

Patrick, the celebrity Shetland

Given his name because he was born on St Patrick's Day, Tawna Patrick is a two year old, 7th registered miniature Shetland who has become a bit of a celebrity in his village - Cockington, near Torbay in Devon.

He belongs to Kirk and Hannah Petrakis who are currently training Patrick to become a therapy pony to help those with mental health, disabilities and those in need. "As part of his training, we were given permission to take Patrick into the village's tea rooms and local pub, the Drum Inn," Kirk tells us. "Dogs are allowed and the landlord said it would be discrimination not to allow Patrick in as well. The customers love seeing him in there and while Patrick was a bit nervous at first - the coffee machine in the tea rooms scared him - he soon started to love all the attention. We were very careful not to make him too frightened and introduced him to everything slowly and surely. Patrick has a lovely calm temperament and is very sensitive, so we think he will be very good as a therapy pony."



Patrick has a big following on social media

Sadly, lockdown happened the day before St Patrick's Day where the Shetland was due to spend his birthday celebrating in the Drum Inn with a few sips of Guinness. TV presenter Alison Hammond was due to come down and do a live interview for breakfast TV and although Kirk and Hannah met Alison, the interview wasn't able to take place and is now scheduled for 2021.

Instead, during lockdown, Patrick proved that he is

already a good therapy pony by entertaining those who have been self isolating through the powers of social media. "We walked Patrick around the grounds of Cockington Court, where he lives, and took lovely photos and videos of his adventures for people to see," Kirk continues. "We received some lovely comments from people saying they were able to see Cockington through Patrick and it had made them feel brighter during a difficult time."

In addition to his therapy training, Patrick and Cockington Court are set to star in a children's book, which will be illustrated by Hannah and will feature all the beautiful wildlife and picturesque buildings the village has to offer. "The book will have a picture of the real Patrick on the back," says Kirk. "The idea is that people can then come and meet him if they are visiting Cockington."

Hannah and Kirk are ambassadors for the War Horse Memorial, which raises funds for animals in need, and an event is held in November each year in Cockington at the Drum Inn, where people knit purple poppies and raise money in any way they can for the various charities that the War Horse Memorial helps.

"Patrick is the War Horse Memorial's Hero Horse number 16. He also features in the official virtual launch of the War Horse Memorial video alongside



Kirk and Patrick laying a purple wreath at Cockington Church

Jenny Seagrove, Chris Hollins, Colin Thackery, soprano singer Christina Jonston, Captain Gary Chilton and Major Craig Hallat, who is musical director of the band for the HouseHold Cavalry. Major Craig's poignant song 'Elegy to the War Horse' played during footage of Patrick and Kirk laying a purple wreath next to Cockington Church.

There is a plaque up in the village in memory of the horses, donkeys and mules who were taken into battle during World War I. "Patrick is the mascot for the Cockington memorial," Kirk reveals. "When I took Patrick along to lay the purple wreath, I also took one of my big carriage horses Annie, who bowed her head to the wreath as we walked past it, as if she was paying her respects. It was a very moving moment for everyone who saw it."

While Patrick won't start visiting hospitals, schools and homes as a therapy pony until he's completed his training, he's certainly captured the hearts of local residents who regularly shout "Look, it's Patrick the celebrity pony" when they see him out and about in Cockington. "We love our animals, they are all part of our family," says Kirk.

The pony has his own Facebook page - the Adventures of Patrick the Pony - and Cockington Court, where he lives, is a tourist attraction that's full of history, with beautiful lakes, craft studios,



Enjoying a few sips of Guinness in the Drum Inn

thatched cottages and is popular for cream teas and carriage rides. In fact, one of Cockington Court's residents Charles Herbert Mallock, a writer and poet in the 1920s, died fighting in World War I, and many of his own horses from Cockington Court fought in this war, too.

After being spotted enjoying a few sips of Guinness in his local, the story caught the attention of the press and Patrick began appearing in newspapers all over the world. "In limited amounts, Guinness is good for ponies because it contains lots of iron," says Kirk. "We are working on getting Patrick his own special horse box so he can visit his fans from further afield and spread happiness."

Once lockdown restrictions are cleared, why not take a trip to Devon to go and visit this little local celebrity and discover more about his antics. He's made quite a name for himself already!



Patrick at his home Cockington Court



Customers love seeing Patrick in the pub

Sharptor Silver Skyline

Karen Hodge has been in touch to share how her four year old grandson has been enjoying lockdown with his seven year Shetland mare, known as Sky.

"During this time Harvey has come off the lead rein and even taught himself to canter on her. She has the most amazing temperament and is a credit to her breeder Julian Walters."



"Harvey has even stolen his Mum Vikki's Fell mare Inleggarth Preview for a ride."

"We took this picture on a particularly hot day, when the pair of them were having fun in the yard and enjoying a cool down. Sky just stood on the paddling pool until she was led out."

Photos © Kirk and Hannah Petrakis