

Watershed RDA Autumn/Winter 2019 Newsletter

It's what you can do that counts

Welcome to our Autumn/Winter Newsletter for Watershed RDA. During 2019 we have had yet another outstanding year. Our new room encourages all our visitors, riders and volunteers to stay a while over tea and cake and share news, ideas and concerns. The

superb facilities are now being used for Regional Training events, Trustee meetings, the AGM and to host external events such as the Waterlane Equine Information evening.

Watershed continues to welcome new riders and volunteers. The number of rides given increases year on year and this year the figure was 902. We continue to maintain a rewarding relationship with the Communications and Interaction unit at Chesterton School. A large number of our riders achieved graded awards this year. These were as follows:

Grade 1 Pony Care and Riding — Natalie, Harry, Arabella and Ellie

Grade 2 Pony Care and Riding — Louise, Fiona Tovey, Julia and Chloe

Grade 1 Pony Care and Grade 2 Riding — Karen

Grade 3 Pony Care and Riding — Fiona Brown

Grade 4 Pony Care and Riding — Penny and Sue

Ellie, Penny and Sue again entered the Dressage competition, kindly hosted by the North Wilts Saddle Club and came away with rosettes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. We all enjoyed the event and the opportunity to promote and represent Watershed.



Our 5 ponies together with Ben and Misty continue to be the stars of our Group. They are all well and benefit from the care of Stuart Philpott - equine dentist and Target Chiropractic together with Waterlane Equine Vets and Bernie Tidmarsh - farrier. We have also welcomed Natalie Reid who has recently taken on the role of yard manager.

The Group has attended and held a large number of events this year; in November 2018 Ben (the pony) met up with Matt Baker, Maisy and Harry as they were completing the Rickshaw Challenge in aid of Children in Need, much interest was shown by all parties.



Our annual street collection in Cirencester again raised both our profile and funds, and Ben was the star performer as usual. The Christmas party followed shortly after and a large group of us enjoyed a delicious cooked lunch and homemade desserts all produced by volunteers and riders.





Shortly after this event all the ponies went on a Christmas break to Duntisbourne Abbots kindly hosted by the Atkinsons.

Term started again in January and we battled with the elements but our outdoor classroom proved invaluable. We were delighted to welcome back our own Grade 1 International Para Dressage rider, Di Green, who came to help the ladies prepare for their dressage competition. In April Watershed held their own in house training day followed by an informal lunch which was both well attended and enjoyed.



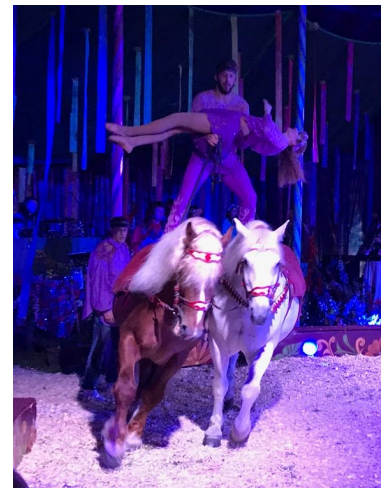
Towards the end of April Watershed was approached by National RDA with a view to hosting a film crew from Country Living Magazine, we were very honoured and readily agreed. The resulting short video was superb and was promoted in the magazine to co-incide with the 50th Anniversary of RDA. All the riders and ponies were beautifully behaved as were the volunteers!



Shortly after this we were very proud when Penny Thomas was approached for an interview with Country Life which also appeared in print in September. Our small group has a very high profile and held in esteem at National level.



In May and August Watershed was delighted to be invited by Gifford's Circus to attend the horse practice sessions. These were put on specifically for RDA groups in Gloucestershire and were much appreciated by all who attended. The first one was hosted by Nell Gifford and the second by Tweedy.



The Summer term finished in mid July with the presentation of awards by Di Green. Events continued throughout the holidays. Firstly we were invited to have a stand at the Cotswold Show courtesy of the Earl Barthurst. We then took two riders, Natalie and Ellie to Gatcombe Festival of Eventing to participate in the musical ride by kind invitation of the Princess Royal. Natalie and Ellie received their rosettes from Princess Ann and her granddaughter Mia. Smartie and Jess did us proud on the day. We then held a social outing courtesy of the Willow Trust which was a trip in a canal boat along the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. The weather was lovely, we were spoilt by the crew, several of the group steered the boat and a splendid day out was had by all.



The annual holiday took place at the end of August and saw a return to Clywd Special Riding Centre in North Wales. 8 riders accompanied by 9 carers spent an enjoyable six days improving their stable management and riding skills. More riding was on the itinerary this year but we still had social activities including an enjoyable day out at Chester Zoo. Three new volunteers joined us this year and a very moving account of the week was beautifully written by Sophie. It was an experience to be treasured by all.



The final event of the year was the Open Day held in September. The “Tuesday Ladies” coached by Sharron put on a superb dressage display followed by a demonstration of Flyball. Volunteers manned stalls and tea, coffee and cakes were on offer all afternoon provided by more kind natured friends of the Group. Watershed was delighted to welcome so many locals and visitors to the Group to showcase our work and all RDA has to offer. None of the events mentioned above would be possible without the generosity of all our donors, sponsors and volunteers. We would especially like to thank Alison Hobson who has retired from her role as Trustee and Secretary after 15 years of loyal service. Mr William Lash has been appointed in her place. Watershed would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all volunteers and your valuable contribution to RDA and to say a huge thank you for everything you do for us.



In conclusion Watershed RDA is flourishing under the guidance of a group of Trustees that ensure financial stability, good governance and sets the visions and ambitions of the Group.

The Watershed Family