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# RDA East Region Newsletter

No 9.

Spring 2012







Telegraph last Christmas and I felt proud to read the inspiring articles. You can be in no doubt of how much is achieved through riding and driving for disabled people and the huge extent of appreciation for the expertise and commitment of RDA volunteers.

Christine, East Region Chairman

Cover photo:

Zoe Talbot side saddle at Oaklands Regional Qualifiers, taken by Andrew Gourlay.

## W elcome to the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the RDA East Region newsletter.

I do hope you will enjoy reading about the successes and activities that took place in our Region throughout the year and will feel inspired to send in an article about yourself or your group for the next issue.

2012 is likely to be an exciting one for us all, with the Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee taking place. I am sure many of you will already be planning your own activities and excitements for your riders and drivers and I hope it will turn out to be a memorable and successful year for us all.

To start with last year, I would like to congratulate Debs Hulbert, from North Norfolk Group, who was the East Region winner of the Volunteer of the Year Award. The other very worthy nominees were Jan Calvert and Tania Horn from West Norfolk Group and Carolyn Rayner from the Buckenham House Group, all of whom received Over and Above Awards.

The Regional Qualifier held at Oaklands College last May was once again a huge success. We were full to capacity and many who qualified to go to the National Championships at Hartpury in July competed to great success both in Dressage and in the Countryside Challenge. Well done to all the competitors and to their Groups and families who provide such wonderful support.

I would like to draw your attention to the new publicity material produced by National. It is very eye catching and is available from pamphlets to pop ups and banners. I particularly like the use of our new strap line, "It's what you CAN do that counts" How very true. To quote our President, HRH The Princess Royal, "There may not be medals given out for stroking a pony's neck, or for sitting up straight, or for saying a horse's name for the first time, but sometimes these are the milestone's that raise the loudest cheer."

This year RDA is adding show jumping to its disciplines. Two Regional Training days are planned to introduce this activity to selected instructors. Accordingly, each County is holding its own training day for helpers. An excellent programme has been devised by our Regional Instructors so I do hope as many as possible will be able to attend their county day. There is more in this issue from Sally and Sue, the East Region Instructors.

RDA was one of three charities to be sponsored by the Daily

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# Sheila Finnie is Volunteer of the Year



Sheila Finnie, Group Organiser at Gaddesden Place RDA Centre has been named Dacorum Sports Partnership Volunteer of the Year Award (held by Group Chairman Trevor Mills) and is also shown with her Lifetime Achievement Award in Service to Sport from Herts Sports Partnership, both awarded in 2011. Well done Sheila!



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## Sid Hobart Receives RDA 'Over and Above' Award

In conjunction with the RDA Volunteer of the Year Award, RDA wants to encourage Groups to publicly recognise the impact that volunteers have on their activities. Therefore it is now possible for Groups to nominate a volunteer from within their Group to be awarded an 'Over and Above' award.



Sally says, "Sid has been associated with the Norfolk Broadland Group, in various capacities but mostly as their RDAGI, for at least 20 years and I have known him, as his Regional Instructor for all that time. I would like to nominate Sid as one of the most reliable and consistent supporters of the Broadland Group for all these years. He has kept the Group going through thick and thin and although he has recently handed over most of the instruction to some younger people, he is always present week after week, despite the cold sometimes and a bad hip as well. He is no 'spring chicken'! Sid is the 'salt of the earth'. The Broadland Group continues, with Sid more on the sidelines now, with its excellent work. This is the only Group in Norfolk who provides riding solely for adults with considerable physical, learning and emotional difficulties. I think it's time that Sid's steadfast devotion to this RDA Group is recognised and I am pleased that the Group is happy for me to recommend the award."

Nomination forms for future awards should be sent to the Development Officer at RDA National Office . There is no closing date for this award and Groups may make more than one application.

Sally C-G

# RDA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Saturday, 9th July 2011 - a personal perspective by William Swire, Barrow Farm RDA

I had qualified for the National Championships by coming third in my class at Oaklands in May.

As my pony, Macie, had not been to the National Championships before, the Group I ride with had to decide whether she would be able to cope with the much larger arenas and numbers of people at Hartpury. They took another pony with them so that she had some company.

On the Saturday morning we made our way to Hartpury College and found the Barrow Farm Group in one of the stables busy grooming Macie and tacking her up. Kath, my instructor, was at the Countryside Challenge.

The classes I was entered for were:-

Class 5 - Grade 1b - Test 13

Class 13 - Grade IV - Test Freestyle

Class 32 - Best Turned Out (Senior)

It was then time for my first dressage. I was in the centre arena and when I had finished I rode Macie back to the stables.

We then had a break and had something to eat and drink. After this we went to find the results of my main dressage test and I came 13th in my category. While we were in the tent looking at the results there was some very heavy rain. Luckily it eased before I went to do my next two classes.

Macie was then prepared for the Best Turned Out class which involved lots of helpers, plaiting up her mane and tail, making sure the tack was as clean as possible, oiling her hoofs and also making sure that I was properly dressed for the class. The rain had almost stopped by the time we arrived for the judging and everyone was able to do some last minute tidying up.

When this judging has finished, I went to do my freestyle dressage and Macie went well. After I had finished I took Macie back to the stables where she was able to be untacked and have a well earned rest. I then had something extra to eat as I was very hungry.

We then got the results of the freestyle dressage and I came second in my category. For the Best Turned Out class I also got second place. After the prize giving we had to go home.

I really enjoyed myself and was chuffed to bits to do so well on Macie. Kath was also very pleased with both of us.



William Swire



## Sadie Ellis, Mid Essex Group - Oaklands 2011 Report

Hello, my name is Sadie Ellis. I'm nine years old and part of the Mid Essex RDA Group. I ride a beautiful Haflinger pony called Kirsch, she has a chestnut body and a flaxen mane and tail which glistens in the sun. This will be my second year riding and also my second year for me and my family travelling to St Albans to compete at Oaklands College. I was entered in the Countryside Challenge and one of the dressage classes.

At home my mum was getting everything ready, by now I was sure everybody, including myself, were feeling nervous but also excited. Wow! The time has finally come! It's time to leave for St Albans. We're nearly there, but there is a problem, it's raining. I hope nobody gets too wet and cold today. Luckily, just as we got there the rain stopped and the sun popped out, but it might be slippery.



It's 9:45 and I'm going to walk the course of the Countryside challenge with my leader Frances and side-walker Anne. I'm now quite calm but there is still something on my mind, are my two little brothers going to behave themselves? Oh no! It's nearly time for me to get on Kirsch and do the Countryside Challenge. Have we got time to prepare ourselves? Good, we're back on track now, I'm wearing my navy blue Mid Essex sweatshirt, my extra clean jodphur boots and my hair is all neat and tidy in my hairnet. Dad just helped me on Kirsch and we're ready to go. Now it's time to concentrate, especially on my steering. "Good girl Kirsch! We've finished, we can take a breather now". She behaved like a star, she didn't put a foot wrong. Now we can take a break, wait for the results and have some well deserved lunch!

Yes! At Last! My little brother Marty is asleep. It's 1:30 now, mum has just taken my other brother, Kasey, for a walk. Wait, why is mum whispering to dad? She is also grinning, ooh is it the results? Fingers cross that I've got laced. My mum has just asked me if I want to know the results. Should I say no? So I thought and then I replied "yes please mum, I'd love to know!" But she didn't say anything, she just waved her hands in the year crazily. "I can't believe it, I've actually won?" Yes! I never thought I'd win again! None of use stopped talking for quite a long time, we were all still so surprised.

But it's time to put my focus head on now because it's nearly time to do dressage. It's 2:35 now and at 2:52 I've got to do a dressage test in the indoor arena. It's 2:50, it's good that me and Kirsch are ready, but are we going to make it on time? We've just done a practice trot to see if I was comfy. As we walked in I could feel Kirsch tensing up, so I shortened my reins. We were half way through the test and Kirsch decided to go to the toilet, which made my ten metre circle look more like a triangle. As we came to the corner for a trot along the long side, something spooked Kirsch. Frances hung onto her and I wanted to scream but I knew that would make things worse.

I'm not angry with Kirsch because there are mirrors in the arena, and I think that's what made her spook. Frances calmed her down and we finished the test. Outside I gave her a big pat although I was a little scared. The judge said I sat well in the saddle and also praised Frances for staying calm. It was yet another surprise when I found out I came 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mum and dad said I had done really well and were very pleased and told me that we could stay for the presentation, it was a fantastic day. I won a massive cup for the countryside challenge and also a large shield for the highest mark. I came home with six rosettes, two trophies and a huge smile on my face. What a day to remember especially as my brothers behaved so well. A big thank you to everyone who helped me and especially my best friend Kirsch.

## CAMBS COLLEGE GROUP REPORT

Our Group has had a very busy year. We have 12 riders and at the moment some good young helpers who are doing their Duke of Edinburgh award with us, apart from our marvellous regular helpers and instructors.

We start the year trying to put in some practice for the Regional Dressage and Countryside Challenge at Oaklands. We take 9 of our riders and 3 of our horses and they all thoroughly enjoy the day. We came home with various prizes ..... which they were thrilled with. Luckily this year Archie did not try to eat the apple! Please thank the organizers - it is quite something to put on, but is much appreciated - I would recommend it to anyone who has not been to Oaklands.

Towards the end of the summer term we take our riders out for a hack in Milton Park and on the last afternoon they have a picnic there, we are lucky to have this facility near enough for us to ride to, so it makes a change for our riders and horses.

We decided this year to have a one day holiday camp at Weston Colville, so 4 of our horses came over the previous afternoon and we had a trial run with able bodied riders of our route, we were almost too complacent and had the odd drama, but all went well on the day when 8 of our riders came. They started off grooming the horses and then 4 rode while the others did stable management and mucked out the fields and we met at a wonderful picnic spot kindly lent by friends in the next door village. Then after a picnic lunch they swapped over and the others rode back but just as they were within sight of the house the heavens opened and everyone was soaked to the skin! However no one minded and dry clothes were found and then they all had a swim once the rain had virtually stopped - the parents by this time had arrived and were watching under umbrellas! but luckily the sun came out again by the time they ended up with a barbeque, They all loved it and went home happy. A big thank you to all those who helped especially Val who came over and walked there and back.

Later in the summer 3 of our riders went on a National RDA holiday to Yorkshire, where they stay for 3 or 4 days and they absolutely adore it.

In the autumn term we did the odd dressage test at The College of West Anglia, Milton where we ride. It is getting much bigger they have many more students and horses and are putting on many more events, so we are lucky to be able to use their facilities.

One of our better riders with Gillian's help and advice has now brought a dressage horse, so far so good and she is pleased with it, so we are hoping it will do well at Oaklands next year

We then decided to do a musical ride for Christmas, so with a bit of practice they all did the musical ride and we managed to borrow wonderful costumes for them from Jane Hood who used to do the Musical ride at the Wembley Horse of the Year Show, so they looked splendid and it added a bit of excitement. We have tried to video it, but have not seen it yet.

We now have our own website set up by Jennifer our dressage rider ..... so do look us up:

[www.cambscollegerda.org.uk](http://www.cambscollegerda.org.uk)

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### MY PROGRESS - THANKS TO THE RDA

Hi, my name is Emma Harris, I have cerebral palsy. I've been riding at Barrow Farm for about fifteen years. When I started riding my balance was very poor, I used to slip in the saddle a lot and had to keep stopping for someone to pull me back into the middle. I needed two side walkers to hold my knees to stop my legs coming up and making my balance even worse. The side walkers also had to hold my ankles so I didn't dig my feet into the pony. My balance has really improved over the years so much that in 2008 I competed in off led dressage at Oaklands and qualified for Hartpury where I came 3rd. I've been riding Jet the Blue Peter pony for over ten years, I would have not been able to get to the level I'm at now without him. Jet will be 29 this year so, I'm getting used to a new pony, Nicco. Barrow Farm has given me so much I wanted to give something back so, I joined the Committee 3 years ago and now I'm a Trustee.

I also play a sport called Boccia, Boccia is a Paralympic sport. There's 6 red and 6 blue balls and 1 white jack ball. The aim of the game is to get as many of your coloured balls closer to the jack than your opponents closest ball. I've been playing Boccia 11 years and am in the England squad. I can't throw a ball so I use a ramp and have an assistant to move the ramp and to put the balls in the ramp.



# Fenland Group Celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The Fenland Group this summer celebrated their 30 year anniversary with a gymkhana followed by a BBQ at the home of Judi Van Geest, where the children from the Priory and Garth Schools in nearby Spalding, come to ride.



A very happy day was much enjoyed by all, and Val Parker (Cambs. Co. Instr.) and Philly Hamilton (Cambs. Co. Chr.) were very honoured to be included in such a special occasion.

The Group was originally started by Liz Dixon Spain, who still comes and helps. Jane Carter is the original instructor and the Group offers riding to many youngsters who have benefited from their teaching skills.

A delicious BBQ was served to everyone in Judi's barn and a wonderful anniversary cake was made by Judi's daughter Fern who is also a volunteer.

All riders received a rosette and a certificate and I think it is fair to say that all the Fenland Group helpers and instructors are very proud of the wonderful progress their riders make.

The Fenland Group helpers and instructors are to be congratulated for their continued hard work and dedication. Cambridgeshire is the richer for having such a Group. Well done to all.

Philly Hamilton



## Generous Donation to Stevenage Group

Martin Stackemann, immediate past Captain of the John O'Gaunt Golf Club - Potton, Beds., Presenting a cheque to Stevenage Group RDA's Tori McKenna (Instructor) and Ian Shepherd (Chairman).

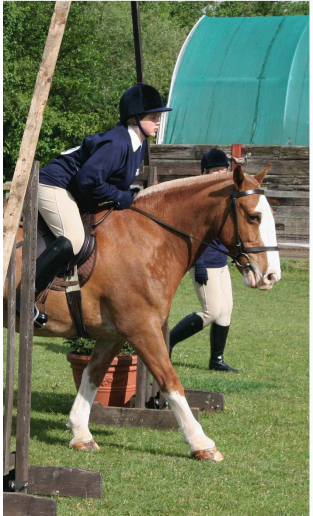
The magnificent £3000 donation came from various fund raising events during Martin's year as Captain.

Stevenage Group expressed their thanks to Martin and all the members of the John O'Gaunt Club for their efforts in raising such a large sum of money which will help us to continue our vital Therapeutic Riding lessons to pupils of local special schools

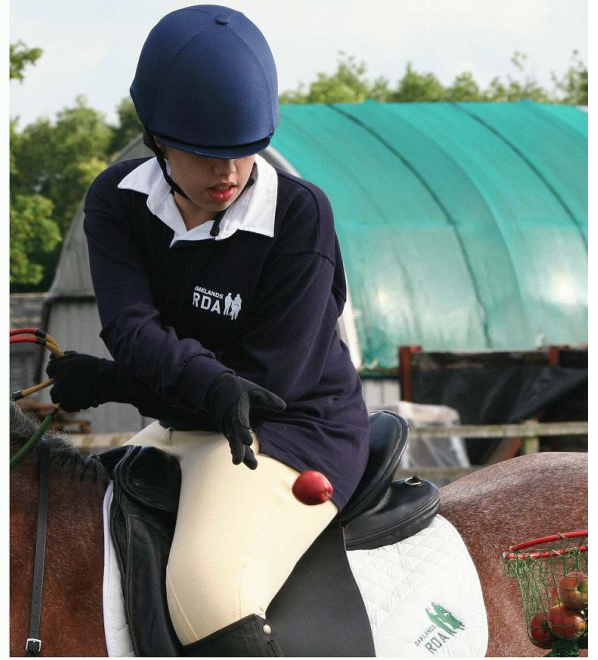
Ian Shepherd



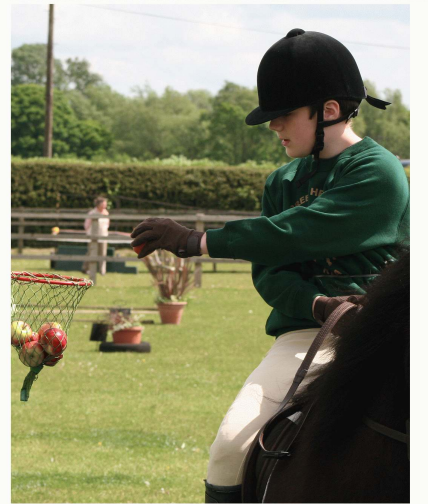
OAKLANDS COLLEGE 2011



















## Enterprising Schoolboy Raises Money For North Herts Group

Tom Parrett, a pupil at Nobel School in Stevenage, has been making nameplates for horse's stables during his school craft lessons. These have been sold to local horse owners and all profits go to charity. Tom nominated North Herts RDA to benefit from his hard work, and also loans a pony to the Group for their sessions. He is pictured here presenting a cheque for £116 to the Chairman & Treasurer.

Val Parker



## 2011 Holidays Report

It was another quiet year with only one rider from the Region going on a National holiday in Yorkshire. I hope more from the Region will apply in 2012. If you do send a rider on a National holiday from your Group, please let me know. There are some super holidays on offer. They are all listed in the Holiday brochure each Group receives quite early in the New Year.

The morning/Day camps are slowly building up in the Region, with the following taking place during 2011 :

The Cambridgeshire Fun Day took place in August. There is a report from Phillipa Hamilton (the Cambs County Chairman), together with a very happy Group photograph. with everyone looking damp but happy. Thanks to Phillipa and to Linda Porter Cohen for all their hard work and organising skills to bring this day together.

The Sugarloaf Group, Essex held a fun day on 17th August (again, a report follows).

This Group once again took some of their riders to Clwyd, Wales for a holiday. this was the third year running and from the report following I think you can see it was another big success. Will they do it again in 2012, I rather feel they will. Well done to them all.

Saddlers Hall held their day camp on 6th July with a red white & blue theme in honour of the Royal wedding year. There is a report on page 15 from Sadie Ellis, one of their riders, and the sheer joy that this young lady gained from this day shines through the words and must make all the volunteers who put in such a lot of time and effort on these holidays feel how well spent their time is.

Yes, these day camps give our riders such pleasure. Could your Group do one?

Anyhow, whatever you do, thank you so much and please keep me advised of any holidays you do, even if only a half a day. Please call me if I can be of any help and happy holidays 2012.

Jace Horner



**SUGARLOAF GROUP** based in Chadwell St. Mary, Essex held a fun day for their riders on 17th August. Lisa Foster, one of our enthusiastic volunteers, organised this as many of our riders would be capable of entering the regional competitions but we are unable to get horses there for them as we use riding school horses. Therefore every rider we have was given the chance to ride a countryside challenge test in the large outdoor menage and a basic dressage test in the indoor school.

The weather was great so making the day even better. Many families and friends attended to watch and also to support the stalls set up to raise funds for the group. A total of 316.50 was collected including riders donations.

As it was the first time most of our riders had done any of the tests we were pleased that they all rode well and enjoyed themselves. Each participant was awarded a rosette after completing their tests and the overall winners were presented with medals.

Thanks to Joyce Truscott, Jace Homer and Kath Hatwell who came to do the judging for us and well done to all our volunteers who worked hard to make the day such a great success. We are looking forward to holding a similar event next year!

Jan Osborn



## Chippenham Summer Fun Day - Thursday 4 August 2011

In spite of the heavy rain the Cambridgeshire Fun Day was again held this year at the Coach House Riding Stables in Chippenham by kind permission of Linda PorterCohen.

As everyone arrived the skies darkened and down came the rain and although damp in clothing all present were in high spirits. We were able to welcome 8 young riders, who were soon united with their ponies. Linda is excellent at matching a rider with a suitable pony. From small to large, there is always a pony for everyone.



Heather Campbell instructed us all, and after warm-up exercises and getting to know our ponies in the arena, we then went for a hack around Linda's fields. Everyone knew their place in the line and with heads into the storm we set off! On our return to the yard we untacked the ponies and decided to enjoy the rest of the day under cover in the hay barn. We were all hungry and tucked into the picnic, and the helpers were grateful for a hot drink.

We then took the chance to have one of the ponies out for us all to look and learn!

The riders were excellent with their knowledge of the different parts of the pony, and drew in bridle, saddle etc on the horse outlines provided. We then enjoyed a guessing game with grooming kit - with one delightful suggestion that a bandage could be used round the pony's ears!

Riders received a rosette to remember the day, and we all thanked Linda Porter-Cohen for a wonderful day with our ponies. Thank you to Linda and to everyone who came to help. These sort of days just wouldn't happen with the support and dedication of the RDA helpers. Many thanks to you all.

Philly Hamilton Cambs Co Chr.

# RIDING HOLIDAY

Monday 25th - Friday 29th JULY 2011

Having travelled from Essex as far as York on Sunday, we spent Monday morning looking round.

In the afternoon we travelled on to the cottages near Bridlington where I am to stay for the riding holiday. These were very comfortable. There was a boy's cottage and a girl's cottage. All six of the riders and the helpers got to know each other as we had tea and cakes and then we were able to chose our rooms.

Each morning the mini bus picked us up from the cottages to go to the riding centre where we were introduced to our horses.

We did some stable management which included mucking out, groomed the ponies, cleaned the tack, tacked the ponies up, attempted to plait the horses' manes and tails and had 2 rides each day. We also did some dressage and a countryside challenge course. On the last day we took the horses for a long trek over the cliffs to the sea and when we got back to the stables we washed our horses down as it was very hot.

In the evenings we went out to the pub, into Bridlington or to the riding centre where we had a meal or a barbecue. We all enjoyed ourselves.

On the last evening there was an award ceremony. I won the dressage and got a couple of rosettes for taking part in the stable management and the countryside challenge.

I really enjoyed myself on this holiday and it was great to meet new people. If they do this holiday again I would like to do it again.

William Swire, Barrow Farm RDA

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## Sugarloaf Holiday at Clwyd, 27th Oct - 1st Nov 2011

Another great holiday! The weather was kind again as we even saw some sunshine and it was quite mild.

We took six riders this year with seven horsey helpers, a cook and two cook's assistants. As usual the accommodation was comfortable and clean and very warm. There is a small television but we seemed to make our own entertainment. Games and jigsaws are provided for our free time and a very complicated jigsaw took a few people five days to complete. One of the instructors compiled a very good quiz for the riders on the last evening and a few of the helpers learnt a lot too!

The horses provided for our assessment were good. We had used three of them before but the others were new to us. We have never been given a bad horse - I do not think that they have one!

As before the indoor school, outdoor menage and the all weather tracks were a joy and the grassy path up to the picnic area was fun although the helpers tended to get a little breathless. The water splash however was a disappointment as rainfall has been low this year and it was dry. We all had to use our imagination.

As we had three instructors we were able to teach the riders in two groups as three of them were much more experienced than the others. They benefited from the more intensive lessons while the newer riders concentrated on learning the basics and becoming more confident.

We were all involved in bringing the horses in from the field, taking rugs off, grooming, tacking up, untacking, putting rugs on and taking the horses back to the field. Then at the end of each day all the tack had to be cleaned.

The whole five days were very tiring for all involved however, unsurprisingly, we are already booked for next year because we had so much fun.

Jan Osborn



# Janet's Show at Sadlers Hall

Hooray - it's July 6<sup>th</sup>, I'm extremely excited for two reasons. One it's my birthday, and two, it's Janet's show. My name is Sadie Ellis, I ride for the Mid-Essex RDA Group. I've been riding at Janet's for two years now. This morning, before school, I've already opened some of my neatly wrapped presents - nearly all of them were horse related! I'm getting very nervous now, I've finished my lunch and a big chunk of birthday cake. Everyone has been told that the theme is red, white and blue. I dug out my jodphurs and my red and white spotty top, my mum bought me some red and white ribbon to hold my hairnet in place (and to match my outfit).

We've arrived, and I recognise nearly half of the faces from last year. All around me were laughing and smiling children, me and mum set up our chairs as my legs began to ache. There's some really good riders here today, I hope I do well as I'm practising for the National Championships. Vikki told me that there's only a couple more riders to go and then it's my turn. There's a mini Countryside Challenge and a fantastic treasure hunt. I ride a beautiful Haflinger called Kirsch. She can be naughty sometimes so we called her 'the old boot', but today she was as good as gold. It was like she was a robot because she did everything I asked all the way through, from posting letters to picking up apples. The two lady judges were very encouraging, I especially liked it when they said "well done". I was the last one to ride Kirsch so afterwards we untacked her, gave her a brush and oiled her hooves (and of course a peppermint, cos that's her favourite). Next was my Horse Care & Knowledge, which I've been studying very hard for. I think I've done quite well as I saw the examiner put quite a lot of ticks on the paper (fingers crossed).

Frances was there, who is my leader at the RDA shows. She led Toerag out of his field for a brush and to say hello to her little grandson, who had a little trot around the arena which he thoroughly enjoyed. My dad turned up with my two brothers, Kasey (3) and Marty (2) to join in the fun, and have a go at the treasure hunt. Janet placed pots around her field which were filled with goodies for us and the pony. Kasey and Marty had a nice ride around the arena on Toerag. . "Can't do much" my mum said as he's getting very old, so he tires easily. When we finished we also gave Toerag a brush and oiled his feet too. Janet then said "have you been around the field yet Sadie? Can't go on the horses as it's far too windy." So I took Kasey and mum took Marty. It was a race between me and Kasey who could get to the pots first, it was great fun finding sweets and toys. Marty was having just as much fun running around with the wind in his hair. I really enjoyed Janet's show and I think that the boys did too.

Thanks Janet, Vikki (who was a birthday girl too), Simon and everyone who also helped me. It was a fantastic day and I can't wait until next year.

Sadie Ellis (aged 10 today).



Unfortunately, last years Holidays Reports arrived after we had gone to press, so here they are (albeit somewhat late)!

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## SUGARLOAF HOLIDAY AT CLWYD 2010



As we had enjoyed our holiday so much in 2009 the group decided to take another five riders to Clwyd again this year. Two of the riders and two helpers were attending for the first time. Luckily our two cooks were there again although two other helpers took over the kitchen to prepare breakfast to give them some free time.

The routine was the same. We were given the health and safety chat when we arrived and were then taken to meet the horses. This was to make sure that the riders and instructors were happy with the chosen horses. We did not ride for long as both riders and helpers were tired from the long journey.

Next morning everybody was eager to collect the horses from the paddock and begin the day. The three riders who had been before knew the routine so with a little help they were able to take the rugs off, groom the horses and tack up. However the new riders were much younger and did not have the experience so they needed more tuition. This also applied to turning the horses back out every day after riding and cleaning the tack before we were able to return to the bungalow for a much earned cup of tea!

We spent a lot of time walking and trotting round the all weather tracks as well as going up the grassy track to the picnic area (which we did not use!). The water splash was a big success again this year as we never get the chance to do this in our normal sessions! We also had a hack along a bridleway on the site of an old railway track but as this was not on the land belonging to C.S.R.C. we were accompanied by a member of staff. However there was still time for some lessons which included a little jumping, more groundwork and even a little cantering for some.

The weather was surprisingly good and although cold we often saw the sun and only had a little light drizzle now and again. This did make the holiday much more enjoyable as everyone had prepared for the cold and wet. Needless to say a provisional booking has been made for next year!



## HOLIDAYS REPORT - 2010

Here we are thinking of holidays ahead this year but I will try to bring you up to date on last year.

Very few Groups applied for a National holiday which is a shame as they are very enjoyable. Details of these are usually sent to your Group correspondent early in the year, so look out for this if you might be interested. Full details of how to apply will be in that booklet together with a booking form.

However, morning / day camps are building up nicely with most Counties having at least one Group holding one of these, as follows:

Cambridgeshire Fun Day - 5th August 2010 - Following is a Report from Philippa Hamilton the Cambridge Chairman, who organises this day, it does, indeed sound great fun. Thanks to Phillips for organising this great day and to Linda Porter Cohen for the ponies.

Saddlers Farm Group. Essex held a 40th anniversary day on 7th July. They have held a Fun Day now for several years usually with a theme which makes the day so different for everybody.

Sugarloaf Group, Essex, held a fun morning in September which was a big success.

This same Group, Sugarloaf, took some of their riders to Clwyd, Wales for a holiday. Having taken one Group in 2009 with such success, they decided to do so again. As you will see from the report following, another success - could this become a permanent fixture? What a nice thought.

If you think you might like to do this in your Group, Clwyd's details are shown in the holiday brochure. This is a delightful venue with first class facilities I have visited in the past and was most impressed. It does take some organising from the Group end, of course. Well done Sugarloaf.

I believe there may be other Groups doing things on the holiday scene. Please let me know if there are, We would like to hear.

In the meantime = Happy holidays. and thank you on behalf of the East Region Committee

Jace Horner, East Region Holiday Rep

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## FUN DAY - THURSDAY 5 AUGUST 2010

We were all most fortunate to have the chance to enjoy another Fun Day in August at Coach House Stables at Chippenham and grateful thanks to Linda Porter Cohen who makes this day possible and has wonderfully behaved ponies.

This year we had 8 young riders from various Groups around the County and the standard was most encouraging. Their enjoyment of the day was a great pleasure to see and riders were able to groom and help tack up their ponies and during the morning take part in an informal lesson and then a hack through the surrounding fields keeping an eye out for the biggest leaf they could spot, who could see a butterfly first, find a feather and look for a pigeon.

During the lunch break we enjoyed an informal quiz guessing the parts of the horse, and what some of the grooming kit was - with a leg bandage being identified as a horse neck scarf - something different!

In the afternoon ponies were tacked up again and the riders played handy pony and gymkhana games before rosettes and time to go home.

Thanks so much to all the instructors, helpers and Linda's staff who gave of their time and help to make this a special day for some of our young riders.

Phillipa Hamilton

# Sitting Pretty

## at the Stevenage & District Group

In the year that RDA Groups are being encouraged to ask 'can we do more?', Stevenage & District RDA secured a generous donation of £1,300 from local firm LV Retirement Solutions for a specially adapted saddle to help them include riders with more severe disabilities.

Like many RDA Groups offering riding to physically disabled children and adults, Stevenage sometimes found that balance issues were limiting the therapeutic benefits of riding for some of its riders. The key features of the new saddle are an adjustable cantle; a handle; built up padding beneath the knee roll and extra padding on top of the flap behind the leg. The modifications were based on a Bates air-filled saddle with interchangeable gullets, which meant it could be used on a wide range of ponies and horses.

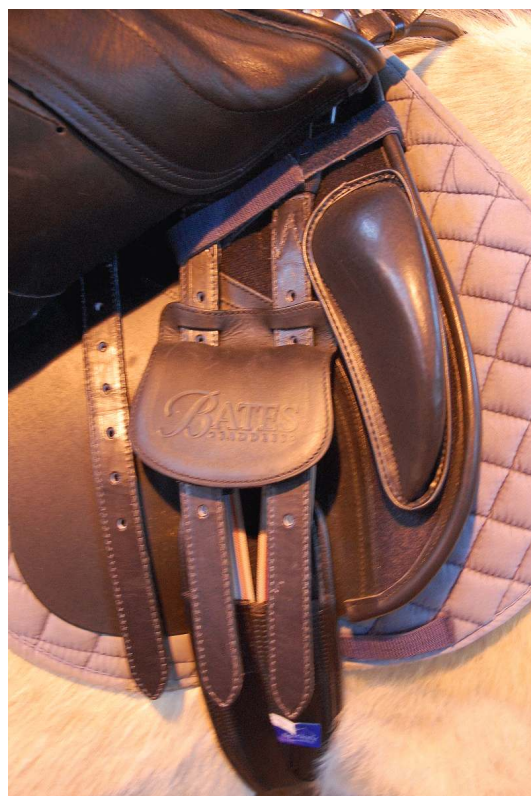
Crucially, all the elements of the saddle are easily removable and adjustable where necessary. The cantle piece, for example, which offers similar support to a very deep saddle, can be removed completely or adjusted to fit riders of different sizes. The blocks of padding are securely fixed and can be attached or removed as necessary. The handle secures underneath the saddle flaps and can likewise be taken off when not required.

Having seen the saddle a couple of times during its development as well as the finished product, Sue Mack has given it the 'thumbs-up' for use by RDA. "It's a real triumph," she says. "I particularly like the way it encourages riders to adopt a more upright position, which will help to progress their riding ability and also maximise the therapeutic benefit gained from their RDA sessions."

Hertfordshire County Chairman, Antonia McKinley, has already seen the saddle in action and is keen to have it on show at the East regional meeting. "It's a very clever design and I can really see this being of interest to other Groups in the region. It's wonderful that Stevenage have come up with an idea that can benefit so many people - and that they want to share their innovation with others."

The team have plans to demonstrate it to the rest of the Region, and are encouraging anyone from RDA who is interested to come along and take a look for themselves.

To find out more about the Stevenage saddle project, contact Peter Tobitt at [peter.tobitt@ntlworld.com](mailto:peter.tobitt@ntlworld.com)







## Active Waveney Sports Awards 2010/11 Most Valuable Contribution to Disabled Sport

### Pakefield Riding School

Tess (Teresa) Hardy MBE started Riding for the Disabled and was made an MBE in the 1970s for all the work she has done for the disabled.

Now more than 100 disabled children and adults ride every week at Pakefield Riding School. The school has been associated with the Activities Unlimited programme and works closely with individual and group riders from the Ashley and Warren rSpecial Schools, the Day Centre for Special Needs, Crown House and Amber Care who all support those with varying degrees of disability.

Lessons are provided with qualified staff and helpers who also take the riders on to the beach and through the woods, which they thoroughly enjoy.

The schools has held competitions for the adults in dressage and for the children in gymkhana, where they win rosettes and medals.

The club is a very worthy winner and should be congratulated for its significant work in the field of disabled riding.



## TRAINING IN THE REGION

2011 has been another busy year for Training in the East Region. Sue and I, with the help and commitment of all our County Instructors and Training Advisers, have been out and about visiting Groups and events, reviewing, advising and updating our instructor/coaches. Many thanks to all our Groups for making us all, County and Regional Officers, so welcome.





We ran three very successful and popular Regional Training Days. There were nearly 100 delegates attending each of the days which were held at Wood Green, Cambridgeshire; Garboldisham, Norfolk and Marks Tey, Essex.

The programmes concentrated on Autism, Education, (which included workshops on ASDAN and the National Curriculum); Coaching as opposed to Instructing (with reference to UKCC) and other useful workshops. All the speakers were excellent and our special thanks go to Dave Victor, Head Teacher of a Special School in Stevenage whose fascinating talk on Autism at Wood Green and Marks Tey was particularly well received. Jenni Espiner (Inclusive Learning Manager at Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke) also held us all in her thrall with tales of her work with young people within the autistic spectrum.

We have had more UKCC Courses, with a good success rate and would urge anyone who would like to consider one of these courses at Level 1, 2 or 3 to contact Sue or me, or Anne Mitchell at Barrow Farm, in the first instance. We would be happy to discuss these courses with anyone interested.



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*Sally Campbell-Gray*

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**That's all for this year folks!**

Please remember to send us lots of articles and photos for next years issue.

[sdiggins@rda-east.org.uk](mailto:sdiggins@rda-east.org.uk)