

## **Pony party time as riding clubs join forces for inclusive gymkhana**

YOUNG jockeys from two riding clubs joined forces for an inclusive gymkhana this summer.

Children from the Furness Group of the Riding for the Disabled Association and Seaview Pony Club formed mixed teams for a competition evening held at Seaview Riding School, in Cumbria.

Seaview is a Pony Club Centre and an RDA Centre, and both clubs are based at the stables on Walney Island, Barrow-in-Furness. The fun event saw children from both groups working together to gain points across two activities.

The first event was the timed 'Ride in the Country,' where the children opened a gate, weaved through bending poles, rode under an arch and posted a letter in a red letter box. The riders then demonstrated their skills in an equitation competition.

All the children received two lovely rosettes, kindly sponsored by South Cumbria farrier, John Stalker. Each team was placed from first to sixth and the winners received the Edward Challenge Cup, named after a superstar Seaview pony who is now retired. Edward, now 35, was himself a champion at the national RDA championships, at Hartpury, with his young riders in the 'Ride in the County' and dressage events.

Seaview Riding School and Furness Group RDA thanked all the riders, families, and helpers for their assistance at the gymkhana.

Judith Stitt, chairwoman of Furness Group RDA, said: "Thank you to Seaview Riding School for organising this wonderful event. It is very inclusive having children from both clubs working together in teams."

Claire Hayton, manager of Seaview Riding School, said: "Everyone has had a brilliant time. We are very proud to host this competition and see the children from both clubs having so much fun and showing great teamwork."

In the Spring, Seaview Riding School staged a unique 24 hour sponsored charity ride. The round the clock riding lessons event raised an incredible £4,120 for Furness Group RDA and Alice's Escapes, a local charity which provides holidays for seriously ill children and their families.

A tag team of 64 riders saddled up for the back-to-back lessons, which took place from 12pm to 12pm in the indoor school. The event saw children and adults, and beginners through to experienced riders, taking part in half hour lesson slots. The challenge involved riding school ponies and horses, and riders bringing their own mounts to the event. Some of those taking part through the night and in the early hours opted to wear pyjamas or onesies. All riders received a special rosette, sponsored by local legal firm Poole Townsend.

The event attracted first-time and returning horse riders, as well as regular Seaview riders, including Seaview Pony Club members, parents of RDA riders and RDA volunteers.

Ross Wood, 50, of Walney, rode a horse for the first time at the event. He was able to learn how to start, turn, stop and have a go at rising trot with Seaview horse, Ryan.

Mr Wood raised £600 and won the most sponsorship raised prize, a £50 Green Garth Saddlery voucher gifted by Gilmour Fabrications. Mr Wood then donated his prize to Furness RDA and Seaview Pony Club. He has now continued with his riding lessons.

Sisters Neia and Isla Marshall, aged 12 and 10, are both Seaview Pony Club members, and they raised around £100 for riding in the early hours.

Neia, who rode Charlie, said: "It was fun and exciting getting up early to go riding. I couldn't get to sleep before."

Isla, who rode Percy, said: "It was fun and cool riding at that time."

The Seaview team and both charities thanked all those who made the event possible.

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