



Whinney Hill Farm, Lancashire – Home of BTRC †



As 2023 comes to a close we are taking a moment to look back on the year. We started the year on a high by recommencing our Vulnerable Horse Programme after it had been suspended for 6 months due to funding issues. We have also been working with the racing industry and in August we embarked on a MOU with the Retraining of Racehorses (RoR) which saw both charities re-connect to support vulnerable horses through rehabilitation and retraining, in order to find them the perfect new loving home (page 5 and 6).

2023 has also been the year of new initiatives as we work to secure a sustainable future for BTRC. Our newly established CIC, Whinney Hill Farm, has enabled us to open up our wonderful property for the benefit of humans as well as equines and through this we have started a new campsite, welcomed new community visitors and facilitated the 'Armed Forces Week' Volunteering Day. You can find out more about Whinney Hill Farm CIC on page 13. If you are looking for a campsite in Lancashire that has a real 'back to nature' feel, please consider staying with us in the New Year.

Our Spelling Station has proven popular, especially with the new addition of rehabilitation and retraining services. If you know of someone struggling to retrain their horse or who would like to take advantage of one of our assessment days then please ask them to get in touch and we would be delighted to help.

If you would like to support our work please consider becoming a 'Friend of BTRC' (page 16).

Finally, thank you for your support and best wishes for the new year!

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‘For the welfare, rehabilitation, retraining and rehoming of Thoroughbreds’

BTRC’s Vulnerable Horse Programme (VHP)

BTRC’s mission statement remains unchanged from when the charity began its pioneering welfare programme for vulnerable Thoroughbreds over 30 years ago. During this time BTRC has been a safe haven for any Thoroughbred that has fallen on hard times, and the Charity remains steadfast that it will never turn away a Thoroughbred that needs assistance.

BTRC’s dedicated and expert team, who are supported by West Ridge Equine veterinary practice, care for these horses through their rehabilitation, retraining and rehoming which includes regular checks. This ensures BTRC horses future’s are safe-guarded for life, as horses are never sold but instead offered on a lifetime loan. BTRC also has a 24/7 emergency helpline for any Thoroughbred owner – so if you need us we are only a phone call away.

Some recent arrivals to the VHP...



What circumstances cause a Thoroughbred to be deemed vulnerable?

There are many reasons that could cause a Thoroughbred to be classified as vulnerable or have a potential risk to their welfare or well-being. Vulnerability is no longer based on the simple context of a horse being in a poor condition or underweight. It is much more complex and, on some occasions, the best-looking horses can be the most misunderstood and vulnerable.

In general, for horses to be eligible to join the BTRC’s Vulnerable Horse Programme they must have no commercial value and therefore unable to be rehomed through normal channels such as being sold or loaned. Some reasons why they could be worthless and therefore not able to move on to new owners can be due to pre-existing clinical issues (which the owner may or may not be aware of) these often present as behavioural issues when being ridden, making the animal dangerous and unsuitable to show potential buyers.

Continued...

Or perhaps the horse has previously been found in a neglected state and the owner does not wish for the animal to be at risk of becoming vulnerable once more. We have also been involved with Thoroughbreds that have been abandoned or their owners have sadly passed away.

The VHP is not intended to support horses that have already been assessed and require a companion home or retirement, or for owners that would like to upgrade their horse but don't wish to sell as they don't want to lose contact with their 4-legged friend.

If you would like further information on the vulnerable horse programme, then please visit our website www.thebtrc.co.uk or call us on 01524 812649. You can also visit our Facebook page to see the latest updates on the horses that have entered the programme.



Written by Previous Owner Helen

Everyone who meets BTRC Siri falls instantly in love with him. He is the kindest most charismatic horse I have ever had the privilege of owning. I first met Siri when I replied to an advert in mid November 2022. On first sight I thought he was an ugly duckling - he had a thick coat and looked nothing like a Thoroughbred, but I was instantly attracted to him as he was a genuinely nice horse - a perfect gentleman. He was 7 years old and had a disjointed life to this stage. Well bred, he was a racing disaster and passed on via the sales by two prominent trainers very quickly ending up at again at the sales. He was acquired by an event rider who gave him time to chill but after 3 years she found he wasn't up to high level of eventing and so put him up for sale. I thought he would do the job I wanted (lower-level eventing) so decided to buy him. I collected him on one of the wettest days of the year dodging floods all the way home. He settled in well and enjoyed meeting one of my older TB's who has been with us over 20 years enjoying time in the field. He had a saddle fitted, a visit from our equine physio and had a visit from the vet for his teeth. However, despite working hard to make sure he was happy, we had issues with him bronking and he was unpredictable when ridden. My vets had also checked him over with nothing noted for concern.



Helen & Siri



BTRC Siri on a community visit to a local primary school

Following sometime at a yard that specialised in TB rehabilitation, we were still having issues and I had lost confidence in riding him but felt I could not just sell him which would probably have involved him being sold on and on. He was far too nice a horse to do that to. It was suggested BTRC might give him the chance of a good life, so I applied and he was accepted on to their Vulnerable Horse Programme. To say goodbye to a member of the family is not easy, however with the best interests of the horse in mind the gifting process to BTRC is straightforward. You know that their best interests for the

future will be taken care of. Siri is a lovely horse with perhaps a somewhat chequered history and changing owners too frequently would not have been right for him. He needs to be in a longer-term home and given time to settle. A thorough veterinary examination is also vital at the early stages and that is exactly what BTRC offer. Knowing that Siri has the very best chance of being rehomed with a suitable match is reassuring and puts your mind at ease.

♥ Horses Recently Rehomed ♥



Written by Loaner Rebecca

I first met Rio back in January 2021 when I started working at the BTRC, I know it sounds cheesy to say it was an instant connection but that's the only way I can describe it, he has such a big personality and I just loved him from the start. If we were bringing in horses from the field or grooming, I would always pick him. When I was promoted to riding staff I was really excited to start riding him. He wasn't the most straight forward horse to ride but over the following few weeks I continued hacking and schooling and one day the penny just dropped with us, he had learnt to trust me and vice versa, and he went from strength to strength, hacking out on his own to jumping in the field and finally he was ready to be rehomed! As much as I wanted to bring him home right then I had a lot of things going on at home and I didn't feel that I could give him the life he deserved, but after a few people has tried him and



were not the right match I knew I had to bring him home. I was so excited I went into work the next day and put in a loan application, over the next few weeks we went through the rehoming process and on November 5th I brought him home. I was so happy! The first few weeks were just about letting him settle and getting used to a completely new environment. That first summer we had so much fun, I took him to local shows, Craven County Ride and eventing camp, he always tried his best and always came home with rosettes. In August, I took him to the ROR champs at Aintree Racecourse, not with any expectation at such a high level show, I just wanted to go and experience the atmosphere at such a prestigious venue but Rio rose to the occasion and came home with two 6th place rosettes from both jumping and showing. I was so proud that he was finally starting to show his true potential and show everyone what I knew he could always do. I think the key to Rio has been building up that trusting relationship with him,

not insulting his intelligence and keeping his work varied. He's not a fan of flatwork, but since I don't have an arena, we school in fields or on the beach which he's happy with! It's not just about the rosettes & results though, it's more about how well he's settled and how he's now part of the family. The kids can go and turn him out or bring him in, sometimes they just like to go give him a cuddle and I completely trust that he'll take care of his little people. My absolute dream would be to ride a freestyle novice dressage test to music, we're not quite there yet but I'm hoping with some hard work it might be possible. Most importantly he has a home for life where he is very much loved by us all, he's such a character with a great sense of humour. I only wanted a horse that I could hack out by myself and he has fulfilled that and so much more!



BTRC Spread Joy During



BTRC are involved in National Racehorse Week every year as it is such a great initiative. This year (September 2023) we decided to head out into the community to meet those people who may not be able to visit a yard. Our first visit was to Chirnside House, a Care Home in Lancaster. BTRC Drifting Star (8-year-old, raced 8 times) and BTRC My My (12-year-old, raced 10 times) greeted the residents, who were delighted to meet the horses and learn more about their life as racehorses and their options for a new career now they are retired. Both horses were so gentle and stood still while being patted and fussed over.

Our next visit took place at Slyne-with-Hest C of E Primary School, where BTRC Drifting Star met over 200 children - who were all VERY excited to see a former racehorse in their playground! BTRC Shetland Pony Mascot Washbear also attended for the youngest children to meet. They learnt about racehorses and the life they lead after their career on track. School Business Manager Caroline said "On Friday 15th September our whole school enjoyed a visit from BTRC Siri and BTRC Washbear. All the children thoroughly enjoyed this and many children who had not had a sensory experience with a horse before, really benefitted. The horses were immaculate and so well behaved, and all the children were very proud of their [#NationalRacehorseWeek](#) stickers! We also received some very positive comments from our Parents about their children's experience meeting the horses. Thank you so much BTRC."

Aftercare forms a large part of a racehorse's life, often longer than they have been on track, so it is important to educate the public on their life after racing during initiatives such as National Racehorse Week. Promoting Aftercare is a large part of our work and educating people on best practice is vital to ensure Thoroughbreds find the best homes in their post-racing careers.

[For more information, click here to read a Q&A with BTRC's Communication & Engagement Manager, Lauren Vickerson.](#)

BTRC's Consultant Vet, Gordon Sidlow BVMS MRCVS appointed as RoR Head of Veterinary Strategy

In September this year, BTRC's Consultant Vet Gordon Sidlow BVMS MRCVS was appointed Retraining of Racehorses (RoR's) Head of Veterinary Strategy.

Gordon has been dedicated to Thoroughbred welfare for almost 30 years. Primarily, in his role as the first equestrian vet for the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC). During his time with HKJC Gordon was responsible for establishing the veterinary standards, and providing veterinary



care for the retired racehorse population in Hong Kong, as well as monitoring the welfare of almost 900 retired racehorses donated by HKJC to Mainland China for equestrian use.



Gordon runs the equine side of a busy mixed practice in Mid-Devon, West Ridge Equine and has also been an Ambassador and Consultant Vet for The British Thoroughbred Retraining Centre (BTRC) since 2015. Over the years Gordon has been instrumental in establishing BTRC's current protocols for retraining. He also visits BTRC at least once a month to assess how all the horses are progressing through their retraining programme, as well as providing veterinary support for all BTRC's horses that are out on loan. Additionally, Gordon supports the Centre's educational programmes by participating in demonstrations and events that the Charity hosts to promote their work and British Thoroughbred Aftercare.

Gordon, who worked as a treating vet for the 2008 Olympic Games also frequently officiates as an FEI Veterinary Delegate (Level 4OV) at competitions both in the UK and internationally. He regularly oversees the

veterinary care for elite equestrian and racing horses as they fly to and from international competitions and races around the world.

We wish Gordon good luck in his new role. We know Gordon is one of the most experienced vets in racehorse aftercare and how much knowledge and skill he brings to the BTRC. We are therefore delighted that he will be able to share this knowledge with other centres and the industry to improve Thoroughbred Aftercare in the UK - but don't worry, Gordon is not leaving the BTRC, as what would we and our horses do without him?



BTRC Chosen as Charity Partner by Racing Syndicate Mills Racing



Local racing syndicate Mills Racing have very kindly chosen BTRC along with Racing Welfare as a charity partner. Mills Racing say "Our horses are the centre to our universe and their welfare comes before any Raceday which is why we have partnered with The British Thoroughbred Retraining Centre. We pledge that 10% of our profits each year will be distributed to BTRC. As a syndicate, we are proud to be associated with this incredible charity."

Mills Racing are a newly established syndicate created by local man Darren Mills. Darren's passion for horse racing is equalled by his passion for horse welfare and he has visited the BTRC on numerous occasions to learn more about our work and understand how we retrain and rehome our horses. To help promote BTRC, back in Summer, Darren arranged for the horse racing media experts, M3 Media, to visit the Centre and create a video showcasing the work of BTRC and the partnership between the charity and syndicate. To view the video, please [click here](#) or head to our YouTube Channel.

BTRC have also been involved in Members Days, held by Mills Racing at their trainer, Jimmy Moffatt's yard in Cumbria. BTRC Communications & Engagement Manager Lauren said "Being invited to the Members Day was a great opportunity for us to meet other members of the syndicate and tell them more about BTRC and our work. Forging strong connections with owners and those within the horse racing industry is really important to promote Aftercare and the options that may be available to owners when their horses retire from the track."

BTRC are delighted to be involved with a syndicate who care so much and recognise the importance of Aftercare and the commitment that comes with owning a racehorse. [Find out more about Mills Racing here.](#)



*** NEW SERVICES * - ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH RETRAINING YOUR THOROUGHBRED, OR NEED SOMEWHERE FOR IT TO REST FROM RACING?**

Rehab & Retraining Spelling Now Available



If you are looking for options for your Thoroughbred, or you have been struggling with your retraining, then please check out the BTRC's spelling facilities. We have recently added rehabilitation and retraining services to the spelling package.

The spelling station at the BTRC is for active, injured, recently retired racehorses, or those struggling in retraining and can accommodate up to 12 horses at a time. This facility is intended to provide horses with a break from the normal training routine, rest and recovery purposes or an opportunity to be rehabilitated and retrained.

BTRC is situated just outside Lancaster, 10 minutes off the M6 (exit 34 or 35) and is based on a 180-acre farm in the beautiful and tranquil Lancashire countryside. The Centre has excellent facilities and a dedicated team, all of whom have professional qualifications in racing or equestrian; including our CEO who was responsible for managing the spelling stables for active racehorses at the Hong Kong Jockey Club.

Spelling prices include feed and forage, bedding and daily turn out and horse walker if required. Spelling starts from £140 for horses who do not require retraining. If you would like to find out the cost of retraining, please get in touch. There will be additional veterinary charges if a horse becomes ill or injured and for any additional supplements or procedures that the trainer or owner may request.

Transport to be arranged by trainer or owner and all horses require a negative strangles ELISA before arrival and proof of valid vaccinations.

Should you require more information please do not hesitate to contact the Centre on 01524 812649 or email enquiries@thetrc.co.uk or.

All profit from spelling stables will go directly to the BTRC's charitable Vulnerable Horse Programme to help retired racehorses that may struggle in their second career.

Race Day Raises £8,000 for Vulnerable Thoroughbreds



On Saturday 5th November BTRC held their 5th Annual 'Charity Race Day' at Aintree Racecourse. It was a beautiful, crisp November morning and the day was a great success.

Over 50 guests enjoyed a champagne reception courtesy of The Jockey Club followed by a delicious lunch in the exquisite 1750 Suite. Prior to the first race, guests donated £10 to enter a raffle to win a pair of tickets to the first day of the 2024 Grand National Festival (donated by the Jockey Club) or a tasty hamper donated by Howard & Jean Johns from Cartmel Village Shop. Our two winners were delighted, but the winner of the Grand National Tickets quickly found out she was unavailable that day so very kindly donated the tickets back to BTRC to raffle off in the upcoming charity auction!

After a delicious lunch guests enjoyed watching the races from the private viewing terrace that overlooks the finish post. Although it was a beautiful sunny day, the position of the sun meant no jumping on the final straight, so it was always a thrilling push to the finish, of which our guests were in the prime spot! The guests generously took part in the charity auction which raised over £1,900, with prizes such as a Polo Experience Day and hospitality tickets to Manchester United. Huge thanks must go to all supporters who donated prizes for the auction.

Overall, the day raised £7,995, all of which will go towards the BTRC Vulnerable Horse Programme. Thank you to the guests for joining us and all who supported the day either by donating prizes or helping to sell sweepstake tickets.

If you are interested in joining BTRC for this event in 2024 please email lauren@thetrc.co.uk. Or maybe you would like to *join our Fundraising Committee* in 2024 to assist with events and ideas to raise vital funds for the charity. If so please email Molly on office@thetrc.co.uk.



BTRC supports the Armed Forces Volunteer Day and signs the Armed Forces Covenant



To mark [#ArmedForcesWeek](#) the Armed Forces Network at The University of Central Lancashire - UCLan organised a volunteering day at BTRC and what a fantastic day it was! Joining us were friends from Healthier Heroes CIC who cleared an old shed from a back field as well as helping paint the outdoor arena. We were also delighted to have some fabulous pupils from Sir Tom Finney Community High School who met our horses and painted some bird boxes to put up in the forest, as well as some colourful paintings for our tack room. We also had a very special visit from the Mayor and Mayoress of Lancaster City Council who came to join us to celebrate [#ArmedForcesWeek](#) as well as to learn more about the work of the BTRC and our plans for the future. It was an amazing day for all involved and our horses loved meeting everyone. We are always looking for volunteers to help out around the farm as there are plenty of jobs to do!!



BTRC & Whinney Hill Farm are delighted to have signed and support the Armed Forces Covenant. This is a promise by the Nation that those who serve or have served and their families are treated fairly. Lancashire as a County has a strong military heritage and we have witnessed first-hand the value in organisations working collaboratively on shared ambitions. It is our intention to support the "Defence Employer Recognition Scheme" moving forward.



To learn more about the Armed Forces Covenant: <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/>



Welcome to Whinney Hill Farm CIC...

To ensure sustainability and a secure future for BTRC, Whinney Hill Farm CIC has been created to aid diversity of the site whilst keeping new activities separate to our main charity. However, all profits of Whinney Hill Farm are asset-locked to the BTRC to help fund our Vulnerable Horse Programme and ensure all work being carried out supports TBs. [To find out more, watch this video.](#)



A GREEN SPACE FOR EVERYONE

- Situated in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Lune Valley, Lancashire
- Over 180 acres of green space including 20 acres of natural woodlands
- Sustainable, eco-friendly camping
- Space for outdoor activities, nature trails, woodland walks, volunteering and more
- A site for all to enjoy, enhance and nurture for future generations

Supporting projects for the community, education and positive wellbeing of humans, equines and the environment.

Visit www.whinneyhillfarmcamping.org.uk



Visitors enjoying their time at Whinney Hill Farm this year ♥



EVENTS

BHS Training Sessions

BHS Accredited Training Sessions

Open to all. Costs start at £55.
Trainer: Debbie Wilson (BHS Stage 5 Performance Coach).

Tack & Equipment (Stages 1-4)
Saturday 27th Jan 2024

Lunging: Theory & Practical
Sunday 25th Feb 2024

Coaching: Theory & Practical
23rd & 24th March 2024

Are you seeking to improve your equestrian skills and understanding? Look no further than our BHS accredited training sessions. Open to all, with costs starting at just £55, these sessions offer a unique opportunity to learn from industry professionals and enhance your equestrian knowledge and skills. First up is our Tack & Equipment session on Saturday 27th January. [Full details and booking here.](#)

THANK YOU

Physio Conference Raises Money for BTRC

We would like to say a big 'Thank You' to the Institute of Registered Veterinary and Animal Physiotherapists (IRVAP) and their sub group the Institute of Equine Hydrotherapists (IEH) for raising £225 for BTRC at their recent Animal Therapy For The Future Conference! The Co-Chair of IEH, Grace Natrass got in touch to let us know she had kindly put us forward as one of two animal charities to raise funds for through their raffle. Thank you, Grace and all who attended the conference, for generously donating and supporting our work. [To find out more about the conference please click here.](#)



How Can You Help?

BECOME A FRIEND OF BTRC

Just a small monthly donation can make a huge difference to the horses in our care. The regular donations we receive from our friends and committed givers help to support our Vulnerable Horse Programme and those horses that really need our help and have nowhere else to turn.

Please consider becoming a Friend of BTRC today. Click the safe and secure link below to sign up...



<https://secure.edirectdebit.co.uk/Thoroughbred-Rehabilitation-Centre/Donate>

MAKE A ONE-OFF DONATION

Donations are our most important source of income. Since 1991 your donations have enabled BTRC to assist hundreds of horses and to today being able to provide a future and safe haven for up to 45 Thoroughbreds at any one time. [Donate now.](#)

DONATE FOR FREE!

[Register with easyfundraising.org.uk](#) and raise funds simply by doing your everyday online shopping! Every time you shop, we receive a small donation to say 'thank you!' It's completely free and over £31m has been raised for causes just like us!

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Get in touch as there are so many volunteering opportunities at BTRC. You could help out with yard work, farm and grounds maintenance, fundraising and events organisation etc. If you are interested call 01524 812649 or email enquiries@thetrc.co.uk.

LEAVE US A REVIEW

Please consider leaving us a review on Facebook or Google as this helps others when they are deciding who to loan a horse from, or more importantly, those who are struggling with their TB.

AND FINALLY...

[Visit our second hand ebay shop for everything from rugs to bridles!](#)

BTRC is registered with the Fundraising Regulator to ensure best practice

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