

# South Bucks RDA

## NEWSLETTER

### | Spring/Summer 2021

#### A few words from Di

Hopefully, it will not be too much longer before riding can return to normal. So many of you have been missed for a long time, mainly due to social distancing, which has made mounting impossible. All schools should be able to return in September, Gina has heard from Coteford and Manor Green Schools so, Wednesday and Thursday rides will resume then.

There will be taster rides during the school holidays so please will all helpers that will be available, let Gina know.

These have been difficult times for everyone, and the staff have continued throughout to care for the horses.

Unfortunately, Caro has resigned from her position of Chief Coach and Manager from the end of July. She has done this with a heavy heart but realised that she was unable to fulfil her duties after undergoing a very serious operation on her back.

She has been here for nearly two years and kept the horses going during the difficult time of the pandemic. She was inspirational for many of you and will be sadly missed.

I am sure that you will want to join me in thanking her and wishing her well for the future

Fund raising has been almost impossible and so all donations have been very gratefully received. It is hoped that the Annual Barbecue will be permitted in September so that everyone will be able to get together again.

I look forward to seeing on all again soon.

#### 2021 Tokyo Paralympics

We'd like to send our congratulations and luck to Natasha Baker our Group Vice President who has been selected as part of the British Dressage Team. Tash has been connected with and supported South Bucks for many years, starting her riding career on the equally famous Forester.

Good luck to the whole team of Tash, Lee, Sophie & Sophie.



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### WHAT THE HORSES HAVE BEEN DOING

This year has been very different for our horses who thrive on a routine. They have missed seeing you all and not being able to do their job. Nobody knew how long the Covid Restrictions or Lockdowns would last so it was important to keep all the horses fit and available for use just as soon as lessons could be re-started.

We have all heard the expression, “a change is as good as a rest” and so to keep the horses fit and in work, they have all been enjoying a different type of exercise. This has included Hacking, Ride and Lead, Led walks in the Woods, Lunging, Long Reining and Loose Schooling etc. We also spent time working the horses “in hand” in the school to ensure they did not forget their job as an RDA horse. So, lots of leading work, stopping and starting to voice aids, coming into the mounting block and standing for a rider to mount before moving off on command.



Earlier in the year whilst we were not able to accept riders and enjoy normal RDA life, we did our best to keep the Group represented wherever possible. We entered various fun competitions and some of the horses in virtual classes of National Competitions sponsored by Your Horse Live,



Harry Hall and NAF Products. In February, Lambrusco, looking very smart and quite the professional model, was entered in a “Golden Oldie” Class and, after much deliberation, Duke was chosen to represent South Bucks in the SEIB “Search for a Star” in a Class for the Best RDA Horse. This Class was to be judged on conformation and suitability for the job long term. You will remember how wet it was last winter and how muddy the fields can be, so imagine how Duke looked when he came in covered in mud and sporting impressive “mudlocks” attached to his feathers.

Fortunately, we were lucky enough to have a couple of warm sunny days so were able to set to work. Duke was scrubbed from head to toe and finally made to look as if he had just stepped out of the washing machine! He looked a picture and whilst he did not win his Class, he was awarded a “Merit” Rosette – which was his first - so he was really pleased.



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During the period of hot weather, we were able to bathe all the horses and make them feel fresh and clean again. Gem has done a grand job looking after them and they are in excellent condition. Recently, with the flush of new grass some have had to go to "Weightwatchers." Friday is weigh-in day for all the horses – so lots of tummies pulled in as the weight tape approaches! And Spillers came to weigh all the horses, Billy decided to join in too.



**Meet Freddie:** our new RDA pony in the making and you will love him. He is 4½ year old 13.2hh piebald cob. He has a lovely temperament, is a pleasure to work with and appears to take all new situations in his stride. Gem is working hard on his education and teaching him what's required of a good RDA pony. He is also being led in Class Lessons without a rider and has even been round the Countryside Challenge Course. He loves to hack out, whether alone or in company.

**River:** continues to make steady progress with his rehabilitation following major colic surgery earlier this year. He is now back in daily work re-building his core muscles. He has also had a visit from the saddler and physio who has given him exercises to do in addition to his fitness programme. We are hopeful he too will be fit and ready to join class in September.

**Billy Black:** is on box rest at the moment with a limited area for grazing. Following a visit to the Veterinary Hospital where he had nerve blocks, X-Rays, and Ultrasound treatment, he has now been re-shod with remedial shoes and appears to be feeling very much better. He is making a good job of mowing the grass on the drive and loves to see how much he can put in his mouth in one go.

**Yoshi:** has just arrived and is destined to become a Para Horse for his owner Emma Stevens. A gorgeous grey standing at 17.1hh he towers above us all. Emma is getting to know him and has great hopes for their future together.



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**Tru:** On a sad note, we lost Tru recently. She suffered a severe colic attack and Gem had to make the decision every horse owner dreads. Tru had been so well, loved her daily walks in the woods and, at 29yrs old, looked a picture of health. Gem has owned Tru since she was a very young teenager so has spent many happy hours with her. When Gem joined South Bucks, Tru came too and soon became part of the Team. She was full of character and such a sweet pony who became a firm favourite. She was loved by everyone who met her.

Below is a compilation of the tributes to Tru received from some of our Volunteers who worked with her:

“....I have such fond memories of her. She was such a sweetheart. How lucky was she to be loved and adored by Gem and all who met her. We can take comfort from the fact that she had a splendid life and was a lifelong friend to Gem who was with her at the end. She will be greatly missed by us all....”



### Volunteers

Thank you as always to all our volunteers, it's been great to see many of you back leading and working with the horses and riders (and poo picking!), we hope to see everyone soon. The virtual Regionals kept everyone busy too, leading and preparing the ponies (what an early start!).



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### Our Riders

Due to Covid this year the Regional Competition became virtual with countryside challenge and dressage tests being videoed and sent in to be judged. The aim as always is to qualify for the National Championships in September, another virtual event. As expected, our riders did rather well. Well done everyone.



#### Dressage

Natasha Wait	Wolfie	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	69.41%	Grade 3 Senior
Andrew Tolmie	Wolfie	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	69.41%	Grade 6 Senior
Sophie Whicker	Pip	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	68.81%	Intro Led Junior Walk
Harrison Mills	Mabel	2 <sup>nd</sup>	65.24% (coll 34)	
Adiyah Rather	Mabel	3 <sup>rd</sup>	65.24% (coll 32.5)	
Joe Lawrence	Mabel	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	69.29%	Intro Led Senior Walk
Pav Patel	Wolfie	2 <sup>nd</sup>	67.38%	
Charlotte Batty	Forester	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	66.25%	Intro Junior Walk &
Trot				

#### Countryside Challenge

Andrew Ward	Bruce	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	91.50%	Junior Led
Tom Hipwell	Billy G	2 <sup>nd</sup>	89.50%	
Isaac McCarthy	Pip	3 <sup>rd</sup>	87.00%	
Tamzyn Dormer	Mabel	4 <sup>th</sup>	86.00%	
Teagan Murphy	Duke	5 <sup>th</sup>	73.50%	
Bryony Moss	Duke	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	78.50%	

#### Show jumping

Harry	Harley	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	70.00 (representing Lambourn)
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A number of riders have been lucky enough to return and have been enjoying our woods which have been in full bloom.



Three Saturday riders achieved Endeavour Awards.

**Millie** – working on her position and planning riding Duke

**Lucy** – sitting like a princess and leading Lambrusco

**Darcy** – holding her reins and leading Forester

Riders who are unable to ride at present have also been grooming and working on their horse care and knowledge.

And Mike our mechanical horse has been in action, he has been working hard with riders for whom we don't have a real-life horse available. **Sally** has been practicing her mounting and dismounting and working on her riding position.



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### Tea with a Pony

A few RDA Groups have been helping dementia patients and the elderly by arranging visits to their Group to meet a pony. This can be done on an individual basis or with arrangements with Care Homes. It has proved to be very successful in stimulating the visitors and if a dementia patient has had horses in their lives at an earlier time it provokes their memories and often conversation.

Once Co-Vid restrictions are over, it is intended that South Bucks RDA will add these visits to its weekly activities, especially from Care Homes. At the moment, it is only possible to take individuals by appointment. Please would any helpers, interested in being involved, please let Gina know.

A few years ago, ahem, Theresa volunteered at the Diamond Centre RDA Group and supported Ron with his riding. Ron came to visit South Bucks RDA as part of his 80th birthday celebration, to see our ponies and Theresa.



We asked our South Bucks community for words that describe what South Bucks means to them, we hope some of the words resonate with you all.



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### Fundraising

As with most other charities, here at South Bucks we have been unable to fundraise as much over the past year or so due to Covid. Our fundraising committee used to meet once every 6 weeks to plan and organise our own events such as the summer BBQ and our Christmas activity, and outside events that we attend such as Fulmer Day and tack sales etc.

With these events cancelled and restrictions imposed, we've done very little in comparison with previous years. Now with restrictions being lifted we will start to ready ourselves to meet and start making plans again. Hopefully, Team GB Dressage Paralympians will do well in Tokyo, as I'm sure many of you know both Natasha Baker and Sophie Christensen started their competition riding with us at SBRDA and they will make up 2 of the 4 in the GB team. I spoke to Natasha at the end of last year and she has said she'll happily visit us at the yard with her medals. South Bucks have, as usual, had great success at regional level this year and I'm sure will do the same at the Nationals. With all this in mind we are hoping to have the annual BBQ in September to celebrate everything that every SBRDA rider has achieved this year whether that's in competition or in lessons and to say thank you to our volunteers, instructors, and staff, please keep an eye out for an email from Gina with details, we'd love to see you all there.

We also hope to have some sort of activity at the yard at Christmas, at this time we don't know if that will be with Cannon Roger Royale entertaining us with his brilliant service or some mad event organised by the fundraising committee like the Hobby Horse Ho Ho Ho, that we had back in 2019, either way it's guaranteed to be good fun, so again look out for an email from Gina and be sure not to miss out.



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One of our wonderful volunteers, Kirsty Forsyth took on her own challenge throughout the month of May, she ran and cycled 489 miles, Kirsty raised around £1000.00, the weather wasn't always kind to her and it certainly took its toll but in true SBRDA style she completed it.



Fred and the committee of the Park Run also made a donation which was very kind, we usually have members of the fund-raising committee that help out at the run on Boxing Day, as it didn't happen in 2020 it was pleasing to see that Fred and his team thought of us when distributing their excess cash.

Please remember there are different and easy ways to help us raise funds:

Amazon Smile – [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk)

Easy Fundraising - [www.Easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.Easyfundraising.org.uk)

As we get a clearer picture of what's going to unfold during what's left of 2021 we'll be in touch, so please keep a look out for those emails from Gina and keep supporting South Bucks, as always if you have any ideas or are able to help us in any way please get in touch, I'm always happy to talk about SBRDA and any fundraising opportunities, my phone number and email are listed below.

Thanks

Alan Lawrence

Trustee – Fundraising

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**Finally.....a few photos – can you spot the Paralympic rider?**



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