

DONKEY DIGEST

The Magazine of the Affiliated Donkey Societies of Australia

June 2019



DONKEY DIGEST

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FROM THE EDITOR

We all know only those with good taste love the Donkey Digest and here's proof. Cover boy Jindi reads the last issue from front to back and vice versa. Dutifully delivered to his paddock by John Wright, Jindi enjoys reading about longears' exploits and tells John when to turn the page, as Jindi has no hands. And besides, humans are meant to be donkeys' servants after all.

On the homefront, things have taken a different turn. After the unexpected death of little brother Elvis, Flicka made it known to the whole neighbourhood that she was lonely. What was worse than the loud braying for us was that she was constantly trying to dig up Elvis' grave. It was very upsetting. So the question was whether to quickly get another companion or to rehome her. While we pondered, the universe took over and made the decision for us – presenting us with an unexpected opportunity to rehome her nearby.



We instantly decided it was right and she is now happy in her new home with five other donkey buddies. Would you believe she hasn't brayed once since she went to her new home! I have always enjoyed training Flicka. She and I clicked and I have greatly missed our interactions over the last few years. So I was immensely proud when the float came for her. Mr Negative Ian was mortified that I hired the float for the three-hour minimum and made it known that I should have hired it for the next block of time – six hours. Flicka had the last word. She followed Ian straight into the float the first go. Not bad for a donkey who arrived at our place by horse truck 10 years ago and had never seen a float in her time here. Needless to say, I ear bashed Ian with 'I told you how intelligent she was' for quite a bit of time afterwards.

.Happy Trails

Christine

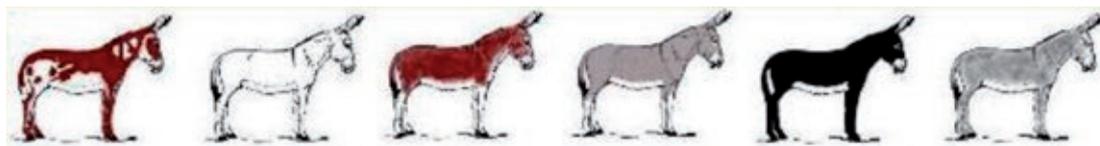
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COVER PHOTO:

What a line-up of ears! Some of the wild donkeys that have made their home on Tanya Hancock's property near Geraldton, WA. Read all about Tanya's self-appointed emotional carers on Page 10.

Photo: Tanya Hancock.



Registrar's Roundup with Kerrie Haynes-Lovell

Registrations	Registration no.	Owner
Eaglehawk Grace	19/003JE	Ann Berrett
Modra Sir Dante	19/005GE/EI	Ann Berrett
Keysoe George	19/006GE	Ruth Walker
Eaglehawk Patches	19/007GE/Aus.min	Ruth Walker
Keysoe Pedro	19/008GE/EI	Ruth Walker
Sylphsong Daisy	19/004JE	Stella Wakil
Crofters Brae Kommet	19/005JE/EI	Marie Lawson
Western Downs Glenwood	19/009GE/Aum	Kim Dalton
Western Downs Vienna	19/010GE/Aum	Kim Dalton
Western Downs Geneva	19/006JE/Aum	Kim Dalton

Transfer #	Name	Registration #	From	To
19/008	Eagle Rock Shelly	18/031JE	Jen Dalitz	Megan Cooper
19/007	Eagle Rock Marty	18/025GE	Jen Dalitz	Megan Cooper
19/009	Eagle Rock Jillie	18/017JE	Jen Dalitz	Paula Barrett White
19/010	Eagle Rock Kayesibabe	17/031JE	Jen Dalitz	Paula Barrett White
19/011	Eagle Rock Courtney	18/030JE	Jen Dalitz	Linda Martin
19/012	Eagle Rock Eeyore	10/023GE	Jen Dalitz	Linda Martin
19/013	Western Downs Memphis	17/005JE	Kim Dalton	Viv Evangelista
19/014	Keysoe George	19/006GE	Ruth Walker	Jennie Tesky
19/015	Rocking Donkey Sienna	18/043/EI	Stella Wakil	David Goode
19/016	Sylphsong Daisy	19/004JE	Stella Wakil	David Goode
19/017	Crofters Brae Misty Mae	18/009JE/EI	Marie Lawson	Glynda Bluhm
19/018	Crofters Brae Porrick	16/005JA/EI	Marie Lawson	Glynda Bluhm
19/019	Crofters Brae Kommet	19/005JE/EI	Marie Lawson	Della Mitchell
19/020	Western Downs Vienna	19/010GE/Aum	Kim Dalton	Murray Sargeant

Endurance: Donkeys and mules now welcome

Donkeys and mules are officially welcome at Endurance Great Britain (EGB) rides this year, thanks to a change in the organisation's rules.

"We've had some donkeys and mules riding with us for years with no issue, and we thought it was time to legitimise them," said Esther Young, chair of the EGB operations committee.

"There's a handful of them and they were allowed to take part but the rule book only specified horses and ponies, and we did get the odd query about whether a rider could bring one."

"The British Mule Society has pushed for it, so we're hoping to work with them on some endurance awards, which might encourage a few more. We've also had some giant American donkeys – about 15hh with huge ears – taking part in a pleasure ride."

Other changes have been made to benefit welfare. These include the banning of pleasure rides of more than 34km in one day; riders who wish to ride longer distances should enter graded rides with full vettings.

Another welfare-based change states that any ride of 80km or more should have at least one vet hold, at least 40 minutes' duration, while a separate rule now removes the ban on helmet cameras.

London New Year's Day Parade

Who would have thought a donkey would make a beautiful sidesaddle mount? The Weaver family took their donkeys into the city centre to participate in the traditional London New Year's Day Parade along with others representing the Donkey Breed Society (DBS). A big crowd of 600,000 lined the streets, giving the donkeys a rousing cheer and showing how much they love the long ears.



Jade Weaver riding Irish Coffee, sister Opal leading the grey and Dad Tom at the rear during the Parade. Photo: Chris Bell. Reprinted courtesy of The Donkey 2019.

Chelsea's Best Artisan Garden goes to ...

Congratulations to The Donkey Sanctuary for winning this year's People's Choice Award for the Best Artisan Garden at the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show.

The Donkey Sanctuary: Donkeys Matter was designed by Christina Williams and Annie Prebensen. Marking The Donkey Sanctuary's 50th anniversary, the garden was designed to showcase the charity's international work and demonstrate how owning a donkey means access to clean, fresh water for some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the world.

The garden was clearly a favourite among visitors at the show. While a shelter provided a shady spot near a well, above which hung a bucket, on higher ground a bank of lavender was reached by a path that led to a rocky area.

Donkeys are the ultimate in sustainable transport. As well as providing a means to carry clean, fresh water for owners in poor communities, donkeys also transport food and medicine, and enable children to receive an education. These tasks are vital for survival in places where no family car could travel, even in the unlikely event that car ownership was within reach.



Mine's bigger than yours

Britain is set to steal the **World's Biggest Donkey** title from America, thanks to Derrick, the growing youngster who lives at Radcliffe Donkey Sanctuary in Lincolnshire.

Derrick is currently a staggering 16.3 hands (5ft 7ins) and is still growing. He's one inch away from beating the current titleholder, Romulus (17 hands or 5ft 8ins) who lives in Texas, USA. Both donkeys are American Mammoth Jackstock, the largest donkey breed in the world.

Sanctuary owner Tracy Garton said: "He was always big and he hasn't finished growing yet. They stop growing when they reach seven years old so he still has a lot of time."

Despite his size, Derrick is a gentle giant: "Derrick is very friendly and just like a big dog. He follows you around all the time and wants to be by your side."



ASSistance given by deputy



This deputy sheriff from **San Bernadino**, USA realises that sometimes you just have to hang out with the locals. These two asked to burro his car to get into town for the bar's Happy Hour.

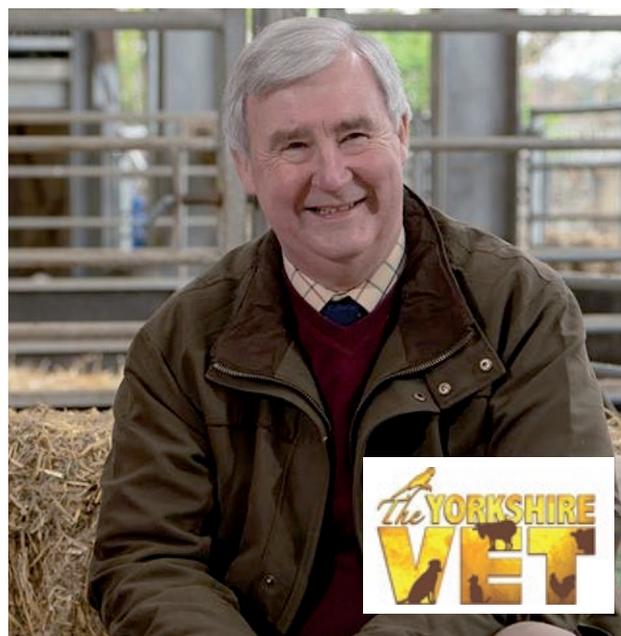
Yorkshire Vet new Donkey Sanctuary ambassador

Accomplished vet Peter Wright has become The Donkey Sanctuary UK's new high-profile ambassador. Known to many as the star of the TV show 'The Yorkshire Vet', Peter is familiar to many viewers as he and fellow veterinarian Julian Norton take TV cameras into their two practices in North Yorkshire.

"We are delighted to welcome Peter Wright as our ambassador. Peter's lifelong dedication and compassion in his veterinary work is inspiring, and we are over the moon he has chosen to join us in this role," said Mike Baker, CEO, The Donkey Sanctuary.

Peter is no stranger to the Devon-based charity. He visited their state-of-the-art donkey hospital in 2018 for Channel 5's first animal charity telethon, 'Help the Animals at Christmas'. During his visit, Peter assisted with an operation to remove a potentially life-threatening sarcoid, a form of cancer, from a donkey called Poppy.

"I consider it a great honour to be asked to be an ambassador for The Donkey Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is at the forefront of donkey welfare both in this country and overseas through its excellent facilities to aid and support sick, abused and abandoned donkeys," said Peter Wright.



Sight issues bond lonely donkeys

Two "reserved and solitary" donkeys with sight problems have overcome their reluctance to bond with others to form an "incredible" friendship. Harry Potter and George, based at the Donkey Sanctuary in Cyprus, did not have an easy start to life.

Harry was handed over by police in 2005 as he had "nowhere to go". He was discovered alone and abandoned in a Limassol village with no microchip. He was blind in one eye, and there was no sign of anyone who could have cared for him.

Since then he has been attended to with patience, love and care by the sanctuary staff and grooms. Now at the grand age of 27, Harry has come a long way – but the scars of emotional trauma do not heal quickly. He can still be very nervous of human contact, according to the Donkey Sanctuary.

Harry did not bond with any other donkeys in the herd until he met George in 2013. George was relinquished when his owner had to return to the UK to care for his father, but due to the fact George is partially sighted, his owner could not find a loving home willing to take him on.

George's poor sight also led to his reluctance to bond with other donkeys – until he stepped in to play an unlikely role in an orphaned foal's life. When little Helena lost her mother shortly after weaning staff were surprised to discover lonesome George had taken the lost foal under his wing.

Harry was eventually moved by the sanctuary into a herd with "additional needs", where he met George.

Although George had learnt to care for young Helena in the past, he was still generally reticent towards interacting with other donkeys and humans. The team were overwhelmed to discover that the pair of reclusive fellows, both dealing with sight difficulties, quickly formed a strong bond.

It's reported the two appear to look out for each other and as if by magic have now truly come out of their shells. They are even seeking out human affection, ear scratches and play. Harry and



George require specialist care owing to Harry's age and the pair's visual impairments which makes exercise "challenging".

The dedicated team in Cyprus take a lot of care to ensure they manage the pair's weight. Although Harry is blind in one eye, he walks on to the weighbridge very confidently and stands patiently while staff check his weight and body condition score. The team always lead him with his good eye towards them, in order for him to take in his surroundings and be sure of his footing.

George's poor sight means he cannot see objects that are close to him making a task such as walking on to the weighbridge rather more daunting for him than it is for other donkeys. Instead of causing him stress by asking him to step on to it, the team manually take his height and girth measurements with a tape measure, and use a weight chart to calculate how much he weighs.

According to the Donkey Sanctuary, the transformation in temperament and trust has been amazing, with the unlikely pair looking forward to spending the rest of their years together with the best care possible.

ANZAC DAY MARCH 2019

Story: Anne Ebbott

Event: Portland, Victoria

My little Bonnie and I took part in our fifth ANZAC day march this year. Bonnie is becoming an old hand now, and becoming more popular also. Fortunately, Bonnie is bit of a ham and loves a cuddle, so she gets a lot out of it also.

The march was followed by a one- hour service and afterwards, the Light Horses and Bonnie got loads of attention and photos taken.

A Police escort headed the march, followed by the Light Horses, Simpson and his donkey, vehicles carrying older veterans, marching veterans, a brass band, school groups, and community groups. At the Memorial Triangle (in front of our Shire offices and overlooking Portland Bay), the floral display each year is fantastic, and there is a guest speaker.

This year, Bonnie was required as a pack donkey, displaying the old petrol cans that carried water to cool the Vickers machine guns so they kept firing, and the old honey tins that carried drinking water for the soldiers.

Simpson used a number of donkeys, as he would never ask a donkey to make a return trip after carrying a wounded soldier down. A fresh donkey would be waiting, ready to take vital supplies up to the soldiers on the hill.

Bonnie's headband was made to the specifications of Colonel Sutton's own armband, which he awarded to "Duffy" – a chocolate brown donkey, as recognition of his work, and acceptance into the ranks. Colonel Butler, who succeeded Colonel Sutton, brought the armband home with him and it was donated to the Australian War Memorial by Butler's grandson.

After the march, we visited Heywood Rural Health nursing home. The residents love to see Bonnie, and many come outside to touch her and reminisce about the animals that they had on their farms.

When we arrived home, Bonnie pranced back into the paddock, knowing that she has pleased us – funny to watch.

ANZAC day is always a very humbling tribute to the men, women and animals who gave so much so that we could enjoy our freedom. It's always encouraging that most children recognize us as Simpson and his donkey, and a living example (hopefully) will make a very meaningful memory for them to carry throughout their lives. Ultimately, once I retire I would love to take Bonnie to schools to talk about Simpson and his donkey – what they did, the gear they used and where the donkeys were kept.



Bonnie & I stand to attention before marching off on Anzac Day this year. Photo: Anne McCurdy



Bonnie carried original petrol cans whose water cooled the machine guns, plus honey tins with drinking water for the soldiers. Photo: Damian Goodman



After the march, a visit to the Heywood Rural Health nursing home is always a pleasure, especially for the residents & staff. Photo: Rod Ebbott



Bonnie & a Lighthorse catch up during the day's events. Photo: Rod Ebbott

FEEDING IN DROUGHT

After enduring a dry Autumn following a dry Spring and Summer, most of us have a great lack of feed in the paddocks for the donkeys. There are a number of problems to be considered in relation to drought when feeding donkeys.

Story: Helen Robertson, South Australia

One "problem" is that donkeys are very good doers, and dry droughty country is their natural habitat. Donkeys will keep themselves alive eating every skerrick of dry grass, every seed, every root or strip of bark. They stay alive in conditions in which everything else starves. However, this leads to a problem, and that is that they'll ruin the paddocks. They will bare the soil till it blows or washes away and also eat the seeds that need to stay in the soil to germinate into new grass once it rains (though they won't get the smaller seeds of broad leaf weeds like Salvation Jane, which aggravates any weed problem you have).

This means once the cover of dry grass in a paddock is down to 70% (at a bare minimum i.e. when you look down at the ground the view is 70% dry vegetation and 30% visible dirt) donkeys (and sheep, etc) must be taken off the paddock. If you have another paddock in better condition, you move them; otherwise they must be moved to yards. If you hand feed hay in the paddock they will keep scrounging around just for something to do and keep making it barer, so when the cover in the paddock reduces to 70% they must come out.

A yard needs to be big enough for the donkeys to move about (say 20 metres across) and be flat to reduce erosion, and have shelter (shed or trees), good fencing, and water trough. If you have a number of donkeys it's better to have only a few per yard and to keep like with like (young stock, or geldings, or pregnant jennies) so each group consists of ones that can all be fed the same.

Donkeys, like horses, need sufficient fibre to keep their gut functioning. This is very important as insufficient fibre will lead to colic and illness. They also need sufficient nourishment,

with enough calories and protein for body maintenance and growth, and enough vitamins and minerals for health. Growing youngsters need more per kilogram of body weight than mature geldings which is why it's best to divide your donkeys into different groups requiring similar feed sizes.

The amount of fibre needed per day is a minimum of 1.5% of body weight, dry matter. So, a 11.2 to 12 hand donkey, weighing around 200kg, needs 3 kg of dry food a day (hay, straw, chaff, pellets). Small square bales of hay tend to weigh 25 to 28 kg each. Straw bales about 20kg. Weigh them at home (hold bale and step on scales, put the bale down, weigh yourself and subtract), or weigh the bales at the feed store where they should have scales for stock feeds. Chaff is cut up hay and the chaff bag will be sold by weight.

So, one bale of hay would last the donkey about 1 week. However, if given the 3 kg of food a day as hay the calorie count would be too high and the adult donkey would get fatter and fatter. Straw is lower in calories per kilogram of food. Most hays are also too high in simple sugars and can lead to laminitis and chronic lameness and hoof problems if too much is fed. Cereals and grasses cut for hay as they run up to flower (which is the usual

time of cutting) tend to be very sweet. Lucerne is actually lower in sugar, but is high in protein and calories. Meadow hay is often listed as the best hay for donkeys and it would be if it was just mixed grasses cut from a meadow; however, a lot of what is sold as meadow hay is planted rye grass and other very high sugar grasses developed for fattening cattle and sheep, so you need to check.

Barley straw is the best for donkeys, but wheaten straw is the second choice. Straw is the residue of the grain crop after the grain has been reaped, and is just the dry yellow stalks. For the hypothetical 200kg adult donkey, yarded, give 2 to 2 and a half kilograms of straw, half to 1 kilogram of hay (part cereal and part lucerne, or all meadow hay), and give 200g of a bagged food like Hygain Zero or other food made for horses at rest and prone to laminitis (that is, very low sugar, low starch) a day. The pellets can be fed when training as rewards, instead of being put in a container at feed time. Young donkeys or pregnant donkeys need extra vitamins and minerals and so should be given a supplement like Kohnke's Donkey Supreme, or similar horse supplement (these are just little pellets of vitamins and minerals, with no food component). Mature donkeys will get enough calcium and so on from the lucerne and the bagged pelleted food. Watch the donkeys' weights and cut back the hay and pellets if getting fatter (or increase if getting thinner). Worm the donkeys.

Once it rains it will take weeks before the grass has grown well enough to be grazed, so we have many weeks of managing the donkeys' feed before they can be turned out again. Training and being taken for walks will add interest to the donkey's day.

Reprinted from South Australia's newsletter Donkey Diaries Downunder.





COME AND TRY DAY

Story: Pat Streefkerk

Recently my carriage driving club, Geelong and District Carriage Drivers, hosted a Come and Try Harness Day open to the general public. The day was designed to show potential carriage drivers what is involved in the sport. By request, my donkey Wendojo Serena was one of the three equines selected to be used for this day, along with two ponies.

The interested people were shown a short video about driving, then a talk about it and questions answered, followed by a harnessing-up demonstration and then the opportunity to actually drive themselves.

Each equine had two pairs of reins so that the new person could actually drive, but if necessary the owner could take control with their pair of reins. Serena was very popular and most wanted a turn with her.

The thoughtful expression in the photo is Serena considering the different feel of two pairs of hands both giving her signals as the new driver gets the feel of the reins. We did two sessions, morning and afternoon.

Great interest was also created at my unharnessing demonstration and the method by which I transport my cart. I had the front of my float lengthened with a platform and a dropdown ramp so that I just wheel the cart up and tip it up, with the back of the seat on a rail. With the ramp up only three simple tie downs are necessary to keep it stable. I just have to watch out for low bridges!!!





Finely tuned over

Generations

NRG Pro-TECT Cream first came about as Boyce had a horse prone to greasy Heal. He sought help from his Irish heritage, developing a cream from an old Irish recipe. With some tweaking, he created our formula, brought up to date with Australian ingredients and soft enough to soothingly apply.

Experience and knowledge do count! Growing up on a farm in Ireland, Boyce has firsthand experience of constant wet and muddy conditions. Passed down through generations was a tried and true recipe that assisted with conditions such as rain scald and greasy heal for their equine friends.

Feedback over the years tells us that the soft NRG Pro-TECT Cream is gentle to apply on these tender areas. We have also learnt that it is better NOT to remove the scabs as this can further irritate the affected area and your horse's disposition.

Mud fever, greasy heel, rain scald and Queensland itch all love moisture and constant wet conditions. Being an oil-based cream, NRG Pro-TECT Cream is a very suitable barrier option, restricting water and mud from entering the hair and skin.

Some reassurance; keep a tub of NRG Pro-TECT Cream in your tack shed, keep your eyes peeled in the wet, muddy conditions and be sure to safeguard against fast growing skin irritations before they develop further.



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HEARTS HEALING TOGETHER

A story of rediscovering joy through the healing powers of donkeys

Story: Christine Thelander **Photos:** Tanya Hancock

It's been a year since Tanya Hancock's world was turned upside down. The sudden and unexpected passing of her soulmate, Shayne, put the couple's dreams and goals into suspended animation. It also left Tanya bereft, broken and questioning whether she could go on. Over the next few months the black dog appeared at the doorway, beckoning Tanya to let him in.

Rewind to the beginning when Tanya and Shayne had moved out to their property near Geraldton, Western Australia. Shayne was a cabinet maker and tiler by trade and together they worked on plans to build a dwelling made from sea containers and a whole lot of love!

A 40ft sea container was at the core of the project, whilst the happy couple lived in a caravan close by. Shayne put in a gas oven, pantry cupboard and kitchen benches. They fenced, built a makeshift portable shower (powered by battery) and began to draw out plans for the dwelling. The world stopped turning when Shayne unexpectedly passed away a year ago.

THEN THE DONKEYS ARRIVED

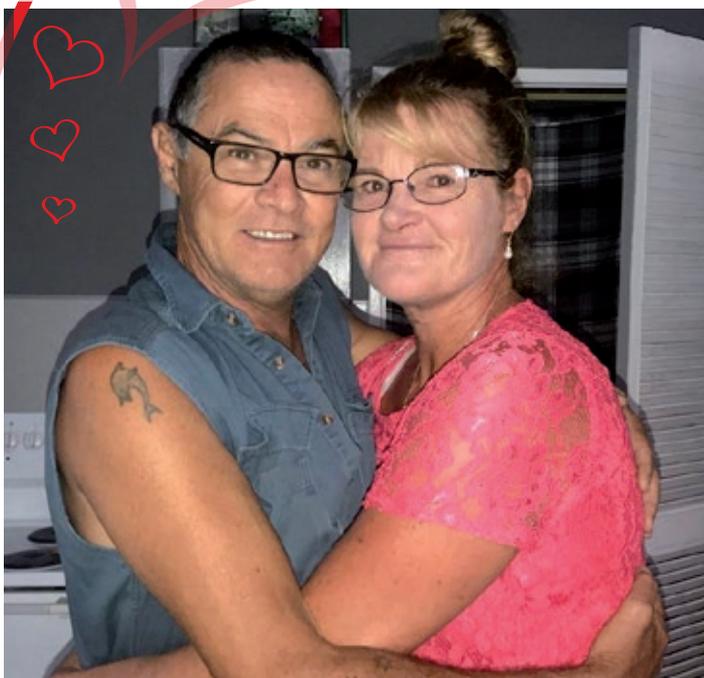
Out of the blue a group of nine wild donkeys mysteriously turned up at Tanya's property. According to her friend, Jeanie Wolfe, Tanya burst into tears because Shayne had always said he would like to get some wild donkeys on the property and work with them to become part of the family. It was as if Shayne had purposely sent the donkeys to help lift Tanya and give her a reason to go on. This it has done, slowly but surely.

The donkeys were a wild bunch whom the neighbours didn't want and luckily strayed onto Tanya's property through a hole in the fence. In that part of Australia, they were destined for one of three endings: to be shot as part of the aerial culling program, to be rounded up for export, or to be sent to slaughter to reappear in pet food cans. In fact, keeping the donkeys safe from shooters is part of Tanya's daily struggle. They are the last remaining donkeys from a 60-strong herd which has been decimated.

Devoted animal lover Tanya immediately set to work bit by agonising bit to gain their trust, with the hope of rehoming them as pets later on. To say the donkeys were wary was an understatement. These nine wild donkeys had experienced only negative interactions with humans and it took months of baby steps for them to feel safe in Tanya's presence.

PERSISTANCE PAYS OFF

If there's one thing Tanya's got bucket loads of, it's patience. Treats, feed and water were offered every day. After initial scepticism and refusal, the donkeys came around and, as to be expected, the younger ones were the first to drop their guard. The older, wiser jennies always stood back ready to make a hasty retreat if needed. Tanya also noticed the



Soulmates: Shayne & Tanya in better days.



The way to a donkey's heart ...

animals operated on 'donkey time' and would appear from the bush at different times of the day or night, or sometimes not at all.

Tanya has been documenting her journey through her Facebook group 'A Donkey's Trust' which has garnered a global fan base. From long-eared shadows in the distant bush to calmly coming up for food and water every evening, the difference has been remarkable.

"The donkeys are now allowing me to sit with them, while talking and singing to them. It is truly a magical feeling when a wild donkey starts to trust you and is feeling more relaxed. A feeling that you can't explain and changes your life forever," Tanya said.

"These beautiful donkeys have helped me so much in ways I just can't explain. The trust, the gentleness of their nature, the softness and their soulful gazes when they look into your eyes; they possess the healing process that I have never felt before and one that I needed the most. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for these beautiful animals."

AND THE DONKEYS ARE:

Tanya has christened the donkeys with names derived to suit their personalities, names that are heavily influenced by wild flowers. For instance, El is short for everlasting flowers, Sneekle is a combination of the snail and leek orchid, Spider is named after the spider orchid, and then there are Clipsy, Namel, Donk Donk, Jack Jack, Little Ridgely and Candy.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Tanya's best friend and supporter Jeanie Wolfe tells us it's not all creature comforts for her friend.

"Tanya is living in a 40ft sea container with no insulation. These containers are known to heat up like ovens on a hot day, so 48°C (118°F) and upward, are a common occurrence," said Jeanie.

"The old air conditioner that Shayne installed does not work properly – she has to lay on the wooden floorboards (which are unsealed and splintering badly) underneath the unit to get any form of reprieve from the very hot weather known to our area.

"She also has no flushing toilet. She has borrowed a small chemical toilet, which she takes in to the local caravan park each week (25kms away) to empty.

"She never complains, never whinges, just deals with it in order to give her all to her beloved donkeys. So, as you can imagine the hardship she faces daily out there is quite monumental. She is trying her best to get ahead, but it's difficult on her own."

HOW DID THEY KNOW?

Oddly, the donkeys did not appear at Tanya's place on the night of Wednesday, 17 April. They did, however, come up to the front door at 2.30am the following morning, led by the wise jennies El and Candy. These jennies had never before come up to the front door. And they did so at 2.30am, the exact time Shayne passed away 10 months earlier. Donkey wisdom cannot be explained.

"These little donkeys just seem to know when I am struggling and missing Shayne," Tanya said. "If I'm having a bad day they just turn up out of the blue and instantly cheer me up. They are truly magical."

The nine wild donkeys that have adopted Tanya: (L-R) El, Donk Donk, Sneekle, Jack Jack, Spider, Ridgely, Candy, Namel & Clipsy.



Tanya has taken superb photos of her donkey herd. Many of these photos are available to purchase, with proceeds going to the upkeep of the donkeys. They make terrific gifts or wall hangings in your home. Check them out on the Facebook site – A Donkeys Trust.



It doesn't take your donkeys long to love the hoof trimming procedure, as can be seen by Christine Trotter's minis greeting farrier Martin Godwin

FARRIER & VET ETIQUETTE

Story: Christine Thelander

Donkeys and mules, like people, can have 'white coat syndrome'. They are perfectly calm, docile animals to handle until the vet or farrier comes and then they start to act up. Routine hoof trims, vaccinations, taking blood or floating teeth can quickly turn into a three-ring circus.

You can largely avoid or at least temper unruly behaviour by preparing well in advance. Don't wait for a vet or farrier visit. Train your animal to enjoy being caught and to stand calmly for you, friends or strangers well before you call the farrier or the vet. Adjust your mindset on training. If you can't manage the animal, why should you expect a farrier or vet to train your donkey? Why would a professional take unnecessary risks with their livelihood on your behalf? A vet or farrier can't work to feed their family if they break an arm because of your untrained donkey or mule? And apart from the real risk of injury, the extra time it takes to manhandle your donkey is something that's not appreciated and not chargeable. No wonder we all get 'that' reaction when we call up a professional and ask them to come and work on our donkeys!

Before the vet or farrier arrives

Have the animal caught, halter on and confined to a small yard or stable. This may or may not include tying up. I personally don't tie up my donkeys while waiting for the farrier because Elvis digs his way to China as an attention-seeking move. So I put a halter on everyone, tie the leads around their necks and leave them loose in a small yard. Then I wait for the farrier. I never leave them unsupervised so they don't get into trouble wearing halters and leads in this fashion. Of course, there's no stopping Elvis; he always goes over to another donkey, grabs the lead in his mouth and takes them for a reluctant walk. But when the farrier arrives, he's good as gold and doesn't even require anyone to hold his lead while his feet are being trimmed.

Keep friends together. Catch your donkey or mule's paddock pal as well, even if he doesn't need to be attended to. Having his mate close by will reduce anxiety



Martin Godwin trims Ashby Manse Savanna: Grawood Half Pint over sees the trimming of her friend.



Sometimes the greetings get a little too enthusiastic. The bromance between stud jack Poplar Grove Hot Chocolate & farrier Martin is obvious. Chocolate launches himself at Martin every time he arrives at Christine Trotter's place.



Come on, time to get up and start work.

and calm the situation down so the donkey being trimmed or having a veterinary procedure will be more likely to stand quietly.

Groom your donkey. While waiting for the farrier or vet, brush your donkey down and get rid of caked mud etc. This, to me, is a matter of personal pride and shows respect to a professional service provider. I don't like people to think I don't care about my paddock ornaments. It's also a useful exercise in grooming them and toweling them down, as we all know how filthy the rolling little monkeys can get. Expecting someone to get black hands and clothes from your donkeys is not professional, particularly when these people have to go on to other clients.

Sedation is not an easy fix. Don't get into the habit of using sedatives to control your untrained donkey or mule. Yes, I can understand why farriers and vets recommend it but in my view, it should be used as a training aid only if needed. If a sedated animal goes on to have his feet done without further drama or a veterinary procedure, he will remember that as a positive experience and it's likely you won't have to sedate him next time. The idea is to teach the equine that this procedure isn't so bad after all. Sedation every time is not a substitute for your lack of training.

Keep treats handy. I have special treats I use only for farrier/vet visits and, boy, does this sort of bribery work with my 'kids'? Licorice is reserved for special 'training' occasions. Flicka will let the farrier/vet do almost anything if there's a sniff of licorice about. Elvis, not so much because his motivation is being the centre of attention so he's happy being fussed over by someone other than me for a change. Every situation is different but you have to be careful to use treats only as a reward for doing something good and watch accidentally rewarding the donkey for doing something undesirable like jiggling around while the farrier is trimming a hoof. There is nothing that annoys a farrier more than an animal that won't stand still and you can't run your hands down the legs to pick up the feet. Oh wait, there is one more – an animal that's 'bargy' and doesn't respect a human's personal space. It's ignorant behaviour in humans and animals.

Enjoy yourself. Don't be nervous or worried about anything. Your attitude will be picked up immediately. After all, donkeys can feel a tiny fly land on them. They are more sensitive than you probably give them credit for. To be honest, most farriers and vets are helpful if they can see you have done your best or they need to be patient with a restless youngster. But please, for the sake of the donkey, teach him or her the basics of handling and you won't look back.





Donkey Info Day a braying success

Story: Christine Thelander

Over 30 donkey lovers descended on Ian and Rita Mitchell's lovely property at Redland Bay, Brisbane for a Donkey Info Day last month. The event, organized by the Donkey Society of Queensland, featured a range of speakers who covered many subjects on donkey health, welfare, training and safety.

Vet Dr Chris Wain noted that colic was by far the most frequent reason he was called out to large animals and he outlined ways to minimize animals developing this distressing problem.

Nutritionist Larissa Bilston spoke about the need for feed and minerals to be used in the correct proportions to reduce the risk of laminitis which donkeys are very prone to.

Jenny Randall, our Clicker Training Queen, demonstrated the basics of this training method and how it can be used for any number of problems, from catching and leading your donkey to more advanced training.

DSQ President Carol Stephens spoke about safety and what methods she uses in the day-to-day operations of handling horses and donkeys. Carol runs a large agistment property and has over 30 horses and four donkeys in her care. Add to the mix owners and kids having lessons and it is obvious how important it is to follow safety procedures at all times.

It was terrific to see people asking questions and working towards solutions to their own problems. The hosts' beautiful donkeys Hoppy and Oddly graciously accepted all the attention, as strangers did this and that to them as practice for their own donkeys at home.

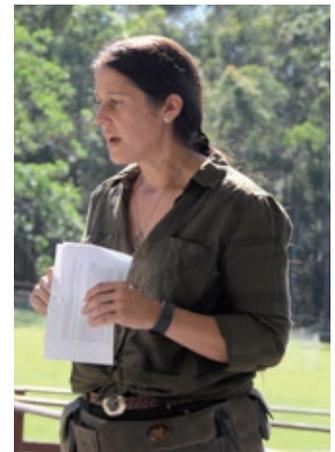
Big thanks go to Ian and Rita Mitchell for generously sharing their property, facilities and donkeys with us. They even concreted an awning off the side of the barn for the day. Wow, now that's commitment. Thanks also to the hard-working DSQ Committee. It's not a simple job to organize an event such as this and Carol, Julia Byatte and Sue Greenwood took on the task with enthusiasm. Lastly, thanks to the presenters who shared their knowledge in their fields of expertise. I'm sure everyone went away with at least one gem of an idea to add to their donkey knowledge.



Nutritionist Larissa Bilston talked about feeding according to the nutrition pyramid.



Carol Stephens demonstrated safety when catching donkeys, using Oddly as the model. In the background are Jenny Randall & host Ian Mitchell.



Vet Dr Chris Wain gave an equine overview, while Jenny Stephens showed the basics of clicker training.



FROM THE RIDGE

With Fiona Mottram

Things just keep on happening with the longears! The quarter started by competing at the DSV's Championship Show with mule Yurrah UpsaDaisy, and donkeys Keysoe Tambo and Keysoe Mathoura (aka Marlo). Ross helped me with the showing and handling. Daisy was spot on, and did everything willingly and keenly. She was a joy to handle whether in hand, long-reined or harness driven. She deserved her win of Champion Performance Mule. Daisy also won Reserve Champion Led Mule from a field of five mules.

At only 20 months old, I was thrilled that Marlo won Reserve Champion Donkey 13hh and under. He behaved really well at what was his second show. Wasn't nearly as patient and calm at his first one! Tambo didn't have any spectacular wins (his strength is in bush outings; at shows he tends to get herd separation anxiety) but he did his very best and the riding practice we did before the show resulted in clearly improved performance together. So I was delighted with him all the same.



KNIGHTS, SQUIRES AND DONKEYS

Last weekend Ross and I dressed as medieval peasants, and took Keysoe Tambo and Yurrah Frosty to the World Jousting Championships which was held for the first time in Victoria. The venue was at Lardner Park, which is about 90 minutes' drive. We couldn't afford the event ticket prices but got to camp there, get some free feeds and enjoy the whole experience as participants because I had emailed the organiser and bartered entry in return for wandering among the crowd in the medieval village with our donkeys during both days. As event participants, we got to meet the horse owners, the knights, their squires and other hangers-on. (Knights came from France, Canada, Russia, Norway, Holland and Australia. The overseas competitors borrowed Australian horses. Most horses were full or part Friesian or Percheron). Many points about jousting and tournament etiquette were explained to us with enthusiasm. If a knight is unhorsed, the armour weight prevents them getting up unaided. The fall is a hard splat off the horse. Once the rider tilts over a certain degree, the armour weight means toppling off is inevitable. We were able to inspect and hold the armour, which costs about \$20,000 per suit. The helm alone – ie helmet - weighs approximately 15kg. Ross had happy man-to-man discussions about wood turning and metalwork with the crew who were making the lances.

Both donkeys wore light pack saddles/gear which we had made from a combination of leather and sisal rope. The saddle blankets were hessian bags stuffed with hay. I used sheepskin fluffies on the rope girths, breastplates and breeching. I did the plaiting and Ross did all the splicing. On Saturday both donkeys wore aged ▶



Marlo meets the neighbour's Arab horse.

Marlo is growing at a great rate. His legs are now longer than Tambo's. Marlo knows to come to the gate when the mules aren't paying attention so he can be easily let out for his daily 'growing donkey' feed without fuss. I feed him 50/50 oaten/lucerne chaff mix, Coprice G (growing) pellets and a sprinkle of Dr Kohnke's Donkey Supreme. Not a huge serving but enough to fuel his growth spurts. I am still taking him for walks to gain experience with different things. Marlo enjoyed meeting an Arab horse that a new neighbour has acquired. The horse was bouncing and bounding around on springs as Arabs do, but Marlo was quiet and polite despite the display.

Keysoe Shane (aka Snowy) has gone to live for a while at Toora to keep a young donkey gelding named George company, who I delivered there from Ruth Walker. George's owner may end up buying Snowy after three months is up (or getting another donkey) but for now I am content to have one less to feed over winter. They are paddocked with an elderly pony mare who was distraught when her pony friend recently died. After a minor kerfuffle involving some chasing around, everyone is getting along fine, but an aging mare is not the best suited company for a gelding donkey youngster. The donkeys are being taken for walks and are adored by visiting grandchildren.



► leather halters, but Tambo broke his by the end of the day so had to wear a brown, modern webbing headstall on the Sunday. For pack loads Tambo carried several rolled-up deerskins and a cow skin. Ross had hand-tanned the deerskins using wattle bark. Frosty carried a folded rug that I had knitted using wool I had spun from a pair of sheep I used to own. Our 'story' was that we were returning from market with a few unsold items.

The event's Re-enactment Coordinator had emailed me some information about authentic medieval clothing. I used the descriptions to make us tunics, cloaks and hooded short-cape garments (don't know the proper term) out of some old woollen army blankets we had. I was thrilled when we met a woman who specialises in medieval costumes was wearing a dress made from the same thing! Although linen was used at the time for underclothing etc, I made my shift and cap from unbleached calico as a cheap alternative for our first foray into medieval re-enactment. We each wore plain woollen leggings that I own. Ross made two cowskin pouches to carry on our belts. We kept our mobile phones, car keys, money, waterless handwash and hanky in them. Time, skill levels and cost meant we didn't get to make ourselves replica leather shoes. However massive rain all week before the event resulted in such boggy, slushy conditions, that waterproof boots were allowed by re-enactors anyway. Safety is also a fair argument for use of non-traditional footwear when handling hoofed animals like donkeys. To our great amusement, we were probably the only peasants there. Virtually everyone else wore a costume of a higher social rank, with most dressed as privileged lords and ladies!

The advantage of taking the donkeys was that everyone wants to come and chat to you and cuddle the longears. On the first day, it took us an hour to stroll 60m because we were so mobbed. On the Saturday morning, the organisers asked us to take the donkeys out to entertain the long queues of people wanting to attend. (The EFTPOS went down and the queue wasn't moving for half an hour). The medieval band Wayward also came out and cheered up the would-be ticket buyers. Afterwards they said how much they loved seeing interact with the public. In the afternoon we walked the donkeys around without their gear. Instead they were muddy from freshly rolling during their break! The rest of the weekend, the boys carried their packs.

It turned out that the MP (Harriet Shing) officially opened the event. She is a friend / acquaintance who adores donkeys. Harriet was over the moon cuddling the boys and taking photos. Rather funny considering the enormous jousting horses are intended to be the main attraction! The medieval re-enactors were just as keen as the general public to meet the donkeys. In turn they were so friendly telling us about their costumes, their gear or craft speciality, and the period they re-enact and so on, it made the event a huge pleasure for us.

Frosty can take standing around and being patted by strangers all day. He lowers his head, closes his eyes and blisses. Children are his favourite. At one point we went over to a woman in a wheelchair. Frosty just hovered his head down over her lap so she could pat him. Tambo generally prefers to keep moving or to graze. He can accept being touched by strangers for two



Tambo with Ross West & Frosty with Fiona Mottram near the medieval village tents at the World Jousting Championships. Photo: Anne Leviston, Facebook page Harlequin Photography, www.anneleviston.com



Dressed the part in authentic medieval gear: Ross, Frosty, Fiona & Tambo Photo: Samuel Noakes Photographics. Editor's note: This is the only time I can call Fiona a peasant & get away with it! Hahaha.

hours or so, but then tells us he needs a break away from it all. If we don't take him off for a rest, Tambo gets restless, tries chewing Frosty's load, starts biffing people with his nose or turns his head away when they reach to touch him. Both donkeys were fine with people pressed all around them and my confidence they wouldn't kick anyone was justified. In all the WJC was a terrific experience. So many people loved Tambo and Frosty, and we were thanked continuously for bringing the donkeys. The jousting was exciting to watch. The medieval village was fabulous. Preparation of the gear beforehand was great fun. It was all definitely worth it and we're feeling keen to try it again.



Kids can't keep their hands off donkeys. And Tambo & Frosty will take all the patting they can get. Photo: Anne Leviston



Mad About Donkeys

I reckon I must be mad!
My mother wasn't into donks,
And neither was my dad,
But the madness hit me early,
And hit me like a curse,
And I've never gotten better,
In fact I've gotten worse.

I cannot bake or cook,
I do not even try,
But I can back a truck and trailer,
In the twinkling of an eye.
My stables are immaculate,
My house is just a mess,
One eye's on the heavens,
It's gonna rain I guess.

And though they're wearing blankets,
The best that you can get,
I bring them in to keep them dry,
While I get soaking wet.
I spend every cent I've got
On donkey stuff for sure.
I could have had that haircut,
Or bought that denim shirt,
Or sewed a fancy outfit,
If not so busy in the dirt.

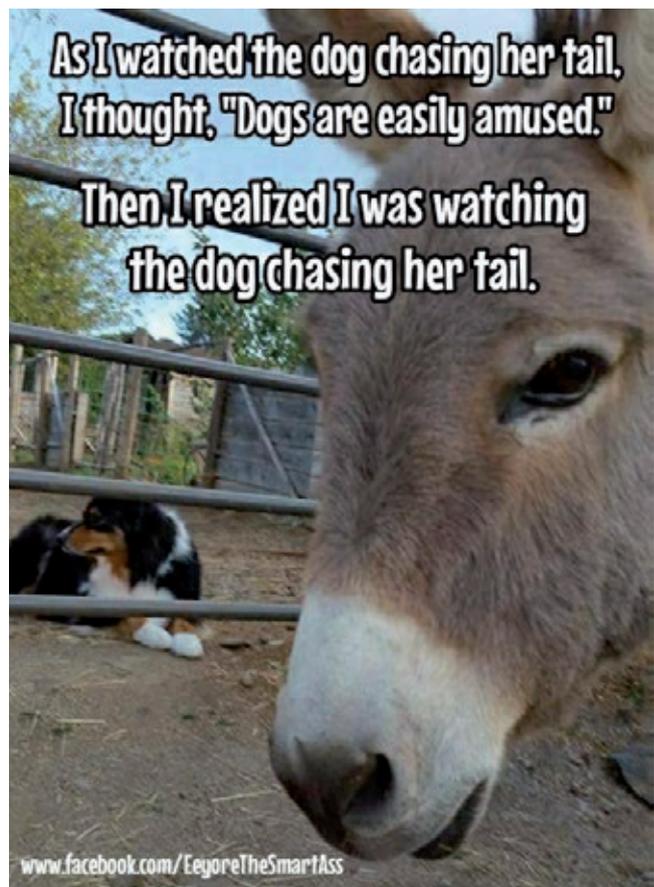
But late at night when all is still,
I've gone to give some hay,
I kiss their velvet noses,
And my worries float away.
They give a gentle snort
And they nuzzle through my hair,
And I know it's where my heart is,
And I love them
More and more.

Author Unknown

'Oh my, what long ears you have'



Archer photobombs Elizabeth Poultney from behind as she sets off on a donkey drive at her property in Pingelly, Western Australia. Photo: Sarah Poultney.



The Origins of Gee and Haw

Someone once asked me where the words 'Gee' and 'Haw' came from. To the uninitiated, these are voice commands used in harness to tell a draft animal to turn right or left, and by draft, I mean horses, mules, donkeys, oxen, goats, sled dogs and so forth.

By Juanita Lewison-Snyder

Reprinted from The Brayer USA

Gee (pronounced jee) meant turning to the offside (or away from the driver). Haw meant turning to the nearside (or towards the driver).

Here in the states, the driver of draft animals stood on their left so animals would thus turn right to the gee command, and left to the haw command. In England however, it's reversed: the driver stood to the right of the animals instead, thereby reversing the relative directions. In other words, an English trained team will haw to the right, while an American trained team will haw to the left – in either case, still towards the direction of their driver.

Etymology

Here's what the Chronicle of the Horse tells us:

As early as 1548 we have record of the term ree, which was a call to a horse to turn right. Ree is in fact simply a corruption of the word right. In 1599, we find this quotation: "Whipstaff in his hand, Who with a hey and ree the beasts command". Hey or Hayte was the word for left at the time but was eventually transformed into haw (mostly in the U.S. 19th century) or heck meaning "to go neither left nor right" or metaphorically, "to be intractable or obstinate". Hey was probably the word we are now familiar with, used as an interjection or to get one's (or in this case one's horses') attention. You may be surprised to learn that the interjection hey dates in writing clear back to about 1225 when it was spelled heil!).

Gee, on the other hand, came about a little later, with written records appearing about 1628: "He expostulates with his Oxen very understandingly, and speaks Gee and Ree better than English," (from A Country Fellow, by Earle). Gee had evolved with influence from ree, as a corrupted form of "go". It eventually came to replace ree to mean "right", but also continued to retain its "go" meaning as well.

The term gee was used in the city as well as the country, in the form of gee-gee, a hypocoristic (baby talk) term for horse. The word gee-gee which had been used to direct a horse eventually came to mean the horse itself. Children in the early 19th century saw horses on a daily basis, and the youngest just learning to speak would hear men shouting "Gee" so logically they



began associating that word to the animal itself. "Horse" became gee-gee after the pattern of children's words for animals, such as bow-wow for dog and kitty cat for cat. The earliest record of gee-gee usage is 1869, but in 1886 we read: "To carry two heavy boys ... on his back, pretending that he was a gee-gee." The term was certainly being used as early as the first part of the 19th century. So when a farmer calls haw and gee to his horses, he is etymologically saying hey and go.

As a Kid Growing up ...

I recall my father often using the term in derogatory tones when describing a person who changed their mind often, or had seemingly no purpose or destination. "They're just sitting around geeing and hawing," he'd complain, my mother rolling her eyes behind his back!

Pop Culture

Curiously enough in pop culture, Chubby Checker and the Goodtimers (of 'Let's Twist Again' fame) recorded a hit song called Pony Time in 1961. Included in the lyrics of Pony Time are these words: "Now you turn to the left when I say gee. You turn to the right when I say haw. Now, gee, ya ya little baby. Now haw, ya oh baby, oh baby, pretty baby. Do it baby, oh baby, oh baby ...". Note: this song is meant to be heard not read on paper, but you get the idea!

Slang

According to the Urban Dictionary, geehaw (one word version) is actually a phrase from the American South meaning, "to get along" as in, "Me and that food just ain't geehawin'." It's also used descriptively to mean zigzagging as in, "That drunk is geehawing down the highway."

I also ran across an odd slang variation in which "gee-gee dodge" actually meant the selling of horseflesh for beef. Yuck!

Haw has also been used by itself to mean a lowly thing of no value: "Not worth a haw to me". To utter a sound representing a hesitation or pause in speech has been verbalised as "He hemmed and hawed".

As a noun, haw, or nictating membrane, is the thin, protective membrane at the inner corner of the lower eyelid of a horse, dog, etc. This is more commonly known as the third eyelid. And finally, the red berries from the Old-World hawthorn tree, *Crataegus laevigata*, are known as Haws.



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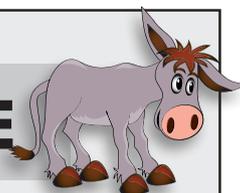
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Advertising material to be sent to the Editor.

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DONKEY FOR SALE



If you are selling a donkey or mule, why not include a Donkey Society membership in the purchase price?

That way the new owner can tap straight into:

- Friendship with like-minded people
- Advice and ongoing education
- Events and social outings

Australian Donkey Societies are in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland.
All contact details can be found inside the front cover of the Donkey Digest.

South Australia

with Kristen Adkins



Left: Val Blessing long reins Blithe Moon Snowden over the cavaletti.

Right: Peggy Moyse & Blue Moon Winter taker a break in between events.

Below: Blithe Moon Keith & Kelsey Dowling make an excellent pair in the standing jump class. The appearance at the show of so many Blithe Moon-bred stock goes to show the influence Helen Robertson is having with her breeding stud.

The Mount Pleasant Show is the most popular donkey outing in South Australia, and this year was no exception. Held in March, fourteen beautiful longears strutted their stuff for the judge, Margaret Reichardt. Margaret was recently awarded Life Membership of the Donkey and Mule Association of S.A., in honour of her tireless commitment to donkeys over many years.

The donkeys competed in a range of events including obstacle courses, barrel race, high jump and costume class. Much time and effort had gone into the preparation and training of all the competitors, and the results were well appreciated by the spectators.

If you have a talented (or not) individual at home in the paddock, why not think about bringing him or her along to one of our shows? They are a lot of fun, and a ribbon at the end is just a bonus! The people involved are very friendly and have a wealth of knowledge about everything donkey-related.

Our next two shows are at Murray Bridge Show, September 28 and Callington Show, October 27. Everyone is welcome to join in the fun.



ABC Donkeys on TV



Escape from the City

South Australia's Fleurieu Peninsula was the backdrop for a recent episode of ABC's 'Escape from the City'. This is a show where hosts guide families, couples of individuals through the trials and tribulations of their life-changing decision to escape city life. The highlight of this episode was a visit to Dayna Curtis and her Li'l Big Ears Donkey Stud. Check it out on iview – Escape from the City, Series 1, Fleurieu Peninsula SA: The Taylors. Note: screenshot photos are a little blurry but you get the idea.



Backroads

The winter episodes of ABC's popular TV show 'Backroads' are now on. Backroads features host Heather Ewart taking viewers to Australia's most interesting communities whose grit and good humour shine through their colourful characters. Fiona Mottram, Ross West, Tambo (donkey) and Daisy (mule) star in the episode about Fish Creek, Victoria. We believe the date this particular episode goes to air is Monday 22nd July at 8pm, so keep a lookout in your TV guides for Fish Creek on 'Backroads'.

MICHELLE KNOLL PHOTOGRAPHY

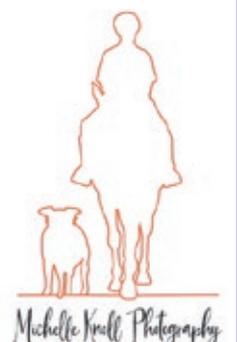


Priceless pet moments captured forever

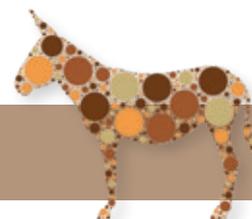
Michelle can arrange to cover your club event or alternatively she does 'private shoots' where she comes to your home or an agreed location and captures you with your donkey/mule/other animals, whether it is riding or driving or just chilling in the paddock.

Michelle took the photos at this year's Victorian Donkey Society Championship Show. More of her work, plus pricing and package deals, can be seen on her Facebook page – Michelle-Knoll-Photography.

Contact Michelle via Facebook,
email mmjjkno@gmail.com or phone 0419 115 539.



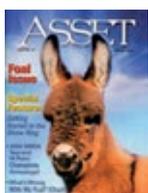
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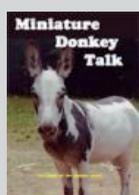
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OUT & ABOUT with Oliver

My fellow donkeys,

It has been very dry up here at the Prickle Farm and also very hot so there has not been much activity in the work department which is very good but we have done a couple of events to show off donkey skills. Earlier on in the year there was a big event to try and get the record for the most people wearing capes in one spot. Of course, I went along wearing my Superman suit. This was a great crowd pleaser but unfortunately, we didn't have enough humans to get into the Guinness Book of Records. The idiot human wanted to know why we did not win the record for the most donkeys wearing capes but his enquiries fell on deaf longears.

We always go up to the St Heliers Heavy Horse Days at St Heliers Correctional Centre at Muswellbrook each year. The organisers give me a space of my own to entertain the people and answer any questions about with donkeys. We represent the Donkey Society of Victoria and many people are curious about donkeys, particularly when they see how magnificent I am. The Good Samaritan Donkey Sanctuary also has a display at the show with a couple of donkeys and lots of info, I called in on them many times during the two days to catch up with them. I came from this sanctuary so I know what wonderful work they do. The stupid shortears and I did tricks all weekend and I made many appearances in my Superman and Shrek suits. I also munched a fair few biscuits and treats over the weekend.

I have to report that I made a bit of a mess of myself on St Patrick's Day. I was thinking about all my Irish cousins and got a bit over emotional. Sadly, too much Guinness was the result and I had a very sore head the next day. Must not repeat that experience next year.

Seven weeks ago, the human picked up a 7-week-old orphan foal to rear. What a little shorteared drongo twerp; he runs around galloping and bucking and knocking things over and chewing up anything not tied down. He gets fed stuff that I should be getting and drinks gallons of powdered milk a day. He ripped the skin off the end of his stupid-looking nose a couple of weeks ago and Dr Oliver was called in to treat him. Because I'm in the same paddock I have no choice but to make house calls.

I was teaching him stuff and had him believing he was a donkey. He was coming along real well until one day he saw his reflection in the water and the shortears told him he was a shortears and not a marvellous donkey like me. So now I have given up on him as a lost cause. I give him a couple of kicks and chase him now and again just to maintain the status quo. There is another little sawn off shorteared squirt up here who also gets feed that should be mine. His name is Jaffa. I have taken steps to rectify the problems with these two shortears. I have advertised them for sale on Gumtree.

Always remember DONKEYS RULE.

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



Is it my Superman cape or my Superman good looks that makes me a chick magnet? I don't know but I don't mind those ladies kissing me. Particularly Leisl Tesch on the right. She's a Paralympic Gold medal wheelchair athlete in basketball and sailing, a school teacher and now our local member of Parliament in NSW. A true Superwoman.



Yes, I guzzled a bucketful of Guinness on St Paddy's day and regretted it afterwards.



Dr Oliver making a paddock call to determine the severity of the orphan foal's cut nose.

Longears roll up for Championship Show



A delighted Jane Homberger congratulates Wendanjo Tex, Reserve Champion Donkey over 13hh.



Wayne Riddell's Wombalyn Rise Oliver won Champion Gelding All Sections.

Story: Fiona Mottram

Photos: Michelle Knoll Photography

Event: 14 April 2019

A sunny day and an excellent venue at Langwarrin Pony Club grounds enhanced a pleasurable day with 23 donkeys and five mules providing plenty of competition at the Donkey Society of Victoria (DSV) Palm Sunday Championship Show.

Life Member and former stud owner Dr. Barbara Taylor judged the halter classes in the morning. The new Show Sub-committee trialed a program of classes by age and estimated/existing mature size rather than by breed classification. This was done in an effort to make entry easier for members who had not shown before and who may not be able to identify that their donkey belonged to a specific breed. This approach gained a mix of both support and displeasure from members. The size groups were: 10hh and under with 11 entries, 13hh and under (but >10hh) with six entries, and over 13hh with two entries. Those classes for animals under 3 years included all genders. Mature animals were divided by jack, jenny and gelding as usual. (Note: Some donkeys entered in performance classes were not entered in halter classes.) Classes were also offered for donkeys and mules registered with the ADSA. Dr. Taylor was pleased with the quality of the animals presented and found the range from minis to mammoths entertaining.

At any time during the morning and early afternoon, entrants could



Stephenie Campbell was delighted when her part mammoth Wendanjo Flynn was named Champion Donkey over 13hh.



Spring Gully Smokey driven by Ann Berrett puts his best hoof forward in the harness turnout class, edging his way towards taking home the trophy for Champion Performance Donkey.

take their longears over to the dressage arena for ridden and long-reined dressage tests, or to the obstacle courses for ridden, led and harness obstacle classes. DSV member and experienced horse riding competitor Fiona Nelson presided at the dressage arena. Farrier and mule expert Oscar Suárez judged the obstacle courses. The pony club allowed the DSV to use its gear, so the obstacle course was quite...colourful thanks to Jan Murray's imaginative efforts. There was even a "dragon's tail" to jump!

Immediately after lunch, Life Member Pam Newton judged the Fancy Dress which was well-contested and included some small children participating. Dr. Taylor judged the standing jump and harness classes in the mid-afternoon.

The day's classes progressed steadily but without rushing. It was fun to compete. This year's show had an increased number of competitors in the performance classes and several participants had not shown with the DSV previously. Thanks to generous sponsors, good prizes were available to winners of the Champion and Reserve sashes, and to the 1st and 2nd place raffle winners.



Consistent placegetter, Keysoe Tambo ridden by Fiona Mottram about to enter the arena for the ridden dressage test.



Always a consistent performer, Western Downs Montana, Champion Jenny All Sections with owner/exhibitor Kim Dalton.



Donkey Society of Victoria Palm Sunday Championship Show



Ben Harris with Keysoe Sky doing the long-reined dressage test.



Rosemary Ferretto & her mule Sparrowhawk competed in led & ridden classes, winning Reserve Champion Performance Mule.



Above: Nic Holdsworth on donkey-holding duties with Shane Carey's youngstock winner Malakai Taste the Rain.

Above Right: Shane Carey's stud jack HHAA Black N Blue again swept all before him, winning the Championship in his miniature class, then overall Supreme Champion Led Donkey.

Left: Stephenie Campbell & Flynn won Open Ridden Donkey & placed 2nd in the Novice Ridden Dressage.



Fiona Mottram's Yurrah UpsaDaisy won the standing jump before going on to claim the Champion Performance Hybrid title.



Making their way to the judging ring: Sally Brownridge & Forest, & Tanya French with Briar. The young mules did well in their led & fancy dress classes.