

# 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.

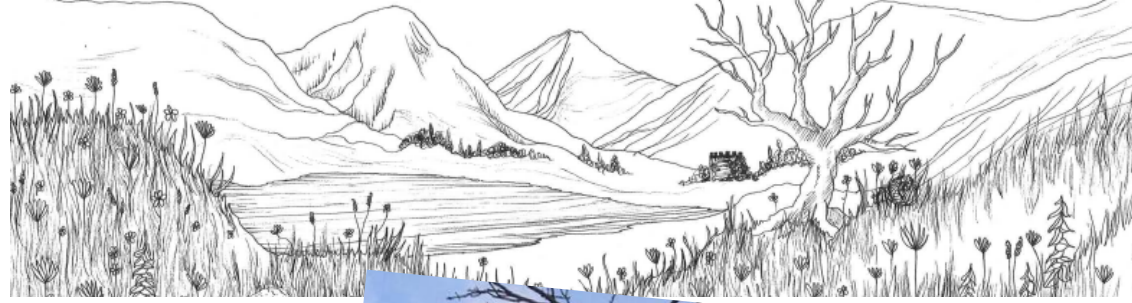
NEW YEAR, SAME YOU - NEW ADVENTURE!

WHERE WILL YOU EXPLORE NEXT?



FIND US ONLINE

[www.wilderways.scot](http://www.wilderways.scot)



## HAPPY NEW YEAR WIDLINGS!

Happy new year to all our Wildlings past, present and future, we hope you had a wonderful Christmas time and are raring for another year of adventures. We had our first Christmas at the farm surrounded by our nearest and dearest –feeling recharged after total food indulgence, we are ready to face 2020 head on. We have so much planned for you so saddle up as its going to be another wild year.

### Our BEST season yet!

150 epic adventurers joined us on one of our holidays during our core trail riding season last year. April to June we returned to Knoydart, a firm favourite, and we spent summer in the Mull of Kintyre, enjoying the new adventure of Glen Kerran - our new home at long last! Riders from all over the world joined us again this year from Australia to Belgium and Austria to Boston and just about everywhere in between. Over 200 guests joined us on a day ride, with our youngest rider only 3 years old at the eldest, the galloping grandad at 84. We had over 40% repeat customers this year – we really can't thank you enough for keep coming back for more! Making such wonderful friends along the way is an absolute precious bonus of Wilder Ways.



2020 PROGRAMME FILLING UP FAST  
BOOK YOUR WILDER WAYS ADVENTURE TODAY!  
SEE PAGE 9 FOR MORE INFORMATION





# WILDER WAYS WINTER 2019/20

## Escape to the Country

Well what a year 2019 was, and how fast it flew by. With our roots now firmly in the soil at Glen Kerran we can reflect on the year gone by and look forward to another huge year ahead of us.

In November we opened our home to more than our horse holidaying clients and are now taking B&B bookings! The traditional stone farmhouse is now bursting with life year round. Our homely steading, nestled in the heart of the farm, provides a haven for you to recharge your batteries. With four cosy, restful country-styled bedrooms and breath-taking views and blissful silence,

Starting the day with a delicious wholesome home cooked breakfast, made from home and local grown products, you are then free to explore the wonders of Kintyre. Guilt free gastronomic delights in the form of evening meals can also be provided as we offer a tasty 'du jour' menu. We are happy to cater for any dietary requirements by prior arrangement.




WILDER WAYS  
HORSE RIDING ADVENTURES

### UNMISSABLE WINTER DEAL

TWO NIGHTS DBB + HALF DAY RIDE  
FOR TWO PEOPLE FOR £285. OR IF YOU DON'T FANCY A  
HORSE-BACK ADVENTURE £175. VALID UNTIL 31ST  
MARCH 2020 SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. DON'T MISS  
OUT, ENQUIRE TODAY AT:  
[ADVENTURES@WILDERWAYS.SCOT](mailto:ADVENTURES@WILDERWAYS.SCOT)



READ MORE ABOUT OUR HOME AND WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER ON OUR WEBSITE





## Saddle Club

This isn't your average saddle club after all we are Wilder Ways...

Each week our eager horse adventurers-to-be descend on Glen Kerran raring to learn and embrace the call of the wild. An hour and a half of intensive horse indulgence split between some hardcore horse care and management theory and hands-on pony time. Designed to make these little Wildlings confident and competent around the noble steeds.

Within this the young adventures had their first session in natural horsemanship. We think this sort of groundwork is fundamental in the building of safe relationships between horse and human. It commands respect for both horse and rider, defining awareness, responsiveness and space in aid of establishing effective communication between you and your horse. And with our saddle club tiny tots starting at just 6 – being able to command your personal bubble is paramount.

All of this is done in preparation for what we all really want to be doing – riding. With the first block due to finish early February the light should have returned to our nights and after school is about to get even more exciting! Our riding sessions are designed to take these equestrians through the basics in adventure trail riding as we explore what Glen Kerran has to offer.

Saddle Club – Introduction to Horsemanship has been more successful than we could have imagined with 18 children we are at our maximum capacity! Spaces for our Introduction to Riding are also limited to six children per session so make sure you book on to secure your child's space!





## The latest additions

New year, new...horses!  
This year you will all get the pleasure of meeting the two new kids on the block – Blu and Ruby (now known as Monday and Tuesday).

Blu the Irish Sports Horse/prince look-a-like standing at 15.1hh. This lovely 13-year-old lad came to us from central Scotland and slotted straight into his new life – cool as a cucumber. He has dabbled in a little bit of everything, but from what we hear the trail is where he comes to life. Could you find a more fitting home? With his kind eyes and heart he has managed to cool the fire that is Miss Ruby.



Ruby is our 12-year-old local girl who has come to be put through her paces with the Wilder Ways herd. An exciting summer lies ahead for the Rubster.

Now that the two have arrived safe and well it is our job to keep them that way. They will undergo three weeks in isolation from our heard. After this period is over introduction will begin...

If you want to know more about how we decide on new additions to the Wilder Ways herd go have a look at [Newsletter 003](#) and our article on buying new horses, page 2.



# ELDER WAYS – PLANNING FOR RETIREMENT

## We all love our horses,

whether they are your leisure companions, partners in your chosen horse-activity, your courage, your freedom.

We all expect a lot of them, and they give to us willingly. But what happens when they get too old to fill the roles for which they were bought – too stiff to canter circles, too arthritic to jump, increasing health-issues and care-costs or just losing condition.

Horses are unique among domestic animals in that they have a working life like us. They have a foal-hood, a long schooling period, a career, and then a steady decline to retirement. Also, like people, improvements in horse-health are seeing many horses living well into their 30s. For people, it is usual to plan well in advance for our old age, to know that we have made preparation for when we can no longer work. This process can be forgotten in the excitement of owning a horse and may not be considered until quite late in the day. As our Wilder Ways herd ages, we want to create a personal, costed 'Retirement Plan' for each horse that allows for their individual needs as well as our own.



“SOME OF MY  
BEST FRIENDS  
NEVER SAID A  
WORD TO ME”





## Retirement Options

There are a range of possible options available to manage each horse as it ages, including options to change their workload or to allow them to live on happily without working. All these options have implications in cost and horse-welfare but also have emotional

impacts to us, and each of these need to be considered and balanced.

This table summarises the main options available and what we consider to be the main positive and negative aspects of each.



RETIREMENT OPTION	FINANCIAL	HORSE-WELFARE	EMOTIONAL
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### Reduced or changed workload

Positives	Horse may still generate some income	Good to keep the horse active & engaged	Retain contact & care
Negatives	Reduced income or cost of additional horse to make up workload	Frequent veterinary checks, may exacerbate existing condition.	Less ridden partnership with our horse or stopping a particular activity.

### Turnout at home

Positives	No livery or retirement home costs	Less stressful to stay at home, continued care	We retain contact and care
Negatives	No income, financial drain, increasing time to deliver medical care.	Horse becomes bored/inactive	Hard to watch horse being frustrated and bored or deteriorating

### Sell/loan to other home

Positives	Income from sale and reduced costs	Ongoing care if good home	Comfort if good home
Negatives	Cost of replacement horse	Stress of moving home	No control over care, loss of old friend.

### Horse retirement home

Positives	No ongoing maintenance costs	High standards of focused care	Knowing your horse is getting good care
Negatives	Expensive	Stress of moving home	No longer caring for your old companion

### Elective Euthanasia

Positives	No ongoing maintenance costs	Horse allowed to die before any conditions become overly painful or it gets stressed by boredom or inactivity	Feel you've done the right thing <u>only</u> if a horse has a condition with obvious pain/discomfort
Negatives	Initial cost - may not get insurance -	Horse dies while still having a good quality of life - very hard to justify that there is any benefit to horse welfare	Unless horse has obvious pain/discomfort very hard to justify emotionally



## Other Considerations

Another aspect to consider when designing your horse's Retirement Plan is what physical or medical conditions your horse may have. In order to create a personal plan for each horse, a knowledge of their existing conditions and treatment is essential, but also awareness of their physical and medical history. This allows monitoring of condition, behaviour and diet in a more targeted way.

Also, as with us, horses are more likely to develop medical conditions the older they get and there are many conditions that are particularly associated with age. For example, in a study of over 400 horses over 20 in the UK and abroad (McGowan 2011), 95% had dental issues, 50% were lame at trot on at least one leg, 80% had hoof abnormalities and 66% had eye problems such as cataracts and senile retinopathy. It is, therefore, sensible for older horse to get a regular health check-over to pick up such conditions as soon as possible and to add these treatments into your Plan. Regular farriery and dentistry are also essential.

Diet is another factor in the care of older horses and there are numerous veteran feeds and supplements available. However, dietary issues are not necessarily that frequent in older horses and, if fit and healthy, they shouldn't need anything special.

We do give all our horses over 15 vitamin C, since most older horses lose the ability to produce this vitamin themselves, but otherwise their feed is based on size, temperament and workload as with any age of horse.

## Our Experience

Here are two case studies from our experience of two very different horse scenarios and which illustrate two different approaches.

### Blue

Blue was an old Welsh child's pony that we had for many years. As a sensible first horse, he was already approaching 20 when he was bought. A few years on, we noticed he had slightly swollen knees and difficulty with downhills, and the vet suggested this may be the onset of arthritis. Initially we reduced the weight of his riders to below 8 stone and gave him glucosamine supplements but, as time passed, the condition worsened, and, at the age of 24, we took the decision to retire him out to grass. We still gave glucosamine and turmeric supplements regularly.

As time passed this became a more emotional issue. On a sunny day, Blue could still be seen frisking about the field and would even canter and throw a buck, but in the depths of winter his knees would swell and he moved round the field stiffly and painfully, losing condition even with a thick rug.

After two years, and with the onset of another winter in Argyll, we took the decision to euthanase him. This was a very hard decision to make and we put it off for some time. However, after the event we actually felt very relieved that we had done it, especially after seeing a cross-section of arthritic knees in horses and realising the pain it must have caused.

We realised afterwards that we didn't have a clear plan for him and that this contributed to the concern and indecision we felt in dealing with his old age.







## Jazz

Our Jazz, ever the professional trail horse, is now 20 and has been showing signs of stiffness when asked to do bending and lateral work. From the standpoint of horse-welfare, keeping Jazz in light work is likely to be beneficial so long as he continues to be sound and able, keeping him fit and engaged.

However, from a business perspective this means supporting a horse that is not working as hard as the others - though needing the same care – and ultimately becoming a net cost to the business. There is a time consideration in maintaining a reduced exercise regime and we will need another horse to make up the work shortfall.

He also suffers from high levels of stress when the other horses go out without him, even though he is never left alone. We always thought he was such a machine that he would go on till he dropped on the trail! We would therefore not consider selling him on as we think this would be particularly hard on him.

We have created a plan for Jazz that summarises his past and current medical history and takes into account the kind of horse he is, his temperament and what kind of work he enjoys -see inset.

We will check this regularly and update it to ensure that it continues to meet his needs.

Of course, this plan needs to be funded and we have had to add the cost of all our horses' retirement plans into our business plan for the future.

**Jazz – Retirement plan 15.2hh, ISH, now 20 years old. He works hard, seems to enjoy working and has been a popular riding horse.**

**Medical history: He was checked for Cushings (winter 2018/19) due to a tendency to gain fat along the crest. This was found to be negative but is to be monitored. He has become stiff in the hocks and has recently experienced some difficulty doing bending, lateral work and jumping. Retirement option 1 – reduced work – trail-riding only. Rationale: We feel Jazz still enjoys work but should not do arena work or jumping. He is very attached to the herd and becomes stressed if separated. As well as regular health checks he needs close monitoring of joint-issues and lameness, weight and condition.**

**Plan:**  
**Specific: Hock scan scheduled for Feb 2020. Dentist 30/01/2020. Daily: general checks, vitamin C supplement, joint health supplement. Weekly: Trot up and check for stiffness/lameness Monthly: Weigh tape Every 8-10 weeks: farrier trim or shoe depending on work**

Welfare of Aged Horses – Catherine McGowan 2011  
Feed your horse like a horse - Juliet M Getty 2016



## Conclusions

At the end of the day, what happens to your older horses is your decision. We all want, of course, to give our horses the best retirement that we are able to provide, but whatever we decide, it will have to be a balance of the various factors discussed: what they need vs what we can afford vs what we can live with. It's a tricky and emotive balance. The important thing is that we all become more open and better informed about this area of horse welfare, and that we can share our experiences. We are really interested in gathering your views about this subject so that we can collate a range of experiences and attitudes around this subject. We have created a short questionnaire on this subject and would be grateful if you could complete it online and pass it on to any horse owning friends. You can just click this [link](#) or access it via our website or facebook page.

Many thanks for your participation in this research, best regards Nikki & Cara.



# 2020 TRAIL RIDING SCHEDULE

A New Year, a new home and an exciting new chapter in the life of Wilder Ways. To say home with the herd is bringing happiness is the understatement of the year. We are learning just how precious it is to see horses from your bedroom window or visit them in the barn at night in our slippers!

2020 is going to be all about Home Sweet Home but with a little sprinkle of Home from Home. It is the first year we will operate year-round and offer a winter program and there is lots of exciting news to share with you about this – see Winter 2020.

If you haven't already booked your 2020 adventure, here's a wee taster - full details on our website





# 2020 TRAIL RIDING SCHEDULE

## Home Sweet Home – Mull of Kintyre

We are excited to adventure locally, literally straight out of our back door! And where better a place to adventure than Kintyre – Dalriada - the original home of the Scots and the birthplace of Scotland. Despite its historical significance, the Mull of Kintyre is one of Scotland's best kept secrets. This is now to our advantage - it is steeped in history and has a strong sense of community spirit, whilst retaining wilderness and natural splendour.

The perfect back drop for a Wilder Ways adventure.

So, come on over. Ride the rolling hills and stunning beaches of south Kintyre. Wonder at the island views and enjoy the strength of community and local entrepreneurialism. On one hand you can feel part of the herd, one of the community; and on the other you can be stood on top of a hill, looking over the wild Atlantic contemplating only the sound of the sea birds and the pound of your heart.

Our riding holiday season starts at home with a series of short breaks (3 days + 3 nights) throughout April. Prior to this we will be running bespoke holidays and individual rides by arrangement so just get in touch. In July and August, we will run more short breaks and week-long riding holidays (5 full days + 7 nights).

This summer will also see our first Yoga and Riding short break holiday, something we will be further developing over winter. Half day and full day rides are slotted in between along with 1-hour lessons for locals.



FOR MORE DETAILS  
CLICK HERE





## A sprinkle of Home from Home - Knoydart

So what about May and June...well, we return to our 'Home from Home'- Knoydart in the West Highlands. For the 5th year running, we will set sail with our herd towards the extreme remoteness of Knoydart. A place great for soul searching among the mountains; for making your heart sing sea chanties; and for being drenched in exquisite local hospitality. Leave your cars and mobile phones behind and get ready for an overdose of fresh air, velvet noses and utter bliss on the wild side....

As we are only here for 2 months this year there are many adventures to squeeze in. We are running an action-packed schedule of a short break (3 days + 4 nights) one week followed by a full week holiday (5 days + 7 nights) the following week. We will also be offering half and full day rides as well as our Knoydart Kids Saddle Club on Friday afternoons.

It's really amazing to see so many of you returning again this year, some of you for your fourth time – thank you. And if you haven't experienced Knoydart yet, exploring it on a horse really is the stuff of dreams. Can't wait to share this magical place with you.



“THE  
MOUNTAINS  
ARE CALLING  
AND I MUST  
GO...”  
- JOHN MUIR





# 2020/21 WINTER PROGRAMME

## 2020 - let's adventure all year-round.

But how?...Kintyre winters are so wet, it's dark, it's too miserable for riding surely...unless...

After much planning, winter 2020 is set to be the year we open our new indoor arena, bringing exciting new adventures. We look forward to sharing our journey of 'the build' with you and we would love to hear from if you have an arena story to tell, want to warn us of some pitfalls, or just tell us how you would like to use this space.

The planned arena will be 60m x 30m, with a sand base and a small viewing area inside. We will use it for training the herd, riding lessons, and our new winter holiday programme. We also want this facility to be available to others to hire as individuals, groups, clubs or for your events. For anyone wanting to make a holiday of it with your own horse, we can also provide accommodation at the farmhouse as well as turn out.

### New Arena - New Adventures...

Did you crack our clue from December;

"THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY FATE IS SOMETHING BEYOND OUR COMMAND. THAT DESTINY IS NOT OUR OWN. BUT I KNOW BETTER. OUR FATE LIVES WITHIN US. YOU ONLY HAVE TO BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO SEE IT".

A quote from the 2012 animation Brave, and a good mantra for us at Wilder Ways generally.



So, what is it?... horseback archery of course!! And why?...well...

- In 2017 Nikki bought me (Cara) a Mongolian horse-bow. Nikki had some prior archery experience and thought I would enjoy it. Also, it is an ongoing family joke that I am a Mongolian...think of the cheeks!
- In 2019 when we bought our new farm, we knew we wanted to build an indoor school so we could operate year-round. We wanted an exciting and innovative new winter product... horseback archery was a great fit.

We have spent the last 10 months developing this idea and practising ourselves. The ancient art of horseback archery is returning to Kintyre, home of the Scots, some 450 years since the art died. The Scots even claimed descent from the Scythians, one of the first and greatest tribes of Steppe horseback archers. So maybe horseback archery is in our blood after all!





Well that opportunity is now yours, regardless of your experience on a horse or with a bow. Initially we will be running short break horseback-archery holidays. Over 3 days you will begin to learn the art of horseback archery. You will receive tuition and opportunities to practice ground archery and the necessary riding balance before putting it together to take your first shot from your steed. I can't tell you what a thrill this is.

Beyond this we plan to open an archery club with regular sessions throughout the winter for locals and visitors alike. We are also developing a weeklong holiday for 2021 with a mixture of activities which will include horseback archery.

If you are interested in taking up horseback archery, or just trying it as a one off, please get in touch so we can keep you posted on our progress and let you know once dates are released. In the meantime, we are enjoying every opportunity to practice ourselves and our herd are loving adding a new string to their bow...sorry, couldn't resist!



## From Savages to Serenity

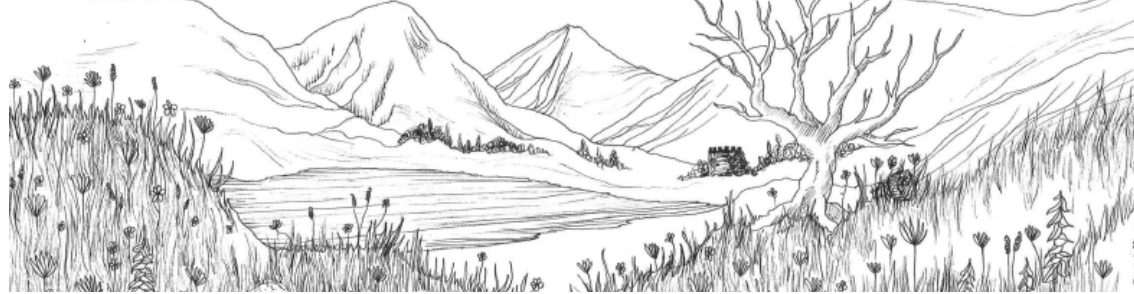
Our adventures are an overload on the senses, designed to make your heart pound as the wild calls. They also provide moments of extreme mindfulness and serenity when you are at one with what you are doing. This need to 'quieten' one's self combined with the physical demands of riding made this next idea pretty much predestined.

In 2019, we met a new client, Marieke. We hit it off from the get-go and talked a great deal about riding and fitness and their impact on horse and rider. Marieke told us of her yoga training, and we discussed the many parallels with riding...so the ideas started flowing. On meeting Marieke's partner Julie, a yoga teacher of 20 years, the ideas spilled over.

To rein ourselves in, we have launched just two yoga holidays for summer 2020. These tasters are similar to our short break trail riding holidays but will also include two yoga sessions daily. The idea is to enhance your day in the saddle; awakening the body pre-ride, easing it post-ride, and restoring your body for the next day. We will start to make connections between our own posture and alignment on the ground and that on the horse, and to offer up suggestions to improve both. Our Iyengar yoga teacher will live in-house so she will be personally tailoring your sessions and be on hand for discussion and advice.

In 2021 we plan to launch a more in-depth 'Yoga for Riders' week holiday which will be arena-based and will go to a whole other level of investigation and intrigue; ultimately improving results for your riding and your horse's way of going.





Meanwhile we have been practising regular Iyengar yoga sessions in the house and on the horses. Personally, we cannot believe the difference this is making to us. One leg longer than the other, stirrups never straight...that was me (Cara) ...but I just came to accept I had wonky legs. After just 1 weekend of yoga and riding with the Yoga on Tay team, I have comfortable and level stirrups for the first time since I can remember. And did I do leg stretches?...No! Arm exercises! Confused? Yeah, I was too. Of course, this is not a miracle cure. I need to continue to work at it but the results are quite remarkable. Look out for our personal findings which we will be sharing in a series of Case Studies in the spring.

This is an exciting time of development at Wilder Ways and we are really looking forward to sharing these new adventures with you, whether you're a regular Wilder Ways adventurer or thinking of joining us for the first time. If you have other ideas of what you would like to see us do, or want to consider an idea together, you know where to find us, so please do get in touch.

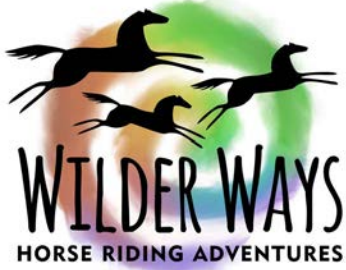




2020 IS VISIT SCOTLAND'S YEAR OF COASTS AND WATERS -  
WESTPORT BEACH, KINTYRE, NEED WE SAY ANY MORE?







## Investing in Innovation

With a busy year of product development there is significant business investment required and we feel extremely grateful for the external support and investment our ideas have attracted. We would like to specifically and sincerely thank Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and W-Power (Northern Periphery & Arctic Programme) for their support.

HIE awarded Wilder Ways a 30% grant towards the indoor arena project, which will enable us to build a facility big enough to be fit for purpose and be available for use by others.

After all, Argyll is the wettest county in Scotland and yet is currently without a commercial indoor arena.

We were also one of the winners of the W-Power Innovation Platform online pitching competition for our horseback-archery product, under their remit for empowering women entrepreneurs in sparsely populated Northern communities. On hearing of this, HIE invited us to apply for their small innovation grant to allow us to commercialise this idea.



ULTIMATELY THIS HAS ALL HELPED US TO MAKE THESE NEW PRODUCTS AVAILABLE TO YOU GUYS – WHO ARE REALLY OUR BIGGEST INVESTORS, AND WITHOUT WHOM NONE OF THIS WOULD HAPPEN...SO THANK YOU! xxx

