

# DONKEY DIGEST

The Magazine of the Affiliated Donkey Societies of Australia

MARCH 2019



**Purple Poppy**  
To remember animal victims of war.





# DONKEY DIGEST

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## FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of Donkey Digest has been the hardest I have ever had to put together in the four years I have been editing the magazine. Why? Not because of any lack of stories and news but because a personal tragedy derailed the process half way through. Our 'baby' boy Elvis, pictured above, died in a tragic and mysterious way that we are finding difficult to come to terms with. Ian saw him at 5pm on a Sunday night (isn't it always a Sunday night when you need to get a vet???) and all was good. Ten minutes later he was found at the furthest end of the back paddock - where he never goes - flipped over the fence and lying in the neighbour's paddock. He could move his upper body but not his back legs. It was like he was paralysed.

Vet came. Nothing made sense to her either. No colic. No tickbites. No breaks. Suggested he may have damaged his spinal cord. Lots of medication given which perked him up. Ian and Tiny, the dog stayed with him in the paddock overnight but by next morning, he had deteriorated. Despite our attempts to give him every chance, we had no choice but to euthanase him. The bright look in his eyes will haunt us forever. He was only eight years old and the first and only donkey foal we have ever had on our property.

Molly, Elvis's mum died a couple of years ago and since then he has been with his big sister Flicka. She is now the only donkey here and is understandably heartbroken and looking for him everywhere. We must now address the problem of rehoming her or getting another donkey pal. Meanwhile, Ian and I have put together a little tribute to Elvis on P16. Self-indulgent maybe but he was a cheeky little character right from the word go.

More heartbreak has been caused by Australia's unpredictable weather. Cyclones, droughts, floods, bushfires, soaring temperatures – we continue to cop it all.. Andy Hearn tells us her experience with taking in animals evacuated from the Gippsland bushfires in Victoria. No doubt there were other donkey lovers seriously affected by these fires and we keep our hooves crossed for positive outcomes. It is a stressful time for all.

.Happy Trails

Christine

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## COVER PHOTO:

'Simpson', aka Pepe Petrovich leads Blithe Moon Jindabyne (Jindi) to pick up a wounded soldier, Astrid Petrovich. Jindi plus Pepe and Astrid, members of the Lighthorse, took part in a photo shoot for the promotion of Purple Poppy Day held at an Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation commemoration outside Bairnsdale, Victoria. See the full story on Page 9.





## Registrar's Roundup with Kerrie Haynes-Lovell

Registrations	Registration no.	Owner
Sedona Chuck	18/007JA/AM	Stella Wakil
Blithe Moon Echo	18/027GE	Ann Berrett
Rocking Donkey Brunello	19/001GE	Stella Wakil
Rocking Donkey Eeyore	19/002GE	Stella Wakil
Crofters Brae Isador	18/041JE/EI	Stella Wakil
Rocking Donkey Pogo	18/042JE/AusM	Stella Wakil
Rocking Donkey Sienna	18/043JE/AusM	Stella Wakil
Rocking Donkey Freya	18/044JE/AusM	Stella Wakil
Rocking Donkey Benebell	18/045JE/AusM	Stella Wakil
Keysoe Sky	19/003GE	Ruth Walker
Keysoe Timor	19/004GE	Ruth Walker
Crofters Brae Sandpiper	19/001JE/EI	Courtney Galea
Crofters Brae Sleeper	19/002JE/EI	Courtney Galea

Transfer #	Name	Registration #	From	To
19/001	Rocking Donkey Brunello	19/001GE	Stella Wakil	Matthew Palise
19/002	Rocking Donkey Eeyore	19/002GE	Stella Wakil	Matthew Palise
19/003	Crofters Brae Celtic Knight	16/004JA(E/I)	Marie Lawson	Courtney Galea
19/004	Crofters Brae Sandpiper	19/001JE/EI	Marie Lawson	Courtney Galea
19/005	Crofters Brae Sleeper	19/002JE/EI	Marie Lawson	Courtney Galea
19/006	Western Downs Maybee	18/020JE/EI	Kim Dalton	Gaylene Callander

### FUNDS MATCHED FOR TANZANIA

Animal Aid Abroad (AAA) was chosen by Ethical Jobs as the Australian charity to support in January. For that month donations to AAA were matched, dollar for dollar, by EthicalJobs.com.au to support AAA's work, up to \$20,000.

AAA supporters succeeded in raising \$20,000 which was matched by the Ethical Jobs community, raising \$40,000 for working donkeys in Tanzania. Congratulations to all.

This money will now go to assist working donkeys in Tanzania who are routinely beaten by their owners, forced to haul or carry inhumane loads and harnessed to a yoke cart system which causes great pain, suffering and trauma, both physical and mental, for these poor animals.

### TABLE TENNIS BODY YIELDS TO PRESSURE

After much expressed disappointment by players and animal rights activists, Table Tennis Australia (TTA) has agreed not to renew its sponsorship arrangement with the Chinese-owned Australian Donkey Industry. This sponsorship expires in April 2019.

TTA was made aware of the cruel and unnecessary ejiao trade which is causing a global disaster for donkey populations. A number of table tennis players were unhappy with being associated with this industry, as were animal rights groups such as Animal Aid Abroad.

Australia – the Northern Territory in particular – is looking to establish donkey farms to supply Chinese-run abattoirs.

## Equines get the Royal treatment

Christmas came early for Ollie the donkey and Harry the Shetland when they 'met' Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall for a Christmas carol concert in Westminster held in support of working donkeys and horses. The Duchess was chuffed when she discovered the pony shared its name with her youngest step-son, the Duke of Sussex.

The carol service took place in Guards' Chapel, London with Camilla attending in the capacity of President of Brooke Action for Working Horses and Donkeys. The Duchess has been President of the equine welfare charity since 2006. A keen equine welfare advocate herself, The Duchess has visited Brooke's work in Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan and India.

100 million horses, donkeys and mules are currently working worldwide, earning an income that 600 million people rely on to build better futures for their families. Brooke works with owners, governments and local policy makers to bring about long lasting change for working horses, donkeys and mules and those who depend on them.



## Driving Clinic in Sweden

Megan Ask is an inspiration with her self-taught harness pair Ada Una the donkey and Lennart the mini Shetland pony.

Lennart has been with Megan since 2005 and is a lovely pony to drive, according to Megan. However, when she added the newcomer Ada in 2016, the donkey was not trained to drive. Megan set about teaching her new donkey and then to pair with the pony. Not a bad effort for someone who teaches herself as she goes along.

Professional horse carriage driver, Jenny Göransson ran a clinic in February in Billinge, Skåne. Of course, Megan and her pair attended.

"I wanted to learn more about driving in pairs. I've done it a lot but I wanted to be taught by a professional who could give me some tips. It was great driving Lennart in pairs with Ada while she is still learning. She is good to work with, even though she is a bit cautious," said Megan.



Working in the indoor arena at the clinic, Megan drives under the watchful eye of Jenny Göransson. Jenny & her husband run a professional carriage driving farm with horses only but it's clear she's having a lot of fun with this unusual pair.

Megan Ask harnesses up her super cute pair Ada Una the donkey & Lennart the mini pony.





# Young mule impresses on hunting debut

**T**he owner of a young mule who followed hounds for the first time on New Year's Day joked that the "stars lined up" for his dream to come true.

Chris Cooke, owner of Cornwall Swimming Horses in the U.K. had been interested in mules for some time, when a friend spotted an advertisement online for "Zeb", near the end of last year.

He was not ideally placed – in Ipswich, some 400 miles away – but Chris said that "everything fell into place", to allow him to buy and hunt Zeb, such as his friend's agreeing to the drive, the buyer holding on to the mule rather than selling him before Chris could get there, and the fact the meet was so near allowing Zeb to ride there with friends from the yard.

"All my horses hunt," Chris said. "It does them the power of good in terms of education; they learn to think for themselves, and have to be clever. The country is perfect for here for Zeb;



Zeb the mule (dark one at back), ridden by Chris Cooke waits patiently at his first ever hunt on New Year's Day

it's not big country where you need a thoroughbred with all the stamina, they have to be tough and clever."

"So I had to get him fit – and teach him to jump!"

"It's always a slight risk, taking a horse out for the first time to a big meet, but I knew the ground would be suitable for Zeb, and wouldn't over-face him – and he just took it all in his stride," Chris said. "His big ears were flicking here and there, taking it all in, but we've built up a real bond."

"He jumped a stone 'hedge' [wall] a good 3'6" to 4" high; he jumped up, I stopped him because there was a ditch on the other side, but he just jumped that too – he really gets it."

"Mules are so expressive; their ears are talking to you all the time, and their tails swishing, like a dog wagging its tail or a peeved cat. You could tell he was loving it."



## SINGING DONKEYS

Influential Dutch artist Karel Appel's eye-catching installation at the Musee d'Art Modern, Paris.

# £30 miniature mule takes five-year-old rider out hunting

**A** £30 mini mule made his hunting debut on Boxing Day in Ireland with his five-year-old rider on board.

Napoleon, who stands about 10hh, tackled banks and leaped a gate, the latter without tiny Farrah Costello on board, on his first time out with the Premier Harriers in Ballylooby, Tipperary.

"We watched a film about hunting the other day, and were talking about it, and Farrah said she wanted to go," mum Lara Costello said. "It was going in at the deep end a bit, but Napoleon managed really well."

Lara, who had spent time in the US and fallen for the draught mules she had seen there, spotted Napoleon advertised as a three-year-old, "but I think he was more like a yearling" for 30 Euros (£26.80) eight years ago.

"He was just down the road so I convinced my husband my horse needed a companion. I went to see him saying 'If he's not friendly, he's not coming home', and he just jumped into my arms, jumped into the trailer and the rest is history," she said.

Lara said she "had no intention of having kids" at the time, but Farrah arrived, and aged two, decided she wanted to ride.

"I had nothing to back Napoleon with, so I just said to him: 'Listen, mate, you've got to do me a favour now' – and he's never put a hoof wrong with her."

Farrah and her trusty steed took part in lead rein showing, in which Napoleon "looked beautiful and behaved impeccably".

"Every time we've taken him out, he's surprised me," Lara said. "I've never seen an animal love what he was doing so much."

"When we went hunting, I couldn't believe how gutsy he was. There was a big bank, about three feet high, and he just launched off it. Then we came to a gate bigger than he is, so I took Farrah off and he went straight over it from a standstill."



Napoleon the mini mule & five-year-old rider Farrah Costello made their hunting debut on Boxing Day in Ireland.

Lara said the plan now is for Napoleon and Farrah to take part in showjumping.

"He's unbelievable," she said. "I love him so much, then every time we do anything with him, he steps up, and I love him all the more."

"When Farrah outgrows him, we've got a little trap so we'll drive him; he's got a home for life here. We'll never part with him because we owe him so much."



Mum & Dad wait with Farrah & Napoleon for the hunt to assemble.





## Meredith Hodges in Hall of Fame

**A**claimed donkey and mule trainer, Meredith Hodges was inducted into the first ever Hall of Fame at last month's Rocky Mountain Horse Expo in Denver, Colorado. Meredith was one of six inducted into the Hall of Fame for their lifetime dedication to various equine activities.

Pictured, left to right, are the Hall of Fame inductees, Julie Goodnight (RFD-TV instructor), Dr. Robert Miller (wrote the book on Imprinting), Denny Emerson (Olympic Gold medalist in Combined Training), Pat Parelli (Natural Horsemanship), Meredith Hodges (American Donkey & Mule Society representative, animal inspector & judge, author & producer) and Richard Shrake's brother, Greg Shrake (Richard Shrake, AQHA instructor/judge, was unable to attend). Congratulations to all equine legends honored.



## ONLY IN SOUTH AFRICA

**I**n Hoedspruit, dogs are not allowed into the 'Thirsty Giraffe Pub' but a donkey is not a dog. In this picture, the donkey gatecrasher looks very smug as he poses next to the 'No dogs' sign.



**HOEDSPRUIT** - All too often the quirkiness of the Hoedspruit is missed out and someone captures the moment on camera. This classic image is no exception to that Hoedspruit / Lowveld rule: 'When a donkey is allowed at the 'Thirsty Giraffe Pub', but no dogs are - it's just too much for most people to fathom! All of us would agree this is one of those 'only in Hoedspruit' moments. 'I just love it that the donkey looks so smug next to the 'no dogs' sign!' said photographer Harriet Nimmo.

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# Gippsland bushfires cause devastation in Victoria



Eerie smoke-filled skies over Poplar Grove Stud, Drouin South; a menacing reminder of active bushfires.

Andy and Peter Hearn from Poplar Grove Miniature and Micro Mini Donkey Stud found themselves helping those in the path of the March bushfires in the Bunyip area of Victoria. Started by lightning strikes, the bushfires quickly spread and several communities were evacuated and sadly often burnt to the ground. One of those areas was Tonimbuk where the Hearn had previously relocated from for this very reason.

### In Andy's words:

**A**fter having lived in Tonimbuk where we had Channel 9 and Channel 7 news helicopters land in our paddocks and interview us; and Elvis water bomb us twice; then three days later water bomb us again in April - wayyy past fire season but back burning had got out of control - we moved to where we thought we were 'safe'. Where we could go out on a 35++ degree day and not be fearful of a fire and the welfare of our oh so precious babies [our horses, donkeys, cats & doggies].

So fast forward to Saturday 2nd March at 10.18 am.

The phone rang 'Hi I'm Julie's neighbour'. Totally perplexed I asked, 'Julie who?'. Eventually the conversation between myself and Meagan Evans was sorted. Meagan lives in Labertouche, another town that was evacuated and subsequently severely damaged. She said 'Andy, I need to move my donkeys - I trust you with them'. I answered 'Of course!'. We spoke further and I offered my cat pens, dog runs and paddocks. Meagan was understandably relieved and said that lots of horse places don't want to take donkeys.

Megan bought down two loads, and Pete, hubby, got through the roadblocks to collect the third load. So we ended up with 7 donkeys, 2 mini horses and 2 cats suddenly entrusted to our care.

It is the most harrowing experience you will ever go through. Until you


have experienced a bush fire, it's hard to imagine the fear of your precious friends' safety that goes through your mind. It's so hard to think rationally. I give full credit to Meagan for searching out another donkey person.

From my perspective... Non-rural people don't understand they're our pets. 'Our' horses, 'our' beloved donkeys, 'our' dogs & cats ... They're our pets; members of 'our' family. They know. They love. They come to their name. They trust us. We must give our everything for that trust and because we love them with all our heart. It's what life is all about.

Everything was fine until Sunday. We went from it's safe .... it'll never get us here...to OMG we're in trouble!

It went from small ashes all over the farm, my Gypsy Cob's wide [lol] back was covered in small dead ash to entire black leaves falling on us. We knew we were not in immediate danger of the fire front. But a hot northerly wind was pushing the front towards us. Towns across the M1 were endangered and the spot fires were popping up left, right and centre. That's what we feared. We have lived through these fires and know that the embers can kill. ▶





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Some of our evacuated 'guests' which are a lot bigger than our minis. All is now safe but noisy! Another jack telling everyone how grand he is!

Our farm is tree adorned, every paddock has shelters and is tree lined for donkey protection. That protection can reverse to liability so very fast... we were no longer 'safe', we were under red alert. We were under threat. We had not only our own treasured herd of micros and min's but someone else's pride and joys to care for. WOW ... that's scary.

Fast forward again. The rains have fallen today, 6th March; and everything is going to be ok for us. We still have the 'visitors' until it's safe for them to go home.

The take-home message is to please look out for each other. Don't think twice - 'YES!' is always your answer. Whether it be donkey people to donkey people, or your neighbour needing help. One small action on your part can be life changing for the other person. In an emergency, we need to support each other. I know Meagan would do the same for us in a heartbeat.



## Bushfire survival tips from Katie Ladd, CFA volunteer and farm girl

If roads are blocked and you cannot evacuate your horses:

- Turn electric fences off immediately.
- Strip horses down – no rugs, no halter, no fly mask. Nothing so it cannot burn the animal, or lead to the animal being caught up.
- Purple spray your horse or paint your phone number onto the horse.
- If you have time, cut the horse's tail so that it doesn't touch the ground or drag on the ground. This is not such an issue with donkeys.
- Open all internal gates but first move them into a paddock with the shortest amount of grass.

**Equines are not dumb. Don't keep them trapped. Allow them to run from the fire. Nothing is foolproof and in the event of a bushfire, leaving before it's too late is always the number one option.**



## Lest we forget our four-legged diggers served too



Story: John Wright, Bairnsdale, Victoria

I had only been a volunteer at our local Animal Aid for a few weeks when the Manager called to ask if we could help out on Purple Poppy Day. She remembered that I had said I owned donkeys and that the organisers were looking for some animals to help promote the event on TV and in the local papers. I'll be honest, after spending most of my life in the military, I wasn't aware of the event or the significance of the Purple Poppy.

Most people would be aware that the traditional red poppy is worn to mark the Armistice Day of 11 November 1918, but there is also the purple poppy, remembering animals that died during conflict. The purple poppy was created in 2006 by the charity Animal Aid, as a way to commemorate animals which served during conflicts as the charity viewed that they had been the forgotten victims of war. Approximately eight million horses and donkeys died during the First World War.

We all remember the story of 'Simpson and his donkey' and as far back as the Boer war horses that carried our soldiers across the veldt in the Boer War. Animals continue to serve in places like Afghanistan, where explosive detection dogs and their handlers work the frontline and animals have helped soldiers cope with post-traumatic stress.

To commemorate all the animal deeds and sacrifices in war, the Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation (AWAMO) has issued a purple poppy, which can be worn alongside the traditional red one. Purple Poppy Day in Australia and New Zealand has now been set at 24 February each year. People are encouraged to wear the purple poppy alongside the traditional red poppy as a reminder that both humans and animals have and continue to serve.

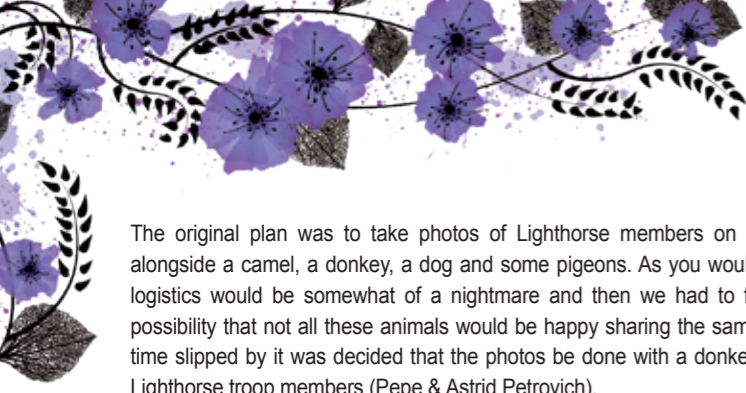
AWAMO is a not for profit organisation run by volunteers who are dedicated to ensuring these animals are remembered. This is done by erecting plaques, memorials and statues. They also ensure that retired animals are not forgotten. Support is offered for ongoing care and vet bills as well as help in dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in these animals. ▶



Lighthorse troop members Pepe & Astrid Petrovich used Blithe Moon Jindabyne (Jindi) to recreate the much-loved war story of Simpson & his donkey. Jindi, owned by John & Judy Wright, was chosen for the promotional photo shoot & dare I say it, performed like a trooper.

Photo at top: At the ceremony Christie flies the Australian flag while John, Jindi & a 'wounded' Army cadet line-up near vintage military vehicles.





The original plan was to take photos of Lighthorse members on their horses alongside a camel, a donkey, a dog and some pigeons. As you would guess the logistics would be somewhat of a nightmare and then we had to factor in the possibility that not all these animals would be happy sharing the same space! As time slipped by it was decided that the photos be done with a donkey and a few Lighthorse troop members (Pepe & Astrid Petrovich).

We have a father and son donkey combo (Donnie and Jindi) that we have brought over from South Australia. Donnie (Blithe Moon Hubble) was purchased from Helen Robertson and Jindi (Blithe Moon Jindabyne) from his previous owner Leanne Christie. It was decided that Jindi should do the honours on this occasion. I did feel anxious about the setting of the photography shoot as it was conducted in a dry creek bed at the back of a large property. I shouldn't have worried, Jindi took it all in his stride and seem more interested in the kangaroos nearby.

The commemoration took place on the 24th February at Cockatoo Rise, a property just outside Bairnsdale, set up by its owners as a retreat for returned service men and women. They hold several events each year and have campers staying overnight on a regular basis. They also have a golf course and a well-presented Military Museum on site as well. The parade consisted of three Cadets carrying flags, followed by Jindi, (with myself leading and a cadet riding, both dressed as wounded soldiers) an Air Force dog handler, (with a retired drug detection dog), four Lighthorse members and a few vintage military vehicles.

The service was conducted by local councillors and Chaplains with members of the Air Force, Lighthorse and myself laying wreaths on a newly created Purple Poppy monument. Several people had also brought their much-loved dogs and a few also arrived on horseback. Following the service my wife Judy and I walked around with Jindi (and our two miniatures) to allow everyone to take photos and enjoy their afternoon tea whilst cuddling our special donkeys.

I can't praise Jindi enough as he battled through a windy day that presented some very flighty horses, vintage trucks that encroached his space and of course dogs looking on from all sides. As Purple Poppy Day becomes more widely held, the opportunity is there to show the love and passion we have for our donkeys and for those donkeys and mules that died giving support to our troops.

**Remembering all who served;  
two or four legged,  
furred or feathered.**



Above: Jindi didn't put a hoof wrong with John Wright & an Army cadet dressed as wounded soldiers.

Above right: Commemorative Plaque & flags flying at the AWAMO service on 24th February.

At right: Battle-worn & certainly not how we are used to seeing him John Wright made sure donkeys were honoured for their war exploits & not forgotten. Jindi agreed.

Is that a halter or hay she's carrying?

Halter. Get ready to run.



## How do I catch that donkey?

Story: Christine Thelander

**D**id you buy a beautiful, educated donkey from the person down the road or across the country, and when it was delivered, found out you couldn't catch it? Did you 'rescue' a moth-eaten donkey from the sale yards believing it only needed a little TLC when in fact it had never been touched by humans? Do you have a donkey that happily comes up to eat treats but bolts off the moment you try to catch it?

It's all too familiar for many of us – the donkey that won't be caught. There are reasons for the three scenarios above. The trained donkey is most likely upset at leaving his friends (or his Mum if he's a foal) and being relocated to an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people. Give him time to settle into his new routine. Most new owners try to rush a donkey into doing what they want straight away whereas it's the other way round. The donkey will think about this new situation and let you know if he's happy to stay.

A donkey from the sale yards can be anything from a wild-caught animal

that's terrified and consequently reacts with aggression, to a jack that nobody wants or an unfortunate animal that has found its way there through no fault of its own. This can be directly linked to the third scenario, the family donkey that takes treats over the fence but receives no further training and when circumstances change it ends up at the sale yards or abattoir.

### What is basic training?

At the minimum, your donkey or mule should be:

- Quiet and able to be approached
- Ideally comes when called
- Easy to catch and halter even in a large paddock
- Able to be led and tied up
- Reliable with standing quietly
- Respecting human's 'space'
- Able to be brushed, feet lifted & dirt picked out from hooves
- Happy to have strangers handling him apart from the owner

### Not the first step

Under normal circumstances getting a halter on a donkey or mule is not the be all and end all in my opinion. Most horse owners will know that having a halter on a hard-to-catch horse makes little difference if that horse doesn't want to be caught. The aim of quietening a donkey starts with it being comfortable around humans. Spend time with the animal every day. Think the way the donkey thinks. If you get him into a small yard and lunge towards him with a halter, you will only succeed in frightening him and he won't fall for that trick the next day. Use the donkey's natural curiosity to your advantage. Sit with him, read, sing (that works for me because it also covers up nerves which donkeys, mules and horses are quick to pick up on). The aim is keep the animal calm and happy to see you when you walk into the paddock, yard or stable whether you want to do anything with him or not.

### Prepare for the stare

Donkeys will watch carefully when you ►



## What is basic training?

interact with other animals and take their cue from how those animals react. Our previously unhandled 12-year-old donkey Flicka would stand behind her mother and stare so intently you would almost feel it piercing your back. But at that stage, if you approached her she would run, even though her mother was a cool cat and could easily be caught and tied up very calmly. Treats, soothing language and reasons for being in their space without actually demanding anything of them gives them more confidence. Slowly, slowly. Each donkey has its own timeframe and the one thing I can assure you of, it's not quick. Leave them to think overnight. All donkeys, just like people, have good days and bad days. Don't work on your donkey if you are short-tempered or angry. And if the donkey's not in the mood walk away. Tomorrow's a new day.

### The dreaded halter

Sometimes I think people are more frightened of a halter than a donkey is. Some folks scrunch up the halter and hide it behind their back, thinking the donkey or horse can't see it and then, I guess, hope to spring on the animal and whack the halter on. I've never seen this work. I've only seen it make matters worse. Equines know exactly what you're up to. Far better to loop the halter over your elbow most times you're in the paddock and doing other things (refreshing water tubs, pulling weeds, watering trees etc). Make absolutely no attempt to halter the animal and indeed if it walks up to you, acknowledge it kindly but continue doing what

you are doing. The idea is to get the animal comfortable with the look and perhaps jingle of the halter and lead rope without expecting a drama every time it appears. Once again, think of it the way the donkey would think of it. You do not want the donkey only associating being caught with a massive drama, a visit by the farrier or the vet. The donkey must associate being caught with something pleasant like being fed or given treats or grooming which they love. Once comfortable with the whole process, even a vet or farrier visit is no big deal to them.

### Avoid these mistakes

Why do people always approach an equine's face first up? They hate it. To them it can be reminiscent of a predator approach. Yes, by all means, let them sniff your hand, but then approach them at the shoulder or the neck where the mane ends and give them a rub. This is what equines do when they greet each other. But leave the face alone for now. When I'm haltering a donkey or horse, I approach at the shoulder and then quietly slip a lead rope around under the neck. This gives me some traction if the animal decides to pull away. Then I move up to the near side of the head, drop the noseband down and quietly put the halter on and release the lead rope from the neck. I have observed countless people who approach a donkey or horse front on waving a halter at their head. This only results in an animal that jerks its head upwards and away from you in a defensive manner. It's also unsafe. If the equine

is throwing its head around, the handler is at risk of being klunked on the head or face.

### You're the voice

Your voice is a valuable training tool, as long as you are consistent with your words and fair in what you are asking. Some people say 'stand' every time they want to catch a donkey. I found I didn't need to do that but I did teach Flicka to respond to the words 'up' and 'down' when teaching her to lift her legs. Training her to lift the legs, pick out her feet etc was a bit hairy, particularly the back legs (she had a decent kick in her) but we got there. The funny part was Elvis was also in the yard watching. He hated being left out of things and every time I said 'up' to Flicka, Elvis would lift his leg! It was hilarious and make no mistake, donkeys soak in as much information as kids.

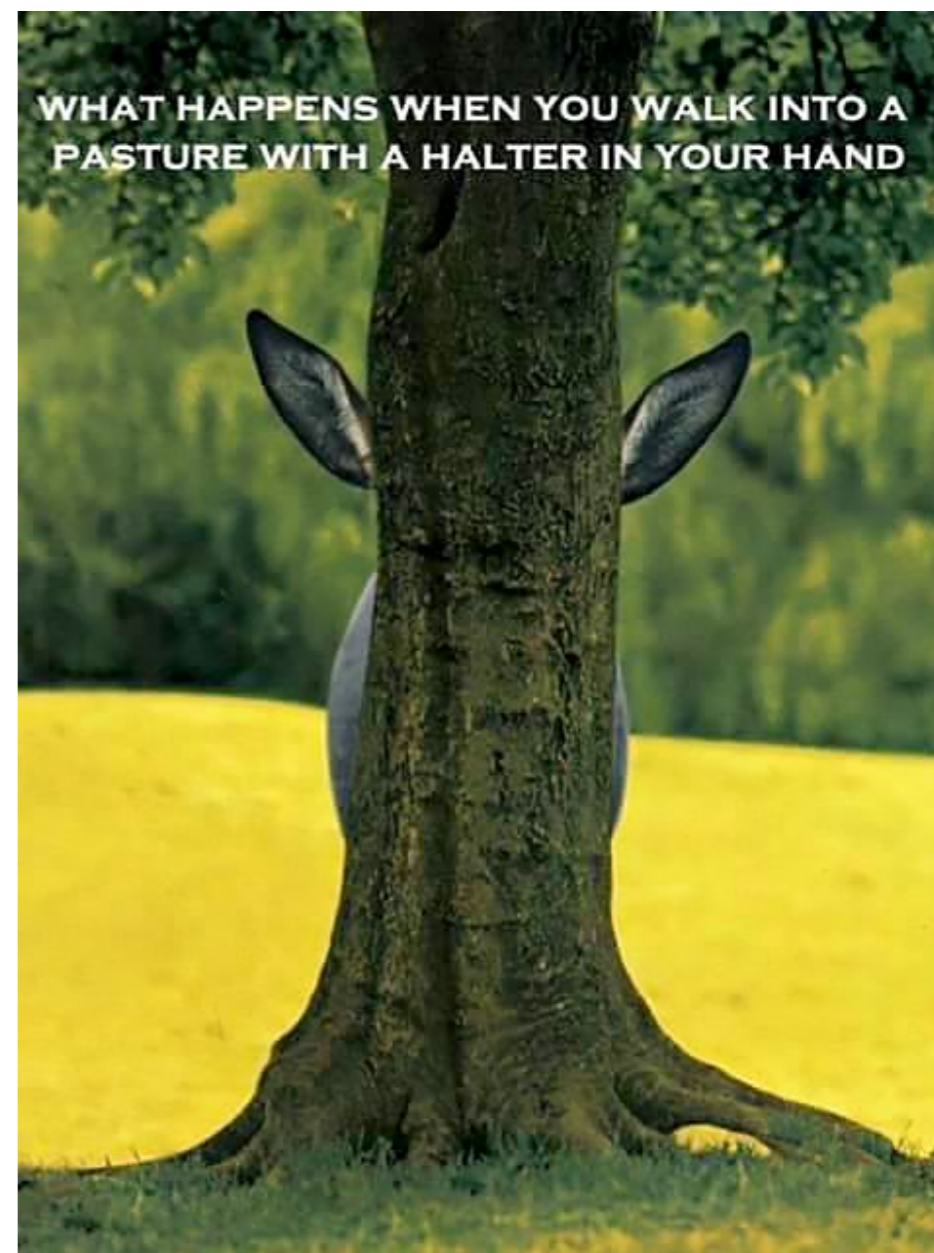
### Safety first always

Learn to read your equine's body language. Is he relaxed and eager to see you? Is it the time of day when he just wants to graze and doesn't want to be fussed over? Does he swing round and greet you with his rump and a pair of threatening heels? Is he normally quiet but all of a sudden is kicking and jumping up and down most uncharacteristically? This is a question we get all the time at the Donkey Society. It's usually because there are bot or horse flies biting the stomach and legs and the donkey is trying desperately to get rid of them. Whatever

you do keep out of harm's way. It's too easy to find yourself dodging kicks when doing simple things like distributing feeds in the paddock. We had one placid jenny who would turn into a raging bull at feed time. Not only would she eat her own feed, she would try to commandeer everyone else's feed by pinning her ears flat, charging and kicking out in a circle like a rodeo bull. The first time it happened there were donkeys and humans flying everywhere trying to avoid being kicked. Needless to say, feeding arrangements were quickly changed and peace was restored.

### Rewarding experience

It's no sin to be a complete beginner but putting a donkey in the 'too hard' basket and not training him is doing the animal no favours. Lots of beginners have great success with training their donkeys to be valued members of their family and fun to be around. Don't be intimidated. Taking a personal hand in educating your donkey, whether going solo or having help, comes with a huge reward in the end: the donkey will bond incredibly closely with you. Donkeys actually love doing jobs and being a part of the family. Once your donkey is trained in the basics, you will feel incredibly satisfied with your effort and probably love him even more. You will also learn new skills and your confidence will be boosted. You and your donkey are never too young or old to learn. Go for it and good luck.



## "Quotes Of Note ....."

"A woman rang me up and said she had a real good mule. She bought him 18 months ago and has now got a halter on him. I didn't know what to say!"  
**Well-known Mule Trainer, USA.**

"People with no experience go and buy mules from kill pens because they feel sorry for them. My general advice is to leave them there. There's a reason they're in the kill pen. Go and buy a trained mule that actually likes people and will do what you want. It's better value for money,"  
**Same well-known Mule Trainer, USA.**

"I always say a man's got to know his limits. It blows my mind how many people who can't ride to save themselves suddenly want to train a green mule or rescue one from the kill pen."  
**Not the same Mule Trainer as above.**

"Some people called me several years ago to shoe an unbroken filly you could barely get in the yard with. Long story short. I asked, why shoes, she's not even halter broken (I was the 4th farrier they had called), what are you going to do with her? They told me they bought her for their kids. The adoption fee was \$125 and that was all they could afford. I said to them 'You don't think much of your kids. Don't call me again.' I got in my truck and drove off." **Anonymous Farrier.**

## "Quotes Of Note ....."

"I need a donkey yearling gelded but I can't touch him. The vet says he won't come until I can put a halter on him. Does anyone know a good sedative?"

**Donkey owner who obviously misses the point altogether.** Why is the vet expected to compensate for the animal's lack of training? Maybe she thinks he'll just dart the donkey like a wild elephant?

"I have a mule that was either kicked or slipped on ice. She's not touchable. Still trying 2 years later (I completely understand the saying stubborn as a mule). Is there more I can do for her?"

**Another clueless owner who hasn't realized it's not the mule who is stubborn.**

"Several years ago, a lady round here wanted a mule real bad. She couldn't wait for her experienced friend to find one so she bought a 4-year-old Clydesdale mule from somebody in her area. She had been on Face Book learning all about 'bonding', cut up some apples and got in the stall with it. When she ran out of apples he kicked her through the wall. He then ran down the road, tore down a fence to get to some show horses where he broke a stallion's back. Then a local cowboy roped him and he ended up in the hospital. A deputy finally put a slug in the mule to get him off the highway. The last I heard the lady was in intensive care, the cowboy had a broken arm, the stud stallion was supposed to be put down, and everyone was lawyering up. A little patience and a \$2,000 trained mule would have been a much better option."

**Donkey & Mule Trainer, USA.**



## What is basic training?

### LUNACY?

Ruth Walker, DSV President

The best example of a ridiculous scenario I have been involved with was when my (now ex) husband got a call from someone to come and trim a donkey's feet. We got there only to find a donkey running around a paddock and when we tried to go into the paddock, the owner was aghast and said "You can't go in the paddock with him, he's too dangerous". Never did figure out how the stupid woman thought we were going to trim an uncaught donkey without going into the paddock! Anyway, we decided the donkey didn't look that dangerous so we went into the paddock and after some time and effort we managed to catch him and get his feet trimmed.

The importance of basic training can't be underestimated. For instance, not so long ago I went out to feed my donkeys and found one of them had a half-closed weeping eye. He is only a youngster I bought last year when he was a wild donkey. Because I have worked with him and trained him it only took a few minutes to put a halter on and bring him in, ascertain that he did indeed have a grass seed in his eye, then fetch my special plastic tweezers and take it out. With the grass seed out, he straight away felt better and the eye stopped weeping. The next day his eye was looking pretty normal again. All quick and easy with a donkey that has had the basic training that every donkey should have. A problem if you can't touch or catch the donkey.

I always feel like the donkeys whose training isn't as far advanced as I would like are a ticking time bomb. For instance, I had one jenny who had come from the wild but because she foaled a few months after I got her, and then had the foal at foot, she was still very hard to catch and not easy to handle. Yep, Murphy's Law kicked in and that same jenny managed to cut her back leg on wire - very quickly she had a troublesome wound that we really had to treat. Fortunately, we managed to get her in to a small yard and treat her. By the time the leg healed up, she was much quieter and easier to handle, with the bonus that her foal was now trained to be caught, tied-up (he was a pesky little boy who had to be kept out of the way while we were treating his Mum) and lead.



*If you are fond of a horse and wish to do him a real favour – train him well. Teach him good manners, good habits, both in the stable and under the saddle. You need never worry about the future of such a horse if for any reason you may have to part with him. You assure him of friends wherever he goes. Perhaps the greatest kindness you can do any horse is to educate him well.*

Tom Roberts – The Young Horse

*Editor: There's never been sentiment truer than this from the late Tom Roberts, master horseman from South Australia. It applies to all equines, as well as other animals like dogs and, well, cats to a much lesser degree!*

### MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

Carol Stephens, DSQ President

I was asked to go to a remote rural property where I was told there was one horse and one donkey. Both animals had been born on the property and were both now over 30 years old. Neither animal had ever been handled. Apparently, they had been given treats over the fence, but that was all. The elderly owner of the property was now very unwell and was in hospital in Brisbane. A friend of mine was asked to find homes for the animals as the property would have to be sold. My friend, who is not a horse or donkey person, called me.

I am a very experienced horse and more recently, donkey person. Although I tried for several hours, there was absolutely no way I could catch either of the animals. I was once able to get close enough to the horse, a mare of about 15 hands, to reach under her neck, but she immediately went for me with bared teeth then spun away. After that, I could get no closer than about 30 metres. The donkey bolted into the scrub and I was not able to find it again. The paddock fences were totally inadequate and there were no yards whatsoever on the property.

Unfortunately, there seemed to be only one solution. And it was all the fault of the owner!

## What is basic training?

### I need help

Plenty of help is available to those who reach out, whatever level of skill you have or don't have. The Donkey Society in your state (contacts inside front cover) is a good start. They will put you in touch with someone you can talk to, go and visit donkeys or make a training plan. The Donkey Society websites also publish good training stories.

The web is a great source of training tips so start looking at YouTube videos for anything you may find helpful on training donkeys, clicker training, putting a halter on a donkey etc. The list below is by no means complete or in order of importance but it's a start on your quest of "how to".

**Ben Hart** - [www.hartshorsemanship.com](http://www.hartshorsemanship.com) - is the trainer used by the Donkey Sanctuary UK, the gold standard in donkey management.

**The Donkey Sanctuary** – [www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk](http://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk) - provides a stack of info.

**Meredith Hodges** – [www.luckythreeranch.com](http://www.luckythreeranch.com) - provides training tips and education for donkeys and mules.

**Wrangler Jane** – closer to home, Victoria's Wrangler Jane – [www.wranglerjane.com.au](http://www.wranglerjane.com.au) - conducts clinics and provides training DVDs that I am told are helpful and easy to understand and put into practice for donkey owner beginners.

**Christine Berry** – [www.donkeywelfare.com.au](http://www.donkeywelfare.com.au) - founder of Donkey Welfare with Heart in NSW can answer your questions.

**Jo-Anne Kokas** – [www.donkeyrescue.org.au](http://www.donkeyrescue.org.au) - founder of the Good Samaritan Donkey Sanctuary in NSW is another fountain of knowledge.

There are also Face Book pages you can look up. If you're not interested in the DIY training option, consider buying a donkey that has already been trained and is solid in the basics. Doing this doesn't give you license to throw the animal in the paddock not to be touched again until the vet or farrier comes. It's likely to revert to its naughty ways so learn how to manage the animal yourself and get comfortable with catching, haltering, grooming, picking up feet etc. well before the vet or farrier needs to come. Besides, you'll probably host of lot of visitors at your place, including kids, so you need to know the donkey is reliable and will enjoy the interaction.

The last two options are to pay someone to educate your donkey, or to pay someone to train you how to train the donkey.

## SUMMER PICNIC HIJACKED BY DONKEYS

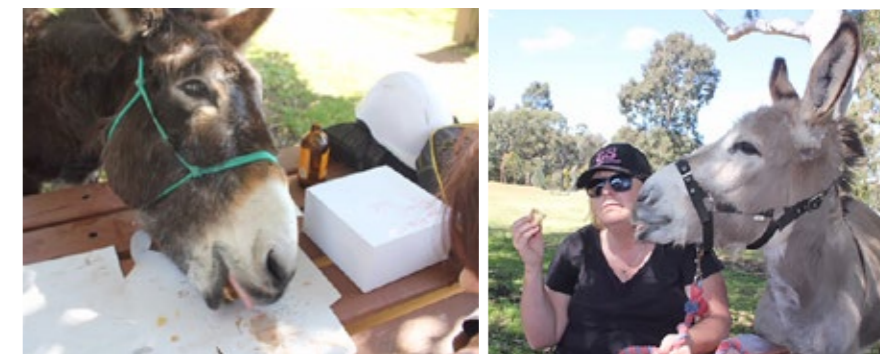
STATE NEWS WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Story: Hanna Silversides

A few of us enjoyed a Hills Donkey Group outing where we all meet up for a few laughs – very therapeutic.

Those on our ride/walk were Margaret Lockyear who had a crook ankle and so rode my Molly, Ann Williams whose donkey Charmouth was eventually left at home because he refused to cross the little creek leaving my place, Liz Appelt with Maisie and me. We walked along an 8km section of the Kep Track running from Mt Helena to Chidlow. Chidlow has an amazing Bay Tree Cafe which not only supplies us with fresh homemade pies (also catering for the vegan contingent) but supplies the donkeys with free carrots. Why wouldn't you walk there! And, of course, the donkeys are the centre of attention in the picnic area. A group of us local donkey owners (and not so local - Elizabeth Poultney came to the last one!) often do this walk with our donkeys - I think there were 10 of us at the last get together. We have such fun.

When we sat down to eat the donkeys turned in to absolute monsters trying to steal our picnic. The funniest was when I had my camera set up on timer release on the rubbish bin so we could stage a lovely photo with us all included. Doing this gives you only 10 seconds to get back to the group and all look at the camera and smile. During that 10 seconds Molly (yes, my donkey!) gobbled all the veggie pasties on the table including a wet wipe and tomato sauce sachet. I have diligently searched every poo for the past week but found no evidence of either wet wipe or sachet! My neighbours are now looking at me strangely!



TOP – We were ready to enjoy our picnic but the donkeys had other ideas. L-R Hanna Silversides, Liz Appelt, Ann Williams, Maisie, Molly & Margaret Lockyear.  
ABOVE LEFT – Yes, Molly really did clean everything up.  
RIGHT – Maisie makes a grab for Ann's lunch. That giraffe-like tongue is on its way out.



# “ELVIS HAS LEFT THE Paddock”

**Story:** Christine Thelander

**Photos:** Ian Shawsmith

Just like Elvis Presley and Elvis Costello, our ‘Elvis’ was a born entertainer and now that he is gone we miss him like crazy. He was born cheeky and died cheeky, leaving behind a chasm in our hearts and a lot less personality in our paddocks. Elvis took his title ‘King of ‘Rock ‘n’ Roll’ seriously and devoted much

of his time to the creation and maintenance of his rolling holes in every paddock so he could rock ‘n’ roll whenever the urge took him. And that was often.

As explained in my editorial, Elvis died as a result of an accident that makes sense to no-one. Why did he go to that corner of that back paddock he never frequented in his eight years? What gave him such a fright that he flipped over the neighbour’s fence? And let me tell you Elvis was not a natural jumper. Something unexpected happened because all the kangaroos took off at the same time as if something was after them. But there were no dogs, bikes, gunshots, humans, anything. We will be forever wondering what the real story was.

Elvis was best known as a columnist in the Donkey Express, the newsletter put out by the Donkey Society of Queensland. His ‘Ask Elvis’ column would give advice to donkeys who would ‘write in’ with problems they were having with their human owners. As a result of his honest, if not ridiculous, advice, he had quite a fan club. He had his own Earbook site and was known to order forbidden treats on Ebray.



## ELVIS WISECRACKS:

### A TIP FOR THE BLOKES

**Elvis:** Hey fellas, I’ve had great success with this pick-up line I use on pretty jennies. Give it a try yourselves.

**Me:** Would you like to see where I was gelded?

**She:** Sure

**Me:** Okay, we’ll drive past it in a minute.

**Gardener:** I’m collecting dung for my strawberries.

**Elvis:** I always put cream and sugar on mine.

Molly, Elvis’ bossy mum was like a mother who had a late-in-life baby who used to fob him off to others to mind and get him out of her hair. Poor big sister Flicka copped the lion’s share of babysitting and rough playing by Elvis until she got heartily fed-up and put him in his place. We humans also seemed part of the donkey clan and would be regularly challenged by the cheeky Elvis. One peculiar thing he used to do was follow me around with his ears pinned back. This alarmed me because if it was a horse you would know you were going to get bitten any second. However, I could ‘sense’ Elvis doing this and every time I unexpectedly turned around, he would prick his ears and look surprised. He never once attempted to touch



## Donkey-to-donkey advice

**Warning:**  
Language may offend some readers

or bite me. I have since found out that this is classic ‘follow the leader’ behaviour and it all makes sense. Elvis used to think of me as part of the donkey herd.

Loving, frustrating, cuddlebug, butter-wouldn’t-melt-in-his-mouth, contrary, impatient, patient, charismatic – Elvis was all of this wrapped up in a chocolate exterior. We now laugh at the imaginary visual of Elvis walking up to the Pearly Gates as Molly trots briskly down to slam the gates shut before he gets there! I’m sure, however, that patience and love overcome all and it won’t really be like this in the after-life. It’s still a funny thought though.



# Donkey Treats

For well-behaved long ears  
(and ratbag normal ones!)

**Story:** Corinne Nash, Editor,  
Donkey Express, Qld

Goosh it’s been a hot summer! And we’re not the only ones feeling it. Inspired by an article in the last Donkey Digest, my daughter, India and I set about making a donkey iced treat!

Using a cake tin, a spatula handle in the middle secured by card and tape etc, we froze pieces of carrot and apple into water, a 1cm thick layer at a time. This took a couple of days!

The treat then had to be coaxed/banged out of the cake tin and a piece of twine threaded through the hole in the centre.

We chose a tree in the shade with a suitably low branch to tie our homemade donkey ice block. Lily and Jesse were very curious over our antics!

The ice block invited licking, biting, poking and surprise when it swung back, hitting them in the nose! Quite good entertainment for us and a cool down for them.

I have been thinking about how to make this more easily and wonder about freezing the string into it, or else using a ring shaped or bundt tin which already has a hole in the centre. Another idea is to make it, string inserted, in a plastic bottle then cut the plastic away once frozen.

Listening to ABC radio I learnt that chickens also appreciate a cool down treat, with corn or watermelon frozen into it! Place in their coop on a hot day and they peck away at it. Ah yes, if only I had chooks left- three pythons in three weeks!!



Jesse & Lily enjoying a frozen carrot & apple iced treat on a very hot day.



**An old woman walked up and tied her old mule to the hitching post.**

As she stood there, brushing some of the dust from her face and clothes, a young gunslinger stepped out of the saloon with a gun in one hand and a bottle of whiskey in the other. The young gunslinger looked at the old woman and laughed, "Hey old woman, have you ever danced?"

The old woman looked up at the gunslinger and said, "No... I never did dance... never really wanted to."

A crowd had gathered as the gunslinger grinned and said "Well, you old bag, you're gonna dance now," and started shooting at the old woman's feet.

The old woman prospector -- not wanting to get her toe blown off --started hopping around. Everybody was laughing. When his last bullet had been fired, the young gunslinger, still laughing, holstered his gun and turned around to go back into the saloon.

The old woman turned to her pack mule, pulled out a double-barreled shotgun, and cocked both hammers.

The loud clicks carried clearly through the desert air, and the crowd stopped laughing immediately.

The young gunslinger heard the sounds too, and he turned around very slowly. The silence was almost deafening. The crowd watched as the young gunman stared at the old woman and the large gaping holes of those twin barrels.

The barrels of the shotgun never wavered in the old woman's hands, as she quietly said, "Son, have you ever kissed a mule's ass?"

The gunslinger swallowed hard and said, "No m'am... but I've always wanted to."



## There are five lessons here for all of us:

- 1 - Never be arrogant.
- 2 - Don't waste ammunition.
- 3 - Whiskey makes you think you're smarter than you are.
- 4 - Always make sure you know who has the power.
- 5 - Don't mess with old people; they didn't get old by being stupid.



# OUT & ABOUT with Oliver

## My fellow donkeys,

There is nothing much going on up here at the Prickle Farm because it has been too hot and humans seem to be allergic to the heat. My main tormentor has now started school so I have had a bit of a rest from her arduous torture. Nevertheless, I have not had much rest because the human put a fair amount of work into helping arrange a donkey class at a local show. That meant we did a bit of training in the sulky as well as the riding class and the stupid horse was performing trick demonstrations during the show. Of course, I was supposed to help her do the tricks. When we were practising at home I was doing all the tricks on my own accord just to get some Arnotts Milk Arrowroot biscuits. As I was doing them so well the human decided that this would be a good exhibition at the show so he led me into the arena and let me loose and set about cueing the stupid shortears to do her tricks which she did of course. What did I do? Sweet bugger all! I just walked around the arena scoffing grass while they did a display for the pencil necks. Donkeys 1, Humans nil.

The donkey section of the show was really popular and got a lot of comments from the announcers and the show committee. There were about twenty donkeys and mules competing and we also competed in the harness classes. The human tried to get harness classes at this show about 15 years ago and got nowhere but last year the committee put on a harness class which attracted about ten harness vehicles as well as us donkeys. This year we were the only competitors in the donkey harness class; if we had not been there the show would have had no donkey harness competitors. The harness clubs totally disregarded the show. No doubt they will be the ones to complain if there are no harness classes next year.

Speaking of the harness class, there was three competitors and two of them did a superb workout but the third competitor, me, turned left when signalled to go right, never trotted one step, never backed up one step and then never stopped when signalled. For some reason, I only got third place and also did not get the champion ribbon. I thought that I gave an excellent display of positive resistance as fitting for a donkey. The show committee were surprised at the donkey people's presentation and showmanship which we have all been working on. I think they expected us to turn up with hairy animals and rough bush attire. We looked as good as any other classes at the show.

We had another feed shed break in up here the other day; two mini horses were caught in the act at the hay but there was no donkey to be seen. Who got the blame? Oliver of course. I have it on good authority it was the notorious bushranger Captain Thunderstruck who got away of course leaving me to cop the blame. Only the other day a donkey at the Prickle Farm who shall remain nameless got his magnificent head stuck through a hole in the fence and had to be rescued; Well, that is about all the happenings up here.

**Don't forget DONKEYS RULE.** (Don't mention the fence!)

*Oliver's personal assistant is Bob Pankhurst,  
Celebrity Donkey Management, Somersby, NSW.*



*I bet you didn't recognize me dressed up as Captain Thunderstruck the notorious bushranger.*



*The longears lineup at Morrisset Show.*



*A heavy horse looks longingly at my beautiful physique & wishes he had the same.*

# BASS COAST SUMMER SHOW 2019

**Story:** Ann Berrett

**Photos:** Mark Berrett

**W**hen we heard that the Bass Coast Summer Agricultural Show to be held in Wonthaggi Jan 12-13 were including Donkey Classes in the Harness Section, how could we not enter?

Logistically we could float two donkeys and one carriage. However, we were able to fit our small Dobbin Sulky into the back of our Toyota Landcruiser, so keen to support the classes we decided to enter Ardock Hamish and the young Irish/Miniature Spring Gully Smokey in the Donkey Turnout, Driven Donkey and Donkey driven in long reins. As both donkeys would be in the same classes, Graham was recruited (willingly), to drive the second donkey. We were joined by our son Mark who multitasked – camera, second car driver and that much needed extra pair of hands on the day.

The donkeys were on later in the program but as entries were also accepted on the day, and therefore having little idea of what time we would need to be ready to enter the ring, we decided to leave early to give ourselves plenty of time. The Showgrounds at Wonthaggi would have to be one of the best venues I have attended. We were able to park under some shady trees; the arena surface was like driving on a carpet and the atmosphere friendly, relaxed and sufficiently flexible to allow competitors entered in multiple classes reasonable time to prepare and get themselves to the ring for judging.

The more experienced Ardock Hamish took home the blue ribbons for each of our classes. I drove Hamish, but we swapped over donkeys for the long reining class. I was thrilled that Hamish also received a beautiful garland in the Turnout Class. It now has pride of place at home in the glass cabinet.

The judge made some very complimentary comments about Hamish. He acknowledged and made allowances for the inexperienced Smokey, suggesting that Graham line him up whilst Hamish continued on the circle. We were both very pleased with how Smokey went on the day. Being his first harness show and, if we are honest, probably not quite ready for competition, we weren't sure how he would handle the challenges of such an event. Now six years old he has been brought along slowly in his harness training since he turned five years of age. He has been worked at home on the farm and has been out for roadwork on a single occasion. However, in the circumstances it was probably the best Show for us to introduce him to competition.

As usual the donkeys were popular with members of the public who came along to watch the harness classes. Requests for photos with iPhones, pats for the donkeys and questions were all accommodated as we are keen to encourage positive interest in the donkey.

We had a great day and as the Harness events will be included in next year's Summer Show program, we plan to make the trip to Wonthaggi again in 2020. At the time of writing I have offered a few suggestions to a request for ideas for expanding next year's donkey classes. Fingers crossed.



*Whip Ann Berrett & Ardock Hamish in a blue ribbon work out under the watchful eye of judge Peter Strafford.*



*Graham Berrett at the reins of Spring Gully Smokey who shows great promise as a harness donkey.*



*Judge Peter Strafford was very complimentary about Ardock Hamish who won the garland in the Turnout class. Ann's husband Graham drove Spring Gully Smokey who acquitted himself well at his first ever show.*



# Who's Your Daddy?

## Inbreeding, Linebreeding, Outcrossing: What does it all mean?

by Christine Thelander

Over the years so called 'linebreeding' has risen in popularity amongst animal breeders of all descriptions. This is just a fancy way of saying 'inbreeding' which is the mating of related individuals that have one or more relatives in common. Close inbreeding is the mating of close relatives – full brother to full sister, mother to son, or father to daughter. The second closest form of inbreeding involves matings between grandparents and grand-offspring, half brothers and sisters, uncles/aunts and nephews/nieces, and double first cousins.

From what I have observed, linebreeding is usually a calculated breeder decision involving related matings further into the pedigree whereas inbreeding, particularly of donkeys, is often poor equine keeping. Leaving a father/daughter or mother/son together and just letting them breed continually isn't good breeding management. Luckily in Australia, our donkey studmasters know what they are doing with bloodline management. This is especially important since a good number of donkeys still do not have full and traceable pedigrees and those breeding, say, Australian teamsters which originated from the wild, take steps to avoid narrowing the gene pool.

Genetics are very complex – and I make no claim to be a geneticist – but here's a brief explanation.

### INBREEDING

Inbreeding is the very close breeding of relatives. Parent-offspring and sibling-sibling breedings are what most people are referring to when they mention inbreeding, but technically pairings such as aunt/uncle-niece/nephew, cousins, and grandparent-offspring are also inbreeding. The percentage of inbreeding increases depending on how closely related the animals are.

### LINEBREEDING

Linebreeding is technically a form of inbreeding. However, linebreeding deals with pairs that are related more distantly than first-generation relatives. For example, it might involve breeding two animals that have a common grandparent. The object of linebreeding is to bring an animal in the pedigree forward again and increase its genetic influence over the resulting offspring. Linebreeding is often utilized by many breeders of animals.

### OUTCROSSING

An outcross is when two completely unrelated animals who share no common ancestors within four to six generations are bred.

### SO, WHY LINEBREED? WHY OUTCROSS?

Breeding related animals is the quickest way to bring out the very best traits in your lines. When two animals that share common genes are bred, it increases the chances of the desirable genes, particularly recessive ones, being visible in the offspring. The objective of linebreeding is to increase the influence of a particular ancestor(s) in the offspring. It also increases the reliability of your results to some

extent. Linebred offspring are more likely to come out sharing the traits of their parents and other ancestors. There are less 'wild card' genes in the mix.

**Outcrossing has its benefits as well.** Typically, offspring from outcrosses show additional vigour (heterosis or 'hybrid vigour') and health. Not that linebred, or even inbred, animals are always unhealthy but essentially, broadening the genetic pool limits the chances of bad traits, particularly recessive ones, from being passed on. However, it also limits the chances of good traits being passed on in the same way.

A recessive gene is one that requires both parents to pass it on in order for it to be visible in the offspring. It needs two copies to be revealed, whereas a dominant gene only requires one parent to pass on the gene in order for the offspring to show it. In some ways, an outcrossing is a wild card breeding, because you don't know how the two lines are going to interact with each other.

However, outcrossing can also be very useful. You can use outcrossing to increase vigour or to dilute an overly-linebred herd. Outcrosses can diversify your herd genetics and prevent livestock from getting too inbred. An outcross can also introduce a certain quality into a line that lacks it. For instance, you may love a certain line, but hate that it doesn't have straight enough legs. You might then use an unrelated animal from lines with really wonderful, straight legs in hope of adding that quality to the all the traits you admire about the other line.

### RISKS OF LINEBREEDING?

Just as linebreeding increases the chances of good recessive genes being passed on, it also increases the chances of undesirable ones being passed. You may breed two animals with no outward sign of a problem but when bred that recessive gene may show up in the offspring. Whereas each parent only had one copy of the negative gene, the offspring inherited a copy from each parent. Suddenly you have a problem foal because you had no way of knowing that the line carried that undesirable trait until you mated the two related animals.

The more closely related the two animals being bred are, the more likely major faults will show up. You also risk losing some vigour in the offspring, which is also due to the increasing of specific genes. Linebreeding too closely may also cause something known as 'inbreeding depression'. The opposite of hybrid vigour, inbreeding depression causes the offspring to lack vitality. They may have dramatic genetic problems, infertility issues, reduced immune system functions, lack survivability, or simply be less sturdy.

For many breeders, genetics is a fascinating subject. Each pairing that takes place is like rolling a dice and hoping to win the genetic lottery. Although it's possible to make a calculated guess of what might come out, it's always a surprise in the end.

## DONKEY SCULPTURE MAKES A SPLASH ON GOLD COAST



Donkey lover and renowned sculptor Pete Denison has taken delivery of his first life-size donkey sculpture which was cast in bronze at a Chinese foundry after no Australian company could be found to do the job.

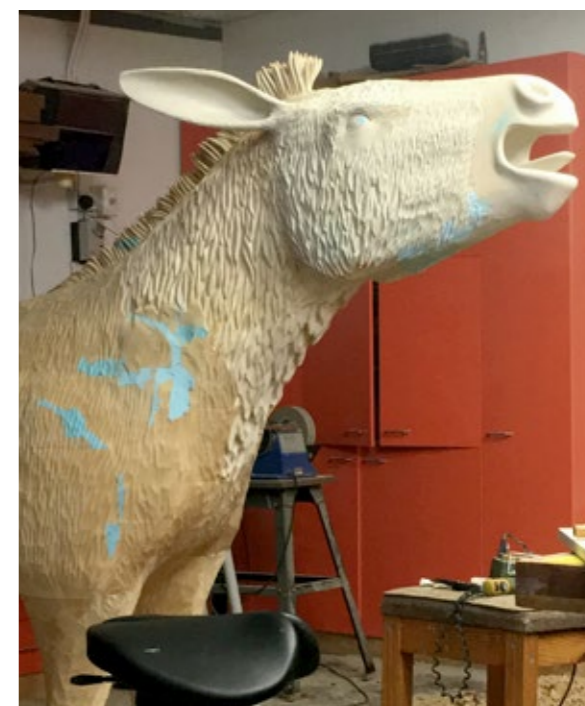
You may remember our story in September last year which detailed Pete's 'research' photoshoot at the Queensland property of Julia Byatte and Adolf Blasnik. These are the donkeys that Pete took his inspiration from.

Pete prefers to carve from wood before making a mould and then casting them in bronze to make the final sculpture.

It seems that Pete has been bitten by the same bug we all have – you can't stop at just one.

"I'm also working on another donkey with plans to cast him as well. In fact, I can't wait to start another and another. I think of them as a true drought-resistant breed and looking around Australia at the moment they are perfectly suitable for the job," Pete said.

"We really enjoy reading the magazine you put out. Always plenty of sadness surrounding the humble donkey so it is refreshing to read about the love people are capable of giving my favourite animal."



Beautiful life-size bronze of a donkey carved by artist Pete Denison is now at home with Pete at the Gold Coast.

The next donkey carving in the studio; and hasn't Pete got the braying posture just right?



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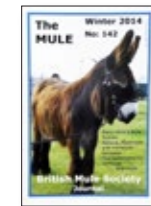
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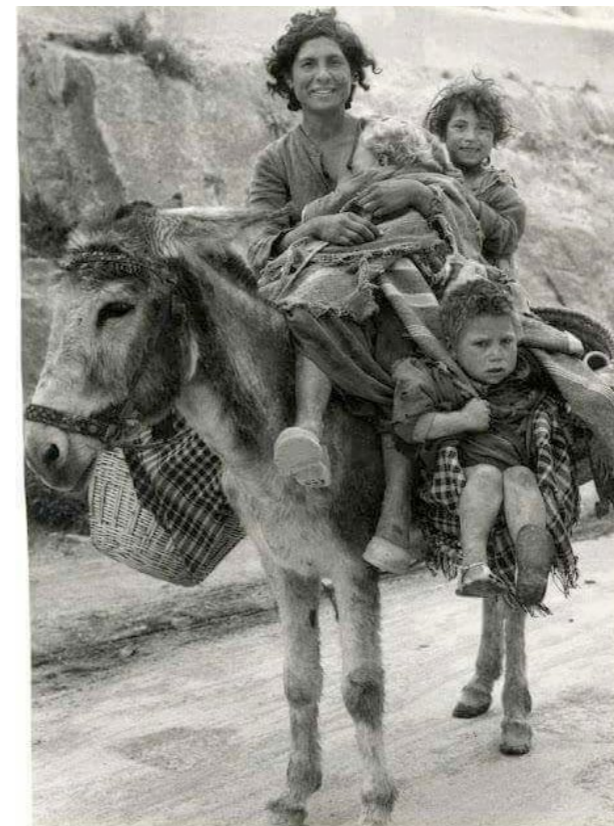
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# Babysitting Donkey's Years Ago



An orphanage outing in the UK in the 1920s. This picture was used to illustrate an article about the Family Planning Association in the 1990s. Photo: Bray Talk.



Early mini-van and soccer Mum. Origin unknown.



The nanny donkey. Origin unknown.





# FROM THE RIDGE

With Fiona Mottram

**K**eysoe Tambo will be getting a swollen head as people with cameras keep telling him he's photogenic. My partner Ross also gets this compliment regularly, and people have painted him, as well as humbly asked permission to photograph him. Doesn't anyone notice that some other mules or donkeys and I are present too? Somehow, we fail to attain the same compliments and attention, ho hum.

Last November the crew filming the ABC television show Heather Ewart's Back Roads spent approximately eight hours filming us as part of next winter's episode on Fish Creek and District. Six hours of this involved taking Heather in the cart with Tambo going up and down the Great Southern Rail Trail for footage of her 'arriving' in the town for the start of the episode. Mule Yurrah UpsaDaisy was tied behind the cart and Ross rode his pennyfarthing bicycle alongside.

We toddled up and down a section of the trail for several hours so they could have versions with different lighting effects. There was filming of the wheels and legs, and trips taken just for sound effects. The cameraman had a ride too, to capture the impression of looking forward from Heather's position in the cart. It was very cramped as we had a large bag of sound gear under our feet. We probably look like we have our knees bumping our chins! By the last take, Tambo was starting to get grumpy that we going over the same ground again with a cart that had a heavier load than usual. However, he and Daisy were incredibly obliging and calm about all the activity and I am very proud of them. We expect this amount of filming will only produce a minute or two – maybe less – of the final half-hour product.

This week, we were called by the series' producer to ask would we mind (as if!) them returning to our home in early April to film and interview us some more because they wanted to extend our feature (especially Ross) in the episode. They already have drone footage of our longears herd, which will likely reveal a closely crowded bunch of muddy and suspicious longears unimpressed by the humming alien thing descending from the sky next to their rolling patch. If only we could convert this attention into some kind of cash income. Or barter it for new season hay or equine vet treatments. But all we can do for now is tell friends the episode is expected to screen sometime in June or July 2019. It's possible we might have to hide after the episode is shown on TV as we live in a location that is quite a stretch for being defined as 'and district' for Fish Creek. The real locals might get huffy!

Yesterday we spent three hours at Coal Creek Heritage Village with three members of the regional photographic club snapping Tambo, Yurrah Frosty, Ross - and sometimes me - posed by various heritage equipment and buildings for promotional purposes. Again, both donkeys were so quiet and patient with everything we asked of them.

The photographers almost had kittens when Ross posed holding his scythe and leading Tambo wearing his leather harness collar. They also loved Ross (in overalls and a collarless grandpa shirt) and the donkeys on the railway line next to abandoned wooden coal skips, leaning against verandah posts, exiting a mine tunnel, reflecting by the lake, lounging by a hitching post etc etc etc – you get the idea. Perhaps if I grow a bushy beard that might boost my photogenic qualities? Meanwhile I shall have to be content with the role of plump, aging peasant woman who happens to have a lot of missing teeth and who looks better photographed from behind at a distance. Please just focus on the donkeys in the pictures!



Outside the buggy shop at Coal Creek Heritage Village. Fiona Mottram with Yurrah Frosty & Ross West with Keysoe Tambo, photographed by Gary Beresford.

LEFT: Fiona & Frosty pose by the steam train for photographer Linda Keagle.



Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to work we go. Ross & Tambo, photographed by Gary Beresford.



Walking along the rail tracks: Ross, Tambo, Fiona & Frosty. Photo: Gary Beresford.

LEFT: Ross & Tambo outside the Coal Creek rail sheds. Photo: Gary Beresford.



## COAL CREEK



### Coal Creek Heritage Village

What a perfect backdrop for a promotional photo shoot featuring Ross West, Fiona Mottram and donkeys Keysoe Tambo and Yurrah Frosty. Reflections of Times Past captured by Gary Beresford, Korumburra,

