

# Riding for the Disabled Association (N.S.W) Illawarra Centre



Tel: (02) 4236 0462  
PO Box 332, Dapto 2530  
29 Mt Brandon Rd Jerarra

Website: [Illawarra.rdansw.org.au](http://Illawarra.rdansw.org.au)  
Email: [illawarra@rdansw.org.au](mailto:illawarra@rdansw.org.au)

Winter Newsletter 2014

## New and Improved "Men's Shed"

2014 began on a high down at the centre with the completion of our new long-awaited 'Men's Shed'!

Thanks to the assistance of Gareth Ward, State MP for Kiama, we were able to receive NSW Government grant for the demolishing and rebuilding of our 'Men's Shed'.

The old shed had stood on the property for longer than the centre has been on the grounds and was originally used as the pump house for Jerarra Dam.

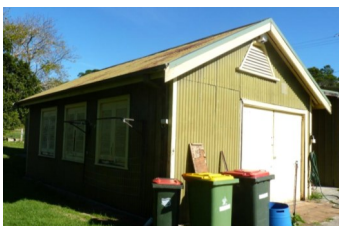
The shed was in desperate need of rebuilding as it was beginning to get very unsafe due to termites getting into the wood and it was deteriorating fast.

On May 27<sup>th</sup> 2013 Gareth Ward visited the centre to present the cheque to RDA, and after almost 10 months the shed was finally completed on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March.

Gareth Ward returned to the centre on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2014 to officially open our new shed.

With this wonderful new sturdy shed, the men have a much safer place to work and are enjoying their new facility.

A big Thank You to our Secretary Carmen Netherclift, assisted by Karin Haubruck for the organising of the grant and to everyone else who helped to get the shed up and running.



Before



After



## 2013 Christmas Party

We ended the year once again with our Christmas party and trophy presentation.

Everyone enjoyed the ponies coming out for a visit all dressed up for the Christmas season and Santa dropped in to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

Each rider was presented with a trophy for all the wonderful work they had done throughout the year.

We would like to congratulate 2013 Rider of the Year Millie Newcombe; Volunteer of the Year, Gary Tozer; and Young Volunteer of the Year, Bridget Wall.



## 2013 Update

### In Memory of Judith MacRae

Mrs Judith MacRae, one of the founders of Riding for the Disabled Illawarra Centre, was a dedicated volunteer from 1983, and President of the Centre from 1986 until 2007. Judith was involved with RDA for over 25 years and she worked tirelessly to promote RDA in general, as an activity for both young and older persons with a disability. She taught hundreds to ride a horse to the best of their ability, giving many a freedom of movement which would otherwise not have been possible.

Judith obtained her coaches certificate in the late 80's and then went on to obtain her lunging certificate. At times she coached up to 4 full days each week. She spent many hours looking after the horses and has always been ready to give a hand at any task that needed doing.

Judith also spent many days and evenings being a speaker at meetings of numerous clubs throughout the Illawarra, raising many thousands of dollars to assist in the building of the riding centre. If she didn't come away with a cheque in her hand, one arrived in the mail the following week. Her enthusiasm and drive was endless. Many volunteers came from these meetings after listening to Judith speak.

During the construction of the Centre in 1986, Judith spent a week living in the old shed on the grounds (together with the spiders and rats and the odd snake -the carpet snake she christened Kenneth), directing all the workmen, and making them cuppas and lunches on an old camp stove.

In May 2007, just weeks before her 79th birthday, Judith received the prestigious "Pearl Batchelor Volunteer of the Year Award" for her service to Riding for the Disabled. The award was given to the person in RDA NSW who had given exceptional service to the disabled throughout the 38 riding centres operating in NSW and could not have gone to a more deserving person.

After she was unable to continue coaching, she would turn up as often as she could to help out with collecting money and wherever she could lend a helping hand. Judith finished volunteering around the end of 2008.

In 2005 we began the 'Judith MacRae Rider of the Year' trophy given to the rider that the coaches think has put in the most amount of effort throughout the year. Judith was honoured to have this trophy named after her.

In 2013, Judith sadly passed away. She will always be remembered in the history of the RDA Illawarra centre. She was known for her caring and gracious attitude that made working with Judith a pleasure. Her organisational skills were remarkable, the riders and volunteers alike all adored her, and the Illawarra Centre will always be very grateful for all Judith's hard work over the years.



**Judith receiving the Pearl Batchelor Volunteer of the Year Award on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2007, from Riding for the Disabled State President Mrs Margaret Norman.**

### Pearl Batchelor Award

A big Congratulations to Pearl Batchelor Award winner for the Metropolitan Region 2013, our very own



coach and vice-president Denise Tozer. Denise has been a volunteer at the RDA Illawarra centre for many, many years and played the key role in coordinating our Dancing with the Illawarra Stars events and numerous other fundraisers.

You deserve it Denise! Thanks for all your hard work.

### Fundraisers

In 2013 we managed to get in a few fundraisers to help raise money for the running of the centre.

RDA Illawarra had a stall at the 'Australia Day Breakfast on the Lake' and received a portion of the money raised on the day.

Also, RDA was chosen as the charity for the R.T.A Charity golf day in November and raised nearly \$700 for the centre.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped out with the organising and all your help at these fundraising events.



# Classes

## 2013

### **Tuesday**

2013 had a rough start for Tuesday classes. With their coach Sue injuring her knee (not at RDA), classes didn't begin until term 2.

Tuesday had one class in the afternoon with 4 riders. When Sue was able to get down to the centre for classes when term 2 began, as she was still hobbling around on crutches, she relied completely on the small group of volunteers who faithfully showed up every week. Our Saturday coach Carmen Netherclift, came down to help run classes and wherever else she could give a helping hand.

After having a large break over the Christmas holidays, the riders did really well and hadn't forgotten a thing!

As the year wore on, Sue's knee was healing (a lot slower that she would have liked) and eventually Carmen went back to just doing Saturday's.

Tuesday classes were a lot of fun. With each rider progressing in so many different areas, there were always lots of smiles at the end of the day. The favourite game all round was 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' and the last few weeks of the year they even began learning the first stages of jumping, which was certainly a thrill!



### **Saturday**

Saturday classes alternated between 5 and 6 riders fortnightly and were run by trainee coaches Justin and Rachel supervised by coach Carmen.

The riders ranged from 5 years old to adulthood and one of our riders loved singing 'Old Macdonald had a farm' and it was lovely to see and hear her and her leader singing it as they came down the trotting lane.

One of the favourite things was to finish up the class with a game of 'What's the time Mr Wolf?'.

## 2014

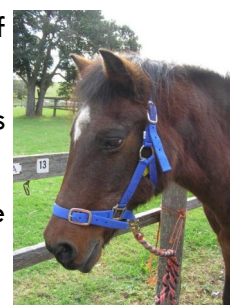
### **Tuesday**

As we are very limited on coaches this year, we are very grateful to Carmen Netherclift and Linda Pullen for taking on the role as coaches for Tuesday. Due to other commitments outside of RDA neither Carmen nor Linda would be able to commit to coaching every week, so by sharing the role we are able to run a class this year.

We have 5-6 riders in the class and so far we've had trail rides, jumping, games, lots of learning, and just having a great time on horseback.

We've had a few new volunteers join us on a Tuesday, which has been terrific as it makes the load a lot lighter with more hands to share it.

We're looking forward to rest of the year full of learning new things and all the while having tonnes of fun.



### **Saturday**

Unfortunately, due to lack of available coaches, Saturday classes were unable to continue in 2014.

# Volunteering

## Volunteer training day

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2014 we had our beginning of year volunteer training day for people looking to become a volunteer and continued training for our already existing volunteers.

We had a large group of eager people turn up and it turned out to be a great day.

The new volunteers were given a tour of the main area to get familiarised with the Den, tack shed, feed shed and surrounding grounds.

Our experienced volunteers who helped out on the day demonstrated tying up a horse, bridling, putting on a bareback pad, safety around horses, leading, and even an emergency dismount.

We've had a number of enthusiastic people return to volunteer on class days this year, both new and old, which has been terrific, but unfortunately others have not been able to come as they are not available during the week, and the centre is not able to run a weekend class this year.

We've also had a few more new volunteers join us through this first half of the year and, as classes have progressed; we continue to give ongoing training for our volunteers.

Thank you to Carmen for organising the day and to all our volunteers who came along to assist her.

Also a big thanks to all our new volunteers; your help has been very much appreciated.

---

## Volunteering at RDA, *why do we do it?*

*We do it for the smile that splits a child's face the first time they trot down the trotting lane.*

*We do it for the tears that run down a mother's cheek as her child achieves something she never thought they would.*

*We do it for the unrestrained gleeful squeal of the little girl when you throw the lead rope away and send her off on her own for the first time.*

*We do it for the strength and balance and freedom a child in a wheelchair gains when riding a horse.*

*We do it for the child who never used to speak, and now tells us what to do, and what we're doing wrong!*

*We do it for the cheers, hugs, smiles, laughter, tears, and shared achievements.*

*We don't get paid in money, but in far more valuable things!*



---

## Just a friendly reminder to parents and carers...

It's really important that when you bring your rider to RDA, you need to be ready to help out in the lesson if needed. Everyone at RDA Illawarra volunteer their time and sometimes due to their other commitments can't make it every week. This is when we need you as a parent or carer to be able to assist us in class. Please ensure you have a pair of enclosed shoes and appropriate clothing so you are able to lend a much needed hand.

Let me take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to all our volunteers, your dedication and efforts week in week out are what keeps the Centre alive and allows our riders to ride each week. THANK YOU!

Linda Pullen  
President/Coach

## Behind the Scenes.

Though not many people realise, there is a lot more to RDA than just running classes. A group of dedicated volunteers are rostered weekly to feed and check on horses 7 days a week, all year round, even if classes are cancelled -whatever the weather.

Getting the horses fed every day is a vital task (especially in the winter) that ensures the horses are well looked after and ready for working on the days classes are run.

So to all those devoted volunteers, a great big THANK YOU from RDA Illawarra (and a special thank you from the horses).

## Farewells

### Sue Pratt

Riders, their families, and volunteers alike are sad to say goodbye to such a valuable part of RDA Illawarra, our treasurer and coach Sue Pratt. For 10 years Sue has been a significant part of RDA and at the end of 2013 made the very hard decision to give her resignation.

For the last several years Sue was the backbone of the centre; it literally could not have run without her. Being the only coach left standing at the end of 2010 she was running all classes, 3 days a week. During 2011, cutting back down to one class, she was able to train up Carmen to become a fully qualified Coach and Karin and Justine to Assistant Coaches.

Through broken collarbones, injured knees, and all sorts of challenges, Sue's dedication remained resolute and got us through the hard years.

We can't forget her meticulous role as treasurer. Sue was known for her budgeting skills and keeping the committee from overspending.

She is very much missed, but we wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

On behalf of RDA Illawarra we would like to sincerely thank you Sue, for all you've done for the centre and the lives of the riders and volunteers over the last ten years (we're all secretly hoping you won't be gone too long).



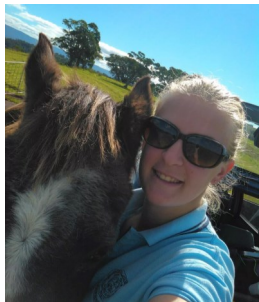
**Sue with her 2013 Tuesday class**

---

### Rachel Anderson

It was back in 2009 when a quiet young girl named Rachel came to volunteer at RDA Illawarra Centre. It was obvious from the start that Rachel had a huge love for horses and was as keen as a bean to learn everything she could about caring for them whilst at RDA.

What surprised me though was how quickly Rachel was comfortable with our riders and how well she would interact with them. It was great to watch her bring out the riders full abilities and she had a way of pushing them in a way that would make them always want to give her their best!



Rachel soon became a valued member of the team and as her knowledge grew she could be called upon to do any task, she was great with new volunteers showing them the ropes and passing on all she had learnt. In 2010 Rachel received the Young Volunteer Of The year trophy for all her hard work.

In 2012 Rachel became a Trainee Coach and was working towards becoming a Coach.

So as you would imagine it was with a heavy heart that we said goodbye to Rachel as she left the Illawarra in June to start a new life with her family in Lauril Hills on their own property.

Everyone at RDA Illawarra Centre wishes you all the very best for your future Rachel and I know that whatever you set your heart to in the future you will succeed at, we miss you already!

## Attention

**The Fire Blanket has been relocated next to the hand washing basin in the kitchen for easier access in case of an emergency.**



**New Location of Fire Blanket**

After attending the coaches workshop in Young, May 2014, our coaches have been made aware of some new safety issues and need for training and preparing their volunteers.

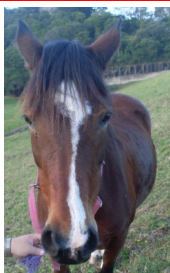


**Linda giving a fire blanket demonstration to Tuesday volunteers.**

## Horse Update

In term 4 of 2013 we were joined by three more horses; Star, Rocky and Echo.

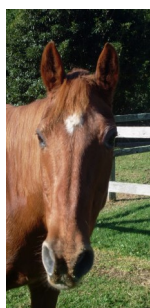
Star is currently enjoying being out in the holiday paddock, as class positions this year have already been filled. She will hopefully be joining us in class in the future.



**Star**

Rocky is a gentle old guy, who began in class at the beginning of this year and is doing really well.

Echo is a sweetheart and won everyone's hearts over as soon as she arrived. In just a few weeks after her arrival she joined classes on Tuesday's and her rider was heard to say "I fell in love on my first ride".

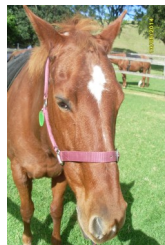


**Rocky**

At the centre we currently have twelve horses and three ponies. Three of our older horses, Daisy, George and Tina, who have served at the centre for many years, are now in retirement. Two of our other horses, Zida and Nippy are currently in semi-retirement and the others continue to serve at the centre in classes.

**We are still in need of a good strong Clydie cross type.**

**So if you know of anyone suitable please advise us!**



**Echo**

## WISH LIST

**Do you know anyone who could donate any of the following items?**

Horse feed, Portable PA system,  
Water tanks, Horse float, Generator

## DONATIONS

**A huge thank you to the following for their generous donations/grants, donations in kind and product:-**

Australia Day Breakfast on the Lake,  
Illawarra Credit Union,  
EJ-EH Holden owners of Southern NSW  
&Kiama Leagues Club,  
Kiama council,  
RTA Charity Golf Day,  
Dapto Leagues Club,  
South Coast District Junior Cricket  
Association,  
Bill Galway Equine Dentist,  
Carl Winkler Farrier,  
Warilla Bowling Club,  
NSW Government,  
New Millennium Trophies and Gifts,  
Jane and Stuart Myers from Equiculture

**Sincere apologies to those whose names may have not been mentioned, your donations are very much appreciated**

## Help us Build our Sponsor a Horse Program

This program is a fantastic way for people to get involved, especially those who do not have a lot of time on their hands. If you can help by distributing some of our Sponsor a Horse Program forms amongst your friends and colleagues, please contact the Centre. Sponsorship starts from as little as \$10 a month and makes a great present.

**Mini and her friends would like to thank their present sponsors for their continuing support!**

