



**Riding for the Disabled Association
Incorporating Carriage Driving**

RDA CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2018

It has been another busy year for the Jersey Group of Riding for the Disabled as we are still growing with requests for both adults and children still being received. We are at full capacity in all our ten rides spread over the weekdays during the school term and we maintain a waiting list to ensure that we can offer the therapeutic riding to those who it would benefit.

We continue to provide rides for Mont a l'Abbe and Bel Royal Schools, at the later part of the week, together with extra rides for primary school unable to come with their school, and Monday and Tuesday rides cater for our adult riders. The new rides started at the end of last year with Rouge Bouillion and Haut Vallee school have been very rewarding for all concerned, with a new connection with Grainville School starting at the start of this Autumn term. Having children from secondary schools is a new departure for RDA Jersey but instilling confidence, raising self-esteem and achieving goals, together with the physio riding provides, is at the core of all we do, and is just as important from teenage youngsters. It has been wonderful to see novices, who sometimes turn up feeling very nervous about the whole activity, blossom into skilled riders and we hope it will help them in other aspects of their lives. The Haut Vallee riders were graded during the year and achieved both their grade 1 and 2 riding certificates; it was a pleasure to see the smile of achievement on their faces.

The new sand school funded by our benefactors and RDA Jersey towards the end of 2017 has reaped benefits during 2018, especially in the early months of the year when huge amounts of rainfall were experienced. We were delighted that the school itself remained dry and usable which meant fewer rides were cancelled, as long as the rain and wind held off during the rides themselves! We cannot underestimate the effect the new surface has meant to our volunteers, ponies and riders who now enjoy a dust free environment with a comfortable feeling under foot. What a joy for us all, we thank all who were involved in the funding ensuring that RDA Jersey will continue doing its work for many years, and we were delighted to welcome our Patron, Lady Dalton, to our headquarters in October to celebrate the completed project.

Our Regional and County Coaches from RDA visited the Group in June again this year to review our instructors and passed all five existing Group Coaches together with two new coaches, Sue Holland and Louise Bailey. We are delighted that their commitment and willingness to our work has been to take on this new responsibility with us, moving up from volunteer status, and hope that they enjoy the rewards in their new roles. The UK coaches were present at every ride during the week watching the improvement in many of our riders and examined Leanne, an adult rider, at Grade 3 level; we were all thrilled that she passed both Riding and Horsecare at this higher level.

BSJA kindly invited us bring a group of riders to one of their summer shows and on Saturday, 14th July we took a group of 12 children to show off their skills. The riders and ponies looked superb on a sunny afternoon and all the children concentrated and rode very well. Spectators, including their families, enjoyed watching their delight as they accomplished the handy pony course and receiving their rosettes at the end of the ride. It is a great event for these riders to be part of a mainstream horse show, managing a new environment and hearing the commentator encouraging their work and is a huge experience for them all.

Another successful Bridge Tea afternoon was held in February at Trinity Parish Hall with all 20 tables being sold and, together with the raffle we raised over £1,500. This has become a very popular annual event due, possibly, to the delicious sandwiches and cakes prepared by our volunteers. We are looking forward to 14th February 2019 which is the date for next year's bridge afternoon.

Once again, we must acknowledge the tremendous hard work and support that all our volunteers give RDA Jersey as it would be impossible to operate without their help. Coaches, Assistant Coaches and those in training are also vital so many thanks to them as well. Finally, we thank our sponsors and benefactors, large and small, who recognise the work we do and donate funds during the year to ensure that we can continue the therapeutic riding which is so beneficial for mind, body and soul.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year

Cathy and Rachel
Chairman and Joint Group Organiser, RDA Jersey

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