

RDA



Riding for the Disabled Association
Incorporating Carriage Driving

SOUTH EAST REGION

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



2022 was my third year as Regional Chair. Where did that go? The first two years were blighted by the pandemic and I found much of my time was spent firefighting problems instead of moving forward. There have been some tough times but our little SE corner on the RDA map has kept going and shown remarkable tenacity and resilience. It was, therefore, a huge relief to see everyone back in action last

year in some form or other, especially our ten carriage driving groups who had waited so patiently to restart.

Seeing participants competing again last Spring at regional events with their beautiful ponies and having such fun was pure joy. This is what RDA is all about. Thank you to Grace Lloyd Jones who organised both the regional riding events for us and to so many of our volunteers who regularly give up their time to make the magic happen. An enormous amount of work goes on behind the scenes in preparation for the big day and it simply wouldn't happen without your commitment and passion for what you do. Challenge Day in particular was a wonderful day out with the use of the fabulous

new arena at Felbridge and at last we were able to take the dust sheets off our newly constructed Countryside Challenge course, complete with scarecrow, sheep and John Deere tractor! I am delighted to confirm that the venue is booked again for this year so I hope as many of you as possible will come along for a great day out with your ponies and picnics. If your group isn't competing why not join us and be part of our team of helpers? Dates for 2023 events are on the back page of this Review.

I am pleased to say that carriage driving too made a cautious return to qualifiers, Le Trek and the annual show. The SE Region is very proud to lead the way with the largest number of driving groups in the UK. We hope this year that even more groups will be in a position to venture out to

events in all their finery to show off their amazing skills.

Another highlight for me last year was our Annual Conference in October which had been on hold since 2019. This is a time when we look back and celebrate your achievements over the year and it was also a huge privilege for me to present the long service awards to some pretty extraordinary volunteers.

Finally, I would like to thank my committee for the support they have given me personally at a difficult time and especially to Paula for juggling her RDA roles and putting this Review together for us. We are still desperately looking to fill the position of Publicity Officer so please speak up if you think this could be you.

My best wishes and thanks to you all.

Pauline X

Cover picture: Zoe Beer from East Park riding Guy in the Countryside Challenge Qualifier at Felbridge in May

Alkham Valley Open Day

Alkham Valley Community Project (AVCP) had a fantastic response to their open day, held in February 2022. Designed to be inclusive for adults and children with all disabilities, but with a particular focus on encouraging those with cerebral palsy, it was promoted through local schools and on Facebook. A successful application for funding was made to the 'Together Fund' (formerly known as the Tackling Inequalities Fund) and Cerebral Palsy Sport (CP Sport) were happy for their logo to be included in the publicity.

To ensure that everyone could be accommodated, hourly pre-booked sessions were run throughout the day. With several new attendees wanting more, AVCP has created new capacity with afternoon and after-school sessions on Fridays. The timing of

these new sessions has also enabled the recruitment of new volunteers who were not available during the working day. AVCP are very grateful for an RDA Group Grant which will support the costs of the additional sessions and volunteer training.

Abi (pictured), together with her sister Amelia, attended the open day with their mother, Natasha, who said, "I brought Abi and Amelia along to the open day because they have always wanted to sit on a horse but have been too frightened. I thought this opportunity would be perfect and therapeutic for them both. Abi has cerebral palsy, epilepsy & learning disabilities; she gets scared doing anything on her own and always wants her sister Amelia to come with her to support her. Amelia, who has a speech and language delay, is an animal

lover and a very caring and kind sister to Abi - she deserved a special treat. It was a wonderful supportive event, and the girls are now riding weekly. Thank you!"



NATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Sadly, due to a Met Office amber weather warning for extreme heat across Gloucestershire, the decision was made to suspend competition on the Sunday of the RDA National Championships at Hartpury College in July. This was disappointing for those groups and competitors due to compete that day although some groups had already taken the decision not to travel to the Championships at all. The event went ahead on Friday and Saturday with some changes to ensure that horses and people could take part safely. South East riders and drivers brought back numerous prizes and rosettes. Carriage Drivers from Stella Hancock set the bar high on the first day. Sisters Stacey and Gemma Tiley, both driving Eddie, dominated the Novice class with a win for Stacey and 3rd place for Gemma.

Sandra Spinner, a winner at Intermediate level in 2019, took the top spot in the Open class driving the diminutive Mario – just 11.2 hands high.

“In the conobstacles the course was huge so I had to push Mario on to gain a good time against the bigger striding ponies,” explained Sandra.

On Saturday the team of four young riders from East Park were all placed in the top five in their Countryside Challenge classes (Zoe Beer 3rd, Erin Hunt 4th, Tyler McTear and Oscar Jones 5th) while Epsom RDA's Jon Sullivan was placed 12th in his highly competitive Dressage class. The region also scored very well in the Arts & Crafts competition. Epsom's Hannah Smith won the Junior Individual Collage class and took 2nd place in the Photography class. White Rocks Farm were particularly successful with Tabitha Payne & friends winning the Senior Group Paintings & Drawings class, Paige Mosley & friends taking 2nd in the Senior Group Collage class, Skye Scott-Belsham claiming 5th in the Senior Sculpture class and a 6th place for Leon Granger in the Senior Photography class.

Pauline Roestenburg, RDA South East Region Chair, congratulated everyone that took part. “As the biggest event of its kind in the world for disabled horse riders and carriage drivers the Championships are a wonderful demonstration of the close teamwork and trust between participants, RDA volunteers and, of course, our extraordinary ponies.”



East Park's Oscar Jones receiving his rosette



Stella Hancock's Tiley sisters Stacey (left) and Gemma (right) with Eddie



Jon Sullivan from Epsom riding Romeo



Left to right Tyler McTear, Erin Hunt and Zoe Beer from East Park



Stella Hancock's Sandra Spinner driving Mario
Photo Credit Michael Martin Photography

Cranleigh Open Day

After a great deal of planning Cranleigh opened its doors to the public on Saturday 22 October. The aim of the day was to showcase the work that the group does and give people a chance to look around the facilities and meet the group's horses and ponies.

There were a range of demonstrations starting with a drill ride by adult riders with multiple sclerosis. A group of young people with varying disabilities demonstrated how a day-to-day session looks and Sally Jones from Happy Landings group gave a carriage driving display.

Last, but certainly not least, Cranleigh trustee Dick Lane gave a thrilling display driving his team of four horses around a course of cones at speed.

“We certainly achieved what we aimed to do which was to raise our profile locally, demonstrate our work and to recruit some more volunteers,” said Sarah Matthews, Cranleigh Co-Chair.



Sally Jones from Happy Landings gave a carriage driving demonstration



Trustee Dick Lane thrilled spectators with his carriage driving display

Volunteers, Participants and Ponies Honoured at Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony

For the first time since 2019, RDA South East Region held its annual conference and awards ceremony at The Haven Centre, Crawley Down in October.

Representatives from 24 groups spanning four counties were treated to three presentations: Katie Radzik and her mum Stephanie on their journey from Cobbes Meadow RDA to Para Dressage, Regional Vet, Katie Snalune, of Newnham Court Equine who presented some 'super fun and exciting' case studies and Sheri Johnson from Horsley, Bookham & Leatherhead RDA on how they raised £1 million to build their new facility at Badgers Farm, Effingham.

There was also the annual presentation of awards by Regional Chair, Pauline Roestenburg.

AWARDS:

Participant of the Year -



Zia Hussein from Mid Sussex RDA who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis while in her final year of university. Zia has made incredible progress and her dedication, enthusiasm and delight in riding impressed the panel. In her words: "It was a fantastic feeling, going from 3ft off the ground to 7ft. My posture is now positive and erect (impressing my physiotherapist) and I have

good balance. My overall confidence is boosted and I come away with a feeling of accomplishment and achievement. When I am riding I am free!"

Young Volunteer of the Year -



Sophia Mehew from Woodchurch Driving Group RDA, who originally joined the group as a Duke of Edinburgh student and has been volunteering with the group at weekends and during school holidays ever since. Sophia will be off to university soon and will be sorely missed!

Volunteer of the Year -



Ruby Grimshaw from Mid Sussex RDA in recognition of her tireless dedication to the group where she began volunteering in 2011. Already an experienced BHSAI she soon became an RDA Coach and has also been Chair for the last six years.

Above & Beyond Award -



Mairi Ames of Kingley Vale RDA who joined the group in 2010 and took over as Group Organiser in 2012 when the group was on the verge of folding. Her enthusiasm and energy brought the group back to life and Mairi devotes endless time and effort to ensure the group continues to deliver riding lessons to some 60 children a year.

Tora Bray Perpetual Trophy -



Susi Anderson from Woodchurch Driving Group RDA who has been an RDA volunteer for almost 25 years and Group Organiser for 12 years. Susi leads the group with positivity and enthusiasm. She was determined to get the group COVID ready after a 20 month break and also assisted Kipling County on the Road to Restart. Not content with her heavy workload in running the group she has now trained to be a Regional Carriage Driving Assessor.

Horse/Pony of the Year -



27 year old Finn from Bradbourne Group who has given 15 years' service to the group and helped scores of participants, young and old, learn to ride. He recently required long term treatment for canker but thankfully pulled through and returned to RDA duties. Whilst his days of canter work and show jumping may be over, his floating trot still puts some of his younger 'colleagues' in the shade!

Buchan Bobby Award -

Horsley, Bookham & Leatherhead RDA in recognition of their incredible achievement in raising £1million and building a brand new, fully accessible, all weather riding centre.



Katie and Stephanie Radzik

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

25 YEARS

Anne Robinson

Court Meadow

Suzi Dyer

Court Meadow

Fiona Drewe

Kipling County

30 YEARS

Hilary Gilson

Cherry Park

Anna Kerr

Court Meadow

35 YEARS

Tony Croughan

Cherry Park

Carol Rycroft

Court Meadow

Sue Coote

Court Meadow

40 YEARS

Sybella McCann

Cherry Park

Rosemarie Hatchard

Court Meadow

45 YEARS

Jean Musson

Court Meadow

Jenny Villa

Mid Sussex

Stella Fuller

Horsehills

50 YEARS

Ann Billinghamurst

Horsehills



Carriage Driving Awards

Stella Hancock group were awarded 2nd place in the Carriage Driving Awards Driving for the Disabled Group of the Year 2021.

Organised by Regional Carriage Driving Representative, Miranda Purves, Cobbes Meadow and Alkham Valley Community Project gave a demonstration of their skills at the Kent County Show on a very hot day in July.

Pat Hammond drove fell pony Django for Cobbes Meadow and Harley Walker drove Tommy for Alkham Valley. Both displays were excellent and enjoyed by all.

Driving Demonstration at Kent County Show



Harley Walker driving Tommy for Alkham Valley



Pat Hammond driving Django for Cobbes Meadow



Lexi and Adam tie the knot

After 12 years together Cornilo's Lexi Griffiths Rayson married Adam Line in Canterbury in August.

There was a special guest at the wedding, Riverview Patch (aka Bomber), Lexi's RDA mount. Bomber is owned by Mrs Maria Loder and is kept on working livery at Cornilo Riding. Maria kindly allows Cornilo group to use him for RDA sessions and Lexi to compete on him.

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Line!

Louise Bingham named RDA Volunteer of the Year

In May, Louise Bingham (*right*) of Horsley, Bookham & Leatherhead Group was announced as RDA Volunteer of the Year in recognition of her work raising in excess of £1 million to fund construction of the group's brand new, all weather riding arena. Congratulations Louise!



Sandhurst Return to Riding

February 2022 saw the return of Sandhurst Riding for the Disabled Association to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Sandhurst RDA group had a longer break than most, due to the additional COVID precautions within the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the closure of the on-site saddle club. But 2022 started positively with the formation of Sandhurst Equestrian Centre (part of the Armed Forces Equine Charity) which meant a return was possible for RDA.

Sandhurst RDA works with local schools and offers riding activities to children with a range of physical and educational needs. The group meets at Sandhurst Equestrian Centre within the Royal Military Academy on a Thursday morning and has free use of the centre's ponies and facilities. The amazing team of volunteers remained in touch over the long break, with Zoom chats and coffee mornings. This meant there were still a great



Sandhurst riders saluting 'the Queen' in their Jubilee celebration

number of helpers ready to go when they were given the green light.

Group Chair Liz Wakefield commented, "I am so grateful to the team of volunteers who have made this return possible. There was a great deal of work to meet the 'Road to Restart' requirements but it was well worth the effort. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our generous donors and fundraisers who have enabled us to purchase new equipment and hopefully, a new pony in the future. Finally, we are very thankful for the ongoing support of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the Sandhurst Equestrian Centre for hosting us each week and providing their

wonderful ponies."

Sandhurst Equestrian Centre Manager and RDA Trustee Amanda Smith was very happy to see lessons start again for both the centre's clients and the RDA, "It is really fantastic to see the RDA back at Sandhurst. I am so relieved that we can return to some level of normality for the schools and the children. The ponies also seem happy to be back into their routine. It is so very rewarding to see the benefits of human and equine interaction, so I am very pleased that Sandhurst Equestrian Centre can be a small part of this."

Amanda Smith, Sandhurst Equestrian Centre Manager and Sandhurst RDA Trustee

MBE for Arundel's Irene Holmes

Irene Holmes, a volunteer and group organiser for Arundel RDA, was awarded an MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list 2022 for 'Services to People with Disabilities in Arundel, West Sussex'. Speaking last summer she said, "I found out back in April when I received the letter from the Cabinet Office. I was sworn to secrecy until the Jubilee, but I was bursting to tell people and I'm glad the cat is now finally out of the bag." Irene, 67, has been an RDA volunteer for nearly 40 years, with 33 of those years at Arundel. She became Group Secretary and a Trustee at Arundel group at a time when its future looked uncertain. Under her leadership the group has flourished and steadily increased rider and volunteer numbers.

However, the award of her MBE was not the last surprise for Irene. Just as the country was coming to terms with the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Irene was privileged and honoured to receive an invitation to attend the late monarch's funeral in Westminster Abbey. It had been Her



Majesty's wish that volunteers recognised in the Platinum Jubilee Birthday Honours List should be invited to her funeral. An initial telephone call from the Cabinet Office was followed, after a tense few days waiting for the postman, by the formal invitation. With little time to waste, Irene started to make meticulous plans, booking accommodation for the night before the funeral in a Travelodge and buying an appropriate black dress online from Marks and Spencer. Irene has an eye for a bargain and managed to source a matching jacket and hat from local charity shops, both of which cost less than £10!

On the morning of the funeral Irene took

her seat in the Abbey just after 8 a.m. and had plenty of time to talk to her fellow invitees and soak up the atmosphere as the many dignitaries and Heads of State arrived. Irene takes up the story, "From fairly early on, the bell was ringing every minute for 96 minutes to denote each year of the Queen's life. In due course, the haunting sound of bagpipes and drums heralded the arrival of Her Majesty's coffin and the Royal Party. Suddenly, it was all very real. At the end of a very moving service we all solemnly watched as everyone left (in reverse order to that which they entered) and then we were free to leave."

Typically modest, when Irene was awarded her MBE she said, "I can't believe I am receiving this honour, I don't feel anything I do is out of the ordinary, but what a huge honour both for me and our group." Irene's well-deserved award, and her inclusion in our late Queen's State Funeral, are not only a tribute to her, but also the many other volunteers, without whom RDA simply would not function.

The Big Build – We Did It!

Horsley, Bookham & Leatherhead RDA are delighted to announce the opening of our new fully accessible, all weather riding centre at Badgers Farm, Effingham. Over the past two years we have been fundraising so we could 'Raise the Roof' and create our new home.

On the 9th August 2021 we broke ground and the first digger was on site. Over the next eight months we watched as the amazing builders from FORMA slowly excavated the ground, dug huge foundations, poured plenty of concrete, then bought in a crane and slowly the new centre started to take shape. The roof went up and then the walls, the floors were prepped, and our fabulous new Andrews Bowen surface arrived (top spec RDA grade – only the best for our ponies, volunteers, and riders). Work progressed inside with the new classroom, kitchen and toilets taking shape. Our new tack room was ready for use and outside the covered tie up area for our ponies was finished off.

In April 2021 we were ready to start using the arena for RDA sessions, and gradually we built up the small army of volunteers we need and added more ponies to our RDA herd, so we could take more riders from more local schools. We were very proud to run a full term of RDA sessions before our summer break.

Since July we have been finishing the painting, rolled out the carpet, fitted out the kitchen and bathrooms, including the tiling! Meanwhile fundraising was still ongoing to ensure that alongside the operational classroom we had a raised

seating area for parents and children to watch our sessions.

On the 24th September 2022, we hosted our official Grand Opening, and were delighted to have the ribbon cut on our new arena by Sophie Christiansen CBE. Our open day was attended by over 60 supporters, riders, fundraisers, volunteers, and, of course, our ponies.

We have managed this huge achievement to 'Raise the Roof' in such a short time thanks to the hard work of those involved in fundraising, the advice from RDA South East Region, the help we have had from local and national organisations through grants and gifts, and the unwavering support from our local neighbours and friends who have supported this local project. We know that we do a fantastic job to transform the lives of local disabled children and young adults but having this affirmed through the money we have raised and the centre we have built is fantastic.

Our chairperson, Sheri Johnson, said "This entire project all began thanks to a generous offer from the Williams family of a favourable lease of land and livery terms here at Badgers Farm. Without that, none of this would have been possible. Since then, so many individuals, Foundations & Trusts, local companies, village councils and charities and even the National Lottery have contributed to making our dream a reality. The generosity and support have been both humbling and amazing."

*Joanna Marsh, Horsley, Bookham & Leatherhead
RDA Trustee*



Chair Sheri Johnson with Sophie Christiansen CBE and rider, Lance



Sophie Christiansen CBE cuts the ribbon



New arena internal view



External view of arena

Carriage Drivers Battle It Out at Bradbourne

It was a head-to-head between 2 South East Region Groups at Bradbourne on Tuesday 24 May at the annual qualifying competition for the RDA National Championships held in July. Drivers from Surrey's Stella Hancock group and Kent's Bradbourne group took part in the three combined disciplines of dressage, cones and obstacles with only the top placed competitors qualifying.

The Novice Whip competition was dominated by sisters Stacey and Gemma Tiley from the Stella Hancock Group. They came first and second (respectively), both qualifying for the National Championships.

In the Open Whip competition the qualifiers were Stella Hancock's Sandra Spinner (formerly of Cherry Park) who took the top spot and Jack Marr from Bradbourne who came 2nd.

In the non-qualifying Assisted Whip class Jean Leverett piped teammate Kelly Stevens, both from Bradbourne, to first place.



Bradbourne's Kelly Stevens is very pleased with her rosette



Carol Page from Stella Hancock driving Tooky



Stella Hancock's Paula Stapeley driving Mario in her first outing since being accredited for single seat - coach Cyndie Gould on backstep



Jack Marr of Bradbourne drives Disney in the obstacles

Fancy Dress Fun at Royal Windsor Horse Show

South East driving group Stella Hancock and riding group Chalkdown were in action in the RDA Fancy Dress class at Royal Windsor Horse Show in May.

The theme was television programmes and both groups chose 'Call the Midwife'.

Stella Hancock took 2nd place in the driven class with Lisa Disborough driving Eddie and Eliana Farragher rode Merlin into 5th place in the ridden class for Chalkdown.

Lisa Disborough driving Eddie takes 2nd place in the driven class for Stella Hancock



Eliana Farragher rides Merlin for Chalkdown group



NEW VENUE FOR REGIONAL DRESSAGE QUALIFIER

Plumpton College, home to Hope in the Valley RDA, hosted this year's dressage qualifier in May.

After an inspiring day of competition Katie Radzik, a Grade 4 para dressage rider formerly of Cobbes Meadow group, gave a demonstration while the results were being collated.

Epsom had the highest number of qualifiers on the day. Jon Sullivan, Amelie Russell, Erin Farr, Adam Dixon and Rhiannon Bone all won their classes to qualify for the Championships, while

Laval Julian and Gray King also qualified with 2nd place in their classes. Libby Jones won her class but narrowly missed out on qualification with a score of 59.25%.

Bradbourne's Caroline King and Katherine Swan both qualified for Hartpury as did Khianna Lucas-Young who won her class and achieved the Highest Junior Qualifying Score. There was success too for Anna Glass riding Disney who won her non-qualifying class.

Cornilo's Lexi Griffiths Rayson put in a



Epsom's Erin Farr rides a winning test on Taffy



Helena Burgess won her non-qualifying class riding Chalkdown's Buttercup



Best Newcomer and with the Highest Senior Qualifying Score Cornilo's Lexi Griffiths Rayson riding Riverview Patch



William Harris qualifies for the Championships riding Sherbert Dip for Hope in the Valley

superb performance to not only win her class, qualifying for the Championships, but also take the trophy for Best Newcomer and Highest Senior Qualifying Score. Sharon Kelsall qualified for the Championships riding Cloonlyon Flyer and also took the trophy for the Highest Non-Qualifying Score riding the same horse in another class.

Hope in the Valley enjoyed Senior success with William Harris taking the top spot and qualifying for Hartpury on Sherbert Dip. The group's Juniors were not to be outdone and Daisy Murray won her class on Rose with the Highest Non-Qualifying Led Score.

It was a successful day for Chalkdown. Helena Burgess and Ami Rumble both

won their non-qualifying classes riding Chalkdown Buttercup.

Kaela Cheffins was the sole representative of Alkham Valley riding Minnismoor Paxman in two non-qualifying classes where she performed well to win one class and take 2nd place in the other.

Bob and Pip Sampson judged the Arts & Crafts competition where White Rocks Farm were worthy winners in four classes all scoring 100% and qualifying for the Championships: Paige Mosley and friends in the Painting & Drawings, Group Collage and Sculpture classes and Leon Granger in the Senior Photography class. Epsom's Hannah Smith took the top spot and qualification in both the Individual Collage and Junior Photography classes.



Kaela Cheffins riding Paxman for Alkham Valley

Bradbourne's Khianna Lucas-Young achieved the Highest Qualifying Junior Score on Bisto



Regional Chair Pauline Roestenburg and Surrey Chair Paula Jones with the Arts & Crafts entries

Challenge Day Returns After 2 Year COVID Hiatus



Chalkdown's George Baldwin negotiates the gate on Merlin



Justine Whitwell from Eridge completes her Countryside Challenge round taking 3rd place in her class

Challenge Day saw riders representing groups from Kent, Surrey and Sussex converge on East Grinstead's Felbridge Show Ground in May. The event featured the Countryside Challenge competition which was a qualifying event for the RDA National Championships in Hartpury, Gloucestershire in July.

Most of the riders had come to go head-to-head in the Countryside Challenge but there were also dressage classes and the 'Television Programmes' themed fancy dress competition which rounded off the day. This was judged by Sheila King and Samber RDA triumphed with their sensational Blue Planet entry.

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 negotiating a gate, crossing a 'road', encountering cows, sheep and hens, picking an apple from a tree and posting a letter. Although great fun, steering, balance and confidence are all put to the test.

In the Countryside Challenge qualifiers two groups dominated - East Park and Quest. Quest's Alfie Barton and Gabriella Fox qualified in Junior sections whilst Zac Galt took 1st place in his class to qualify as a Senior. It was a clean sweep for East Park in the Visually Impaired class with Zoe Beer qualifying in 1st place and Erin Hunt in 2nd. East Park's Oscar Jones took the top spot in his class to secure qualification.

There was success for Eridge in the non-qualifying classes, including a win for Anna Jones. The group were at the competition for the first time and were awarded the Newcomer's Trophy for their successful day. Chalkdown celebrated double wins for Jack Baldwin in the Juniors and Steph Baldwin in the Seniors who both topped their dressage and Countryside Challenge classes. Fairlight Hall were well represented and stole the show in the Senior Independent class with an impressive win for Zoë House. In addition to their Fancy Dress success Samber's Juniors took the top 3 places in their class with Yusef Ramzan in 1st.

Dressage top spots were dominated by Chalkdown including a win for Ami Rumble. There was success too for Bradbourne with Khianna Lucas-Young winning both her class and the Helen Blakey Trophy for Best Turned Out. Quest's Gabriella Fox added to her Countryside Challenge success with a win in her dressage class.

Pauline Roestenburg, RDA South East Region Chair, congratulated everyone that took part. "It was such a joy to see riders, ponies and volunteers taking part again in their group colours after 3 long years. We can't wait to do it all over again!" she said.



Chalkdown rider Robert Hill riding to 2nd place in the dressage



East Park have a very successful day with 3 wins and a 2nd place



Fairlight Hall's Olivia Heyes



Samber take the Fancy Dress Cup with their Blue Planet entry



Samber's Keiran Gurney posts a letter on Misty



Willow Supple from Eridge picks an apple on Rhubarb



Quest's Zac Galt and Alfie Barton both win their classes and qualify for the National Championships



Fairlight Hall's Zoe House took the top spot in her class with an impressive 93.3%

Carriage Driving Summer Show

The annual summer carriage driving show was held at Hadlow College again this year.

The day, sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights, started with a win for Stella Hancock's Stacey Armstrong and pony Jolly in the Condition and Turnout. The pair were also placed 3rd in the Novice Whip with team mate Olivia Morris taking the win driving Mario pushing Emma Broadhurst and Rocky from Happy Landings into 2nd place.

Rocky grabbed another ribbon helping Norman Watson to a win in the Assisted Whip for Happy Landings.

In the dressage, Elizabeth Delahunty from Woodchurch won the Novice class driving Teddy and Sally Jones from Happy Landings won the Open class driving Misty.

It was a head-to-head between Woodchurch and Happy Landings in the Open Cones. It was another win for Woodchurch's Elizabeth Delahunty and Teddy who shared the top spot with team mate Martin Rhydderch also driving Teddy. Sally Jones added another ribbon to her collection in 3rd place driving Misty for Happy Landings.

Stella Hancock's Stacey Armstrong won the Judge's Award and Woodchurch once again took the shield for the group with the highest average points per driver.

South East Region Carriage Driving Representative Miranda Purves said, "It was lovely to be able to hold the Summer Carriage Driving Show again after a two year break due to COVID and lockdowns. We are grateful to the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights for their very generous sponsorship of the show, and to all the groups who entered and provided stewards to help on the day."

Stacey Armstrong and Jolly win the Condition and Turnout for Stella Hancock



Elizabeth Delahunty and Teddy win the Novice Dressage and are joint winners in the Open Cones for Woodchurch



Emma Broadhurst and Rocky take 2nd place in the Novice Whip and 8th in the Open Cones



Norman Watson of Happy Landings wins the Assisted Whip driving Rocky



Virtual National Championships

There were lots of ribbons for South East riders and drivers in this year's RDA Virtual National Championships.

The South East had two National Champions in the Visually Impaired dressage classes. Bradbourne's Khianna Lucas-Young took the top spot in the Totally Visually Impaired (TVI) Walk Only class and Lexi Line (formerly Griffiths Rayson) won the TVI Walk & Trot class for Cornilo.

There was success for Epsom who had two National Champions in the dressage both riding Romeo: Amelie Russell was Junior Champion in the Grade 6 Walk Only class and Adam Dixon took the top spot in the Grade 7 Senior class.

There were some fantastic results in the Novice Carriage Driving which was dominated by Woodchurch and Kipling County who claimed eight of the top ten places between them. It was a one, two for Woodchurch with Neil Simmons crowned Champion driving Teddy and Elizabeth Delahunty driving George just half a mark behind him in 2nd place. Amanda Wakefield was Kipling County's highest placed driver in 4th place with Archie.

Stella Hancock completed the haul with Paula Stapeley winning the Open Carriage Driving with Mario.



Adam Dixon and Romeo are Senior Grade 7 Champions for Epsom



Woodchurch carriage drivers with their Virtual Nationals rosettes



Woodchurch's Neil Simmons driving Teddy



Cornilo's Lexi Line with her Virtual Nationals rosettes



Martin Rhydderch and Teddy take 3rd in the Novice Dressage and are joint winners in the Open Cones for Woodchurch



Olivia Morris of Stella Hancock wins the Novice Whip driving Mario



Sally Jones is presented with the Open Dressage Salver by Elliott Porte, Master of the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights

Quest Golden Anniversary Ball

A year later than planned due to the pandemic, Quest RDA group celebrated its 50th anniversary in style with a Golden Anniversary Ball held on Saturday 7th May 2022. The Ball was held at the Berystede Hotel in Ascot and was attended by over 170 guests.

It was a wonderful evening where guests celebrated in style and were treated to an amazing array of guests and entertainment. The social media star 'Teddy the Shetland' greeted guests on arrival and was very happy to pose for photos in his very own DJ! Two Quest riders, Isla and Jack, were assisted by Sophie Christiansen leading grace before dinner after a fun game of 'Heads and Tails'. There was barely a dry eye in the room as Isla's mum, Nicky, gave a moving talk telling guests about the positive impact riding at Quest has on Isla and their family. Between the starter and main course James Phelan, The Greatest Magician, who is a nephew of Paul Daniels wowed guests with his clever and entertaining magic show. Throughout the evening guests had the opportunity to bid on some incredible silent auction lots or purchase a golden envelope many of which contained some superb prizes all kindly donated.

Perhaps the highlight of the evening was the interesting and very entertaining after dinner speech given by Alastair Stewart OBE. Dinner concluded with a live auction of nine lots hosted by Jonty Hearndon from Cash in the Attic and Antiques Road Show. Jonty was also the MC for the evening. The celebration finished with guests dancing into the early hours of the morning!

Quest RDA Chair, Julie Jones said, "The Ball was a truly wonderful way to celebrate 50 golden years of Quest. I am very proud to be a very small part of Quest which has grown and developed

over its fifty years. I am extremely grateful to everyone who attended the Ball and the many donors and supporters without whom the Ball would not have been the great success it was. Huge thanks must also go to the volunteers on our Ball team who worked tirelessly to plan and produce such a spectacular evening."



Sophie Christiansen CBE and Teddy the Shetland, Photo Credit Steve Walker



Alastair Stewart OBE, Photo Credit Steve Walker



James Phelan The Greatest Magician, Photo Credit Steve Walker



Jonty Hearndon was MC and auctioneer for the evening, Photo Credit Steve Walker



Quest participants Jack and Isla led grace before dinner, Photo Credit Steve Walker

Epsom and Quest Start Tea with a Pony Sessions

Launched nationwide in 2021, 'Tea with a Pony' is an RDA activity focusing on sensory experiences with RDA horses and ponies. It was launched in response to the growing number of people living with dementia, for whom horse-riding may not be suitable but who might be helped by some other form of animal-assisted activity involving horses.

During 2022 two more groups in the South East Region started to hold 'Tea with a Pony' sessions inviting guests to enjoy a cup of tea, some cake and a sensory experience with a pony.

Epsom

Epsom set up tables and chairs in their stable yard with a parasol for shade. Tea and cake was served to residents of Anchor's Linwood care home who watched a pony parade. The ponies were led up to the tables by volunteers who introduced each pony giving their name, age, years in service and a brief character description. One pony, Briony, stayed for cuddles and patting for everyone who wished to, and everyone did!

Mo Blackett, Epsom RDA Thursday Session Leader said, "Our first trial morning for 'Tea with a Pony' was a wonderful, joyful experience for all concerned. I think the Thursday team of volunteers got as much enjoyment from the visit as our visitors did. Seeing the ponies being so gentle with our visitors and rekindling memories was moving and humbling. We found out that one lady does not usually engage with activities and had been reluctant to come along but even she wants to return again soon."

Quest

Over the summer Quest were delighted to introduce some 'Tea with a Pony' sessions for people living with dementia or similar conditions and their carers.

For our first session we asked our volunteers if they had any relatives who would like to take part and then asked some of our volunteers to do a ridden demonstration for our guests. As this trial session went so well, we held several more 'Tea with a Pony' sessions where guests enjoyed watching some of our Quest riders show off the skills they learn during their riding lessons.

The afternoons were very successful. The 'Tea with a Pony' participants and their carers thoroughly enjoyed spending time at the stables and meeting our ponies. Our riders also got a huge amount from the sessions – they were proud to show off their skills and delighted to interact with our guests.

Thank you to Morrisons supermarket in Weybridge who kindly donated the refreshments.



Quest volunteer Zac introduces DB to a Tea with a Pony guest



Residents of Linwood care home meet Epsom's pony Briony



One of Quest's Tea with a Pony guests meets Magic



Residents of Linwood care home watched a pony parade at Epsom



Tea with a Pony guests at Quest

COMINGS & GOINGS

OBITUARIES

Peter Felgate

For hundreds of riders and volunteers, the RDA was Peter Felgate. He taught children with disabilities even before he bought Bradbourne in 1965 and developed it into one of the 8 founder RDA groups. Peter's tireless work in



the early days helped to make RDA the national success which it is today. He will be remembered perhaps most for his hat, his kindness and his commanding voice.

He was only interested in solutions, not problems: if someone was unable to ride then driving was an option - and if you didn't have a wheelchair-friendly carriage then persuade a carriage builder to make one. Why not organise holidays for disabled riders at Bradbourne, or perhaps take them abroad to somewhere they might otherwise never visit?

A member of the first RDA Council, the first Honorary National Consultant Instructor, as well as being the SE Regional Instructor for many years, Peter was rewarded by being appointed a Life Vice President of the RDA. However, he would far rather focus on what he enabled riders to achieve than his own

accomplishments. His joy was in the child who had never spoken before saying the word 'horse'; in a rider completing their first ride off lead rein; or a nervous child finally climbing the steps of the mounting block onto the patiently waiting pony. The relatively small competitions that he arranged at Hever, and then Arundel, eventually grew into the biggest disability dressage competition in the world, now held annually at Hartpury College.

Peter's contribution to RDA over so many years is immeasurable, but perhaps the last word should go to his horses and ponies. Just as he understood them, so they understood him in return, and I have no doubt that they, like us, would simply say, "Thank you Peter. Where else could we have learned so much and had so much fun?"

Ingrid Ward

Ingrid Ward died in July having been diagnosed with late-stage stomach cancer in 2021.

Horses and riding were a big part of Ingrid's life. In 2012 she was persuaded by an old friend to join Leatherhead RDA as a volunteer. She quickly became an invaluable member of the



team, well liked and respected by the volunteers, children and ponies.

Ingrid was always willing to take on extra responsibility and in 2016 became a Coach. She may have been out of her comfort zone at first but she could see how much she was needed and wanted to make a difference. Ingrid was always willing to learn from others and was a wonderful team worker. If she had a fault, it was a lack of confidence and belief in how well she was doing but that made her all the more endearing. She is sorely missed.

Jan Binstead

Jan Binstead was an amazing volunteer at Cobbes Meadow for around 17 years. She spent some time as Chair as well as being a coach for adults on a Tuesday. Jan didn't enjoy being in the limelight. She was a very hard worker behind the scenes, organising clean up days and helping run the centre on a daily basis keeping the indoor school watered and the indoor and outdoor schools raked over. She will be really missed by everyone who knew her.



RDA South East Region appoints Katie Snalune as Regional Vet

Riding for the Disabled's South East Region has appointed a new regional vet, following the recent retirement of Judy Scrine. Katie Snalune, owner and Head of Hospital at Newnham Court Equine, Maidstone, Kent has agreed to take on the position of South East Regional Vet and will play a vital role in the team by officiating at regional events as well as delivering equine training modules for the RDA Coaching Pathway.

RDA South East Region Chair, Pauline Roestenburg, commented, "We are thrilled that Katie has agreed to join us and we are sure her extensive knowledge and experience will be an enormous asset to the Region."

Katie has a busy year ahead of her not only with her involvement with RDA but because Newnham Court Equine will be moving site and building work will be starting on a new equine hospital.



New Treasurer in Charge of the Regional Purse Strings

Sharen Cain is our new Regional Treasurer taking over from Beryl Randall.

Sharen is a volunteer with Chalkdown and lives in Lenham Heath, Kent with her partner and two grown up children. With an accountancy practice in Charing she was an obvious choice for the treasurer's position!

Sharen has recently qualified as a canine hydrotherapist and enjoys canicross running with her dogs, swimming, walking and holidays!



New Dressage Representative Ali Remmen

With thanks to Grace Lloyd Jones who has held the post for the last six years we welcome our new Dressage Representative, Ali Remmen.

Ali is a BHS Stage 4 Senior Coach in Complete Horsemanship, presenter and equine specialist to a Channel 4 series and the inventor of the Rider Balancer.

Ali has national and international experience of bringing out the best in horse and rider at all levels. She believes that hard work and having fun brings results.

As well as taking on the Dressage Representative role, Ali is an RDA Coach Developer.



Jenny Murdoch

Jenny started volunteering with Woodchurch at the beginning of the 2018 season and soon became a popular member of the team.

Profoundly deaf following a riding accident Jenny communicated by lip reading which was more of a challenge for us than Jenny who never let her handicap hold her back.

Jenny loved being around the ponies and started riding her beloved Teddy as part of his fitness programme. She loved her hacks out with fellow volunteers Ann, Stella and occasionally Susi.

Jenny suffered a catastrophic stroke in January 2022 and after eight long and traumatic months in hospital died on



the 5th August.

Jenny's absence from the team has saddened us all and we will continue to miss her presence and smiling face.

Peter Walker

Peter's late wife Vicki was a Carriage Driving Coach with Cobbes Meadow. Peter was very knowledgeable about all matters carriage driving as he and Vicki had previously run their own business providing turnouts for weddings. He was also an excellent mechanic and helped to look after and service the Cobbes Meadow RDA carriages. He always carried a full set of tools in his car!



New Regional Secretary



Taking over from Marie Gilbert, we're delighted to welcome Catherine Richards to the regional team as our new Secretary.

Catherine has lived in Kent for the last 20 years with her husband and two sons. She grew up with ponies and her mother helped out at her local RDA groups.

As soon as Catherine could commit the time she joined Chalkdown group where she has been a volunteer for 5 1/2 years.

DATES FOR 2023

April 23	Therapy/Medical Training Module	Diamond Centre
April 28	Coaching Module	Cranleigh RDA
May 4	Regional Challenge Day	Felbridge Showground
May 18	Regional Dressage Qualifier	Hickstead
May 25	Emergency First Aid at Work	Haven Centre, Crawley Down
May 30	Carriage Driving Qualifier	Bradbourne RDA
July 5	Le Trec Carriage Driving Competition	Bradbourne RDA
July 14-16	RDA National Championships	Hartpury College, Gloucestershire
July 25	Carriage Driving Summer Show	TBC
July 27	Russell MacKechnie-Guire Lecture Demo	Horsley, Bookham & Leatherhead RDA
October 25	Regional Conference	Haven Centre, Crawley Down
November 19	Horse Care & Knowledge Module	Diamond Centre
November 19	Therapy/Medical Module	Diamond Centre

SOUTH EAST REGION WHO'S WHO

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
RDA SOUTH EAST REGION**

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



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Paula Jones, Editor and
Bob Sampson, Designer, who has given up a lot of his time for this year's magazine.

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