

WILDER WAYS

Straight from the horses mouth



IT IS THE CALL OF THE WILD, THE WILL OF THE HERD,
THE THUNDER OF HOOVES, THE POUND OF YOUR HEART.
IT IS RIDING ... WILDER WAYS.

'THE BEST LAID PLANS OF MICE AND MEN...'

A COVID-19 INSPIRED UPDATE



FIND US ONLINE

www.wilderways.scot



WILDER WAYS RESILIENCE

The best laid plans of mice and men

“The best laid schemes o’ Mice an’ Men - Gang aft agley’ a very fitting quote from Robert Burns.

Well, this year has taken quite the turn from when we released our January newsletter! Nothing like a worldwide pandemic to keep you on your toes. As such we thought we should give you an update on the Wilder Ways team and our exciting resilience plans.

On March 20th we had to shut our doors. We felt it was the right thing to do to keep ourselves, our clients and the general public safe. This was, of course, in line with the latest government guidance designed to help protect our precious NHS.

We are trying our best to keep everyone up to date on what is happening and what is expected to happen, so please bear with us as we navigate this unprecedented time.

We are so grateful for all the love and support we have been receiving in this extremely trying crisis, thank you. You are what is keeping us driving forward. Now for the good stuff, are you ready?





BEFORE COVID-19

Our Bulgarian Adventure

As you will know from keeping up with our different social media platforms, we had many plates spinning before the pandemic – these are still spinning, plus a couple of extra ones for good measure!

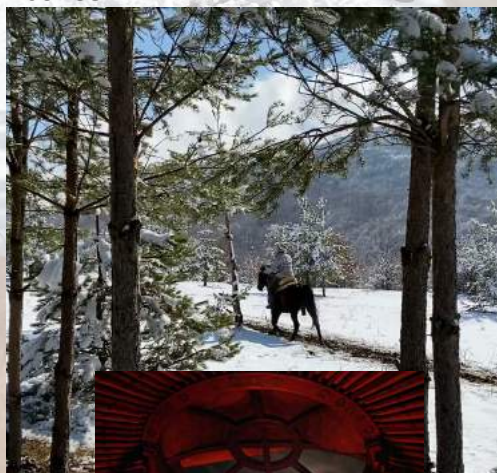
Our main effort has been Horseback Archery, from training with Bethany from the 'Les Amis' team, flying to Bulgaria and training with Vladimir for a week, to having the British No 1. Simon Harding visit us at Glen Kerran to continue our training and put us through our Club Coach assessment! The ball is rolling on Horseback archery and we cannot wait to share our plans with you.

On the 23rd February we set off on our Bulgarian adventure to train with Vladimir Mustakerski of The Way of the Horse and Bow. Vladimir is a student of the Hungarian 'Kassai Lajos' school of horseback archery and so his teachings and training are of this manner. The ethos is the recreation of the ancient traditions of the people and the art of horseback archery.

This week not only involved archery, ground and mounted, but also gave us insight into ourselves and our body awareness. Through natural horsemanship and warrior form work - it enabled us to be mindful of how the way we move and hold ourselves can direct energy. This focus is the essence of creating balance, rhythm and is essential in becoming one with your horse and indeed your bow. I also like the analogy of the film Avatar, when the rider plugs their hair into their dragon and they become one, this synergy is what we are striving for with our horse and our seat bones.

One of the most endearing things about our week was understanding the passion for archery which Vladimir has, and its rich history in humankind. Throughout the week we stayed in an original Mongolian Yurt, as a way of connecting us to the past and giving us an understanding and feel of the authenticity about the traditions we were practicing. The food was truly delicious, all homemade by Lydia – thank you.

The experience was like no other and the emotions it raised in us will be life-lasting: admiration, frustration, humbled, mindful, overwhelmed and energised. If you are interested in a trip to Bulgaria we would highly recommend it, please visit their [website](#).





Horseback Archery at Glen Kerran

Following on from Bulgaria, Simon Harding, trainer and assessor from the British Horseback Archery Association, came and spent 1-week with us at Glen Kerran. Simon is the UK's top horseback archer and it was an honour to have him with us. Simon was not only extremely talented and inspiring to watch, he was extremely pragmatic, and the different styles, techniques and teaching methods empowered us to go on to pass our Club Coach assessment. We are now qualified to teach horseback archery and are accredited by the British Horseback Archery Association allowing us to teach you! See page 9 for more details on this!

We have also (obviously) been training our horses to accept mounted archers and shooting from their backs and, as we expect with our herd, they have taken it in their stride. We, as usual, are so proud of them! Mango gracefully flies along our track – we already know he is going to be a favourite. Whilst Puzzle offers a gentler rhythm and Denver makes you feel ready for war!

Just in the nick of time, before we locked down, we were lucky enough to run our first trial short break archery adventure. We had guests from America, Germany and Scotland - thank you for being our guinea pigs! These sessions have given us a flavour of how exciting these courses are going to be for us to run and you to join!





BACK TO OUR ROOTS

“Out of adversity comes opportunity.” Benjamin Franklin

And breathe... We always run so hard that the majority of the time we forget to do this. Changing the mind-set and thinking about this as an opportunity is how we have decided to approach the current COVID-19 situation. Now is the time to catch up on everything we have wanted to do but, due to our Wilder Ways lifestyle, we have not had or made the time to do it.

Our green fingered resident (Nikki) has been desperate to get out in the garden and turn it into something beautiful and ‘fruitful’. So off we went with our shovels, trowels, and a heap of horse manure. We have created various raised beds and planted broad beans, onions, garlic, potatoes, broccoli, salad, carrots, tomatoes, radishes and herbs. We have also mulched more ground to crop next year. We have tried various mulching techniques including old hay, carpet and rotting horse-manure so will let you know how the different options work and our recommendations. During lockdown its been hard to get hold of compost...but not deterred, we have been using soil from the farm, conveniently prepared by the local moles. By collecting mole-hills we not only have an instant supply of good quality potting soil but we are also tidying up the fields as we go – win-win.

Whilst the farm dining room has proved a great greenhouse in the short term, some plants are growing on so fast they were desperate to get outside. However, despite the sunny days, evenings were still cold and sticking with great Scottish proverb, “ne'er cast a clout till May be oot”, we needed a wee half-way house for the courgettes. A polytunnel, now that would be handy....And so, we bodged our best bodge and created a cosy courgette bed from an old fence we had dismantled, plastic bottles and bubblewrap. Pretty chuffed with that and another great recycle/ upcycle project in our quest for self-sufficiency.

Cara, who always enjoys some heavy lifting, has created a beautiful patio area from bits of stone found around the farm. The patio looks over our fields at the front of the house – the perfect spot for a bonfire and a wee dram while watching that Southend sunset.





Our little flock

Counting sheep is one of our favourite jobs in the morning. As we wander through them, it's amazing to think that our 31 strong flock has come from just 4 ewes five years ago – a most fabulous birthday present from Nikki to Cara. The warm spring of 2020 has led to a great Wilder Ways lambing season with 15 wee lambs produced in a mixture of white, black, grey and traditional Moorit (brown) colours.



Every year, we shear mountains of soft, fluffy Shetland wool from our ever-increasing herd of sheep. Shetland sheep are an old breed, famed for their beautiful wool, upon which the world-renowned Shetland wool industry was built. Nikki spends winter months busy washing, carding and spinning the wool and lockdown has been a good opportunity to get on top of our woolly backlog. We've spun up a load of wool from our grey sheep, Stumba, blending her darker first clip with her lighter second, to create an interesting striped wool. Our new drum carding machine (thanks Mum) has really helped speed up this process.



Next project, trying out some natural dye plants from our farm, we've had some interesting results with nettles, bracken and birchbark – any other ideas? So, if you have a knitwear or felting project and want some gorgeous hand-crafted wool – you know where we are. We are also planning to run some 'Sheep to Shawl' holidays and experience days in the winter where you can learn these traditional skills in the comfort and hospitality of our farm.



Although small, these characterful sheep make great mothers and produce high quality slow grown meat, which is lean and very tasty. Just before lockdown we sent 6 of last years lambs, to Mull Abattoir and we now have a freezer packed with delicious Hogget, even more flavoursome and versatile than lamb. We have lots of chops, roasting joints and slow cook joints available and are happy to share, so if you would like some Wilder Ways lamb, please e-mail us at adventures@wilderways.scot and we can organise delivery.

And as if all their wonderful produce wasn't good enough, they are browsers rather than grazers, so they are excellent at cleaning up the fields after the horses.





The Chickens

Our little trio of silk bantams has really settled in to the new and improved run we've created, overlooking the garden, with some fun branches to hop about in and under. They even, finally, started laying two wee bantie eggs every day, totally delicious, until Winifred decided to go broody. Hopefully five new little chicks on the way. However, I'm trying to extend our flock with some proper layers so have a box of fertile eggs to incubate on its way from Cameron Clark's flock at Glenegedale on Islay – Isa Brown crosses so should be enough to keep our guests in free-range omelettes. Then maybe some ducks... I need a pond Cara!



Local Produce

Our local producers have been very enterprisingly setting up new delivery services for a surprising range of items during this lockdown. Thanks to McAlister's shellfish of Campbeltown, we've been able to get fresh, live langoustines delivered to the door – making us feel very bougeois and giving us a great opportunity to learn some new skills. We tried dressing a large crab – crunchy and very messy, but we managed to successfully remove all the dead man's fingers, crack every bit of claw and carapace for the white meat and made pate with the orangey stuff, great with oatcakes. Our grocer, McIvors, has also created a collaborative service whereby we can not only get a weekly box of fresh veggies and fruit, but they'll pop next door and pick up fish from the fishmonger and meat from the butcher to bring along. Thanks so much guys!



SOME OF OUR LOCAL
FAVOURITES:

MCALLISTERS SHELLFISH

MCIVORS

KINTYRE EGGS

THE WEE ISLE DAIRY

KINTYRE MUSHROOMS

CAMERON CLARK EGGS



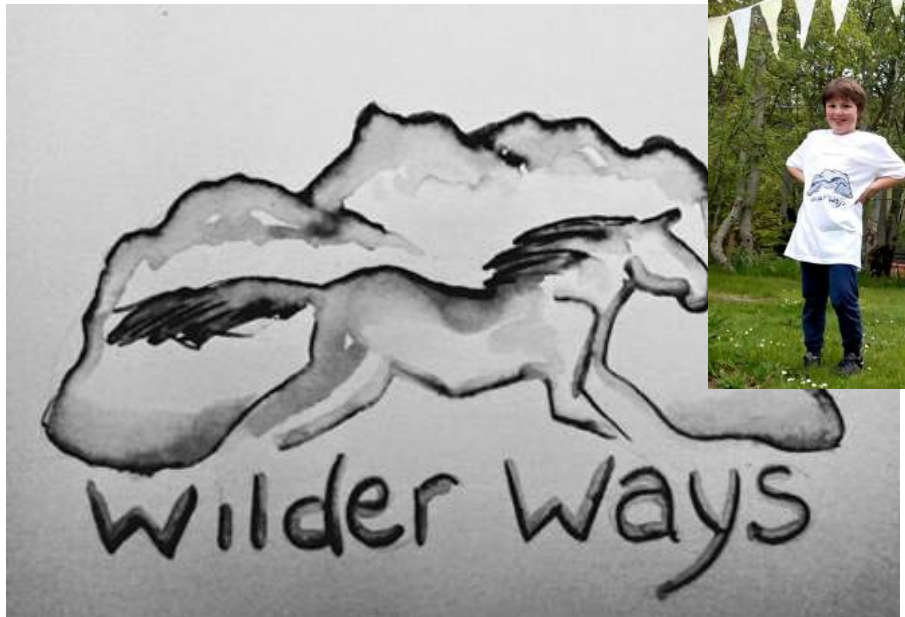
Isolation Creation

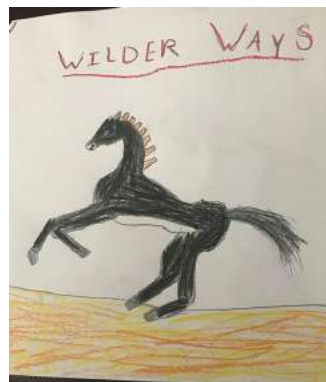
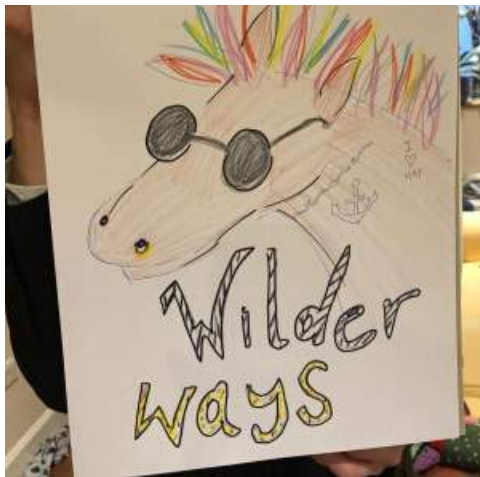
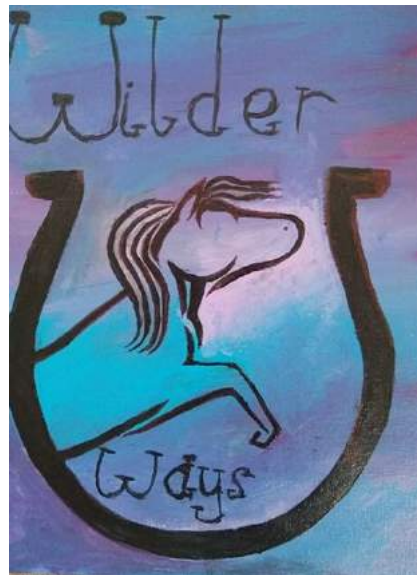
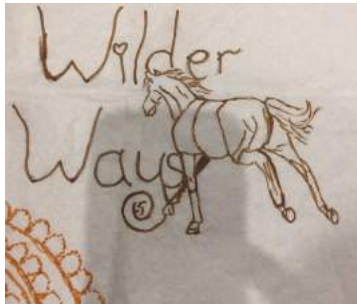
It was time to find the hidden artists within our Wildling herd and what better way to do this than with a T-shirt competition! The top 3 entrants as voted by you were to be available for sale on our Teemill website with the main winner design being our uniform of the year. A scary prospect at first especially with some interesting design submissions in the mix!

A total of 30 fabulous designs were entered for us to narrow down to our top 10... this proved far too difficult as the quality was too good. Settling for 12 top designs we put it back to you to vote for.

The top three designs were as follows: 3rd place was Grace Stewart a budding young equestrian from Aberdeenshire; 2nd place was Anky (a German lass who volunteered with us earlier in the year) and in 1st place with the winning design and our new uniform was Rhona Miller from Knoydart Pottery & Tearoom.

Congratulations to all of you, our Teemill shop has been updated to include these new designs. Get yours [here](#).







THE RECOVERY

Get your diaries out as our 2021 dates have been released and bookings are now live! We understand all the uncertainty at this time so, to provide a bit of comfort to you all, we have updated our cancellation policy during the pandemic to include the following: deposit payments for our 2021 holidays are fully refundable on new bookings made after March 20th 2020 if Wilder Ways has to cancel your holiday as a direct result of operational or travel restrictions imposed by the Government in response to COVID-19.

April will be spent at Glen Kerran riding the rolling hills and exploring the beautiful coastline. We have set dates for several short break holidays to welcome the spring plus some weekend breaks that, running Friday to Sunday, should fit in with your working week.

There are also dates for some horseback archery short breaks that will have you learning an exciting new skill as well as extending your riding – see Archery below. We are delighted to be heading back to Knoydart, our home from home, for another 2 months of adventuring around Scotland's last true wilderness during May and June 2021. This will include a mix of short break and week-long wilderness extravaganzas at our most extreme and remote location.

After having to cancel Knoydart for the first time in 5 years, we will be eager to get back there.

We will be returning home in July for adventures around the Mull of Kintyre including short breaks, week-long adventures, day long rides including beach adventures, archery days and other

local trails in the hills and woods around the farm.

Our trail riding season ends mid-October when the nights draw in. After this we will HOPEFULLY be able to enjoy winter training opportunities and events in our new indoor arena. Watch this space to see how this progresses in coming months.

[CLICK HERE FOR OUR
FULL SCHEDULE](#)



HORSEBACK ARCHERY ADVENTURES

The one you have been waiting for! It has been an incredible journey to this point, and we are so excited to now be able to share it with you. Our first available archery holidays and 'experience sessions' are advertised in our 2021 summer programme. This winter (2020) we also hope to be able to run some horseback archery holidays once restrictions have lifted so...watch this space!

Nothing can prepare you for the thrill and satisfaction of shooting arrows from a running horse. It connects you to our warrior past in a way that is both visceral and exhilarating. The skills involved are 'easy to learn' – allowing you to quickly get a feel for this exciting sport. However, they will take a 'lifetime to master', potentially setting you off on a journey that will last, well, a lifetime.

We currently offer horseback archery as experience days and short breaks.

Experience Days

The experience days give you a grounding in archery skills and the opportunity to try this from horseback. During the day you will complete ground and mounted sessions, before putting these together to shoot from your horse. Lunch, featuring much of our own produce, will be provided in the farmhouse.

INCLUDES A FULL DAY'S TUITION (10AM-5PM) INCLUDING GROUND AND MOUNTED ARCHERY SESSIONS, AND LUNCH AT THE FARM

- APR 3RD
- APR 24TH
- JUL 10TH
- AUG 21ST
- OCT 9TH

PRICE: £150 PER PERSON (INCLUDES ALL RIDING, ARCHERY INSTRUCTION, EQUIPMENT & LUNCH)





Horseback Archery Short Breaks

On our short break holidays you will spend 3 days learning the basic skills you need to shoot arrows from your horse as well as experiencing some of the historic and cultural feel of this ancient art. By the end of the holiday, if a competent rider, you should have learnt enough to be making shots at canter! This holiday is all set at our traditional stone farmhouse within the secluded and tranquil Kerran Glen and includes 3 nights' accommodation, full board and transfers from Campbeltown.

Additional riding (or non-riding activities) and further nights' accommodation can be added to this if you want to enjoy an extended stay.

THURSDAY – SUNDAY OR SUNDAY – WEDNESDAY INCLUDES 3 DAYS HORSEBACK ARCHERY + 3 NIGHTS ALL INCLUSIVE

- APR 11TH-14TH
- AUG 29TH-SEP 1ST
- SEP 30TH - OCT 3RD

PRICE: £850 PER PERSON

(INCLUDES ALL RIDING, ARCHERY INSTRUCTION AND EQUIPMENT, ACCOMMODATION, MEALS AND TRANSFERS FROM CAMPBELTOWN (AIRPORT OR BUS STATION)).





Training Opportunities

Yes, we know, we have technically been coaching since day one, however, we are making it official. Lessons are now available to book – both private and group, local or visitor!

This is a chance for you to put your knowledge of horse care and stable management to the test and get some real yard experience!

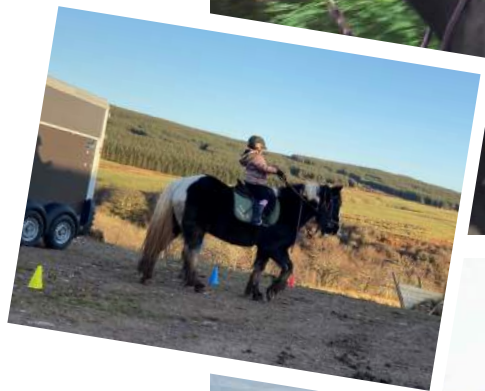
FOR MORE DETAILS
[CLICK HERE](#)

For more information and the terms please visit our website.

Lessons will be designed to:

- be rider led – i.e. focus on what you want to achieve
- support people in their individual riding development
- provide motivation and challenge, encouraging you to get the best from your lesson
- provide you with feedback, allowing you to grow and acknowledge your progress
- be a safe and inspiring space for simply having some horsey fun!

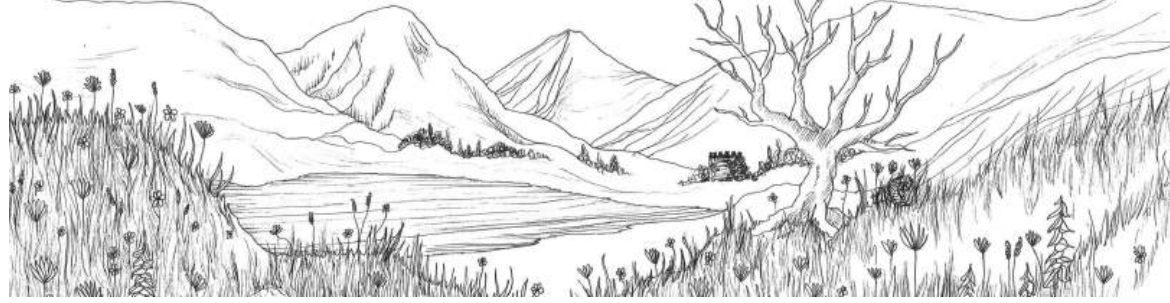
We will also be continuing to run our lovely saddle club after school throughout the year. And as an extra we are introducing 'The Sunday Squad'. Most Sundays from 1.30pm - 4.30pm you can come and help on the yard as supervised hands: brushing and tacking up the horses, feeding and yard work as well as a full hours lesson.





2020 IS VISIT SCOTLAND'S YEAR OF COASTS AND WATERS -
LET'S DO IT AAGAIN IN 2021





A Final Round Up

The bottom line is that the Wilder Ways team are as determined and enthusiastic as ever. It is going to take more than a global pandemic to see these dream-makers abandon ship.

So, we welcome you, our treasured Wildlings - both loyal and new - to stand beside us, fantasise over beautiful skies and sparkling seas and look forward to our future adventures together.

We also want to take this moment to share our most heartfelt thanks to you. Your kind words, shared memories and continuous adventure planning gives us all the boost we need to stay focused on 'the call of the wild and the will of the herd'.

Love to you all. Stay safe and stay sane!

Cara, Nikki, Amie & The Herd



@Wilder_Ways