

CHRISTMAS 2014

We are pleased to report that Riding for the Disabled, Jersey Group has had another busy and successful year at Le Claire Stables. All our rides are full – every weekday afternoon during the term time - and we continue to have enquiries from adults and young people wishing to come and ride.

The Group continues to improve our profile and access to details, but we had realised that potential helpers, riders and those wishing to contribute financially, were finding it difficult to find RDA Jersey on the internet. Thanks to initial encouragement and guidance from Nuala Greenwood to a small working party discussing the various forms of social media, Trish Parkin our Treasurer, offered to organize and design a fabulous website for our Group – www.rda.org.je – and, in the few months that it has been active, this has generated a lot of interest. A huge thank you to her for all the hours spent on this project, bringing it to a successful conclusion and for continuing to monitor it and update it.

Becky Monk, our RDA County Instructor, visited twice during the year. The first visit was to assess Kellie Symonds, Wednesday instructor, for her RDAGI certificate. The second visit later in the year in May was for regular assessments of instructors and for all instructors to pass a new section for the RDAGI qualification. All instructors passed and Kelly has now received her full RDAGI qualification. In November 2013 Cathy Fricker and Charlotte Bashforth attended a Training Day on Grading 1 and 2 at Lakefield Equestrian Centre. They both found this very beneficial and rewarding and this year 5 children from the Friday ride have passed their Grade 1 and also 3 from the Thursday ride, plus 3 have achieved an Endeavour badge. Grade 1 was also taken by 5 of the Tuesday adults and 1 achieved an Endeavour award.

All instructors have now completed their Level 1 Safeguarding Course in July, which is a requirement for all instructors, and many volunteers have also attended St. John's Ambulance First Aid courses.

RDA Jersey were invited by The Pony Club of Jersey to take part in their 85th Anniversary Summer Show. 15 young riders from Thursday and Friday rides (Bel Royal School, Mont Nicolle School, Mont a l'Abbe School) took part in a Handy Pony class riding at their best and really enjoying the experience taking part in a Horse Show. Many thanks to Lizzie Bois for organising the afternoon and to our many volunteers who helped. The children were delighted to welcome our Patron, Lady Gene McColl, and her husband, His Excellency General Sir John McColl, who presented the rosettes and special T-shirts to the participants, and spent time talking to all the riders and their families.

A group of six children from Bel Royal School and their carers (mothers) went to The Calvert Trust on Exmoor for a Horse Experience Weekend from 11th - 14th July 2014. This was the second visit RDA Jersey has organised and the group had a wonderful time. They enjoyed the travel over and visit to a Wildlife Park on the way but worked very hard on their riding over the Saturday and Sunday. They improved their riding skills enormously, most riding off the leading rein on the final day and perfecting their rising trot. They also learnt how to carriage drive, enjoyed a hack in the countryside, how to run a stable and hands on stable management. Many thanks to The Clarkson Family Trust and the Lions Club of Jersey for their donations enabling the party to enjoy this opportunity.

We continue to hold our annual bridge afternoon for fundraising. This is firmly in peoples' diaries now so we had a full house and everyone enjoyed the delicious tea.

Rural Magazine and Channel TV have both paid us visits this year in January. CTV spent a long time filming the ride and interviewing riders, instructors and helpers and after the film was shown we received many enquiries regarding volunteering. The article in Rural has given a wider circle of people a much clearer understanding of the work we do with the riders and has also resulted in new volunteers.

We are very fortunate to have a wide range of support across the community who raise funds for us and without this we could not continue to provide free lessons to our riders; we are extremely grateful for every donation, large and small, so that we can continue the work on the island.

Lastly we would like to thank all the members of the Committee for their continued help and support and all our volunteers who turn up regularly every week to allow our riders to experience the benefits of learning to ride.

Cathy Fricker and Rachel Andrews