



My Horse Riding Story by Suzie Jo Walker

Tuesday morning, yippee, it's riding day on Daisy. She's my favourite but sometimes I ride Sooty and he's really good was well. I was born with no sight so when my special college said I was going riding I was very excited. I have to remember to put on my jodphurs and take my riding hat with me. I go on the bus to the stables where the helpers are waiting. Before going to the mounting block I put on my hat and Nicky comes to help me, Sue calls 'Daisy please'.

The first time I rode her I thought I was going to sit on a lovely warm cuddly pony but it was a hard cold saddle. Anyway I now know that beyond the saddle there is a warm neck and Daisy's mane. I put my foot in the stirrup, find my reins and say 'walk on'. Off we go with Sarah leading me and side walkers Clare and Alice. I use my legs and my voice to make Daisy 'walk on' and when I want her to stop I say 'whoa'. Felicity, the coach, tells me what to do, Suzie Jo 'head up, heels down'. I do exercises, play with balls dropping them into buckets and fishing nets, with hoops that I put on hooks but because I can't see anything my helpers tap the buckets and help me feel for the hooks. Another game is with a dice - Felicity throws the dice and calls out six steps so I make Daisy walk six steps. Sometime Daisy has a tickle and this makes me jump and I think I might fall off, but of course I won't because I have my helpers, and sometimes she sneezes which makes me laugh. When the weather is nice I ride outside and as we leave the indoor school I can hear Daisy's hooves making a tip tap noise on the concrete. The field we ride around is near a road so I hear the cars and lorries going by. We find wild flowers which I can feel and smell. We have treasure hunts and play games.

When it's time to get off I give Daisy a big pat and cuddle, say thank for the ride and 'see you next week', thank my helpers and before going back to the bus (said in a whisper!) Alice gives me a biscuit. I like riding because it's good exercise for the muscles in my legs and strengthens my body and it's much better than being at college. It's great fun and makes me very happy and having been born totally blind I never thought I would be able to ride a pony one day, so thank you everyone.

One last thing, I have learnt to do 'rising trot'!

Dictated by Suzie Jo Walker rider from WESC Foundation for Visual Impairment, Exeter

Acorn & Squirrels of Exeter RDA Group