Green Animal Shelter Group Chairman for many years and was devoted to RDA. He joined the group in about 1996 where his wife June was working in the offices. RDA was a voluntary lunch time activity carried out by the Shelter staff.

After a long career in the RAF, and another shorter period working in local government, John retired and brought his organisational skills to the group. Wood Green RDA became a separate charity on 1st April 1999, and John took on the role of Chairman, which he held until he died.

John was determined that everything should be correct. He was usually the first to arrive on site, and would be found filling in rabbit holes and trundling around with his trolley loaded with equipment. He would put out all the equipment, making sure that no pole or marker was even an inch out of position, allowing the other volunteers the time to groom the ponies ready for the session.

John and June also spent much of their time in fundraising for the group by running stalls at Wood Green and other local venues.

In 2013, when we only had two ponies left, and one of them was often lame, John moved the group to Northbrook Equestrian Centre, where we now carry out our sessions. The range of ponies available to us allows us far more flexibility, as well as having the benefit of an indoor school.

John and a few volunteers still continued to visit our two old ponies at Wood Green, where they had been retired, right up until their end. He was particularly fond of Cherokee, a coloured cob, who many Cambridgeshire groups would have recognised from the annual County Gymkhana.

John was very 'hands on' and loved grooming Cherokee. He also cared very much for all the volunteers, as though we were his family, and always had a joke or a story to tell.

He could be described in three words: dependable, hardworking, and caring. He is missed by us all.

BROADWAY FARM CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

Broadway Farm Group this year celebrate their 40th Anniversary. The group was founded by Anne Wedd, Mrs T. who passed away some years ago and Pauline Berry. Originally located at Lolworth and having moved several times the group operates from Needingworth. Throughout the forty years Pauline has been our leader. She has now decided to “hand over the reins” to another longstanding volunteer, Heather Eggett. On 3rd July we said thank you to Pauline. The occasion was enjoyed by parents and friends of the group who watched the riding, followed by refreshments.



RDA Iceni Group have been the most fortunate recipients of new funds from a Charitable Trust keen to support children and animals. RDA is a good fit for their aims, and it already supports the Arundel Group RDA.

In order to make really good use of this additional funding, we held a meeting within our group to brainstorm and try to come up with some new ideas.

Our regular riders all attend The Castle School in Cambridge, and they are kind enough to invite us, termly, to a wonderful School Assembly focusing on their riding activities and we are royally entertained. Whilst being shown round the school, which is so very well designed to help children with many challenges in life, we met children who are wheelchair users, and would not necessarily be candidates for riding.



We put our thinking caps on, and our first foray to bring some new entertainment and experience to the children was to take two miniature donkeys, which belong to our Founder Diana Allan, to the school for everyone to meet. The school certainly was suffering from donkey fever, as the children we see regularly for riding were very excited to see donkeys in their playground. The donkeys have exceptional manners, and welcomed pats and strokes and some gentle grooming from children of all ages. The staff were rather excited too.



On that day the wheelchair users were so very thrilled to meet such enormous animals, to touch and to be filled with awe. We thought these wheelchair users needed more excitement.



To that end we contacted Claire Bourn at Snailriver Driving, based in Soham about half an hour away from The Castle School. She had just commissioned a specialised vehicle to be drawn by two piebald Shetland ponies. The vehicle is perfectly built to accommodate any wheelchair, with a long gently sloping ramp for access. The wheelchair is then securely anchored to the base of the 'carriage'. For those with stronger upper bodies, reins can be attached for them to hold. For other children, it was just the experience of being rather higher up, of being lucky enough to sit next to Claire as she drove the ponies with such flair and expertise, of the different smells as harvest approached, the cheerful sunshine washing over the Isle of Ely countryside, the other horses in

the fields, and quite a lot of RDA Icen Group volunteers anxious to help and delighted to see so much enjoyment in our young friends.

Our plan is to continue these Driving outings with Claire through September and October, as we are very weather dependant. Of course this has been the most perfect summer to take the children out driving.

Our regular riders have been so enthusiastic this year, and have made such progress in their riding. They have completed a musical ride and have celebrated the end of term with a gymkhana and picnic. We have even been able to purchase a portable gate to use in the arena at South Cambridgeshire Equestrian Centre for 'handy pony'. As ever we are immensely grateful to Christian Rawoo and all at SCEC for providing such good ponies for us and three other groups to use for RDA.

The West Suffolk Group continues to thrive with notable achievements for this terms riders.

Eight riders from the Priory School passed their Grade 2 riding proficiency Tests and I hope they will have passed Horse Care Grade 1 before the end of term. I am hoping to fit in 1k Endurance too.

On 3rd July 2018, five riders completed the 2k endurance ride in beautiful sunshine accompanied by a very welcome breeze. These were adult riders with learning difficulties and those in recovery from Mental health problems. Riding in 2 groups the distance was completed in 30mins. We are so lucky to have on site safe hacking around the paddocks at Barrow Hall Stables. A big thank you to the volunteers on foot who completed the distance twice. Greg on Jack and TJ on Albert rode first, followed by Amanda on Corky, Becky on Jack and Gillian on Albert.

We are looking forward to a Dressage day in September to be judged by Frances Wheatley.

Sue Price (West Suffolk Group RDA)



Becky Gets Gold



Following on from her success in 2017, Becky Page has gone one better and achieved her Gold Horse Care Proficiency Certificate. Margaret Fowler, Vice Chairman, commented that the Shelley Group were "so thrilled" for her. "All her hard work and study paid off."

Sue Diggins said that she was very pleased to be able to make the award. "Very few participants in the Region have managed to attain this standard. Becky should be very proud of herself."

The Woodhurst RDA Group

have enjoyed another successful year working with children of mixed ability, aged between 5 and 8, from Spring Common School in Huntingdon.



Every Monday, during term time, eight children take part in our riding sessions at the Northbrook Equestrian Centre in Offord. We rely heavily on the support of our volunteers to ensure that the children are able to develop their riding skills on an individual basis and participate in group activities and games.

Several new children joined the group this year and we have used the school projects which include colours, shapes, the senses and parts of the body, as the focus for activities in our riding sessions.

We have had two very successful fund-raising events this year. In February we held a quiz at the Crown Pub in Broughton with over 60 people attending. This raised £725 for the Group and was a very enjoyable evening. In May we held a musical extravaganza in the grounds of the Pub, which included three well known musical acts - The Killer Shrimps; The Good Old Days and The Masquerade. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended and raised over £1400. The Pub provided a marquee and food for the evening and we are very grateful to them for their support with our two major fund raising events.

We look forward to another successful year with a new group of children joining us from Spring Common School in September 2018. We are planning to raise funds for the Group next year, by holding our annual pub quiz in February and a pleasure ride in April.

Alison Mackenzie, Chairperson Woodhurst Group RDA.

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Shelley Group Receive Masonic Grant

The Shelley Centre were very excited and privileged to be nominated and to receive a grant of £25,000 from the Masonic Charitable Foundation, awarded as part of the 300th Anniversary celebrations of the United Grand Lodge of England. This grant has enabled us to carry out some urgent projects which have been kept on hold through lack of available funds. The Back Yard and shelter have been re-surfaced, a new field shelter purchased, acres of wooden fencing and electric tape have been replaced, our Arena will receive a much needed re-surface and top-up, and our mechanical horse will be positioned a little below floor level to make it more accessible for riders - particularly those using the ceiling hoist.



We are hugely grateful to all our friends, riders, families and supporters whose on-line votes secured for us the maximum grant, and of course to the Masonic Charitable Foundation for their generosity and support.





ASDAN in Essex

This year in Essex, two more riders finished all five modules in their ASDAN Transition Challenge Portfolios.

The ASDAN Transition Challenge covers the whole of the school curriculum – from English through to Science.

The Portfolio has 5 modules. Each module has 14 pages/activities and the rider and coach just have to choose 8 to complete each module.

And the best bit about it, is that it can all be done on horseback and during your usual RDA session.

Adam from Barrow Farm Group and Addi from Upminster Group have now finished all 5 modules and both have received not only a certificate for each module – but a gold certificate to show that the whole Portfolio has been completed.



Left - Adam was so pleased to be presented with his Portfolio whilst standing with his horse and special team of helpers

Right - Addi was very proud to be presented with his Portfolio at his College Leaving Assembly



Both are long term riders in their groups and so were able to work on just one module per year.

Over the course of the 5 years, they have both passed Proficiency Tests, and learned to be better riders. And now, having completed their last module, have each shown that they not only have more independence in their riding but also have a great rapport with their horse and with their helpers.

Reading and looking through their ASDAN Portfolios is like the reading of a story – seeing all the things they've worked on over the past 5 years. Showing skills that have been learned and ones which will stay with them all their lives!

Why not have a go yourselves – give this amazing experience to one or more of your riders.

Happy riding!

Kath Hatwell

ASDAN Co-ordinator for the East Region

Cambs College at The National Championships

Cambs College had a great day at the Nationals at Hartpury, and Lizzie Bennett said " I'm so excited for Eleanor and Olivia; they were both fantastic and so chuffed with their results. It was a great weekend all round!" The Group's results were as follows:

Showjumping

- Level 2 SJ - Chloe 12th Junior; Shani 10th Senior (both on Boysie)
- Level 3 SJ - Eleanor 5th (Boysie)
- Level 4 SJ - Lizzie 3rd (Danny) and Chris 4th (Quintus)

Showing

- Eleanor 6th (Boysie) and Chris 7th (Quintus)
- both have qualified for the SEIB Search for a Star final!

Musical ride

- Unled - Cambs College 1st! (Chloe, Emily, Chris, Lizzie, Shani)

Dressage

- Grade 3 Championship test - Eleanor 1st and Class Champion! (Boysie) She scored 77.05% which was 5% higher than the 2nd place rider! It was also very nearly the highest dressage score of the whole weekend.
- Grade 4 Freestyle - Olivia 8th (Uma) - Olivia did so well in this because Uma really wasn't in the mood! Fortunately it came before her main test...
- ...Grade 4 Championship test - Olivia 3rd with 72%! (Uma), Gemma 12th (Danny)
- Grade 1-6 Canter test - Lizzie 5th (Boysie)
- I/D Canter Championship test - Chris 12th (Quintus), Shani 14th (Boysie)
- I/D Canter Freestyle test - Chris 2nd (Quintus)
- Walk/Trot Led - Kodie 11th (Danny)
- I/D Walk - Jodie 4th (Boysie)
- I/D Walk/Trot - Chloe 8th Junior (Boysie) and Emily 11th Senior (Boysie)
- Walk only Led - Rebecca 8th (Danny) and Claire 13th (Danny)

Countryside Challenge

- Led or 1 sidewalker - Kodie 13th (Danny)
- Led and 1 sidewalker - Lucy 4th (Danny)

Vaulting

- 17+ and overall - Lizzie 1st (Bear - Perry RDA horse) I also won Best Turned Out vaulter!

Arts and Crafts

- Individual Collage - Claire 4th

Best Turned Out

- Olivia and Uma - 5th



Emphatic dressage triumph for Currington

CAMBRIDGE'S Eleanor Currington claimed the National Grade 3 RDA (Riding for the Disabled) title after an emphatic win in her dressage class at the RDA National Championships at Hartpury, Gloucestershire, last weekend.

Riding Drunken Boy, a horse owned by the Cambs College RDA group, Currington scored an impressive 77 per cent in her test, five points clear of her closest contender.

When Currington saw the scoreboard, she said: "There must be some mistake!"

Currington, 26, began riding seven years ago with the Cambs College RDA group (recent recipients of the Mick George Bag of Gold) following a stroke that left her unable to feel her right arm and leg.

Although Currington has qualified for the RDA National Championships before, this is the first time she has secured the title.

Riders who compete at the championships will have first qualified at a Regional Qualifying Competition in one of our 18 Regions.

To add to her outstanding competitive year, Currington was selected to represent the East Region at the Para Home International in Leicestershire, in April, where her team came third and she won her Grade Three class.



NORFOLK BROADLAND RDA



It has been an eventful year for Norfolk Broadland RDA Group. First we had retirement and resignations from some of our senior volunteers. Then we were told we had to find another stables as the one we were at was closing down.

So we all moved to Weston Equestrian Centre, Weston Longville in November 2017. We were worried our riders would be upset by the move. Thankfully they all returned and settled very quickly at the new venue. We changed our routine and now ride fortnightly on Wednesday mornings and have a long break after we finish in December starting back in February.

Due to the move we lost some of our experienced volunteers but we have acquired new volunteers who have worked very hard to learn as they go along, how we run our group the RDA way.

Due to the nature of the disabilities in our group we require two mounting blocks to help our riders on to the horses. We had a very cumbersome large wooden mounting which got very heavy in the winter and was awkward to lift when it was wet. Having seen an article in an RDA magazine we got in contact with REMAP a company who support charities. Thanks to Andrew New and his team a lightweight aluminium mounting block was designed and created which we took possession of in November. What a difference that made!



Finally for the first time on 18th July we had a gentle hack with 8 of our riders around the fields at the stables. All our riders loved the experience and requested that we do another one. It was lovely to see all the smiling faces as they returned to the school. What a perfect way to end our summer term.

Jacqui Vyse, Norfolk Broadland Group Secretary

Bridie's Fond Farewell



My name is Bridie. I am 28 years old and have been doing RDA for 23 year reindeer on several occasions. I started at the Magpie Centre in Norfolk when my new owner moved to Suffolk in 1994. I came with her and joined the Hollesley Group. As I am only 11 hh I have had many little riders on my back and have always taken care of them. It makes me smile when some of my riders now in their twenties and with children of their own, say to them "I learnt to ride on Bridie." I have been out fundraising many times over the years and have raised well over £1000 to help me and my horsey friends to keep well fed and healthy. I also have made a splendid reindeer on several Christmas occasions! Soon the group will be moving to new premises and many changes are happening, therefore it has been decided that I should retire from my RDA duties. I am now living in Aldburgh close to my owner who comes to see me every day. I am happy here but I miss you all, especially my dear friend Lottie.

Bridie (retired!)

East Norfolk Group Erect 'The Cabin'



The Cabin is dedicated to the memory of Gemma McCormick who was a North Sea helicopter pilot based at Caister on Sea. She was 1 of only 5 women helicopter pilots at the time. On retiring she moved to Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

She was a very competent horsewoman but in November 2015 while riding she suffered a fall from which she tragically died.

Her mother Moira wanted her to be remembered in the county she loved. Because of her daughters love of horses Moira contacted Peter Tobitt County Chairman of the Riding for the Disabled offering help.

The East Norfolk group was chosen as we are based close to where Gemma worked.

The legacy received has meant we have been able to replace a 34 year old Portakabin with this new building. This is a comfortable waiting room for our riders and a storage area for our equipment.

The East Norfolk group enable children and adults with learning and/or physical difficulties to take part in riding which provides a sense of achievement, is also therapeutic, and most of all fun.

We thank Moira McCormick for her generous legacy and we know The Cabin is a fitting tribute to her daughter Gemma.

Claire Wilkins, Chairperson of East Norfolk Group, said

"We are very grateful to Gemma and are looking forward to our riders enjoying the use of this excellent facility."

The new building, at Croft Farm, Filby, was officially declared open at a ceremony on 30th June.



Ebony's Downsize

The Shelley Centre have benefitted from the services of a horse simulator for over 20 years and it has proved to be a great asset in extending the therapeutic benefits of riding within the group. It is used to assess the balance and capabilities of all new riders before they ride the horses. Also for those with insufficient balance or body control, to help strengthen their core and muscle tone sufficiently to then transfer to riding outside. As it has a weight restriction of 16 stone we are able to continue to provide therapy for some riders who are over the weight limit for our horses. With the added assistance of a ceiling hoist riders are able to mount without difficulty.

Well so we thought for many years - but it became increasingly difficult to mount some of the taller riders who needed to use the hoist, as the ceiling was not high enough to raise the hoist just the few extra inches needed to make the transfer simple.

Now at last with the financial help from the Masonic Charitable Foundation Grant and the building expertise of local builder Tom Lowe and his team, we have been able to lower Ebony into the floor. With the additional donation of a new ceiling hoist and the installation of a wide screen television in front - courtesy of AV Unit in Ipswich, we now have a 'Shetland Pony' which is less daunting for some of the younger clients, more accessible for all the clients and very much safer for side-helpers, who are now able to stand on the level floor instead of mounting blocks on either side.

Ebony may have lost a bit of 'dignity' but the alterations have not lost any of its beneficial attributes. It still provides a therapeutic walk, sitting and rising trot (to teach rising trot without damaging the horses backs) and the experience of canter paces. Together with a video screen to enjoy watching a ride through the countryside!



From your Regional Coaches....

2018 has been a busy year so far for your County and Regional Coaches. We arranged two Regional Training days on Governance, Physiotherapy, and Musical Rides at Wood Green, Cambridgeshire and Marks Tey in Essex. In addition, there have been two Equine Welfare training days at the Magpie Centre in Norfolk and Barrow Farm in Essex. Hopefully many of you have had the opportunity to attend one of these.

Following on from a nationwide questionnaire, which had an excellent response, it was clear that RDA coaches wished to have a more streamlined Coaching Pathway. This year there have been Coaching Pathway workshops at National Office and Open Forums around the country including one in Bluntisham which was attended by many coaches and volunteers from East Region.

The result is the launch of a New Coaching Pathway in 2018 with;

Less Paperwork

A Simple direct path

Standardised training from grass roots up

No big exams

Modular training for flexibility

Quality e learning for convenience

Reviews will be annual after qualification and thereafter, every three years. Hopefully this will enable your Regional and County Coaches and Training Advisers (soon to be renamed Coach Developers) to train and support when needed.

There are over 50 groups in East Region from small groups who meet once a week to full time centres with over 100 riders but to each RDA participant the experience we provide should be the best possible. We owe it to our amazing workforce of 264 East Region coaches and many more volunteers to make sure they have access to good quality training to get the job done well!

Since July, Kath and I, together with help from the County Coaches and T/A's have mapped all coaches across to the new Pathway. Letters will be going out from RDA UK confirming where coaches are on the new Pathway. If coaches have relevant external qualifications, these may give them exemptions from certain modules.

With the launch of the New Coaching Pathway at the RDA Coaching Conference on Sunday 14th October, Kath and I will be looking at ways to tailor training to underpin the new structure. Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions.

Your help and feedback is much appreciated.

Christina Grieve (christinamgrieve@hotmail.com)

Kath Hatwell (kathhatwell@gmail.com)

Regional Coaches, RDA East Region.

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Stop Press News

Jo Clark Bould from Digswell Place RDA has just passed her Bronze proficiency test while on a RDA Riding holiday in Yorkshire. She is now learning to ride Side saddle with Anne Everall at Acrecliffe and doing really well. She is a credit to her coach, Sian Ibsen, so many Congratulations should go to both of them!

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That's all for this year folks!

Please remember to send us lots of articles and photos for next year's issue.

To guarantee inclusion, can you please ensure we receive all content before the 2019 summer break?

If you're in doubt as to our preferred formats please email sdiggins@rda-east.org.uk