



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PETER FELGATE

As this is the 50th year of the RDA I thought you might like to know how our dressage competition started out. In the 1960s there were about eight groups. Some of these just led riders around with helpers either side, but a few of us could see that some riders were capable of achieving a great deal more including dressage. The riders rode the Prelim 5 test at trial events. If they were able to complete a short canter in the test they were automatically awarded a mark of five. Then the Spastic Society, now renamed Scope, arranged for us to have an event at Buckingham Palace Royal Mews, with Princess Anne in attendance. We invited groups from all over the country. The competition consisted of three elements; a prelim dressage test, a small showjumping course and gymkhana races. Bradbourne supplied all the ponies. Everyone enjoyed a day in the Royal Mews!

After the pilot event we decided to run dressage tests at a regional level. We were offered the use of the grounds at Hever Castle by Lady Astor. We introduced a newly compiled lead rein test. We then moved to Arundel Castle as the guests of the Duchess of Norfolk. Qualifiers from regional events competed at the National Championships. Adult riders were also able to participate in the Riding Club Championships.

“ THIS LED OVER TIME TO THE CURRENT SYSTEM USED IN THE PARALYMPIC GAMES ”



“ BRADBOURNE SUPPLIED ALL THE PONIES FOR THE COMPETITION. THEY THOROUGHLY ENJOYED A DAY IN THE ROYAL MEWS! ”



**50
YEARS**

Our own Championships then moved to Hartpury where they remain to this day. I was, also, travelling country-wide advising on setting up and running new groups. In Holland I was invited to attend the Handicapped Games to see different sports realising ridden dressage as a possible addition. This led over time to the current system used in the Paralympic Games today which I was able to attend in 2012. I was proud of the standard achieved by all the competitors. It has all come a long way from hairy ponies, borrowed hats and muddy wellies!

Peter Felgate National Consultant Instructor (Retired!)

WHO'S WHO ?

FIND OUT WHO DOES WHAT IN BRADBOURNE RDA



PRESIDENT

PETER FELGATE

TRUSTEES

CHAIRMAN: SARAH FENN
TREASURER: JON GRAY
ALYSON MCKEE, DOUG WILLIAMSON, SARA HOWE

SE REGIONAL COACH

JENNA LEIGHT (WITH FIONA DENT)

GROUP RIDING COACHES

AMANDA CLARK, ANN FROST, DOUG WILLIAMSON, EMMA JOHNSON, GILLY ROPER,
JACKIE ROBERTSHAW, JENNA LEIGHT, JILL TOWERS, KATE FREDOU, SHEILA GRACE,
SOPHIE HONNYWILL, VICKI WHITE

RIDING COACHES IN TRAINING

CHARLOTTE RUDDEN, JANE RENAUD, LEE WALKER, TINA FREEDMAN

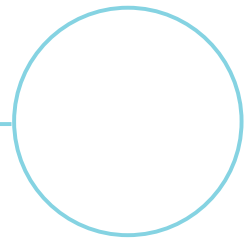
CARRIAGE DRIVING ASSESSORS

DEBBIE TATTON, SARA HOWE

GROUP CARRIAGE DRIVING COACHES

DEBBIE TATTON, DONNA SIMMONS, SHARRON KILPATRICK, WENDY FIELDER

GLOSSARY



SOMETIMES PEOPLE ASK ABOUT CERTAIN EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR SO HERE ARE A FEW POINTS TO HELP EXPLAIN SOME OF THE REGULAR EVENTS:

RIDING EVENTS:

South East Challenge Day held at Felbridge Showground, Surrey

An opportunity to experience an external riding show environment and take part in fun gymkhana activities- sports day on a pony. Usually in May.

South East Region Dressage Qualifying Event held at Hickstead, West Sussex

Different rider dressage classes, some with leading rein, some without – demonstrating accuracy of riding around the arena against a list of instructions where to go, when to stop, and whether to walk or trot, having practised at Bradbourne. Winning some classes gives eligibility to go to the RDA National Dressage competition in Hartpury. Usually in May.

National RDA Championships at Hartpury College, Gloucestershire

Top level competition for RDA participants involving hundreds of competitors who have won dressage and show jumping classes at their Regional Qualifying events. Also includes carriage driving and vaulting classes. Now incorporates Endurance riding. Usually in July.

Endurance/Pleasure Ride at Underriver Farm, Sevenoaks

Riding specific distances (1km, 2km, 3km, 5km) at walk, trot or canter depending on the ground conditions and participant ability, either with leading rein or without. Timed, but can also provide the opportunity for an informal ride in different surroundings from those at Bradbourne. Usually in June.

DRIVING EVENTS:

Le Trec event at Bradbourne Riding and Training Centre, Sevenoaks

A driving event which tests the abilities of the drivers by using various activities including halt and rein back, throwing balls in a bucket to carrying a mug of water without spillage. All the activities are marked out of ten. Usually in early August.

RDA National Qualifiers at Sands Farm Equestrian Centre, West Sussex and Bradbourne Riding and Training Centre, Sevenoaks

Two qualifying events for drivers in the South East Region. To get to the RDA Nationals they have to win their class driving a dressage test, a course of cones and two or four obstacles. Usually in September and June.

RDA National Championships at Hartpury College, Gloucestershire

There are both showing and driving trials classes at this event with drivers completing a dressage test, cones course and two or four obstacles. Usually in July.

FUNDRAISING:

Heavy Horse Show at Preston Farm, Shoreham, Sevenoaks

Fundraising event. The show is organised by Sevenoaks Lions, held on the first Sunday of September. The BRDA stand, historically with many stalls requiring a large team of volunteers to set up, run and take down, now focusses on promoting the Group to prospective volunteers, participants and sponsors, while also raising funds through the sale of tack and harness, clothing and accessories. Held on the first Sunday in September.

Knole Ride at Sevenoaks

Fundraising Pleasure Ride event. 12km ride through Knole Park, organised by Bradbourne RDA Group with the kind permission of Lord Sackville. Usually in October.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2019

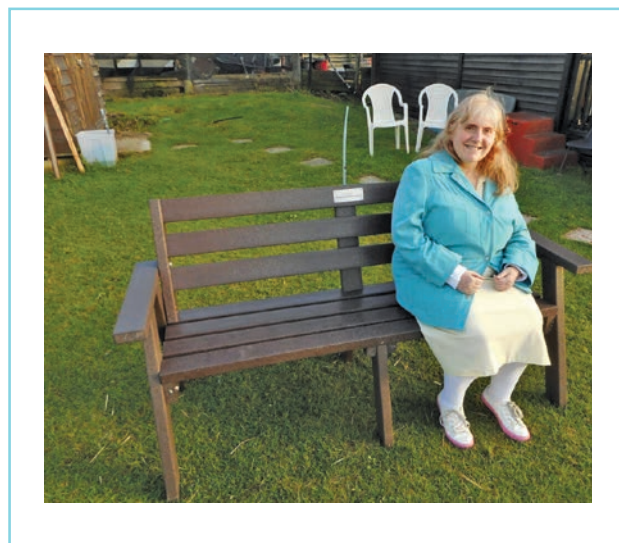
SARAH FENN

Throughout 2019 there have been so many examples of individuals 'having a go' at Bradbourne RDA Group from our youngest new rider climbing the mounting block for the first time, those very wary of ponies approaching with caution but soon developing confidence to groom, tack up and lead, through to participants entering external riding and driving competitions new to them and the pony, and even a volunteer learning to drive the tractor to help harrow the indoor arena.

This spirit is a key trait of everyone involved in Riding for the Disabled, which nationally celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2019, and is evident in the many Bradbourne RDA events and activities highlighted throughout this newsletter.

A number of new volunteers have joined our invaluable team of a hundred and forty to help with both riding and with carriage driving, including those young people undertaking work experience as part of their Duke of Edinburgh awards and those with special needs developing key life skills as they look towards their futures beyond school and college.

We are delighted three people have chosen to work on becoming riding coaches, succession being key to the future of the Group, and wish all those now at different stages of their training well. Those people and ponies who have enabled the Group to reach its current position are always remembered, and it was lovely to see many of Glenda and Ken Lyford's family at their plaque and bench unveiling in the summer.



We have welcomed over eighty new riders and carriage drivers to the Group this year, over ninety per cent of whom are under twenty-five, as well as our newest addition to the herd, Missy, who is doing well with her carriage driving training and already proving invaluable supporting some rides.

The carriage driving section has been impacted with health matters of key ponies restricting availability, with Bisto off lame and the very sad loss of Minty, yet have still secured great success at regional and national competitions and hosted another successful fun day event. It was fantastic that their achievements were recognised when the Bradbourne RDA Group driving section were awarded the South East RDA Region Group Award at the annual conference in October.

We are always keen to hear from anyone who may be interested and able to help in any way, with ponies and people or from home, particularly with the wide range of 'behind the scenes' activities, recognising the pressures of busy lives on everyone.

I would like to thank all volunteers, supporters, parents, carers, school staff and families for their help, energy and enthusiasm. I look forward to a happy, safe and successful year of riding and carriage driving at Bradbourne in 2020.

NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



DEBBIE TATTON

CHANGES IN THE BRADBOURNE HERD

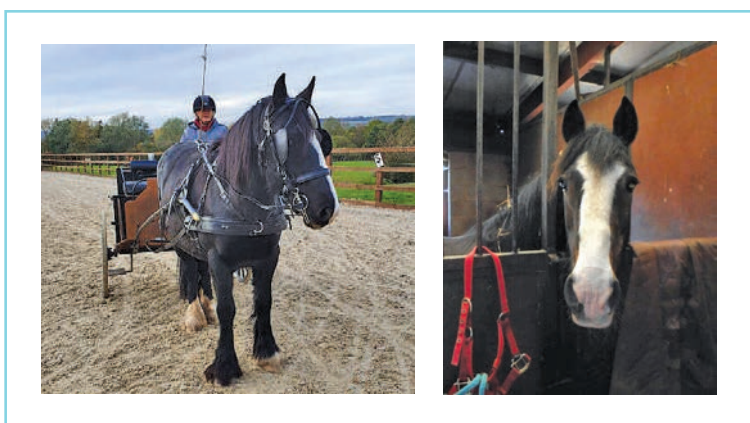
As 2019 draws to a close we have all had an eventful year with both highs and lows. Lots has happened both around the yard and at outside venues.

For the first time the driving group ventured out to Royal Windsor Horse Show and Hartpury with Jack and Disney alongside some of our riders, Peter, Caroline and Catherine with Mystique and Al. More of our riders and drivers have achieved great results at other events, such as at Felbridge and Hickstead, much of which you can read about in the following pages. We have adopted a revised coaching pathway for training new riding coaches which is also being used as a template to develop a new coaching pathway for driving, due for launch in early 2020. Some of our riders and drivers have also achieved great results in their Grades 1-4 in riding, driving and horse care. We sadly lost Minty to cancer back in January, Bisto is still on field rest, and we welcomed a new ride and drive pony, Missy, to our herd earlier in the year.

We have, also, sadly lost a much loved volunteer, Jane Cole, and a regular carriage driver, Jonny Carthy, this year. There has also been unusual activity on the yard including the use of our defibrillator on a person having a heart attack across the road from the yard. Thankfully they did recover and thank goodness we had access to such a machine.

Many people have been busy fundraising for BRDA through the Knole Ride, Heavy Horse Show amongst others and our many sponsors and supporters have once again shown us great favour in both financial and practical ways. Our thanks go out to Debbie who steps down as Knole Ride organiser as Kate takes the reins from next year.

I hope you enjoy what we have to offer in this year's newsletter. So, read on and be inspired.



L - MISSY IS SETTLING IN WELL
R - BISTO ON BOX REST

JENNA'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

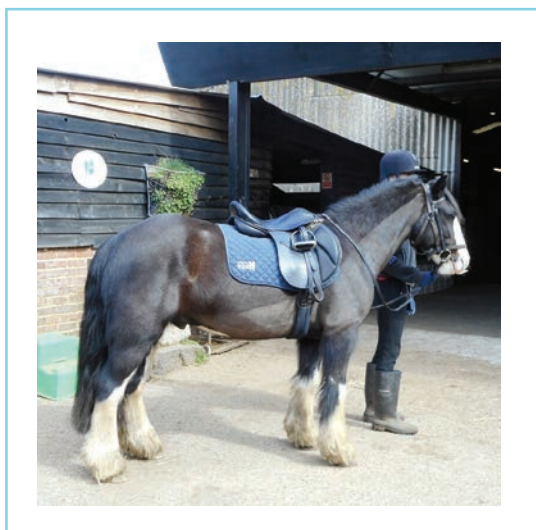
JENNA LEIGHT

Let's start with the good bits. As part of a Regional Coaching duo, we have been delivering a large amount of both volunteer training and training for those who aspire to become RDA coaches. Anyone who might want to consider beginning on the Coaching Pathway is welcome to speak to me about it and to Debbie Tatton about coaching for Carriage Driving.

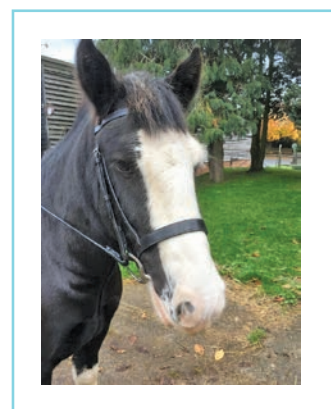
We seemed unlucky with weather again at Challenge Day as Felbridge was a combination of sun and torrential showers. It was Patch's first big day out and he behaved well with Trinity riding, giving us confidence to take him to Hickstead. Josh was again a great star, performing in gymkhanas, Countryside Challenge and Handy Pony with Miles, Owen, and Leo, as was Toby, Gilly Roper's small pony borrowed for the occasion.

Some of us were very fortunate to be indoors for Fancy Dress during a particularly bad downpour. Eliza and Kate were Little Red Riding Hood and Grandma respectively, with Alzira the Wolf, and Miles and Owen the Pevensie brothers with Josh as Aslan from The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe. Peter Broome rode a dressage test on my daughter's horse Mystique in their first competition, and they both performed well, as did Eliza in her dressage test on Al.

From Felbridge to Hickstead, where once again prizegiving took place in wet conditions. The Regional Committee is now sourcing a large marquee for the future. Bradbourne was very proud to take home two trophies, for best score in a Qualifier for Caroline and best score in a Non-qualifier for Samantha. Three riders, Katherine, Caroline and Peter, qualified and went to Hartpury for the RDA National Championships. Patch completed two dressage tests, with Sophie and Lily, who competed at Hickstead for her first time. Finn returned as a veteran with Samantha and Rob, Joe and Anna rode Bill and Kyle competed on Al.



PATCH WITH TACK
FUNDED BY
YORKSHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY



June saw a return to Sophie's estate for what has been our Endurance Ride, which this year we ran as a Pleasure Ride. Charlton Park camp participated and it was a lovely day out, with enormous thanks to Sophie and her family for their preparations and their wonderful welcome.

Hartpury this year proved most exciting, as it was a celebration of RDA's 50 years as a national organisation. Princess Anne attended on Friday and watched as Disney and Jack performed in the Carriage Driving competition, coming a very close second, in Bradbourne's first foray into the National Carriage Driving scene. They both then featured (again with Princess Anne) on the Countryfile programme that was broadcast shortly after to celebrate RDA's fiftieth anniversary.



SAMANTHA'S CUP

Our summer camps were a success, with fantastic help from several young volunteers, some completing their Gold Duke of Edinburgh residential requirement, at our Bradbourne camp. Charlton Park brought a school group for two days and the following week brought their riders and volunteers who stayed overnight in the caravans. Later in the summer, we held day camps, with huge thanks to Doug for organising and running.

We welcomed Missy, a ride and drive pony, in August. After spending months looking for a gelding, Liz Felgate saw Missy advertised and suggested we go see her—green light for another mare! She has worked in the Riding School and within RDA rides with our volunteers riding and being long-reined and driven, waiting for her new carriage to arrive.

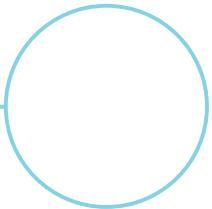
Fundraising continued with the Heavy Horse Show, a slightly smaller presence, but very successful, and the Knole Ride. Rain was forecast for the entire day, but we were very fortunate it didn't start until most of the riders were on the course. And despite the wet conditions at the end, there were smiling faces all round. Many thanks to the Hosiene family, Kate and Debbie for organising and running seamlessly.

The not so good bits—we very sadly had to say goodbye to Minty in January; he had developed cancer. And after finally healing a hind leg, Bisto then injured a front leg. He has had box rest and is now on field rest.

Clocks change, days shorten, layers are on and we all try to be creative as the indoor school beckons for this part of the year. But it never gets boring with horses; we hope everyone enjoys and appreciates the amazing job they do for us all.



TRIBUTES



JANE COLE by Kate Robinson - Wednesday morning

I first met Jane eight years ago when I started volunteering at Bradbourne. On paper our paths probably would not have crossed had it not been for RDA but I'm so glad they did and a fond friendship developed.

When Jane was first diagnosed with breast cancer she bravely continued to support RDA giving up her Wednesday mornings in between rounds of chemotherapy.

A very dedicated and committed volunteer not only to RDA but also the Working Horse Trust. Jane had an amazing intuitive way with her beloved horses and her gentle, kind manner will be greatly missed by us all.



L- R
Kate, Doug, Jane with Bill, Susie, Heather, Jenna,
Jemma (behind), Chris, Miranda, Ann, Chris and Brenda

JONNY CARTHY

Jonny Carthy was a valued member of our driving group. Despite his disability he showed a great determination, within his limitations, to drive with a real sense of enthusiasm and ability. He was always excited when he climbed on to the carriage each time and most enjoyed himself in the competitions he was involved with. He also had a sense of humour; one year whilst competing in our Le Trec he was handed a cup of water to carry over the finish line but he drank the water instead, it was a hot day after all! He always made sure each time he finished driving that we knew he would be back “in two weeks”. He was much loved and respected by all the driving volunteers and is greatly missed.



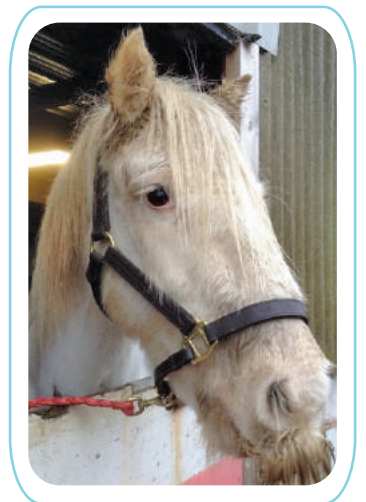
MINTY by Sharron Kilpatrick

Minty graced the front cover of the newsletter last year with our carriage driver Kelly. We are very happy to still have Kelly as one of our most loyal drivers, both on a fortnightly basis and at competitions too. We did however lose our darling Minty this year. Anyone who came into contact with him would remember him because of his wonderful majestic moustache! If you tried to trim it, he was having none of it, a gentleman of style was our Minty.

“It will wear down when he grazes out in the field”, coaches would say but not a centimetre came off when the green grass arrived. He was very much loved by all of the driving team, having a character all of his own.

Always a good forward walk, steady even trot and rock solid at stand, all of which are very important traits in any driving pony but especially desirable in an RDA pony. He seemed to know when we needed more from him and loved our Le Trec event. I could swear he grew a few hands higher, head held high and eyes wide, taking all that was going on around him. However, we had all noticed he was losing his condition and definitely losing his forward going pace.

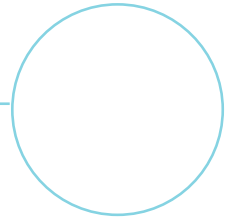
We all know the outcome of his well-battled illness, throughout which he was his usual well natured self, and I am sure his moustache was still growing right to the end. My biggest regret was that I never actually had a chance to drive him. I had started my carriage driving coaching, but never managed to have a go with him. A loss I feel deeply but I know how much happiness he gave to our clients in the short time we had him. I, along with all the carriage driving team, miss him but I am forever grateful that I had the chance to know and love him.



Thanks, Minty you were a star xx

CARRIAGE DRIVING REPORT

AMANDA HEBBERT RDA DRIVING ADMINISTRATOR



In spite of the challenges due to the shortage of driving ponies in 2019, driving continued with 12 drivers on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. Unfortunately, we had to stop the Friday morning session as we had no suitable pony for that session. With the arrival of Missy, we have started to plan for more drivers, and are now going through our waiting list, approaching people who were unable to start driving to see if they would like to come for assessment with a view to starting to drive next year.

We had a busy year and managed to get to three shows plus run our own Le Trec Show. Jack and Disney competed at Royal Windsor in May and they qualified for the RDA Nationals in July where they came second in the Novice class. Jack and Jean then went to the Sands Farm qualifier in September where Jean came a creditable ninth in a strong Novice class with Jack winning the Intermediate class thus qualifying for next year's RDA Nationals again.



Another highlight of our year was our own Le Trec Show, a show that is structured so that competitors of all levels can compete, thus enabling some people with more challenging disabilities to have a fun day out with a chance of winning rosettes as well. The Le Trec competition is in two sections, comprising an endurance section, and an activities section, the activities testing driving skills, and letter posting, ball bobbing and bin ball providing a chance to show skills whilst having fun. There is also a cones course which is judged separately. Competitors can compete in the Le Trec and/or the cones, and/or the activities sections, depending on their abilities and their stamina.

Six of our drivers entered the show, Jean Leverett and Joan Waller both winning their classes, and Woodchurch and Stella Hancock brought a number of competitors as well. Unfortunately, due to our date coming at a time when there were a number of other shows, other groups very reluctantly had to give it a miss as they were already committed elsewhere. However, Herons Ghyll, whilst unable to bring competitors, came to support and volunteer to help on the day. Our own volunteers and coaches turned up to help, including a number of riding volunteers which was greatly appreciated as the driving side of Bradbourne RDA comprises a very small number of people for putting on a show, and also we were well supported by the local driving community as a whole, and White Stuff staff, all of whom put a lot of effort into making the day a success. So, thank you everyone.

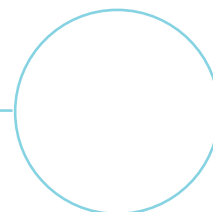
We continue to provide a very individually tailored service to all of our drivers and the new hydraulic ramp has made it so much easier for our less agile drivers to get onto the carriage. Although we have had to face quite a challenging year, we have more than survived thanks to the hard work and flexibility of our coaches, volunteers and Donna Simmons' Axel. Also, the forbearance of staff, carers, parents and clients who were asked to change days and times for their sessions, not always an easy thing to do.

One volunteer driver, Clive Tate, even gave up an activity which he shared with his wife, in order to bring Jonny Carthy because he could see what a difference carriage driving made to his life. We finish 2019 with a huge surprise. The Bradbourne Driving team were awarded the South East Region Group of the Year at the Regional Conference in October, a huge honour and much appreciated.

We look forward to next year with two Bradbourne based ponies and a new carriage, a happy team and more clients. We are always looking for more volunteers, so anyone who reads this and is inspired to get involved please get in touch.

FROM WINDSOR TO HARTPURY & BEYOND

JACK MARR (CARRIAGE DRIVER)



I began carriage driving at Bradbourne RDA when I was at a very low point in my life due to worsening disability, and it's made such a huge difference to my life. The team of coaches and volunteers have gone above and beyond to make things possible for me, and in the past year I began competing in RDA driving competitions with coach Debbie and the wonderful Disney.

I'd participated previously in the Le Trec event put on at Bradbourne, but my first experience competing outside of that was at the Regional competition at Sands farm in September 2018. Going to Sands Farm was nerve-wracking.

On top of anxiety about competing in such an event for the first time, it would be the furthest I'd travelled in years because of my disability, and the longest day out I'd had likewise for anything other than medical care. I was worried about managing the journey there and back on top of competing during the day, especially not knowing what the site was like. But everyone was so kind and encouraging and helpful, and at last we set out early in the morning, helped by my partner Rachel and a friend of ours who'd come along to help.

When we arrived at Sands Farm all the volunteers whisked into efficient action. Disney was beautifully groomed and everything was made as easy as possible for me. I was able to have a look at the arena using my rollator. Before I knew it, I was up in the carriage and warming up for the driven dressage with Debbie beside me, and then going into the arena. It all passed in rather a blur and then we were back at the horsebox. I was able to watch Ivan competing with Disney and Donna in the Assisted Whip class; they looked very smart and drove a nice test.

After lunch it was time for the afternoon part of the competition: cones and obstacles. The volunteers helped me walk the course, and then we were whisking around it for real. Disney behaved beautifully, giving us a double clear round, and then it was just a matter of waiting until the results were declared. It was a challenge in terms of energy and pain but I think adrenaline carried me through! We placed 6th in the dressage and 2nd in the cones and obstacles, meaning we placed 5th overall in the novice class, which while not enough to qualify for Nationals I was very happy with. I was driven home while the tireless volunteers sorted out the horses. I was very tired and sore afterwards, but it was such an amazing day out.

Over the winter Debbie arranged for me to compete in some of Sara Howe's driving competitions at Bradbourne, which were great fun and excellent experience. In this time, I received two thrilling bits of news: that I'd been awarded an RDA scholarship, which would mean I could have lessons with Sara Howe later in the year to improve my driving skills, and that we would be competing at the Royal Windsor Horse Show in May!

Again I was very nervous – Windsor meant an even longer drive and a longer day out, but more than that it was a famous horse show I'd heard about since I was a child, in the grounds of Windsor Castle! Debbie gave me so much help and instruction in the run up to the show, and at last it was May and we were off in Sharen's car for a very early start. Even Disney seemed to find it rather too early to be awake, and helped herself to Debbie's cup of tea while everyone was getting ready!

Arriving at Windsor was quite overwhelming and very exciting. There were so many horseboxes and so many people and horses. Where we had to park was a long walk across the site from the arena itself (which seemed a rather impractical arrangement for disabled riders and drivers!) so we weren't



At the start of June I placed high enough at a qualifier at Bradbourne to attend the RDA National Championships at Hartpury in July. The carriage driving team sprung into action yet again, organising everything at short notice, and my lessons with Sara began. For several of these I was able to drive Disney, and for others I drove Sara's pony, Xander. They were a wonderful experience and I learned so much.

Hartpury was the most nerve-wracking event yet. How would I cope with the long journey to Gloucestershire, and staying overnight? Thankfully I again had absolutely cracking support in the form of Debbie and Charlotte, and my wife Rachel. Debbie valiantly drove the horsebox all the way to Hartpury despite terrible traffic that made the journey several hours longer than it should have been, and when I arrived exhausted and in pain everyone made it possible for me to go straight to bed and even to have dinner in my room in the student accommodation.

able to see the arena beforehand. Driving across to it was amazing though, seeing so many different sights from showjumpers to polo ponies, from the Pony Club teams to riders for the international display dressed in gorgeous national costumes, as well as some gorgeous traditional driven turnouts. Debbie, Charlotte (who was our groom for the day) and I all looked rather smart too in matching tweed, and Disney positively sparkled.

The next morning it was all go. It was a hot day and the big site was absolutely full of RDA competitors, both human and equine, RDA volunteers, merchants and show attendees. It was the fiftieth anniversary of the RDA and was an incredible place, full of enthusiasm and energy, with several arenas both in and outdoors hosting all different kinds of events.

The showing portion of the competition was less alarming than I'd feared, with the judge not asking us to do anything terribly difficult. Afterwards we whipped around the cones in record time – and only subsequently realised that rather than racing against the clock we were meant to be matching an optimum time. Whoops! But I had a great time, and at the end the Countess of Wessex presented the rosettes, with us placing third in the showing.

As we drove back to the horsebox the heavens opened with torrential rain and even some hail, drenching us all. The volunteers, tireless as ever, leapt into action and got everything squared away, and we left for the drive home after a splendid day. I was so grateful to everyone who'd made such an amazing experience possible.



It was great to be around so many other disabled equestrians and to be in such a supportive atmosphere. Charlotte worked amazingly hard as Disney's groom and had her looking absolutely flawless for the competition, and then it was time for the dressage part of the competition, in a large arena in the blazing sun.

I was very nervous, but Rachel and Debbie kept me calm and Debbie's experience guided me through the experience with aplomb. I felt I did a reasonable test, with only a couple of mistakes, and then it was time to rest until the afternoon part of the competition. A wheelchair had been arranged for me, but it was quite difficult to manoeuvre on the steep slopes of the site, but I still managed to see some of the show and watch some of the other competitions, including the RDA vaulting which was very impressive!

In the afternoon there was a long delay waiting in the collecting ring in very hot sun, with humans and horses all struggling rather overwhelmed by the heat. After a while we saw a helicopter landing, and wondered who was arriving. We then had the cones and obstacles part of the competition, which went well, and on coming back into the arena for the prizegiving discovered that it was Princess Anne who'd arrived; as we drove round, we could see her being interviewed. I was astonished and delighted to find we'd placed second, and the rosettes were awarded by Anita Rani from Countryfile, who were filming the event for the RDA's 50th. We also saw John Craven awarded a Countryfile cake for his long service on the show! We went home very tired but happy, and a little while later I was able to watch myself driving Disney with Debbie on the television when Countryfile aired!



Before I knew it, it was September and we were off to Sands Farm again, this time to compete in the Intermediate class in the regional qualifiers – my first time at Intermediate level. As always the Bradbourne carriage driving team made everything run smoothly and the day was great fun. Disney competed twice, once with me and once with Jean, and in the end I placed 3rd in the dressage and 1st in cones and obstacles – which made me the overall winner in my class! I was given a beautiful shield to keep for the year and we were all incredibly proud of Disney. And it meant I've qualified for the Nationals again this coming year, at Intermediate level, which is both thrilling and terrifying.

It's been an astonishing year, and a wonderful one. I'm so grateful for all the help I've been given, for all the effort and time on the part of the organisation and the volunteers to make these things I never thought I'd be able to do possible. Carriage driving at Bradbourne is the absolute highlight of my fortnight and it really has changed my life; I'm so grateful to everyone who's given me so much help. And, of course, to Disney herself, who's an absolute star!

FELBRIDGE REPORT

KAY SPURRIER

'A rookie volunteer's perspective'

Having only signed up as a BRDA volunteer in February I was a little unsure about joining the team for the Felbridge Challenge Day but a little voice in my head kept saying, 'Do it, it'll be fun!' so off went my email offering to help.

On the morning of the 9th May I arrived at Bradbourne at 7:30am wondering what the day would bring and was cheerily greeted by Jenna with the words, 'Tack cleaning – we need to look spic and span!' So I spent some time buffing and polishing saddles and bridles before moving on to help groom the ponies, who obviously needed to look their best and who were already receiving pedicures, haircuts, sponge baths and other various beauty treatments. By 8:30am we were ready to load Al, Patch, Josh and Jenna's mare, Mystique. After a quick check that everything and everyone was present and correct, we moved off in convoy.

The journey was smooth and uneventful, even the M25 behaved, and Kate's trailer towing was effortless (how do they do that?). We parked up and started to unload the ponies who were pleased to stretch their legs. Our first event was 'Handy Pony' which entailed some serious steering, opening a gate, picking up a hoop and putting it over a pole, posting a letter and ringing a bell. Eliza and Al dealt with all the moves superbly and rightly received a rosette for their efforts.



Meanwhile, there were gymkhana games going on in another arena and watching these took me right back to my childhood Pony Club days, dashing between posts, racing from one end of the field to the other, and generally having lots of fun whilst really testing riding skills and your relationship with your pony. I sincerely hope the Felbridge riders remember their gymkhana experiences in years to come.

Next, we got Eliza and Al ready for their dressage test and how smart did they look? Not only did they look the part but were rewarded with a well-deserved 1st in class at the prize giving. After watching Eliza we saw Peter complete his dressage test looking every part the professional rider on Mystique and gaining another 1st for BRDA.

Moving on to the next event, Eliza and Al rode the 'Countryside Challenge' which involved a hare, a duck pond, a sheep pen, a gate and a fake apple tree (although this didn't stop Al taking one of the apples – oops!). Don't think he would've passed the test but, luckily, it was only for fun!

The finale was the Fancy Dress parade for which we dressed up Al as the wolf, Kate as the granny and Eliza as Little Red Riding Hood gaining a 2nd place rosette whilst Josh, with his riders Owen and Miles, looked very much the part as Peter and Edmund from the Chronicles of Narnia and took 3rd place. Lots of respect to Kate too!

Throughout the day I mainly worked with Kate, Eliza and Al and the thing that really impressed me was the rapport between coach, rider and horse and how each relies on the other to get the job done. Other BDRA riders, ponies, volunteers and supporters all played their part to make the day go smoothly and provide a great experience for all involved. Since joining BDRA as a volunteer I have really begun to appreciate the benefit and absolute joy the riders get not only from riding but also from just being near horses. Once again this took me back to my childhood and the absolute pleasure horse riding gave me and somehow this was reflected in the faces of everyone at Felbridge that day. For anyone a little unsure about offering to help in the future just say to yourself, 'Do it, it'll be fun!'



TRINITY BEESLEY

AGED 7



I had a very nice time at Felbridge. I got two rosettes and one medal. First I did an activity called Handy Pony- it was fun and I did it two times. For Handy Pony, it is like an obstacle course but on a pony.

Next I did gymkhana which is like games- a bit like a race but a bit different to a race. Lastly I did Countryside Challenge which is a bigger version of Handy Pony.

I would love to go again next year.



CAMPS AT BRADBOURNE



CAROL KENDALL, CAMP ORGANISER FOR CHARLTON PARK

We have a taster two day camp at Bradbourne for Charlton Park riders that may not manage a full camp with a weeks' camp the following week. Bradbourne is a fantastic place full of smiles and we are all made very welcome.



This is a brilliant opportunity for our children to have a week with a pony pal, live in caravans, and experience all the stable management aspects we cannot provide. The children ride in the indoor school and out in the countryside.

We took the children on an outing to the local Eagle Heights where they got up close to MAGNIFICENT birds of prey, Huskies, piggies and much more with a picnic at the Heights.

This year there was an amazing treat that was new to us all- Jenna and all the lovely Bradbourne group took us and their ponies to Sophie's Underriver Farm also providing a chance for the children to see their steed loaded on horse boxes.

Here the children had 2 lovely long "endurance" rides around Sophie's farm. It was fantastic. We had lovely weather and amazing scenery and the children had a fabulous time. We had a full day at the farm with a picnic inbetween rides and in the evening we had a BBQ.

We are able to use the nature reserve to take children for lovely walks and this year we found the very rare BEE ORCHID out showing its lovely flowers, We saw many baby toads running about the pathways and baby bunnies along with the ducks, swans and other lake inhabitants.

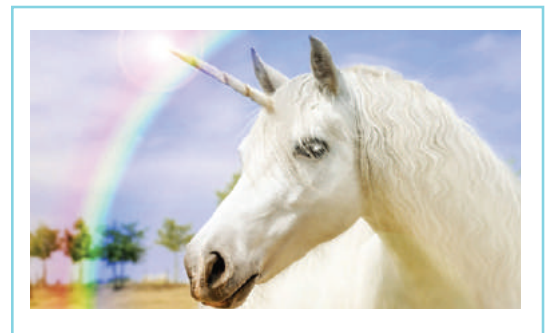
As per usual a great couple of camps- everything we need is to hand, and its lovely to see the children progress, take grade tests and thoroughly enjoy themselves. Also some of the children do not sleep at home but at Bradbourne they are so happily worn out they sleep all night and late in morning.

BRADBOURNE UNICORNS

In the early summer about 6 of us were leading the ponies up across the top field, bringing them in from the lake field, and a school coach was heading slowly down the lane towards the wildlife centre. It was clearly full of children so we stopped and waved, the children excitedly waving back.

The next week I bumped into a friend who is a primary school teacher and she told me she had been on the bus – a school day out to the wildlife reserve. She said they had a good day and when they were back in school they asked the children to draw a picture of their favourite part of the day.

Over half the children drew a line of ponies being led across a field! And a lot of those drew them as Unicorns!!



DOUG WILLIAMSON

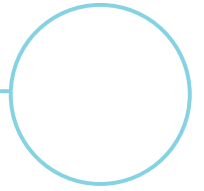
We again this year did a number of day camps – 6 in all, spread across the summer holidays.

I am quite keen on these as it gives our riders a much wider experience than just coming along, getting on their pony for half an hour, and then going off again. They get to really engage with their pony. The riders come along about 10am, by which time we have done the mucking out, but they will come out to get their ponies from the field, groom them, help with ensuring they have hay and water and tack them up. They get to ride twice – often for longer than they normally do, and we normally try to do some more unusual, fun, things like bare back riding which everyone enjoys. By 3.30 everyone is tired (riders and helpers) as we put the ponies back out after a busy day.

This year around 30 of our riders had this experience and Debbie and the driving team kindly arranged to provide a carriage driving experience on a couple of the days. This is always a favourite with the riders, who again don't normally get to try this.

We are always very grateful to those who help on these days, and make such a difference to our riders' lives. If you haven't helped before then maybe in 2020.....

OTHER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



HICKSTEAD



ANNA COMPETING ON BILL
PETER & MYSTIQUE
ANNA LEAVING THE ARENA WITH THE SUPPORT TEAM



FUNDRAISING AT RADNOR HOUSE EASTER FAYRE



SEVENOAKS ROUNDTABLE DONATION AT THE HEAVY HORSE SHOW FOR
MISSY'S CARRIAGE



CHARLOTTE PREPARING TO SWEEP THE INDOOR SCHOOL WALLS, AND SPECIAL VISITORS AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

We always love to hear encouraging comments from both those who bring our riders and drivers and also the comments from coaches and volunteers who give up their time and energy to help them each week. Here are a few which will hopefully be a prompt for anyone thinking about volunteering:

From those bringing participants:

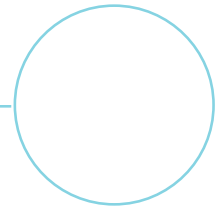
- We are very grateful to have your sessions
- Our young people absolutely love their riding lessons
- Our students are getting so much from the sessions
- For some of our young people, your lessons have proved to be the turning point for them in regaining hope for the future.

From our coaches/volunteers:

- We feel really inspired and energised by the youngsters who come
- It is fun and incredibly rewarding to coach or help on the rides
- These sessions really show how horses can work to inspire and help people
- Ever since I started at Bradbourne 6 years ago, I have felt it to be a huge privilege to work with all of you, our helpers, our wonderful ponies and our riders. I can honestly say that it is the best 'job' I have ever done. I have learnt so much and am still learning.

THE PROVEN BENEFITS

OF PONIES, HORSE RIDING, FRESH AIR AND NATURE



We are a Designated Special Provision of Alderwood Primary School in Greenwich.

The class has a dedicated team of 5 adults taking responsibility for the teaching and learning of 8 children with autism and many with ADHD as well. It is crucial that we meet the needs of the children in line with their diagnosis of autism and ADHD, together with their learning. Therefore, the children take part in many specialised and tailored activities, one of them being horse riding.

We are in a very lucky position being able to join Charlton Park RDA and have for so many years now. Year after year we experience the many benefits of these sessions for our children. As a result, the children display reduced anxiety, reductions in problem behaviours and ASD severity, and increased wellbeing, language and communication skills. They also display greater social interaction with the therapist in the presence of a horse. The bond between the children and horses is also just amazing to watch.

This year we have had the great privilege to spend two days at Bradbourne RDA and I can confidently state that it has been our greatest and most beneficial time of the year.

The team at Bradbourne couldn't have been more welcoming and prepared for us. The children had two well organised days with amazing activities and great experiences with the horses and nature. They had plenty of opportunity to ride indoors and in the open. The children visited a beautiful nature reserve area, exploring plants, animals, and a mini-beast hotel, bird watching and feeding ducks. They were able to run freely, be noisy, and roll around on the grass – everything children enjoy the most. There were no toys or electronic devices and the children didn't demand any of them!

By the second day the children's emotions were regulated, their ADHD reduced like we have never experienced before and nature simply provided and fulfilled their sensory needs. They were eating well and were as happy and relaxed as we have ever seen them before.

On our first day back to school we had a great group discussion reflecting on these two wonderful days and we could hear the same question repeated over and over 'When can we go back?'

As professionals on a daily basis our team experience that children with autism find noise, crowds and public transport a challenge, they are fussy eaters, have sleeping problems and social communication difficulties. Amazingly, these all faded and greatly improved in our children at Bradbourne, yet it was only after two days spent with the horses and being out in nature allowing our children to be children.

Once back to the busy, crowded city with noise, sitting in the classroom all day, and many going home to a small flat, all their signs of autism and ADHD very quickly returned.

We are being bombarded from all forms of media how great the increase in negative mental health is amongst our population and how concerning it is. People living in big cities are affected the worst. Are children with autism sending us a message? Is it time to start listening?

We are extremely grateful for this amazing opportunity. We will most definitely look forward to our next visit and wish the best of success to Bradbourne RDA with the wonderful work they do and for providing for those with the most need.

We cannot thank you enough.

**ALDERWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL,
ASH CLASS CHILDREN, THEIR FAMILIES AND THE TEAM.**

COACHES IN TRAINING

CHARLOTTE, TINA & JANE

RDA launched a new way for volunteers to become coaches called the 'coaching pathway' which is a more structured approach to training RDA coaches. At Bradbourne Jane, Tina and Charlotte have been working their way through it together, we suspect that the new pathway may be harder than our predecessors had to endure and to some extent we are guinea pigs! Strangely we all volunteer on a Monday, so watch out Tuesday volunteers 2020 might be your year!

Before becoming a coach in training we had to complete two theory modules and two practical modules. RDA has an e-learning website where anyone can improve their knowledge or skills by completing a variety of courses. The 'equine knowledge' module contained information about different breeds of ponies. The 'disability awareness' module is incredibly informative by getting you to think about different ways to change rides depending on the variety of disabilities we all encounter. The two practical modules 'mounting and dismounting' and 'preparing and assisting RDA sessions' were held at Bradbourne and covered the different ways to mount and dismount participants, how to correctly lead and sidewalk (ensure everyone across RDA is doing the same thing), checking for hazards before and during rides and checking all tack is fitted correctly.



Both the online and practical modules refreshed things we already knew but also gave different ways or ideas on how things have changed over the years. Anyone can do them whether you want to become a coach, are already a coach or are a volunteer. The 'disability awareness' is highly recommended by all three of us and by everyone we have encountered throughout our training. It is easy to access and you have the option of doing it all at once or for 5 minutes at a time.

On the 27th January at Bradbourne (we are very lucky to have Jenna, as a regional coach as she can run our modules) along with volunteers from across the southeast region we met for our 'pre-coach training' session. The full job role of an RDA coach was explained to us, and we realised that our coaches have a lot of behind the scenes paperwork to do! We were introduced to risk assessment forms that are done before every ride and Jenna kindly laid out many hazards, some silly but some we encounter most days. We all guessed what was coming next and yes, we were indeed correct, we had to put our 'coach' hat on and complete the form and then discuss it as a group. The next set of forms were coaching session plans, which have certainly proved useful preparing for our own imminent sessions. Provided we had completed all the necessary modules and Jenna hadn't scared us away we were all awarded the 'coach in training' status.

In order to become a coach we needed to complete two theory modules:

- Pre-assessment checklist and Safeguarding

and three practical modules:

- Horsecare and knowledge, Therapy/Medical and Coaching

followed by the dreaded assessment.

In April we travelled to an RDA group in Cambridge to complete the 'horsecare and knowledge' module. All three of us wanted to really get going with our training so we used www.myrda.org.uk to find the closest group running the course. Unfortunately this was Cambridge which meant a very early start but we had no issues with any motorways (phew!). We all travelled together and ended up being the first ones there so we could help ourselves to coffee before the crowds appeared. It was great to see some familiar faces from our 'pre-coach training' and to catch up on what we've all been doing back at our own groups. Some mixed attempts at being the coach but talking it through with each other eased some of the anxieties. The regional vet was able to deliver the course up until lunch time and she covered a massive amount of information. She took us outside and we learned equine conformation and how to condition score the ponies in front of us. Not as easy as first thought! She then went through the most common injuries or ailments our ponies could have and very briefly what to have in our first aid kit and when we should perform first aid and when to leave it to the professionals. Who knew a nappy could be so useful to an injured pony! She also briefly covered: different feeds, when we should be giving the ponies feed, dentistry, poisonous plants and other checks we should be doing on a regular basis. We didn't want the vet to leave, it was such an interesting session and there was insufficient time to go into detail on a lot of it but she gave us some useful websites to look at. The afternoon content was information we had covered before we had started our coaching pathway but that was perhaps due to our RDA training at Bradbourne but other people did find it useful.

In September we travelled to Cranleigh RDA for the 'therapy/medical' module and were left very envious. The RDA centre at Cranleigh has the benefit of being a fairly new purpose-built centre with stables and indoor arena with viewing area all under one roof. The course was designed to provide a Coach in Training with some information regarding the type of disabilities our riders may have, how that may affect their riding and how what we do also impacts their riding. The morning was taken up with practical training. Jane was one of 4 people who rode a pony, the other trainees led the ponies or were side walkers.



The pony Jane rode had a sheepskin saddle with no stirrups. Immediately she realised that this type of saddle results in a lot more feeling of the horse's movement – more of a swing from side to side with each of the horse's strides. It is suggested that this saddle is used for people who are very tight / stiff around the hips as the movement should help to loosen the hip area. What we as side walkers need to be aware of is that the rider could become a bit wobbly. As side walkers we sometimes feel the need to hold onto the rider. We were encouraged to have minimal physical contact with the rider and if we hold on to do it for a few seconds to perhaps restore balance and get a better leg position and then let go. We experimented with the impact on the rider of holding in various positions:-

Moving the leg back too far – unless Jane braced engaging her core moving the leg back had the impact of pushing her body forward and causing her to look downwards and feel quite unbalanced.

Moving the leg too far forward – This had the opposite effect and pushed Jane's weight backwards. Additionally it felt quite uncomfortable.

Holding back of the heel – This is the ideal place for us to hold onto a rider however we need to ensure that there is minimal pressure in the correct place i.e. downwards only and not forward or back.

We were also able to view different items of special equipment some of which we do not use at Bradbourne e.g. bunny ears, bobble reins and bar reins. The afternoon was more theoretical where we considered what we might see in terms of behaviour, communication, muscle tone, stability etc from riders with different disabilities. We talked about the application Assessment for RDA activities, special situations where a standard riding hat may not be worn, different ways of communicating and when should a rider stop riding? Nothing is really set in stone and we can always refer to (a) our regional physiotherapist and (b) regional coaches as well as other coaches within our local RDA organisations for more support when we need it.

We only have one more module to do which is 'coaching' and we are doing that in November. All three of us have been let loose and given the opportunities to take charge and be a Coach whilst being supervised. We've had mixed success ranging from awful to fantastic, but we are still learning and get the chance to watch our experienced coaches at Bradbourne. In time we hope to be thought of as part of those 'experienced coaches'.

Without some persistent but gentle prodding from Jenna we wouldn't have put our names forward for this journey. Through gritted teeth (but with a smile) thank you Jenna!

Tina – currently volunteers on a Monday morning. She has been volunteering for approximately 3 years.

Charlotte – currently volunteers on Monday afternoons and Thursday mornings for riding and Tuesday afternoons for driving. She will have been volunteering for 2 years in February 2020.

Jane – currently volunteers on Monday evenings for two riding sessions. She will have been volunteering for 2 years in April 2020.

HARTPURY REPORT

LEE WALKER



The weekend of the 12th – 14th July this year is one which I will remember for a long time. The RDA National Championships at Hartpur College took place with the RDA celebrating 50 years since its official foundation in 1969.

A Royal visit from Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, Princess Anne. The entire event filmed by the BBC's Countryfile program. An appearance by multiple gold medal winning Paralympian Sophie Christiansen and my very first visit to the Nationals. Quite a weekend indeed.

The day started bright and early for most of us on the Friday, although Debbie, Charlotte and the wonderful Disney had already travelled up the day before to compete in the Carriage Driving on Friday morning. Everything went well and we were soon underway on our 150 mile journey west, blissfully unaware of the slight technical hitch which had beset us. Luckily team Bradbourne is a large and observant one and back at the yard an eagle-eyed Doug had noticed a slight problem with the equipment we had on board. A few phone calls later and Doug was soon doing his Lewis Hamilton impression around the M25 for a rendezvous at Clacket Lane services, complete with a replacement saddle for Bill!

Teamwork having overcome that problem, we were soon on our way again and with fair weather we all made it safely to Hartpury in good time.

Having never been before, I have to say how impressive the facilities and organisation were at the college. All the volunteer staff were helpful and cheerful in equal measure and we soon found ourselves in a nice quiet stable area, slightly away from the main arenas, with our own small grassed area and small paddock. Perfect.

Bill and Mystique quickly settled into their new homes and were shortly joined by Disney as she returned from a very successful morning of carriage driving with Debbie, Charlotte and our first competitor Jack. It was hardly a surprise when watching Countryfile a few weeks later to discover that Disney, Debbie and Jack were given so much airtime on this hugely popular nationwide show. They obviously have a producer who knows a fantastic team when they see it.

We worked hard to get everything ready for the next day and undertook the first stage of Bill's transformation to gleaming show horse. Much shampoo and water later and he was starting to look great. All around us other groups were working hard and preparing their own horses and ponies. The atmosphere was such a lovely one, with groups from all over the UK working side by side to ensure that their riders and drivers could achieve so much. During a brief break we were able to watch a couple of events in the outside arenas and with the sun shining it was fantastic to see so many happy smiling faces.

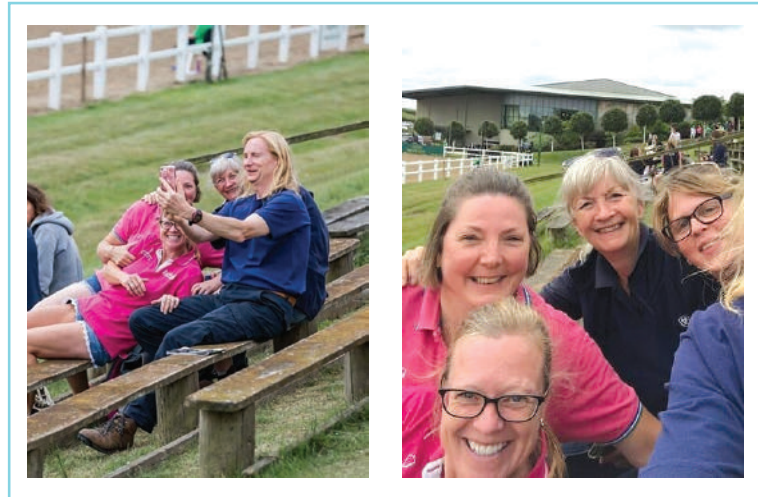


Riders, their families and supporters, volunteers and coaches alike all seemed to be so glad to be at such a prestigious event and to have the opportunity to perform to their best. Much praise was handed out to the horses and ponies, seemingly regardless of how they had performed on the day. That was great to see. It was also lovely to return to our stables after dinner to see three eager heads, popped over their stable doors, ears pricked and happy to see our return. After bedding the horses down, we all retired for a well-earned (if short) sleep.

Saturday morning again saw us greeted by three eager horses who all seemed to be enjoying their new surroundings although Bill did seem to be having some difficulty with the concept of a sliding stable door. It was quite amusing to see him moving sideways as the door was slid open, with his head still protruding between the bars. However it all became clear when he told me later that he had just been practising some fancy dressage moves! We were also pleased to see that we had been awarded a vets certificate overnight for keeping our horses so well hydrated. OK, well it was actually awarded to Jenna and Mystique but we are a team and we all basked in the glory for a while!

After a busy morning preparing Mystique, it was time for Peter to perform his dressage test in one of the outside arenas. Again it was great to see a big crowd, with happy faces on competitors and watchers alike. Peter also summed up the spirit of the event perfectly for me, when immediately after his test (and long before he knew his scores) he was leaning forward over Mystiques neck, giving her a huge hug of thanks as they emerged out of the arena. It really was all about the opportunity not the result, although in fact he had performed brilliantly.

During a brief respite from competition we returned to the stables and after interrupting Bill (who was still practising his dressage skills every time we opened the sliding door) we gave him his second bath of the weekend and with the sun out it was getting to the stage where we were all reaching for our sunglasses just to be able to look at his gleaming white coat!



There was also another chance to witness Debbie's brilliant driving skills, although this time it involved a large 4x4, a huge trailer and a very tight turning circle, rather than with Disney and her carriage! "Just one more manoeuvre should do it Debbie" was heard about 10 times! Great composure under pressure.

The afternoon saw Peter competing again in the endurance event on Mystique. This was a more relaxed class and it was great to see so many competitors able to enjoy a lovely journey through the woods and paths around the outside of the college. The variety of classes at the Nationals is fantastic and they give riders of so many different abilities the opportunity to "compete" at this huge event. It's harder work for the organisers having so many different classes, but so, so worthwhile. Well done RDA.



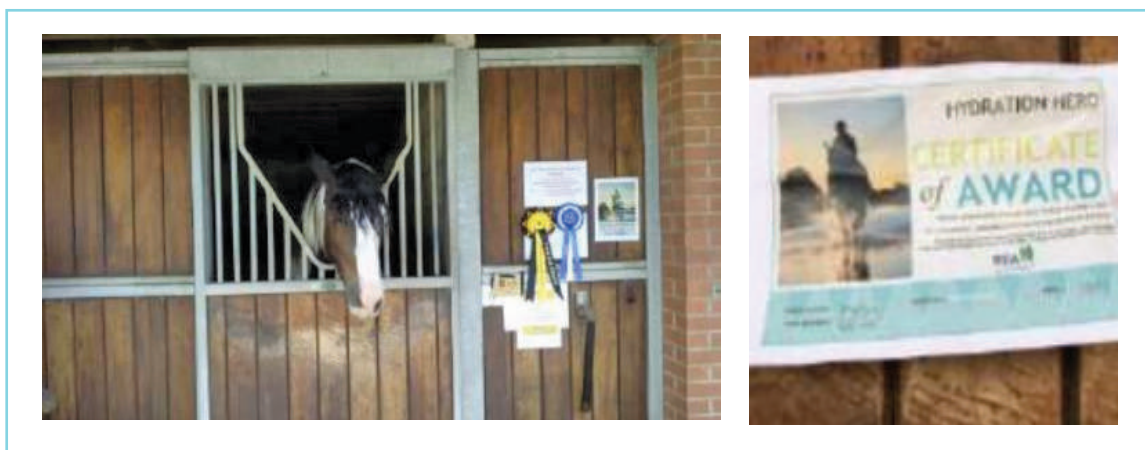
The early evening saw us in one of the inside arenas watching a class called "Costume Freestyle to Music". This was a class where some fantastic children with a wide range of disabilities, together with their horses and ponies, were able to perform in various themed fancy dress costumes to some fantastic popular musical scores. It would be hard to find a class that is more different to the formal dressage events of the morning, but it was truly inspiring and enchanting to watch. It's just a shame that there must have been so much dust in the arena, which seemed to cause quite a few tears in spectator's eyes. At least, I think it was dust that caused the tears.

We adjourned to the canteen for our evening meal and it was great to sit and discuss the day's events and plan for the future. Various ideas were proposed for next year, with my favourite being a suggested new class, to be called "Opposing pairs in fancy dress to music" which I'm sure would go down very well. Come on Jenna, you know it makes sense!

It was a lovely evening and this is perhaps a good time to say a big thank you to my teammates for the weekend. Charlotte, Claire, Debbie, Jackie, Jenna, Kate and Peter – thank you so much for your companionship and guidance over the weekend. It is great to be part of such a fantastic team again. Big thanks also to our equine stars Bill, Disney and Mystique.

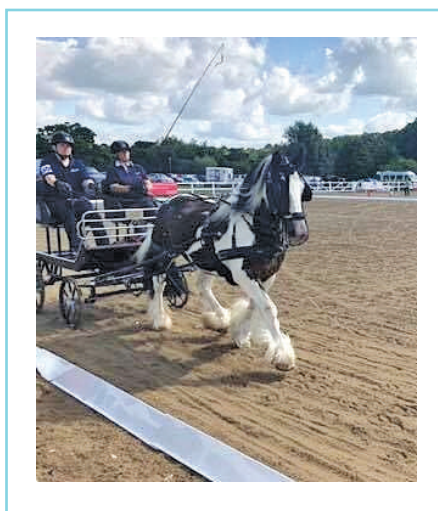
After what seemed like a couple of hours sleep we were up bright and very early again on Sunday morning, greeted as usual by pricked ears and welcoming equine faces. Bill (still practising his dressage moves with the sliding door) had his final mini bath and prep, ready for his tests with Katherine and Caroline. Although Peter had finished his competing for the weekend he was still able to show off some more of his horsey skills as he strolled into action to catch a loose horse who had broken free and was threatening to cause havoc near our stables. Not one of our horses I hasten to add.

Having returned the errant chap to his relieved group we met up with our two immaculately turned out young ladies for their tests in a large dressage group. They again performed well and were great ambassadors and representatives of Bradbourne Group RDA. Katherine and Caroline along with Jack and Peter you should all be extremely proud of yourselves for making it to the Nationals and achieving so much. Always remember- you are competing on equal terms with the best in the whole of the UK. Well done to all of you.



And so, with the competing over, it was time to say goodbye to our luxury accommodation suites (!) and prepare our horses for the long journey home. On arrival back at Bradbourne, after a great journey home, we unloaded our gear and set about releasing Bill back into the field. He was still gleaming and as he set off to greet his friends he definitely had a new spring in his step and I could have sworn he had grown several inches with the way he was carrying his head. Perhaps it wasn't just us humans who had been so inspired.

It was a fantastic weekend, full of inspirational people and wonderful horses and it was great to see the RDA still doing what it does best, 50 years on.



THE KNOLE RIDE



KATE FREDOU

As the sun struggled to rise on the morning of the 2019 Knole ride I stood at Redlands waiting, hoping that volunteers on my work sheets hadn't been put off by the terrible weather of the previous week and forecast for the day.

As I watched them arrive armed with waterproofs, chairs and flasks I acknowledged that all our volunteers really are priceless.

The ride could not run without the army of volunteers it takes to liaise with Knole, organise the entries, set up, make and sell refreshments, park lorries, marshall the route and all the other tasks.

We may appear to those riding that we are like the proverbial swan, however there has been a lot of paddling under the water to get to that stage!

The stewards were all in place and ready with their number sheets to tick off the riders as they passed, the first ones heading off at 9.30. One of my responsibilities for the day was to travel around the steward posts to check the volunteers were OK and that there weren't any problems with the riders or horses. As the weather worsened, I continued speaking to the volunteers at their posts and those at Redlands who were selling tack, raffle tickets and refreshments.

Every person on the route had a smile and cheery word for the riders, offering encouragement to those who were a little nervous, taking snapshots for those who were updating their Instagram and making sure that every rider was safe and enjoying their day.

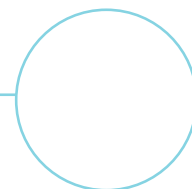


BITCHET GREEN RIDERS & LILY WARDROPE

As I saw the last riding pair back through the Knole gate towards Redlands, I watched as the soggy route stewards were collected and returned to Redlands. The Sherry Anderson quote "Our volunteers are not paid, not because they are worthless but because they are priceless" could not have been truer. I hope I thanked each person, but if I didn't, I want to thank you all because without you this ride wouldn't be possible. I would also like to thank Lord Sackville, the Knole Park Estate and Sevenoaks Riding Club for allowing us to use the glorious, historic park and the facilities to start and finish the ride.

To conclude, a huge 'thanks' go out to all participants, particularly Lily Wardrope and the riders from Bitchet Farm who raised huge amounts of sponsorship. The total raised by everyone exceeded £6000.

2019 RDA AWARDS



2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

| <u>Trophy Name</u> | <u>Awarded For</u> | <u>Awarded To</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Topper Trophy | Under 13 | Leo Golds |
| Misty Trophy | 13 - 20 years | Lily Burton |
| Crosland Cup | Best outside achievement | Sophie Irvine |
| Black Prince Trophy | Group | Parkwood Hall |
| Balkan Cup | Achievement (Adult) | Rob Maasland |
| Darkle Trophy | Camp | Stephen Sawyer |
| Rusty Challenge Cup | Competitions | Caroline King |
| Darkle Trophy | Achievement (Adult) | Di Lyford |
| Heavy Horse Trophy | Beyond the call of duty | Doug Williamson |
| Marjorie McClure Cup | Dressage | Samantha Diplock |
| Muffin Shield | Achievement (Adult) | Peter Broome |
| Long Service Award | Long service | Annie Davies & Sharron Kilpatrick |
| Competition Cup | Competitions & Endurance | Katherine Swan |
| Hestar Trophy | Best newcomer (Any age) | Anna Cibulska |
| Billy Trophy | Child | Rose Jefferis |
| Beth Gaved Trophy | Under 18 | Daniel Ayres |
| Special Achievement Award | Special Achievement | Trinity Beesley |
| Paintbox Trophy | Driving - Most improved | Andrew Murray |
| Alan Hayward Cup | Driving - Achievement | Jack Marr |
| Jezebelle Award | Driving - Outside event | Jean Leverett |
| Jimmy Cup | Driving - Local cones | Kelly Stevens |
| Axel Trophy | Driving - Volunteer | Amanda Hebbert |



2019 has been a very successful year for RDA Proficiency Tests and we congratulate the riders and carriage drivers below on their achievements.

| RDA Grades 1 & 2 Riding & Horse Care | RDA Grades 1,2 & 3 Driving & Horse Care |
|---|--|
| Kyle Barnes | Jack Marr |
| Lois Braam De Carvello | |
| George Iraggi | |
| Dylan Williamson | |



EVERYONE at Bradbourne RDA Group is an achiever

If you have enjoyed what you have read, why not be part of the 2020 newsletter – anyone connected with Bradbourne RDA Group in any way and of any age, from riders and drivers, to volunteers, to parents and other family members, to carers and teachers is very welcome to submit a story, a poem, a report, a photograph or any type of article throughout the year. Please provide to your coach or main contact at the Group. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

A HUGE THANK YOU

We are incredibly fortunate to benefit from a number of corporate supporters, groups and individuals who fundraise for us as well as generously giving us the time and skills of their workforce. In particular we would like to thank the following for their help and support this year:



THE LUBRICATORS CHARITABLE TRUST

SEVENOAKS RIDING CLUB



HIRE-A-LOO

LRG
Photography



BELLEQUINE
VETERINARY CLINIC



Sir Edward Clarke Lodge
Peace and Concord Lodge



The Iron Bridge Trust



SPONSORSHIP

Our amazing riders and carriage drivers continue to be extremely successful at both Regional and National RDA competitions and we want to ensure we can go on providing these competitive opportunities as well as the regular daily morning, afternoon and evening sessions and more informal events on site at Bradbourne despite ever increasing costs.

We have a range of sponsorship options to support our participants and fund key costs and purchases required for our ponies and operational activities. We would be delighted to hear from you if you are interested in supporting Bradbourne Riding for the Disabled Group in any way.

Please contact sarahfenn@bradbourn-rda.org.uk.