

# Redwings

## Horse Sanctuary



NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2022

### *Healing hands*

Meet our amazing vets!

### *Stars of the Sanctuary*

Here's what your adoption stars have been up to

### *PLUS*

### *Record breakers*

Another flying year for our rehoming team

### *And a special tribute...*

to two residents who touched all our hearts

*And much more inside...*





For many of us the words 'neglected horse' create an image in our head. John's needs were neglected but the effects on his health and behaviour were unlike many of the horses who begin a new life at Redwings, although they were equally as serious and every bit as harmful.

Turn to pages 18 & 19 to read how the complete transformation of John's life began on the first day he came into our care.\*

Please donate today:

- 01508 505246
- [www.redwings.org.uk](http://www.redwings.org.uk)
- Text JOHN 10 to 70480 to donate £10

(Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message, and you'll be opting into hearing more from us. If you would like to donate but don't wish to hear more from us, please text JOHNNINFO instead.)

\*Your donation will be used wherever it is needed most in the Sanctuary and will help to fund the ongoing care of all our residents, including those described here.

## Welcome to your Spring Newsletter for 2022

Although we have made it through 2021, these continue to be difficult times for us all. We are used to maintaining good biosecurity in order not to spread disease through our resident herds of course, as our strangles work demonstrates, and we know it can be done. However, during the human disease pandemic, we have had to learn to adapt, particularly in terms of how we work every day to keep our staff and supporters safe.

All our horses and donkeys are special, and we always try to make the most of their time with us. We were terribly sad to lose two particularly famous Sanctuary residents in 2021, the brave boy Phoenix whose intense but short life impacted hugely on the teams and our beloved blind giant, Boo, whose 12 years with us were an everyday treasure. This winter has been full of tears, but those two chaps truly epitomise why Redwings is here for horses in need. Read more about them on page 8.

Being a Sanctuary prepared to take in horses and donkeys who we know may be relying on us for many years, we always try to think long-term. We have grown in size over our 37 years, and we have measures in place regarding the environment and the impact of our work. Anyone who cares for horses knows the impact of climate change and we continue to keep a watch on what can be done to help in this ongoing crisis.

Talking of longevity, this newsletter features several people with a long history of commitment to Redwings. In December, one of our longest-serving Trustees, Ann Polley, retired after serving 23 years as Vice Chair until May 2018, when she stepped aside but remained as Trustee, and our current Chair (Mark Little) became Vice Chair. Throughout Ann's time on the Board, Redwings has benefited from her extensive knowledge and considered approach. We value her commitment and wish her well in her retirement.

The teams at Redwings have been innovative over the last few months in bringing our work and stories to supporters in new ways, including our new podcast series, Sounds of the Sanctuary, and adding TikTok to our social media platforms. Access to these is free and even those of us who know our work well still seem to always learn something new from the podcasts in particular!

Fundraising is vital to ensure our horse care and welfare commitment continue but we appreciate that financially life is increasingly tough for all, so heartfelt thanks for all the support you are able to give to our work. We are looking forward to 2022 and hope that you can visit us and see our work first-hand. Let's hope the weather is kind, particularly for Redwings Mountains which has been impacted by the storms over the winter period.

We are so grateful for your kind words and messages of support, all of which do make a positive difference. Please do read and enjoy this newsletter.

Very best wishes,

Lynn Cutress  
Chief Executive



## News update...



### A star turn in the rain!

On Sunday 19th December we made an appearance on ITV's Love Your Weekend programme with Alan Titchmarsh! Adoption Star Tinkerbell and her friend Miss Muffet from Redwings Ada Cole were accompanied by Hollie from the Ada Cole team and Jude from our Communications team, who along with rehomed pony

Redwings Puck and his Guardian Victoria did a wonderful job of sharing our work and the importance of rehoming our ponies...so we can rescue more! Despite atrocious weather the crew made our team very welcome, and Alan and Tinkerbell had such a lovely little 'moment' together in the rain that we have sent him an honorary adoption of Tinkerbell too!

### What an achievement!

Did you know? At our Hainford site north of Norwich we have two Russells! Both Russells help the team caring for the horses and at the end of 2021 both Russells celebrated 25 years of working at Redwings! Isn't that incredible? Thank you so much Russell and Russell for all your extraordinary hard work for all those years ❤️ We hope you enjoy your gifts.



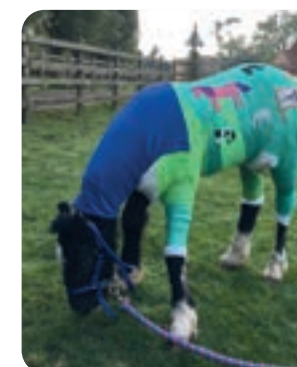
### Come and see us!

At the time of writing, following a couple of years of uncertainty during the Covid-19 pandemic, all our visitor centres are open. We have kept some of the changes that we introduced over the last 18 months, including asking visitors to book ahead if you can, and reducing opening at our smaller

centres to one weekend a month, plus private tours on selected days. Visit our website [redwings.org.uk/visit](http://redwings.org.uk/visit) to find out the latest details and book your tickets or see page 17 for a map of our centres.

### Our dear boy

Phoenix the foal was posthumously awarded the prestigious Horse & Hound magazine Pony of the Year Award at a ceremony in December, for which he was nominated and voted for by the public. Thank you to all those who voted and spread the word. We were very honoured to even be nominated for such a wonderful accolade, especially alongside the likes of Olympic gold medal winner Explosion W, and yet it was a bittersweet and emotional event as you can imagine. Turn to pages 4 & 5 and 8 to read more about this very special pony.



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### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Charity's purpose is to provide and promote the welfare, care and protection of horses, ponies, donkeys and mules.

### Key Contact Numbers

General Enquiries  
01508 481000 [info@redwings.co.uk](mailto:info@redwings.co.uk)

### Horse Care Advice and Welfare

01508 481008  
[welfare@redwings.co.uk](mailto:welfare@redwings.co.uk)

### Visitor Information

[www.redwings.org.uk](http://www.redwings.org.uk)

### Address for all correspondence

Redwings Horse Sanctuary  
Hapton, Norfolk NR15 1SP



# Redwings to the rescue!

News of our frontline work from around the UK



## Man jailed after 170 animals rescued



A man was jailed for 19 weeks in October and given a lifetime ban from keeping animals after 170 animals, including 131 horses, were found living in poor conditions on a Surrey farm in one of the UK's largest ever rescue operations.

Surrey Police executed a warrant at a farm in Ripley in January 2019 as part of an RSPCA-led investigation supported by a number of animal welfare organisations, including Redwings.

Rescuers discovered two starving ponies suffering from cyathostomiasis (a life-

threatening disease caused by a severe worm burden) in one pen and a goat collapsed in another. Sadly, all three animals were put to sleep at the scene on the advice of vets.

Huge herds of ponies, many more riddled with worms, were also found living out in fields with

hazardous metal and broken fencing sticking through mud, while inside two barns were pens with ponies, donkeys, goats and alpacas standing in 2-3ft of waste and faeces.

Dozens of dogs were also found tethered on the filthy yard, while others were inside cramped cages.

Redwings has been caring for some of the horses since the rescue. Some who arrived at

the Sanctuary were pregnant, and in the months following the rescue gave birth to three foals. Piebald cob Myra – who required foot trims, worming and treatment for leg mites – became a mum to little Gwendoline in April 2019.

Despite Myra's previous neglect, Gwendoline was born a healthy foal and continues to enjoy a happy life at Redwings.

Your regular monthly donations help ensure we are ready to rescue and care for horses like Myra. Thank you!



Two ponies rescued from the scene of a road accident that resulted in the death of a third pony are doing well in our care.

Mariah and Carey came into us on 11th January after the incident on the A11 in Suffolk the night before. Very sadly,

## Ponies getting tlc after tragic road accident

Carey's mum was killed after getting onto the road and being hit by a vehicle. Mariah and Carey were secured in a

neighbouring field by police and signed over to Redwings when their owners could not be identified.

Mariah, a mini Shetland, is aged around two years old, and Carey, a cob cross filly, is around six months old.

Julie Harding, Redwings Senior Field Officer, said: "These poor ponies were quite distressed, in particular the youngster who lost her mother in the accident. Naturally, after such an ordeal, she didn't want to leave her friend's side. They were both underweight and had lice and quite scabby skin which they're now being treated for. We named them after the lead police officer at the scene, who is called Mariah, and who we're grateful to. They are both doing really well and are very sweet."



## The fight to save Phoenix

A seven-week-old foal who suffered horrific burns as a result of an apparent arson attack arrived at Redwings in August.

The youngster, named Phoenix, had sustained a mix of first, second and third degree burns down one whole side of his body resulting in the loss of his foal mane and hair.

Phoenix was discovered by a passer-by on a roadside in Kent and taken to nearby Lingfield Equine Vets, where he received emergency care for two weeks before being transported to our Horse Hospital in Norfolk.

Over the next two months, Phoenix received around-the-clock intensive care – including daily bandage changes, which took up to two hours at time, and feeds every four hours.

His story captured the hearts of people from across the world, who sent in thousands of pounds in donations and gifts in support of his care.

Very sadly, despite all our best efforts, Phoenix passed away in October. **Turn to pages 8 and 9 to find out more about Phoenix's time at Redwings and the lasting legacy of this very special little pony.**

## Helping the ponies of Dartmoor

You may have seen in the news that in September an outbreak of strangles took hold in the pony herds on Dartmoor in Devon.

If you've supported Redwings for some time, you'll know that we've built up years of experience and knowledge in preventing and managing this highly infectious equine disease, so we joined the efforts to help bring the outbreak under control.

Our Head of Welfare and Behaviour, Nic de Brauwere, travelled to the stunning area to test and treat some of the ponies in a bid to detect those who were suffering or carrying the disease, and to provide biosecurity advice so annual pony sales in the area could still continue safely.

**Turn to pages 6 & 7 to discover more about our work on Dartmoor.**

## Pony's rescuer delighted with success!



Do you remember the story of Matty in the last edition of the newsletter?

This emaciated and abandoned foal, who was rescued eight years ago, has since been rehomed and became a star of the show ring!

Well, following the publication of his success in a Norfolk newspaper, the person who first found him and called Redwings for help has reached out to say how delighted she is at his progress.

Lin said: "My daughter and I noticed Matty. We could see he wasn't very old, and his coat was extremely matted. He didn't look comfortable, stamping and trying to scratch himself.

"He was such a sweet boy that he didn't mind us having a look over him – he really was in an awful state, very thin and crawling with lice and maggots. We couldn't leave him like that, so we contacted Redwings who thankfully came out and rescued him.

"Then recently I saw the Eastern Daily Press news article about him winning a rosette. I contacted his Guardian through Facebook as I was over the moon to see him looking so fantastic now due to her care and the amazing care and work of Redwings."

**If you have concerns for the welfare of a horse, you can contact our Welfare team by calling 01508 481008.**



Matty after with Guardian Sarah Prior



# Lots of scope for Dartmoor ponies

A widespread outbreak of the infectious disease strangles in ponies living on Dartmoor last year made for a particularly challenging welfare situation.

The Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust charity (DPHT) contacted Redwings as they faced the enormous challenge of containing and eliminating the disease from the 27 ponies in their care who had been badly affected by strangles. In October, Redwings vet and strangles expert Nic de Brauwere headed to Dartmoor to work with the DPHT, a local vet practice and staff from the nearby Mare and Foal Sanctuary to ensure all 27 ponies were checked with an endoscope, with samples being taken for testing. The importance of testing ponies as they recover from strangles was very clear, as many of the ponies now appeared healthy, but still had large quantities of pus in their respiratory system. Without remaining in quarantine and receiving treatment, these ponies could continue to spread strangles to other horses.

This collaborative project was seen as a turning point that helped turn a difficult situation into something much more positive. Not only are the DPHT ponies now completely strangles-free so that new owners can take them on with confidence, but local organisations and pony owners have more knowledge and confidence to help prevent or tackle outbreaks in the future. To find out more about the Dartmoor scoping project, listen to our special podcast episode on Redwings' YouTube channel or through your preferred podcast software.



## Strangles Awareness Week 2022



The third Strangles Awareness Week (SAW) is being organised in partnership with 12 other equine organisations, and will take place between 2nd and 8th May. It's already looking bigger and better than ever! Not only do we have further international interest from countries including Italy, Poland and Finland, but we're hoping that this

year people will be able to get together to share information and support in person as well as online. Sharing social media posts is the easiest way to get involved and spread the word as we work together to protect horses from a really nasty, and potentially life-threatening, illness.

To find out more and become a SAW Ambassador go to [www.redwings.org.uk/strangles/saw](http://www.redwings.org.uk/strangles/saw)

## Do you remember the first time?

Huge thanks to all supporters who took part in our My First Horse survey last autumn. We were absolutely delighted that almost 4,000 people took the time to share their own experience as a new horse owner or carer, whether that was one year ago or 50 years ago!

I completed the survey this afternoon. It did make me realize what a momentous decision it is to go from riding other people's horses to having your own. I was very lucky with my first horse, Punch, who was with me until he died, aged 27yrs in 2018. One of the questions was about what you might have done differently with hindsight. For me I would have chosen a smaller, more supportive yard like the one where I keep my present horse, rather than a large, competition venue/livery yard which was close to home. It will be very interesting to see the results of the survey.

The survey will help Redwings understand more about when, how and why people make the decision to move from riding lessons or helping look after a friend's horse, to taking responsibility for their own. These insights will help us develop ways of helping people decide if and when caring for a horse is right for them and to support them at this exciting but often daunting time. With so much data to explore it will take time to fully analyse the survey responses. But at first glance, there are already some fascinating insights:

- More than half of those who completed the survey took on their first horse before they turned 16
- Almost two-thirds of people did not come from a horse owning or riding family
- Over 80% had learnt to ride at a riding school and almost 60% gained most of their horse care experience from helping out at their local riding stables
- Less than 30% had their horse vetted when they took them on
- More than 40% rated their relationship with their first horse as 10 out of 10
- First horses were more likely to be rehomed elsewhere because of a behavioural issue than a veterinary issue.

We look forward to bringing you more news on the survey results later in the year!



# Tiny worms, BIG problems!



In 2021 we added a new 'Field Notes' to our series of practical guides for horse owners. The latest edition is ***Tiny worms: BIG problems*** which shares up-to-date guidance on worming horses.

Worms are one of the most common welfare issues we see in new horses at Redwings, and is sadly sometimes a reason we cannot save the

change from worming routinely every few weeks, which was standard practice in the past, but which we now know encourages resistance.

Every horse owner has a part to play, and we'll be promoting our new Field Notes widely this year to help people make the switch from routine worming to testing if they haven't already done so. Otherwise, de-worming drugs will become less and less effective, creating an increasingly serious health risk to all horses.

To download ***Tiny worms: BIG problems*** go to [www.redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/wising-about-worms](http://www.redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/wising-about-worms), scan the QR code (right) or email [campaigns@redwings.co.uk](mailto:campaigns@redwings.co.uk) to request a copy in print.



life of a recent rescue. Any horse can have worms, however well-looked after they are, and keeping these parasites in check is an essential part of routine care.

To control worms, we all rely on a small number of de-worming drugs. Unfortunately, there is a growing population of worms that are resistant to the drugs, meaning they survive the de-worming process. Researchers have not yet developed new de-worming drugs, so we need to prolong the effectiveness of current products for as long as possible.

The good news is that we can slow the rate of resistance by worming horses less often while still keeping horses healthy. A simple test tells us if a horse needs worming or not, so we only use a drug if it's needed. In many cases, worming isn't necessary, which is cheaper too! Regular testing is a big





# Forever in our hearts...



In August 2021 a tiny foal arrived off the lorry at our Hapton HQ covered in bandages and with his favourite teddy bear by his side. Little did we know this little pony would break our hearts in a hundred different ways.

**N**ot only was he one of the sickest ponies we have ever cared for, Phoenix also turned out to be one of the sweetest. He absolutely loved being cared for by our staff, especially his milk drinks which he liked to spray everywhere or dribble down their backs as he gave them a cuddle. He also adored his foster mum Mildred, even though she wasn't so sure at first because he definitely didn't look - or smell - like a normal foal! Soon enough, however, she had accepted him as her own and he loved nothing better than to go out into the paddock near our hospital with her for some fresh air, kicking up his heels and looking for all the world like your average foal. He was friendly and so trusting despite all the cruelty he had already been through in his short life. But beneath the team's incredibly bright and cheerful bandage designs, Phoenix's burns were far, far worse than we first thought.

He had suffered extensive second and in some cases third degree burns across most of the left side of his body and as we took more and more advice from wound care and burns experts (horse and human too) it became clear that without further intervention his skin simply would never heal. This would mean he would never be able to have any kind of quality of life and would be living in bandages or having to be kept inside for the rest of his life.

The only option for him was to try a complicated skin graft operation and we brought over a specialist surgeon from the Netherlands to do the work. Phoenix never recovered from the general anaesthetic and October 19th will forever be etched in our history as one of the very saddest days. Phoenix really did epitomise everything we try to do at Redwings, with our vets and care teams going far beyond the extra mile and pulling out all the stops to give every horse the best possible chance. They all absolutely adored this little pony who has left his hoofprints on all our hearts.

I doubt there has ever been a foal in the world who received more love than Phoenix



Phoenix touched the hearts of so many. Thank you for the work you do and the heartbreak you endure to give a voice to the voiceless

If love could have saved him alone he would have lived forever



Like the thousands of supporters and the staff at Redwings I am heartbroken. The wonderful photo of him with Blind Boo will stay with me for a long, long time... I'm still thinking of ways of raising funds

I hope his legacy will be helping others in need. He knew love, what a gift that is



You should be so proud of your team, you gave him a chance when so many wouldn't have tried

and all the fuss he could want. Very sadly, just before Christmas, Boo began suffering with lameness in his front legs and our vets could not get to the bottom of what was causing it. This severe lameness combined with existing arthritis in his back legs meant he was in a lot of discomfort, and we were at the limit of the pain medication we could give him. Our vets had no choice but to make the decision to put Boo to sleep to ensure he did not suffer. It is testimony that when the time came there was a queue of staff waiting outside his stable to give him a belly scratch, showing just how much he was loved for so long and by so many.

Thank you to you all for making it possible for us to give both these horses a fighting chance. You have sent so many incredibly kind donations and messages throughout the highs and lows of the past few months and we are so grateful for all your support. Here are just some of the messages we received in tribute, and some pictures of these two very special boys who will never be forgotten.

**I**n the same way, it's fitting that we also pay tribute here to our gentle giant, Boo the blind Clydesdale, who sadly passed away just before Christmas.

Boo was the opposite of Phoenix in so many ways. He was huge for a start, more than double the height of Phoenix, and unlike Phoenix, of course, Boo lived to the ripe age of 24. Nevertheless, their stories resonate profoundly. Boo was subject to an act of unbelievable cruelty when he was shot in the eye and blinded and yet he was also one of the kindest horses you could ever wish to meet. Despite his condition, Boo lived out the life at Redwings that we hoped Phoenix could have had too, more than 12 years spent happily in a field with a dear friend for company

R.I.P. Phoenix & Boo X



# Healing hands

In our latest Sanctuary Stars feature, we take a look at the incredible skills and dedication of our vets, who give horses in need the chance to enjoy the happy new lives they deserve.

## Did you know we don't just have one vet team – we have two?!

At Redwings, we employ our own highly-skilled vets. As we care for 1,500 rescued horses and donkeys every day, we need to ensure we are always ready to spring into action - whatever the hour - whenever any of our four-legged residents needs veterinary attention! In fact, we employ two vet teams; welfare vets and sanctuary vets.

### Welfare vet team

Our welfare vet team plays an integral role in our frontline rescue work. They will often accompany our Senior Field Officers to sites following reports of concern from the public to assess the horses they find and help educate owners on improving the welfare of their animals.

Animals can only legally be removed from a site by the police or a local authority upon the advice of a vet, so our team's expertise in determining a horse's condition and whether they are suffering or are likely to suffer if left in their present situation is vital. Their skills are also often called upon by organisations like the RSPCA, when they conduct large-scale rescues.

Most new arrivals to the Sanctuary first stay at our Reception Centre where our welfare vets will run further health tests and determine whether they're suffering from or carrying any

infectious diseases.

Once quarantine is complete, our welfare vets then continue to take responsibility for the veterinary care of any horses who require the support of our Behaviour Centre, while those who are able to join herds in other parts of the Sanctuary will be signed over into the care of our sanctuary vets.



### Sanctuary vet team

Our sanctuary vets are based out of our Horse Hospital at our headquarters in Norfolk. They take responsibility for the health

of our permanent herds across the region, which equates to about 1,200 horses, donkeys and mules, while the veterinary needs of those horses living outside of Norfolk are overseen by external vets. However, our sanctuary vets continue to take the lead in any care decisions. You might be surprised to know that our Horse Hospital is equipped with facilities often only seen at specialist referral practices. With your support,

our vets are able to assess and treat almost any injury or ailment thanks to a large treatment room, intensive care stables and specialist care paddocks, an X-ray room, pharmacy and operating theatre with specially-built recovery room.

Our veterinary surgeons are also on call throughout the night in case they need to examine and treat a horse who falls seriously ill in the small hours, or even to perform emergency surgery. For those horses requiring really specialist treatment, the team has fostered fantastic links with some of the country's top equine referral facilities such as Rosssdales in Newmarket, and other external experts such as wound management specialist Georgie Hollis who provided invaluable guidance when we cared for Phoenix (read more on page 8). In fact, it was precisely because of our reputation for excellence and extensive links within the sector that the vets who first provided Phoenix with emergency care asked us if we could take him in.



# Meet some of our vets



### Nicola Jarvis

Head of Veterinary Services who leads our Sanctuary vet team

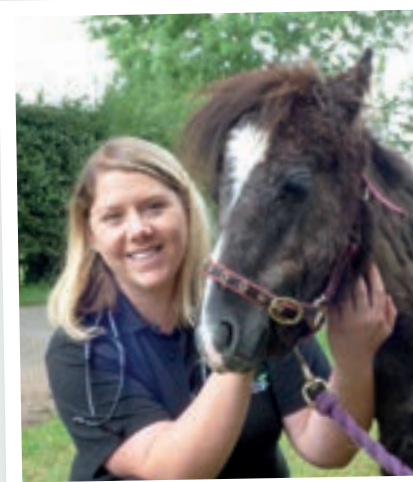
Although I've always thought horses were amazingly beautiful, I'm not horsey at all! When I first qualified 31 years ago I wanted to be a small animal surgeon. An equine vet friend helped me to see you didn't have to be an equestrian or wear a Barbour jacket to work with horses, so one year later I became a large animal vet at a practice in Norfolk. After two years at Rosssdales, I started some temporary ('locum') work at Redwings. That was 25 years ago, and I can honestly say I couldn't hope to work with a better team than I do today. I'm surrounded by such talented and dedicated people - and usually a lot of cake!

### Dawn Trayhorn Sanctuary vet

I always wanted to work with horses. It sounds very cliché I know, but I was lucky enough to grow up around horses in my formative years and I loved it! After graduating, my first job was in mixed practice in Suffolk, where I stayed for two years. I was then fortunate enough to get a job as a veterinary surgeon at Redwings, and I have now been here for 17 years. I am so lucky to be able to have horsey snuggles every day. I love the team that I work with, they are so supportive and hard-working. It is such a varied job and very rewarding - I feel very proud of the work that we do here.

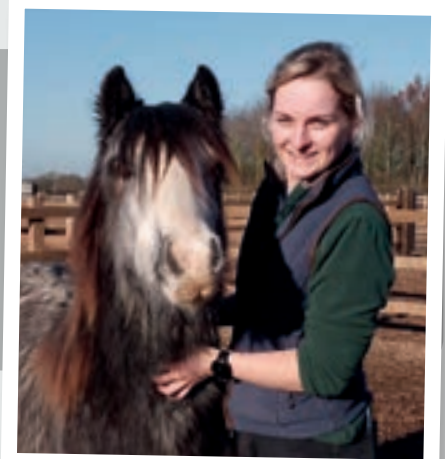
### Emma Winward Sanctuary vet

I joined the Redwings vet team last summer after spending a couple of years in mixed practice. I first met the team whilst working in private practice through a cute little pony called Ginny who became unwell in her Guardian home. After seeing the incredible work the team do here, I knew I had to join them when the opportunity arose. I spend a lot of my time doing dental work, lameness investigations and making sure all my in-patients get extra grooms and cuddles.



### Nicola Berryman Welfare vet

I came to Redwings 10 years ago straight from university, during which I had spent time as a student at a practice who regularly saw welfare cases. Dolly the cob was my first experience of a welfare case and was the reason I applied to work at Redwings. She was emaciated, unable to stand and covered in sores. I helped the nurses lift her and dress her wounds daily - seeing her transformation was inspirational. When I saw the ad, I knew I had to work for Redwings! I really enjoy being able to provide treatment for horses with behavioural issues and seeing their progress. My main area of interest is how I can use my clinical skills and knowledge to assist owners and horses who may not otherwise access regular vet care. Education is the key to making a positive impact on welfare.



### Chloe Jefferd Welfare vet

I joined the Redwings team last summer as a welfare vet, having just graduated from university. I have absolutely loved my time at Redwings so far and can't believe how quickly the time has gone since I started! Everyone has been so welcoming and it's been incredible getting to know all the ponies, horses, donkeys and mules that we work with. One highlight from the past few months was being given the opportunity to help train the 'Pasta ponies' with our Behaviour team, which has not only been a great learning experience but also lots of fun as well!



# A record-breaking year for Redwings rehoming

Last year we achieved another record-breaking year for our Guardianship rehoming scheme, with more rescued horses and ponies than ever finding new loving homes outside the Sanctuary.

In fact, in 2021 we rehomed 130 ponies to new Guardians, up over 50% on 2020's total of 84. We also offered a safe home to 132 rescued horses and donkeys in need of our care and veterinary expertise, meaning that for the first time we almost reached a point of rehoming one horse or pony for every horse taken into Redwings. This was one of the main objectives we hoped to achieve by investing in additional rehoming facilities in Norfolk and Warwickshire over the past two years.

Rachel Angell, Head of Norfolk Equine Operations, who heads up our rehoming scheme, said: "As the Sanctuary has been operating at capacity for many years, this milestone is an important one, and shows that one of the most important ways Redwings can continue to help more horses in need is to try to make space through rehoming. Despite the challenges we continue to face with rehoming in the pandemic, our team are doing a fantastic job of finding long-term, loving homes for our rescued horses."



Maverick and Galena (in stables) meeting their new friends

and are helping with grooming and interactive sessions for children.

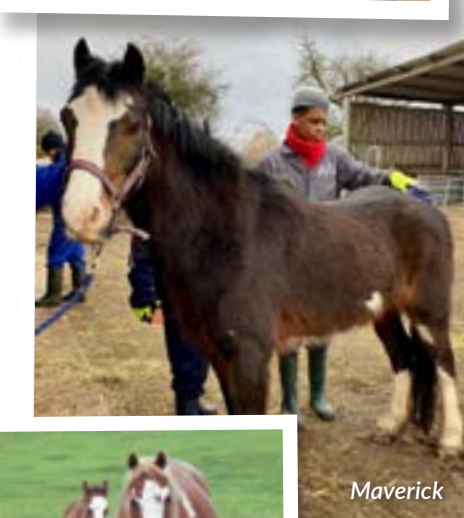
Native pony Galena was one of 35 ponies rescued by Redwings from a site in Norfolk in 2009.

Many were emaciated, and were being kept in unsuitable conditions, on waterlogged land, with no grazing and surrounded by broken machinery and other hazards.

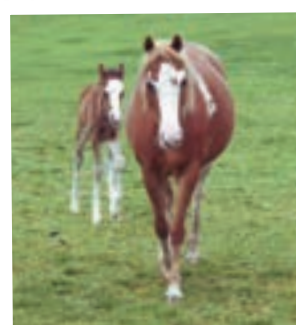
Meanwhile, Welsh cross Maverick was born at the Sanctuary in 2008

after his mum and five other horses were rescued from a site in London. They had been turned-out on pasture without the landowner's consent and were starting to suffer from lameness and poor body condition due to a lack of care.

Stevie Edge-McKee, Farm School Manager, said: "At Wick Court we offer children from urban areas the chance to experience farm life. Our ponies are especially important as their sessions help to promote wellbeing and a connection with animals, and the children often bond especially with them."



Maverick



Maverick with his mum Splash

## City slickers

Redwings Maverick and Galena have been rehomed to a very special home, helping children discover their love for animals. The friends were rehomed to Wick Court, a farm run by the charity Farms for City Children in Gloucester - co-founded by Michael Morpurgo, the famed author of War Horse. Rehomed in October, the pair have been settling into their new home,

With thanks to Farms for City Children

## Two very special ponies find a happy home together



In October 2021, we were delighted to wave off Redwings Anne and Redwings Rubic to their new home.

Anne and Rubic had been rehomed previously in a Guardian home together,

but through no fault of their own had to be returned to Redwings. As they were such close friends, we hoped we might be able to find another home for them together - and we turned to our wonderful followers on our social media pages to help!

Now settled in their new home, their Guardian Moira was delighted to tell us: "They really are the perfect ponies.

They fitted in so well from the moment they came off the lorry and they are just so calm and well mannered.

"Anne is the sweetest mare and just wants to make sure everybody is okay. She likes

to keep an eye on our two young miniature Shetlands who live in the field next door. Meanwhile, Rubic is our resident clown and likes to make you laugh. He seems to think following you when you are poo picking, putting his head over your shoulder and sticking his nose in your ear is great fun!

"They both come trotting over when you go into their field and love getting lots of scratches.

We really have been very lucky and couldn't have wished for a better pair of ponies."



## Remembering Redwings Noel

We wanted to pay tribute to a very special pony who, throughout his lifetime, championed the cause of rehoming rescued horses. Redwings Noel, rehomed to his Guardian Hayley Ward 20 years ago, enjoyed incredible showing and showjumping success before he sadly passed away in November, aged 25 years old.

Noel, a Welsh cross Arab, was originally rescued in 1998 by Ada Cole Memorial Stables (as it was known before merging with Redwings in 2005) alongside his companion Mistletoe. The pair had been left to fend for themselves while their owner was in prison. They were both underweight, infested with lice, and Noel had a significant worm burden.

Throughout their time together, Noel and Hayley won countless rosettes and trophies and were Supreme Champions of the Kimpton Horse Show in Hertfordshire a record-breaking three times!

Hayley said: "When Noel arrived, we just clicked, and he was a superstar ever since. He was an absolute cheeky monkey but was just cracking and won so much for me! Our successes always meant so much to us but were always even more of an achievement because of Noel's background. Everyone knew he was a Redwings pony, and he would

always be included in publicity - flying the flag for rescued horses - which always made it extra special."



## The next steps for Mildred

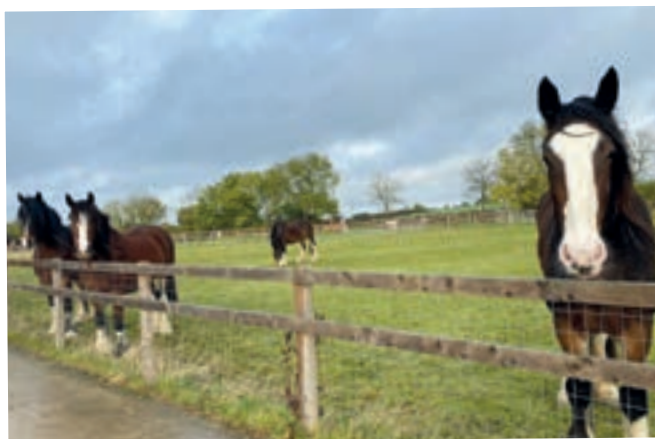
Lovely Mildred, Phoenix's foster mum, is embarking on her next steps here at Redwings. Throughout her time by Phoenix's side, Mildred's kind and friendly personality shone through to our veterinary team, and they thought she would thrive in a Guardian home of her own, where she can enjoy being thoroughly fussed and loved. So, she has spent time with our Rehoming Team at our Hapton Headquarters going through our rehoming training and preparing her for a new home outside of the Sanctuary as a non-ridden companion pony. Good luck Mildred - we can't wait to see what happens next!



# Tall (and small!) stories!

If you sponsor one of our Adoption Star horses or donkeys, you'll know from their online diaries that they get up to all sorts of antics and adventures at the Sanctuary!

Here's an update on what just some of our Stars have been up to recently – and they just happen to be the largest and smallest rescued residents on our Adoption Scheme!



## Two new giants arrive in Warwick 'Shire'

**A**doption Star Lady has been a large part of the furniture at Redwings Oxhill since 2019. Her story began in 2017 when Redwings received a call from a landowner reporting that 19 abandoned Shire horses were fly-grazing on his land near Kidderminster. Sadly no one came forward to claim ownership of the horses, so a rescue of sizeable proportions got underway!

Redwings joined forces with the RSPCA and other equine welfare charities to round up and remove the Shires from the

site, and six of the horses were offered a home at Redwings. From the beginning, it was clear Lady was a special mare. Her gentle nature and love of human affection made her an obvious choice to be an Adoption Star – and of course, her stunning looks helped too!

But Lady's story doesn't end there; the recent arrival of two Shire horses to Redwings Oxhill has started a whole new chapter. The new horses are named Papillon and Peacock, and the fact that this group are all named after butterflies

is not coincidental. Holly Blue, Lady and Peacock were all rescued together in 2017 and Papillon was born at Redwings shortly after. Excitingly, Peacock and Lady have far more in common than butterflies – they are mother and daughter!

After a successful reintroduction by the fantastic Oxhill team, the four Shires are living happily together – and they are certainly making a big impression on everyone who meets them!

Shires Lady, Holly Blue, Peacock and Papillon

## Life was not a 'Patch' without Aleia and Aurora

**W**hen Patch from "The Gangsters" at Redwings Aylsham visited our Horse Hospital last summer, nobody knew that a story of Shetland affection was about to unfold. It began when Patch showed signs of lameness which required investigating so he was taken to the Horse Hospital at Redwings HQ. Patch was placed in the company of Aleia and Aurora – two miniature Shetland ponies – who gave him the very warmest of welcomes!

In the weeks that followed, the bond between the three Shetlands became unbreakable and, while Patch's lameness had been addressed, an entirely new

question had presented itself! How could Patch go back to The Gangsters at Redwings Aylsham without his beloved Aleia and Aurora?

Fortunately for the three amigos, the Redwings vet team had noticed the strong connection and they set about organising for them to return to Aylsham together. The five remaining Gangsters

were introduced to Aleia, Aurora and Patch via a neighbouring paddock – just to give both parties a chance to get to know one another. And when positive signs of neighbourly love were observed, the two herds joined together and Shetland Shenanigans commenced – Gangster-style!



## Spot the Adoption Star!

**D**id you see our latest animation voiced by Stephen Fry? The short film goes back to the beginnings of Redwings in 1984 and how the Sanctuary has transformed into a national charity caring for more than 1,500 rescued horses, donkeys and mules every day. It shares the rescue and rehabilitation stories of some of Redwings' adorable residents, including a few of our



Adoption Stars! So far, it has been viewed by over 150,000 people through our social media channels!

If you haven't watched it yet – don't worry! You can still watch it via our website by visiting [www.redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/christmas-animation-2021](http://www.redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/christmas-animation-2021) or scan the QR code with your smartphone (right)



## Adopt a rescued horse with a Direct Debit

**D**id you know that you can now purchase or renew your adoption, as well as make a regular gift to Redwings, via Direct Debit? Donating by Direct Debit is quick and easy and, by choosing our automatic renewal option, you will never have to worry about not hearing your Adoption Star's latest news or your friendship lapsing. Paying by Direct Debit also helps Redwings save on administrative costs, which means that your adoption or donation can go even further towards helping the 1,500 residents at the Sanctuary.

Just visit [www.redwings.org.uk/adopt/make-a-new-friend](http://www.redwings.org.uk/adopt/make-a-new-friend) to find out more. Thank you!







## Immerse yourself in life at Redwings!

In the Autumn of last year, we launched the Sounds of the Sanctuary podcast\*, a series of 10 episodes based around life here at Redwings. It turned out better than we ever could have hoped, in fact, it's been downloaded more than 1,500 times already! Hosted by Steph, Jennie and Jude from our communications team, we interview a huge array of members of staff from across the sanctuary. There are two Sarahs who talk about our rehoming and behaviour work, lots of equally super people called Holly/Hollie who help care for the horses, and even more super people called Nicola, Nic and Nicky who all work in our vet team (Yes, we all have the same name, it makes life easier!).

But the real stars are our gorgeous horses and donkeys of course, as our hosts get out and about around the Sanctuary and find out more about some of our very special residents, including Esther the donkey and Matty the pony to name just two.

There's a 'sister podcast' too, which we call Field Notes. In each episode we delve a bit deeper into an area of our work, from biosecurity and behaviour to rescue and rehoming.

*What are you waiting for? Have a listen today!*

\*Don't know what a podcast is and too afraid to ask? It's simply a way of getting a free audio programme, like an audio book, which is delivered directly to your phone, tablet, computer or other listening device. There are podcasts out there on every subject you can think of! Try googling 'podcast on cycling' or 'podcast about stamp collecting' and you'll see what we mean.

All you need to do to listen is search for a subject or the name of the podcast on your web browser – e.g. 'Sounds of the Sanctuary podcast'. You can listen right there through your computer, or use something like Spotify or the Apple or Google podcasts app on your smartphone. Or just scan this QR code\*\* with your smartphone camera to get started!

**If you hit subscribe, then every time we upload a new episode you'll receive a notification – easy!**



## Join the herd

Give us a follow on social media and you'll be joining a herd of more than 200,000 people (otherwise known as our #RedwingsAngels) who keep up to date with us through Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and now TikTok! Pick your favourite or join us on every channel if you like! We share regular news and updates from across the Sanctuary, pictures and videos of the residents, of course plus all sorts of other fun, games and general silliness!

You can also sign up to our e-newsletter by visiting our website and scrolling to the bottom of the page [www.redwings.org.uk](http://www.redwings.org.uk)

\*\*We've dotted QR codes throughout this newsletter. They look complicated but all you need to do is turn on your smartphone camera and hover it over the code and it should take you to the relevant web link to read extra content, watch videos or listen to our podcast. Don't worry though, all the essentials are right here in print, so you won't miss anything important if you don't.



Kate Ford from Coronation Street meets Wacko



Retired Adoption Star Del Boy with his adoring fans



Merlin and Arya enjoying their carrot rope toy



Meeting Wiggins and Wacko at Redwings Aylsham



Donkey kisses!



Meeting Timothy at Oxhill

## Come and visit



We have visitor centres in **Norfolk, Essex, Warwickshire and Scotland** where you can come and see first-hand how your kind donations are used, and meet some of our very special rescued residents of course. At the moment, each centre is operating on an individual basis in terms of hours and bookings so please check our website or phone us on **01508 505246** for the latest details and before you travel, as of course we are still hoping there won't be any further Covid related restrictions!

	Ada Cole	Essex, EN9 2DH
	Aylsham	North Norfolk, NR11 6UE
	Caldecott	Gt. Yarmouth, NR31 9EY
	Mountains	Scotland, DD8 3SQ
	Oxhill	Warwickshire, CV35 0RP



## Have a clear out!

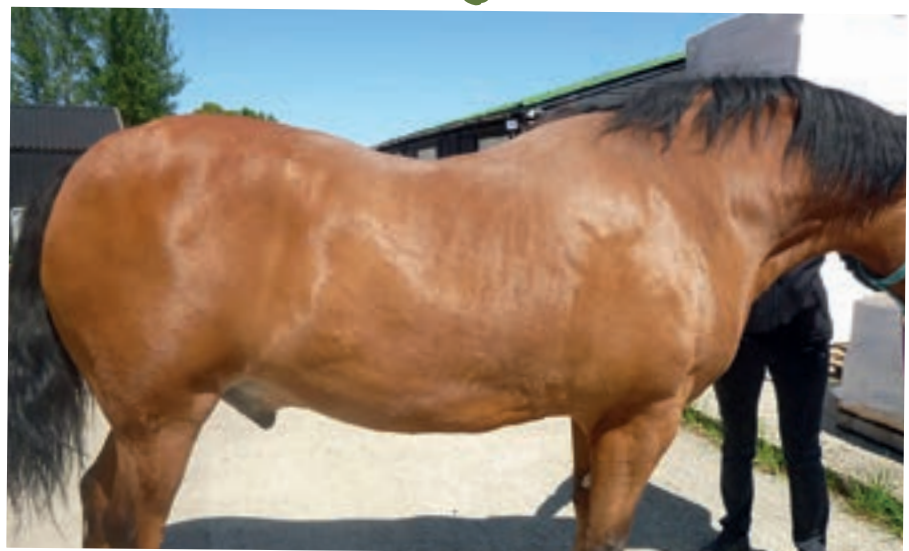
**Are you planning a Spring de-clutter?! If so, we would love to hear from you!**

We are looking for donations of homewares, gifts, collectables, toys & games, horse rugs and tack (in clean useable condition please) to stock our pre-loved shops, especially at Mountains and Ada Cole and to sell on our eBay channel. It's a wonderful way to help us raise funds without breaking the bank! We also accept used stamps so if you have a stock from your Christmas card haul, we would be delighted if you could pop them in the post to us at Redwings, Hapton, NR15 1SP.

**Please note: Our super revamped preloved shop at Mountains will be open to visitors on Fridays and Mondays and alternate weekends but please note that due to major storm damage received at the end of 2021 the rest of the site will only be accepting private booked visits until April.**



# What neglect can look like



John before

## The risks John faced

John was described by a vet as 'grossly overweight' when he was rescued in May 2020. The eleven-year-old was just over 15 hands high yet weighed 612kg and his body condition was 5 on a 0-5 scale where 0 is emaciated and 5 is obese. John was also suffering the effects of a hoof condition called laminitis, which causes a lot of pain inside the hooves and is a particular risk for overweight horses. That pain was made worse by the additional pressure placed on his feet caused by his excessive bodyweight.

## Life changes from day one

When he arrived at Redwings, the team carefully planned a weight loss programme and treatment for his laminitis. The veterinary and horse care teams put plans into action, such as soaking hay to reduce its calorie content and putting it in a small-holed haynet, to make John's meals last longer. His carefully calculated daily ration was split into lots of small meals and given throughout the day and night, to make sure he never went for long without food, which was important for his digestive and mental health.

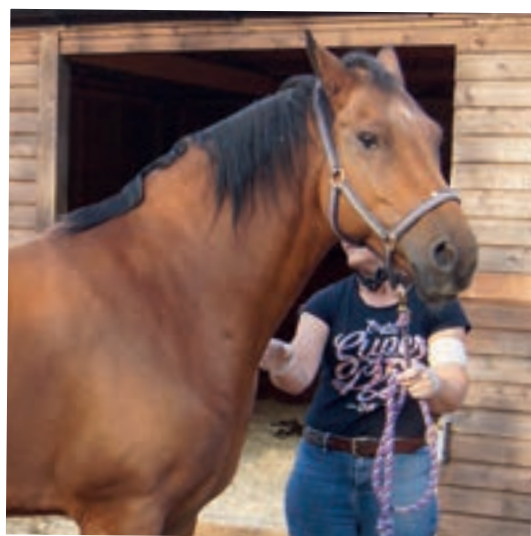
At first, John needed to spend time in a stable to help him fully recover from the laminitis. He was given pain relief and a deep, comfy bed to support his feet. When he was feeling better, John was able to be turned out on one of our special all-weather woodchip paddocks with a shelter. This gave him space to exercise freely but without letting him eat rich grass which could have triggered his laminitis again and made it harder for him to lose weight.

“John wasn't bothered by the other horses and only seemed to associate interacting with people solely in terms of being fed. Generally, he wasn't a particularly happy horse in those days. Not only had he had to cope with being laminitic, which can be very uncomfortable, but he didn't like to be touched at all. Whenever we tried to give him a scratch to say 'hello' it just seemed to make him more unhappy.”

Teresa, Reception Centre Team Leader

To meet John today, you would never guess what his life was like before he came into our care. The skills and experience of the Redwings team are called on every day, to help neglected horses recover their physical or mental health.

Rehabilitating John required a dedicated effort, but his background was very different to many horses that come to live at Redwings.



Although he made use of the opportunity to exercise, he showed little interest in the horses in neighbouring paddocks.



## A horse transformed

Over 14 months the dedication of those caring for John helped him to lose a remarkable 167kg, more than a quarter of his original body weight. Luke looks after John on a regular basis today at one of our Sanctuary sites and has seen how weight loss has helped transform John's behaviour.

The laminitis that caused John so much pain has now been brought under control thanks to a carefully monitored diet. His front feet are now shod, to support the delicate structures in his hooves. John will need to be carefully managed from now on to keep him trim, and to reduce the risk of him suffering from laminitis again. Thankfully our teams have lots of experience in monitoring and looking after horses like John, so he will be able to enjoy sanctuary life with his new friends – horse and human – in a way that allows him to be both healthy and happy.

“John spends a lot of his day with his best friend, Garde. They are currently being turned out on woodchip paddock and can be quite playful. It's good to see because John wasn't used to any type of herd environment and it shows just how much happier he is these days, both with other horses and with people.”

Luke, Equine Centre Team Leader

## A new future in front of John

The life that John can go on to lead in Redwings' care will be very different to the one that he was rescued from. Teresa saw the physical and behavioural changes in John, over those 14 months.

“I was not the only member of the team who was sad to see John leave. The people who he was indifferent towards had become his friends and John had learned that a nice scratch of his withers was a lovely reward for his good behaviour, which was just as gratifying as food. Learning a routine and some boundaries have made John a much happier horse and now that he is being well cared for, one with a healthier future.”



John and Garde

Please donate today  
and help neglected horses like John enjoy  
the benefits of a healthy future once more.

- 01508 505246 • [www.redwings.org.uk](http://www.redwings.org.uk)
- Text JOHN 10 to 70480 to donate £10

(Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message, and you'll be opting into hearing more from us. If you would like to donate but don't wish to hear more from us, please text JOHNNINFO instead.)

\*Your donation will be used wherever it is needed most in the Sanctuary and will help to fund the ongoing care of all our residents, including those described here.





# A pledge for the future of the horses in our care

**W**e hope that you have been uplifted and inspired by the stories of those horses, ponies and donkeys whose lives have been changed by our care in this edition of our newsletter. You, our remarkable supporters, inspire us every day. Thank you all.

As we look to the future, it is special gifts from people like you that will ensure our Sanctuary is a safe and caring place for rescued horses and donkeys for many years to come. We know that you may be thinking about your own future and providing for loved ones. When you do, please consider the causes you care about and leaving a gift in your Will to Redwings.

## Gifts in Wills have had a massive impact on the lives of horses and donkeys in our care.

The gifts left to Redwings by supporters meant we could open a new centre, Redwings Aylsham, providing a home for rescued horses. People who have remembered Redwings made the development of our horse hospital possible, enabling our in-house veterinary team to perform life-saving procedures.

## The care that Redwings gives today and every day simply would not be possible without the generous support of people who have remembered us in their Will.

If you are thinking about leaving a legacy to Redwings, we can provide information and advice to help you. Katie, our Legacy Officer, can answer your questions and discuss the options open to you. **To find out more about the difference you can make by leaving a gift in your Will to Redwings, please contact our Legacy Officer, Katie, on 01508 481030 or email [legacies@redwings.co.uk](mailto:legacies@redwings.co.uk)**

## *I would walk 500 miles...*

**A**nimal-lover Isabel was so inspired by the Shetland ponies she met during a visit to Redwings Oxhill in Warwickshire that she wanted to do something to help raise funds for the Sanctuary. After discussing it with her dad, Richard, they came up with the amazing idea to walk around the Shetland Islands!

The isle itself is quite long so they decided to walk in circular routes on parts of the island as this would make the walks more scenic and enable them to hopefully spot some of the resident Shetland ponies that inhabit the island too!

With the help of their good friend David, who was designated van driver as well as a fellow walker, Izzy and her dad walked 10 miles a day for 10 consecutive days and completed their amazing fundraising challenge on Izzy's 11th birthday! What an achievement!

Izzy's incredible fundraising adventure has raised over £2000 for the Sanctuary and we're so proud of her. Thank you so much Izzy (and Richard and David too!)

