

# South Bucks RDA

## NEWSLETTER

| Winter/Spring 2023

### Welcome to our Newsletter.

Spring is around the corner; and it brings exciting times. The ponies and horses might be dreaming of relaxing with the spring grass in the sunshine, but we are aiming for a more active spring: taking rides out in the woodland, a training day for staff and volunteers with Robert Pickles, setting up the countryside challenge course, and preparing for the In-house Countryside Challenge Competition and Regional Show for our riders and of course the endless brushing of moulting ponies.

I'd like to say a big thank you to all the wonderful volunteers, without you we couldn't exist. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions.

I've been at South Bucks for 5 months and it is feeling like home, please always say hello, if you don't yet know me. Thank you all for helping me, Rocket, Harold, and Ludo settle in.

Frankie  
[Frankie.Payne@Southbucksrda.org](mailto:Frankie.Payne@Southbucksrda.org)



**The Equo Pony of the Year** was awarded to our beloved Forester at the Horse & Hound Awards 2022, in partnership with NAF, thank you everyone for voting. Theresa attended the Awards Dinner on behalf of everyone at South Bucks RDA – yes that's her in the middle out of her yard clothes.



## | SBRDA Winter/Spring 2023

### New Hat Standards

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 RDA riding hat standards changed. Some of you may have wondered why all hats belonging to individual riders were being checked. This was to ensure that they were to the approved RDA safety standards. The current hat safety standards acceptable for use in RDA sessions are as follows:

- PAS 015: 2011 provided it is BSI Kitemarked or Inspec IC Marked
- European VG1 provided it is BSI Kitemarked or Inspec IC Marked.
- EN1384-2017 provided it has another accepted standard from the list which is BSI Kitemarked or Inspec IC Marked
- SNELL E2016 American ASTM F1163: 2004a or 04a onwards provided they are SEI Marked.

In view of these changes, we had to purchase additional hats. This was because some of our newest hats, which did meet the new standard, had to be destroyed because the safety standard label had been removed by curious fingers. This damage renders the hat unusable as we cannot verify its safety standard. Please can parents, carers and supervising visitors take care to ensure that their children do not remove these very important safety labels.

Please can all riders who have their own hats, and volunteers who use their own hats at/for RDA ensure they meet the required standards.



### Staff

We are still looking for staff, please spread the word, and if anyone is interested ask them to contact Frankie.



**South Bucks RDA Group**



### Grooms Needed

#### Full / Part Time and Weekend

Duties include horse care and management including bringing in, turning out, grooming, feed and water, haynets, mucking out.  
 Plus the chance to work with RDA riders & horses and optionally to pursue coach qualifications.

We have paid vacancies for a full time, a part time and weekend roles.

You will be working as part of a small, experienced team of staff and volunteers

For more information please get in touch!

Frankie Paine - 07725 135690

[frankie.paine@southbucksrd.org](mailto:frankie.paine@southbucksrd.org)

**South Bucks Riding for the Disabled, SL2 4QR**



Please make all cheques payable to South Bucks Riding for the Disabled Group  
 Registered Charity No: 1136630  
 01753 662796 or email [enquiries@southbucksrd.org](mailto:enquiries@southbucksrd.org)

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### Thank You

In December the Reverend Roger Royle came to South Bucks to lead our Carol Service, as always it was a lovely event. Thanks to Roger, Santa, the Band, Gina and everyone who came along, took part and helped to set up and clear up.



In November Jenny Owens and members of the Rotary Club of Jordans and District organised a Film Night showing Fisherman's Friends: One and All, in aid of South Bucks and Bucks Vision, it was a lovely evening raising £600 for the Group, we appreciate your support. Thank you.



Thank you to the ladies at Beaconsfield Golf Club. The very talented Judy Lucas made this beautiful quilted house to raffle off to raise funds for South Bucks RDA. They raised an incredible £420.00 for the Group. Nuala Gillmour-Morris was the lucky winner and looks delighted to be the proud new owner!

Thank you to helper Lorraine for lending us her husband for the morning! Ben came in and replaced the roof on our electricity meter shed as it was in a very poor state and leaking. Thank you for your help Ben, it's very much appreciated.



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Dropmore Infant School visited RDA on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March. The children had a marvellous time meeting Pip and Freddy, exploring materials in the tack room, riding the mechanical horse, doing an obstacle course and interviewing Carol (Sunday helper) all about volunteering. The children finished their day with a lovely walk in the woods. They were very disappointed when the coach turned up to take them back to school and home.. Thank you to all the volunteers who came in to lend a hand, the event couldn't happen without you.



### Our Riders & Participants

In November residents from the Avondale Care Home in Aylesbury had Tea with a Pony. Our guests watched a horse-riding lesson whilst enjoying some delicious cake and tea, and then met Pip and some of his horsey friends.



The eleven children from Coteford Junior School had a busy Autumn Term. Four new riders joined in September and have passed their Grade 1 Proficiency Test in both Riding and Horse Care with a 100% pass mark. Congratulations to Saair, Iyass, Fergie and Thea on their achievement.

When asked about tack, a little rhyme the children had learnt was eagerly repeated: Without the girth, you will fall to earth. One for all riders to remember.

The seven more experienced riders prepared to take their Grade 2 Proficiency Test in Riding & Horse Care in February, 2023. Many thanks to Anne Coney for very kindly coming to South Bucks to examine the riders.

The Spring Term will also bring more activities. Over the Christmas Holidays all the Coteford riders were asked to think about their ideas and write/start to write their entries for the RDA National Creative Writing Competition 2023.

There are also plans for a "Parents Day" when family members are invited to come and see for themselves how their children are progressing and what education and life skills they experience through activities associated with their riding and horse care lessons when they come to South Bucks RDA. We will also start to practice elements of the Countryside Challenge Competition in readiness for the RDA competitions held in the Summer Term.



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### Arbour Vale School

We are pleased to welcome the return of pupils from Arbour Vale School. We have been working with the School to provide therapeutic lessons for a new group of riders as part of their Learning Programme and look forward to helping them benefit through their riding at South Bucks RDA.

.....and Saturday rider Zayn loves Billy as much as we do.



### South Bucks RDA – a teachers view.

Hello, my name is Sarah Hutchinson and I'm a Teacher at Coteford Junior School. For the past 17 years I have been bringing disabled children to South Bucks RDA to take advantage of the wonderful facilities and opportunities they offer. However, our School has been running a riding programme with them for a lot longer.

The learning and sense of purpose that riding brings to our children with often quite severe mobility issues is a joy to watch and very rewarding. The weekly sessions make a real difference socially and emotionally to every child.

Only 10 of our pupils each year get the opportunity to embark on this amazing journey. Some of these children cannot access the required 2 sessions of PE each week as stated by the national curriculum. This is mainly because they have physical and/or learning difficulties that hinders or prevents this.

Some have experienced tragic loss, abuse or even faced terminal illness and in each and every case, I know that putting them on a horse will calm and soothe them and give them a sense of independence and control back in their lives.

Many of these children often find it hard to communicate with adults and peers but sitting on a pony will release their deepest darkest feelings and emotions through the horse, talking to them, confiding in them, trusting in them. This provides a much needed outlet that otherwise would stay bottled up and fester.

Riding is widely recognised as an excellent form of physical and sensory therapy. It helps to build up self-confidence, develops concentration, balance and strength and at the same time provides recreation, education and sport which is so desperately needed by some our children.

The children chosen, embark upon a 30 week course which is split over 3 school terms. It has both classroom-based studies as well as riding challenges. The children are taught Riding and Horse Care and take RDA National Proficiency Tests. They also enter any appropriate competition. For example, some will qualify to compete at the RDA South Region Show where, for the first time, they will meet



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riders from other RDA Groups. Imagine the thrill when a child does well and qualifies to compete at the RDA National Championships. Many of our riders have competed very successfully at both events and we are so proud of them.

These children often find concentration and literacy particularly hard but while at RDA in the classroom they don't even realise that they are learning new skills. At every opportunity we incorporate educational exercises associated with their riding activities.

Each year our riders are encouraged to take part in the RDA National Creative Writing Competition and, for the last few years some of our students have received recognition for their written compositions, with pupils from Coteford receiving the top accolade nationally, and highly commended awards. This enhances their school based lessons.

Some years ago, we had the honour of being included when the Princess Royal came to visit South Bucks. Similarly, Coteford School was given the opportunity to read and review a draft of a new book by Clare Balding MBE "The Racehorse Who Learned to Dance", giving me the chance to squeeze in more subtle literacy and reading lessons, without the children even noticing. She loved our thoughts and review on the book and came to South Bucks to have lunch with the children to thank them for their input, as well as personally autographing a book for each child.



This programme, together with the support from RDA, has helped 100's of our children over the years to accomplish some truly outstanding achievements academically, personally and to become well rounded confident individuals. An example of one of our and South Bucks' top achievers is Natasha Jaconelli (nee Baker) OBE, who was a pupil at our school and was introduced to riding at an early age. She has gone on to become a multi medal winning European and Paralympic champion and a very successful member of the British Team. From time to time, Natasha very kindly visits South Bucks to meet the Coteford children, answer their questions and give them the opportunity to see and hold in their hands her Olympic Medals. Her visits are inspirational and provide an experience which is priceless.

However, South Bucks RDA is a Charity which does not benefit from any Government or Lottery Funding. Riding at South Bucks is subsidised for all disabled riders and the cost of providing this service is solely reliant on fundraising, donations, sponsorship and a dedicated team of volunteers who continue to provide the life-changing service that it offers. This programme is an invaluable resource and the support of South Bucks RDA plays a pivotal role in the development of all riders who participate.



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### Our Volunteers

In January Sarah and Paul left us to live in Wales. Sarah has been a key member of the South Bucks team for the past 10 years working on a Saturday, leading at Shows and being a Trustee. You'll still see Sarah on a Saturday every 4 – 6 weeks, as she's still one of us, just with a longer commute!



### We would love to increase our pool of coaches.

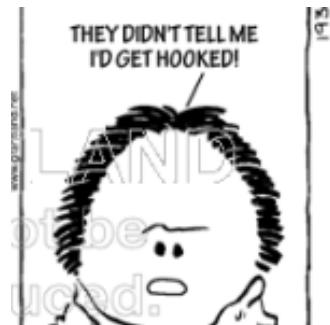
We have a small team of coaches at South Bucks RDA. We would like to have more volunteers to support them and share some of the coaching in the Group. If you would like to expand your knowledge and support our participants, you could become an Activity Leader (for unmounted activities) or a Coach-in-Training. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact: [Theresa.Drake@southbucksda.org](mailto:Theresa.Drake@southbucksda.org)



*“Coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It’s helping them to learn rather than teaching them.” – Tim Gallwey*

**RDA E-Learning** - We would like to encourage all our volunteers to visit the RDA National E-Learning website – [www.rda-learning.org.uk](http://www.rda-learning.org.uk). Here you will find many useful and interesting short courses, covering areas such as: Safeguarding; Equine Knowledge; Disability Awareness; and Person-Centred Approaches. The more volunteers we have with this knowledge the better for the Group. Any questions please contact [Theresa.Drake@SouthBucksRDA.org](mailto:Theresa.Drake@SouthBucksRDA.org).

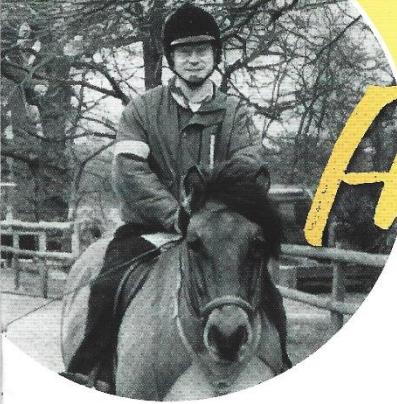
Our thanks as always to everyone who volunteers for the Group in whatever capacity, it's great to see so many new people joining our South Bucks community. Emma is now the Volunteer representative for the Trustees, if there is anything she can help with contact her on [emma.ford@southbucksda.org](mailto:emma.ford@southbucksda.org) or 079564 82911.



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At the end of last year, Francis who many of you know, was featured in the Winter 2022 Issue of Shine's Together magazine. It's a great article about one of our longest serving South Bucks riders now volunteer, who loves a coffee (2 sugars) and a chat and is great on a tombola.



**Together Winter 2022**

# Francis' story...

*"...I was told from an early age 'you cannot (or will not) do certain things', but today I can look back, having ticked off a whole list of things, -within six months I had passed my driving test on the first attempt..."*

We recently caught up with Shine member Francis who was kind enough to share with us his story of life growing up with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, his passion for horse riding, and his involvement with the South Buckinghamshire Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA).

It wasn't the easiest of starts in life for Francis, who grew up in the Care system from birth, until he was 16 years old.




He remembers: "I was told from an early age 'you cannot (or will not) do certain things', but today I can look back, having ticked off a whole list of things, like living independently. In 1993 I started driving lessons - within six months I had passed my driving test on the first attempt and thanks to the Motability scheme, have had cars to get me around. I also worked until I was made redundant in 2004"

Francis started riding around the age of 4 years old, and made it clear that he hated it! It wasn't until he was 20 years old, that he had the opportunity to attend the Avon Tyrrell Activity Centre where he was given a choice of activities including horse riding, art and canoeing.

"I am not art minded and petrified of water!" he recalls.

Francis was put in touch with the RDA National organisation who connected him with a local group in South Buckinghamshire. The rest is history. Since

the age of 21, Francis has excelled and has a wall full of awards to show for it.

He developed a keen sense of purpose and drive and with his love of horses and riding, found his niche in the fields of the South Bucks RDA. In more than 12 years of competing, Francis was placed in the top six Dressage competitors in his class at both regional and national level.

Francis recently celebrated more than 40 years with the South Bucks RDA and now helps them by fundraising and supporting the group, however he can.

"After 12 years and multiple operations, I stopped competing in Dressage. But through South Bucks, I was able to join the RDA National Team where every year for over 10yrs, I've been responsible for playing the rider's competition music at the National Dressage Championships at Hartpury College in Gloucester.

"Each test is about five minutes long, and I had to be aware of what the riders, their teams & the officials were doing, starting & stopping the music at the appropriate time"

"Simple, but the days can last up to ten hours and it can be exhausting over a weekend! I have to make sure the running order and the CDs all tallied, and collect information as to where the music should start and stop. All good fun, but extremely tiring!"

**Would you like to include your story in a future edition of Together Magazine?**

If you're aged 18\* or above and have Spina Bifida or Hydrocephalus, we'd love to feature you in the pages of our magazine which is shared with more than 13,000 Shine members each year.

Email your story in no more than 600 words, along with a good quality photograph to [marketing@shinecharity.org.uk](mailto:marketing@shinecharity.org.uk) to be included in a future edition.

\*Under 18s must seek permission from their parent or guardian before submitting their story.



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### Our Horses

Our search for additional horses to join the South Bucks Team is progressing well and we hope to have some new horses/ponies on the Yard in the near future. In the meantime, each day is busy with private lessons, group lessons and School groups. The horses are eagerly awaiting the return of Spring, which will bring them tender green shoots of new grass and we are waiting for the ground to dry up so that they can resume hacking in the woods. Meanwhile all the horses provide tremendous pleasure for us to enjoy our "horsey fix".

George: who is still in training and is being schooled at least 3 times a week is gradually being introduced to more lessons where he is doing well.

Wilma: Is a firm favourite with everyone. He is adored by the staff, riders and volunteers who all love his kind temperament, lovely nature and desire to please at all times. We are so lucky to have him as one of the South Bucks Team of Schoolmasters.

Mabel: Spring is in the air and Mabel appears to be back to her sprightly self. Always kind and careful with her riders, she seems to be aware of their ability and adapts her performance accordingly. She is a firm favourite with riders and volunteers who appreciate her lovely nature.

Wolfie: Some may consider him to be in the old aged pensioner bracket, but nobody has told him! He is the one most eager to come in for his breakfast in the morning and is still able to show off his prowess with some of the more impressive movements of a higher level dressage test. Although he shares a field with two much larger horses, he is the boss of the group.

Duke: Those of us who spend time with this pony realise that he is actually a sweetheart who is generally misunderstood. He genuinely wants to please but has got himself a reputation for being grumpy. Although he prefers working with independent riders and is an excellent schoolmaster, he is versatile and safe for all riders to enjoy.

Freddie: Despite being the youngest member of the Team he is proving to be a versatile chap who is safe and can be relied upon to give confidence to the most nervous of his riders. At the same time, he enjoys working with those who are more advanced and are perfecting their trot work. His easy going nature makes him suitable for use in all areas of RDA work. He is not only cute but is a very useful pony. He also has a playful nature and on one winter morning he was seen enjoying himself with an ice covered puddle in his field – banging it with his front feet as if practicing on the drums!

Pip: The nasty cut on his leg has now fully healed and he is back in the field with his friends. You can imagine how he exploded into action when he was first turned out after more than two weeks in the stable. It was a case of Ascot Racecourse here we come! Wow - he was fast! Racing round and round inciting the others to join him in a game of "Got You Last". In the pony field it is Pip who winds everyone up and then leaves Billy, who is the boss, to restore peace and order to the group. Pip is another favourite with his riders and has a delightful way of saying thank you to his rider at the end of the session. Once they have dismounted he turns his neck round and "tucks them in" as if to give them a cuddle.



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Chequers: Is another versatile RDA pony as he is safe for use with therapy riders but also enjoys helping at a higher level with independent riders who are capable of walk, trot and canter work. He has started to jump with one of our riders and loves showing his ability over a fence. He thinks it's great fun!

Billy: Is another versatile RDA pony as he is safe for use with therapy riders but also enjoys working at a higher level. He is a super pony with a tremendous character and is very much loved. He is also the boss and the peacekeeper in the pony field. While Pip was doing his rendition of Ascot Racecourse, Billy stood in the middle of the field and just watched the chaos with a bored expression. Once the excitement had died down and everyone was "puffed out", Billy stepped in, restored order and told them all to get on with their grazing!

Athene: Is now in regular work following her return from 3 years at Stud. She is being got fit and gradually returning to full ridden work.

### Farewell to Bruce (Aka Ukardo)

Bruce was a handsome black 16.3hh KWPN Warmblood Gelding.

As he was so tall, he had long legs and a very long stride. You did not need to go to the Gym if you were leading Bruce – he gave you a very effective “workout” in the School. Above all, he was safe, reliable, kind and forgiving of his riders. If his rider became unbalanced, he would stop and wait while they regained their position. He was very popular in School Group lessons and was always in demand. The smaller the rider the more they wanted to ride him. He was the cause of many an argument between riders about whose turn it was to ride him.



In addition to his work in the School, as an RDA horse he hacked out regularly both on the lead and independently in our own woods or on the Common. He took several riders to the RDA South Region Show competing in led and independent classes in both Dressage and Countryside Challenge. He helped each of his riders to either win or be placed in whatever class they had entered and qualify to compete at the RDA National Championships in July where he again won or was placed in each of the classes he entered. He was an absolute star!

He was safe, reliable, kind and versatile and equally suitable for use with a 6 foot rider working independently or a small person learning to perfect their skills on the lead rein. He was a very special member of the South Bucks team of Schoolmasters who will be sadly missed by all who loved him.



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### Training

Robert Pickles (British Horse Society Fellow - [www.robertpickles.com](http://www.robertpickles.com)) is with us again on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April to work with our volunteers and staff. The morning will be focussed on volunteers so please attend if you can, we hope to make it as useful as possible. We are planning to focus on equine behaviour and how to use this to improve our interactions with our horses and ponies, please let Frankie know if there is anything specific you would like covered. We'd also like it to be a social event, so there will be coffee and biscuits on arrival and lunch provided. We will send round an agenda nearer the time.



Thanks to Anne Coney for visiting South Bucks in February to deliver Safe Guarding training, it was great that so many volunteers attended.

### Regional Training

In February Beaconsfield MP Jo Morressey paid a visit. Whilst with us she watched a group of RDA Coaches in Training taking part in a Medical and Therapy Module led by Nona Dane – Regional Physio and Theresa Regional Coach – thanks to those volunteers who came in specially to support the event. We were lucky to have participants attend from the South and West Mercia Regions.

On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March a South Region Coach Training Session was held at South Bucks for Coaches and Coaches in Training. The day covered: how horses move; how trotting affects a rider; and how to introduce trot into a lesson. Waveney Luke, former para-dressage selector and FEI judge and Nona Dane MCSP, Regional Physio led the sessions. Thanks to all our riders and volunteers who participated and helped, as always feedback on what we do was great.



### Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April  
 Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> April  
 Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April  
  
 Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May  
 Friday 14<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July

Volunteer Training with Robert Pickles  
 Trustees Meeting  
 In-house Countryside Challenge Competition  
 (your Coach will give you more details)  
 Regional Show at Berkshire College of Agriculture  
 National Championships, Hartpury College



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### A little important admin.

Please make all cheques payable to South Bucks Riding for the Disabled Group not just Riding for the Disabled. We cannot pay them into the bank if they are payable to RDA – Thank you.

#### Legacies and Donations

Sometimes the Group is fortunate enough to benefit from a legacy. It is important that if you know anyone, who would like to mention us in their will, that South Bucks is stated otherwise the legacy could go to RDA National. This has happened and it is very difficult to rectify. Any donation or legacy should always have South Bucks in the wording not just Riding for Disabled, this will enable it to always reach its intended destination. Thank you.



Amazon Smile has now closed, please remember you can still support us by using Easy Fundraising. It's easy to use with known brands and so far, we have raised over £2000.  
[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/southbucksrsa](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/southbucksrsa)

#### Lessons

If you are not able to attend your lesson, please let us know as soon as possible, leave a message on the yard phone 01753 662796 or contact your coach. We understand some circumstances are unavoidable, but the sooner we know the easier it is for us to fill the space with one of our reserve riders from our ever-increasing waiting list, our aim is to offer our services to as many people as possible. We also plan our horses/ponies workload each morning so that they are matched with riders and the work is equally shared, this becomes more difficult if we have late cancellations. Oh, and our volunteers work really hard to get everything ready for lessons before you arrive.



#### Out There



#### Signing in and out

Please can we ask everyone who comes on site, including riders, parents, carers, teachers, volunteers and visitors to make sure you sign in **and out**, this will ensure we comply with fire and safety regulations.

.....And if you're late for your lesson, don't worry, give us a call and we'll wait for you. Remember to drive slowly when you're on the premises.



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We are planning an update on Fundraising after the next meeting, in the meantime if you have any thoughts, ideas or questions about Fundraising please contact Alan Lawrence on 07881 950147.

If you have any thoughts or comments about the Newsletter let Emma know [emma.ford@southbucksrsa.org](mailto:emma.ford@southbucksrsa.org) or 079564 82911. Thanks to Romilly for her help and support writing content for the newsletter.

At long last, things are gradually returning to pre COVID and hopefully everyone will be able to look forward to some summer riding. A big 'THANK YOU' is owed to all the staff and volunteers who have managed to keep things going throughout a very difficult time.

I hope that you all have a very happy Easter.

**Di Redfern, Chair**



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... and because we loved it – Wilma by Thea

