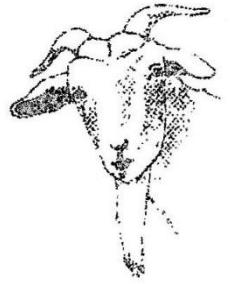


Buttercups Sanctuary for Goats

Reg Charity 099627



Highlights 2021

As Spring Returns - a message of hope

I think we can all agree that the last 12 months have been tough. Almost overnight, our lives were turned upside down and we quickly had to adapt to a new way of living. It has been a year of great change for many, and we will certainly not forget this period of our lives in a hurry.

Despite the obvious drawbacks of lockdown, there was a certain peace and serenity to be found as the world came to a standstill for the first time in living memory. As I write this, I feel the sun beating down on my skin from a beautiful clear blue sky, I can hear the sounds of birds singing from the trees as a gentle breeze blows delicately through them, and even the thick mud of winter is quickly drying below my feet; a blissful moment of silence and stillness.

The return of spring is a welcome and timely reminder that nothing lasts forever, and brighter days are always just around the corner. It is also a reminder that change is just part of life, and that nothing ever stays the same. All we can do is embrace this inevitability. Just as the spring brings new life, so shall it bring the change we have all been praying for, and the beginning of a new chapter.



Will things ever go back to normal? My answer; what is normal anyway? One change we are all likely to experience, is a new appreciation for the things that really matter. For family, for friends and for freedom. As the spring blossoms before our eyes, ushering in brighter days, let us move forward together with a heart full of hope, and embrace the good times which are, finally, just around the corner.

The Wild Side

For a casual visitor, it may appear that Buttercups consists of only one field, and a handful of stable blocks. However, if you look a little closer, there is more going on than meets the eye. There are a further six fields across the drive which (with the kind blessing of the landowners) are also managed by the Buttercups team. Through its thirty-year history, the land has remained relatively undisturbed by both goats and humans, and as a result, has attracted a lot of wild life to settle amongst the grasslands, trees and hedgerows. Indeed, Buttercups is home to a lot more than just goats!

One field in particular has been carefully observed, maintained and cared for by the charity's co-founder, *Mrs Valerie Hitch*. Through her love and attention, this particular pasture has become home to a wide variety of plant life, birds, mammals and insects alike, creating an incredibly diverse local eco-system. The badgers and foxes she knows by name, and Butterflies can be seen throughout the summer fluttering through the tops of the tall grasses from dawn to dusk. Perhaps most magnificently of all, one of the old, tall trees is home to a pair of nesting Buzzards, who, if you're lucky, you may see swooping through the blue skies together over the sanctuary. It is safe to say Buttercups has become a safe haven for all.



Introducing Nessa - Our One Horned Pygmy

One unsuspecting morning, not so long ago, the Buttercups staff were busy with the morning routine, and had an even busier day ahead. Almost all staff present were due to be heading out on various ventures, from foster home visits to picking up feed. By the time midday arrived, all had departed to different parts of the county, leaving only the founder *Robert Hitch (aka Bob)* and general manager *Gower McCarthy* behind to man the fort. Now, anyone who has spent time at Buttercups, will know that Bob has a well-established history of sneaking in an extra goat or two, when he thinks nobody is watching, and then standing back with feigned astonishment on his face at the appearance of the new arrival, or even better hoping that everybody else would simply not notice the newcomer.



And so it was, as everybody returned home one by one mid-afternoon, that they were each greeted with a new unfamiliar face, all asking the same question; who are you? As it transpired, whilst the rest of the team were away, the office had

received a distressed call from nearby animal sanctuary, *Happy Pants Ranch*, regarding one of their pygmy goats. The poor girl had gotten into a tussle with another goat and severely damaged her horn. Upon inspection, it was decided that it would be best for the individual, named *Nessa*, to come to Buttercups, in order to receive specialist care.

Unfortunately, it soon became evident that the horn was damaged beyond repair and had to be removed. She also had a worrying habit of screaming whenever anybody touched her, which suggested a possible history of serious trauma. Thankfully, Nessa has begun to settle into sanctuary life and made many new friends, and the wounded horn has healed without any issues. Whilst she was quite nervous at first, she was soon won over by food. She is still a little shy, but is much more confident than she was, and is much happier for it!

Winter Goats

Two happy goats were grazing
Under the winter sun

Their toes were cold yet their hearts were warm
And they were ready for some fun

They skipped across the field
They hopped over a fence

They chewed their way up the garden
Then napped upon a bench

As they snored the sun went down
When they woke up with a start

We best go home and quickly too
We're frightened of the dark!

They jumped and pranced and ran to bed
As the stars came out to play

They stretched and yawned and nestled down
Golly what a day!



New Faces

The constantly revolving gate at Buttercups never quite seems to stop swinging! With all our comings and goings, sometimes it's hard to keep track of all the new faces, and the last few months has certainly not shown any signs of this coming to a halt. Two of the new faces you may see among the herd, are those of *Josie* and *Albus*.

Josie, a medium sized Golden Guernsey type, arrived at Buttercups late spring, after being found by a couple, walking along the backroads near Detling. Unfortunately, they did not have fencing suitable enough at home to guarantee her security, so they decided that Buttercups was the best solution. A few days later, Josie turned up at the sanctuary, looking a little worse for wear following her ordeal. Whilst she was a little shy of people, she was certainly sure-hooved around the other goats and soon made herself comfortable.

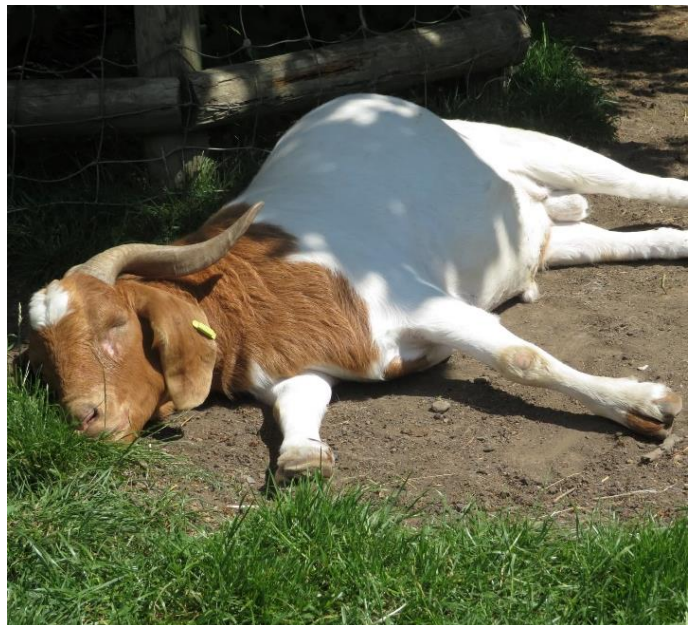
Following an initial health check, Josie was found to be quite sunken toward her back end. As well as this, half of her udder was infected with Mastitis, whilst the other had a very painful looking severed teat. Our theory is that she had recently been in kid, and had them taken away once born. It may have been that during her subsequent attempts to return herself to her babies, she injured the teat and ended up escaping into the big wide world.

She was taken to the vets for treatment that same week, suspecting that she may need to have a mastectomy, to have the infected udder removed. Fortunately for Josie, this ended up not being the case. The infected udder was treated with intermammary antibiotics, and the wounded teat cleaned and stitched up. Since then, she has been allowed to settle in at her own pace and can now be seen regularly relaxing out in the paddock, or happily munching away at one of the hay racks. She has settled in well amongst the herd, although we suspect it may be some time before she is ready for some human interaction!

Albus, a young but already very large and stocky Boer, on the other hand, has quite a different background. He originally lived in East Sussex with a loving family, who cared for him greatly, along with his partner. Unfortunately, Albus' partner had suffered greatly from severe bladder stones, and following an unsuccessful operation, passed away.

This left young Albus very sad, and rather lonely. He became very clingy to his owners, following them everywhere and constantly getting under their feet. Sadly however, no matter what they did, they were unable to stop Albus from pining for his lost friend. Goats are extremely social creatures, and really benefit from the company of others, and as a result, Albus' owners took the tough but necessary decision, to bring him to Buttercups.

The difference in Albus was almost instantly noticeable once he arrived at Buttercups, and suddenly had more new friends to play with than he could count. He proved himself to be very confident, introducing himself to everybody. Albus even had a go at taking on *Vincent*, the boss of the herd, simultaneously winning him several fans amongst the ladies of the group. However, despite immediately perking up, he remained very much under the feet of the humans of Buttercups. Whilst he is undeniably a very chatty and very friendly individual, he is also very much in the way a lot of the time! Albus also possess a definite mischievous streak too. One evening, as the goats were going to bed, and the evening meals were being given out, he decided that he was going to plant himself directly outside the *tuck shop* door, the very source of food itself! From there, due to his great size and stature, Albus could easily accost unsuspecting volunteers, and take all the meals for himself. This young man is only just two-years-old however, so we are hoping that he may mature, just a little bit, over the years to come.



Chewing the cud with Natalie

We would like to introduce the newsletter's new and exciting feature; "*chewing the cud*". In this section we will be chatting with some of our residents about their life at the sanctuary, likes, dislikes and life before Buttercups. To kick things off, this quarters interview will be with the lovely *Natalie*, an 11-year-old Swiss alpine who has been living at the sanctuary since 2011. We find ourselves sitting out in the parkland on a sunny afternoon, Natalie enjoying a nibble of the tasty grass amongst the shade of our 300-year-old trees, with a relaxed atmosphere in the air....

"When you're adorable as I obviously am, you become used to the fame that comes with it"



Well Natty, you've been with us quite some time, how do you find life at Buttercups?

Certainly can't complain! With good food, good company, a comfy bed and a stable over our heads, what more could we wish for really? Especially when you think about where some of us have come from.

As you've just touched on, may I ask if you remember life before Buttercups?

Bits of it....fortunately I don't remember much, but they tell me that when I was very very small I was rescued from a slaughter house with my sister Nadia. Luckily a very nice man rescued us, I don't remember his name.... let's call him Mr Nice-man.

So that's when you were bought to the sanctuary?

Not quite no! My sister and I spent a brief period in Mr Nice-man's back garden. However, I seem to remember that we ate everything very quickly (we were really hungry!). It was soon after this incident that we arrived.

And what do you remember about your early days at Buttercups?

I remember being fussed over and cuddled a lot, it was great fun! There were lots of goats to meet as well so we were very busy. Another kid close to our age called Vern arrived around the same time too and we became buddies. I still share a pen with him actually.

Now during your time at the sanctuary, it's fair to say that you have earned yourself a reputation as one of the smartest goats on the yard, rising to fame in your early years for learning how to unlock pen doors. However, this undeniable intelligence has come with a certain amount of accusations of mischief. Do you feel this is fair?
Entirely unfair. Is it my fault that I'm smart enough to earn myself some extra rations? Is it my fault that the locks on the door aren't me-proof? And is it really my fault that the other goats watch me picking the locks and copy?

Well, perhaps the less said about that the better. But you do walk around letting your friends out of their pens?
....yes.

Moving swiftly on, for many years you have been one of the chosen handful of goats to appear on our adoption scheme. This must feel like quite the responsibility, as it is one of the sanctuary's biggest fundraisers. How do you deal with the pressure?

When you're as adorable as I obviously am, you become use to the fame that comes with it. These days I just take it all in easy stride. Yes, occasionally I feel the burden of being so important, but all the extra treats and cuddles from the supporters make it all worth it.

Thank you for your time, Natalie, it's been a pleasure!

And with that, she puts her head to the ground and continues the all-important job of eating the fresh green grass.

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