

DONKEY DIGEST

The Magazine of the Affiliated Donkey Societies of Australia

SEPTEMBER 2019



DONKEY DIGEST

is produced by the

Affiliated Donkey Societies of Australia



Four issues are published per year in March, June, September and December respectively.

Distributed to society members

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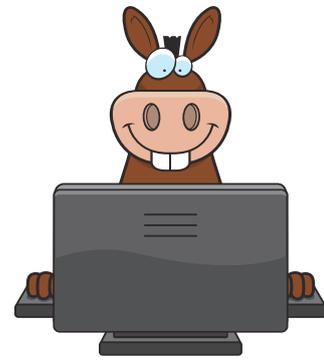
NEXT DEADLINE - 2nd DECEMBER FOR THE DECEMBER 2019 EDITION

Annual overseas subscriptions
Colour electronic copy - \$20 Aus
Black & white posted copy New Zealand -\$35 Aus
Northern hemisphere including UK, Europe,
Canada & USA - \$45 Aus

Please contact the Administrator, Christine Trotter,
for details on payment by direct bank deposit to
the ADSA

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FROM THE EDITOR

I'm full of admiration for people who go out of their way to help defenseless animals and donkeys, in particular, which are labelled as the most abused animal on the globe. They range from being treated like pests in some countries to being wiped out in others for the skin market. It's heartbreaking to think the qualities we love about donkeys – friendly, loving, hard-working, stoic – are the very characteristics that put the species in constant danger of abuse and maltreatment in third-world countries.

Global Working Animal Day (GWAD) in August drew attention to the plight of all working animals, donkeys being just one species. Animal Aid Abroad (AAA), the Perth-based charity set up a fund raiser with the challenge to 'Walk a Mile in My Shoes' which many people did at the Queensland Donkey Walk. It was admirable to see so many walkers laden with 12kg backpacks fulfilling their fund-raising obligations. Many of these walkers came from AAA's Facebook page to join our Donkey Walk and contributed to the happy occasion.

Congratulations are also in order for Julia Byatte and Sue Greenwood, pictured above flanking myself and Tiny. As Secretary and Treasurer of the Donkey Society of Queensland, they work hard for us behind the scenes in their DSQ roles and cheerfully carried their laden backpacks on the fund-raising walk. This was no easy feat as the sun burned down, sapping the energy of some. But both Julia and Sue remarked that what they were carrying was nothing compared to what over-worked and injured donkeys overseas are loaded up with. Read more on P12.

Also in this issue is a comprehensive Worming Special, written by Helen Robertson who breeds quality Australian teamster donkeys at her Blithe Moon Stud in Laura, South Australia. Correct worming is often a subject of confusion as some worms are now resistant to chemicals used in the past to kill them or break the breeding cycle. Animal worming chemicals are suffering the same fate as antibiotics in humans. They are less effective so it is time to rethink the way we worm. What we have 'always done' is no longer necessarily good enough. We run the risk of wasting money on wormers that are ineffective, getting the seasonal timing wrong and harming the environment unnecessarily. Read the full story on P18.

Happy Trails

Christine

inside

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COVER PHOTO:

Oh, those beautiful ears! Kids came from everywhere to drool over Carol Stephens' donkeys at the Queensland Donkey Walk. Here, Chocky exhibits the ultimate patience and kindness as this little girl checks the flexibility of those ears. Unfortunately, we don't know the girl's name as she rushed over from a nearby play park and was not actually on the walk. Read more on Page 12.

Photo: Ian Shawsmith.



A mule walks into Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport

It might sound like the beginning of a lame joke, but it's a real story. In July, a mule wandered into Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport in Israel, inside the actual terminal buildings, stunning security and passengers.

According to Ynetnews.com, the mule escaped from a farm that is near the main airport and wandered its way down the highway. After being bemused for a few minutes outside the departure drop off area (which sounds like a common thing most passengers do when trying to figure out which door to enter), the mule wandered into the terminal building. Maybe he was seeing off a friend?

Onlookers said the mule was incredibly calm and wandered the departure hall looking at puzzling items like the flight information screens, conveyor belts, and low-cost-carrier baggage limit displays.

The unexpected event caused quite a stir for staff on the late-night shift.

"This is the weirdest thing that ever happened to me during a shift," said a worker to Ynetnews.com. "It was very, very late. At first, I thought I was dreaming."

Video footage of the four-legged intruder posted online showed the animal ignoring security staff as passengers looked on. A woman can be heard giggling hysterically as the mule is guided through the airport by employees. Other staff can be heard in the video calling into their radios for other security members to come and see the spectacle. "Ruthie, come quick" one of the officers can be heard saying, followed by heavy laughter.

The mule was left undisturbed until Agriculture Ministry personnel arrived to carefully coax the creature outside and return it home. As far as we can tell, this event did not result in delays, cancellations or affected travellers' plans.

It could have been worse though. Some travellers may recall that a few months ago, a bear wandered into a Siberian airport, causing mass panic and shutting down the terminal for several hours.



A fuzzy still from the video but you get the idea. A staff member guides the mule through the airport after its unexpected appearance at the international airport.



Donkey Lie Detector

Arabs would put a donkey with a greased tail in a darkened tent, then would warn suspects that when the donkey's tail was pulled by a guilty man, the animal would bray.

Those who emerged from the tent without grease on their hands were presumed guilty.

Children love reading to Bindy

A new program, 'Reading to the Donkeys', has been introduced to the Equine Spirit Sanctuary in Taos, New Mexico.

The Sanctuary specializes in equine-assisted learning activities and therapies (EAAT) programs under the guidance of psychologist Dr Jon Katz and internationally-accredited instructors who oversee therapeutic riding programs.

Bindy is one of the donkeys children can practice reading to at the Equine Spirit Sanctuary.

According to Ruth Bourgeois, founder and executive director of the non-profit Equine Spirit Sanctuary, some kids struggle to learn to read.

"Reading to the Donkeys is a great way for kids to improve their reading skills and build self-esteem and confidence in a fun, relaxed setting with our delightful little donkeys. The donkeys are small, calm and well-behaved. Reading out loud to the donkey, with the assistance of a volunteer, is motivating. It's relaxing, entertaining, inspiring and exciting," Ruth said.

There are numerous other benefits, too. Reading interesting stories helps to increase a child's attention span, helps improve communication and build language and social skills. Reading well sets a child up for success in life, opening up endless opportunities for learning. Reading to the Donkeys is a form of pet therapy designed to connect kids with animals, building a bond that makes learning to read enjoyable and encourages kids to learn more and do more.

Age-appropriate donkey and horse storybooks are used for this program, including miniature donkey Bindy's life story for the kids to read.



Bindy takes a paddock break before the next session of Reading to the Donkeys at the Equine Spirit Sanctuary, New Mexico.

Show rider reaches Miss England final with dress made from rosettes

Heads turned on the catwalk when 18-year-old Isobel Lines made her appearance in the finals of the Miss England competition wearing a dress made out of green rosettes.

The idea evolved when competitors were asked to create a green "eco" dress from recycled materials.

Isobel, who has spent the last decade showing her horses at Horse of the Year Show and the Royal International Horse Show, among others, came up with the idea of a dress made from green rosettes. A quick shout-out to her horsey contacts resulted in over 100 green rosettes being donated.

Isobel also wanted to use the dress to help promote awareness of mental health issues.

"Green is the colour for mental health awareness, so it all tied in," she said.

"I lost a friend to suicide last year so it is something I think is really important. We're trying to start a campaign to get mental health on the curriculum in schools, as well as promoting sport as an important part of mental wellness. Horse riding and showing is definitely something that really helps."



Miss England finalist Isobel Lines parades before the judges. Her stunning dress made from green rosettes certainly embodied the requirements for a green eco dress created from recycled materials.

Kenya's donkeys could be extinct in four years

Kenya may not have a single donkey by 2023 if the current slaughter rate continues.

A new report by Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) says the rise of slaughterhouses threatens to wipe out the animal.

The study traces the problem to the classification of donkeys and horses as food animals seven years ago. This led to the establishment of more slaughterhouses to meet the high demand from the local and international markets.

There are four donkey abattoirs in the country namely Goldox Kenya Limited in Mogotio, Baringo County, Star Brilliant Abattoir at Maraigushu in Naivasha, Silzha Ltd at Nakwaalele in Turkana, and Fuhai Machakos Trading Company Ltd.

Animal welfare lobbies have urged the government to withdraw the abattoirs' licences until measures are put in place to guarantee

the welfare of the animals. The lobbies also want trade in donkey meat and skin halted until regulations are set up to protect the species.

The report was compiled by Josiah Ojwang, Dennis Bahati and Sebastian Mwanza from ANAW and Bernard Atsiaya of Kenya Society for the Protection and Care of Animals.

"Most donkeys in Moyale come from Ethiopia through unofficial border entry points," said the report.

Brooke East Africa in collaboration with Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation, the Network of Donkey Owners (Nado) and the Alliance of Donkey Welfare Organisations in Kenya have also called for a ban on the export of donkey skin.

They also want a crackdown on cross-border smuggling of donkeys. Brooke East Africa CEO Fred Ochieng said communities should work together to fight for the survival of donkeys.

Brooke is an international animal welfare charity dedicated to improving the lives of donkeys, horses and mules.

Nado chairman Robert Mutethia said donkeys should not be slaughtered. The export of donkey products is driven mainly by demand from China where the skin is used to make traditional medicine known as ejiao.

The Chinese believe that the skin supplement delays ageing, increases libido and treats side effects of chemotherapy. They also believe that it reverses infertility, prevents miscarriage and menstrual irregularity.

It is estimated that 1,000 donkeys are slaughtered in the country daily. This has led to an increase in donkey theft. ANAW veterinarian Calvin Onyango says 600,000 pieces of donkey skin and 400 tonnes of donkey meat were exported to Vietnam and China between 2016 and 2018.

'Cleopatra' wows Moroccan village at donkey pageant

Wearing a crown of flowers, 'Cleopatra' the donkey delighted villagers in central Morocco by winning the top prize in a beauty pageant.

Named after the ancient Egyptian queen, she triumphed at the Festibaz event — becoming the first female donkey ever to win the contest, held in the village of Beni Ammar.

"It's a devoted and tireless animal, but it must be looked after," said Abdeljalil, the winner's 26-year-old owner. A farmer, he took home a prize of 2,500 dirhams (\$380) and a sack of barley, when the pageant was held again after a five-year break caused by funding difficulties.

As well as a flower crown, Cleopatra wore glamorous sunglasses and was dolled up for the nine judges. The panel included a vet and a philosophy professor, who closely examined the donkeys' appearance, health and bond with their owners.

The twelfth festival in Beni Ammar, some 120 kilometres west of the capital Rabat, was intended as a celebration.

The donkey "plays an essential role in the life of village residents", said Mohamed Belmou, who works in Rabat but is originally from the village.

Donkeys are a key mode of transport and pull heavily-laden carts in rural areas, but the animals have a bad reputation in popular culture and their name can be used as an insult.

"We want to change the image of man's old companion, victim of abuse and bad-mouthing," added Belmou.



Beauty pageant winner donkey, Cleopatra (middle), at the festival 'Festibaz' in the village of Beni Ammar, Morocco. Picture: FADEL SENNA / AFP



Happy horses in Hydra: Charity takes heat off Greek island's working equines



An animal charity boss has made his holiday count after initiating shelters for working donkeys and horses on the Greek island of Hydra.

Geoffrey Dennis, Chief Executive of working animal charity Spana, was on holiday with his family on the island two years ago, and soon learned that there were no motorised vehicles on the island – and that donkeys and horses were the main forms of transport.

Rubbish trucks are the only motor vehicles on the island since, by law, cars and motorcycles are not allowed.

Dennis noticed that the animals that were used as taxis were made to wait for their next trip in uncomfortably high temperatures, with no shelter. He immediately arranged a meeting with Hydra's Port Authority officials to discuss measures that would relieve the working animals of this unnecessary distress.

Dennis, who has been Spana's boss since early 2017, said the charity works

in 26 developing countries providing free veterinary treatment to working animals, training owners and vets on the ground and teaching children the importance of kindness and compassion towards animals.

"It is at the heart of what we do as a charity, and not something you can simply switch off because you are on holiday," he said.

Dennis also offered to help and advise the Port

Authority with potential designs for shelters and explained the necessity of keeping the animals comfortable while working. Those shelters have now been constructed.

"I am delighted that the Port Authority took advice on shelter designs – I cannot wait to return to Hydra and see them for myself. While we don't fund projects in affluent countries and locations like this, we are always happy to help in an advisory capacity.

"I believe the Port's next goal is the establishment of a retirement sanctuary for the animals that can no longer work, and if they need suggestions or recommendations for this, I'd be happy to help.

"A life of work should not mean a life of suffering for animals."

Before: Working equines on the Greek island of Hydra waited in the heat without any shade for their next trip.

After: The new shelters on Hydra provide shade for working horses and donkeys.





On your mark: Burro racers compete in growing sport's world championship

The population of Fairplay, Colorado, USA swelled from 700 to 10,000 in late July when visitors descended on the community for the annual weekend-long event called Burro Days.

Highlight of the event was the World Championship Pack Burro – Spanish word for donkey - Race, now in its 71st year.

The race started at Fairplay township and headed up toward Mosquito Pass before returning to town. Around the start line, people sported hats and shirts proudly inked with the phrase “Celebrating 71 years of hauling ass.”

Last year, the world championships attracted a record-breaking 89 participants. This year, 93 people and burros took their place at the starting line.

The race has both a 15-mile and 29-mile leg, though the latter was cut a few miles short due to snowy conditions on Mosquito Pass. The shorter races are more attractive to the everyday person who doesn't want to run an ultramarathon, much less run one with a burro.

Runners could either bring their own donkey or rent from somebody in the area. Each animal must carry 33 pounds on its back, including a pick, shovel and gold pan as a nod to the sport's mining history.

The animals were a favorite for miners because they could carry more weight for their size than a horse or a mule. They were also used to sniff out dangerous gases underground, since their sense of smell is much sharper than that of humans. This earned them the nickname Rocky Mountain Canary.

By the 1940s many mining towns started to dry up. The idea of burro racing stemmed from a desire to draw visitors to a mountain town that couldn't reap rewards from tourist traps like a ski slope or river.

And so, burro racing, a sport indigenous to Colorado, was born and is now legislated as Colorado's summer heritage sport.



ABOVE: “Get yer ass up the pass.” Pack racers run or walk towards Mosquito Pass in the historic mining district of Colorado.

TOP: Ninety-three competitors started in this year's World Championship Pack Burro Race through the township of Fairplay, Colorado.



Find out more at nrgteam.com.au

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Why register your donkeys?

By Kerrie Haynes-Lovell ADSA Registrar

Registration of donkeys is not something that immediately springs to mind for new donkey owners. Many people would think that registrations only apply to “purebred” animals and not just “pets”. Of course, all our donkeys are purebred but of varying types and origins.

Donkeys and mules come in many different sizes, colours and origins. One of the reasons for having a registration record of the animals in Australia is to identify these differences. In recent years, we have seen the importation of different breed types: Mammoth, Irish, English and Miniature, to name a few. We also have many “teamster” or “bush” donkeys that were the backbone of our rural societies in days gone by.

In the past, some owners did not want, or have access to, brands to identify their animals. However, the advent of microchips has paved the way for a much less traumatic method for many owners to permanently identify all their animals. In fact, if you are in areas where it is necessary to vaccinate against Hendra virus microchipping is a compulsory part the vaccination programme.

In much the same way as a dog or cat microchip works, registration identifies individual animals which reduces conflicts of ownership and allows animals to be identified in the case of that animal being lost, particularly during natural disasters such as floods, fires and storms. In my area at present we are surrounded scary, fast-moving bushfires. In the case of natural disasters like this, animals may have to be relocated to communal paddocks or they often escape from their normal environment. If the animal is registered the owner can be positively identified and ownership verified.

Another, often distressing, consequence of not registering a donkey is that previous owners cannot track their donkey or its progeny. With donkeys living up to 40 or 50 years, this is a problem. I often get calls from people wanting to find out more about a donkey they have purchased or sold and lost track of. I can sometimes help them in their quest to find more information. Sadly, more often than not, I can’t help them as the animal is not in the records or the change of ownership record has not been kept up to date. This can be heart-breaking for someone whose

search suddenly comes to a dead end.

So, registration is not solely for breeders. It is just as important for paddock pets, often of unknown parentage, to be registered on the Affiliated Donkey Societies of Australia (ADSA) database to keep track of the animals, see what types are being kept and the origins of the animals. It’s crucial in building up a picture of the national donkey herd.

The ADSA has a long history of registering donkeys and mules in Australia and the more information the registration system collects the better we are able to assist owners and interested parties about the number and type of animals found in the country.

An animal with identification that is registered has its ownership details, parentage, breeder and current whereabouts recorded on the ADSA database. When an animal is sold and the transfer details are entered into the records, we can track the animal through its life.

If you haven’t registered your donkey or mule, it’s not an expensive process so why not consider doing so? If you require a registration form, or a copy of the registration rules, contact Kerrie Haynes-Lovell – phone 0416 167 453 - Email: lotsodogs@bigpond.com.au - for an electronic copy. Alternatively, the form and rules are available on the ADSA website – www.donkeysadsa.org

Registration costs (one off)

Jack registration	\$40
Jenny registration	\$10
Gelding registration	\$5
(including transfer from colt registration)	
Hybrid – mule or hinny	\$5
Official Height record	\$5
Transfer of ownership	\$5
Stud prefix registration	\$5

Registrations	Registration no.	Owner
WattleWoods Wee Shad (100% Australian Min.)	19/011GE/Aumin	Joanna Shore
WattleWoods Wee Sassi (100% Australian Min.)	19/007JE/Aumin	Hazel Knight

Transfer #	Name	Registration #	From	To
19/021	WattleWoods Wee Shad (100% Australian Min.)	19/011GE/Aumin	Hazel Knight	Joanna Shore

Vale Ivan Summerhayes

By Christine Thelander

Queensland donkey lovers were shocked and saddened at the news that Ivan Summerhayes had passed away unexpectedly on 21st of August this year. He was 87 years old.

Ivan and his wife Marilyn were key figures in the Donkey Society of Queensland, with Ivan being Treasurer and Marilyn Secretary for 13 years. Their untiring efforts to promote donkeys through the DSQ were recognised by the Society with Life Membership, as well as being inducted into the Hall of Fame.

A country boy through and through, Ivan was passionate about animals and would train just about everything – ponies, working draught horses, camels, bulls and donkeys. Add to the mix an assortment of dogs, goats, chooks, turkeys, geese, and Ivan was in animal training heaven.

It's impossible to talk about Ivan without mentioning Marilyn. They were a great team. One could almost say in longear lingo that they were a 'bonded pair'. They came together after previous marriages, both having four children each. A friend's match-making efforts got them together 29 years ago and they have been married for 28 years with an instant family of eight children.

After spending 20 years as an Animal Attendant at the CSIRO tick research station, Jimboomba, the Summerhayes clan moved to Black Duck Creek and this is where most of us knew them from. With nearly 100 acres, Ivan had room for everyone, two-legged and four-legged. Oddly enough, his introduction to donkeys came via Henry, that gorgeous little character formerly owned and trained by Joy Dyer (now Hollingworth). The Summerhayes, not knowing anything about donkeys, were approached to buy him because Joy was going through major health issues at the time. After declining, Ivan had a change of heart and said to Marilyn that at least they should go and look at him. We all know how that ended!

It was the beginning of an era where Ivan took on many donkeys, trained them to saddle and to harness, took them to shows, gave kids rides and even used them daily to ride into the steep country on his property to spray weeds.

A gentle man whom Marilyn says has never once raised his voice to her or any animal in his care, Ivan really was 'unforgettable', as his favourite song attests. Our thoughts go to Marilyn and the extended family at this sad time.



Ivan & his donkeys were a familiar sight on local roads round Black Duck Creek. Here, he drives the pair, Aniseed & Joeleen, with his farm dog going along for the ride.



Always ready to talk animals, Ivan (R) chats to Ian Jamieson (L) from Stanthorpe at a donkey event at Destiny, Boonah.



The Show circuit back then included Kilcoy, Mt Gravatt, Laidley, Goomeri & Greenbank. Ivan is pictured here at Laidley Show with Kazoo Cherish in harness. Would you believe, he took no less than 9 donkeys to Laidley!

Fiesta and Luna share the love



By Cathy Buerckner, Cottles Bridge, Victoria

We recently took our gorgeous Fiesta and her five-month-old foal Luna to a local aged care facility. It was the first of what will be very regular visits and the culmination of a dream for me.

The girls lapped up every moment while the residents and staff were delighted. There were a few deep connections with residents that we wish to build on. It was such a lovely day for all of us. So proud of my girls; nothing phased them, not even the elevator!

It all started when I saw videos and photos of donkeys and horses in aged care facilities and I was instantly keen to become involved. This is where Facebook can be beneficial; I sent messages asking how they prepared their donkeys and was basically told to just socialise them as much as possible and to introduce them to as many different environments as possible. So, I began to encourage the donkeys into our home. Most didn't hesitate especially if there was a carrot stick or two waiting inside for them. I walked them right through the house on all surfaces. I still have two donkeys that do not want to come inside and that's fine, I'd never force them to do anything out of their comfort zone.

Fiesta's sweet jenny foal Luna has been very brave and independent from a young age so Carl and I decided they were the ones to take into an aged care facility. My friend's father had recently moved into this particular home and she had actually taken her goat inside which had been a huge hit. She spoke to the activities co-ordinator about my desire to do this with the donkeys. This was met with an excited 'Yes'. So, we did a recce and walked through the home without the donkeys, checked out where we could park, discussed insurance and the possibility of the donkeys relieving themselves inside the home (they didn't). We also booked a date for three weeks later to give me time to comfortably prepare both donkeys for this new experience. I hadn't yet taken Luna in the float or to town but she waltzed straight into the float and strutted through town without any hesitation. We did this a couple of times and then the big day finally arrived.....

Yes, I was very nervous. I had no idea how it would go and the facility knew that I may not get them through the front door but the girls never hesitated with anything and were inundated with attention from the moment they stepped off the float. Wee Luna was off racing ahead of mum to see what adventures were ahead. The donkeys had no previous experience with wheelchairs, mobile beds, trolleys or lifts. Both girls took themselves to the people, Luna stretching up to reach onto beds. Fiesta was a very calm mum who let her foal do as she wished while she did her own socialising. Luna waltzed straight into the lift. I was very surprised at this to be honest however Fiesta wasn't so sure so she took the scenic route outdoors and met us downstairs. Neither seemed distressed about being separated thankfully and I'm sure in time Fiesta will join us in the lift too.

One lady held Luna's tiny face for about five minutes. It was so beautiful and Luna has always loved her head held in my hand from the day she was born. I feel it's important to choose donkeys that are comfortable about being touched all over, especially the face. I have some donkeys that prefer not to be, it's their very personal space, they accept it but don't enjoy it. Both Fiesta and Luna will snuggle their heads into anyone they meet. It truly couldn't have gone better. We were inside the home for about an hour and that seemed a good amount of time. The residents and staff absolutely loved it, the donkeys loved it and of course so did we.

They are very keen for us to come back weekly but at this stage we will return monthly and have a mini bus of 12 residents come out to the farm in between on a regular basis. I will be trying out some of my other donkeys too. Hopefully they will enjoy the experience as well.

Love affair began decades ago

I had my first donkey experience in the '80s when we lived in Queensland for a few years. I happened to fall in love with a lone donkey that lived around the corner from us. He was tethered in an open paddock and would bray when he saw me from the corner. We developed quite the relationship after I quickly discovered the beauty, gentleness, cheekiness and love a donkey provides.

I talked my husband Carl into getting one, contacted the Donkey Society of Queensland and, would you believe, that particular boy on the tether was the only one they had for sale at the time!! Of course, I just had to have him. I met with his owner to discover he was fully trained to harness, something I'd never considered but I had some lessons and brought him home. The joy Tenna gave us was immense. We had two very young children and two dogs, and the donkey wedged a very large chunk of love in our hearts and family life. He appeared to be happy to be an only donkey, and, to be honest, I didn't know any better at the time.

We had a lot of fun out on the roads in his beautiful hand painted red jinker with white detailing and leather seats. Tenna would go to his harness when he was in the mood to head out on an adventure and often ignore my request to turn into our driveway if he hadn't had enough - haha. Other days he would refuse and literally sit down on his hind quarters like a dog when I went to harness him up. He was such a character but always gentle, kind and loving.

Less than a year later Carl was transferred by his employer back to Melbourne. We were devastated. We adored the life we had created in Queensland but brought Tenna back to Melbourne and agisted him at a friend's property in the hope we could afford enough land to keep him. Sadly, we couldn't and had to move him on. This truly broke my heart. He ended up going to Tasmania (quite the travelled donkey) to a fabulous home who could take his training further and he learned what it was like to have donkey friends.

Donkeys re-enter our lives

In 2011, as empty nesters we were finally able to purchase some land to have a couple of donkeys. I began my search for two geldings but couldn't find any at the time. I contacted Deb Hanton (Amelia Rise Donkeys) who put me onto Margaret Hurrey and we brought a gorgeous six-month-old Irish jack home. His name was Neville and he hadn't been handled so it was a learning curve for me but Deb was with me all the way with her support and advice. Nev and I formed a strong bond very quickly; he was gelded and it was time to introduce a donkey friend for him. We purchased the adorable Amelia Rise Lorado (Bean). Before bringing him home I had regular visits to get to know him and, of course, met Deb's gorgeous newborn foals. We had never considered breeding but after many discussions, Deb and John came here to see our set up and we purchased our first jenny in foal from them, Grawood Cuddle Pie. The joy of seeing a foal being born (along with the stress) and then to raise her was incredible so now we have a small breeding herd, a gelding, mini mule and have raised six beautiful foals.

We purchased one of our jennies Iron Brook Fiesta from Linda Jay at birth. Like Bean I visited regularly and loved the way Linda took her foals out into her local town with their mums. It was such a fun experience and you couldn't imagine the attention they got! It was a great lesson for me to socialize the donkeys more widely from a young age. We had already been taking our donkeys out for walks in our neighbourhood but progressed into our village. Everybody loved it, I was astounded at how calm the donkeys were with traffic, dogs, bikes, loud noises and people coming from everywhere to meet them. We'd just take things very slowly and let them check out their surroundings in their own time. They'd occasionally stop but rarely for long; they were obviously enjoying their adventures. By the second or third time they took everything in their stride.

Donkey adventures continue

We were asked to be involved in a local open farm day and I carefully observed which of our donkeys enjoyed the experience the most. It was very overwhelming for them and to be honest I won't do it again. They all behaved impeccably but it was many of the parents and children that didn't. There were too many people to properly supervise and I found it very stressful.

Not long after adding Neville and Bean to our family I started to realise that by taking the right training steps I could make my dreams a reality. And that's how I ended up taking Fiesta and Luna to the nursing home where Carl, myself and our donkeys gained so much more than the residents themselves. Yes, Fiesta was not going into that lift but I'm hoping to get the donkeys into hospitals so confidence in a lift is paramount. It may well be that Fiesta must learn to follow her baby's actions this time rather than the other way around. We will see.

If anyone is thinking of doing something similar, there are no set qualifications for this so I strongly recommend giving it a go. We are so privileged to share our lives with these generous, amazing, hilarious little creatures that it is a great joy to give such pleasure to those less fortunate.





Hoofing it for charity

Story: Christine Thelander

Photos: Ian Shawsmith

Event: 25 August 2019

Queensland's annual Donkey Walk has always been popular because it successfully blends the excitement of being up close and personal with donkeys with a welcome opportunity to shed the winter blues and enjoy the great sunny outdoors. This time, once again, the walk was held at the scenic Brisbane Valley Rail Trail at Fernvale.

Initially the day was bittersweet for the DSQ, as we had received the news that much-loved member Ivan Summerhayes had passed away a few days earlier. It seemed only natural to dedicate the Donkey Walk to Ivan. The day also coincided with Global Working Animal Day (GWAD) where we committed to raising funds for Animal Aid Abroad (AAA) to help ease the suffering of working donkeys way less fortunate than ours. I know Ivan would have approved, as he was a staunch believer in kindness to all animals.

For a variety of reasons, several donkeys couldn't make it and it was left to Carol Stephens' girls Tina and Chocky to cope with all the adoration. From the time they unloaded from the float they were swamped by fans. I know I have said this before, but it constantly amazes me how kids in particular will rush up to strange donkeys and hug them endlessly – the invisible connection between kids and donkeys never ceases to fill me with awe. And, of course, Tina and Chocky exhibited faultless manners and patience, as usual.

After loaded backpacks were strapped to human GWAD fundraisers, all set off for a couple of hours' walk and lots of chatting along the way. When they returned, it was hot and remarks were made about how the 12 kilo weights they were carrying were nothing compared to what poor donkeys overseas are loaded up with. However, aside from fund raising for AAA, the thought of what was awaiting them on return - cool drinks and a barbecue cooked to perfection by Mr Barbecue himself, Adolf Blassnig – spurred them on.

It was a lovely opportunity to promote our donkeys, enjoy an outing, chat with new friends and old, plus raise money for a cause close to our hearts. It doesn't get much better than this



DSQ President Carol Stephens unloaded Tina & Chocky who were quickly the centre of attention.



Joining us on the fund-raising walk were Lindy Drew-Tseng, Caron Memashe & Deenese Clark from the Bridging Lanka group, a partner of Animal Aid Abroad.

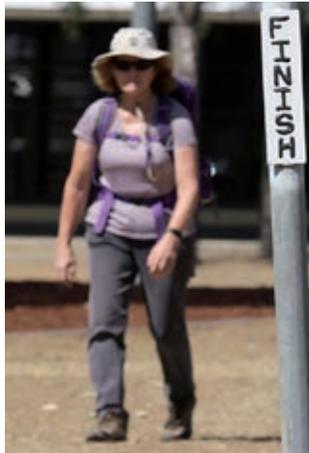


Above: Homeward bound: Peter Anderson & Deenese Clark.
 Left & Below: Kids came from everywhere to pat & hug the ever-patient donkeys.



Anne Tracey fuels Chocky & Tina with apple slices before they set off on the Brisbane Valley Rail trail.





WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES CHALLENGE



GOAL
To raise \$60,000 worldwide.

AAA RAISES \$56,594

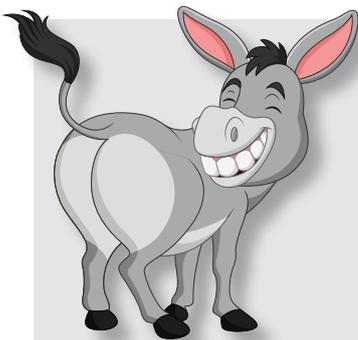
Walk a Mile in My Shoes was a challenge put out by Animal Aid Abroad to raise funds for Global Working Animal Day (GWAD) which draws attention to the dire conditions many working animals, particularly donkeys, are subject to in other parts of the world.

Sue Greenwood, DSQ Treasurer (*pictured above*) and Julia Byatte, DSQ Secretary (*pictured below*), carried 12kg and 13.5kg backpacks respectively on the walk as the culmination of their fund-raising commitments. They were joined by a group of AAA fund raisers who learned of the Donkey Walk through our Facebook page. They also carried weighted backpacks for GWAD. All are to be congratulated for the efforts they put in. DSQ raised \$648 on the day, the majority of which came from Sue's fund-raising activities in the weeks prior to the walk. Many non-donkey owners joining us on the Donkey Walk also generously donated to the cause.

There are five specific projects that will benefit from funds raised by AAA. Three AAA partner groups will help working donkeys in Tanzania and Zimbabwe with new humane carts and harnessing. Funds will be allocated towards the operation of the Donkey Education and Rescue Centre in Sri Lanka. Funds will also be directed to the care of working horses in Nicaragua and working ponies on Gili Islands in Indonesia.

More details can be found on the webpage:

<https://www.animalaidabroad.org/globalworkinganimalday>



An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolated area. Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his big strong mule named Buddy.

He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, "Pull, Nellie, pull!" Buddy didn't move.

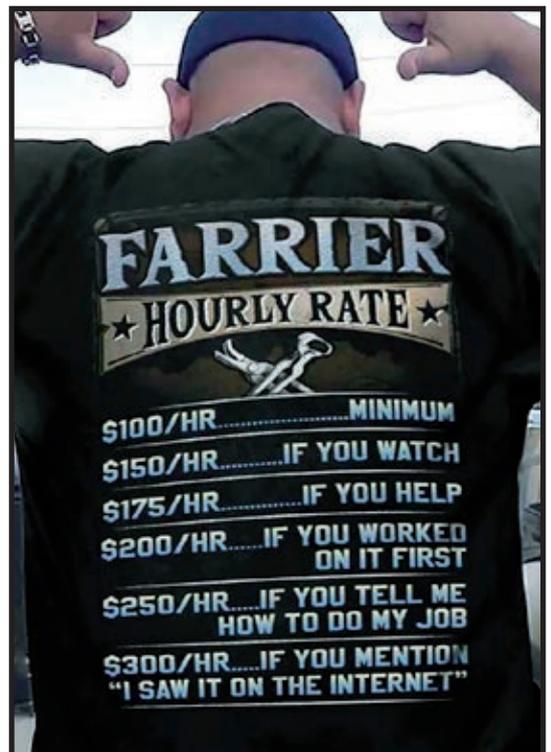
Then the farmer hollered, "Pull, Buster, pull!" Buddy didn't respond.

Once more the farmer commanded, "Pull, Coco, pull!" Nothing.

Then the farmer nonchalantly said, "Pull, Buddy, pull!" And the mule easily dragged the car out of the ditch.

The motorist was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his mule by the wrong name three times.

The farmer said, "Oh, Buddy is blind and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try!"



Feeding Lawn Clippings: Yes or No?

Story: Kentucky Equine Research

You've already revved up the lawnmower and are about to begin cutting your lawn. All that lovely green grass seems to be wasted as horses and donkeys drool over the fence, begging for a tasty treat. Like countless others you can't help but think "Why can't I rake up these lawn clippings and give them to the animals, particularly as their paddocks are so dry and uninteresting at the moment. Besides, aren't we supposed to be doing our bit to recycle? Surely, grass clippings wouldn't hurt?"



A familiar question, but what's the best answer?

To answer it properly, you must think about your equine's diet and the decisions you make for him daily as well as the decisions of those whom you trust with his health. If you do this, the answer to your question will quickly become apparent.

For the sake of consistency

One of the tenets of feeding management is consistency—both in feed type and times of feeding. The equine's digestive system adapts to a certain diet and does amazingly well on whatever limited menu he is offered daily, be it primarily pasture and a vitamin/mineral/salt supplement or a little more for a hard worker. Any abrupt change in the diet can upset the delicacy of the digestive tract, throwing the entire system into chaos and possibly causing colic or founder.

Feeding lawn clippings will dramatically upset the balance of microbes in the hindgut, potentially leading to colic or laminitis, as the amount of highly fermentable carbohydrates in regularly clipped lawns is dangerously high. Excessive intake results in a high rate of fermentation in the hindgut. Accelerated hindgut fermentation can produce increased amounts of volatile fatty acids, which, as their name implies, are quite acidic.

In addition to volatile fatty acids, a surplus of lactic acid will be produced. Lactic acid is not utilized or absorbed well in the hindgut. This increased concentration of acids brings about a condition called acidosis that lowers the pH of the hindgut. The acidic environment created by fermentation of grass clippings in the hindgut causes microbes to die, releasing into the bloodstream endotoxins that can cause laminitis.

Problems too risky to chance

Another aspect often overlooked by well-meaning equine owners is how lawn clippings will affect individual animals with certain

quirks or conditions. When an equine grazes, he must go through the motions of selecting, ripping and thoroughly chewing grass. When a pile of lawn clippings is placed in front of him, the equine can consume the cut grass much more quickly than if he were grazing naturally. If your horse, donkey or mule has a tendency to bolt his feed (eat it very quickly), he may do the same with lawn clippings.

When insufficiently chewed and gulped too quickly, a bolus of clippings can become lodged in his throat, and a condition called choke may ensue. Choke is serious and usually requires the intervention of a veterinarian for resolution.

Lawn clippings might be thoroughly unsuitable for an equine that suffers from a pulmonary disease such as heaves. Dry clippings can be dusty, and may trigger a reaction that leads to respiratory distress. Reactions may be severe enough to warrant veterinary attention or a break from regular work. On the opposite end of the spectrum, damp clippings could provide the perfect environment for mould and bacterial growth. Consumption of mouldy grass has the potential to cause colic or diarrhea.

Not always the same: Lawn grasses and pasture grasses

A final factor worth consideration is chemical exposure. As equine owners, we implicitly trust grain farmers, hay growers and pasture specialists to make informed choices about the growing conditions for their products, especially when it comes to fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals that might be necessary to ensure bountiful crops. Manufacturers of lawn-care products are probably not as concerned with the effects of such chemicals on horses or donkeys.

Fertilizers and weed-control products intended for lawns might not prove detrimental in small quantities (it's not unusual to see owners hand-grazing their horse in their front yard), but to overload the system with large amounts might indeed be harmful.

The potential problems associated with feeding

lawn clippings far outweigh the benefits. Certainly, there's nothing wrong with offering your four-legged friend a treat, but it's safest to stick to the usual gustatory delights such as carrots and apples. Without knowing for sure how an equine will react to lawn clippings, it's best to avoid feeding them altogether.

Re-educating neighbours

Well-meaning neighbours can create problems by throwing their grass clippings over the fence for your equines to chew on. They think they are doing the 'kids' a favour and don't realise that their practices may end with you copping a massive vet bill. A little talk about the whole thing is needed, along with a request not to do this anymore. Most neighbours are only too obliging once they realise the potential consequences of their actions.

EDITOR'S NOTE: news from a friend

"Last night's emergency: pumping out 15 buckets of fresh grass clippings from a colicky horse's stomach! Vet said it is such a common and avoidable emergency at this time of year."

"Vet also explained colic, laminitis, diarrhea and death are a possible result for horses eating a pile of clippings. The centre of that sugary pile of grass quickly ferments especially during warm days and because it's chopped so finely horses tend to gorge on it, ingesting large amounts without barely chewing on it. Suddenly fermentation continues in their stomachs and they become gassy and colicky. Some survive the colic but lose the battle to the laminitis which often develops a few days later from the large and fast ingestion of all the sugar."

The vet's advice?

"Rake clippings when mowing the lawn or paddocks and leave horses off the paddocks for several days for the mowed grass to dry-up if removing the mowed grass is not possible. If you find out your horse ate a pile of clippings don't waste time - call your vet right away."



FROM THE RIDGE

With Fiona Mottram



L-R Keysoe Mathoura, Keysoe Shane with packsaddle & Fiona Mottram.

Mud, mud and more mud. After a warm, dry autumn and early winter, we've had rain with a vengeance. We'd love to share some with those of you in drought. Our steep hillside home is a slippery swamp. The spring at the top of the hill shows the water level is right up under the grass. The longears have churned up much of the paddock but the small amount of short nibbled grass is clearly growing and providing sugar because the mules especially but also the donkeys, have started fizzing about. In the paddock they leap, shy and gallop at the slightest excuse, chasing each other in pretend fright with tilted heads and tails held high. If racing downhill they slither, slip, skid and sometimes fall right over on the treacherous surface. They look offended when I laugh. Everyone has a thick woolly coat, commonly coated in mud. It takes ages to brush anyone I want to take out.

The mules' hooves cope pretty well with the wet but the donkeys' feet suffer in our high rainfall climate. Keysoe Tambo has issues with sections of his outer hoof wall peeling off. My partner Ross has made up a mixture of hoof gloop for me which works better than bought stuff and is far cheaper. He combines Vaseline with beeswax from our hives, eucalyptus and ti-tree oils, and possibly (he forgets!) a dash of turpentine. I slather it on a couple of times per week and it is definitely helping to minimise damage and maintain what is growing. When the donkeys get seedy toe rot holes, I pop some copper sulphate powder in after cleaning out the hole with a hoof knife, then plug it up with some of the gloop – or sometimes with volcanic mud. It's a constant struggle keeping seedy toe at bay in the elderly Yurrah Frosty's hooves. However, he is very patient about my fiddling with his feet and he gets a serve of Gumnuts elderly equine pellets to occupy him while I do this treatment as well as very regular trims to promptly cut rot out. The gloop also softens the coronary band and can be used on the backs of heels, both places where dried mud can make crusty, unhappy skin.

With the cold weather and shortage of grazing, we've been going through lots of hay feeding five donkeys and five mules. Because I bought too much hay the season before last and still have some leftover from that time, I was conservative

in my purchase last season. Finally, we've burrowed through some of the newer stuff to reach the older crop that had got boxed in behind it when we didn't want the effort of rearranging hay at the time. In this cold weather the longears willingly eat it. They had scorned the older feed (which is dry and clean) earlier in the year. The round bales, which by necessity have to be stored outside under trees, got finished while the house sitter minded all the beasties when we snatched a fortnight up in the Northern Territory to remind ourselves what sunshine looks like.

Apart from Keysoe Shane returning home from Toora, the most exciting donkey news is the arrival of Blithe Moon Key, a 14yo gelding who was bred by Helen Robertson and kept as a stud jack until he was 12. He's a sturdy boy a bit bigger than Keysoe Tambo so my intention is to ride and harness drive him when he's been trained. Aesthetically he'd make a lovely harness pair with Tambo as they have both roaned out to an off-white colour. At the moment Key is often a bit worried about things that my other donkeys take for granted but he's willing to try things, has a sweet nature and enjoys cuddles. We've been for walks with bridge crossings, pedestrians, dogs and bicycles. He doesn't like the float so we've practised eating feed moved progressively into the float so it's not such a scary place to spend time. He's also learning to enjoy having his bottom scratched so it will be comfy for him to lift his tail to have a crupper put on. Poor Key is the most submissive individual in the herd so the others can keep him out of the shelter when it's raining and he won't push in among the others to feed at the hay rings. Instead he stands aside and waits until the others move away before he takes his turn. Getting used to dogs running in and out of the paddock or hanging around for hoof trim off-cuts, eating from hay nets and odd noises

from Ross' workshop are just a few of the many new experiences for him. However, I think he'll cope with outings in the real world well once he properly relaxes during training at home. For example, Ross was using his noisy metal cutting saw while I practised float loading Key, the dogs were visiting into the float to see if any feed was being dropped, and cheeky young Keysoe Mathoura kept self-loading into the float an attempt to get the feed bucket contents for himself. I am pleased because Key did load in and out of the float several times and finished his half-bucket in there, containing oaten chaff and Coprice C pellets, sprinkled with Dr Kohnke's Donkey Supreme Supplement and Farrier's Formula hoof pellets. He also calmly accepted me sitting on a low stool so I could keep my back straight while I trimmed his hooves (not in the float).

Shane has been doing some pack saddle practice. He's been very

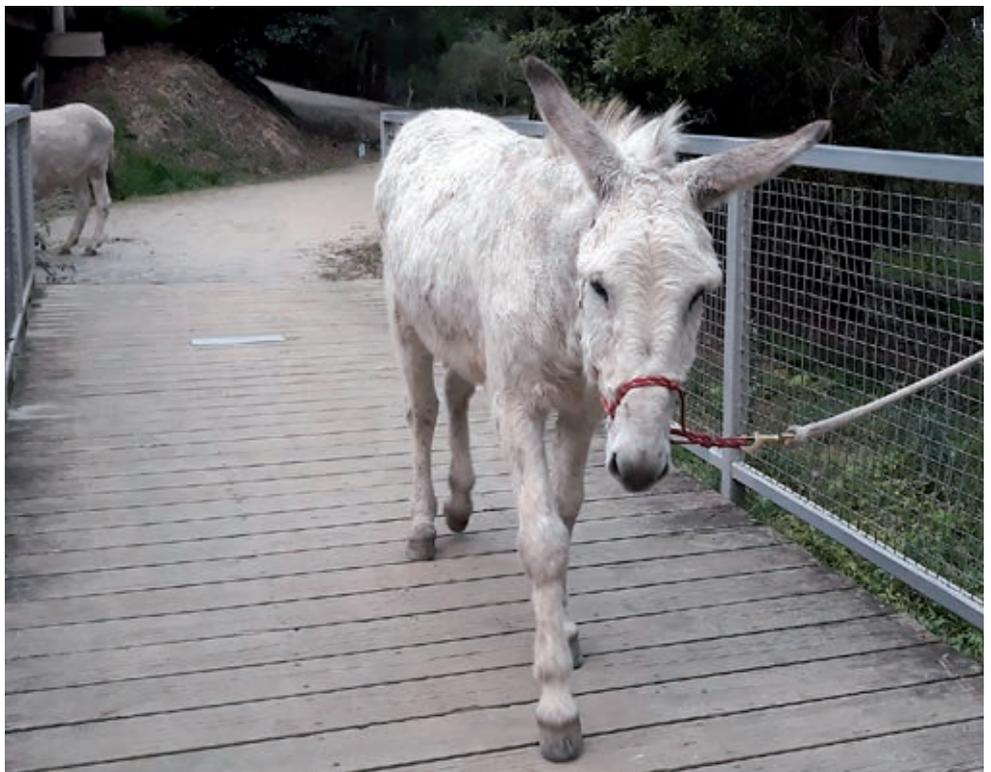


Grooming each other by the polypipe hay ring: Keysoe Tambo & Keysoe Shane.

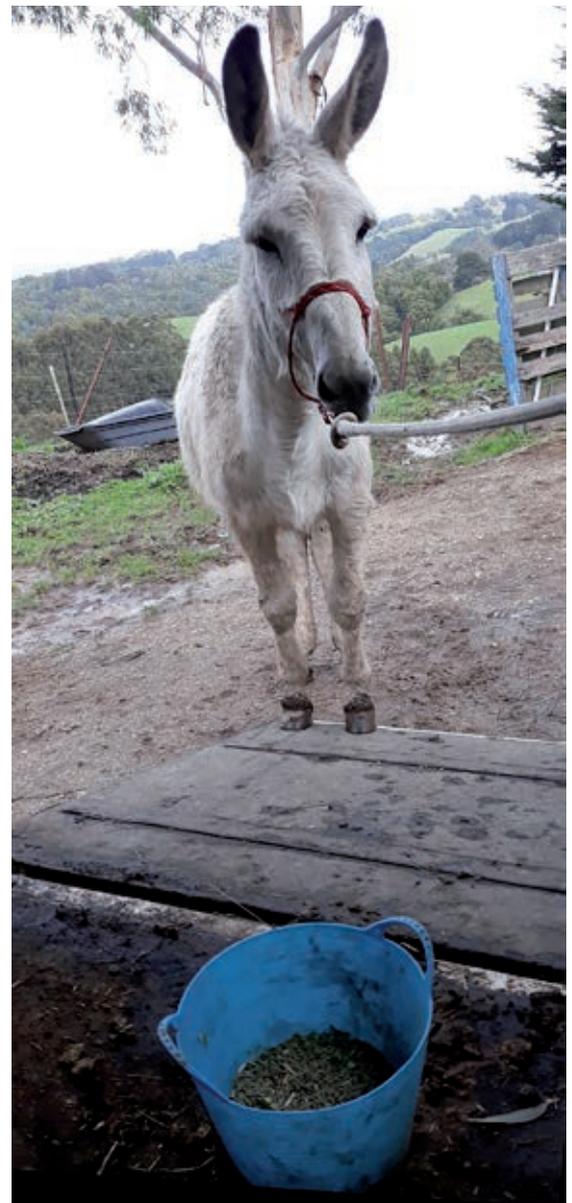
quiet about the gear and led without issue across some wet ditches but was annoyed by Mathoura who was tied on behind. Now 2yo, Mathoura was bouncing around, and when bored, kept trying to nip Shane's face, legs and ears. These two are best friends, and will call plaintively if the other is taken out of the paddock however Mathoura is undeniably pesky to his mates.

Tambo and I attended the DSV's clinic run by Lara Beth Poynton. It was a valuable session and I am very glad we attended. Her methods area similar to those at the other clinics I have been to with David Mellor, Ty Evans and Wrangler Jane. Move the equine's feet to prove your leadership so they see you as the confident leader. Away from the clinics I tend to get hazy on how to do everything I've been shown so it is handy to be reminded. Each teacher also explains things in a different way and has a variation on the detail of implementing techniques. I find some work better with some animals than others. And in turn I modify my own handling practices. If you get the chance, attend something like this. If you can't take your longear, at least go as a fence-sitter and ask some questions. Don't be shy about what you and your animal can or can't do. Some people arrive late because they have trouble float loading or leading their donkey or mule. You won't be the only one with a problem of some kind that can be helped!

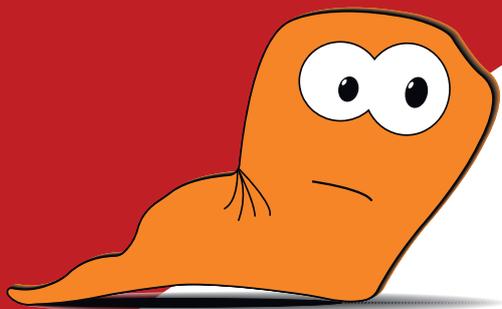
My 4-wheeler pair cart is going well after returning from the mechanics where it got fitted with new disc brakes all round. (It was away for a year and I missed it terribly). It's wonderful to be hooning about in it again. The little mules Yurrah UpsaDaisy, Yurrah Milo and GSDS JoJo go well in it. They enjoy each other's company going out, and I can easily fit all 3 dogs on board. It's a sturdy, well-balanced and sprung vehicle. At harness club it copes with going over logs, through creeks and along eroded tracks. Daisy's willingness to overcome any challenge encourages her pair partner and any animal tied behind to do the same. Hawaiki Bobby Sox was towed onto bridges over flowing floodwaters, into water and into a tunnel (a highway underpass) by the pair cart last week. Once he was into/onto the feared surface, he could cope and move forward under his own initiative.



Blithe Moon Key practises bridge crossing.



ABOVE: Fiona Mottram backs up Keysoe Tambo at the Lara Poynton clinic. Photo: Fleur Dack.
 RIGHT: Blithe Moon Key considers tackling the float ramp in order to get his feed.



Worms and Donkeys

By Helen Robertson, Blithe Moon Donkey Stud,
Laura, South Australia.

A "worm" sounds a harmless thing; one thinks of earthworms working in the soil. However, centuries ago in English the word "worm" applied to all elongated cold blooded creatures, from worms in the garden, through snakes, to "the Great Worm", the dragon killed by St George. The worms and similar ilk that live as parasites inside our donkeys seem to take inspiration from that dragon and can do great harm, laying waste to the tissue "landscapes" of internal organs.

Consider the **Large Strongyle** (Large Red Worm or Blood Worm 10 - 20 mm long) - hatching from an egg in manure in the pasture. It develops over a few days through its early larval stages, then crawls several metres in the damp grass and up onto a blade of grass, awaiting ingestion by another equine. Eaten, it burrows through the lining of the intestine and into a blood vessel, where it resides for a time (and may wander, causing havoc, like a stroke if it gets into a blood vessel in the brain). Its target in its journey is the mesenteric blood vessels that serve the large intestine, and it comes back out of a blood vessel and into the large intestine. It can hold onto the wall, to prevent itself being swept downstream, and (having matured over 6 to 11 months) lays vast numbers of eggs to start the cycle again. These worms, by blocking blood vessels, can cut off the blood supply to areas of tissue, sometimes with fatal results, especially when large numbers congregate in the mesenteric vessels of the bowel. They are a lot less common since the 'mectin group of worming medicines became available in the 1980s.

Then there are the **Small Strongyles** (Cyathosomins, or Small Redworms 5 - 15mm long), which also await as larvae in the grass but they simply migrate into the intestinal wall and become inert encysted larvae, and wait and wait, usually for weeks, but a few wait for months or years, before awakening and coming out into the intestine to mature and feed and lay lots and lots of eggs. The encysted larvae wait till their best chance at life in the intestine; many make their move in Spring, but the absence of adult worms of their species in the gut can lead to large numbers coming out (and this can happen when a worming medicine has killed off the ones living inside the gut - the encysted larvae are very resistant to being killed and currently only one medication is known to be effective against the encysted ones). A massive out-pouring of fresh Small Strongyles from the gut wall can cause severe damage and fatal colic. These are now the most troublesome worms in equines in Australia.

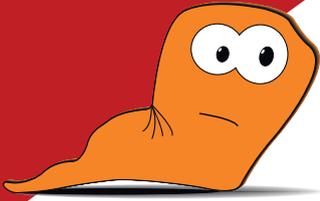
Large Roundworms (Ascarids) take a couple of weeks in passed manure to become ready for ingestion from the paddock. They hatch in the stomach and intestine, migrate into blood vessels and spend time in the liver and lungs (doing damage) then journey back to the small intestine where the adult worms (up to 30cm long) lay lots and lots of eggs, about 3 months after initial infestation. If in large numbers they can cause fatal damage to the small intestine. The eggs are very resistant to environmental effects and can lie about in the dirt, ready to go, for years. Young animals (in first few years of life) are particularly susceptible to them.

Pinworms have a 5-month life cycle - and that life cycle is simple; live in the large intestine, lay eggs around the anus, giving an itchy bum so your host rubs on everything and leaves eggs stuck on posts and trees and stable walls, ready to be licked up by the next questing equine.

Bots are the larvae of the Bot Fly which lays eggs on the hair of the horse (luckily, they are not quite so keen on donkeys), especially the front legs. They hatch with the moist warmth of the horse licking itself and invade the tissues of the mouth and burrow about for 3 weeks then come out and go down the throat to the stomach, where, as third stage larvae, they cling to the wall for months, and if in large numbers cause ulceration and blockage (they can take up a lot of room). They then pass out in the manure, burrow into the soil, pupate and come out as new flies.

Tapeworms look like a long flat white tape (3 species, up to 25 cm long). They have a life cycle that requires two hosts; first the new hatched larva is eaten by a tiny forage mite in the pasture and develops in its body. The equine eats the mite on the grass and the tape worm comes out and develops into an adult in the intestine (and produces lots and lots of eggs).

These are the main worms we currently contend with. There are



Worms and Donkeys

many others (and there are some horrid ones in some parts of the world). As you see, weirdly complex life cycles are common. They lay lots and lots of eggs because in the wild the grazing equine may not come over the same patch of grass for a long time, and at least some of the worms' offspring need to survive hot summers and snowy winters and the lottery of if another equine mouth will ever ingest that blade of grass. In domestication, with many donkeys and horses confined to paddocks and yards that have manure being deposited in them day in, day out, all through the year, the numbers of eggs or larvae consumed can be very high, and the number of organisms residing in the gut and bodily organs of a donkey can become overwhelmingly high.

So that outlines the problem; no donkey is free of worms and they can do severe harm but what can be done to minimize this harm?



Controlling Worms in Donkeys

As safe and effective worm-killing medications were developed in the last few decades it seemed worms and internal parasites sapping the health of equines would become a thing of the past.

The first of the 'Mectin group was released in the early 1980s. It was Avomectin, an injectable agent for cattle. Word quickly went round that it could be used off-label as an oral agent in horses. Prior to that, Large Strongyle worms were a major problem, and a friend's father who had a pony stud had had animals die of these parasites. He was in a high rainfall area and the burden of worm larvae in the pastures was high. He heard of Avomectin and asked me to find out about it. I got the name of a vet who was said to be advising people on it. I phoned him; however, he didn't know me and said he couldn't recommend it as the use in horses was off-label. I said that I'd heard some other vets used it, what dose did they use and he said, "Oh, those other vets, they use ..." and gave me the dosing schedule. So we used it on my friend's father's horses and all the Large Strongyles DIED. End of Problem!

However, as we know, the story didn't end there. In every population of organisms there is genetic variation. If a wormer was given at a low dose some worms, by chance a little resistant to the poison, would survive and have off-spring inheriting their resistance. Some of those worms which resisted low doses would have further genetic mutations and come to resist high doses. And so, in all internal parasites, resistance develops. Because the parasites have such enormous numbers of off-spring, thousands upon thousands in a matter of weeks, there is rapid breeding up of any which resist the medication to which they are exposed.

It is important to give full doses exactly as prescribed of the medication. This means weighing the donkey or using the chart (a nonogram) provided by the English Donkey Sanctuary to calculate weight. Never give half a dose now and another half in a few days thinking to spare the donkey - all you'll do is spare the worms and breed resistance. Under-dosing can also occur if a donkey spits out part of the dose, and you should try to give a bit more immediately if you can work out how much got dropped. In any case, draw up 10% more per dose than the exact weight calculation, as that is

safe. Some wormers can be given in double and triple doses without harm but some can't, so be careful with calculations. Moxidectin, the only one recommended these days for encysted Small Strongyles, is notorious for needing careful dosing. However, it is used by the English Donkey Sanctuary.



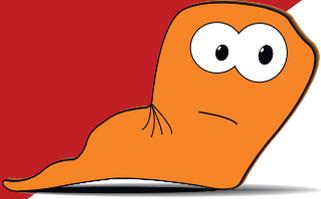
Faecal Egg Counts are Important

Because of the problem of resistance, focus of worming now-a-days isn't the eradication of the parasites but rather the protection of the donkeys from harm. The recommendation is that faecal egg counts should be done to find out what the level of problem is. Young donkeys are more susceptible to worms than ones which are over 2 to 3 years of age. Some adult donkeys will be more resistant to worms than others, both because of inherited factors and environmental factors. Sick or malnourished donkeys are more susceptible. The donkey susceptible to worms will be inhabited by much larger numbers of worms and excrete much larger numbers of eggs than the donkey resistant to them. Thus some donkeys are contaminating the paddock with many times more worm eggs than others. Donkeys resist worms by various actions of their immune systems, their bodies producing substances that slow the growth or reproductive ability of the worms. It's an arms race; the host develops methods to poison parasites and the parasites develop methods to resist these forces in the host's body. The immune system attributes are genetically determined but the body requires good nutrition and lack of other stressors to maintain the immune system (an enormous array of different types of cells, in the blood, in the lining of the gut and mouth, etc).

Faecal egg counts are done by collecting a ball of fresh manure from each donkey and putting it in a lab container or a small plastic bag, and delivering it fresh to the lab or vet clinic where the count will be done under a microscope. If there's a delay in delivery, keep it in the fridge, but for best results it's done within 24 hours. The longer the specimen waits, the more micro-organisms in the manure destroy the eggs or eggs hatch. The way the count is done, only eggs are detected. Many species of worms can't be told apart with the usual test that's done, so it's just a total count. It only tells you about the adult worms that are actively laying eggs in the gut. It won't tell you about Botfly larvae; Tapeworms egg segments are often not detected even when the tapeworms are present; encysted Small Strongyles are, of course, resting and not laying eggs. None-the-less it gives you an indication of the worm burden in each animal.

The donkeys with high egg counts are then dosed. The donkeys with low egg counts aren't. Ten to 14 days after dosing manure is collected from the treated donkeys and faecal egg counts are done again. If there are no eggs, your wormer was effective. If there are some worm eggs, resistance is developing. If the count is unchanged, your worm population are laughing at you as your treatment is ineffective. All donkeys in their first couple of years of life are wormed, because of their increased susceptibility to parasite load and damage.

The way to slow the development of resistance to wormers in the



Worms and Donkeys

parasite population is to minimise the exposure of the worms to the worming medication. This minimises the number of worms that, having some innate and partial resistance, survive ahead of their fellows and live to breed a next, resistant generation. By leaving lots of naive, susceptible worms in proportion to the resistant worms in the population, most of the worms picked up by the donkeys are susceptible and can be killed. The sites in which untreated worms live are called refugia, and rather than trying (and failing) to destroy all worms in all their refuges, the idea is to allow refugia where it can be done with little harm to donkeys. So adult donkeys with few worms are not medicated and newly dosed donkeys are not put in "clean" paddocks. If the newly wormed donkeys were put in "clean" paddocks, all the worm eggs deposited would be the eggs of resistant worms. This is a complete change to strategies used twenty years ago, when people hoped to eradicate worms from the property.

As most of the worms are being deposited as eggs in the paddock and then being consumed as larvae by the donkey, the obvious strategy is to break this cycle. Almost all internal worm parasites in humans are eradicated from any human population with toilets which remove all faeces from any further contact with the humans. (The only exception being the little Pinworms that lay their eggs on the anus and create itching there; different species in humans and equines but same life cycle.) Cleaning manure from yards and sheds and even paddocks, every 3 days or less, reduces the contamination of the environment with eggs and larvae. This is hard work, and few of us have time to do it obsessively. This manure then needs to be composted or used on gardens that the equines won't have any contact with. Eggs and larvae resist destruction in the environment. The parasites' ancestors, when parasitising our donkeys' ancestors in the semi-deserts of north-east Africa had a long wait for donkeys to come by and graze that particular spot again. Severe prolonged freezing snow conditions (nowhere in Australia) can reduce numbers. Severe prolonged dry heat (some parts of Australia) can reduce numbers. If there's a bit of moisture throughout the year and temperate to tropical temperatures, eggs and larvae survive well in the paddock. Harrowing to spread manure under these last conditions simply increases the problem. Harrowing to spread manure on the paddock surface only helps if you've got months of dry baking sun to expose it to.

Cross grazing with sheep, cattle or alpacas can help a little as the equine parasites can't live in them and theirs can't live in equines (with a few exceptions). However, this is only helpful if the period of time of grazing by the other species is very long, many months.



Biological Control of Parasite Numbers with "Bioworma"

A new product on the market is Bioworma, now available after 20 years of research by CSIRO. It is the spores of a fungus, *Duddingtonia flagrans*, which occurs worldwide. The product is given mixed in feed and the thick walled spores pass unchanged through the digestive tract and out into the manure. The spores then become active and the fungus grows and it "captures, paralyses and consumes infective larvae", with microscopic traps in the form of loops.

Bioworma helps control the following nematodes (round worms) in horses: Large strongyles (large red worms), including *Strongylus* spp., *Triodontophorus* spp. and *Oesophagodontus* spp., small strongyles (small red worms or cyathostomes), including *Cyathostomum* spp., *Cylicocyclus* spp. and *Cylicostephanus* spp., Stomach Hair Worm (*Trichostrongylus axei*), Ascarids (*Parascaris equorum*), Threadworms (*Strongyloides westeri*) and Pinworms (*Oxyuris equi*).

These are the ones that come out in the manure as eggs which hatch in the manure to become larvae that are then eaten by the horse or donkey. It doesn't help with Bots or Tapeworms. It has to be given every day so that it is there in great numbers in all manure. Used this way the numbers of larvae in the pasture are reduced by (on average) 84%. This then reduces re-infection and this method is unaffected by whether or not the worms are resistant to ordinary worming medications. Faecal egg counts are done to monitor the situation and worming medication given if needed.

The same product can be given to all the hoofed mammals as *Duddingtonia flagrans* captures and feeds on the larvae of the parasitic nematode worms of everything from Alpacas to Zebu Cattle.

It comes as "Bioworma" for mixing in feed by feed manufacturers and vets, and "Livamol with Bioworma", marketed for use by the owners of stock. Looking on the website, the Livamol it is mixed with is the usual product called Livamol produced as a feed supplement for lots of different species of pets and livestock. However, it is high in protein and calories and at the suggested feeding rates would be too rich for adult donkeys. I'm trying to contact the Bioworma company to see if the unmixed product can be bought by non-professional owners.



When and with What to Treat Worms in Donkeys

There are no longer hard and fast rules for this, as detailed earlier. Below are general recommendations, gleaned from recent publications. However, you should talk to vets in your area about what parasites are causing problems locally. One important thing is whether Tapeworms occur. There are some hot dry districts where they don't prevail, because the mite can't survive without moisture. Worming medicines must be kept at the correct storage temperature or they will be deactivated and WILL NOT WORK. Don't leave them rattling round in the ute in summer.

However, firstly and at any time, treat donkeys that seem likely to be suffering harm from worms. So, if a donkey has lost condition (thin along the back bone and rump) and is slow and scruffy when others are bright and sleek, worm it. (Ideally, collect manure for a faecal egg count beforehand, so you know where you started from, and again 10 to 14 days later.) At my



Lungworm: Dispelling the myth

Here's what The Donkey Sanctuary has to say.

Some equestrian owners believe donkeys and horses cannot live together due to the lungworm parasite *Dictyocaulus arnfieldi*. Here at The Donkey Sanctuary we believe that despite the risk from lungworm, donkeys, horses and ponies can live together quite safely, provided a regular de-worming program as advised by your vet is followed.

When we hold our training days, it is common to hear people state that donkeys and horses can't live together because of the risks of lungworm. But the fact is they can.

Top lungworm facts

1. Donkeys are assumed to be the natural host of this parasite.
2. Donkeys tolerate even a large infestation of lungworms without apparent signs; whilst it can cause severe coughing in horse and ponies that contract the parasite.
3. Lungworm larvae can live on pasture for a considerable length of time, so good pasture management can help reduce infection.
4. Faecal sampling is the best way to diagnose lungworm in donkeys.
5. Donkeys, horses and ponies can live together quite safely, provided a de-worming program as advised by your vet is followed.

We are also keen to clear up misconceptions about parasite infection levels in donkeys in the UK and have recently presented the results of a study assessing parasite infection levels in donkeys to vets and parasitologists. It is often quoted that a large percentage (up to 70%) of the UK's donkeys are infected with lungworm. Our study to determine levels of parasite infection in donkeys new to The Donkey Sanctuary, over a four-year period, showed that only 4% were infected with lungworm.



References

- Donkeys Parasites in the UK; Infection Levels, Treatment Intervals and Anthelmintic Use. Proceedings of the Worldwide Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology, Calgary, 2009.
- The Complete Book of The Donkey, 2009.
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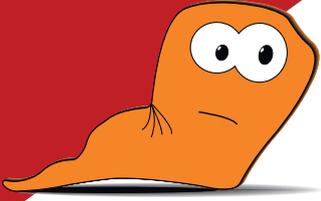
place a young horse came to live in one of my yards till his new owner was ready to take him home. He had a rough coat and pot belly and was poorly grown for his age. We wormed him. Masses of worms and bots came out in his manure; the Meat Ants (Bull Ants) came and devoured the dead parasites and fed their queens and young in the nest - the huge Meat Ant nest that had been there for years died out, poisoned. (Never forget that worming medications can produce environmental harm, another reason for using them carefully.)

Next, remember that donkeys in their first 2 - 3 years of life are more susceptible to parasites and harm from parasites than adults, and some worm species are particularly likely to attack youngsters. It is recommended that foals are wormed 3 monthly, and yearlings 3 or 4

times in the year. Foals should be weaned onto clean paddocks so they pick up less worm larvae.

Adult donkeys that prove, on faecal egg counts, to be susceptible and shed high egg numbers should be done 3 or 4 times a year. Adult donkeys with low faecal egg counts should be done once or twice a year.

There is no great value in worming when environmental conditions kill lots of worm larvae for you. In Australia, this is the part of the year when temperatures are often over 40 degrees Celsius, and conditions are very dry. If you live in such an area, 3 wormings a year are needed for susceptible donkeys. If there's some moisture



Worms and Donkeys

all year and temperatures aren't as high as that, susceptible donkeys need 4 treatments a year. Freezing conditions, especially alternating freezing and thawing, also destroy a lot of worms, but this applies in places of winter snow or frosts so severe nothing grows, not just a few light frosts.

With donkeys of low susceptibility to worms, treat them in the part of the year when worm larvae are surviving well and lots of parasites might be picked up from the pasture, and any eggs shed will survive well and produce lots of larvae for other donkeys to pick up. For most areas, this means Spring and Autumn treatments, at the breaks of season.



Pick the Right Wormer

There are a number of different groups of wormers. All the agents put in a group together are very similar and have similar action (way of killing the parasites) and so if a parasite becomes resistant to one in a group it will be resistant to the whole group. The worming medicines have lots of trade names; several trade names might have the same active ingredient (the same generic name or one from the same group). You have to look at the packaging carefully. The main 3 groups for treating nematode worms are Fenbendazole/Oxibendazole (Benzimidazoles), Pyrantel, and Ivermectin/Moxidectin ('mectins/Macrocyclic Lactones). Tapeworms are treated with Praziquantel or double dose Pyrantel, and, if considered to need treating, are done once a year. The Praziquantel comes in a combination wormer with an agent to kill nematode worms (the main groups of worms we are targeting).

Large Strongyles are susceptible to the 3 nematode treating groups of wormers, which is why they are rarely a problem now days.

Small Strongyles (Cyathostomins) are often resistant to Fenbendazole/Oxibendazole (Benzimidazoles), and Pyrantel, but killed by 'mectins. Currently only Moxidectin is recommended for killing the encysted, resting phase of these worms. It is recommended that a treatment targeting these encysted worms is done at the end of the grazing season (Spring in most parts of Australia). Moxidectin MUST be given carefully according to accurate weight.

Round worms (Ascarids), dangerous to foals, are commonly killed by Fenbendazole/Oxibendazole (Benzimidazoles), and Pyrantel, but may be resistant to Ivermectin/Moxidectin ('mectins/Macrocyclic Lactones). Thus foals may need to be wormed with a different agent to adults. Faecal egg counts before and after worming will tell you if your local worms are being killed by what you are using. Sometimes a Benzimidazole will be needed at higher dose for 5 days running; you need to check with your vet. (Luckily all "my" worms remain susceptible to Ivomectin.) Bots are killed by 'mectins.

Some areas may have other considerations. There are some worms in the tropics causing skin irritation and severe itching (they migrate through the skin in part of their life cycle). As detailed in the earlier sections, trying to lessen the exposure of your donkeys to parasites is important, as is trying to reduce the chances of the parasites becoming resistant to the medications.



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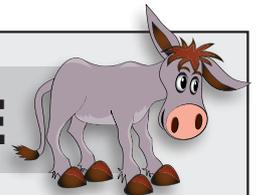
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DONKEY FOR SALE



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 Leanne Christie



ROUND★UP

It's been a fairly quiet winter for the Donkey Society in SA but show season starts next month and the spring weather will hopefully encourage people to get out and about with their donkeys. We have the Murray Bridge Show on Saturday 28th September and the Callington Show on Sunday 27th October. We always welcome newcomers and a fun day is guaranteed for owners and donkeys alike. If you're thinking about coming along but need some moral support just ask, there will be plenty of extra hands to help out and show you the ropes. Our new Show Secretary Elaine Knubley is working hard to ensure the days run smoothly and we have a new fundraising stall planned with lots of lovely donkey items for sale.

Several of our members have taken on new donkeys this year; three youngsters are coming down from the Flinders Ranges and others have been adopted or bought for various reasons. More info about these donkeys will be in the next edition.

We've had requests for help from donkey owners with difficult to handle donkeys in the last few months, especially hoof handling. It's very disheartening to hear of farriers being unwilling to work with donkeys and owners to ensure the process is a pleasant experience for all. Rough handling, ear twisting, and even allowing their dogs to run around the donkeys while trimming hooves is not acceptable and we have now compiled a list of farriers who we know will be patient and gentle with our sensitive friends. It is also up to the owner to ensure their donkey will stand quietly and have its hooves picked up. We can't expect our farriers to put themselves in danger of being kicked or to do the training for us. With regular short lessons and lots of positive reinforcement donkeys soon learn to accept hoof handling as a part of life and not see it as a stressful event.

We have been dealing with a very sad case of neglect over the past 12 months. Two donkey jennies were surrendered to the RSPCA in February 2018 with terribly overgrown hooves, poor condition and were terrified of



The donkeys were sedated to correct their overgrown slipper hooves.

humans. They were wearing halters that had been on for several years. You may have seen the advertising campaign and GoFundMe run by the RSPCA to raise money for their vet care and rehabilitation. The donkeys were sedated and had their hooves trimmed and the RSPCA put out a call for prospective adopters. Despite several experienced donkey people volunteering to adopt them they were unfortunately given to a well-meaning but completely inexperienced home with no handling facilities,



Violet & Bluebell, a sad case of neglect & inappropriate rehoming.

just a large paddock. Over the next 12 months the donkeys remained untouched and their hooves soon returned to as bad a condition as they were when surrendered. Although the RSPCA promised to help the new owner with their care, their only suggestion when approached several times by the owner for help was that they come and shoot the donkeys!

I decided to go and visit the donkeys and assess their condition and see if there was anything we could do to help. The owner was quite distressed at the situation she had been placed in by the RSPCA and really just wanted someone to take the donkeys and care for them properly as she didn't have the experience or facilities to do this herself. After spreading the word and praying for a solution I had a call from Sonya Little from Lincoln Park Horse and Human Rehabilitation who agreed to take the donkeys and attempt to rehabilitate them. Sonya liaised with Champion's Horse Transport to collect the donkeys and after one failed attempt to get them on the truck, the second attempt a few weeks later was successful and they were finally safe at Lincoln Park. Sonya and her volunteers have made a lot of progress with Violet and Bluebell over the last few months and they now eat from her hand and will allow pats. Hopefully soon they will be able to be sedated again for another hoof trim and will be much more comfortable. They still have a long way to go and their future is uncertain but they are in good hands at Lincoln Park. It's very disappointing that the RSPCA did not do their best for the welfare of these two poor girls.



Eventually rehomed to Lincoln Park Horse & Human Rehabilitation, Sonya Little is making progress & the jennies are at last in good hands.

OUT & ABOUT with Oliver



Me giving advice to the human.



Me teaching the human how to trim hooves

My fellow donkeys,

I am writing this soaked to the skin because it is raining cats and dogs up here for the first time in months. Of course, I am forced to stand outside in it because the human won't let me into the house to get near the fire.

I have not done as much work as I used to because my tormentor now goes to school - what a wonderful institution school is. I have done some harness club events in the last few months which of course I give my all. I don't back, I don't trot or canter, I don't do proper responses to the rein signals. Actually, I am quite proud of my performance and so is the human because he now takes Lightning McQueen (The Silver Maggot) in my place because as a worthless snivelling short ears he does not have the intelligence to resist. Serves him right. The rotten human gives him biscuits though, which should be mine, for this pathetic performance. Why don't I get biscuits for giving a performance that any donkey would be proud of?

We now have a stupid orphaned shortears that has come to live with us. He lived with me for a while and I had almost convinced him that he was a donkey (the most magnificent creature on earth) but the big shortears spilled the beans that no, he wasn't a majestic donkey but a worthless shortears instead. Ouch. That must have hurt his feelings. The humans call him Denver but I call him Lurch because he has ridiculously long legs and reminds me of Lurch from the Addams Family. The human tries to teach him tricks but as soon as he puts out the trick apparatus I get on and don't let anyone else near. Now, for some reason, he puts me in the yard when he wants to train anything. They really don't appreciate anyone helping them.

I am to be featured at a Country Fair in October. My predecessor Benny and one of the nondescript shorteared goobys have done the fair for about twenty years so it is always a highlight of the year especially the apples, carrots and treats which the kids all give me.

Always remember DONKEYS RULE.

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



Oh dear, she's out of school. Forced to work by 5-year-old Abbey.

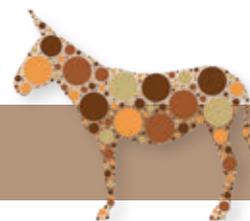


More torture. Sulky tricks with the grandchildren.



Dr Oliver treating Lurch for abrasions to the nose

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Contact Helen Brodie, Little Paddocks, School Lane, Great Steeping, Spilsby, Lincs PE23 5PU, UK.

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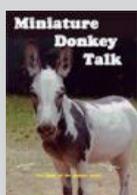
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Daffodils and Donkeys

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