

st Nicholas

PARISH MAGAZINE



SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2014

£1.00

JAMES KINGHORN and RIDING FOR THE DISABLED at WORMWOOD SCRUBS PONY CENTRE

In July Rosemary gave a wonderful tea party to thank those of us who have been fortunate enough to be on the rota to take James to his Saturday morning session at Riding for the Disabled,. The sandwiches and cakes were delicious, charmingly served by Philip, whilst James proudly displayed the trophy with which he had been presented after 12 years of attendance at the Centre.



I say fortunate because it has been a privilege not only to see the pleasure which James gained from his weekly ride on his special horse, Purdey, but to see the amazing things which can be achieved by one very determined lady inspired by her love of horses and her deep spiritual conviction.

The lady in question is Sister Mary Joy Langdon who runs the Wormwood Scrubs Pony Centre, an inner-city riding school for children with disabilities. She was influenced by her own childhood in Sussex, with parents who ran their own riding school. However, it was when she joined the Roman Catholic Sisters of the Infant Jesus in 1984, and moved to London to take on charitable work, that the idea of a riding school for disabled children first came to fruition.

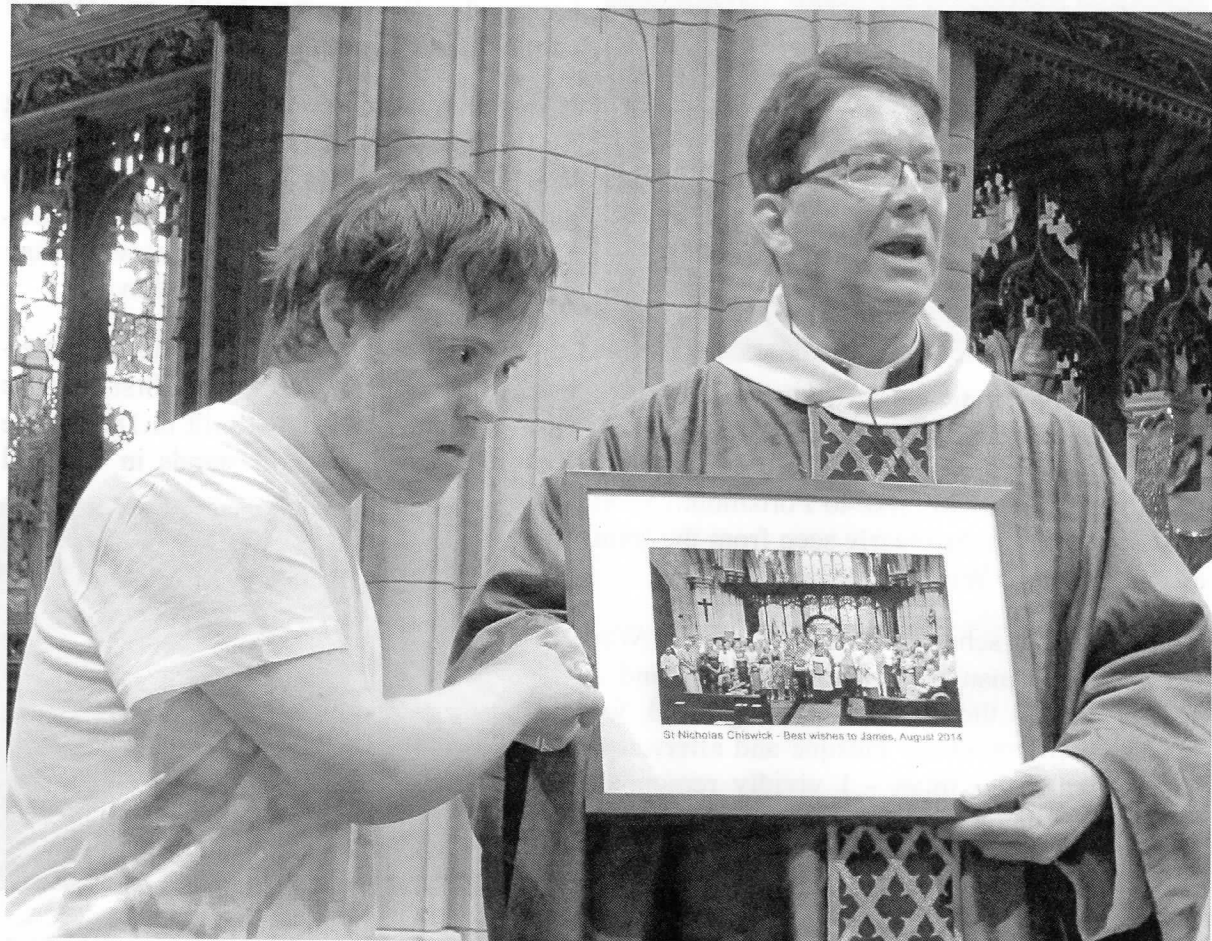
Mary Joy began with a piece of land in Wormwood Scrubs and a few ponies, but, with the help of volunteers - because she does indeed inspire loyal volunteers of all ages - the project grew apace. Five years after this modest beginning television's Challenge Anneka built an indoor riding arena in just 72 hours. With the new facilities the Pony Centre went from strength to strength.

Mary Joy has now been helping children for 25 years, and has given countless hours of joy to literally hundreds of disabled children. Classes are held on all aspects of stable management, care of the horses and then riding them. At an age when most of us are thinking of slowing down Mary Joy is still mucking out the stables at 7a.m. and thinking up new fund-raising activities. If you visit the superb website you will see wonderful photos of the horses and children and the volunteers who care for them, and wonderful ideas for fund-raising both modest and ambitious. I hope you will not be able to resist the urge to make a donation for a hay bale or riding hat!



I joined a sponsored walk at the Centre one morning in spring because I wanted to meet this formidable lady. It was indeed moving to have her point out children who had been barely able to speak or who had struggled to talk, but through bonding with their special horse had gained such confidence that the physical and emotional benefits achieved were unbelievable. What a privilege to witness such spiritual faith and love in action.

Patricia Sunley



A photograph was taken of everyone present at Parish Mass one Sunday in July, then a couple of weeks later, at the end of the service, a framed print was presented to James by Fr Andrew. We all said good-bye to James and wished him well as he moves to his new residential special college in Corbridge, Northumberland - which is only three miles from Hexham Abbey where he is already signed up for the acolytes rota!

