

South Bucks RDA NEWSLETTER

| Winter/Spring 2022

Happy Easter

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who have returned since the first lockdown and to especially welcome all the new helpers who have joined since the outbreak of COVID and to thank you for your support. Without you there would be many disappointed riders.

This year sees the return of the Regional Show in May after a two-year absence and many of the Fund-Raising events are resuming and will take place during the summer months.

The last two years have been a particularly difficult time for Charities to raise money and I am grateful to everyone who has continued to donate.

Let us hope for a brighter future and look forward to the joy and happiness that our horses and ponies bring to so many people.

Enjoy your Easter break!

Di Redfern
Chair

How many Easter Bunnies can you find in the newsletter?



Storm Eunice

Storm Eunice didn't spare South Bucks RDA 😞 The field shelter in Handy Pony field (next to the indoor school and car park) was damaged beyond repair, and we have a few fences down. Fortunately, all the horses and ponies were safe and well.

Thanks, Alan for starting to clear up.



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Centre Manager

The Group is still looking for a new Centre Manager since Caro left last Spring to have a major operation on her back. A few candidates have been interviewed but so far, the right person is still illusive. An agency has been employed to help with the search and so hopefully, a suitable candidate will be found soon. Thanks to Gem, Chloe, Fern and Romilly for all their continued hard work.

MP Visit

We were lucky to have Tan Dhesi, Labour MP for Slough visit us. Gem showed him our facilities and introduced our ponies, he then enjoyed a coffee and chat with Di, Romilly, Alan and Emma. Lovely for someone to have such enthusiasm and interest in what we do at South Bucks.



Thank you

....to Sarah Cawthorne for your donations which have been keeping our ponies in carrots – so important and appreciated!



....And to Kiran Lone who has bought us new noticeboards, they look great and make such a difference.

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National Women and Girls in Sport Day

February 2nd was National Women and Girls in Sport Day, our Vice President Natasha Baker shared some photos of where her equestrian career started, at South Buck RDA with Forester and Shadow.



Congratulations Tash and Marc on getting married in March



Our Horses

Looking after our horses

Have you ever asked a friend or family member what they think an RDA Group does to help support disabled riders? Often you will be told “Oh you just put a rider up on a horse and lead them round for a bit.”

From first-hand experience, you know that at South Bucks we strive to help each rider achieve as much as possible - but what about our horses. How do we care for and protect them so that they are able to give us a dedicated, life-long service?

Horses are an essential part of RDA and as owners or carers we have a responsibility to ensure that they receive every care and consideration to enable them to fulfil their job. You need empathy, observation and instinctive “feel” to know when a horse is not quite himself. It is for this reason it is essential to know what is “normal” for each horse in terms of temperature, heart rate, respiration, feeding habits and general demeanour. A good “eye” for these details ensures that anything unusual is picked up immediately and treated.

Each horse has an individual feed schedule which you may have seen on the White Board in the Feed Store. All are fed in accordance with their dietary needs which takes into consideration their age, body condition, workload, or special needs. Meadow hay is also fed to the horses and provides bulk to sustain them when the grass is insufficient. In the stables, you may have noticed that some horses have their hay on the floor, which is the most natural way to feed it, others have theirs in a hay net. We use a hay net with any horse who eats very quickly as it helps to slow them down and make their hay last longer. Forrester, who has been with us for almost 25 years, can no longer manage hay so he has additional feeds during the day and, when he is not required in Class, he enjoys extra grazing time in a “resting” field which gives him access to longer shoots of fresh grass.

FEEDS MEASURED BY THE YELLOW CUP!

HORSE:	CHAFF:	NUTS:	OIL:	MEDICATION/EXTREMES:
X2 MABEL:	2	1/2	✓	1 BUTE (AM)
X3 FORRESTER:	2	2	✓	1 PRASADIN + 1/2 PREVILCOX
X1 WILLMA:	1	0		1 BUTE (AM)
X1 BRUCE:	2	1	✓	1 BUTE (AM)
X1 BELLY G:	1	1/2		1 BUTE (AM)
X1 PEP:	1	1/2	✓	
X1 SHANE:	2	0		1 YELLOW CUP FRAXELERS PARALIN
X1 GEORGE:	1	0		
X1 BULLY B:	1	1/2	✓	
X1 FREDDY:	1	1/2		
X2 WOLFIE:	2	2	✓	
X1 DURE:	1	0		

Most of the horses wear Turnout Rugs in the winter months. The older ones especially, need extra protection to help maintain good body condition as they can quickly lose weight during inclement weather. Others we have to be careful with, because they can easily become too fat and be at risk of contracting a very painful condition in the feet called “Laminitis”.

Although we have some younger horses within our Group, we also have a number who have been working with our riders over many years and are now elderly. Sometimes, you may wonder why your favourite horse or pony is not available for you to ride. This may be because as a horse gets older his workload and weight limit is reduced. To monitor the capacity of each horse we have a Chart on which is written the essential details of each horse in our care. This includes things like height, age, carrying capacity, weight of tack and combined weights.



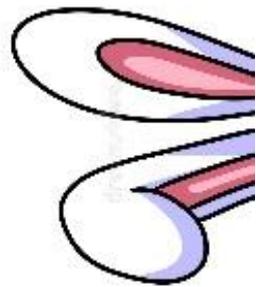
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It may surprise you to know that some of our saddles and bridles weigh-in at 14kgs and adding this to the weight of the rider makes a big difference to the total weight carrying capacity of the horse. These recommendations are regularly updated by our Vet and Yard Manager. In addition, RDA National Office has strict guidelines concerning the acceptable ratio of rider weight to carrying capacity of the horse.

To give you an idea of how comprehensive this information must be, the following is a copy of our Chart which gives you an insight into how much consideration is needed to protect and safeguard each horse in our care.

SOUTH BUCK RDA - WEIGHT CHART

Name	Height	Age	Max Carrying Weight	Tack Weight	Max Rider Weight
Billy B	16.0hh	9	84kg	14kg	70kg
Duke	14.3hh	8	79kg	9kg	70kg
Wilma	16.2hh	16	84kg	14kg	70kg
George	15.2hh	6	84kg	14kg	70kg
Bruce	16.3hh	21	78kg	13kg	65kg
Wolfie	15.0hh	25	64kg	9kg	55kg
Mabel	16.0hh	24	64kg	9kg	55kg
Billy G	14.1hh	19	54kg	9kg	45kg
Forrester	13.3hh	29	54kg	9kg	45kg
Freddie	13.2hh	5	49kg	9kg	40kg
Pip	13.1hh	16	44kg	9kg	35kg



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Other horsey news

George has been coming on a treat, he is being schooled by a friend of the Group Alex, and also ridden by Gem, Chloe and Fern. We're sure he'll become a brilliant RDA horse with a little more time and training.



In preparation for forthcoming shows Gem and Romilly have been taking some of our horses out for a hack to Berkshire College of Agriculture, as due to Covid they haven't been off the yard for at least two years. Thanks Romilly for organising.



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A few words from Freddie

Hello Everyone,

My name is Freddie. I am 5 years old and a very smart piebald pony with long white feathers and a full mane and tail. My early life was spent with cows but when the herd was sold to a Farmer in Somerset I went as well. There I met the Farmer's wife, a lovely lady called Sian. She broke me in to ride but as I am only 13.2hh she did not have a job for me. She wanted to ensure she found me a "forever home" with lots of children so that I would not have to be sold again when I was outgrown. This is when I was told that I was going to join an RDA Group. I had never heard of RDA but as people have always been kind to me, I was looking forward to this new adventure.



I have been at South Bucks RDA Group for nine months and in January 2022, I graduated from the "Training School" and have just started my career as an RDA pony. When I first arrived Gem, who looks after all the horses here and is light enough to ride me, created a structured programme to cover all aspects of the training required to help me become a good RDA pony. I have learned so much and enjoyed the variety of activities involved so I thought it would be fun to share with you my journey through the training school to become a junior member of South Bucks RDA Team of Schoolmasters.....

When the horsebox turned into the drive, out of the window, I saw the sign *South Bucks Riding for Disabled Group* (RDA). "That's funny" I thought "I'm not disabled. I can gallop like the wind, so what sort of place is this?"

Once the mandatory isolation period was over, I was turned out in a field with a lovely pony. He was very kind and made me feel at home. We used to graze side by side and spent many happy hours chatting. He told me about his riding career, but he looked surprised when I asked what his disability was. I told him that as I did not have one, I didn't understand why I was here. How he laughed ... "Of course you don't silly ! All of us here have a very important job helping disabled RIDERS achieve as much as they can". He continued "You have been chosen because they think you have the potential to make a good RDA pony. So, learn your lessons well and you will have a job for life here at South Bucks."

The change from life on the Farm to starting my apprenticeship at South Bucks was something of a culture shock. To begin with, each day I loved going hacking with one or two others. I had to learn to be the leader or follow at the back. I also had to learn to leave the others and ride past them on my return. I did all this without hesitation.

In addition to hacking out alone and in company, I also worked in the School with Gem perfecting the 3 L's, Lunging, Long Reining and Loose Schooling. All three of these exercises are controlled by voice aids but I'm a quick learner so I did not find any of these activities difficult. On other days we spent time preparing for RDA lessons by working "In Hand." This involved leading practice, coming into the mounting block, standing still, and waiting patiently to be mounted.



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I felt important when I started to join lessons, fully tacked up but without a rider. It was fun going round with the other ponies and I certainly enjoyed all the activities. I was not bothered by anything so even when a tray was knocked over or someone missed a bucket, I took it all in my stride. I just wished they would let me have a go! I could chuck a bean bag or a ball into a bucket with no problem! One afternoon I did get taken into the School and let loose with a ball. When it was thrown ahead I went after it and nosed it along, as you do, like “dribbling” down the wing in Football. Soon it was time for me to start going into lessons being led but with Gem riding me. Took me a little longer to get the idea of having a rider on top and somebody walking alongside holding a lead rope. To begin with I did not see the point of this but now I have got the hang of it. This practice continued and other small riders sat on me and I joined the lessons where appropriate.



There is never a dull moment here. South Bucks is open 7 days a week so there is always something going on. I am interested in everything and, as I love people and enjoy being involved with all activities or new experiences it was great to be invited to join “Tea with the Pony.” This is an activity where elderly visitors from local Nursing or Care Homes come and visit to rekindle memories of childhood or just to talk to and pat a friendly pony. I love this interaction with people and feel especially proud when they say things like “isn’t he cute.” I look at them from under my long black eye lashes and try to look angelic. I am still working on how you get to sample the cakes!

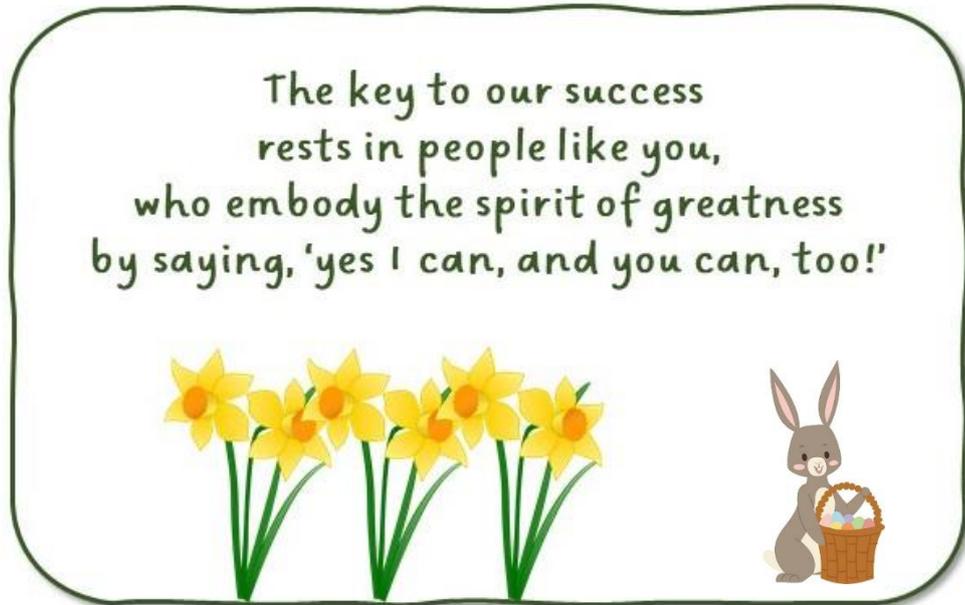
I also joined my friends, Billy G, Pip and Forester when we all took part in our Christmas Carol Concert and the visit of Father Christmas. All those people, the decorations, the noise and even a 30-piece brass band! Wow! It was super fun to be involved and I wanted to sing along with the Carols, but I didn’t know the words, so I could only hum.

There is still lots for me to learn but I love it here and am enjoying this very special job with its permanent supply of children. I have also made lots of “horsey” friends so I am never lonely and am looking forward to the next stage in my career development.



Our volunteers

As always thank you to everyone who supports us, whether that be in person or from afar.



Our Riders

Competition time is nearly upon us, and we can go out and compete - hooray!

We are planning give everyone who wants to, the opportunity to have a go at the Country-Side Challenge course during the first week of May. Have fun doing something different. Rosettes for all entries.

Some dates for your diary:

In-house Country-Side Challenge Qualifier, week commencing 2nd May

Regional Show at Berkshire College of Agriculture, Sunday 22nd May

National Championships at Hartpury College in Gloucester, 15th – 17th July

Your coaches will keep you informed.

Dressage Pit Crew



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Anaya, Darcy, and Jake have been trying out the new equipment bought for us by the Roland Callingham Foundation



Proficiency tests – Saturday riders

Daisy, Ben, Lucy, and Millie passed their Grade 1 Riding and Horse Care
 Jake, Darcy, and Anaya received in Endeavour Awards.

Training

South Bucks hosted a very successful training day for coaches in the South Region. Thanks must go to the team who prepared the ponies so well and the riders for their great efforts. A special thanks to our coaches Gem and Emma, who had to use ideas from the delegates to form two very interesting rides. All the delegates left buzzing with ideas.

Thank you so much for hosting the event today. And thank you to everyone at South Bucks involved, you are an absolute credit to RDA.



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Robert Pickles FBHS was with us this month training our staff (thanks Cherry and Karen for being our guinea pig riders). Great to see Billy B in a lesson a year after his first diagnosis, he can now start to trot correctly in straight lines with staff.



Gem & Duke



Romilly & Billy B



Fern & George

Health and Safety

Please remember even if you feel that you are late, please drive slowly on the premises. Horses and people are always moving around the premises.

Legislation has finished but please continue to be aware that COVID has not. If you feel at all unwell ring 01753 662796 and let us know that you will not be coming to a session as a rider or volunteer. Keep safe. We continue to advise side walkers and those in close proximity should consider wearing face coverings.

Theresa



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17 Easter Bunnies

