

Considering an Apprenticeship?

Read some Case Studies from our previous & current Apprentices

Terri Ann Watkins



Advanced Apprentice at Popsters Stud

I chose to do an apprenticeship when I left school because I wanted hands on experience and to learn things on the job rather than in a classroom. I chose to do an apprenticeship at Popsters Stud, purely because they were the only yard that were professionally competing and offering an apprenticeship in my area, so I jumped at the chance to apply. It was even better that it was local to where I live.

When I started I had no experience with the world of showing or working with Welsh ponies, coming from a dressage background. Not knowing what to expect I was excited to jump in after hearing about the different things Heidi and Justin (owners of Popsters) had achieved and done. Once I had a taste of showing (both ridden and in-hand), I was hooked and wanted a Welsh section D myself. Heidi and Justin found a Cob mare for me to have on loan for 2 years, to learn the ropes of showing and ring craft.

In our first ridden season together we won many Junior Ridden classes, became Junior Champion and qualified for the Junior Ridden at the NPS Championships where we were placed and took part in the evening performance. We are now preparing for our second and last season together, before she returns to her owner and we are looking for a 3 year old cob for me to buy. At Christmas, I was also given the opportunity to show a foal in-hand which was a great experience!

During my 18 months at Popsters so far, I have had the opportunity to travel all over the country to many different shows, from small local ones to large county (three counties, Derby festival) shows and in October Horse of the year show.



At HOYS 2015 Popsters qualified a ridden section C mare and an in-hand section A mare and foal in the Cuddy. Sarum Rose Petal (section A) and her foal were reserve champions in her class, and went through into the evening performance in the main arena under the spotlight. This made her supreme Mountain and Moreland pony of the year. It was such a pleasure and a very proud moment to be a part of this achievement and journey. In the section C ridden class there were also 4 other Popsters ponies bred by Heidi and Justin, with Popsters also being named breeder of the year.

Also at Popsters, I have been part of sales- Fayre Oaks (sections A and B) and the cob sales (C and D). Both ridden and in-hand ponies were produced for owners. At Fayre Oaks we achieved highest price of the day with a section A stallion. At the cob sales we achieved highest priced section C with Popsters Rock Chick- a filly foal. Not only have I been able to learn horse and yard management skills, but also communication and social skills with owners and clients etc by being at shows and the sales. During the sales I stood ponies up for potential buyers, got them ready for the ring and presented them in the ring before they entered into the sales ring.

I found it very easy to complete my Diploma because of all the practical work on the yard and most of the time I completed units without even realising it. I also felt confident with the units as I got so much practice with them from the different things happening; such as veterinary treatments that need carrying out, everyday mucking out, feeding, watering. It was very easy to fit the written work in around work on the yard and I'm looking forward to completing my level 3 - including the breaking unit where I will be breaking in my own Section D.

I have been given more opportunities, experiences and help to achieve my own goals than I ever imagined. Including being granted a £2000 bursary from the Welsh Pony and Cob Society. I have only scraped the surface with the things I have been a part of during my time so far at Popsters and would encourage everyone to go for an Apprenticeship! I cannot thank Heidi and Justin at Popsters enough for all the opportunities they give me to me!

Rachel Gander

Intermediate and Advanced Apprentice at Summerhouse



I have always wanted to work in the equine world and after some basic experience at other yards I started at Summerhouse in September 2010 as a working pupil completing a Level 2 Horse Care Apprenticeship.

It was hard work but also fun. I learned a lot about looking after the horses and how a large riding school is run at the same time as gaining valuable work experience. I progressed at a pace which suited me and started to learn how to run the Yard and complete supervisions.

I also started to take on more responsibilities such as dealing with the farrier, ensuring that all horses at Summerhouse got seen regularly and if any treatment was needed I monitored this. This gave me more knowledge about shoeing, hoof care and equine first aid.

I was given the opportunity to complete my Advanced Apprenticeship and started to supervise the yard on a full time basis, with continued support and guidance from my peers. I completed my L3 qualification and was then employed as Yard Supervisor. After a year I moved on to work on reception where I now support the lead receptionist.

I want to gain more business experience through Summerhouse and know I will be given valuable support and opportunities to develop myself as my career progresses.

Yasmin Beard

Intermediate and Advanced Apprentice at Summerhouse



I came to Summerhouse to gain experience and started on my L2 Apprenticeship in Horse Care. This gave me the knowledge and confidence to be able to tack up, muck out as part of a team, general horsemanship and yard duties.

In the future I would like to have my own yard, where I could run treks and teach clients on their own or on my horses.

To help with this I wanted to achieve my coaching units so Summerhouse advised me to take the coaching pathway in my L3 Advanced Apprenticeship, as this will give me the teaching qualification I need.

To gain experience I helped to teach some lead rein lessons and I gained some of my own clients. This helped me learn how to progress my clients and in my daily riding lessons I was helped to develop more feel and skills to school horses effectively.



Summerhouse has also offered support and advice in helping me set up a business plan using the site costs as a comparison.

I consider my time and experience here at Summerhouse as a positive stepping stone in my long term career plan.

I have now completed my Level 3 Diploma and have successfully worked as a full time groom with a local up and coming Dressage and Showjumping rider. In 2016 I was offered a position in the Yard team at Summerhouse where I am supporting the Yard Manager and help supervise the current Apprentices