



COTSWOLD RDA EASTER SHOW

It's Easter again, which of course means it's show time at Cotswold RDA! On 14th April, we held our second Easter-themed show open to all our riders to participate in. With classes in Dressage, Show-Jumping and Countryside Challenge, there really was something for everyone!

We had a total of 25 competitors in the four classes with a super display of riding skills and lots of enjoyment! A huge thank you to everyone who helped and supported this show.

CLASS 1 DRESSAGE - WALK ONLY

- 1st Becky A. on Morph with 75.9%
- 2nd Hannah D. on Harry with 71.2%
- 3rd Jenny C. on Flossy with 68.8%
- 4th Andrea P. on Dave with 66.5%

CLASS 2 DRESSAGE - WALK & TROT

- 1st Mackenzie O. on Morph with 72.9%
- 2nd Poppy G. on Topsy with 70.9%
- 3rd Olivia T. on Topsy with 70%
- 4th Millie M. on Morph with 69.5%
- 5th Lilly S., 6th Olivia N., 7th Jenny C. – all with scores above 66%

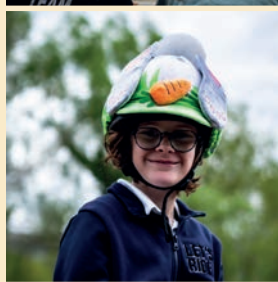
Overall Best Dressage – Becky A.

CLASS 3 SHOW-JUMPING LEVEL 1 WITH EQUITATION MARKS AWARDED FOR STYLE, ACCURACY AND ABILITY

- 1st Mackenzie O.
- Great clear rounds and good riding also from Jenny C., Kai K. and Willow E.

CLASS 4 COUNTRYSIDE CHALLENGE WITH EQUITATION MARKS FOR ACCURACY, RHYTHM AND ABILITY

- 1st Jenny C. with 38 out of 40 with a super clear round unled on Flossy
- Everyone achieved a clear round with Emma L., Claire H. and Morgen S. scoring 32, Kai K. unled with 31, and Georgie R., Willow E., Oliver N., George W. and Sienna H. scoring 30 – 26



Well done!

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

■ by Tim Baylis - Chairman of Cotswold RDA

Once again, it's time to produce the Pony Post which seems to come around ever sooner each time but Laura keeps contributors on their toes to get their pieces in on time.

Your Board are delighted to announce that Debbie has been promoted to General Manager and we all know what a success she is making, and will make, of it aided as she is, by the team in place who work so well together.

We are starting to make real practical progress with the Arena Development project. Debbie is currently reviewing the proposed internal layouts, drawing on others with relevant experience, to produce a final layout that properly reflects the needs of CRDA's day-to-day operations.

Your Board are increasingly confident that we can raise the necessary funding having been encouraged by recent donations and conditional pledges. This does require us to agree satisfactory lease terms with the Jockey Club, but we are confident given our relationship with them that we can get agreement.

We will need to go back to the planners for a new planning permission having reviewed the original external elevations and made some significant changes for the better.

We are very sorry that Fiona who manages the Longlevens shop has decided to step back, but will continue to help as and when she can. Her contribution and commitment to CRDA Trading Company Ltd has been quite fantastic under some very challenging times both for her personally as well as for CRDA in respect of the Tewkesbury shop.

Plans for the celebrations of CRDA's 60th Anniversary are well underway to which we are all looking forward and I hope to see you all there.

Best Wishes, Tim



OPERATIONS REPORT

■ by Debbie Powell - General Manager

Exciting times ahead as Cotswold RDA enters its 60th year! We will be celebrating this fantastic achievement with a party on Sunday 6th July, we hope you will join us at the arena for a morning full of fun. Invites will be sent out after Easter, this is sure to be a popular event so please ensure you reserve your place by returning the RSVP on your invite.

Thank you, as ever, to the team at Cheltenham Racecourse, for once again involving Cotswold RDA in the Cheltenham Festival. This year we had the opportunity to bring a pony up to the racecourse, to represent Cotswold RDA on our very own information stand! You can read all about our week with Toffee the Shetland pony later on in the newsletter.

Next month a handful of our riders will be attending the RDA Regional Championships, held at Hartpury College. We know they are training hard in their weekly lessons, and we wish them all the best for the competition! You can read all about how they got on in the next newsletter.

We will be creating a Service User group, which will meet four times a year. We would like to involve existing volunteers and participants. The purpose of this group is to give our rider community a voice, and gain their input on how we can improve the services we offer. If anyone would like to enquire about joining this group please do come and see me in the office.

From everyone at Cotswold RDA, we hope you have a wonderful Spring and we look forward to seeing many of you over the coming months!

Are you interested in becoming an RDA coach? You will help to change the lives of our riders, and receive training and support from RDA. Please enquire in the arena office or email info@cotswoldrda.org.uk for more information.



NEW FACES ON THE YARD

EMILEE JOHNSTONE

Emilee has been with us for 4 years as a volunteer, and has recently joined us as an Apprentice. Emilee is completing her BHS Level 2 Qualification while she works with us, giving her the knowledge needed to progress with a career in the equine industry.

LUCY MOORE

Lucy joined Cotswold RDA in February as an Apprentice, with a background in horse care and riding from owing her own horse and helping out at her local riding school. Lucy is also completing her BHS Level 2 Qualification while she is with us, which will open up many possibilities for Lucy in the future.

THEO JONES

Theo is our Trainee on the yard and is completing his BHS Level 2 qualification through Haddon Training, with whom we have a great partnership. Theo is learning all aspects of equine care, from grooming techniques to stable management and also developing his riding skills. We look forward to seeing Theo grow his equine knowledge during his time at CRDA!



▲ Emilee, Holly, Lucy and Louisa with the ponies at Cirencester Park Fun Ride

In Remembrance of Lindsay Baker

1948 - 2025

Late in March, on a sunny morning that matched her ever-present smile, many of us joined the celebration of the life of our board colleague, Lindsay Baker. She'd not been well for some time but few of us knew it. Right to the end, her commitment to Cotswold RDA was unwavering, her judgment was astute and her contribution to everything we do, enormously valuable.

As well as volunteering in the shops, she brought to the board her experience in retail and business marketing. She'd been a radio journalist, producer and presenter with Severn Sound Radio and for many years ran the radio show at Badminton Horse Trials. She'd been a freelancer on BBC programmes as varied as Today and the Food Programme and had interviewed 300 veterans from the Second World War and Korea, building an archive for the Imperial War Museum.

Her volunteering was not confined to Cotswold RDA. Having seen the result of drug and alcohol dependency, she devoted 20 years as a drug and alcohol counsellor. She was a magistrate and most recently, offered an ear to many refugees at Glos Action for refugees and asylum seekers.

But her commitment to Cotswold RDA was deep rooted. She was born in Cheltenham in 1948 and went to school at Sacred Hearts of Mary and Joseph Convent, close to where she lived in Charlton Kings. She found it restricting but sought joy in ponies. She used to ride her pony Peek-a boo down to Albion Street for shoeing and took her retired milk float horse, Shandy, to Pony Club at Stowell Park.

She left Cheltenham briefly to read International Relations with Politics at Lancaster University – we concluded we must have met when she travelled across to York for the series of matches that made up the Wars of the Roses Tournaments in the late 60's.

Her children Alex and then Felicity, were born in the late 70's and for a substantial time she was a single mum.

Lindsay's role on the board was pivotal. She brought specific experience that led, for instance, to the opening of the Tewkesbury shop. But it was her thoughtful and wise counsel that we all valued. She didn't say a lot. The debate would ebb and flow then Lindsay would make a key contribution. Very often clarity emerged and a decision soon followed.

Lindsay Baker will be sorely missed.

Stephen Pidgeon





COTSWOLD RDA IS NOW A PONY CLUB CENTRE!

We are very happy to announce that Cotswold RDA is now a Pony Club Centre!

As the world's largest equestrian youth charity, The Pony Club supports young people up to the age of 25, with more than 30,000 Members in the UK alone. Whether or not you own a horse or pony, there's a membership option for everyone.

By joining us as a Pony Club Member, you'll have the opportunity to enhance your riding, horsemanship, and take part in a wide range of sports and activities while developing vital skills. Whether you're new to horses or an experienced rider, The Pony Club offers a fun, supportive environment where you can grow, learn, and compete.

PLEASE CONTACT US FOR ALL ENQUIRIES ON INFO@COTSWOLDRDA.ORG.UK OR CALL 01242 584420. YOU CAN ALSO VISIT THE PONY CLUB WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE WWW.PCUK.ORG

DID YOU KNOW?

WE ARE A PONY CLUB
LINKED RIDING
CENTRE!

PONY CLUB
Linked Riding Centre



JOIN THE FUN!

How many achievement
badges can you
collect?



PONY CLUB



by Bryan, Bethan's dad

21 years ago in April, our daughter Bethan was born with half a heart. She needed life-saving open heart surgery over 3 days at Birmingham Children's Hospital. This was followed by a further 3 heart operations in the next 6 years. In the first 4 months of life she suffered multiple cardiac arrests and a brain bleed that permanently affected her development. Fortunately BCH helped her through all of her difficulties and she has grown into a beautiful young woman.

Today, Bethan overcomes her limitations with positivity and humour! In the last 5 years Beth has made a strong connection with Cotswold Riding for the Disabled. They give her a rewarding structure to her life by providing riding and volunteering opportunities. As a family we're so grateful to these fabulous organisations - it drives our motivation to fundraise.

If you have Facebook please visit the "Charity Plants Evesham" and "Cosy Heart Crafts" pages to support Bryan and Mandy's fundraising ventures, through plants and crafts!



▲ Bethan



VISIT TO BEN PAULING RACING YARD

by Debbie Powell - General Manager

On Wednesday 12th February, myself, Mel and Brenda (General Manager, trustee and volunteer) had the amazing opportunity to visit the racing yard of Ben Pauling, organised by CRDA Ambassador David Crosse.

We all had a very enjoyable morning on the gallops, and even met a few of Ben's racehorses in training! It was so kind of you to allow us to visit, and thanks again to David for organising the trip.



SOFIA - CRDA VOLUNTEER AND DRESSAGE COMPETITOR

At Cotswold RDA we are delighted to welcome volunteers from all walks of life! In this edition read about our volunteer Sofia, who recently competed at international level in France, in Dressage.

16-year-old Sofia had a fantastic week in Le Mans, competing in the CDIY (Concours de Dressage International) Young Rider series with her horse Boccelli. Sofia took wins in both the Team and Individual tests and ended the week with a fantastic score in Freestyle, which earned them the top spot once more. We look forward to following Sofia's journey, and wish her congratulations on the fantastic results!

If you're a CRDA volunteer with a story to share we'd love to hear from you! Get in touch with us by emailing info@cotswoldrda.org.uk or pop into the arena office.



▲ Sofia and Boccelli (Photos by Mila Fromage @design.the.light_studio)





SQUIRREL



FOXY

WELCOME TO THE HERD!

In March we welcomed two new ponies to the herd! The pair have begun their training with us and are enjoying getting used to life at Cotswold RDA.

Squirrel and Foxy are best friends and came from the same previous home. We hope you enjoy meeting them in the coming months!

HARIBO'S NEW HOME!

We are pleased to share this photo of Haribo in his new home, with Merlin, who belongs to our volunteer Jo. Haribo has settled in very well and is enjoying his new life not far from here!



▲ Haribo and Merlin

HACKING IN THE SUN

Our ponies work hard to deliver riding lessons to our participants, so of course when the weekend comes around, they love to have fun (like the rest of us!).

Hacking around the local villages is a wonderful way to enrich their weekly schedule and give them some variety and fun, led by our Head Groom Holly and our team of volunteers. Keep an eye out for Team Cotswold on Sunday mornings!



▲ Hacking in the sun



BBC RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S VISIT TO COTSWOLD RDA

On 18th February we welcomed the team from BBC Radio Gloucestershire to the arena, for a special programme focusing on the local community.

Presenter Nikki and her team got stuck in from the start, with Nikki delivering a piece from atop the mechanical horse!

We heard from volunteers and riders throughout the day; thank you to everyone who joined in and shared their stories live on air!

Thank you to BBC Radio Gloucestershire for coming along to see what we do, and for featuring us in your busy schedule! We hope to see you again.



▲ Nikki and Debbie



▲ CRDA team with presenter Nikki

SAVE THE DATE

COTSWOLD RDA'S 60TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

SUNDAY 6TH JULY AT COTSWOLD RDA ARENA - 10:30AM TO 12:30PM

Tickets will be available to purchase from Friday 23rd May via our website, and through the arena office.

The Celebration will include:

- Performance, including surprises from our riders and staff
- Historic Heroes
- Cake Decorating competition
- Tombola
- Plant sale
- And...a celebratory 'get-together' brunch in the Sensory Garden

Tickets will be limited and cost £2 each. A maximum of two tickets per person can be purchased.

Cotswold RDA Members go free! Tickets available for members to reserve from Friday 16th May. Further details will be sent to all members before this date. If you'd like to join us as a CRDA Member please visit our website: www.cotswoldrda.org.uk/membership/ or scan the QR code.





BUCKET COLLECTING ON FRIDAY 14TH MARCH

What a result for our bucket collection this year, we raised a fantastic £15,017.05!

A huge thank you to all the collectors who braved the cold and crowds to fundraise for Cotswold RDA.



EASTER FUN WITH wellChild

On Tuesday 15th April we were delighted to welcome the staff and families from Wellchild back to our arena, for a day of themed activities and pony riding!

Thank you to all our volunteers who helped deliver the equine element of the day, preparing ponies and supporting riders during their sessions.

It's always a pleasure to offer our facilities (and ponies!) to you all for the day, and we look forward to seeing you again next year!



▲ Photo ©Wellchild



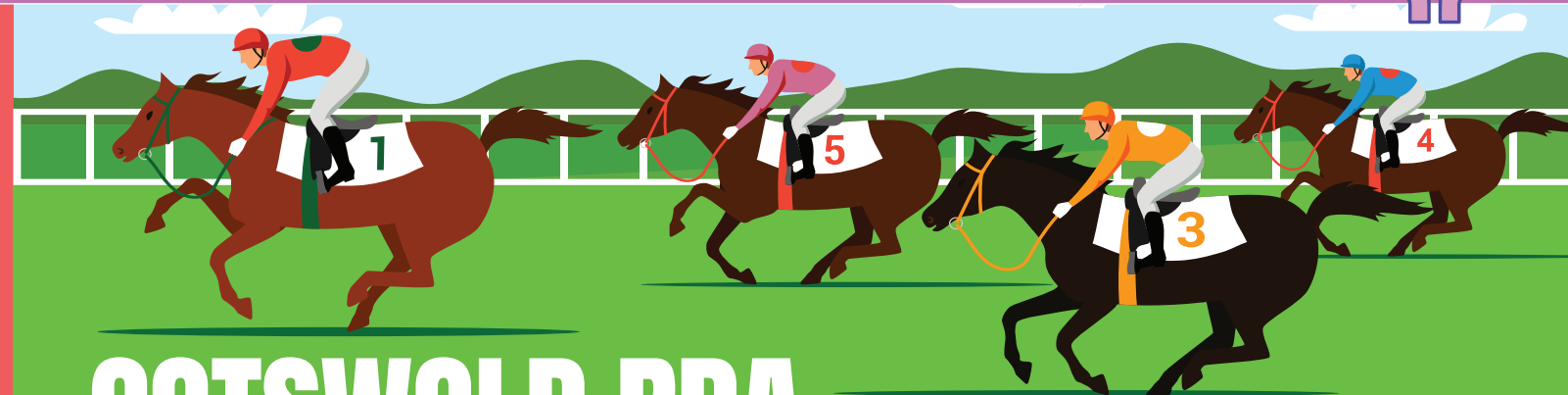
▲ Photo ©Wellchild



▲ Photo ©Wellchild



▲ Photo ©Wellchild



COTSWOLD RDA AT THE CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL

PONY MEET AND GREET STAND

Over all four days of the Festival, we had the fantastic opportunity to have a stand inside the North Entrance plaza, the main draw of course being a pony to meet and greet the crowds. Enter Toffee the Shetland pony!

Toffee was our ambassador, drawing in the crowds who could then find out more about us and chat with our staff. Toffee was an absolute star the whole week and loved every bit of attention he received (and there was a lot!). Thank you so much to Toffee's owner Ann, who made the journey from Bath to Cheltenham to help us out. It was an absolute pleasure working with Toffee, we hope our paths cross again!

THE TOTAL RAISED FROM TOFFEE'S STAND AND OUR SHOP AND DROP STALL WAS £681.30!

SHOP AND DROP

After the success of our stand at the November meet last year, the Racecourse kindly offered us the same setup for the duration of the Festival. Thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time to man the stall!



▲ Debbie, Toffee & Holly setting off from CRDA



▲ Debbie, Toffee & Holly



▲ Team Toffee at the Racecourse



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT CRDA LONGLEVENS CHARITY SHOP!

Could you help us with daily tasks such as putting stock out, cleaning and chatting to customers?

You don't need any experience of retail work, and we provide training on the essentials.

Please call our shop phone on 07949 115080 or email shop.manager@cotswoldrda.org.uk to find out more.



▲ Inside our Longlevens Charity Shop



THANK YOU FIONA

As you may be aware, our Shop Manager Fiona will be leaving Cotswold RDA at the end of April. We'd like to say a huge thank you to Fiona, for all the time she has given to our Trading company since joining us in 2023.

Fiona began as Shop Manager of our Tewkesbury shop, before moving to our concession charity shop in Longlevens upon its closure.

Fiona also came to the arena many times with a selection of stock to sell, most recently at the Carolokee last December.

We hope you will join us in wishing Fiona all the best for the future!



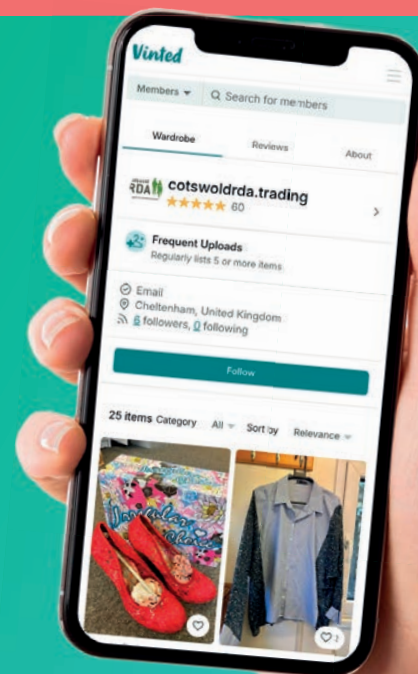
▲ Sharon with Fiona at our old Tewkesbury Shop

COTSWOLD RDA IS NOW ON VINTED!

Please do take a look at our page and follow us as we will be regularly uploading new items. Please note collection is not available for Vinted purchases, postage only.

Vinted

cotswoldrda.trading
★★★★★ 28 reviews



Thank You

We would like to thank the following grant making organisations for their support this year so far:

THE HEDLEY FOUNDATION	£3,000	FITTON TRUST	£300
TEWKESBURY ROTARY CLUB	£250	HIMBLETON CHARITABLE TRUST	£250
NATIONWIDE	£10,000		

Thank you to the customers at ASDA Gloucester, for donating £29.55 to us during our bag packing day on 5th April.

Thanks also to Fay, ASDA's Community Champion, for allowing us to fundraise in-store!



A huge thank you to Dave Bath and the community of Cheltenham, for donating chocolate Easter Eggs for our riders!

They will be enjoyed over the Easter holidays and at our Easter Show!



We are pleased to announce that our new set of Show-Jumps have arrived!

We were able to purchase the jumps thanks to our grant from the Nationwide Charities Trust last year. The jumps will be used by our grooms to exercise the ponies, and also to enhance our arena hire offer.



Thank you to NAF for another donation of wonderful products!

Our ponies will be looking their best for the upcoming Regional Competition in May, and enjoy a well-deserved treat or two!

Thank you to the Cheltenham Bowling Club, for their wonderful donation of £350, raised through their Gold Cup Day event.

We really appreciate your continued support of Cotswold RDA!



Thank you to Cheltenham Rotary Club, who have again supported us by sponsoring one of our ponies for the year! Hattie says thank you very much for choosing her.

MEET OUR TEAM



DEBBIE POWELL
General Manager



JANE MONTELLIER
Operations and Volunteer Coordinator



LAURA BENNETT
Office Administrator



CLAIRE JENKINS
Fundraising Manager



HOLLY BROOKS
Head Groom



DEE GRIFFIN
Head Coach



LOUISA BROWN
Groom



GILL AINSLIE
Staff Coach



EMILEE JOHNSTON
Equine Apprentice



LUCY MOORE
Equine Apprentice

MEET OUR TRUSTEES



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**Cotswold
RDA**



**It's what you can
do that counts**

Riding for the Disabled Association

Cotswold Riding for the Disabled Association

Cheltenham Racecourse, Prestbury Park, Cheltenham GL50 4SH
t. 01242 584420 e. info@cotswoldrda.org.uk

www.cotswoldrda.org.uk

Patron: Natasha Baker MBE

Vice Presidents: Edward Gillespie OBE and Judy Johnstone

Registered Address: Cotswold Riding for the Disabled, Cheltenham Racecourse,
Prestbury Park, Cheltenham GL50 4SH.

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