

HOOFPRIINT



www.gaddesdenplacerta.org.uk

November 2021

Looking Forward

Here at Gaddesden we are looking forward to new challenges in the future. We are building our new classroom and home for Champion in November and combined with that and our new ponies, Melvin and Chunky, we are aiming to continue our services for our riders in 2022. Melvin and Chunky are settling in and being trained for our RDA use. The other boys have welcomed them into their 'gang'.

In spite of all the difficulties that we have faced in 2020/21 there have been many positives. The Countryside Challenge was a huge success. Many riders have hugely benefitted from the therapy provided by Champion and we have introduced new services, Hippotherapy and Tea with a Pony. We are hoping to restart with enthusiasm for all riders, the volunteers – the whole Gaddesden community.

Margaret

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RDA Eastern Region Virtual Countryside Challenge (part of RDA National Championships)

This summer we were delighted to be able to participate in the RDA National Countryside Challenge. This has been a competition that has proved too difficult for us to enter in previous years as it meant a lot of travelling for grooms, riders and their parents/carers and of course the transporting of ponies.

This year due to Covid, as with many things, it went online and we decided to take up the challenge and build and design our very own course following a detailed course layout. The countryside course was set up to develop the skills acquired in RDA sessions, challenging and stimulating the rider, but with the focus being "fun". Riders had the opportunity to put their skills to the test through challenging tasks: going through a gate, into the 'farmyard' encountering sheep, hens and other obstacles! Steering, balance and confidence were all put to the test.



Our Countryside Challenge Course



Angus meets Scarecrow

The course proved to be quite a challenge for us to put together, but we worked as a group recycling and re-purposing everyday items. In the process we discovered some hidden artistic talents, flower arranging skills, jig-sawing & creative expertise amongst our many volunteers, riders' parents and grandparents and produced our own interpretation of the course set out by RDA National. So, from beautifully painted cockerels and sheep, to some rather 'interesting' sheep and pig obstacles we set out a course that we hoped our riders would enjoy. The concept

was, in a small way, to introduce elements in a safe environment that could be encountered on a countryside ride, from the aforementioned animals to gates, arches, bridges and a maze. Our ponies, as always, just took it in their stride and soon worked out that they couldn't eat the artificial flowers and leaves!



Angus testing the bridge

The Boys During Lockdown



Bill poo picking!

Our boys really enjoyed their extended holiday during lockdown. They enjoyed their field time with each other which is a great way for them to bond as a herd.

JimBob, Angus and Bramble were our stars that came back to work first, for the brief spell whilst we were up and running under the stringent guidelines from RDA. They were very patient and adapted well to our strangely quiet environment under the new rules and reduced numbers of riders and people onsite. They were well behaved and helped to teach many of our parents and carers, some of who had very little or no horse knowledge, how to lead them safely around the school. Our boys really are very special.



JimBob & Bramble travelling to GPRDA



Bramble & JimBob sharing



Angus out in the snow



Bill & Angus



Field time for the boys

The Dentist Pays a Visit



Blue with the dentist

Just like us, horses need to have an annual visit from the dentist. This is very important as domesticated horses do not have such a rough diet as their wild friends, which means their teeth can become sharp and may cause discomfort.

Most of the boys were very well behaved, with Angus and Bill probably objecting the most! Horses do not like having to keep their mouth open, so a gag does the job for the dentist so that their back molars can be checked (see pictures of Bramble and Blue).

We are pleased to report they were all fine and are okay for another year. Which is good as often when horses get a bit older they have to have their teeth done every 6 months.



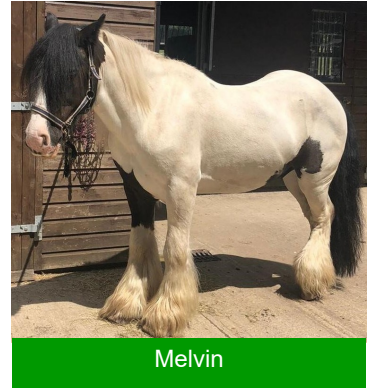
Bramble's turn!

Meet the New Boys!



Chunky

We are pleased to introduce you to 2 new horses that have joined GPRDA this summer, Chunky and Melvin. Chunky, to the left, is a 14.3 chestnut cob with flaxen mane and tail and is 13 years old. Melvin, to the right, is a 15.1 piebald cob and is 14 years old. They are currently learning about life at GPRDA and getting used to their new environment and making friends with the boys. Both boys have had a full check by the vet, the dentist, physio and the saddler, all very important when purchasing a new horse to ensure their wellbeing and happiness in their new home.



Melvin

Both boys are settling in well. Chunky has been working on his ground work and lungeing. His journey will be a little longer than Melvin's but he's doing well. Melvin has settled in well on the RDA yard and has started to ride out with the holiday rides and lessons to learn how things work.



Do I look handsome

We are asking for help to support Chunky and Melvin as they begin their RDA journey. Their initial assessments will cost in the region of £900 plus the costs of their saddles and bridles and their ongoing care. As everyone knows the last 18 months has been a challenging time and Covid has significantly impacted our rider income and restricted our fundraising events. All donations would be very gratefully received. www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/chunkyandmelvin



Exploring the arena

Countryside Challenge cont'd....

Centre Manager Louise says, "The countryside challenge provided a unique opportunity for our riders to work in partnership with their pony to successfully ride through all the different elements. It challenged all that they've been learning in their lessons: steering, control and remembering where to go! It allowed them to have fun while learning new skills and while completing each element they were left with a real feeling of achievement."

It was a fun challenge for those riders who were able to enter, and after much practise and an increase in confidence of riding more independently, seven riders completed the course, were filmed and their 'round' submitted to the Eastern Region of RDA for scrutiny by independent judges.

We were absolutely thrilled that Eden Hays had a First place in her dressage competition and that Judith Taylor and Stanley Franklin both did brilliantly in their respective dressage and countryside challenge competitions. All were amazing as this was the National Competitions. Huge congratulations to everyone who took part - superstars one and all.

Many of the elements can now be used anytime in lessons to enliven sessions – watch out for some new additions too!



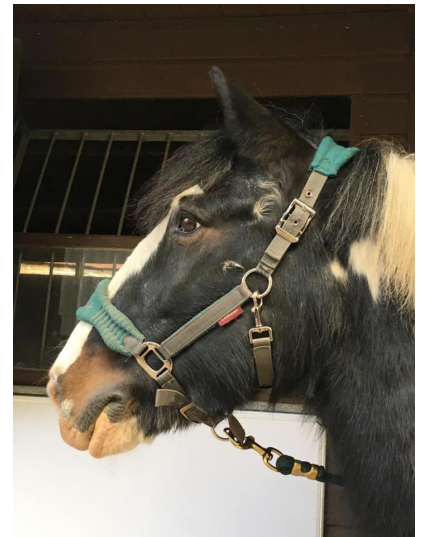
Our riders receive their Rosettes!

Farewell to a Friend

Sadly back in March this year we had to say goodbye to Jimbob. Jimbob was the gentle giant of the Gaddesden Place RDA team. He was the most kind-hearted, willing horse and it's no secret that he had a huge fan club including his riders, volunteers, instructors and anyone that met him.

He will forever be remembered for the amazing impact he had on his riders and for his role as an equine therapy horse. We have loved receiving all of the heartfelt messages from those who knew him, some of which are below.

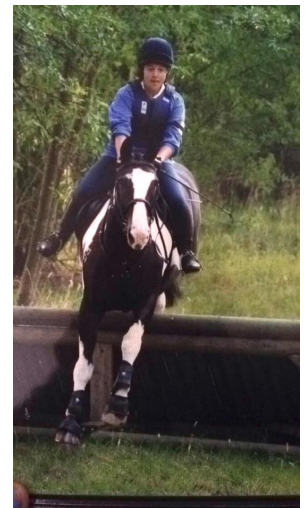
- ◆ *He gave so many of them (children) confidence and joy. He was the perfect Equine therapy horse and will be much missed.*
- ◆ *He was such a gentle soul.*
- ◆ *Dear Jimbob - such a gentle and loving horse. He has given so much to so many.*
- ◆ *Such a happy and loving horse.*
- ◆ *He will be very much missed.*
- ◆ *He will be a hard act to follow and one not to forget.*
- ◆ *Jimbob and I loved our hacking during lockdown, as long as he was in front mind you! He was a total gentleman and confidence giver and I feel very lucky to have been close to him this past year.*



Jimbob watching for his dinner



Jimbob grazing



Jimbob in younger days

Tea with a Pony

This is a new venture that is being introduced into some RDA centres countrywide through an initiative by RDA National and is being trialled as a pilot programme by us.

The basic premise is to invite people with dementia to come with a carer and meet a pony and interact in a manner that is comfortable for them. It is not a riding session; it is far more a quiet time to observe, stroke or groom a pony, have a cup of tea and a biscuit and simply enjoy the benefits of being around ponies.

We have started off small, as advised, and it has been a very rewarding experience to welcome people in who, as you can see from the photo, enjoy meeting and interacting with our patient ponies. Such a lovely time for all involved.



Bill making friends

Equine Sessions

We have also started small group sessions with groups of people with learning difficulties who have visited with carers from a Day Services group in Watford. These too are quiet, calm sessions interacting with the ponies at an individual's own comfort level.

We have been fortunate to have the benefit of a miniature horse, Novi, with his owner and volunteer Ann Ackerman join us. He has been a star, as have our boys, and happily stands whilst several people have been either side looking, patting and grooming. It is a pleasure to see the joy it gives and the confidence of our visitors increase in a relatively short space of time.



Novi meets our big boys

We hope that these new initiatives will continue and provide a great experience for more people in the future.

Hippotherapy



Hippotherapy session with Bill

It has been fantastic after much training and covid delays to be able to offer Hippotherapy within the great facilities at Gaddesden Place RDA. Hippotherapy is a type of therapy provided by registered Occupational, Physio or Speech and language therapists. The child's therapy goals are worked on using the horse's movement. The ponies have been specifically chosen and are proving brilliant at providing the desired movement experiences for the children. So far both Bramble and Bill have adjusted to the children using different positions to help meet their therapy needs. Although the children are on horseback, the aim is therapeutic rather than learning to ride. The different positions such as sitting sideways, facing backwards, lying or even crawl position challenge the children in different ways and offer the varied but beautifully rhythmical input, so valuable to sensory and motor learning.

A big thank you to the ponies and GPRDA team!

Jo Elliott

Specialist Paediatric Occupational Therapist, Hippotherapist and RDA Coach.

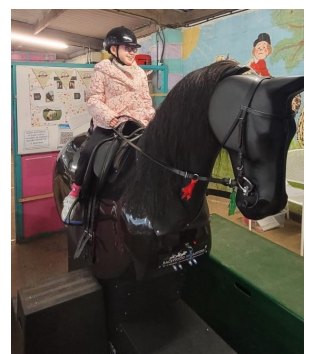
Champion in Action

We are pleased to report that all of our instructors have been training with Champion, our mechanical horse. Champion provides amazing physical therapy as his 'gait' is close to perfection. This means that the physical stimulus to the riders is intense and huge. The result is that everyone who has used Champion has made great progress in their posture and their riding position. Our instructors also use him to coach the correct position of the hands and legs.

The riders also enjoy the fun of the computer screen as they can visit the beach and take their horse into the sea; they can visit a farm, the zoo or the forest. This encourages them to sit up and to look forward.

Overall, Champion is an amazing horse, a huge benefit to all riders and a lot of fun. Ask your instructor about 'Having a Go' on Champion.

Another benefit is that he does not keep stopping to have a wee!



Lessons with Champion

Registered Charity Number 1140330



Your Calendar for 2022!

Due to popular demand, we have a lovely Calendar lined up for 2022!

Orders are now being taken and calendars can be collected from the yard or posted to you. £10 each

A perfect Christmas gift for all our supporters and your horse loving friends.
Contact Karen: karengosen@aol.com

Fundraising and Thanks

We were delighted that we could hold our Golf Day this year, which turned out to be a gloriously sunny day. It was also so good to see so many familiar faces at the Quiz Night, and volunteers helped us marshal the Gaddesden Estate Park and Ride days. Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to these events:

Golf Day	£7268.00
Quiz Night	£864.00
Estate Ride	£2281.50

We have also been fortunate to have received grants and donations that have helped us through these very challenging times, for which we are very grateful.

Dates for the Diary

Save the Date!

- 16th November @7p.m. via Zoom— AGM 2021.
For details please contact Karen: karengosen@aol.com
- Berkhamsted Rotary Santa Sleigh—9th December
- Hemel Hempstead Rotary Santa Sleigh—14th December

Term Dates

Due to the uncertainties involved with the impact of the barn conversion work, we are unable to give specific dates!

Keep a look out for emails about the possibility of a couple of weeks of riding before Christmas and also a January return date.

Contact Us

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