





South Region Chair's Report for 2024

After nine years as Chair of South Region I officially stepped down on December 31st 2023.

I have really enjoyed getting to know so many of you during my time as Chair and have made many friends along the way.

I have attended all sorts of events from Group celebrations and anniversaries, training days, AGM's, Royal visits, sharing the highs and lows with the participants at our Regionals and the National Championships, helping and supporting Groups as they have strived to move with the times. Getting back up and running after Covid was especially challenging for all, but I was so pleased that South Region bounced back with confidence after such a difficult time. It has been a privilege to work with you all.

The Charity world is more difficult than ever with so many Charities calling on people's generosity of time and money. People have less disposable income, so Charities like RDA Groups have to work so much harder to get the funds in. I recently attended a "Meet the Funders" day at West Berks council which included advice on how to apply for grants. The general message that came out of the day was that

funding is down by 25% while applications by Charities for funding is up by 25%. We are all going to have to rattle our tins, bake more cakes and find inventive ways to keep the money coming in.



I would have loved to have spent my last year as your Chair getting out and about around the Region, but unfortunately as Deputy Chair of RDA UK I had to step into the role of Interim Chair when our UK Chair of Trustees stepped down last March.

I will however remain as part of the South Region Team as

a Coach Developer, continuing to do coach reviews and assessments and examine proficiency test for our participants. I will also be taking up the role of New Groups Liaison Officer helping

potential new RDA Groups and Accessibility Mark Groups set up in South Region and find their way through the maze of good governance for their Groups.

I am delighted that Diane Lee from Wyfold RDA has taken up the role as your Regional Chair, I know that she will be a huge asset leading the Regional team and will represent South Region well on the Regional Chairs committee. I will be helping her settle into the role over the coming months and very much hope that she enjoys it as much as I have.

Thank you for the kindness and support that you have shown to me over the last nine years and I look forward seeing many of you during 2024.

Frances

All change at Baughurst R.D.A!

Baughurst Group



We have two schools who would have been very sorry to see us close as the children enjoy contact with ponies and benefit greatly from their rides each week. It's such a pleasure to see their progress.

However, everyone pulled out the stops and in a matter of two weeks we had some new ponies, a wonderful new venue, which both have generously been provided for our weekly sessions.

After meeting together with our volunteers, we decided to share the running of our group among us and make it more viable to run our group. New trustees, treasurer, school contacts and new chair! We already have a coach and one in training and two on standby if needed so we were able to go ahead with this after many risk assessments, volunteering forms and DBS checks!!

At the beginning of September, we were without enough ponies, a venue, secretary, and Chair!! As well as a change of members of the committee due to retirements after an amazing 20 years of volunteering with the RDA. In addition, we lost our venue due to it being sold and ponies retired too!

This year we have several children in wheelchairs and with more complicated disabilities but along with their own staff and our volunteers and very patient and understanding ponies all has gone very well and we are pleased to be up and running. We had our first sessions on September 19 and were delighted that everything went very well.

We had a very successful first term ending with a Christmas party with Father Christmas arriving by pony and trap, he then gave out presents to the children. As one of our schools was unable to attend that day two of our volunteers visited the school for their end of term concert and gave them their presents. It was an amazing experience!

We don't have sessions during the winter months as the colder weather is too much for some of our children. We now look forward to the next term in the Spring and a successful future for our group.



South Buckinghamshire Group

A big thank you to everyone at South Bucks who worked so hard to make our Carol Service in December a great success. We were so lucky that the Rev Roger Royle came to make it so special, along with members of the Chiltern Music Academy's Symphonic Wind Band who provided us with music to sing our carols to and Sophie Christiansen, our Group President, welcoming everyone. Our ponies were amazing dressed as Angels, Christmas trees and clouds, Freddy was very good at his quick changes! Father Christmas, hot chocolate, mulled wine and mince pies made the afternoon complete.



The Rev Roger Royle who conducted our service with the Nativity



Our angels - Chequers, Freddy and Duke



A quick change for Freddy from Christmas Tree, to Angel and then a Cloud

Windsor & Ascot Driving Group

We started driving again in 2023 on a very cold March day but as you can see from the photo, Rebecca is delighted to be back in a carriage.

We entered the Fancy Dress Class at Royal Windsor Horse Show for the first time in many years and won a prize. The theme was Heroes and Villains and our carriage was transformed into the Batmobile driven, of course, by Batman and Robin. The Joker, the Riddler, Catwoman, Penguin and Poison Ivy were our villains on the ground. A huge amount of effort went into the decoration of the carriage (including Bat 1 number plates) and making the costumes but it was also great fun. Janet, aka Batman, who drove and Daniel the Joker, who carried our bat shaped name board, both really enjoyed

their first time at Windsor Horse Show.

We held a bucket collection at Windsor Racecourse in May at a Family Funday and took Blue, one of our ponies, to meet the racegoers who of course loved him. We raised enough money to buy a set of driving cones. We had lots of lovely drives through the year and finished with our Tinsel Drive which was combined with our Christmas party. Our coaches dressed up as Father Christmas, Mother Christmas and their elves. They gave gifts to our participants before escaping the rain into the party.

We're looking forward to celebrating the group's 50th anniversary in 2024.



Lambourn Group

Lambourn RDA is in great shape as we go into 2024, thanks to the amazing work of our Chair, Trustees, Volunteers and supporters.

Fundraising has never been more important as we all struggle with rising costs, and we continue to have a full calendar of events to keep the funds coming in.

In January we held a Burns Night for the first of our fundraisers in 2023. In March we were supported at a golf day, raising a considerable sum. We took a stand at the Lambourn Open Day on Good Friday (7th April) and for the first time we also ran a Fun Dog Show which was a huge success with full entries in all classes.



In May we celebrated the Coronation with themed riding sessions, and we entered the Royal Windsor Horse Show RDA Fancy Dress Competition.



June was a hair raising month for 20 of our volunteers and supporters who abseiled 100 metres down the side of Portsmouth's iconic landmark, Spinnaker Tower. This raised over £11,000 for our group, which is a staggering amount!

We had a very successful time at the RDA competitions, with all six of our riders qualifying for the National Championships. Harry achieved the highest score in the show jumping. Christopher, Roisin and Jennifer qualified for the dressage and Aaron and Tommy for the countryside challenge! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experience of going to the National Championships and we look forward to the 2024 competitions.

At the end of the summer, we held our first 'Tea with a Pony' and we look forward to many more in 2024.

September was a whirlwind of a month with several fundraising events, including a clay pigeon shoot at Barbury shooting school, two days at the Royal Berkshire Show and a private film evening at the Parade Cinema in Marlborough.

In the run up to Christmas we held a raffle, and also in December, we took a stall at the Hungerford Extravaganza with a raffle for the chance to win

buckets of bottles, perfect for the festive season!

We have already had the first of our fundraisers in 2024, which was a very successful Race Night, and we look forward to many more.

There have been a few changes to our group over the year, with some Trustees stepping down and the appointment of new Trustees. We had to say a very sad goodbye to one of our ponies, but welcomed two new ponies, a 14.2hh bay mare and a Shetland pony. We also had a change of Yard Manager at the end of the year, and we look forward to working with the new Yard Manager in 2024. Following a very generous donation, we have had mirrors installed along one side of our arena, which are proving to be very beneficial to our participants. We have plans for some improvements to the yard, subject to available funds, so we are keeping our fingers crossed!

Our riding sessions are almost full, and our ponies and horses are all fit and well, so we are looking forward to another year full of laughter and fun.





New Yatt RDA opens Countryside Challenge Course

This July NYRDA celebrated the opening of their Countryside Challenge Course by hosting a volunteers 'thank you' event at the yard.

The newly fenced off outdoor arena has been turned into a Countryside Challenge Course with the inclusion of locally made obstacles and recycled items kindly donated by volunteers. The wooden apple tree and farmyard animals were designed and made by a volunteer and are loved by all the participants.

During the warmer Summer days, many outdoor riding sessions were enjoyed by not only the riders but volunteers who lead/side walked too. Riding outdoors has provided a different experience for many of our riders and the ponies who all enjoyed the change of scenery. The aim is to build on the course year by year and add elements to keep it fresh and interesting for everyone.

Fundraising will continue for a new, higher all-weather mounting block to maximise its usefulness.

New Yatt Group



Bank Farm Group

The theme for International Women's Day this year was Inspire and Inclusion and there is no one who lives and breathes this more than our local Riding for the Disabled group founder, Anne Coney.

A horse lover since she first fell off a pony at 3! She was invited to see a local RDA group in action where she saw the life-changing experiences children with additional needs and disabilities gained through riding.

She took her carriage driving pony to an RDA camp and along with our co-founder Gaile Ogden, ran her own RDA camp at Bank Farm in Bellingdon where the Bank Farm RDA group was born in 1986. Today, the group is going



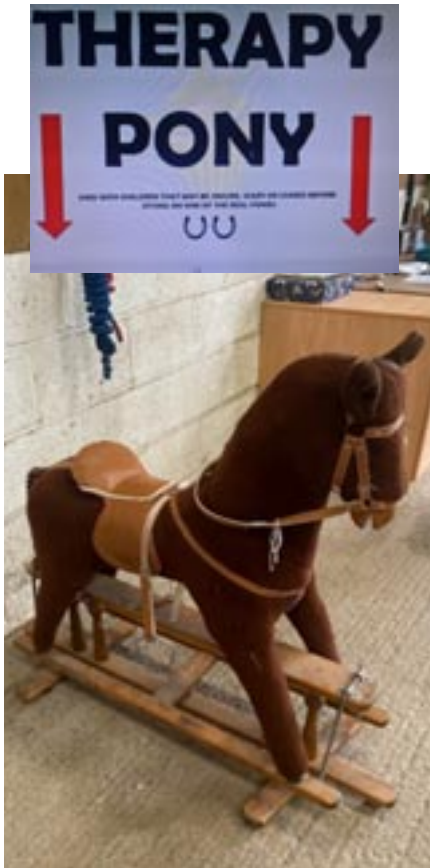
strong with 7 ponies and 60 riders.

Anne's philosophy has always been that at Bank Farm its 'what you can do that counts'.

The community at Bank Farm allows not only the riders to be their authentic selves, without having to conform to what society dictates, but creates a safe place for them to go to.

And it goes beyond the riders, to the volunteers and the parents.

Anne inspires young volunteers to embrace difference and demonstrates the importance of inclusion, empathy and belonging, breaking down barriers and providing opportunities for positive communication and connection.



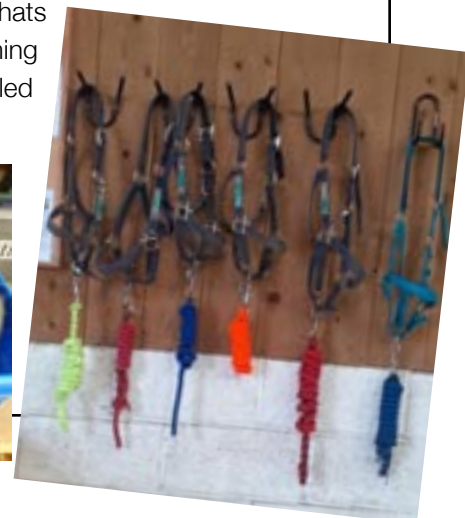
Gifted by Jan Scully and Cath Shipton who are proud to present "Bob The Therapy Pony". He is loved and used by children who may be wary, unsure or scared before sitting on one of the real ones. Named Bob, thanks to Emma MacDonald's daughter because he bobs backwards and forwards!



Bucks Country Show on Sunday 5th and Monday 6th May

We will be decorating the rocking horse in RDA colours and taking it to Bucks Country Show to guess the name. We will have a sheet with different pony names on and charge £2 a go for people to put their name and number against the name – the person who guesses the correct name will win a full Grooming kit and bag. We will also be doing pick a lolly 50p a go, tombola 3 tickets for £1, but our main aim is to try and increase awareness and encourage the sponsoring of a pony, donations etc.

A massive shout out to Emma for all her hard work in tidying up the barn at Bank Farm, for arranging and labelling all the hats and halters. Additionally, all the ponies grooming kit boxes have been cleared, sorted and labelled with each one having a minimum of 7 items.



'Do horses ever get Hiccups?'

- one of the questions in Bank Farm's Charity Quiz Night.

Earlier this year my friend Martina and I organised the 1st Charity Quiz Night in aid of Bank Farm RDA. Held at The Three BlackBirds in Boxmoor. The event resounding success and raised £370.

It consisted of 9 rounds of 10 questions, plus 2 bonus rounds on horses including the one above - (the answer was Yes by the way). Tremendous fun and enjoyed by all plus a delicious meal in the interval. The winning team got rosettes and the 'also rans' a carrot!

The evening was such a success that we have 3 future dates

Wednesday 19th June 2024

Wednesday 4th September 2024

Wednesday 27th November 2024

If you would like to join us or bring a team of 6 then please contact me, Emma MacDonald

Email dot3082@hotmail.co.uk Phone 07506 329862



The winners - first past the post...



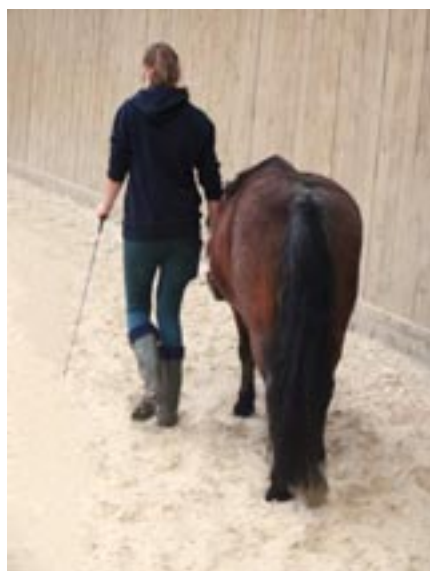
... and the also rans!!



Oh no, Rosie, not again!

She has a habit of nibbling my jumper. Rosie is a New Forest pony that I am lucky enough to work with at Bank Farm RDA. I have been volunteering there for around 5 years and in that time I have met wonderful people and horses. I have had amazing opportunities that have broadened my horizon. Thanks to the training I have received whilst volunteering, I am now on my way to qualifying to become an RDA Coach. Volunteering has developed my confidence and I am now pursuing a career in Equine Management. I first met Rosie in 2022 and a year later started liberty work with her. When I first

started working with her, if I asked her to do anything, she would ignore me and was very grumpy. Now she will follow me around with no headcollar and listen to my instructions. They say never work with animals and children, but I have been lucky enough to do both. If you want to hear more about me and Rosie, make sure to check out my Instagram @emsequinelife



Woolbeding Group



Taken at our last session before Christmas

Woolbeding RDA group are celebrating their 25 year anniversary. Named after the original location where it started, they now meet at Hewshott Farm, Liphook. Some volunteers have been there right from the start!



We have super new saddles made by Voltaire! Thanks to Jo Lock for sourcing them ... so comfy for Nancy.



One of our longtime riders, Sean Stirling riding his favourite horse Buddy, sharing a joke with Father Christmas. He has been attending RDA since he was 7 and recently celebrated his 18th birthday.

Warfield Group

We have had another trying year, mostly water-and flooding related at Lands' End Equestrian Centre. However, when the children have been able to ride they have all been very enthusiastic and eager to learn. So, they all have progressed, despite the disruptions, with our regular team of helpers; this has made everyone's efforts worthwhile. Watching the riders gain confidence, balance and self-esteem is very rewarding, and, this year, we hope to introduce Grade I and Grade II again as they are certainly ready to take their tests. Unfortunately, earlier in the year, the outside floodlit menage started to slip into the river, so the riders have been using an unlit field close by; but on Thursday evenings, our adult clients come, and they had no lighting which made it very difficult. Luckily, after a few months of negotiations, their smart new floodlit riding area is under construction, so they will be up and running again very soon.

It's with great sadness that we report that Linda

Lucken, the owner of Lands' End Equestrian Centre, passed away unexpectedly in November. It was a huge shock to her family, and to us all: she will certainly be missed. We have, however, been left in the excellent hands of her daughters, who are an active part of our group.

This year our Annual fundraising Driving and Horse Shows will both be held in June. The Driving Show will take place on Sunday 16th June at our new venue, off Ryemead Lane, Church Road, Winkfield SL4 4SE and the Moss End Show will be held on Sunday 23rd June at Moss End Farm, Warfield, nr Bracknell, Berks, RG42 6EJ. We have a wide range of showing classes, including Arab Horse Society and CHAPS classes, which are all affiliated, and many other showing classes to suit all. In the morning, we have a clear round ring. So, if you would like to come and support us, you can find all the updated details on our website:-www.mossendshows.com.



VIRTUAL AVIATION EXPERIENCE

The free Virtual Aviation Experience (VAE) is a programme by Aerobility and is funded by the UK Government and opens up the world of aviation to a community of people that might have previously felt it was impossible. With sessions being delivered remotely, anyone with a disability who has dreamed of flying can now do so from home.

www.aerobility.com/virtual-aviation-experience

WINDSOR
GREAT PARK



WINDSOR GREAT PARK CROSS COUNTRY RIDE

A unique opportunity to ride
in the beautiful surroundings of
THE WINDSOR GREAT PARK
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7th & 8th September 2024

Please check the website
www.windsorlions.co.uk for confirmation

Every penny raised and donated supports
Riding for the Disabled Association and
other worthwhile causes

Please visit www.windsorlions.co.uk
email horse@windsorlions.co.uk or call 0345 833 2832



The Lions Club of Windsor would like to thank our generous
patron **The Shanly Foundation** for their continued support.

SHANLY
FOUNDATION

2024 Dates for your diary

May 19th - South Region
Qualifier to be held at The
Berkshire College of
Agriculture.

July 12th, 13th & 14th
RDA National
Championships at Hartpury.

September 7th & 8th
Windsor Lions Sponsored
Ride, Windsor Great Park.

**If you would like to help with
RDA in any way by
volunteering or fund raising
please contact any of
the people listed below:**

REGIONAL AND COUNTY CONTACTS

- Regional Chairman** Diane Lee - 07710 357846 diane_lee@btopenworld.com
Regional Driving Reps Sarah Clunie - 01491 599701 clunie@talktalk.net
Anne Coney 07922244288 anne.coney@hotmail.com
Regional Dressage Rep Antigone Bentley - 07775 661522 tiggibentley@aol.com
Regional Equine Advisor Waveney Luke - 01865 874440 waveney@jandwluke.com
Regional Physio Nona Dane - 07854 379271 anon_dane@hotmail.com
Regional Rep Nona Dane - 07854 379271 anon_dane@hotmail.com
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Participant Representative Natasha Wait - 07766 853559 participants@southregionrda.com
New and AM Group Liaison Officer Frances Lochrane - 07798941229 flochrane@btinternet.com
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Buckinghamshire County Chairman Irene Purse - 01442 825010 irenepurse@hotmail.co.uk
Hampshire County Chairman Carol Boulton - 02380473693 caroltheboulton@yahoo.co.uk
Oxfordshire County Chairman Moo Nowell-Smith - 01844339650 moo@nowell-smith.com
Regional Vet Ryan McCarthy - 07710801525 ryan@gvgbrooksequine.co.uk

All other contacts can be found on the South Region website www.southregionrda.com