



RDA CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2017

RDA Jersey are delighted to report another very successful year increasing again the number of riders during our term time schedule thanks to our hard-working band of volunteers. There is now extra ride on a both on Thursday and Friday afternoon for groups from Rouge Bouillon and Haut Vallee schools and we provide the benefits of therapeutic riding to over 60 adults and children rides. We have increased the original five rides to nine per week over the last couple of years and all our rides are full with waiting lists

We are very fortunate to have a loyal band of volunteers who support the work and have welcomed new helpers this year but also said goodbye to some. We were sorry that Lizzie Bois, Monday instructor, retired due to a change in her working week but we delighted encourage two current volunteers, Helen Dorey and Louise Bailey, to train as instructors. Long serving volunteer and past committee member, Liz le Fondre, who had received her 25 year Service award last year from the National Chairman, stood down this year for a well-earned rest. We have had many volunteers reaching five, ten, fifteen year milestone stones but special mention must be made of Monique Tait and Gill Luce who are a couple of years from completing forty years continual volunteering weekly on a Wednesday afternoon this year. We thank all our volunteers for their support in helping with tirelessly and giving more of their valuable time.

In a busy year the Group sent two parties to The Calvert Trust on Exmoor and, for the first time, this opportunity was offered to the adult riders. A group of five went with their carers in May escorted by Tanya Bates, Tuesday instructor, and she was able to see them enjoying the full riding facilities at the centre. In July a party of six children and their parents/carers went for the Horse Riding Experience Weekend and were able to hack in the countryside, learn how to carriage drive as well as work in the sand school and the stables. It is a wonderful and enriching holiday for both the riders and their helpers and thanks to The Clarkson Trust and The One Foundation for helping with the cost of the holidays.

The annual bridge afternoon fundraiser was held in February, which was a great success at St. Lawrence Parish Hall and raised £1,850; a tremendous amount bolstered by a generous donation. The money raised has been used to purchase new riding equipment needed for our riders – boots, sweatshirts, new colour reins and stirrup leathers and safety stirrups.

Becky Monk, our Regional Instructor, and her husband Mark, County Instructor, again came over from our South West Region in June to carry out the annual examination of our instructors whilst also providing a practical training session for our volunteers. Their visit was during the hottest week of the year in June and instructors passed their assessments, but unfortunately the sand school at Le Claire Stables did not meet the strict health and safety standards of RDA National, which are higher than normal, and the group was told it could not be used. RDA Jersey have been very happy at Le Claire Stables and, as there is no other suitable place to base our Group, a committee decision was made to try and raise the necessary funds rather than disband the group. Quotes were gathered and legal documents were put in place to protect the charity's investment in the riding stables, then an appeal went out to past supporters. We were delighted that the original quotes were considerably reduced due to AA Langlois only charging their work at cost, Profreight delivering the specialised sand surface free from Portsmouth and Douglas Pryce donating his time as project manager. Thankfully two private trusts came forward to over three quarters of the cost and RDA Jersey were able to use money from reserves to complete the finance which was an enormous relief. The work started in October and we are very pleased to report that the sand school is now in use again.

Those of us who work with our riders are constantly surprised by the far-reaching effects achieved by the therapeutic riding provided by RDA; core muscles are strengthened, mobility and balance is improved whilst increasing self-esteem, motivation and communication skills. We are relieved and delighted that the new school sand at Le Claire Stables has been completed and trust that the Group are now fitter and stronger so that the future of RDA Jersey is secure of many years to come.

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

Cathy and Rachel
Chairman and Joint Group Organiser, RDA Jersey