



Heron's Ghyll Newsletter

Autumn 2025

Hello and welcome to the latest newsletter. Some fun driving and nice, dry sunny days at Burchetts, but also one or two sad events to report this time. Driving at Burchetts is now over for this year. Our last get-together was on 6th November when we had our annual clearing up and putting away session, cleaning all the carriages, reins and equipment and a good sorting/tidying of the carriage shed. Full report in the next 2026 newsletter.

On 4th December is our Christmas lunch at Welleshurst Golf Club with presentation of Annual Awards and results of both the cones and dressage competitions. Contact Jan for tickets.

Recent Events

At the end of August, we were invited by Kipling, our neighbouring group, to a driving and fun social gathering. This was what Jan had to say...
A super morning spent with our Kipling friends in a different setting. Fun activities included, with some driving (Funny how Sue F. and I became just a tad competitive!) Oh and not forgetting some tasty treats for us all. Many thanks to Kipling for their hospitality.



Recent Events

Moira Macmillan



We were all saddened by the news last month that Moira had passed away after a recent illness. So many people had memories of Moira and below are some of them:

Sarah Baverstock:

Our Dear Moira. My family and I knew Moira for the 25 year volunteering for Herons Ghyll. I believe Moira had her own small vets practice in Seaford (so a clever lady). Moira did so much for the group - on the committee, coach, brought Charlie weekly to the group field, took him home, bought him rugs etc as she loved him, cleaning harnesses and carriages and looked after the reins.

Supporting drivers at shows etc , picking up Greg & taking him back to SeeAbility, helping me with Kelly when my dad had his accident, supporting me when I did a speech at Crawley Down, driving me there and back home. She was a very kind lady who helped without expecting applause. We will miss you.

Anthea's daughter Sam said:

What lovely words Sarah. We will miss Moira so much. She was such a special lady - always so kind to mum and I, so caring and thoughtful to people and animals. She will always be in our hearts.

Jan's words:

Our lovely loyal volunteer, Moira Macmillan. She was one of our longer serving ladies and a previous CDC, due to receive her 25 year service award at this year's conference. She will be sadly missed - making sure all the drivers had the right reins. Our condolences to her family.

From Bella:

She was a great lady and an excellent vet, who went the extra mile for any animal. RIP

Sue Redshaw:

I feel very sad as she was always kind to me and I felt she was a friend.

Sue Willis:

So sorry to hear of Moira's passing, she looked after Charlie for so many years and was a good friend to Brenda who recently died. My sincere condolences to her family.

Brian Wilson:

She will very sadly be missed, a real genuine lady, you could always sit and have a chat.

Hilary Hill: Well said Sarah, Moira will be greatly missed by us all for all the many tasks she fulfilled. Moira was my vet while I lived in Seaford and treated my Siamese cat Taio when she had her kittens. A lovely caring lady who remembered me walking my Springer Spaniel Pip whilst pushing a pram when we met up again at HGDG. RIP Moira.

Christina Fowden:

I agree, a lovely, kind and gentle lady, who will be missed.



Recent Events

Brenda Longley



Brenda driving
Charlie with Liz

Liz Major's thoughts and memories of Brenda:

In the late nineties when Brenda reduced her hours as account secretary to Tony Penrose on his farm and Picasso exhibits at Farley Farm, she joined Heron's Ghyll as a helper. Unfortunately due to rapidly failing eyesight (due to macular degeneration), she became a disabled driver.

She offered to look after Charlie for us and Jeni learnt to drive with him and the rest is history.

Brenda had great fun driving with Sue Page and Sandra Pochin in later years, but she always drove Charlie at outside events. They won the Disabled Driving Class at Royal Windsor – her proudest moment – taking part in displays at Heathfield show, Herstmonceux Castle and South of England at Ardingly. She also drove Prince with Val Eyes at Heathfield and the Oaks show for many years.

Brenda was a very generous person and she and Jerry sponsored all our rosettes for many years. Apart from her driving, she helped run Chiddingly Arts Festival every Autumn.

She loved walking her Springer Spaniels, latterly accompanied by Tony Redmond.

It was very sad that her last months were plagued by illness, falls and Jerry's failing health before his death.

I had known Brenda for over fifty years and really valued her friendship.

Charlie

We were sad to hear this week that Charlie, probably our longest serving pony for RDA, has passed away. Most of his twenty five years with RDA was spent with Heron's Ghyll until his retirement.

Much more about Charlie in the next 2026 newsletter.



Recent Events

RDA South East Conference 2025

Several of us attended the South East Regional Conference at Ardingly recently where Karen gave a very amusing talk and presentation with early pictures of the original group members.

All 8 driving groups in the region were tasked with doing a visual presentation of their group which was interesting and helped give the riding groups of the RDA some insight into our activities. Thank you to Rosi, Karen and Hilary for helping me get the display board sorted out.

There were presentations to Stuart (Volunteer of the year), Silver service awards to Jo Angear and posthumously Moira Macmillan, and a certificate to Karen (Over and Above).

Jan



Jo receiving her Silver Award for 25 years service



Karen receiving a certificate for 'Over & Above' service



Stuart voted Volunteer of the Year



Karen giving her talk



Recent Events

Heron's Ghyll AGM 2025



Our 2025 AGM was held at East Hoathly village hall on 30th October. Both the treasurer's and chairman's reports were delivered by Angela and Jan, and apart from Sue Redshaw who is retiring from the committee, all other committee members were voted back on to serve for another year.

We were sad to hear that both Marion and Brian Wilson are retiring from the group and were thanked by the chairman on behalf of the group, for all their help and service for the past few years. They will be sadly missed.

Angela asked for a volunteer to take on the issue of changing the group to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation); Christine Abdy volunteered and was thanked by the committee.

Diesel is to remain at the livery yard on part time loan and Dexter, who has recovered from some major health issues, is now installed in luxury accommodation on loan where he will be ridden regularly and have access to some delicious grass. Both ponies will be brought every Thursday for our drivers.

Bella was thanked for bringing Buttons each week and Mia and Karl for bringing Ollie our newest and popular recruit.



Some of the committee –
Pat, Rosi, Jan and Angela

The results and awards for both the cones competition and the dressage competition will take place at the Christmas lunch.

Heron's Ghyll Driving Group RDA
Registered charity 1073569

'Carriage Driving for People with a Disability'
www.heronsghyll-rda.co.uk

