

RDA CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2015

We are delighted that Riding for the Disabled, Jersey Group has had another busy and successful year at Le Claire Stables as we continue to hold adult rides on Monday and Tuesday and children's rides on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; we still have a double ride on a Wednesday and towards the end of this year an extra ride was added on a Thursday.

The RDA Jersey Group website introduced last year is proving extremely successful and we have a number of enquiries through the site – both from new volunteers and those wishing to financially support our work – and it is a good way for all involved to keep up to date with our activities.

In June 2015 Becky Monk, our RDA Country Instructor, and her husband, Mark Cuncliffe, came to visit our group for the annual assessments. We had quite a number to do so they stayed for a week and we were delighted that all instructors passed with flying colours, with Lizzie Bois obtaining her RDA Group Coach badge and certificate. A training morning was held at the RJAHS during their visit which was well attended; Becky always has a wealth of information and knowledge to pass on and everyone enjoyed participating with the Makaton signing session taken by Mark. Sadly we have to report that Kellie Symonds, Wednesday's instructor, has returned to full time work and until we can find and train a new instructor to replace her, this ride will be taken either by Donna, Cathy or Rachel. In connection with training, Cathy Fricker and Lucy Johnson attended an instructor's course at Lakefield, Cornwall, where they were able to listen to talks on autism and watch rides and found it very informative and enjoyable.

The Group made a decision to purchase a set of five jumps and extra trotting poles in the New Year and these jumps are approved by RDA National re safety which means that they can be left in the sand school whilst we hold RDA rides. Although purchased by RDA Jersey, the jumps have been loaned to Donna at Le Claire Stables for her use to ensure that our valient volunteers no longer have to move and replace the old wooden jumps and wings before and after a ride; this has made a huge difference to the preparation of a ride and we are grateful to Channel Island Lines for the free transport of the jumps to Jersey.

On 6th March the group had a visit by Nicky Bowden, ACTPR, which was sponsored by the Lions' Club of Jersey. Nicky held a training session for our volunteers in the morning and in the afternoon rides were held at the indoor riding school at Les Marais so that adults and children riders could benefit from her assessment as an equine physio. This was an extremely valuable session and instructors, volunteers and riders all benefited from her day trip to the island.

We were delighted to have been chosen by Anne and Marcus Binney as the second charity to benefit from the fundraising from the Opera Festival held at Domaine des Vaux. This was a wonderful opportunity for Rachel and Cathy to speak to the audience on the Wednesday evening about the work of RDA Jersey and we are delighted to report that the event raised a substantial amount.

In June, Cathy Fricker took over a group of Thursday riders (Mont a l'abbe School) to The Calvert Trust in Exmoor for a Horse Experience Weekend (12-15 June). This was the third visit that RDA Jersey has organised and the group had a wonderful time. For one child it was the first time he had been on an airplane and stayed away from home and his mother, and the school, said that after the visit they could not believe the positive change in him. The facilities are incredible at The Calvert Trust and they all enjoyed the horse activities.

The Annual RDA Bridge Tea afternoon at Trinity Parish Hall was a sell out afternoon with 80 players enjoying sandwiches and cakes whilst raising funds for our group and the money will be used to replace all the riding hats by the end of 2016 with new hats which is necessary under the new safety guidelines decided by RDA National. RDA Jersey were also nominated by Waitrose to benefit from one of the Monthly Community Support schemes and once again The Lions Club of Jersey chose RDA Jersey as one of the charities to benefit from the 2015 Swimathon.

RDA Jersey are extremely fortunate to benefit from such support both financially from companies, individuals and clubs and also from the enthusiasm of our volunteers; we could not survive without both these elements and are very grateful for it so we can continue to work with our riders to improve their self-esteem, posture and mobility.

Wishing all our supporters and friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Cathy Fricker and Rachel Andrews