

Hampshire & Surrey Borders RDA

Riding for the Disabled Association

Welcome

Welcome to our Summer 2019 Newsletter.

Two of our Tuesday group riders did us proud at the South Region Show held at Wellington Riding in May. In this issue we have a report of the day and some pictures of the boys expertly putting their ponies through their paces.

Also in this newsletter: the positive effect that back-riding is having on one of our Tuesday riders, recognition for some of our volunteers for their long service to RDA and the latest fund-raising news. On a sadder note we report the loss of long-term RDA pony Smokey.

As another school year draws to a close we hope you enjoy reading the latest news from Hants and Surrey Borders RDA.

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South Region Show

On Sunday 19th May two boys who are regular Tuesday riders took part in both the Countryside Challenge and dressage tests at the Southern Region Qualifier held at Wellington Riding in Heckfield. We borrowed two ponies from Wellington and Dummer RDA. Toffee and Rocky were lovely, kind, steady ponies, and knew their job was to look after their riders. The ponies looked a picture after some expert shampooing and grooming by experienced helper Jo. Our riders looked smart too in matching gilets embroidered with our HSB RDA logo thanks to Mandi's excellent sewing skills.

The first task for the boys was to complete the Countryside Challenge when they had to carry out a variety of tasks and negotiate obstacles that you might encounter on a country ride out.

Our riders managed steady and competent rounds, steering their ponies confidently, and both were awarded highly commended rosettes for their achievements. Most importantly, they remembered to thank the organiser as they finished.

After leaving the ponies to rest with hay and water, and lunch for the riders and helpers, it was soon time for our riders to warm up for their dressage tests. These were held in the attractive new outdoor arena, with a judge and writer watching keenly. Both boys acquitted themselves well and rode their tests with minimal help from their leaders. At the prize-giving Sebbie was awarded 3rd place and Louie 5th place in their class (which included walk and trot) - an excellent achievement.

It was a very good day enjoyed by the supporting families as well as the riders and helpers. There was a big turnout and it was fun to be part of the bigger 'family' that is RDA. Thank you to the leaders and helpers for being such a great team. I am sure we will be back next year.

This year's winner of the Rachel Plumbe Cup for Outstanding Achievement, given in memory of Rachel and awarded to the rider with the highest percentage score of the day over all competitions, was a young lady from South Bucks RDA. She was presented with the cup at the end of the day prize-giving by Rachel's husband Graham.

Some photographs from the show are shown on pages 2 and 3. They appear courtesy of Dan Marshall at dmphotographyuk.com.

Photographs from the South Region Show

Congratulations to the winner, Natasha Wait of South Bucks RDA. Here she is being presented with the trophy ...



The whole team after a successful day at Wellington Riding

... and then proudly holding it - well done!



Sebbie skilfully steers Toffee under the arch in the Countryside Challenge



Louie and Rocky demonstrate how to open a gate whilst mounted on a pony



Sebbie concentrating hard on his dressage test



Louie proudly showing his 'Highly Commended' rosette

Smokey

It is with much sadness that we report the loss earlier this year of Smokey after a short but serious illness. He was settling in well to his new home with a young family, alongside his friend and stable-mate Pablo.

In our August 2015 newsletter we published an article written by Maureen Carroll who rescued Smokey as a two year old. When Maureen first met Smokey he was in a pitiful state, unhandled and abandoned at a livery yard on a farm that Maureen and her husband had purchased. She wrote: *Over the years he has repaid his rescue a million times over. This little pony who had such a bad start in life has become a superstar.*

Smokey was an RDA pony for 15 years. He was well looked after by Pat and came out of retirement when we needed another reliable pony for our riding sessions at Four Seasons Hotel. He never forgot his job, and though he could be cheeky sometimes, he always looked after his rider and was a favourite with many. Smokey's years of service to RDA was marked with a posthumous long service award at our recent AGM.



At Easter we were sent this fabulous picture and a greeting from Smokey's new owners.

We are both very well and happy and took part in the pony club Easter egg hunt today - Pablo won a prize for his Easter bonnet. We went hunting in the winter, and do pony club rallies every month. We're looking forward to some lead rein gymkhanas over the summer, and picnic rides with our friends. Mostly, we love being groomed and looked after by our children. We hope you are all well. With love from Smokey and Pablo xx



Smokey will be much missed by Pat and by the young family who gave him a happy retirement home.

R.I.P. Smokey and thank you.

Smokey was an RDA pony for 15 years

The photograph to the left was taken the day Smokey went to join Pablo at his new home. Two old friends meeting again and leaving nobody in any doubt they were happy to be re-united.

Over and above

Jenny Edmonds has been secretary of Hants and Surrey Borders RDA for 23 years. She began volunteering with the then named Aldershot group in September 1985 and became group secretary in 1996. Our group is very grateful to Jenny for all the administration she has quietly got on with over the years. Jenny has now stepped down from the post and we are delighted that Sarah Wood has agreed to take over from her as our secretary. At our recent AGM Jenny was presented with a garden centre voucher as a token of our thanks. Thank you very much Jenny from us all.

Also at the AGM many volunteers were presented with long service awards in recognition of the years they have volunteered with RDA. Thank you to all our volunteers who give up their time each week, some of them at both Tuesday and Thursday groups, to help our riders achieve their full potential.

Pat was presented with an 'Over and Above' award in recognition of the many years she has volunteered with our group. For a long time Pat looked after our ponies at her farm, ensuring they were fit and well for RDA twice a week – and keeping them fit during the holidays helped by a team of pony walkers - as well as looking after the van and its contents, instructing at our Thursday sessions and helping in a myriad of other ways. Thank you very much Pat. Your service to RDA is most definitely 'Over and Above'.

Jenny and Pat will continue to volunteer on a Tuesday and a Thursday respectively, Pat as Thursday group's most experienced instructor.



This year marks 50 years since the Riding for the Disabled Association was officially formed in October 1969.

In June the brand new National Training Centre in Warwickshire was opened by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, who is President of the RDA and a patron of the Centre.



The National Championships in July (12th -14th) will include a special pageant on the 12th featuring all the activities RDA has developed over the past 50 years.

As the RDA website says:

Our pioneers set the foundations for the great organisation and it is exciting to see that their spirit lives on in the way we continue to grow in scope, confidence and relevance.

Happy 50th birthday RDA!

Other news

Thursday group have a newly qualified coach to join their team. Karen recently passed her Pink Coaching Assessment with flying colours. Her background with the Metropolitan Mounted Police stands her in good stead and she will be an excellent coach for our Thursday riders.



Karen (right) taking a lesson

Adam, who volunteers on both Tuesdays and Thursdays when his work schedule allows, has been awarded his BHS Stage One in Horsemanship. Congratulations Adam!



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

From the *Farnham Herald*

Back riding

In November 2018 an article in the *Farnham Herald* highlighted the benefits that back riding with Elspeth, the regional physiotherapist, is having on one of our Tuesday group riders. The article is reproduced here with the paper's kind permission.

Mum 'forever grateful' to disabled riding group

FOUR Seasons Hotel Hampshire's onsite equestrian centre currently hosts the Hampshire and Surrey Borders Riding for the Disabled branch twice a week.

As part of this partnership, the hotel helps children with a range of disabilities using different forms of physiotherapy, including back riding.

Back riding sees the charity's regional physiotherapist, who has specialist training from Chartered Physiotherapists in Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy (CPTRH), ride behind students on one of the hotel's horses.

One child who has already benefited from the therapy is six-year-old Asher Jones.

Asher was born premature, at 30 weeks (3lb 2oz) and stayed in a special care baby unit for 10 weeks.

At eight months old, Asher was diagnosed with quadriplegic cerebral palsy, a combination of spasticity and dystonia causing him to be either very stiff or very floppy with very little core control.

When Asher was two, his mother Sarah took him to a local children's event where she signed him up with the RDA.

Initially Asher tried to ride with the support of the RDA volunteers by his side but after a few sessions it became clear to everyone he was

really struggling to keep his body upright because of the lack of core strength. RDA advised they would like to try back riding with Asher.

Since starting the therapy, Sarah is delighted with the progress Asher has made.

She said: "The benefits I see from the back riding are fantastic.

"His core strength is improving and head control is much better. RDA are also working on Asher verbalising to get the horse to move or stop.

"I am forever grateful to the RDA team for giving my little boy a wonderful experience and memories for us all to treasure."

For more information visit www.hsbrda.co.uk.



Six year old Asher 'back riding' at the Four Seasons



Supporting

HANTS AND
SURREY BORDERS
RIDING FOR
THE DISABLED

Make the most of
Summer
Help the Community Shine!



Supporting our cause means the sun won't be the only warmth we feel this year

- **Help us to make a difference to our community – play for just £1 a week**
- **For every £1 ticket our cause will receive 50p back, a further 10p goes to other great causes in the local area**
- **We can do so much more with your support**
- **It's a WIN WIN for us both – you also get the chance to win up to £25,000 every week!**

Click here to support today

Supporters must be 16 years of age or older.

Fund-raising news

A grandparent of one of our Thursday riders was lucky enough to win a luxury hamper in the pre-Christmas Hart Lottery draw. That follows Pat's win of a Kindle Paperwhite. You have to be in it to win it! It's very easy to join up from as little as £1 per week and you can stop at any time. To date Hants and Surrey Borders RDA has received over £1,000: a welcome sum.

Izzie, the daughter of one of our Tuesday volunteers and House Captain of Champion House this school year, made a successful presentation to her fellow students at Farnborough Hill for HSBRDA to be the benefitting charity for money raised during her time in office. We were delighted to receive a cheque for £800. Thank you very much to Izzie and members of Champion House for their tremendous effort.

Following the closure of BT's MyDonate we have set up a new fund-raising platform with Virgin Money Giving. This link will take you to our fund raising page:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/hsbrda>

And finally ...

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

A plea for help

Our newsletters began when we owned our own ponies and a 'Sponsor a Pony' scheme was in place. They are an excellent way to keep our many volunteers in touch with all of the group news and are sent out to a long mailing list of supporters.

The ever-increasing amount of paperwork that an RDA Chairperson has to deal with means that I can no longer be solely responsible for sourcing content and writing copy. The late Sylvia Hebdon used to compile the newsletters and I am very grateful to Rod Marshall for taking over from her and producing a very readable newsletter out of all that I send him. Thank you Rod.

Can somebody take over responsibility for compiling the content for the group newsletters?

This will be the last newsletter – certainly in this format – unless somebody comes forward to help me with them. **Please, can somebody take over responsibility for compiling the content for the group newsletters?** Until this issue we traditionally had spring and autumn editions, but an annual newsletter would be enough to keep everyone in touch. I believe that they are well worth continuing with.

If you can help please let me know. Thank you.

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

Hampshire & Surrey Borders RDA

(Registered Charity No: 1074282)

For more information please contact Lesley Bull on 07858 694636
or email – hantsandsurreybordersrda@hotmail.co.uk

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