

Buttercups Sanctuary for Goats

The Friends Newsletter Summer 2009

Tilly & Ginger

Tilly came to us some eight years ago. She was a noble looking white female Saanan, long legged, with an upright head supporting a pair of long elegant horns. Tilly was found abandoned near the centre of Manchester, tethered by a rope to a rubbish skip. When she arrived at the Sanctuary, although sporting the above attributes, she was emaciated, dirty, and confused. She never settled; always on her own, never making friends. Although attempts were made to introduce her to new bed fellows, she preferred her own company and insisted in having her own individual pen.

About a year later we travelled to Coventry to take into care a male Golden Guernsey cross. He was larger than normal for his type, sporting a magnificent pair of mature horns. He was peach coloured with long strands of hair along his back and down his hind quarters; he could have no name other than "Ginger". The then owner confessed to us on the telephone that she was at her wits end as to what to do with him. He was in a run at the bottom of the garden and would not let her get near him. She was afraid to go into the run to clean out his shed, and he certainly would not let her trim his feet.

They had 'Ginge' and his sister from when they were young kids. The goats had grown up together and were inseparable. Originally they were cared for by the daughter, who groomed and looked after them, so creating a close bond of friendship. The daughter then left home for university, so dad looked after the goats. Soon after this, Ginger's sister died, leaving him on his own. A few months later the father then died of a terminal illness, leaving the mother on her own to care for Ginger.

It was in the middle of summer and extremely hot, well into 30c plus, and Ginger had arrived at the Sanctuary the day before. All of the goats had eaten their fill at the hay racks, and were either standing or lying contentedly in the shade of the trees, regurgitating and chewing their morning feed, with the look of self satisfaction that only a camelide can express. In the middle of the field, lying down entirely alone, was Ginger. Thinking that he must be ill, we slowly walked up to see him so as to observe at closer quarters. He lay contentedly in the heat of the day with his head up, eyes closed, looking into the sun. Somewhat confused we left him to it, and walked quietly away. Sometime later, we reflected on his past history and the conditions where we had found him. It was a lovely garden setting with large mature trees over his run providing constant shade, but Ginger had seldom ever enjoyed the feeling of the sun on his back and was now relaxing with that warmth, and the feeling of having found new friends.

The day after, we observed the same behaviour, but this time he had someone with him; Tilly was lying close by watching him in adoration. When Ginger got up, so did Tilly. When Ginger decided to lie down, so did Tilly. When Ginger went to the hay rack Tilly followed. When Ginger went to the water trough to drink, so did Tilly. This went on all day. That night, not to put obstacles in the path of true love we decided to let them sleep together. For the first time since Tilly had arrived, she had found her true love and a life long companion.

Patron The Rt. Hon. Ann Widdecombe

E mail; enquiries@buttercups.org.uk Website www.buttercups.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1099627

Buttercups Sanctuary for Goats

The Friends Newsletter Summer 2009

Currie

Currie, you may remember, came to us last year. Only twelve months old, long legged and a typical teenager. As a young kid, he had been taken to the local market and was purchased for a wedding feast!! (hence the name). Fortunately for him, the necessary paperwork was not completed, the sale fell through, and he was left behind in his pen in a deserted market. A farmer took him home and for some months kept him on the farm. A neighbour then made contact with Buttercups, explained the situation and we straightaway made arrangements to collect him.

Currie a mature white Saanan, was at first, quite a challenge. For the first two weeks, volunteers were told not to go near him, as he was quite free with the use of his large horns. Time and patience has now transformed him into a beautiful and loving animal. We suspect that his time on the farm was probably spent living in a very confined area. His rear leg muscles have not properly developed, and he is very unstable in that area. Nature has a way of sorting out the weak and when Currie was brought into the main herd it was soon evident that many of the fitter and stronger males took advantage of his situation and set upon him, often knocking him to the floor. For this reason he was relocated to the small herd that lives separately a field away. This small group of eight acts as a welcoming group for entire males. Here, Currie is the dominant male, being the largest of the group.

The other morning when they had all eaten their breakfast and had been let out of their pens, Currie was in the mood for playing games. Picking on the smallest pigmy, who had only just woken up and was, to say the least, somewhat reluctant, Curry started by making playful contact with a head to head. Tail wagging frantically with excitement, he bounded two steps sideways with all four feet together, as if on springs. This action attracted the attention of another pigmy. Now, two heads against one - what fun! Up on his hind legs and a playful "down butt", he stepped back, and then a quick two steps forward and a "side horn twist". With all tails wagging with excitement, Currie in the centre, all three looked around together to see who may be watching. After a five second statue stare, Currie is off like a bullet, back legs giving way with a side ways lurch, but determined to keep going. The barn door is open - what fun; hay bales to climb!!

With the other two pigmies in hot pursuit he reaches the stepped bales first. On top of the front row of bales he turns and faces his pursuers. Up on rear legs and down, a quick side step and up onto the next row. Nobody dares to follow, so lets go higher! Racing up the next step of six bales, Currie looks back standing on his rear legs in a defiant "Hi Ho Silver" attitude. Suddenly his legs give way from under him, he collapsed, and slides down the hay stack on his back, landing at the bottom in a tangle of twisted legs. Meanwhile all the other goats had come to stand at the bottom of the stack, and were now looking on, somewhat bemused, with their tails wagging.

Shelly a.k.a. Diesel

Shelly was mentioned in the Spring Newsletter. This grey pigmy goat found abandoned, had been submerged in oil. We gave him over twenty warm baths using "washing up liquid" to remove the oil. All his hair fell out, leaving him pink skinned

Patron The Rt. Hon. Ann Widdecombe

E mail; enquiries@buttercups.org.uk Website www.buttercups.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1099627

Buttercups Sanctuary for Goats

The Friends Newsletter Summer 2009

and almost bald. The following day, we took him to the vets and the nurses re-named him Diesel. He was suffering from breathing problems, wheezing and coughing. Medication for horses, taken for a month in his morning and evening meals, has now sorted this out. His skin was dry, shrivelled and cracked leaving many "ulcer type" sores, all caused by the oil. This has been a major problem for him, and we first gave his skin two daily treatments by gently massaging in baby oil. At the end of each week we cleaned this off him using a special dog shampoo for dry skin. He was very proud of being the only goat wearing a coat, and I am sure he felt somewhat special. After three weeks his hair started to come through and his skin lost that pink look.

We then changed his medication to treat the ulcers that kept re - occurring over his body. Again, we had to revert to experimenting using a cream designed for burns on horses. This has done wonders for his skin and they have now virtually disappeared. Now, every three days, his bath has been changed to a shampoo which includes a steroid treatment. Diesel has now grown a full coat of hair and, to every ones surprise, has turned from grey into a beautiful white and brown goat.

So many of you responded to our appeal to help with Diesel's recovery. On occasions such as this, you can only imagine the joy and satisfaction it is to arrive at the vets and to say to them – 'Do all you can, cost doesn't come into it'. My sincere thanks go to you all.

Last year we were asked by the Ministry of Defence to take 32 goats into care. For many years the MOD had been making experiments with goats, for the purpose of submarine rescue. This involved putting the goats into pressure chambers and giving them the bends. Over this period of time over 200 goats suffered and died, but thanks to public pressure, in 2008 these experiments were halted. Buttercups is the only goat charity in the UK dealing with goat welfare, so we were approached to re-home them. We were fortunate to find wonderful homes for them all and were able to keep them in their family units.

When we find good foster homes for our goats they still remain the property of the charity. If there are problems, we are then in the position to take them back into our care. Recently, we were in such a situation, and four lovely white MOD Saanan's were brought back to us.

Early in the morning last week; many of them were crowded round the long hay racks scattered around the yard. Diesel was standing alone at one end of a rack, contentedly pulling out mouthfuls of fresh hay. The four newly arrived MOD goats came sauntering up alongside him, and stood in a row; they also started pulling out hay to eat. Diesel, being a pigmy goat, stands at only about 18 inches tall and the MOD Saanan's tower above him at more than 4 feet. For about five minutes all was well, until the Saanan closest to Diesel thought that perhaps the hay Diesel was eating must be sweeter than that in the rest of hay rack, and gently pushed Diesel to one side.

Oh dear, this was certainly the wrong thing to do. Taking three steps back for momentum, then up on his hind legs, with his front two tucked into his body, three tiny steps forward, standing upright and balancing perfectly, a faultless two horned attack right into his opponents rear quarters. So unexpected was this action that the

Patron The Rt. Hon. Ann Widdecombe

E mail; enquiries@buttercups.org.uk Website www.buttercups.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1099627

Buttercups Sanctuary for Goats

The Friends Newsletter Summer 2009

first Saanan's rear end immediately collapsed. He floundered into the second who, startled by this unexpected attack, immediately collided with his neighbour. He then collapsed onto the floor in sheer horror, leaving the last to take flight out into the field as if his life depended on it.

Diesel then returned to his end of the hay rack and continued with his chewing and meditation leaving the rest of the area now devoid of any opposition.

Guardian Scheme - Become a 'Guardian Angel'

We have recently launched our "Guardianship Scheme," making the recipient a "Guardian Angel." The cost of keeping a goat for a year can vary, depending on type, the facilities available, and possible medical expenses. Taking into account the cost of food, hay, straw, worming, tools, etc, it costs in the region of £300 to keep a goat for a year. You can become a "Guardian Angel" by paying for the upkeep and care of one of the Buttercups goats. For an annual fee of £300 you can choose to sponsor any goat, other than those available under the Adopt a Goat scheme.

In return, you receive a personalized certificate. You can come and see your goat any morning; brush and comb them, take them for a walk, and as a special treat give them a bath and shampoo if you wish! Occasionally, if you feel energetic, you could come along and help clean out their pen. If you wish to know more about goat husbandry, you are also invited to be a guest at one of the many "Goat Workshops" that are held during the year at the Sanctuary. If you are unable to visit us to choose a goat yourself, why not tell us the type and nature of the goat you wish to support, and we will choose one for you?

Yang

If you have visited the Sanctuary recently you will no doubt have seen "Yang", who is a black male pigmy. Unfortunately he contracted viral arthritis some three months ago which has left him crippled. Within days, both of his front legs were affected and he was immediately given anti inflammatory and pain relief drugs. All we could do was to wait for the virus to burn itself out, which it did after ten days. He has now been left with permanent damage to his front knees, leaving them badly bent. He seems quite happy, keen to come out and moving about with all the other goats; he is often seen walking about and grazing. We have of course taken professional advice but there seems little to be done. Needless to say all the volunteers are making a special fuss of him, which he thoroughly enjoys.

Patron The Rt. Hon. Ann Widdecombe

E mail; enquiries@buttercups.org.uk Website www.buttercups.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1099627