

RDA NEWS

Riding for the Disabled Association

NORTH WEST



2019 - 2020



Lilith Roberts, from Beechley RDA Group, who attended the Regional and National Championships this year on IZZY

CHESHIRE

Camsley Grange
Mid Cheshire
Middlewood
Nantwich & District
Sandy Lane
Wirral and Chester

GREATER MANCHESTER

Friends of Landlords
Pegasus
Saddleworth

ISLE OF MAN

Isle of Man
Manx Carriage Driving 4 Disabled

LANCASHIRE

Dyneley
Midgeland
North Meols Carriage Driving
Pendle
Phoenix
Red Rose Carriage Driving
Seaside Venture
West Lancs

MERSEYSIDE

Beechley Stables
Crosby
East Liverpool
Foresters Horn
Formby & Southport

NW Regional Chair's Report

Gill Petty



This is my first year as Regional Chair and I am absolutely delighted and honoured to be following in Sheila's footsteps. I am very much looking forward to meeting and supporting more of our Groups over the coming months and years.

I became involved in RDA about 6 years ago as was looking for something horsey to fill some time on weekends and a friend suggested RDA, as her mum used to volunteer in Yorkshire. I have an Equine Science degree but somehow fell into a career in the telecoms industry, so RDA was the perfect match to connect me with my first love.

Starting as a volunteer at what was then Greater Manchester RDA, I was moved, humbled and hooked in the first hour and have got more and more involved ever since. I started training as a Coach, and set up a new Group (Pegasus) with a team of fantastic trustees in 2017. I then joined the Regional Committee as the County Chair for Greater Manchester and in January 2019 took over from Sheila as the Regional Chair.

The Regional team have been amazing in helping me find my way and Sheila is a constant (and very crucial!) support!

My thanks go out to our County Chairs, Glenny Richardson, Cheshire, Sheila Saner, Greater Manchester, Lisa Patterson, Merseyside and Gwen Wordley for Lancashire. The team has been working hard to visit as many Groups as possible and to pick up the increased number of enquiries we have had in our 50th Year!

Dr. Jenifer Hoggarth has been extremely busy with new Group enquiries, and in 2019 a new Group, Phoenix, has successfully set-up, which is fantastic in making RDA accessible to more people.

The coaching team, Kate Bailey, Regional Coach, Sheila Saner and Sarah Underwood, County Coaches, have



continued to share their knowledge and expertise with Groups and new and developing coaches.

Pam Rigby (MBE) stepped down from her long standing roles as Chair of Mid Cheshire and County Coach this year and our immense thanks go to Pam for her relentless support of RDA and the continued support for hosting Mid Cheshire RDA at NewBarn Stables.

Our Regional Vice Presidents, Jean Carter and Felicity Goodey support us where they can and special thanks go to Jean for presenting all the awards at the Regional Show.

Our Regional Holiday at Clwyd in June was great fun, with 5 riders attending the 3 days and all progressing with RDA horse care and riding grades. My thanks go to the Regional Team and volunteers from Groups who made the weekend happen, especially Julia Armitage and Glenny Richardson for keeping us well fed.

We are already looking for riders for next year so please do get in touch if you are interested!

We have aimed to provide as many experiences as possible to participants this year and my thanks go to Jeanette and Barrie Dixon who organise the Dressage Training at Mid Cheshire, as well being fundamental in organising the Regional Show, where we had 36 participants from 7 groups this year and we are aiming for more in 2020.

Again, we thank West Lancashire Free Masons for their generous contribution to the running costs of the show.

Jane Guilford, Regional Physio, and the team have visited several Groups and are providing support to enhancing participant's experiences and also delivering courses as part of the coaching pathway.

Julia Armitage is to thank for a lot of the Regional fundraising, along with Tania Coventry who has been managing our Virgin Giving page as well as our Social Media, also Jane Windsor, Regional Treasurer, who keeps our funds in line.

Special thanks go to Julie Birchall who has produced this RDA news yet again

I look forward to getting out to more Groups and supporting the Region in all the wonderful things that we do.



Dates for your Diary 2019 -20

Friday 29th November 2019
RDA AGM, All day
 Saddlers Hall, London

28th, 29th, 30th & 31st December 2019
Liverpool International Horse Show
 Reduced price tickets available for RDA Groups and volunteers
 Contact sheilas@nantwichcc.co.uk

Sunday 8th March 2020
All Day Dressage Conference
 Lowlands Equestrian Centre, Shrewley
 Warwickshire

17th May 2020
The Regional Show
 Venue to be confirmed

Friday 12th - 14th June 2020
Regional Holiday
 Clwyd Special Riding Centre
 Wales

Friday 10th - Sunday 12th July 2020
National Championships



Every year we distribute around 3000 copies of the RDA NW News to our Groups throughout the North West Region. It is a valuable resource to reach out to people and paid for by raised funds. For this edition we are very grateful to Johnsons Print, Nantwich, who have partially funded the print and delivery.

If you are interested in sponsoring the publication, or any RDA event or wish to donate, please see the back page for information, or contact: gillpetty@hotmail.co.uk

CHESHIRE

A B C

1 Camsley Grange

Church Farm, Glazebrook Lane, Glazebrook, Warrington WA3 5AY

381 17 51

tel: 07788 717442 Denise Shaw

2 Mid Cheshire

New Barn Farm, Chelford Road, Ollerton, Nr Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 8SZ

2422 96 53

tel: 07490 682429 Jeanette Dixon

3 Middlewood

Bank Hall Riding Stables, Middlewood Road, Poynton, Cheshire SK12 1TU

535 35 27

tel: 01625 578178 Lucie Pettit

4 Nantwich & District

Reaseheath College Equestrian Centre, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6DF

112 25 27

tel: 07968 190745 Sheila Saner

5 Sandy Lane

Sandy Lane Equestrian Centre, Sandy Lane, Weaverham, Cheshire CW8 3PX

2693 136 25

tel: 01606 854244 Rose Tommons

6 Wirral and Chester

Wirral Riding Centre, Haddon Lane, Ness, Neston, South Wirral CH64 8TA

2882 188 381

tel: 0151 648 6308 Janet Vickers

GREATER MANCHESTER

7 Friends of Landlords

Landlords Farm, Dicconson Lane, Aspull, Wigan, WN2 1QD

957 91 24

tel: 07703 486793 Michelle Pendlebury

8 Pegasus

North Cheshire Equestrian Centre, Carrington Lane, Carrington, Manchester M31 4AE

397 37 34

tel: 07725 113599 Helen Bacon

9 Saddleworth

Saddleworth Stables, Diggle House Farm, Diggle OL3 5LB

66 15 22

tel: 07768 986031 Alison Pickering

ISLE OF MAN

10 Isle of Man

Guilcagh Stables, Andreas, Isle of Man IM7 3HF

810 67 32

tel: 01624 851997 Lynne McNamara

11 Manx Carriage Driving 4 Disabled

Ballavartyn Equestrian Centre, Ballavartyn Road, Santon, Isle of Man IM4 1HT

284 38 22

tel: 07624 322431 Liz Lillie

LANCASHIRE

A B C

12 Dyneley

Crown Point House, Crown Point Road, Burnley BB113RT

194 17 25

tel: 07817 914 298 Catherine Dower

13 Midgeland

Midgeland Riding School, 460 Midgeland Rd, Blackpool, Lancs FY4 5EE

835 32 25

tel: 07960 495319 Pat Bevan

14 North Meols Carriage Driving

28a New Lane, Crossens, West Lancs. PR9 8LH

393 13 15

tel: 01704 566728 Fiona Caplan

15 Pendle

View Cottage Farm, Moorgate Road, Barnoldswick, Lancs BB18 5SG

779 78 25

tel: 07780 864723 Kate Bailey

16 Phoenix

Clough Bottom Farm Stables, Moor Lane, Haslingden BB4 5TX

*Newly formed Group.
No figures available yet.*

tel: 07899 483015 Jenni Clough

17 Red Rose Carriage Driving

8 Gorsey Lane, Banks, Southport, PR9 8EH

94 13 16

tel: 01704 229311 Jane O'Neill

18 Seaside Venture

Wrea Green Equitation Centre, Bryning Lane, Wrea Green, Preston PR4 3PP

1722 46 16

tel: 01772 686576 Chris Pollitt

19 West Lancs

Parbold Equestrian Centre, 21 Bradshaw Lane, Parbold, Wigan WN8 7NQ

353 23 13

tel: 07931 435627 Glenda Foley

MERSEYSIDE

20 Beechley Stables

Beechley Riding Stables, Harthill Road, Allerton, Liverpool L18 3HU

2882 98 34

tel: 0151 724 4490 Ralph Dunne

21 Crosby

Chet Centre, Crosby Hall, Little Crosby, Merseyside L23 4UA

1493 82 86

tel: 07975 751 880 Judith Parsons

22 East Liverpool

Riderscroft, School Lane, Rainhill, Merseyside L35 6NW

1540 49 24

tel: 07985 364655 Ms Natalie Burns

23 Foresters Horn

Wirral Riding Centre, Haddon Lane, Ness, Neston, South Wirral CH64 8TA and

413 21 29

Larton Livery Riding School, The Stiles, Frankby Road, Frankby CH48 1PL

tel: 07776 465190 Rachel Williams

24 Formby & Southport

Bowlers Riding School, 35 Brewery Lane, Formby, Merseyside L37 7DY

539 47 25

tel: 01704 875007 Joan Lathaen

These figures represent figures submitted by individual Groups as compiled by RDA National Office, October 2019

Honorary Regional Vice President's Report

Jean Carter

I would like to give the warmest welcome to Gill Petty as she completes her first year as North West Regional Chairman.

I am sure that she has the full support of all North West Groups in what is a most rewarding but, at times, very challenging job.

I was delighted to be able to go to our Regional Show this year, kindly hosted by Crosby Group and their willing band of helpers. I was also invited to their Open Day in June, a lovely day, which gave me the opportunity to meet many old friends and to make some new ones.

I must also pay tribute to all members of the Regional Committee who never cease to surprise me with their hard work and dedication to their respective jobs.

This helps to make our Region such an efficient part of the RDA family.

Jean Carter Regional Vice-President.



The RDA North West Committee



A full list of the members, along with their job titles and contact details, is to be found on the back page of this magazine. If you have any queries regarding any aspect of RDA, please don't hesitate to contact one of us - between us we have many years of RDA experience, too many to count. If we can't answer you satisfactorily, we know which direction to point to get the answer you seek.

Sheila Saner - NW Volunteer of the Year!



The period 2018 to 2019 has been something special to observe.

From a standing start, Sheila Saner has fulfilled a personal dream to create Nantwich and District RDA, a Group which will serve a large area presently not covered.

Sheila persuaded local Reaseheath Equestrian Centre to seeing the benefits of having an RDA Group on site and outlined the many benefits to their students and the opportunity to raise their community profile at the same time.

There was ALL to do - raising funds and organising a Board of Trustees, find volunteers and participants - oh, and maybe some ponies! The College agreed permission to use the mechanical horse once a week. Sheila organised for a web page to be created which was donated free of charge.

Throughout this initial period, Immaculate filing and records were kept to keep hundreds of 'balls in the air', all the time juggling these with work commitments and family. Sheila kept in regular contact with all the volunteers and riders to motivate them for the day we would eventually have live mounts. During this initial stage of the Group set-up, Sheila found the time to continuously negotiate with the College, with fund raisers, donors and the inevitable search for suitable mounts (which also proved to be very time consuming!)

As the only qualified Coach in the Group, the work falls on Sheila to organise the lessons. She is training several people to be able to share this load. Hopefully one day we will see Sheila being able to take a break from the busy schedule, but this year has been one of her most hard-working of all time. Although dispensing some of the more mundane chores, the main organisation of the Group had to be the work of one person who possessed all the necessary knowledge and, let's face it - who better to take on the role!

I think all her family, friends, riders, carers and volunteers - in fact anyone who knows her, would recommend Sheila for Volunteer of the Year. I have never observed a more dedicated and tireless approach to achieving a goal in such a loyal and charming person.

Her motivation to fulfil a dream to set up and run a successful RDA Group has been achieved through her tireless dedication to RDA.

Julie Birchall

Tea with a pony promotes well-being. Who knew?...

People with dementia should be offered activities, including animal assisted therapy, to promote their wellbeing, according to recently updated guidance from NICE, the National Institute of Clinical Excellence.

A small number of RDA Groups are already offering services to people with dementia, notably Cotswold RDA, the Avon Centre and Beechley Stables RDA. The Groups are offering similar services that are delivered in slightly different ways to suit their individual context. The local offer is 'Tea with a pony', an unmounted activity session including tea and cake with other participants and their carers followed by the opportunity for supervised close contact with several ponies that can include grooming, taking care of tack and other sensory experiences.

The NICE guidance emphasises enabling people with dementia to make an active choice to engage in activities and it also recognises the importance of supporting their carers. Both Cotswold RDA and the Avon Centre have produced case studies that show their 'Tea with a pony' sessions are meaningful and valued by participants and carers.

One carer said: *'It seems to have helped mum's memory. I'm not sure how but it has, and, more than anything, it's been like a light has been turned back on.'*

Another carer said of her husband, who is now in a care home: *'He can't step back into my world anymore, I can step into his but I've also got mine, so this gives us something joint again.'*

We have convened a Dementia Services Development Group to encourage more RDA Groups to enter this area of work, which doesn't require a lot of resources to do well and is greatly needed by our local communities. We aim to produce a resource pack by the end of March 2020 and we'd love to hear from anyone interested in running similar sessions.

Denise Robertson,
RDA Head of Therapy
drobertson@rda.org.uk





The NW Region held another successful riding holiday at the Clwyd Special Riding Centre in June with the usual fun and games!

The riders were Matt and Nianh from Pegasus Group, Karen from Pendle, Kath from Mid Cheshire and Annie from West Lancs. Group. Everyone achieved Grade Tests thanks to Jeanette Dixon and had the opportunity to ride the Mechanical Horse if they wanted to. We all went out on hacks round the outdoor track and each rider had a horse to look after for the entire holiday.

We were fortunate to have our Regional and County Physiotherapists, Jane Guilford and Lucy West to join us on the Saturday to give advice and they helped everyone to improve their riding skills.

We were well looked after by our talented Chef Julia Armitage ably assisted by Glenn Richardson our Cheshire County Chair. The food was magnificent as usual and we were well supplied with cakes provided by members of the Funky Choir.

Kate Bailey our Regional Coach headed the coaching team with the help of Allan Black, Helen Bacon, Megan Holland, Gill Petty, Sheila Saner, Sarah Underwood and Kelly Glynn. Our artistic skills were helped by Julie Birchall who brought along colourful items for us to enjoy and have a few moments of peaceful relaxation away from the horses.

With our Regional Chair and our County Chairs attending this was a well supported Regional Event and we could not have managed without our volunteers Dave Birchall and the riders' family members who came along to support them as well as daily visitors.

We are looking forward to next year when more riders from across the Region will have the opportunity to spend time away from their Groups and improve their skills as well as get to know other riders from across the Region.



North West Regional Holiday
Clwyd Special Riding Centre June 2019



The six Groups in Cheshire are all working hard to overcome any problems with funding, having enough volunteers and obtaining suitable horses. They all continue to ride from the same venues as last year. Groups should keep a look out on the Region's Face book page and also on the Regional website for news of upcoming events and training sessions. It was good to see so many at our Lunch at Nunsmere Hall in October last year.

For me the highlight of the year was to receive the President's Award from Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal at Hartpury in July. It was hot, sunny with a lovely friendly atmosphere which helped to make the day special for me and in celebrating 50 Years of RDA.

Wirral and Chester

We have overcome a lot of hurdles in the past twelve months

We have emerged as a strong, vibrant, happy and conscientious Group, working together with one aim in sight – to provide riding lessons and pony and horse rides for over 120 people with a vast range of disabilities. We now operate solely from Wirral Riding Centre, who have been amazing at accommodating all our extra rides. More importantly, it is invaluable to be able to rely on our incredible team of over 100 volunteers – to whom we owe the sincerest of thanks.

Not everyone was able to ride at a different time but with a never ending waiting list, any vacancy time slot was soon filled. We have made some important changes in the way we organise our rides as well. Working closely with both the coaches and individual ride leaders, we now always try to place riders of a more compatible ability and age range together. We are also limiting the number of adult riders we have on any lesson so as we can ensure safety for both the rider and the volunteer.

Following two Facebook appeals, we have held new volunteer evenings where we have had the opportunity to describe our work and achievements and this has had a very promising result. We have also adopted a new 'uniform' of purple sweatshirts, rugby and polo shirts. We have offered these at a subsidised price to riders and volunteers alike and we are very pleased at the enthusiasm and pride for everyone to be seen as part of our Group.



Whilst there were lots of celebrations to mark the 50th Anniversary, we at Wirral and Chester RDA held an afternoon tea for all our volunteers and coaches. This was a lovely way to meet everyone and enjoy exchanging experiences and stories of their time with the Group. We also used this event to make some very special awards. We were delighted to present certificates and flowers to two volunteers who have helped for 40 years- Jean Pickering and Anthea Herbert – as well as a 30 year awarded to Sonja Nixon and 25 years to Barry Jenkins who has been coaching as a volunteer. Congratulations and thanks to them all – *but only on the proviso that they don't intend to retire yet!*

Other events this year have been a well attended training evening for all volunteers and it was a most enlightening lesson for older as well as new volunteers. We are all capable of slipping into 'bad' habits we found! We have had support from the Rotakids at Neston Primary school who enjoyed a visit and talk and we hope they will be able to come up and see us in action this year.

Other groups that we have visited are local Trefoil groups who have been so supportive to RDA this past year and one group came over to WRC to watch some lessons in action.

As an RDA Group we have encouraged our Ride Leaders to be more involved. They have taken on the responsibility of training their new volunteers and

have actively had an input into how we run our Group. Their suggestions are invaluable and wherever possible changes have been made for the benefit of both riders and volunteers.

So all in all this has been an action packed year and after our summer break we are now gearing up for an even more busy year ahead!!



Mid Cheshire

New riders and volunteers!

We were sad to lose long term volunteer Carole due to personal circumstances, but were pleased to have Joan rejoin us after a short break. We also lost two of our school groups, which was very sad, we are looking to recruit others to replace them.

Our dressage riders did well in the Dressage Anywhere RDA Online championship, especially Mary who won her class on the lovely Trigger who joined Pam's band of horses this year. Cathy, in her first dressage championship took third place in her class. At the Regional Show at Crosby our Countryside Challenge riders excelled with Emma and Cody winning their classes, Jake taking second and Helen third in their classes. Our wonderful volunteers put in the extra training ready for the championships at Hartpury. All the hard work paid off with Emma and Jake taking 6th place in their classes and Cody just outside the placings, all riding on our wonderful Father Ted. Ted is shortly to be featured in an article about RDA ponies in Horse and Hound online.

Our Volunteer of the Year was Nicola Rowley who has gone above and beyond, helping at numerous different events and with our Countryside Challenge riders. We are extremely grateful for all the time given by our wonderful volunteers.

A number of riders completed RDA proficiency tests and gained certificates in riding and horse care, including Kath who passed the Grade 3 Riding and Care whilst on the Regional Holiday at Clwyd. We make good use of the Endeavour Awards, which allows us to make our own goals for our riders to achieve. We also continue with the Therapy Tracker, the certificates are much appreciated, especially by our school groups.

We were thrilled when our rider Emma was presented with the Anne Thorpe Memorial Trophy at the 2018 regional lunch. Emma has overcome a number of challenges and we were delighted that her grandparents could be present to see her receive the award from Alastair Stewart. Emma also received an award in the RDA Creative Writing Competition.

Under the new Coaches Pathway we now have four green coaches, 5 pink and 1 trainee. We held a very good Makaton course related to riding, which 20 of our coaches & volunteers attended and a 1st-aid course run by Medi-K that 8 of our coaches attended, along with some from Pendle. It was excellent and highly recommended.

We were sorry to lose a few of our riders due to deterioration in their health but we still have some very long term riders such as Sean who started with us in his school group at the age of 8. He still attends at the age of 25 and now also helps on a Saturday.



Mary and Trigger



Sean aged 8



Sean aged 25

Sandy Lane Roll on 2020!

Sandy Lane RDA have had great fortune this year to have had a substantial funding from **Cheshire Free Masons** for mounted games equipment.

Keith Howbrigg from the Masons visited our Tuesday evening sessions and put forward our request for funding.

With Keith's input and great understanding of the great work we do, he secured our request and the pictures show our great purchase.

We have also had the local **Rotary Club** purchase Rabbit Ears to attach to our saddles.

We had a great start to fundraising with a Golf Tournament in the late summer at Hartford Golf Club, with all proceeds donated to our Group.

Waitrose chose our Group as Charity of the month of October.

More exciting fund raising events are planned to support our running costs going into 2020, help always needed.

On a personal note I received the runner up position for the Golden Spur National Riding Instructor of the year award from the Association of British Riding Schools.

Jane Whitney



Nantwich & District *We've had an exciting year...*

- what with the refurbishment of our four stables and the purchase of our first three horses and ponies. We are fortunate to have our home at Reaseheath College and work closely with the Staff and Students and the use of their magnificent facilities.



Irene introducing Sandra and Mac to the mounting ramp

fund-raising events and the support of local businesses in the Nantwich area.

Our annual Fashion Show at M & Co. gave our riders and volunteers a chance to become models and we all support the local Supermarkets after our stint with collecting buckets at Sainsbury's and Morrisons.



Rosa modelling at M&Co

We also have the use of Flicka, the Mechanical Horse who can help us to build confidence and assist in training.

Our riders

We have a wide variety of riders of all ages and abilities. They are all individual riders who come to our sessions in the afternoon often after a day at school, college or work. Most are new to the pleasure and benefits that riding and spending horses can bring.

"Awesome!"

"That was the best ever"

"Can I do that again?"

"Can I come everyday?"

"I never thought I could do that"

"Do I have to get off I want to sleep up here tonight"

... just a few of the comments we get every session!



Making new friends and sharing experiences has been very rewarding and we have great plans for the future.

Sheila Saner – Group Chair



Kate and Jodie receiving their Proficiency Certificates



Our ponies

The hunt for gentle, understanding and suitable mounts took some time and we are fortunate to have Ben, Mac and Bobby. The search for our fourth pony continues.

Finding the ones just 'for us' is a careful decision and not easily made as further training will be required to ensure they become consistent and know what is expected of them.

Our willing volunteers

We have a great band of volunteers who have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know our riders. We are gradually expanding our wardrobe of team co-ordinated clothing as the seasons evolve. There is always something to do and new things to learn and caring for our horses is just one aspect of the experience.

Our Supporters

We could not manage without our



Jodie with Mac



Milo with Bobby



Sheila receiving a generous cheque from MKM Building Supplies



Andy with Ben

Middlewood A great year!

We have had a great year at Middlewood RDA. With lots of fund raising we have bought all our ponies new bridles. So they are looking very smart. We are also still able to offer all of our 24 children free weekly riding lessons. I know the Schools that come to us are extremely grateful to our Group for this.

Like all the other Groups, we have a wonderful loyal bunch of hard working volunteers. As we know, without them we literally cannot run our Groups. This year we have seen quite a few retirements and we know we have a few more coming up. Christine Heginbotham, one of the founding members of our group retired this Summer. Christine has worked tirelessly for more than thirty years for Middlewood RDA. She has been a prolific fund raiser and an extremely dedicated Coach. Her calm persona and patient nature will be greatly missed by us all. We know she will keep in touch and we look forward to her popping in now and then.

Enjoy your retirement Christine!

Over the next few months we will be focusing our efforts on recruiting new volunteers. We already have had three new starters over the last two weeks, so it's looking hopeful!

Of course the children will be looking forward to our annual visit from Father Christmas as always!

We also are hoping the weather will be kind to us this Winter and we don't want any more rain!

Lucie Pettit
Chair Middlewood RDA



Camsley Grange 40 Years on!

Camsley Grange RDA Group celebrated our 40 year anniversary on Sunday 29th Sept.

We held a show for the riders, and invited volunteers, family, friends, and supporters to come along and join in a day of fun, food, and activities. The weather was against us and it poured down for most of the day.

However, we didn't let that stop us - everybody still came and enjoyed the day enormously. The riders all did a fantastic job in their classes, and the horses (as always) were amazing!



This last year has been one of change, both in the formatting of some Groups and in some of the personalities who have been so formative in moving the North West Region along with such success, making room for new faces within our organisation. The highlight for me this year has been to my very first visit to the RDA National Championships gathering at Hartpury, in Gloucestershire. Some 500 participants attended the three day show this year, making it the largest event of its type in the world. On a brilliant Friday I witnessed the parade of the many and varied disciplines that RDA promotes within it's Groups, from vaulting, carriage driving, showing, endurance and of course dressage

horse riding. The day was made even more special as it was the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Riding for the Disabled and our Patron, The Princess Royal was in attendance as some of you may have seen on BBC's Countryfile programme last July. Princess Anne was interviewed by national treasure, John Craven, who himself was celebrating 30 years on the BBC!

I can certainly say that I look forward to visiting the National Championships next year, as the show ground and college at Hartpury provides a stunning backdrop for our celebration of all things RDA.



East Liverpool *What a year of change at East Liverpool RDA Group!*

Exciting times and amazing opportunities ahead for our Group!

We have moved to a new centre, made changes to suit our members, resurfaced our arena and most of all we have been busy making it our home!

The horses have settled and love the facilities and our new surroundings, our fantastic riders are back along with new faces from our waiting list. We have introduced 4 new horses to the Group who are doing an amazing job and love their new job already! We are growing!

By members request, we have added some chickens (from West Lancs chicken rescue) along with Bella and Bertie our ducks!

Fresh eggs!!

We have welcomed new trustees to our board and they are also settling in to RDA and experiencing the amazing work we do as volunteers.

We are delighted to be able to welcome World Champion and Paralympic gold medalist Nicola Tustain MBE as Ambassador for our Group. Nicola's knowledge and support for us as a group is a huge asset. The riders and members are delighted to have Nicola as part of our team.

We have really enjoyed spreading the word of the work our Groups do and raising awareness of all the activities in RDA recently on Ladies of Liverpool podcast. We owe a huge thanks to NCS for the amazing volunteers we have had helping us make over our fences and sensory areas.

So it's a busy time at East Liverpool - everybody is working together to grow and adapt our new centre.

We are excited for 2020 and to see our new horses develop in their new role within RDA!

We have also celebrated a huge milestone 80th birthday for **Pauline Edge** with a surprise party at the stables, balloons and glitter a plenty. It was a fantastic afternoon shared in celebrations for the **RDA 50th Birthday! Cheers! Happy Birthday!**

To add to celebrations we presented our annual 'Bill Burns Memorial Trophy' this time for dedication, commitment and fundraising efforts to Pauline Edge.

A huge thanks to Pauline for everything you do for us - you go above and beyond and your effort is amazing! Happy Birthday!



Formby & Southport

Many of our riders achieved for the first time their Grade 1 certificates and badges. These were presented to our participants at our annual presentation evening in July which this year included a BBQ. Each participant also received a trophy and rosette for their achievements throughout the year. These were presented to them by our special guests *Spiderman* and *Queen Elsa* who entertained everyone during the evening.

It has been a first for our new participants too. One of our participants - Josh, gained so much confidence that *his* first was actually letting go of his reins for a time while riding.

This year has been a year of firsts for our Group!



A first time for mounting a horse or pony and a first time for walking and trotting. For some of our more regular participants it has been a first for coming off the lead rein and a first for doing their rising trot. They have all gained in confidence. One of our trainee instructors is our first on the new Coaching Pathway and we wish her every success.

Throughout the summer months some of the horses and ponies we

use have been on holiday. Much appreciated by them I'm sure! A big thankyou to all the staff at *Bowler's Riding School* and also our wonderful volunteers who make Formby and Southport RDA so enjoyable for all our participants.

We look forward to 2020 and hope to bring more success to our Group and participants..

Foresters Horn *The past year was very eventful*

We were lucky enough to be chosen by the Mayor of Wirral to be joint beneficiaries of his charity fund.

This called for full participation in all the fund-raising events as well as holding two very successful events of our own, a fashion show hosted by M&Co and a Spring concert.

The Mayor and Mayoress attended one of our riding sessions and showed great interest in riders, horses and volunteers, so much so, that the Mayoress has promised to be one of our volunteers when she has finished her year in office. She will be a great asset to our Group.

The year culminated in a reception at the Town Hall, when we were presented with a substantial donation.

A very exciting development last year was the formation of a further group at Larton Riding School made up of six riders from Meadowside School. The group, led most successfully by Celia Parry, is going from strength to strength and we have a growing group of enthusiastic volunteers many of whom also help with our main Group, riding at Ness.

The year saw the retirement of our wonderful secretary Jean Heath. Jean has served us with

great dedication for close on twenty five years. She has exceeded her brief in raising funds by holding countless events in her beautiful home supported by her husband, John.

We are most indebted to Jean for all her hard work, efficiency and bonhomie!

She has succeeded by Rachel Williams, the daughter of one of our volunteers who offered her services. We are very fortunate to have secured Rachel's services as she is most able and enthusiastic as well as being a busy working mother of a one year old!



Crosby 2019 Yearbook

This year has been a busy one for Crosby RDA.

We have said Goodbye and Hello to some new horses. We sadly said goodbye to Gypsy who had only been with us a short time. KC who has been with us for 13 years will be following in the footsteps of Ellie to the Horse Trust in Oxfordshire for a well-earned retirement. Many of our carers and riders have grown up with KC and will be sad to see her go but also very happy that she will be eating grass to her heart's content in the Oxfordshire countryside. She may even bump into Ellie. Our newest recruit is Leo he is a 13:2 very sweet little cob and seems to be getting the hang of his new job very nicely indeed.

We held our very own Countryside Challenge in March for all of our riders, with plenty of rosettes all round. The sun was shining and our riders and their families loved the day and I think even our horses enjoyed the change too! Crosby Group held the Regionals this year with Groups from all over the Region attending. Our yard was transformed into a big event which took a lot of organising but again the sun was shining and a good day was had by all.

Our own open day is held every July where we have riding displays and lots of stalls, fun and games and this is a special time for all of our riders, families and volunteers to enjoy themselves at our lovely yard.

In August six of our riders went on our annual holiday to Clwyd Special Riding Centre. Riding though the water splash was one of their favourite things to do, as well as all of the extra horse riding and hacking out in the beautiful countryside.

Everyone enjoyed lots of eating and playing games in the evening too.



Beechley Stables *Our Group has had a very busy and exciting year so far!*

We attended the North West Regional Show in May with a team of 5 horses, 16 riders and 18 volunteers; a fabulous day was had by all. Following on from this, our team did themselves prouder at the National Championships where we took 4 horses, 8 riders in a total of 11 classes and 8 volunteers. Our riders competed in Dressage, Countryside Challenge, Endurance and Best Turned Out. All of the riders thoroughly enjoyed the experience, with some excellent scores and placing being achieved (over half of the riders who attended had never ridden away from home before, let alone taken part in a national competition). Whilst we were there we were also lucky enough to have one of our horses, Gulliver, take part in the RDA 50th Anniversary Parade.

Furthermore, our Group has received the brilliant news that one of our riders, Isabella Theophanous has won the RDA Participant of the Year Gala Award. Isabella has been riding with us since 2016, but has within the last 12 months been registered severely sight impaired. This award is testimony to how determined and inspirational Isabella is. We look forwards to her attending the RDA Gala Awards in October.

Our dedicated team have been working hard behind the scenes so that Beechley will hopefully be able to offer vaulting as a new activity in the near future. We are very excited to be adding this discipline to our weekly timetable for participants.

Finally...

as the RDA celebrates its 50th Anniversary, Beechley also turned thirty years old in September. It was founded in 1989 by Bill Beeley as a disabled riding centre and has flourished ever since!



Sarah Underwood

Participant's Report

Congratulations to all of our Participants on another brilliant year of RDA in the North West! I know that you have achieved many wonderful things, well done to you all! Thank you very much to everyone who made it possible, whether human or equine; team work definitely does make the dream work!

It was lovely to see and support so many Participants at our Regional Show, the Regional riding holiday and National Championships. It would be great if more Groups were willing and able to share horses and ponies with others to enable even more of our Participants to experience the thrill of representing their Group in competition and taking home some precious rosettes. Thank you to everyone who has generously offered and facilitated this magical experience so far.

Plans are already coming together for a Participants Event in 2020. I am always keen to hear anyone's ideas and suggestions as to how we can organise events and training with Participants at the fore, hopefully increasing the numbers who can attend and benefit from the experience.

Please keep sending me stories and photographs of your RDA adventures and achievements. With your permission we can share them on the North West website and social media platforms for everyone else to discover.

I am always delighted to receive invitations from Groups to visit during sessions and attend events; I really enjoy meeting you all, especially the horses and ponies. I usually learn something new at every visit so please do keep the invitations coming. I've been out of action this year following surgery but hopefully I'll be out and about visiting Groups again in 2020.

Happy driving, vaulting and riding, it's what you can do that counts!



... a brief moment of calm at CSRC in June 2019



REGIONAL SHOW

Fantastic photographs, as always, a big thank you to Barrie Dixon and Jennifer Hogarth





HARTPURY COLLEGE 2019





REGIONAL SHOW







NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS





HARTPURY COLLEGE 2019



I have thoroughly enjoyed spending time with the Greater Manchester Groups and I hope that I will be able to help them grow and continue to thrive.

It is by building good relationships with the Group Officers, their volunteers, supporters and participants that we can share ideas and support the Groups by offering relevant training opportunities and report to the Regional Committee so they can understand just exactly what is needed throughout each different County.

My experience at Regional and National level should be of great use in letting the Groups know what is available and how we can help them to ensure that an excellent service is maintained for all participants.

Each Group is operated independently and not only do they vary in size but also on location and facilities. I have attended their AGM's, Fun Days, Celebrations, Training Sessions and riding lessons during the year and look forward to many more happy days with the Groups in the coming year.



Pegasus *It has been an amazing few months at Pegasus RDA ...*

... as we continue to develop and grow. We have welcomed many new riders and volunteers, said goodbye to Sophia who emigrated to Australia, and finally purchased our own horse. We also enjoyed a very successful end-of-term pony morning with lots of participation from riders and parents and also went on our first summer hack.

We very much hope to see Katie in the medals next year along with more riders from Pegasus.

Pegasus Group is looking forward to the coming months where we will continue to develop and grow.

Cooper

Our new horse Cooper is jointly owned by Pegasus RDA and North Cheshire Equestrian Centre. He's a 7 year old cob who came to us from County Kildare in Ireland. Cooper is slowly learning the ropes with our more independent riders and will be joining our lessons from September. He is pictured here with our rider Matt.



Blue Peter

Our rider Katie and her lovely horse Boo were very fortunate to be selected to appear on Blue Peter in celebration of RDA's 50th year. Katie gave a fantastic interview and Boo behaved impeccably and it was lovely to meet Claire Balding. This was only the first of Katie's media performances as she went on to appear on Countryfile as part of their coverage of the RDA National Championships.

RDA Regionals and Nationals

Pegasus attended the Regional Show for the first time this year. Katie and Boo competed in Dressage and the Countryside Challenge. Fallon entered the arts and crafts competition. We were delighted when she won her class and Katie qualified for Nationals. Pegasus volunteers supported the event by helping out on the day doing all manner of things, from stewarding the Dressage arena to running the raffle stall.

Katie went on to do brilliantly at the Nationals and was awarded 3rd place in Freestyle To Music and also did very well in the Countryside Challenge and Dressage.



Saddleworth *A time of exciting change and development*

As well as celebrating the RDA's 50th Anniversary, 2019 has been a busy year for Saddleworth RDA. In March we moved stables and are now based at Diggle, in the heart of the Saddleworth villages, with access to an Olympic sized arena and an enviable moorland backdrop. The arena mirrors have become a key teaching tool, providing participants with visual clues and reinforcement of instructions. Our riders' faces light up when they see themselves riding and we get the biggest smiles!

In May, Tesco's Bags of Help scheme awarded our Group £4,000 to build an arena viewing shelter and we are well on with this project which will provide participants, families and volunteers a warm, dry place to meet and watch lessons. We also attended our first NW Regional Show and left full of enthusiasm to ensure Saddleworth riders and ponies are competing in next year's show.

In June, we took the plunge into loaning for the first time and a wonderful cob named Dylan became 'ours' on full loan. Obviously, this is a big commitment for the Group but it was a great decision as he is such an amazing pony, with a superb character and everyone loves him to bits! We also part loan another super cob called Ludo and Sheila Saner recently visited us to approve a very smart little piebald pony 'The Fantastic Mr T' (aka Tank).

Tank will join us on Saturday mornings and he completes our equine team.

We welcomed several new members to our highly committed

and professional team of over 20 regular volunteers. A more enthusiastic and engaging group of people you would be hard pushed to find and the unique bond between volunteers and participants is very moving to watch.



Every Wednesday and Saturday the Group delivers arena lessons, hacking and horse care sessions for our 20 participants, 9 of which are new to us since our move. The first wave of participants have completed their Proficiency Grade 1 Riding and Horse Care awards and we are ambitious for more!

The future is a very bright shade of purple for Saddleworth RDA!

Friends of Landlords

Friends of Landlords RDA continues to grow with both new helpers and riders joining our crew.

During March and April we sold raffle tickets to win fabulous Easter hampers which had been donated to us. We also held an Easter lunch on Easter Monday. Both these events raised £394!



In August we had a visit from Margret and Chris Pearmain who volunteer with a Riding for the Disabled Group in New Zealand.

It was a lovely morning discussing the similarities and differences between our Groups.

We are looking forward to next year!



LANCASHIRE County Chair's Report

Moving our County forwards to 2020

My role as Lancashire Country Chair came round a lot quicker than expected due to Pat's retirement and it is with great trepidation I am trying to follow on from her vast experience and knowledge.

This year we lost one of our Groups but we have gained a new Group, Phoenix. This Group is still small and in the process of

becoming fully established, but - oh boy, what an enthusiastic and determined committee it has!

West Lancs is readjusting following the sad loss of their Group coach Debbie Abraham. Debbie Harthill now takes over the role as Coach.

It has not been possible to visit all the Lancashire Groups but I have managed to at least to speak by phone to everyone, I am hoping to rectify that before summer comes.

Roll on 2020!

Dyneley Another great year!

We started the new season in May with a brand new mounting block and parking area. We would like to thank both BAAS Construction Ltd Burnley and Angie Henney for helping raising the money to fund this resource for our Group. We would also like to thank Gavin Fernavs and Dan Dower for carrying out the construction work to get this up and running ready for us to start the New Year. Being able to have this facility has now given our riders a safe environment to arrive, park and mount the horses for their weekly sessions.

We have welcomed some new riders this year to the Group, Rohann, Amelia, Joshua and Gary. Rohann has begun to build his core strength to help him to sit up with less and less assistance. Amelia is very happy in her seat and enjoying the new experience. Gary enjoys telling us about how he is going to spend the rest of his day drinking tea and playing music on his organ. Joshua is show casing his beautiful riding techniques and absorbing all information taught during the lesson

As always our riders are making excellent progress, always growing in confidence and independence. Thomas is building his independence by mounting onto Rocky now with little assistance. Sophie enjoys taking part in the game activities during her sessions. Archie continues to have a beaming smile while riding, as this always holds his volunteer's attention. Lucy is now getting on by herself and continues to show off her independence when riding. Becky is still loving her lessons when she feels the rain and wind in her face. Jamie now has an amazing seat and enjoys adding a song or two whilst he is taking part in his lesson. Jason enjoys the learning experience and has become very confident in answering questions when asked. Kaiden makes us laugh with his sense of humour throughout each session. Catherine continues to be a very able and experienced rider with lots of patience and skill. Abbie has been focusing on controlling and mastering her rising trot and Joe is more than happy each session to progress and lead other riders with his exercises before dismounting and enjoying a well-earned bacon butty. Our horses, Arnie, Raven and Rocky continue to be lovely and compassionate throughout the sessions, looking after each rider and their individual needs.

We would like say a thank you to Jenni Clough and Emily Bacon who have been teaching the sessions while training for their coaching certificates, so that they can set up their new Phoenix RDA Group in the North West.

At Dyneley we are always very appreciative of the support that we receive and we would like to thank everyone involved, as the Group being a success is down to many people who dedicate time, energy and passion into the group and it could not run without them.



Pendle

When I first began volunteering with Pendle Group, I never imagined that I would be carried around the arena at Whitemoor on the back of the Easter Bunny during Pendle Group RDAs' Fantastic Easter Egg Hunt!!



We had over 30 of our riders, with parents and carers throughout the morning, and thanks to Ruth and Eric at Whitemoor, we had the use of the indoor arena and had a maze of large straw bales where we had hidden clues to the treasure.

People brought home made cakes and treats and left with more Eggs than they could carry. I never envisaged that the role of a volunteer would entail me to be carried by the Easter bunny or to fill the boots of Santa at Christmas.

What a great journey so far!

Allan Black Pendle Group Coach.



Phoenix *New Group!*

We are a new Group that gained our charity number on the 21st of June this year, with the help of a lovely lady call Katherine from Springvale Farm in Accrington, Lancs. We have been able to run some pony care, stable management sessions and natural horsemanship lessons , but unfortunately we do not have the use of rideable ponies at present. We are looking for new premises to work from with suitable rideable ponies.

We do have a list of riders ready to start and volunteers eager to help out. I and two other ladies are currently working hard to complete the Coaching Training Course. Many thanks to Catherine Dower from the Dynley RDA Group for helping us out.

Jenni Clough Group Chair

2019
Welcome
Phoenix
NEW RDA
GROUP

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A HUGE thank you to Johnsons Printers of Nantwich for helping us to print our RDA news this year!

Seaside Venture Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of RDA

Here at Wrea Green Equitation Centre we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Riding for the Disabled Association, by having a musical ride for all our RDA riders. In true style a gold theme sweeps the yard from the gold balloons in the office highlighting the cupcakes and treats for all the riders, parents and volunteers to the horses and ponies in the school with gold ribbon accessories to add a bit of glamour to this special occasion. One pony in particular Ritchie a new addition to the Wrea Green Equitation Centre family who came to the centre from Ireland has won over many of our riders and is always in popular demand on RDA night.

The musical ride was enjoyed by all including our lovely team of volunteers who had fun showing off a few moves during the odd ABBA song, to help make the session more fun for all involved. Not only did the riders get to have a little boogie when riding but also the riders took part in the fun knowledge quizzes to help develop a range of skills and it is always funny to see the riders reaction when they are asked if the ponies might like to have cake and ice cream for tea. After each session each rider received a gold rosette as a well done for all that they have achieved and thank you for helping to celebrate the 50th anniversary for Riding for the Disabled Association.

Prior to this event most of our riders took part in our fun field ride over the summer where we took advantage of the great weather and filled the field full of fun riding activities. The riders truly loved being outside and taking part in a range of activities, from basic knowledge questions involving parts of the tack or what a horse might like to eat, to more advanced riding exercises such as steering one handed and learning how to signal on a road by working through our mini road that we set up in the field. All our riders and volunteers enjoyed being out in the sun shine and all learnt something new from the fun field activities.

An event all our riders are looking forward to is the Christmas party to get everyone in the Christmas spirit. All our riders and volunteers have fun and enjoy looking back at all the things that they have done throughout the previous year.



The event is full of laughter and fun times for all involved. All our riders always get excited when the special guest Father Christmas comes to see everyone to help celebrate in true Christmas style.

Midgeland Looking forward to next year

Despite an unfortunate spate of circumstances beyond our control, Midgeland Group has had a full year of riding and we are hoping for a much improved 2020 when we will be once more be able to show our prowess.

We held a very successful Safeguarding Course which was attended by three other local Groups.

A huge thank you to Sheila Saner for coming to join us and making the course so interesting and informative.

Isle of Man *A busy year!*

Just before the end of the summer term, a group of us went to Clwyd Special Riding Centre for a long weekend holiday. We hadn't been for three years, due to having to change venue for our riding sessions, getting settled in, finding the best format for successful lessons etc.

However, due to a chance encounter, we have been given a very generous yearly donation for holidays at Clwyd for 5 years by the Scheinberg Family. *How good is that!*

Our stay coincided with the Championships at Hartpury so we had the centre virtually to ourselves.

It was lovely to see and use all the new (to us) facilities that had been created and to familiarise ourselves again with what we already knew.

The horses and ponies, as ever, were absolutely brilliant and the staff so welcoming.

We managed, yet again, to choose good weather and had some great trips out to

Chester Zoo, Blue Planet and Llangollen canal boats.

It still amazes us what a difference these holidays make to the riders' abilities. The daily contact with their mounts and the interaction with each other and our willing volunteers. Grooming, tacking up, cleaning tack and even helping to muck out all go to make a totally different experience for them.

It is a full on few days and can be quite tiring but we all came home smiling and talking about our next visit.

We have already booked for next year!



Joan Waters
Chairman/Coach/Head Cook/Bottle washer!!

West Lancs *Some amazing successes - and a busy year ahead*

2019 has been a sad year for West Lancs RDA with the passing of their Coach Deborah Abraham. The Group had to suspend riding for a short time until a new Coach qualified with two further Coaches in Training being recruited. The Chairman and volunteers, Dave and Elsie Galt retired from the Group. *The West Lancs RDA wish to thank them both for all their hard work and wish them all the best for their future in Scotland.*

The West Lancs Group also wish to thank the Crosby RDA Group for their continuous support through the difficult period. As the saying goes, "We couldn't have done it without you". The Coaches and volunteers have all been working hard with all the riders preparing them for their RDA Grade 1 and 2 Riding Proficiency and a Grade 1 Horsecare. All the participants have been excited to show off their riding and horse skills and this culminated in Assessment Sessions at the end of the school Summer Term where eight participants were successful in gaining Grade 1 passes for Riding Proficiency, one Grade 1 pass in Horsecare, four Grade 2 pass in Riding Proficiency with two Endeavour Awards being given for milestone achievements. The riders were so proud of their achievements as were all the volunteers, parents, carers and teachers. Certificates for the school riders were presented in the school assembly which made the riders feel extra excitement. More assessments by the end of Summer Term 2020. All our new riders are started on the Tracker.

Our independent rider, Annie Wordley riding Brackenbank Flash Harry, attended the National Championship in Hartpury and was placed first in Class 33, Dressage Championships 72.37% and Class 83 and The Trefoil Guild Countryside Challenge (Independent) with a score of 85.00% Her Arts & Craft entry – Paint me a Picture – was awarded 5th place.

Great achievement Annie!

News is spreading about the successes of the Group and volunteer and rider enquiries are growing. The West Lancs RDA Group wish to thank the Parbold Equestrian Centre for supplying the amazing ponies, without whom we could not deliver our sessions.

Three cheers for Wilson, Spike, Nandy, Finbo, Willow and Moss.



Our Test Riding Day with John Robinson, held on behalf of RDA UK in September last year was very well received with 6 riders taking part. The day also began with a talk on classification, which was very helpful to our riders.

We had two training days earlier this year, one with Liz McGann (BD list 3 Dressage Judge) coaching, the other with Pam Rigby MBE coaching. We have been pleased to welcome new riders, Katie and Niamh from Pegasus, to our training as well as our regular riders.

We have encouraged as many riders as possible to take part in the RDA Dressage Anywhere classes, so it was great to see the increased numbers taking part in this year's classes and the Online championship. It was especially pleasing as Mary Leigh, one of the Mid Cheshire riders who regularly attends our dressage training, won her championship class. Cathy, also from Mid Cheshire, placed 3rd in her first dressage championship. Dressage anywhere classes were expanded to cover many more tests this year, they are open to all riders whether classified or not and riders can compete in any class. Jeanette again retained the Sidesaddle Association Disabled Rider Award, the Area 11 Dressage trophy and Veteran Trophy mostly based on points earned through Dressage Anywhere. She is urging RDA sidesaddle riders to take the SSA Disabled Rider Award from her now that her pony is partly retired.

It was disappointing that RDA UK decided to disband their committees as it is difficult to influence them without any representative there. If anybody does have any problems relating to dressage you can still let us know and we will see what we can do. We believe that the RDA National Dressage Conference will be held 8th March 2020. Look out for details on the RDA website.

The ID Para Championship took place for the first time in 2018. Riders were invited to take part based on their results at the Regional shows. Kassia (East Liverpool) riding Natalie Burns' pony Rio took third place and was the highest placed junior. More riders were invited to the 2019 event. Theo and Kassia (Beechley) were invited as was Annie (West Lancs). Annie took third place in a very closely contested class.

The numbers in the Dressage Classes at the Regional Show were much increased this year. Several new riders took part with many qualifying for the National Championships. In the juniors Isabella (Beechley), Katie (Pegasus), Daniel (Beechley), Kassia (East Liverpool), Solomon and Theodore (Beechley) all won their classes while in seniors Karen Dunne (Pendle), Annie Wordley (West Lancs) and Gary Paton (Crosby) took the top spots. Well done to them all. At the RDA National Championships,



Isabella was 3rd in the PVI walk class; Katie was 3rd in the grade 1-6 freestyle, Kassia was 3rd in the ID walk/trot while Annie took the Championship in the ID canter class.

Huge congratulations to them all on their well-deserved achievements.

Glenys Richardson - The President's Award

The President's Award is the most prestigious volunteer award within RDA and is awarded for service of an exceptional nature over a period of not less than 30 years.



Glenys Richardson was presented with The President's Award, which is a well deserved honour having been a supporter of RDA for over 30 years. Her quiet, tireless diligence has impacted at Group, County and Regional levels. She was a Trustee and Chair of the Wirral and Chester RDA Group for many years together with her husband Norman.

Glenys has been the Cheshire County Chair since 2013 and also stepped in to take over as Greater Manchester Chair for a few years. She efficiently takes and produces the minutes at our Regional Meetings which is regularly quite a feat in itself and attends all our events and usually controls the register and hands out the badges which means everyone knows her and she remembers all the names of the Volunteers and the Groups they come from. This is invaluable as she makes everyone feel welcome and part of the Region.

Glenys acts as Scorer and Secretary at our Shows and Qualifiers and nothing is ever too much trouble. Her quiet cheerful manner calms every situation and helps keep us all grounded and on track. She volunteers for Regional Holidays, turning her hand to whatever is required and although she rarely goes near the ponies she can always be relied on to be

an active member of the team especially in the kitchen.

Glenys is an unassuming key member of the North West Region team with unfailing reliability and dedication, together with her great understanding of all aspects of RDA (operational and managerial) and the requirements of our participants, coaches and volunteers, are gifts freely offered and gladly accepted by all throughout the Region.

The Region are proud that Glenys has been recognised at this level.



Isabella Theophanous - Rider of the Year! RDA Rider of the Year Gala Award Nomination

Isabella takes part in therapeutic riding sessions weekly at **Beechley**. She has been attending since 2016 and comes each week with an infectious smile on her face!

Isabella has a rare congenital disorder called Oliver MacFarlane Syndrome and this has resulted in her being registered severely sight impaired in recent months.

Within her everyday life Isabella has faced many setbacks. However, being able to continue taking part in RDA activities has proven to be a coping mechanism for her and her positive attitude amazes us every week.

One goal in particular that Isabella set herself was to be able to volunteer with us and she was unbelievably eager to turn 14 so that she could start. Now, she comes every week for an hour after school with her best friend to help feed the horses and prepare the yard for the next day. Doing this allows Isabella to continue feeling socially included and allows her to escape her everyday worries.

When Isabella began volunteering, her Mum stayed close by as she felt insecure and didn't have the confidence to ask other volunteers for help. This is no longer the case; Mum waits outside in the car for her and she still comes



even if her best friend is unable to. Her confidence has grown enormously and she is able to feel independent by volunteering. Her determined attitude has allowed her to achieve this goal.

Horse riding is currently the only sport and recreational activity that she does. She is unable to take part in physical education at school but she says "that is ok because I do horse riding". Due to this, Isabella agreed to try to achieve her goal of being able to show off what she can do by attending the RDA North West Qualifier this year. She worked incredibly hard for months leading up to this.

When I put the idea of attending Regionals to her mum she said "Why would you choose Bella?" - to us it was only right for her to have the opportunity. This proved to be a milestone for her, as she qualified for National Championships and placed 3rd in her class this year. We have seen a positive transformation in Isabella's self belief as a result.

Isabella is an inspiration to everybody at Beechley. It is a pleasure to know her and be part of her incredible RDA journey.

CARRIAGE DRIVING

North Meols Carriage Driving

Where have the last 12 months gone?

After our usual winter break, driving sessions began again in April and are due to finish again for the winter. This year, we have had the maximum number of drivers that we can accommodate meaning that our two ponies have worked hard and are no doubt looking forward to having some time off, the picture shows them last winter with their friend Tanis, Jake is on the left and Charlie on the right. We take great care to ensure that neither Charlie nor Jake are overworked so that they remain sound and happy in their work and we're all delighted to be able to say that Charlie has again shown no sign of his previous leg problem and has remained sound. He is going better than ever and that Jake has yet again defied his advanced years and continues to demonstrate the energy of a pony half his age. We would love to be able to take on more drivers but unfortunately because we're only a small Group this isn't possible which is such a shame because we have so many enquiries and it's very difficult to have to say that all we can do is add them to our waiting list.

Throughout our driving season the weather has been very mixed which has meant that Brenda, our Group Organiser has been kept even busier than she is normally ringing round drivers, carers and volunteers cancelling sessions and trying to rearrange them where she can. Unfortunately because of the weather and the resulting state of the field we were unable to have our annual Open Day. We were extremely disappointed that we had to cancel it because we enjoy being able to demonstrate our skills and to socialise with family and friends but the going meant that it was unfair on Charlie and Jake, too bumpy for our drivers and too unsafe for everyone to walk on so we felt we had no choice.

As well as the benefit that our drivers get from actually driving, we also organise social events during the year where everyone - drivers, carers and volunteers can get together. For one of our Group outings this year we were invited to 'Rebel Flower Farm' in Orrell. One of our volunteers Mandy and her husband Pat actually live on the lovely small holding along with their son Liam (one of our drivers), ponies, goats and hens! We were kindly welcomed in and did 'the tour'. We went into the paddock with the goats and met the recently born kid called Sunny who was so inquisitive and made us all laugh. Mandy gave us a talk about the organic ethos of growing food; importance of nurturing soil etc. Her business partner, Martin also showed us around the ongoing



Jake and Charlie



Billy

development of orchard and surrounding areas. We then had a lovely picnic in the cosy lounge and Liam had made some tasty soup and snacks, an extra treat! The ponies are allowed 'free rein' (excuse the pun) whereby they can wander along various paths within the farm, a great idea. We all thoroughly enjoyed our day out there and because not everyone was able to go we are thinking of making a return visit.

One of the ponies at Rebel Flower Farm is Billy who we are hoping will soon be ready for his assessment so that he can be used by the Group. He is the ideal type for RDA as you can see from this photograph showing him harnessed up to the Fenix carriage. He is coming on well and we're hoping that it won't be long before he can take some of the workload off Charlie and Jake.

One of the events that most definitely combines learning to drive with a social side is the RDA Driving Holiday at Escrick Park. This year Liam went to the holiday and thoroughly enjoyed himself. I asked Liam to send me a quote about what it meant to him and this is what he wrote. "The York holiday is a brill trip

to go on. There is so much to do and I learned lots from all the different coaches which really helped my driving. I enjoyed meeting all the drivers and helpers. Such a fab week to go on". A big thank you to everyone involved in organising this holiday and I'm sure when you read what Liam has to say you will agree that it was all worthwhile. Finally, a big thank you to all our volunteers for their hard work and to our drivers for their continuing enthusiasm.

Here's to the next 12 months.

Red Rose Carriage Driving

Another busy year for Red Rose Carriage Driving

During the winter when the weather wasn't suitable for driving, stable management took it's place and Jenny and Christina both passed their Tests 1 and 2 with flying colours during the RDA Carriage Driving holiday in Yorkshire. Jenny also qualified for the National Championships and was kindly offered the opportunity to drive a Horse from the Forest of Dean Group. Having only driven Lola once before she did really well to come 4th in the Novice class.

Jenny and Jane have also attended Para Carriage Driving courses in Gloucestershire in the spring and autumn and Jenny was awarded the rosette for Star Driver.

Unfortunately on our 50th anniversary we were unable to do the planned driving display

due to the weather but everyone enjoyed the hot pot lunch indoors and a bit of fun afterwards.

The Group again held the Alpaca Day which is our main fundraiser and a really good day out for all who attended. We also had a visit from a group of riding instructors keen to see what we do and to offer their support. They really enjoyed watching Jenny's father, George, trying and failing to beat Jenny's time round the cones.

The sessions end with everyone getting together for tea and cakes made by the ladies, with fruit and veg collected from Jane's garden the previous week and always delicious.



Manx Carriage Driving 4 Disabled

Twelve months of mixed fortunes

The Committee for the past year, indeed several years, has worked hard to maintain the momentum of the Charity. I, as Chairman, thank the Committee and those volunteers working outside the Committee, for all the hard work, energy and time they have given to our Charity. Since election last AGM, our Committee has worked to move the charity forward to put in place funding, policies, procedures, social and driving sessions to allow the continued development of our charity. I believe the Committee have fulfilled their obligations.

The past 12 months have been full of mixed fortunes, having to pay high vets fees to try and keep our ponies fit for work, in the end losing a pony, reducing our pulling power to two and at times to one. Our star pony, Skip, has kept things moving!

It has also been difficult to get sufficient volunteers for sessions due to personal commitments, ill health and work. In a way this also applies to our Coaches with changes to their circumstances, it has become quite difficult to muster two outfits for our sessions.

Our aim is to have three ponies and three carriages for each of the Friday and Sunday sessions with the support of our five coaches.

This has not been possible. However, with your valiant effort and the support of our valued sponsors we may be able to achieve this in the next 12 months.

Through out the year our volunteers and supporters have been fundraising with Open Days Bag Packing and Coffee Mornings. Fundraising is very important to enable us to maintain the high service which is our duty to provide for our service users!

Arne Le Dahn
Group Chair



This year has flown by again!



I have spent a great deal of my time this year at the RDA's fabulous new venue at Lowlands Equestrian Centre, so much so, my car knows its own way there, I'm sure! I have been attending numerous training days working on the new "Coaching Pathway" - it's a fantastic learning opportunity for coaches at every level. I have delivered several Pre-Coach Training Days within our Region, which I'm hoping has inspired many volunteers to take up the "coaching reins".

The system of reviewing the coaches has changed slightly, and we have all been feeling our way around this change, but I have had positive comments and outcomes.

I was happy to judge the Showjumping event at our Regional Show back in May at Crosby, as usual, the standard was high, and the sun shone throughout the day.

We enjoyed a wonderful holiday weekend at Clwyd in June, it's always a joy to be part of this happy event and to be able to spend it with our riders and our brilliant volunteers who give up so much of their time willingly.

Katie and Boo were the stars of the show when they appeared on the legendary children's TV show, Blue Peter in June, and I was honoured to be asked to help on the day, I must admit

that the day was fraught with challenges, as we were filming in Media City in Manchester with crowds, cameras, boom microphones, a tramline, and a young horse and rider who had to give a performance of dressage when the programme aired LIVE at 5pm..... So, no pressure!

Claire Balding who interviewed Katie was the consummate professional, and after a couple of nerve-wracking rehearsals, we went live on air with not a hoof out of place, what a relief! It just goes to show what a well-oiled unit the RDA is! And yes - I got my very own Blue Peter Badge !!

I attended the National Championships in July, it was wonderful to be able to take part in the 50th Birthday Celebration Parade, which went perfectly to plan, well done Sheila who organised this massive undertaking!

Well done to all our fabulous North West riders who came away from the weekend with many awards, I'm very proud of every one of you!

As we enter the Autumn, this is the season for conferences which are always good to attend as there are inspirational speakers and new skills to learn, please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any training needs, or you would like me to deliver you a specific training



day, or if you would like to move on with your own Coaching Pathway, I'd be happy to help!

A life well lived is a beautiful thing!

Kate Bailey BHSAI RDAC



A huge thank-you to everyone in the North West Region for allowing me to be the Regional Chair for so many years. It has been an honour and a pleasure to visit all the Groups and I have made so many wonderful friends within the RDA family, not just in the North West, but across the UK. I am sure that Gill Petty will enjoy the role and I wish her every success in leading our Region forward into the future. I am so grateful for such a joyous farewell celebration at our Event at Nunsmere Hall Hotel where Alastair Stewart the broadcaster, spoke inspirationally about his involvement with RDA.

I have had some amazing experiences and opportunities representing the Region at National Events and Meetings. The National Championships are always a highlight of the year when you meet participants and volunteers from all over the Country at one huge event where everyone just has the same goals and enthusiasm.

Attending Supra Regional and other Regional Conferences in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and across England has been inspirational and has shown me how totally diverse and successful



our organisation has become. The hours that volunteers dedicate to RDA and the high standards at Group level right up to our Paralympic riders is overwhelming.

As a Director of the newly opened National Training Centre at Lowlands Equestrian Centre in Shrewley, Warwickshire I am proud to have been involved from the very first idea. It has been very satisfying to see all the plans and ideas come to fruition and our National Office is now settled and established at the new home of RDA.

The 50th Anniversary has been celebrated across the Country with small Group activities right up to large prestigious events. I organised a Reception at the Palace of Westminster with the help of several Members of Parliament for the RDA Board and sponsors. Taking part in a live Blue Peter programme with the Region and Katie Reilly, one of our young riders, was exciting and Clare Balding was as always relaxed and knowledgeable. The Countryfile TV Programme was filmed at Hartpury College during the Championships where I organised the Anniversary Parade. Every Region and all the activities and disciplines in RDA were represented. It was fun and lively and an opportunity to showcase just how broad and diverse we are.

At the National AGM in Scotland I was proud to be appointed as an Honorary Life Vice President of RDA UK by HRH Princess Royal who is the Charity's President. This is an honour that is bestowed on very few volunteers and

Sheila Saner HLVP



is certainly something to live up to following in the footsteps of some very accomplished volunteers.

Thank you to RDA for enriching my life and giving the opportunity to help others while having fun and making so many life long friends.

Jane Guilford - NW Regional Physiotherapist

Physiotherapy Report

Para Equestrian Classifiers Course

In February, Jane and Lucy braved the icy weather and travelled down to the BEF headquarters in Warwickshire, to undertake the Para Equestrian classifiers course. This was an intense 2 days – with a lot of practical assessment practice and some (initially) bewildering maths calculations! The course was completed with submission of further practise assessments (– many thanks to our willing guinea pigs!)

HETI UK Spring Forum

Jane attended the HETI UK Spring forum, held in Doncaster, in April. The theme for the day was the need to rethink the approach to research into therapeutic riding.

The traditional approach to providing evidence of effectiveness, is based on Randomised Controlled Trials – which were originally designed to study the effects of drugs! They require large numbers of people (hundreds)

who all share a range of narrowly defined criteria – a model which definitely does not fit therapeutic riding, with smaller numbers of very diverse participants!

Discussion took place around the use of rider centred case studies as a far more appropriate approach to research, and the day was spent exploring potential case study designs. Hopefully in the future it will be easier to “prove” the amazing results we see achieved by RDA!

CPTRH Conference

This event was held at the Avon RDA Centre in Bristol, in May. The program included presentations by Sophie Christianson and Laurentia Tan about their early experiences with RDA and subsequent journeys to international competition. The second day included an excellent presentation and practical demonstration by Russell Guire of Centaur Biomechanics, with some very

interesting ideas to take away and put into practice.

North West Regional Holiday

In June, we were invited to attend the Saturday at Clywd SRC. It was really enjoyable working with the riders and coaches, and very interesting seeing the other riding activities. (- and the cakes were amazing!)

Hippotherapy

The first Hippotherapy session is now up and running, based at Beechley RDA stables. For any specific information, please contact Lucy West.

For more general information on Hippotherapy, please see the “Hippotherapy: FAQ” sheet: myrda.org.uk

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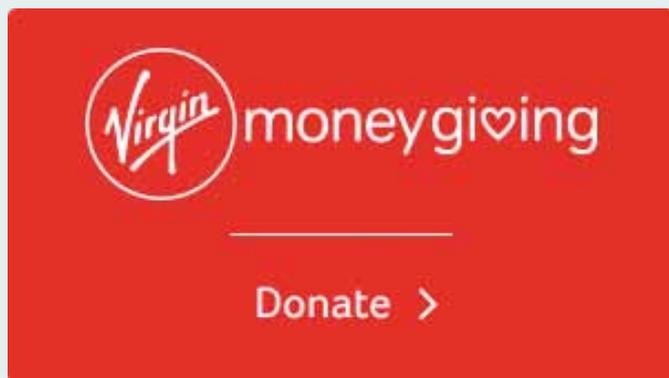
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 RDA North West

The RDA North West Region operates under the umbrella of RDA UK (Charity Number 244108), however, as a Region we fundraise independently for the funds needed to undertake the work we do including publishing this RDA NW News. The Regional Team consists solely of volunteers. Donations make a huge difference and we are so grateful for your support.

Donations can be made using the donation button on our webpage www.rdanorthwest.org.uk/donate.

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