

KESTEVEN RIDEABILITY

Annual Report

2019



2020

Reg. Charity No. 1074079

Group Information

Sessions

Over the past year Kesteven RDA provided 298 sessions to 25 participants with the help of 21 volunteers. 6 of the riders took part for the first time and the disabilities ranged from Physical to Intellectual Disabilities.

Riders

Riding takes place on a Tuesday all day, Thursday morning and Saturday afternoons.

The simulator continues to provide a means to give therapy sessions for those not able to ride and to provide an indoor alternative during inclement weather.

The “Silver Hour” and “Meet the Horse” sessions allows older and less advantaged people with disabilities to enjoy the company of our horses and beautiful surroundings free of charge. The sessions involve meeting and grooming the horses plus a chance for a chat over tea and cake.

Numbers of sessions and riders are reduced this year due to Covid 19.

Volunteers

The number of volunteers actively involved in the group is 21 with 5 of the volunteers aged 25 and under. Encouraging young people to volunteer with Kesteven RDA helps to ensure succession planning and secures a healthy future for the charity. The volunteers consist of Trustees on the committee, riding session helpers and people who help with the riding holiday, National competitions etc.

Our Trustees

Kesteven RiDeAbility is supported by a board of Trustees who lead the charity and decide how it will be run. We must comply with all relevant charity laws as well as our own governing document. All of our Trustees are voluntary with some having specific responsibilities. Each person uses their individual skills and experience to support KR and help it to achieve its aims.

Present Trustees are:

Nicola Webber [Chair]

Sharon Watson [Secretary]

Gay Hatton [Treasurer]

Karen Thompson [Group Organiser]

Claire Honeywood

Elizabeth Jones [Safeguarding]

Clare Brown

Emily Johnson [Rider representative]

Susan Jane Ashton [Rider representative]

Gill Smith [Horse and pony welfare]

Rider Achievements

Each year we present awards to our adult and junior riders. This year the winner of the Fronerthig Delyn Aur Trophy for the Most Improved Junior Rider 2019 was presented to Thomas Underwood-Harley for qualifying and competing successfully at the National Championships.

Our most improved adult rider was Tracy who was presented with the Kesteven RiDeAbility Most Improved Adult Rider shield for her improved partnership with Rio and her performance at the Have a Go Show.

Isabella, Victoria and Lauren each gained their Endeavour Awards and Victoria also told us that she had been awarded a Blue Peter sports badge. She is the first Kesteven rider to receive one so well done!



Victoria with her Blue Peter award

Regional Competitions 2019

RDA Regional Qualifiers



The RDA North Midlands Regional Dressage Qualifiers for the RDA National Championships were held this year at Scropton Riding and Driving Centre in Derbyshire. First up was the Dressage in April and Sue, Tracey and Emily were competing. This was followed in May by the Countryside Challenge Qualifier in which Timmy and Thomas were competing. All the riders rode super tests with Emily and Thomas qualifying for the National Championships in July and Sue and Timmy only missing out by miniscule marks. It was a very successful outing for our Group.



Thomas ready to compete on Rio

Sue after her test on Rio RDA National Championships: Hartpury. July 2019



Our Regional Qualifiers Emily and Thomas did really well at the National Championships with Emily scoring over 66% on Rio in her Dressage test and taking second place on Fudge in the Freestyle.

Thomas, taking part in his first National Competition, came fourth in the Countryside Challenge scoring 78%. Well done to both competitors.

Thomas with Fudge

Regional “Have a Go” Fun Day 2019

In May and August we returned to Scropton to take part in their “have a go” days. This is another opportunity for our riders to experience competition away from home as well as another chance to acclimatise the ponies to the hustle and bustle that surrounds many competitions.



First up in May was the Dressage and Sue did her first Walk Trot test on Rio coming fourth. Tracy did a Walk test coming first and taking the red rosette.

In August it was time for the Countryside Challenge and Timmy, Thomas and Grace took part, each winning a rosette.

Countryside Challenge competitors with their rosettes

Silver Hour and Equine Therapy

Our *Silver Hour* was successfully launched in 2018 and we were very keen to run it again in 2019. This programme which offers elderly disabled adults the chance to benefit from interaction with horse helps reduce stress and anxiety but also offers an ideal opportunity for older people to rekindle their love of equines or to experience a connection with a horse for the first time. So successful has the programme been that we were contacted by a number of charity groups who asked if they bring along members who they felt would benefit from the equine therapy sessions we offered.

As an extension to the *Silver Hour* we therefore hosted visits from a number of local charity groups including Community Intro Club and Grantham Autistic Network. Unfortunately the summer 2020 programme had to be cancelled because of the pandemic but we were able to keep in touch with our many elderly clients by setting up a few Zoom meetings so that they could see how the ponies were keeping and know that when things improve they will be able to come back.



Betsy taking part in our therapy sessions.

Carriage Driving

Just as we became a designated RDA Carriage Driving Group the pandemic arrived which was disappointing. However, when the restrictions were relaxed a little we did not waste our time and instituted some theory sessions in what is now known as our “quiet corner”. Sue who is beginning her carriage driving journey and Joss our carriage driving coach met up to look at some of the technical issues such as rein holding and how to build a cone course. The results of these will prove beneficial when we are able to once again restart.

Fundraising Events

Annual Quiz and Fun Dog Show

Both of our major fundraising events went off successfully again this year and together raised over £2,000. The Fun Dog Show in August 2019 was held in lovely sunny weather and as usual we welcomed lots of different dogs. The classes were well supported and it was so lovely to see many of the youngsters sporting the rosettes their dog had won. With lots of different classes to enter there was much fun and laughter as the dog with the waggiest tail, the fastest biscuit eater, musical sits and best trick were judged. In January the annual quiz was another fun filled evening with over fifteen teams of players. The winners were the Mad Pandas.

Virgin 2.6 Challenge

Because the London Marathon could not take place the sponsors Virgin set up a virtual challenge called the 2.6 Challenge. There wasn't much notice but we managed to put together a team of 10 made up of trustees, coaches, volunteers, riders and supporters from Kesteven RiDeAbility. On Sunday 26th April each member ran, jogged or walked 2.6 miles before passing on the "virtual" baton to the next member. The marathon distance of 26 miles was completed in good time and we raised £2,600 which was very appropriate.



Karen Thompson completing her 2.6 miles

Pony Angel party

In September 2019 we held another "Pony Angel Party" to thank all those who sponsor our ponies by being a "Pony Angel". Whilst we run fundraising activities throughout the year our Pony Angels provide constant support to our ponies Rio and Fudge and will do so for our new pony, Bob.

This year the party was also a chance for us to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the formation of Riding for the Disabled. The afternoon began with some of our younger riders completing a Countryside Challenge around the arena. This is like a pony and rider obstacle course. After successfully completing the challenge each rider was rewarded with an RDA 50th Anniversary gold rosette. The ponies were then introduced to their sponsors and tea and cake was provided. All the ponies love being fussed over and it was nice to see the sponsors getting a chance to meet the pony they help to support.



A new Pony and a new Simulator



By mid-2019 it was obvious that our riding simulator was not going to last much longer. Simulators are very expensive but it was imperative we replaced it as it plays a crucial role in our riding activities. Funding for such large items is not easy to raise but we were fortunate to be awarded a grant from the Sir Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust to purchase a new one. In order to be considered for a grant the Trustees put together a bid which was submitted in the Autumn of 2019. In January 2020 we were told that we had been successful and that the Charitable Trust would grant us funds to replace our broken simulator.

Our new simulator arrived during the lockdown but it will soon begin to take a major part in our activities as we slowly resume our work. After discussion with the Trust we named it "Sully" after Sir Peter.

Sully, our new riding simulator

Trefenter Fred aka "Bob"

Our new pony Trefenter Fred aka "Bob" arrived in March 2020, just before we had to cease our activities. He is a part welsh cob standing 14.2 hands high and will enable us to take on more riders once we reopen. During our closure Bob was put through his RDA training course learning about how to be an RDA pony. He was introduced to the many different scenarios he might expect to be taking part in once we are back up and running and also spent time getting to know the other ponies he will work with. He also took part in his first Dressage test with Kesteven RiDeAbility and scored over 70% taking first place. He is proving to be a lovely boy and very adaptable. He will be a very good addition to the group. Bob gave his first RDA session at the end of August and all the hard work and training paid off. Robert enjoyed the ride and was able to ride independently making easy changes of direction and halts.



"Bob" giving his first RDA session

Covid-19

On March 17th 2020 we had to suspend all activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We did not know when we would be able to reopen and it was a challenging time for us. We were fortunate that we had plenty of outside space and a dedicated cohort of volunteers who enabled us to keep our RDA ponies fit and healthy with arena work such as lunging, jumping and pole work. Plenty of outdoor space meant that we could put in place social distancing requirements and so keep our volunteers safe whilst they exercised Rio, Fudge and Bob (our new pony).

To keep our clients in touch with us we regularly posted photographs and videos on our Facebook page as well as running some competitions such as an art competition for our youngest riders and a “lockdown virtual dog show” for our supporters.

We did however still have a very busy time prior to the closedown in March and so an outline of what we achieved follows.

Restarting our activities

In June 2020, as things began to improve, we were able to reopen and bring back some of our riders. Primarily this meant those who could ride independently and who had a family member who could help them mount and dismount their pony. Social distancing was still paramount and so it was not possible to let those who rode on a lead rein or who needed close contact assistance to return to riding at the same time. For these riders we offered the chance to come and visit their pony in a newly set up “quiet corner” so helping them to keep the bond with their pony intact until it is safe for them to return to riding. Hopefully we can welcome them back to riding in the near future.

The “Quiet Corner”



Social Media

Currently we have 656 Likes on our Facebook page and 653 Following, both of which represent a rise from last year. The page is linked to our Twitter account. We often receive enquiries from potential new riders and volunteers from these sources. The website continues to attract new clients and sponsors with some funders using the site to check that the group’s activities fit their criteria before approaching us

One of our riders also writes a Blog each month about our activities and her riding journey. It can be found on the Genius Equestrian website. www.geniusequestrian.com

Pony Angels

The group own three ponies: Rio, Fudge and Bob and hire other ponies from The Paddocks Livery Centre to help run the sessions. Their board and lodgings are paid for by the Pony Angel scheme. There are six businesses and fourteen individuals who are contributing towards the scheme which guarantees a set monthly payment, or a discount on services provided, to cover their costs.

Our Pony Angels are:

Marie Ashton
Kathy Blake
Chandlers
Mark Frazer
Gay Hatton
J & V Heslop
Hills Polyprint
Andy & Claire
Honeywood



Paul Johnson
Lincs Rug Wash
Suzanne Sanders
Sarah Shelbourne
Stephanie Smith-Maxwell
Rachel Stothert
Ros Wentworth
Rachel & Lee Williams

Donations

Further donations this year have been received from:

Barkston Garage
Helen & Avril Bill
Malcolm Broughton
Mrs E Charlton
Maggie Clark
Dan Edwards
Grantham Lions
Haemmerlin Wheelbarrows
Sir Douglas and Lady Sarah
Hogg
Grace Moore
Mrs J Neasham

Parallax Plastics
RAFC Cranwell
RAFC Thrift Shop
Rotary Club of Grantham
David Rofe
Hon Mrs C Sacks
Shire Lodge, Sleaford
The Sir Peter O'Sullivan
Charitable Trust
South Notts Centre Fund
Stephanie Smith-Maxwell
Skylark Endowment Fund

Symphony Retail Ai
South Kesteven District
Council
Sleaford Lionesses
Gill Smith
Barbara Thompson/Angel
Med
Tryac
Waitrose Lincoln
Kathryn Wale