

# A DAY in my LIFE

We take a look behind the scenes with **Hannah Buteaux**, equine vet at Seadown Veterinary Services in Hythe.

**M**Y day starts at 6am, if not earlier, when my daughter wakes and I'm up organising family breakfasts before my mum arrives at 8am to take over. I really couldn't manage without her! Juggling life as a working mum and vet in the New Forest is a challenge but I wouldn't change it for the world. I grew up in the area and absolutely love living and working in such a special place.

Today is like any other, filled with patients of all shapes and sizes in different parts of the Forest. I am never quite sure what's going to greet me when I arrive at a destination. I start the day at the Hythe hospital at 8.30am to treat two current equine inpatients, giving medications and updating their owners. I see that today's diary is already pretty full — no rest for the wicked but it's a beautiful day and our patients are always as lovely as our clients. There is nothing quite like the community in and around the Forest — but I admit I am biased!

First port of call early morning is to see Andy and Sally Davis in Totton, who have around 15 alpacas and also a small herd of Valais Blacknose Sheep. Andy has called me for a health check on his beautiful alpacas. They are a delight to work with - well handled, soft fleeced and friendly, and come in a wondrous range of exotic colours. I was pleased to be able to tell Andy that they are all fit and healthy, a credit to his husbandry and ready for the breeding season. Next onto Andy's small flock of Valais Blacknose Sheep. It's not an easy task to turn them to have their feet trimmed and I'm grateful to Andy for the extra muscle in rolling them over and helping restrain them while I tackle the trimming. I'm not the tallest and these sheep must weigh close to 100kg each!



Next, I head off for a call that came in this morning to see a grey pony that is having trouble walking. I arrive at the yard and sure enough, the pony is clearly in a lot of discomfort coming out of the stable. I listen carefully to the owner's history of recent events and fully examine the friendly mare, checking her feet and taking some blood tests. I suspect laminitis and give some advice regarding treatment, but it's good to be sure she's responding, so I will call back in a couple of days.



Half an hour later, I arrive at my next visit on the edge of Lymington. It's a nursery school where they encourage the children to take care of their own animals as well as understand about all aspects of Mother Nature and the environment. Currently,

they have two Kune Kune pigs (Pumba and Timon, named by the children!) and some chickens. Pumba has had a skin disorder for some weeks on his face but it has been gradually healing, so this is a visit to check that no further medication is required. These pigs are very friendly and are easily examined while I feed them some pig nuts. The chickens also allow me to examine them all over, checking their feather and skin condition and advising on worming.



My final call of the day is at a local riding school to vaccinate some New Forest ponies. They are all fit and well, and behave for their vet visit. I'm pretty tired as I head back again to the hospital to write up notes and pick up any messages, but it's been another varied and really interesting day, out and about across some of the most beautiful parts of the Forest.

I finally roll in through the front door at 6.30pm, and my husband and daughter are there to greet me. She loves animals and to hear stories from my day. I might be exhausted but it's a real privilege to be able to describe what mummy has been doing all day. She's only a year old but she adores our pets at home and if she seeks to follow in my footsteps when she grows up, I shall be immensely proud. Being a vet is a hard but wonderfully rewarding life!



## ABOUT ME

I qualified from The Royal Veterinary College London in 2009 and following graduation I spent some time working for the equine charity SPANA at their hospital in Morocco, before joining Seadown Veterinary Services.

Working mainly with equine and farm animals, I enjoy all aspects of equine practice with particular interests in internal

medicine, emergency medicine and anaesthesia. I am the regional lead veterinarian for BARTA (British Animal Rescue and Trauma Association) and am also delighted to have been recently confirmed as one of the New Forest Pony Breed Society vets, joining my colleague and Seadown Director, Laura Trigg from 1st August this year.

Photo credit: Richard Dunwoody