

EPSOM RDA NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2018

National Championships

Well done to our riders for bringing home such good results from the RDA National Championships. in July

The weekend had its challenges with some last minute horse substitutions. The vet advised that travelling such a distance to Gloucestershire in the hot weather was not advisable for Sam and Marigold.

As a result Alicia

made her RDA Championships debut and was an absolute star. Milton as always took everything in his stride substituting for Marigold. A huge thank to Perry RidingDriving And Vaulting for loaning us the lovely Great Bear for two of our riders.

Our riders also stepped up with Caroline, Felicity Matt and Jon adapting to ride

their new equine partners. Bo provided Alicia with an excellent introduction to the big stage of a National competition. Leo and Milton produced a beautifully ridden test in a highly competitive class.

Felicity excelled in her introductory appearance at the Nationals by coming 1st in her class and giving Epsom RDA another National Champion.

A particular achievement given Felicity was expecting to ride Marigold.

A thank you to the supporting team of volunteers who gave so much of their time in the lead up to and at the National Championships. Without their commitment our riders would not get the opportunity to experience competing against their peers from around the UK.

Results:

Day 1

Bo with Alicia 3rd
Leo with Milton 7th
Caroline with Milton 12th

Day 2

Felicity with Milton 1st
Jon with Great Bear 13th
Matt with Great Bear 16th
Emily with Milton in 4th

Civic Reception

Epsom RDA volunteers and riders enjoyed a happy occasion on Wednesday 22 August. The Mayor and Mayoress of Epsom and Ewell hosted a reception to recognise the success of the team that competed so successfully in the RDA National Championships The seven

riders, together with a number of the volunteers who travelled to

the Championships in support of the riders, attended the reception at the Town Hall.



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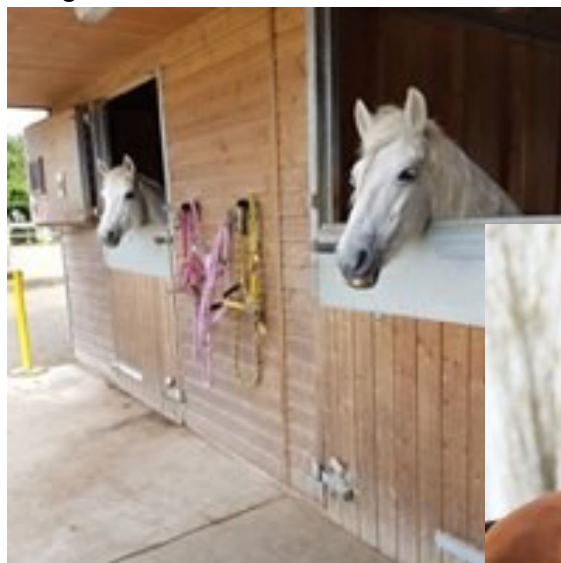
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Break In

- ◆ Over £14,000 donated to date
- ◆ On-site security reviewed
- ◆ Grant of £5,000 from Surrey County Council to install electronic gates at the entrance
- ◆ Northside gate to be strengthened
- ◆ CCTV system to be installed
- ◆ Sensor lighting system to be installed
- ◆ Local community police marked our tack and other equipment
- ◆ Epsom RDA to be the charity for the Epsom Town Christmas lights switch on
- ◆ Epsom and Ewell Rotary donating some proceeds from the 2018 Father Christmas collection

The weeks following the break in onto our site in August and the subsequent attack on Buffy, Marigold and Sam has been a challenging time for everyone at Epsom RDA. It is a situation which as a voluntary run charity we could not imagine we would have to face.

Thanks to our community of volunteers, riders and supporters we have been able to respond positively to the situation. Volunteers have used their skills and expertise to help manage the numerous different aspects of the situation, stepped forward to put in the extra hours to care for Marigold and Buffy, and alongside riders and supporters, taken the initiative to organise fundraising events, and of course, sessions continued to run to ensure our riders could enjoy the benefits riding brings.



Both Marigold and Buffy have made better progress than we could have hoped for. Their physical injuries are healing well, and at the time of writing they are both now able to enjoy turn out in the fields during the daytime. They continue to be monitored by our vets.

The heart-breaking news is that Sam was put to sleep four weeks after the attack. He will be missed by all of us as he was a true ambassador for Epsom RDA, loved by us and many others in the RDA and equestrian world. Our heartfelt sorrow goes out to our Trustee and fellow volunteer, Wing Bo Chan, who has lost her beautiful friend as a result of a senseless act.

There has been an enormous amount of activity in response to the break in including local, regional and

national media coverage.

The response of the local community has been amazing with generous donations and fundraising events along with words of support. It has been heartening to hear how much Epsom RDA means to so many people far and wide.

We have also received messages of support from the rest of the RDA community up and down the UK, and from further afield including a RDA group in New Zealand..

The Trustees are continuing to work to improve the security of our site and follow up on the various offers of support.

The key details of the actions taken to date and those planned for the near future are summarised in the panel on the left.



Meet Your Trustees

At the AGM in July Epsom RDA elected two new Trustees onto the Trustee Board.

Below Angela Wilson and Viran Wiltshire briefly explain their backgrounds and their relationship with Epsom RDA:

Angela Wilson

I have been a Friday volunteer at Epsom RDA now for nearly 7 years. My background is as a management accountant in both the private and public sector. I am currently a Finance Director Business partner and the best thing

about my job (other than being able to work compressed hours) is looking at the best way to use our funds to maximise our contribution to society which is why I wanted to join the trustees here. I am also the treasurer of the civil services oldest charity – The Lifeboat Fund so I have first hand experience of charity governance.

Viran Wiltshire

I am lucky to be given the opportunity to perform the role secretary for Epsom RDA. I joined as a

volunteer on 11th November 2017 and am now a trustee.

I have been around horses and ponies for approximately 9 years. My daughter is a keen rider and we have a horse share in Epsom. Fellow Epsom RDA volunteer, Wing Bo Chan, taught my daughter to ride previously.

Everyone at RDA is so passionate about what they do and its humbling to see all the amazing work that goes into it each day.

I especially love all the pony cuddles

Annual Prizegiving—Sunday 11 November

Our Annual Prizegiving is the one event in the year when all our riders, volunteers, parents/carers from across all sessions have the opportunity of being together.

This year we are holding

the event on a new date and time—Sunday 11 November from 2:30pm. We hope this will make it easier for more members of our community to attend.

Information on our Facebook page and reply slips to book

your space available in the Coffee Room



New therapy experience for Epsom RDA

Early in August the Thursday session hosted our first therapy visit from a dementia patient when Bracken Bellfield, a resident of Linwood Care Home in Thames Ditton, visited the yard.

Bracken owned ponies in her youth. The care home thought having contact with our horses could help

her rekindle childhood memories. The visit was a tremendous success with Bracken spending time patting and talking with our ponies. The ponies seemed to understand the situation responding to Bracken with kindness and gentleness. Seeing Alicia bury her head in Bracken's shoulders and stand patiently to be patted was one of a

number of touching moments during the visit. The carer accompanying Bracken commented it was the most animated and connected they had seen Bracken in the time they had known her.

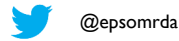
It is hoped to repeat a similar visit later in the year.

A report on the visit was printed in the [Surrey Comet](#)

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Big 50

2020 marks the 50th Anniversary of Epsom RDA. It all started with four volunteers and a Shetland pony called Bubbles. We now have over 200 volunteers, a whole herd of ponies., and over 300 riders.

During the year there will be three big events to celebrate our Big 50 with our volunteers, riders and supporters; a barn dance, a horse show and a special event for our volunteers and riders to round off the year.



As well as the center piece events we would like to encourage all of you to get involved with your sessions, families, friends, work colleagues and local communities.

A few ideas below how you can help celebrate our Big 50, raise funds and let people know about the amazing work we do:

- Coffee mornings
- Sweepstakes
- Sponsored poo pick
- Open gardens
- Bake Offs
- BBQ
- Sponsored car wash

Look out for the 50th anniversary logo for more ideas and updates on our Big 50.

Sensory Track Transformation

The summer has seen transformation of the Sensory Track.

It all started with the addition of a set of pallets to create a pathway with a series of wooden blocks to create a weaving obstacle. Now known as Shona's chicane and Sinatra's stepping stones! Then followed a series of Highway Code inspired "traffic" signs designed by Sarah Wiffen.

With thanks to Steve from the Maintenance team for

his handy work and to Ella McDonald from the Saturday session for her artistic skills, not to mention the imagination of a number of other volunteers the signs are now in place on the Sensory Track.

There is also work planned to update the layout of Orchard field to make the Sensory Track accessible even when there are ponies grazing in the field. This will make the track avail-

able more frequently to the afternoon and evening sessions.

If anyone has more ideas for further signs that would like please let Sarah know. In the meantime if anyone has any outdoor duck ornaments that they would be willing to donate, all wild fowl are welcome!

