

Summer 2006

Great news! The work of the Donkey Sanctuary and EST is going to be featured on the "Animal 24/7" television series, which will be on BBC1 every weekday morning during September at 9.15. The film crew has recorded many aspects of our work, much of which we hope will be shown on the programme. These include accompanying one of our vets, Vicky Grove, throughout her working day, joining our team on its visits to nursing homes, where the donkeys are given a very warm reception by the elderly residents, and visits by our Welfare Officers to beach donkey operators. They also filmed the donkeys at Paccombe Farm as they were let out into the fields after having spent the long winter months in their stables. This is a wonderful, exciting time for them, as you can see from their faces!



Donkeys at "turn out"

I do hope you are able to see as many of these programmes as possible, and we would like to thank True North Productions and the BBC for giving us this opportunity of showing our work to you.

Donkey Week

What a brilliant week it was this year! The weather was kind, and the donkeys really enjoyed all the extra attention they received! Unfortunately I haven't been too well lately - I suppose "Anno Domini" takes its toll - and I was unable to join in this year. However, with the support of our wonderful staff, my son Paul ably took over my role for the week and everyone had a lovely time. This year, of the 331 supporters who came along, 102 have been attending Donkey Weeks every year for over ten years, and 9 for over twenty years! As you can imagine, firm friendships have been made as a result of a common love for donkeys. Anyone who would like to join this happy throng next May will be more than welcome, when I hope to be with you!

Mickos

Poor Mickos had been a stray in the Sugar Loaf mountain area south-west of Glengarriff in County Cork since his owner died eighteen years ago. He had no shelter, and was surviving on titbits from passing hikers on the Kerry Way walk and whatever rough grazing he could find. However, in February this year, a concerned hiker reported to our Donkey Sanctuary in Lisscarroll that Mickos had very overgrown hooves - they were long, turned upwards and split. He was also suffering from rainscald, a nasty

condition suffered by donkeys when their skin gets excessively wet from standing in heavy, driving rain. Having located Mickos, Welfare Officer, Veronica Sheehan, immediately called a vet and the Gardai and, a phone call later, the Sanctuary lorry was sent to collect him.



Mickos on arrival at the Sanctuary

Paddy Barrett, manager of the Sanctuary in Liscarroll, was initially concerned about the damage to Mickos' hooves, but he seems to be improving, thanks to extra feeds at breakfast time, pain killers administered by way of a "sandwich", when the drug is hidden between slices of bread, as well as lots of expert, loving care and attention. Hopefully he will enjoy a long and happy future in the safety of the Irish Sanctuary.

Overseas

As you know, we work in many parts of the world to help donkeys that have such very hard lives. They are of utmost importance to some of the poorest people in the world, as they are used to transport goods to and from market and carry necessities such as water, all of which can be many hours' walk away. If a poor owner loses his donkey it can be disastrous. A healthy donkey is therefore an absolute lifeline to a poverty-stricken family.

We try to help donkeys in as many developing countries as our funds will allow – by free veterinary care where possible, by educating owners in how to care for their donkeys and, on occasions, assisting other organisations to help donkeys in countries where we, for various reasons, are unable to be present.

Another important aspect of our work is to give training on donkey welfare to as many vets around the world as possible. An important event in this year's calendar is a Colloquium we are hosting in **Ethiopia** with the collaboration of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Addis Ababa University.

This will take place in October, and leading figures in animal welfare, legislation and the environment will be giving lectures on the main topics concerning the future of working equines. There will also be "hands-on" sessions, field visits and practical demonstrations. Veterinary delegates from all over the world will be attending, and we hope they will carry their new-found knowledge back to their various countries in order to help as many equines as possible.

Following an introductory visit to **Tanzania** in March, The Donkey Sanctuary, with the co-operation of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), is funding two donkey owner training courses in the Mgeta area. The donkeys there suffer mainly from harness sores and the effects of flies. In particular the flies seem to irritate the donkeys' legs, so some owners have devised donkey stockings to protect them! It is hoped the training courses will help the owners to find ways to solve these kind of problems. I thought you'd like to see this photograph of the donkeys in their latest lingerie – complete with suspenders!



In **Egypt** we run mobile clinics to help working donkeys. In 2005 our project leader Mourad Ragheb and his team administered 76,265 free veterinary treatments to donkeys to alleviate their suffering, and provided advice to 24,630 owners by helping with donkey husbandry and harnessing issues.

Joshua

Joshua came into our care thirteen years ago, when he was just two years old. He has always been a bit nervous and is occasionally a bit difficult to handle. To promote the work of our charity the Donkey Display Team attends various agricultural shows in the South of England. The team also puts on shows at special events here in Sidmouth. The team decided to recruit Joshua to see if some new skills would help improve his confidence – and their idea worked!



I thought you'd like to see this photograph of him on a "dress rehearsal" for our "donkeys working around the world" display. He is sporting the type of pad we encourage donkey owners in developing countries to use to reduce the instances of sores being caused by poor harnessing.

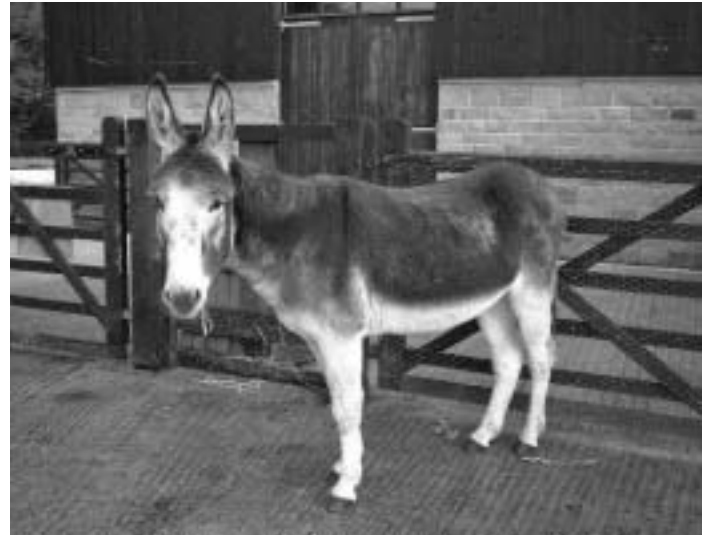
EST

I have some absolutely marvellous news here! We have at last managed to purchase some land near Ivybridge, Devon, on which to build our fifth EST Centre. Planning permission has been granted and, when built, the Centre will serve children with special needs and disabilities in the Plymouth and South Hams areas. If all goes well, we hope to have everything up-and-running in the early part of 2007!

It's just amazing how much the children benefit from their contact with our gentle donkeys, and should you ever have the opportunity to visit The Donkey Sanctuary, do try to pop into the EST Slade Centre to watch the children riding and see the benefits gained by both animals and children. It's lovely to think that, having been taken into our care themselves, the donkeys are then, in return, able

to help children with problems of their own – and in turn you can help both by adopting one of the donkeys! A form is enclosed for this purpose.

Douglas the escape artist!



Douglas is one of the donkey team at our Leeds Centre, where he has the very important job of helping children with special needs and disabilities. Just recently he has developed a reputation for being an escape artist! He likes nothing better than to open the gate for all the other donkeys so that they can go for a stroll. All the stable doors now have extra bolts on them, which has foxed Douglas for a while, but no doubt he'll work things out and we'll have to devise a new way to ensure the donkeys stay safely where they belong!

Beach donkeys

For many years donkeys have been seen on British beaches giving children what is perhaps their first contact with a large animal. We receive many letters from people who recall the excitement of their first donkey ride, and who are now concerned as to the welfare of beach donkeys today. Last summer there were almost 1000 donkeys working on beaches around the UK. We have no objection to this, providing they are treated well - that the eight-stone weight limit is not exceeded, they are fed and watered correctly, have good veterinary care, and are not worked for many hours at a time.

Our Welfare Officers attend licensing meetings before the season starts, along with the local council and a veterinary surgeon. However, advice given in situ on the beach can often prove difficult for the beach donkey operator, who

has to keep an eye on the children as they ride, and be aware of tides etc. For this reason, in March, we decided to hold a "Beach Donkey Operators' Day" at The Donkey Sanctuary. The nine attendees from the South West region were able to expand their knowledge of the donkey, and we were able to develop and strengthen our working relationship with them. Presentations and practical demonstrations were given, including donkey foot care, how to apply a bandage or a poultice to the foot, hoof trimming and how to recognise problems. Our Senior Veterinary Surgeon, David Hadrill gave presentations about the work of the Sanctuary, both here and overseas, and vet Tshidi Makhambeni's talk covered sarcoids, deworming and tetanus vaccinations. I'm sure the beach donkey operators gained much from the day which, in turn, will help ensure the well-being of their donkeys.

Clever donkeys

I thought you might like to read the following story, which was recently sent to me by Mrs Thomas of Congresbury in Somerset. It relates to some friends who owned two donkeys and a goose, who lived in a field opposite their owners' kitchen. One morning, looking out of the window, they saw the donkeys walking round and round in a tight circle. On closer examination they found that they were walking around the goose, and in the field was a fox. They continued to do this until the fox had gone!

Gift Aid

Don't forget that we can re-claim money from the tax man for every donation you send. We estimate that we could re-claim tens of thousands of pounds if all our supporters who are tax payers completed a Gift Aid form. The donkeys need it much more than the tax man! If we already have your signed form, thank you very much; if we haven't, and you would like to give us some extra help, please tick the box at the back of the Donkey World Sales Catalogue (which is enclosed) and we'll send you a form.

Field of Dreams

We were delighted that so many of you have set up a special Field of Dreams fund mentioned in our Christmas newsletter. Each fund is dedicated to the name of a departed loved one and allows families, friends and colleagues to help a cause that was dear to them. We've enclosed a leaflet explaining more about these funds and how they can help to keep special memories alive.

Finally

I do hope as many of you as possible are able to attend Memorial Day, which will be held at The Donkey Sanctuary on Saturday 7th October 2006. This is a special day when we remember all our loved ones who are no longer with us – relatives, friends or pets. This year the proceedings will commence at 10.30am, to enable the vicar to have more time to spend with people close to their memorials around the Sanctuary.

As I mentioned earlier, I have not been too well lately and, although I am going to stay with The Donkey Sanctuary for many years to come, we will be looking for a new Executive to take over some of the more demanding aspects of running the charity. Rest assured, though, that I will continue to play a key role and be with my donkeys for what I hope will be "donkeys' years"!

Really good news! Every year details of the top charities are sent out in the form of two books, one from the Charities Aid Foundation called "Charity Trends" and the other from CaritasData Limited which produces "The Top 3000 Charities". I'm delighted to advise you that both of these independent reference books confirm that The Donkey Sanctuary spends only 5 pence in the pound on administration and management!!

I really need all your support and help, and cannot thank you enough for the tremendous way you have contributed towards making The Donkey Sanctuary such a success in improving the lives of thousands of donkeys. The donkeys join me in thanking you all – bless you!

Yours sincerely



Dr Elisabeth D Svendsen, MBE
Chief Executive