

RDA



Riding for the Disabled Association
Incorporating Carriage Driving

SOUTH EAST REGION

Review of 2015



CHAIR'S CHATTER



In our house we decorate the Christmas tree with decorations and memorabilia we've collected from all over the world. Each year this means not only do we remember the past but we also look to the future as we know that next year there'll be new yet undiscovered events, activities and memories to be added.

For the last three years, with a little smile, I've placed on our tree a new decoration, one, given to all the volunteers at Sandhurst RDA, where I am also a coach, by Bagshot School. This year it's a Penguin and he'll join his friends Snowman and Santa along with a train from Bruges and a star from Prague which are new this year. So, what would go on the South East Region's tree?

Well we've had quite a year. As a region we "Saluted the Future" with our Supra Regional Conference held at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. RDA's President, The Princess Royal, was in attendance and I vividly recall the inspirational speeches and wonderful demonstrations. Definitely the ticket from the event would make the tree.

Talking of demonstrations you could not forget the impressive carriage drivers at the conference. Celebrating their 40th anniversary this year I had a brilliant "RDA moment" in July when Happy Landings invited me to take part in their celebrations and actually drive a carriage with the fabulous Misty. Maybe a replica of the new Fenix is an appropriate addition.

As region, our nomination won, for the 2nd year, business partner of the year at the RDA National Awards for our new website kindly donated by Netro42. What a wonderful evening we had at Lord's with Claire Balding and all the winners. So a Netro42 decoration is a must.

We continue to share our events and accomplishments on social media – be sure to "like" our Facebook page and follow us on Twitter. Congratulations to those groups who are embracing social media, we are enjoying your news and particularly the photos! Keep up

to date on information on our events and training days as they appear on the regional website.

We couldn't survive, as a region, without the support of our main sponsors Cowan Architects. We cannot thank David Cowan and his team enough, not only for financial support, but also for their time at our regional events where you will find them awarding rosettes and trophies with genuine appreciation. David himself delivered an inspirational talk at our Supra Regional Conference bringing to life the fascinating world of designing for disability. A big Cowan's star ornament from the regional team.

If there is a decoration to represent "succession planning" then that should go up as well. The regional committee has worked tirelessly as always with a focus on identifying talent for the future not only for the region, but helping groups to develop individuals and recruit new talent. We now have a regional talent pool in place and will be scheduling events and training during 2016. Thanks to those of you who are already reaching out and assisting us with our activities and if you have not yet made yourself known and are interested in taking part – please contact me.

Of course if I have a tree large enough I'd have a decoration from all 40 groups, every horse, rider, driver, and volunteer. I know each group will have their own tree of memories and people they would want to thank. Personally I'd like to acknowledge and thank the 17 members of our regional committee. You make my role as Chair so much easier, more effective and fun.

Looking forward to 2016 we know we'll have more events, we know succession planning will improve further and we know more participants will benefit from the gift of riding and driving that you all enable.

Be open to new experiences that we've not yet thought of so we can have a new array of decorations and ornaments for 2016.

Front page picture: Margaret Morrison driving Moses from the Stella Hancock Driving Group and Fiona Stuart as Whip. Photo courtesy of Zecora

REGIONAL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 2015



Tina presents Stella Hancock group with Buchan Bobby Award



Tina selects Raffle winners with Janie Lawson of the RDA Committee



Vicky Bragg Sandhurst Group shares a story with Plumpton's RDA Sheila Camilleri

OUR GREATEST ASSETS DISCUSSED

At this year's Regional Conference over 130 delegates (representing nearly 25 groups from across the South East) were asked to focus on the theme of "People and Potential" with a series of workshops run by RDA's National Office. The day ended with some well-deserved awards which were presented by the Region's Vice President, eventer and Olympic medallist, Tina Cook.

"People are our biggest asset" said Regional Chairman, Lindsay Correa. "So we need to ensure that

all our volunteers have a role to play, can grow in that role and can spread the word as RDA advocates and these workshops will help us to do this".

Delegates considered the use of internal skills' audits of themselves and their other volunteers and then addressing where there might be skill holes in their Groups. Then they looked at how they might go about finding any additional skills they needed externally and the power of the people stories that they have to tell.



Pat Breakell is a Raffle winner



Matt Cobble and Caroline Ward present a workshop

Caroline listens in to a group discussion



Tina presents Liz Major of Heron's Ghyll with Tora Bray Award

"Our stories from the RDA are a very valuable currency that we can use to motivate people who may be new to us" said Caroline Ward, Communications Manager at RDA National. "We are all extraordinary and we witness many moving moments, which to us may become normal but we must remember what an amazing resource we have to share".

Tina Cook was happy to present 25 year service awards to Anna Kerr from Court Meadow (Albourne, East Sussex), and Mary Briggs, Helen Mills and Jennifer Nash – all from Cranleigh RDA, Surrey. Liz Wrighton from Bradbourne RDA (Riverhead, Sevenoaks), was also honoured with the Volunteer of the Year award.

Tina presents Liz Wrighton from Bradbourne with Volunteer of the Year Award



Liz Major from Heron's Ghyll RDA (Whitesmith, Nr Uckfield, East Sussex) was awarded the coveted Tora Bray Perpetual Trophy for being "a committee member, companion whip, indefatigable helper and all round good sport" and going 'above and beyond' the normal. Liz is first in, putting up the road signs and getting out the carriages each week and this after feeding 50 calves on the family farm and taking the grandchildren to school. Liz also takes her turn in supporting the disabled drivers and she is at the forefront organising the loading of the carriages and all the insurmountable amount of equipment needed for events. In 25 years Liz has missed very few days and once she hobbled in after being knocked over by a cow because "she didn't want to let the Group down".

In the 40th anniversary year of RDA carriage driving it was fitting that the Stella Hancock RDA Driving Group (Worpleston, Surrey) was awarded the Buchan Bobby trophy for their amazing driving commitment and for producing an extra-ordinary display for RDA President, HRH The Princess Royal.

AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL



Lorraine at South of England Show with Shirley Price standing and Anthea Shipley as whip

Lorraine Mercer MBE is an inspiration to everyone who meets her - so I was particularly thrilled when her sister asked me to be the Nominee in her application for an honour in the Queen's Birthday honours list. I cannot think of anyone more deserving.

I have known Lorraine for the last 30 years as she joined Heron's Ghyll Carriage Driving Group just a few months after me in 1985 so we are both nearly founder members of the Group. She has been a very regular Member ever since. She is an inspiration to everyone and very competitive, entering all the competitions that she can get to

and winning numerous prizes along the way.

But her commitment to the RDA knows few bounds. Three times she has undertaken a sponsored mile swim raising £5,000 for the Group; this is all the more remarkable as it takes her 3 hours 15 minutes to swim a mile which is some feat.

Always one to think of others, Lorraine also undertakes a number of other charitable works outside the Group such as visiting hospitals to give inspiration to people and helping others with disabilities.

"It must be hard for people who suddenly find themselves disabled. It's such a dramatic change for them as they often feel they've lost their dignity and motivation" says Lorraine. "Some people have no-one to help. Having faced these challenges all my life, I think I can give them helpful insights to encourage them to get back into life".

Lorraine is also an incredible craftswoman, making intricate fine lace items and painting beautiful pictures, both with her mouth. In fact, 2015 has certainly been Lorraine's year for as well as the MBE, she won the RDA's National Arts and Crafts competition with her painting of a mare and foal. She also makes greetings cards and raises a lot of money through her crafts.

Shirley Price MBE, Whip, Heron's Ghyll



Lorraine Mercer receives her MBE from HRH Princess Anne at Windsor Castle in November

ROYAL RECOGNITION FOR CAROL

At a very special 40th Anniversary Carriage Driving event at Stowe in June, our very own Carol Porter from the Happy Landings Group nr Horsham, was presented with a national award by HRH The Princess Royal, in recognition of her contribution and dedication to carriage driving within RDA. She was one of only 6 people across the nation to be honoured with this unique award.

Carol started riding with RDA in 1998 after a riding accident that left her wheelchair bound the previous year but only a year later she started carriage driving with the Happy Landings Group. Two years later she was on the Great Britain Para-driving team. After being in two silver medal winning teams she won Individual Silver in the first Para Pairs class. Carol's pony is used at RDA every week and Carol has been the Group Organiser for 15 years, Regional Driving Rep for 11 years and is also on the Carriage Driving Committee. She fits all this in around a very busy life organising events for the British Horse Society.

"I was stunned to be given this award and had no idea that I had been nominated. It's been a real privilege being involved in RDA carriage driving and I hope more people will be inspired to give it a go like I did" said Carol after being presented with the award by HRH The Princess Royal who is President of the RDA.



Carol Porter receiving the Carriage Driving Award from HRH The Princess Royal

BUILDING ENDURANCE

Bradbourne hosted the third Regional Endurance Competition in June and enjoyed a growing interest in the discipline, which is now offered by 4 groups across the Region with a number of others in the process of registration.

On a dry day, competitors from 8 to 50 years selected the 1km, 2km or 3km classes where the 3km had to be off the lead rein with an able-bodied escorted rider. Feedback from the day was very positive. Endurance is about personal bests so everyone enjoyed winning a certificate and rosette, though all those in the 3km class also managed to complete the ride within the optimum time.

The competition's organiser, Gilly Roper, said "Everyone seemed to really enjoy it so it was worth the effort involved. I'm confident that more and more groups will see the fun and benefit from the discipline".



Sally Anne O'Neil of East Park Group leads a happy Keira O'Donovan on Comet



Partially sighted, Jon Lee riding Finn is joined by his Group Coach, Kate Fredou riding Bill

NETRO42 WINS

Our very own business partner, Netro42, who designed the South East Region's ground-breaking new website, won RDA National's business partnership of the year award for its efforts.

The award was presented to Netro42's Managing Director, Tony Orsi, by presenter and broadcaster, Clare Balding, at a gala dinner held in September at Lord's Cricket Ground. Clare is a great supporter of the RDA and was particularly enthusiastic about the work of Netro42 saying that the website set the benchmark for the RDA. Our own Chairman, Lindsay Correa, who project managed the website build, said "Netro42 have delivered all of our aims beyond our expectations".

The key aspects to the site are its need to be useful to everyone regardless of their disability whilst also being capable of accepting online donations and maximising the power of social media through the bespoke Content Management System. Netro42 has managed to re-build the site from the ground up to provide an



inclusive and accessible online experience that works across all platforms and devices.

"Our first big challenge was the RDA's Supra Regional Conference in April 2015, and here the site was invaluable, as we were able to drive all registration and information through the "Event" section of the site – saving us lots of time and money," said Lindsay. "Netro42 had to be particularly responsive on this occasion in order to comply with the additional security requirements for the attendance of HRH The Princess Royal". "We are enormously proud of our site and grateful for the time and expertise donated by Netro42, which represents a donation close to £25,000" said Lindsay Correa.



From left to right: Clare Balding, Tony Orsi (Managing Director, Netro42) and Alison Sherwood-Bruce from BETA, Award Sponsors

A ROYAL DAY

The Quest group applied several times for a visit from Her Royal Highness but it was quite a surprise when we received confirmation that our application had been successful. There was much to do by way of preparation but we were patiently guided through the process by Julie Dargie from National Office – to whom, many thanks!

From the moment that the Princess Royal arrived at Laris Farm Stables, where the Quest Group is based, she was gracious and totally absorbed in the group and our activities.

Quest has been a “pioneer” for the Accessibility Mark Scheme. An outcome of this has been the development of a strong working relationships with both management and staff at Laris Farm. The Princess took a particular interest in

the Accessibility Mark and the opportunities it offers to disabled people. Some of the young people who ride with us, as part of the Accessibility Mark project, displayed some activities for HRH The Princess Royal.

Highlights of the day were the presentation of long service awards by Her Royal Highness to three of our ponies and also to volunteers from Quest and other groups. The Princess also presented rosettes to every child and took a special interest in the newly developed woodland walk which has a number of sensory and physical activities for riders.

This was a splendid, memorable day for the Quest Group which we were delighted to share with our riders, volunteers, visitors and honoured guests.

By Molly Rickwood



HRH The Princess Royal taken on Countryside Challenge

HRH The Princess Royal presents rosettes



Autumn Royalty for Farnham

DID YOU KNOW?
the Regional Committee . . .
organises workshops on safeguarding and first aid

The much anticipated visit by HRH Princess Ann to Farnham RDA in October went very well indeed. It was such a special day for everyone and we were particularly grateful for the fine weather as we ride in an outdoor sand school!

We work with children from two schools and both groups gave short riding demonstrations. The children all rose to the occasion, splendidly, proudly showing off their riding skills to the special audience, which also included their parents and teachers.

Some of the younger children had only ridden with us a handful of times, but they all

tried really hard and were able to show how to halt, walk on and change direction with their ponies. The older children were able to show off their trotting skills. Then the children lined up on horseback at the end of the session and bowed to our Royal visitor who gave them a wave. The Princess Royal met all the children and presented them with red/white/blue & gold commemorative rosettes. She then went on to chat with all the volunteers (who were also given a lovely rosette) and unveil a plaque to mark the visit. We have some great memories of the day! It was such a highlight for our small group, and we all felt proud to be part of the team that made this such a successful visit.

By Sue Griffiths

HRH The Princess Royal is presented with a posy by Eloise



HRH The Princess Royal presents rider Oliver on Mr B with a rosette



The rain held off for the Region's Dressage Qualifier which was held at Hickstead at the end of May. During a fabulous day, 55 RDA riders of all ages from 9 groups converged on Hickstead to show off their accuracy skills in dressage riding.

There were 13 classes held across three arenas in all, of which 6 were qualifying classes for the RDA National Championships at Hartpury, Gloucestershire in July. Tom Longley, Director of Architecture of RDA Regional

way to qualifying for the nationals with Simon Blight, for East Park RDA (Newchapel, West Sussex). Jemma Salmon from Chichester RDA won a pewter tankard for being the highest qualifier while Gregor Sumner from Court Meadow Group, Albourne won a rose bowl for being the highest led senior score and Gareth Bithell from Cobbes Meadow, Canterbury won a trophy for the best led senior.

And while the results were being collated, the numerous entries to the annual Arts & Crafts



PHOTO BY ZECORA

Team Cobbes Meadow after a good day

DRESSAGE DAY

sponsors, Cowan Architects, presented the prizes with his colleague Sarah Goad. "I watched these riders in a number of the classes and I really take my hat off to them as they all have such empathy with the horses. They're all winners in my book" he said.

There were a couple of annual newcomer trophies presented where Charlotte Harvey from Albourne's Court Meadow Group, won the horse trophy with the highest non-qualifying score. Katie Radzik from Canterbury's Cobbes Meadow Group won a cup for the highest senior newcomer score on her

competition were judged by designer Bob Sampson, who designs our Regional Review and his volunteer wife, Pip, from Mid Sussex RDA Group. Lorraine Mercer was an individual winner with her painting-by-mouth featuring a mare and foal, while Sandhurst and Farnham RDA groups were both Group winners.

DID YOU KNOW?
the Regional Committee . . .
. . . provides extensive support and liaison for new groups

Tom Longley from sponsors, Cowan Architects, presents Charlotte Harvey with trophy for Highest Newcomer



PHOTO BY ZECORA



PHOTO BY ZECORA

Hannah Thomas riding Aero from Gennets Farm prepares for a turn with Nicky Hardwicke

Gregor Sumner of Court Meadow wins Rose Bowl for Highest Led



PHOTO BY ZECORA

Sophie Burrows of Bradbourne on Bisto salutes the judges



PHOTO BY ZECORA

NOTHING'S TOO BIG FOR THE SOUTH EAST

SupraRegional Conference Success at Sandhurst

HRH The Princess Royal joined top speakers at for the Supra-Regional Conference in April which was hosted by the South East Region and held at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.



PHOTO BY ZECORA

A salute for the Princess

More than 300 delegates from the South East, Greater London and South Regions of the RDA descended on the RMA to be inspired, under the suitably military theme of 'Saluting the Future'. After a morning of fascinating talks, the RDA President, HRH The Princess Royal was treated to a number of unique show jumping and carriage driving displays from host members of the South East Region. The RMA's Corporal of Horse, Tim Puddifoot, delighted everyone to round the day off with a demonstration of making his horse, Invader, lie down.

The talks followed a journey from selection (with David Hamer, British Dressage Para Director) to competition (with triple gold medallist Sophie Christiansen OBE) with additional information on preparing the competition horse from RDA vet, Judy Scrine and the techniques of inclusive design from leading architect in disability, David Cowan of Cowan Architects, which sponsor the RDA South East Region.

Of course, the RDA would not have the success in changing lives without the continued hard work of its 'army' of volunteers, so the last speech featured Matt Cobble



PHOTO BY ZECORA

Verity Jones of Godstone is presented with the President's Award

of RDA National Office in a drive to support current volunteers and recruit new ones under the banner, 'Your Country Needs You!'. During lunch, a number of the volunteers from across the South, who work so tirelessly to support the RDA, were presented to the Princess Royal. Then everyone 'trooped' out to the display rings to enjoy Stella Hancock's Carriage Driving team give a display of 40 years of carriage driving. This highlighted the evolution of carriages from the Jubilee Cart in 1977 (described as an "orange box on wheels"), through various models to the most recent Fenix making its debut out-

ing and designed by Mark Broadbent. This was followed by a show jumping display by a young RDA member from the Ashdown Forest Group, Lauren Huggett and Rio Paralympic hopeful Simon Blight of East Park Group.

HRH The Princess Royal gave out a number of presentations to end off the day with a 25 year service award to Hope in the Valley RDA Group Chairman, Lesley Morrill and the coveted President's Award to Verity Jones of Godstone RDA Group and Fiona Wright of South Downs Group.

"The success of the day came down to teamwork and enthusiasm which are always at the core of everything we do in RDA. Sophie Christiansen is always so appreciative of her RDA days and it was great to hear this echoed by The Princess Royal" said Lindsay Correa, Regional Chairman of the hosting South East Region. "A special thanks to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst for allowing us to use their amazing facilities. It helped make it a perfect day".

PHOTO BY ZECORA



A bow to HRH The Princess Royal in the Fenix Carriage



Lauren Hugget from Ashdown Forest Group gives a high five



The Stella Hancock Team with the Jubilee Carriage



Show briefing

GRAB THE MONEY

Just a reminder for you to tell family, friends and anyone else who might be interested, that we have a Just Giving facility and you can donate straight from the website.

JustGiving™

Also, don't forget to ask your Group to register with www.easyfundraising.org.uk. Then encourage all your supporters to use the website when they shop online (via the website) from any of the 2,700 major retailers listed, a commission of what they spend will go to the charity they've nominated. It's so worthwhile.

easyfundraising

.org.uk

TINA THANKS THE VOLUNTEERS

A team of volunteers from across the region were able to raise some much needed funds for the charity as organisers of the South of England Horse Trials in September made RDA South East the chosen charity for the event – much to the delight of RDA Regional Vice Presidents, Tina Cook and Pippa Funnell who were both competing.

Some of our young local fundraisers, Gigi Bushell from Gennets Farm RDA Group, near Guildford and sisters, Eleanor and Francesca Mumford from Nutley, East Sussex were thrilled to meet their horsey heroine, Olympic Silver Medallist, Tina Cook, in person as she thanked them for their efforts during the day.

Though hard work, Janie Lawson, regional committee member and organiser of the fundraising efforts said “We were blessed with the weather and the real enthusiasm of the team. The funds we collected will go towards all the wonderful training, courses and events that the regional committee provide our groups”.

Tina Cook and Watergate with Gigi Bushell from Gennets Farm RDA and Eleanor and Francesca Mumford



HAPPY DAYS

The Happy Landings Carriage Driving Group gets its name from the home of Ann Sheldrake who started the Group in 1993 to meet the needs of adults who could not ride, but still wanted to be involved with horses.

Carriages that have been specially adapted to take wheelchairs are used and a small army of helpers are needed every time a disabled driver is taken out in order to maintain a safe environment. There is a driver (called an RDA whip), three helpers on bicycles and two more to load and unload the disabled driver. It is a very labour intensive operation. Every Wednesday morning four or five ponies are brought to the site and harnessed up to their specially adapted carriages to allow ambulant and non-ambulant clients to have a great time around the lanes and in a field

adjacent to the stable yard.

The purchase and maintenance of carriages, harness and other equipment is also expensive as is the day-to-day care of the horses and ponies. The Group owns two of its own ponies but is also fortunate to have two ponies lent to us by members of the Group.

The Group's season is from April to October and is dedicated to providing disabled people, who are unable to ride, opportunities to drive a pony and have fun but also to meet and make friends with other disabled people, and their helpers. They also get the chance to have contact and interact with ponies and even to compete in friendly competitions, both locally and even nationally.

The Group has recently acquired a wonderful new Fenix carriage that is extremely innovative with slide-away ramps for wheelchair use as well as many other benefits.



Above: Happy Landing Group



Above: Wednesday Morning

Below: Happy Landings get together



HAPPY LANDING

Di Westall (RDA Whip)

Many years ago a Group was begun
For disabled people, a morning of fun.
Ann Sheldrake it was, with Queenie her mare,
From her home, "Happy Landings," Ann had this idea.

Over the years we've moved home just once or twice
From Ifold to Dounhurst, (which was terribly nice).
But as time passed by and Dounhurst was sold
We found a new home out at Burningfold.

The Group is still thriving. The best thing of course, is
The drivers and helpers and the wonderful horses -
Of whom we have six of varying sizes
And this is the list and how it comprises:-

There's Arthur who's Carol's, and Margaret brings Jack -
Arriving with car loads of harness and tack.
Our Fjord horse, Karina with her owner, Mel
And Serenade with Sue... they come as well.

Our new girl is Misty; and Biff's our new boy,
They both go quite fast - for some drivers a joy
For the wind in their faces brings smiles and laughter.
At the end of the day, isn't that what we're after?

But allow just a moment to fondly recall
Our four-legged friends who gave their all
No longer here, but in pastures new ...
"Horsey Heaven" I like to think, - don't you?

Wednesday mornings are usually busy by ten,
Getting out carriages, bikes and then-
Sometimes there's time for a cuppa with Anne -
(Or a scone made by Eileen is a wonderful plan!)

When our drivers arrive we start putting-to;
"Who's driving who? Is it me or you?"
Some days are for training and some are the shows -
There's our Fun Day or course, where anything goes!

But mostly we just go out for a hack
Down the lane, round the corner, there and back.
The horses stand quiet, we change drivers and reins,
Then, ready, with escort, we go out again.

When the drivers have gone at the end of the day -
The horses are watered, the stuff put away ...
"See you next week" as we drive down the lane
For, next week..... WE DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN !!!

40 YEARS YOUNG

This year all the driving groups in the region celebrated 40 years of carriage driving within RDA and in recognition of this special occasion many of the groups held open fun days with driving followed by a picnic and, of course, an anniversary cake. It was a good occasion to invite past members, sponsors and supporters and commemorative rosettes were presented to ponies while drivers and volunteers were treated to a special anniversary badge.

Cobbes Meadow invited Woodcurch to join them and the day started with a fancy dress competition followed by cones and a

mini Le Trec. After this they had a fabulous celebratory lunch and a glass of champagne.

Happy Landings invited Cherry Park to a fun day in their field. The drivers were put into teams of four and competed over an obstacle course involving great dexterity and careful driving. Rosettes were awarded to all and this was followed by a picnic and strawberries and cream provided by Cherry Park.

Heron's Ghyll combined their day with their own 30th year anniversary celebration by holding a fun team competition and everyone was awarded a special rosette. Their buffet lunch was

served with a large birthday cake and plenty of Pimms.

Bradbourne celebrated their 40th anniversary alongside a combined service of blessing for all the riding, driving and RDA horses and ponies. After this, their drivers earned an endeav-

our award for completing a timed cones course.

Stella Hancock also had an open day while Kipling County really went to town and held two!

All in all, it has definitely been a year to remember.

Carol Porter



RDA THROUGH THE LENS

At the beginning of the year, Natalie Hurrell and Lisa Saint at Zecora Photography started a new relationship with RDA South East as our official photographer. Already highly skilled equine photographers, Zecora has offered their expertise on a voluntary basis and we've been lucky enough to have Nat and Lisa cover a number of our regional events and competitions throughout the year. They have been extremely generous in allowing us free access to their stunning photos for publicity purposes and for RDA members to download for their personal use.

Keep a look out for Nat and Lisa in 2016 or visit their website www.zecoraphotography.co.uk.



ACCESSABILITY MARK

Grove Farm Riding School in Rye, East Sussex and Laris Farm in Farnham, Surrey have become a pair of the latest riding facilities in the country to be credited with the Accessibility Mark. The centres are delighted to have won this innovative award, which recognises their efforts in increasing the number of riding opportunities available to people with disabilities. The Accessibility Mark was developed in 2013 by

the RDA in partnership with Hoof, the British Equestrian Federation's participation programme. Insight suggests 18 per cent of the population in England have a disability and that there is currently a far greater demand for horse riding than RDA Groups are able to accommodate at present. Accessibility Mark aims to bridge this gap.



accessibility mark
RDA in partnership with hoof

DID YOU KNOW?
the Regional Committee ... gives advice

DID YOU KNOW?
the Regional Committee ... manages the website

DID YOU KNOW?
the Regional Committee ... organises two carriage driving competitions

CARRIAGES AND SUNSHINE

The Region's annual carriage driving at Felbridge in July saw a record number of competitors drawing more than 50 competitors from 7 groups.

Woodchurch RDA Group from Ashford, Kent was competing for the very first time with 6 drivers. They were joined by Heron's Ghyll and Kipling County from East Sussex, Cobbes Meadow from Kent, Happy Landings and Cherry Park from West Sussex and Stella Hancock's team from Surrey.

The day started with Ros Smedley from Cobbes Meadow winning the Condition and Turnout with Jacko for the second year running.

The Showing Classes were judged by Louise Woodward and prizes were presented by Ian Armfield, Master Wheelwright of the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights who were the day's sponsors. Gemma Collingwood with Misty from Hap-

py Landings won the Assisted Whip class and Ellen Chapman with Jim from Chichester's Cherry Park won the Novice Whip Class. The Open Driving was won by Emma Capon with Serenade from Happy Landings following on from her win in the Novice Whip last year.

The dressage classes were judged by Kay Hooper. Sally Jones with Misty from Happy Landings won the Novice and Beth Allsopp with Prince from Kipling County won the Open.

Jacko from Cobbes Meadow was judged as the day's most 'Workmanlike' Horse and won a special trophy that was donated by the Heron's Ghyll group in memory of Gillian Maitland. Unsurprisingly, Happy Landings won the shield for the group winning most points.

"My thanks have to go to the wonderful work of the teams behind the competitors, who are tireless in their time and support as well as our sponsors, The Worshipful Society of Wheelwrights" said our Chairman, Lindsay Correa.



Cayman Islands Pony Club



Stella Hancock's Margaret Morrison drives Moses to 2nd place in the Novice

AUTUMN TRAINING

In the Autumn, Regional Coaches offered two training days in close succession. Epsom RDA hosted the first for Proficiency Test Examiners for Grades 1- 4 which offered the standard 3 year update for existing registered Proficiency Test examiners but also gave an opportunity for potential new examiners. More than 30 attended including a few from London Region's Diamond Centre with excellent feedback and total success. The session was very hands on with a short introduction to examining followed by 2 ½ hours of observation of ponies and riders

for standard setting. In October the annual training day for Groups at Sands Farm where there were around 75 attendees at all levels, from helper to experienced coaches, all wishing to improve their knowledge. Three workshops offered subjects on Scales of Training, how to develop riders with different disabilities matching their mounts/activities to their needs, and ideas for exercises/games to stimulate and challenge. It proved a good day for learning, consolidating knowledge and networking while the sunshine made lunch an enjoyably social occasion.



Training Day in action



Gemma Collingwood of Happy Landings is winner of the Assisted Whip Class driving Misty



Andrew Norman from Cobbes Meadow driving Jacko



Dressage Sally Jones from Happy Landings driving Misty

Good Sense Holiday

This summer Bradbourne hosted its second Sense holiday as part of the charity's programme of breaks for people with visual and hearing impairment. We are fortunate to have both the facilities and an amazing group of volunteers, including a number of younger helpers.

The Sense team all arrived early Saturday to prepare for the holiday makers later that afternoon and greet the Tesco delivery with provisions for the week. Sunday was a free day for getting to know each other and have some non-horsey activities, before beginning Monday morning, for five days of riding, horse care and fun.

Our three riders all had Charge Syndrome which resulted in very impaired vision and hearing. Two of the volunteers were deaf as well and the Sense Group Leader was a master of sign language. We often found ourselves in a very quiet room with a lot of conversation going on but by the end of the week, we had learned a few signs

and were all using our hands and bodies to express ourselves.

We began each action-packed day with mucking out before everyone headed down to the field to collect the ponies. Grooming was next, with tacking up and riding both morning and afternoon. On one morning, we were even able to offer carriage driving which was an enormous hit with everyone.

A farm trip was thwarted by bad weather and resulted in playtime instead, but we made horseshoe biscuits and horse treats, with everyone helping measure, pour and mix.

Bradbourne has always offered residential holidays during June, July and August, as well as day camps for both adults and children who ride with the Group during the year. All of us have found the Sense holidays to be lots of fun, wonderfully rewarding, and we all make new friends and learn from the riders and the carers who help them. We really hope to see them back next summer!

Jenna Leight



THE RDA HOLIDAY at RUDGEWICK

When I knew I had to finish riding
I was very, very sad
But then along came the RDA holiday
What an opportunity to grab!

The first night was successful
I really slept quite well
Then came breakfast and horse riding
A morning I would not sell!

Carriage driving was fantastic
It really did feel great
It was a thrilling experience
And I had a new horsey mate

Swimming was just brilliant
I enjoyed all of it, true
But I did get in with my socks on
What a silly thing to do!

The holiday continued rapidly
Until it was time to go
I was very sad at this
Cause I had just got with the flow

And finally, in conclusion
I do have something to Say
"Thank you to all those who've helped me
At Holiday RDA!"

By Harry Naylor

DID YOU KNOW?
the Regional Committee ...
... manages the accreditation and assessment of coaches

CHALLENGE DAY WITH SHOW JUMPING



PHOTO BY ZECORA

Charlie Wicks from East Park shows off his jumping position

Nearly 50 of our young riders from across the Region came to display their riding skills in a range of activities at the annual Challenge Day in May. These included the Countryside Challenge Qualifier for the summer's National Championships, and show jumping classes for the first time, which proved to be a popular and successful introduction to the discipline.

Most of the riders had come to go head-to-head in the Countryside Challenge, but there was also Handy Pony, a number of gymkhana games and the fabulous fancy dress competition which rounded off the day with a 'Heroes and Villains' theme. This was judged by David Cowan, Chairman of the RDA's local sponsor, Cowan Architects, who selected Samber RDA, from near Woking, Surrey as the ultimate winners with their selection of Peter Pan favourites.

The Countryside Challenge follows a simulated course where

the riders put their skills to the test by tackling obstacles and tasks they might find in the country. These include going through a gate, crossing a 'road', entering a farmyard, picking an apple from a tree and collecting eggs from a chicken! Although great fun, this also tests their steering, balance and confidence.

Qualifying this year in the Juniors were Nancy Davies, Daisy Murray and Brandon Witham, all of Hope in the Valley RDA (Plumpton, East Sussex), and Emily Hansome from East Park RDA (Newchapel, Surrey). Adam Lester of East Park RDA (Newchapel, Surrey), qualified in the Senior class.

Forelock Books, which specialises in pony story collectables for young pony mad readers, donated prizes this year for the junior classes.

David Cowan also awarded the prizes and said "It's always such a treat and an honour to participate in these inspiring events and meet such enthusiastic young people. The weather held for us and there were smiles all round".



PHOTO BY ZECORA

Regional Sponsor David Cowan with Fancy Dress winners from Samber RDA



PHOTO BY ZECORA

A Bradbourne competitor in the Countryside Challenge



PHOTO BY ZECORA

Show Jumping winner, Leroy Vincent from East Park receives prize from sponsor David Cowan



PHOTO BY ZECORA

Chloe, age 4, from Hope In The Valley in the Fancy Dress

Emily Hansome from East Park at the game



PHOTO BY ZECORA

COMINGS & GOINGS

NEW EAST SUSSEX COUNTY CHAIR

East Sussex has finally found someone to step ably into the very large County Chair shoes left by Sheila Camilleri. Ali Remmen of Ashdown Forest Group has been selected into the role and with a fabulous RDA pedigree background, she's going to be able to hit the role running.

Ali started working with the RDA when she was just 17 years old when she was hooked by watching Jilly Bishop with the children at Crabbet Park. She started Ashdown Forest RDA Group 8 years ago and now has an active and growing group that meets four times a week and offers show jumping.



Ali Remmen teaches Shannon Lee with Maggie

She has always been 100% horses having spent 25 years on the national and international show jumping circuit, before running a livery and student training business. Never one to stand still, she's also worked for Channel 4 producing a children's equine TV show called "If Wishes Were Horses". She's also very well known locally for running a show ground and horse shows. But when her daughter had to have a liver transplant she decided to focus locally and follow the RDA.

"All the helpers and supporters work so hard behind the scenes. I know that, without them, there would be no RDA" says Ali. "It's such a fabulous organisation helping so many people; not just with riding but with everything else that goes with it. The RDA changes lives".

NATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Congratulations to:

Gill Anslow of Farnham Group who is appointed Chair of the RDA UK Education Committee.

Peter Alexander, of Sandhurst Group and our Regional Treasurer, who is appointed to the RDA UK Finance Committee.

HELLO

We say 'Hello' to **Miranda Purves** to the Regional Committee who succeeds Carol Porter as our **Regional Carriage Driving Representative**. Miranda is a volunteer with Cobbes Meadow Group in Canterbury and will bring a wealth of experience to the role. She's currently Chairman and Secretary of The Shepway Harness Club, a British Carriage Driving Club assessor and an RDA carriage driving assessor.

Hope in the Valley RDA also welcomes an additional Group Coach, Jen Wathan, who is currently completing a PhD at Sussex University on Horse Communication and Cognition.

WELCOME

We also welcome a new RDA Group in **West Wolves** at Ashington in West Sussex which has been started for adults by Vernon Roper and Louise Larkman. It is already catering for riders from 21 to 80 years of age.

GOODBYE

Hope in the Valley RDA Group has said "Goodbye" to Secretary Karen Butterfield, and "Hello" to Liz Mills who has been a volunteer with the Group since January 2001, having been with the Epsom Group for a year and half before that.

Mid Sussex RDA has had to say "Farewell" to a former Chairman and Treasurer, Desmond Pelly, who sadly died on February 9th 2015. "We were honoured to have him as part of our Group; nothing was too much trouble for him and we loved him" said volunteer, Sally Yonge. "He mounted and led the riders and had a particular talent for finding sponsors and supporters which kept our Group in the money!" she continued. Desmond was a very talented man having flown Lancasters during the war, and he will be sadly missed.

Court Meadow RDA have had to say "Goodbye" to their oldest pony, Banner, who has sadly died having been a stalwart contributor and given 25 years of faithful service and joy to his riders. His list of achievements is long and includes competitions at Regional, National and Special Olympic levels as well as enduring patience during the weekly riding sessions.



Banner being groomed

DATES FOR 2016

26 April	Carriage Driving Training Day with Sara Howe	Bradbourne
12 May	Regional Challenge Day	Felbridge Showground
24 May	Regional Dressage	Hickstead
26 July	Southern Region Carriage Driving Show	Felbridge Showground
27 Sept	Indoor Driving Trial and Qualifier	Sands Farm, Warnham
19 October	Regional Conference	The Haven Centre, Crawley Down
TBC	Riding Training Day	Sands Farm, Warnham

SOUTH EAST REGION WHO'S WHO

Regional Chairman	Lindsay Correa	<i>lindsaycorrea@hotmail.com</i>
Regional Treasurer	Peter Alexander	<i>peterg.alexander@ntlworld.com</i>
Regional Publicity Officer	Joanna Sale	<i>joannasale@btinternet.com</i>
Regional Instructor	Gilly Roper	<i>gilly_ropers@outlook.com</i>
Regional Driving Rep	Miranda Purves	<i>mcvp@ashenfield.co.uk</i>
Regional Physiotherapist	Anthea Pell	<i>antheapell@hotmail.com</i>

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON RDA SOUTH EAST REGION



look at our new website
www.rda-southeastregion.org.uk



SPECIAL THANKS

To our printer,
Mike Payne of
Design to Print
*for giving us a special
discount to print this year's
Regional Review*
t. 01342 822824
www.designtoprintuk.com
Riverside Business Park, Forest
Row, East Sussex
RH18 5FS

**This edition of
2015 South East Region's
Annual Review is the result
of the combined talents of:**

Joanna Sale

Editor and Photographer.
*Please send ideas for future
articles to Joanna for the
2016 Review.*

Bob Sampson

Designer,
*who has so generously donated his
time and creative skill to do
a fantastic job on the stylish look
of this year's magazine.*
enquiries@direktor.co.uk

Zecora Photography
*who attended many of the events
and took wonderful photographs
for us to use and share*
www.zecoraphotography.co.uk

YOU CAN HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE

If you have enjoyed this review of the work done by the RDA Groups in the South East Region throughout 2014 and you would like to help, either financially or by donating your time, then please go to our new website (www.rda-southeastregion.org.uk) or contact us to see how you can help.