



# DONKEY DIGEST

The Magazine of the Affiliated Donkey Societies of Australia

DECEMBER 2020



# DONKEY DIGEST

is produced by the

**Affiliated Donkey Societies of Australia**



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Distributed to society members

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*Please send items to the editor for inclusion in the magazine.*

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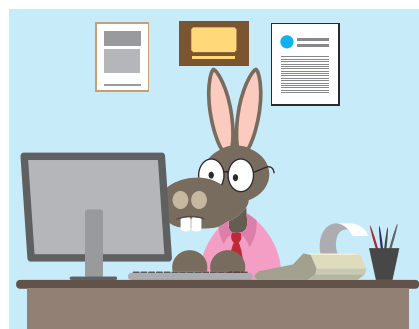
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## Chris has two passions in life: alcohol and donkeys.



### FROM THE EDITOR

It's almost time to put 2020 in the bin where it belongs (when is bin night again?). The majority of us got through it in one piece. Unscathed? No, but still here. Now, it's just a matter of surviving summer! Luckily my two passions (above) should help me through.

With state borders opening, closing, opening again, I hope all my long ears friends can finally spread their wings and get together with family and friends for Christmas celebrations.

While we take time out to determine what we want to continue with or change in the coming year, let's continue to look after each other and our precious animals. Speaking of which I am excited to learn that The NRG Team has now launched No-Nots for dogs. I'm a great fan of No-Nots for horses. It's fantastic used on donkeys and mules. It detangles and conditions the hair. Yes, I know donkeys don't have anywhere near the full manes and tails that horses have but I discovered a trick that makes you appear a better donkey Mum than you probably are. We all know that donkeys love rolling, particularly straight after you have just groomed them. So how do you keep them clean when taking them on an outing? You just wipe over their coats with No-Nots and they come up smooth, shining and with a hint of 'I've-just-been-bathed' scent. It will impress everyone, as long as they don't part the hair and discover the ingrained dirt on the skin. Now No-Nots for dogs will make life a whole lot easier for the long-haired canines that many of us own. Good one, NRG.

We are still looking for a volunteer Administrator. After three years in this role for the Affiliated Donkey Societies of Australia (ADSA), Chris Trotter is handing over the reins. This is an important role, as donkeys in Australia are underrepresented compared to other animals and we need to continue the momentum already built. Donkeys are under threat of extinction worldwide from China's insatiable appetite for donkey hides and the threat has now resurfaced in Australia. Don't let this scare you off because as ADSA Administrator you won't have to deal with this. I merely mention it to reinforce my point that our donkeys need us to stand up for them as a representative body. You don't even have to own a donkey or be very experienced with them to do the Admin job capably. Read more details on Page 6.

**Happy Christmas Trails**

*Christine*

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### COVER PHOTO:

Christmas has come early for Keysoe Donkey Stud, Bendigo, Victoria. Blithe Moon Rain foaled a lovely jenny, christened Keysoe Rey by Ruth Walker, ardent Star Wars fan. Now two months old, Rey was sired by stud jack Keysoe Mulga.

**Photo:** Ruth Walker.



## Horse, mule rescued from neck-deep mud

**MARION, MASSACHUSETTS:** Girlie the mule and Tick the horse nearly drowned in mud recently at Merrow Farm before the Marion Fire Department, the Plymouth County Large Animal Rescue Team and a host of rescue assistants came onto the scene.

The animals had trouble breathing as the mud pressed against them in the pit, which was also filled with rocks and stones.

Marion firefighters quickly began digging the mud out from around the animals with shovels and their hands to help alleviate the physical pressure. Crews used hay and plywood to stabilize the mud, and wrapped slings and straps around the animals to pull them out with a rigging system.

The three-hour ordeal came to a successful conclusion. Both the horse and the mule escaped without injury. A veterinarian evaluated them at the scene.

It is believed Girlie and Tick wandered out of their paddock through a hole in a barbed wire fence. They were found around 5 p.m., after they had sunk in a pit of mud up to their necks while searching for a watering hole in the unfamiliar pasture.



Firefighters found Girlie the mule and Tick the horse stuck neck-deep in mud. The animals were experiencing laboured respiration due to being buried so deep.

## Donkey strapped with bombs in Nigerian ambush

**ISLAMIC STATE MILITANTS** used a donkey strapped with explosives to ambush the convoy of the governor of a Nigerian state, leading to a shoot-out on September 27.

Babagana Zulum, Governor of Nigeria's north-eastern Borno state, was returning from Baga when soldiers reportedly saw the donkey on the road and shot at it.

According to media reports, as soon as the explosives went off, militants came out of their hide-out and opened fire on the convoy. The firing ensued a shoot-out and a number of IS militants were killed. While no one from the convoy was injured, some of the vehicles were damaged by bullets.

The incident occurred two days after an ambush on the governor's convoy left 30 dead, including police officers, soldiers and civilians. Islamic State West Africa Province (Is wap) militants have split from Boko Haram and the violence has spread to neighbouring countries, killing more than 30,000 people and forced two million from their homes, according to the United Nations.

## Donkeys clean up Turkey's historic Mardin province

**DAILY SABAH, ISTANBUL:** Donkeys are shouldering the garbage burden in Artuklu, an historic district in the southeastern province of Mardin. They are the transport of choice, as they can scale narrow, uphill alleys, going where no modern vehicle can.

The donkeys work six hours a day alongside the human garbage collectors in a morning and evening shift, hauling garbage collection sacks on their backs before retiring for the evening in stables provided by the municipality.

Artuklu has tapped into the strength and agility of the donkeys for years. Unlike their human co-workers, the donkeys can retire after seven years at the municipality-run shelter.



A donkey accompanies a garbage collector in the Artuklu district of Mardin province, southeastern Turkey. (DHA Photo)



# Donkey therapy for frontline workers



The Donkey Doctor project helps Spain's professional medics de-stress as they grapple with one of the highest Covid-19 infection rates in the European Union.

**SPANISH FRONTLINE WORKERS** battling the Coronavirus pandemic are benefiting from donkey therapy which helps them de-stress and relax.

El Burrito Feliz, Hinojos, is providing free donkey therapy sessions to medics, as such encounters with animals can help with a range of physical and mental disorders, including stress, depression and anxiety.

Although animal-assisted therapy is more associated with horses, experts say donkeys are better suited to helping mental or emotional disorders given their gentle nature and intuitive respect for personal space.

Located by a sprawling forest on the edge of Andalusia's Donana National Park in southern Spain, El Burrito Feliz is a non-profit association with 23 donkeys that have worked with Alzheimers' patients and children with problems.

Studies show that animal-assisted therapy triggers changes at a physiological level, activating oxytocin, connected to experiencing pleasure, increasing endorphins and reducing cortisol in the blood which is a product of stress.

After befriending one of the donkeys, the medic goes on a guided walk and when confident, they can go back into the forest alone with the donkey and stay as long as they like.

Back at base camp, they prepare food for the animals, and then there is the option of a "donkey bath" - entering the paddock for an immersive experience with the herd.

The "Doctor Donkey" project began in late June as a way of offering respite to frontline workers battling a virus in Spain that has killed some 38,800 people, infected more than one million, and left medics traumatised and exhausted.

## From The Vault

Albert Crandall and his obstinate mule Jerry

Los Angeles Herald, 16 December 1905

### "STEP LIVELY NOW," SAID ELEPHANT TO THE MULE AND FOR ONE "MAUD" HAD TO OBEY

**Balky Beast That Had Defied Trainers  
Made to Move Along by Heavy-  
weight — Ropes, Chorus Girls'  
Charms and Candy All Failed**

Special to The Herald.

NEW YORK, Dec. 16.—What happens when an irresistible force is exerted on an immovable body?

This old conundrum was answered yesterday afternoon when Jerry, a trick mule, refused to cross a runway into the Hippodrome building.

For almost an hour Jerry defied a crowd of several hundred persons. With feet barred against the curb he defied two score stablemen, three policemen and a dozen other men.

Albert Crandall, Jerry's owner, led the mule to the Hippodrome early in the afternoon. He had no difficulty until Jerry caught sight of the runway leading into the subterranean vaults of the building. Then the mule balked.

A rope was put around the mule's neck and several men tried to pull him over the curb. It was no use. Chorus girls going to rehearsal tried to coax Jerry into the building by feeding him candy. Of no avail. A blanket was bundled around the obstinate creature's head and he was turned round and round, but when an endeavor was made to lead Jerry over the runway he set his feet against the curb.

"Pete" Barlow and "Bill" Powers, elephant trainers, appeared at this critical moment. Barlow declared he knew how to move Jerry. Followed by Powers he disappeared into the Hippodrome. When the two came forth they were leading Tom, the big elephant.

Jerry realized that it was all up with him, but he determined to make a hard fight to uphold his pride. After trying to drive Jerry into the building by smashing him over the back with his trunk, Tom got behind and tried to push the mule forward. There was a bombardment of heels that drove even the elephant off.

Jerry was then put in harness and a hawser connected with big Tom. Jerry was dragged on all fours into the building.

# Mysterious parasitic disease of equines confirmed in donkeys in Britain



**Besnoitia bennetti** cysts in the eye of a 5-year-old donkey. The cysts appear as multiple, up to 1 mm in diameter, round, white and firm nodules (arrow).  
Photo: Elsheikha et al.

**A CHRONIC AND DEBILITATING** parasitic equine disease which causes eye lesions and skin lumps has been confirmed in donkeys in Britain.

Equine besnoitiosis can affect donkeys, horses, zebras and mules.

It was confirmed in 20 donkeys under the care of The Donkey Sanctuary, with researchers saying more work is needed to learn more about its possible occurrence, characteristics, and clinical manifestations in donkeys and other equids.

"At present, it cannot be certain whether *Besnoitia* infection is confined to the donkey population or whether it has not been identified yet in other equines in the UK," the research team reported in the journal *Parasites & Vectors*.

"Further studies to establish whether the cysts are also present in the horse and pony populations are warranted."

The infected donkeys had never lived outside the UK, except for one who came from Ireland. All were kept on various Donkey Sanctuary sites in East Devon and a single location in Dorset.

Besnoitiosis was first described in Sudan in the 1920s. In Europe, the parasitic disease was first reported in France in 1922.

The disease is a result of infection with the protozoan parasite *Besnoitia bennetti*. It typically gives rise to multiple, pinpoint, raised, round, yellow-to-white cysts in the skin over the head and

body. Lesions can also develop in the eyes.

Besnoitiosis in donkeys has gone from being a rarely detected parasite to being reported in donkeys in many countries, including the United States, Spain, Belgium, Italy and Portugal.

"This increase in the number of reports of *B. bennetti* infection in donkeys and other equids is probably attributed to the increasing awareness of the disease," said the researchers, comprising experts from the University of Nottingham and The Donkey Sanctuary.

## MYSTERIOUS DISEASE

There are many unanswered questions around the disease and the parasite that causes it, with little known about its life cycle and route of transmission.

"This raises the question about the source of infection and possible route of transmission in donkeys in the UK," said the study team, led by the university's Dr Hany Elsheikha, an Associate Professor of Parasitology.

"Since its discovery, the route of *B. bennetti* transmission has not been clearly defined."

One of the most unique features of besnoitiosis is the development of tiny cysts on the eye surface.

Some infected animals can remain otherwise healthy, while others suffer weight loss, malaise and generalized dry skin.





However, this has not been observed in the British cases, which chiefly involved small skin masses with little involvement of the eyes.

"There was limited health impact on the donkeys concerned," the study team said.

Although many of the clinical signs associated with besnoitiosis have not been seen in the cases identified in Britain, the study has important clinical relevance.

### FIRST UK CASE SEEN IN 2013

Besnoitiosis was discovered in 2013 in a donkey at the charity. The animal had skin lumps that were presumed to be sarcoid tumours. However, microscopic examination of the affected skin tissue revealed cysts similar to those caused by *Besnoitia bennetti*.

Since then, 19 other donkeys with skin masses were also found to have *Besnoitia* cysts. Anti-*Besnoitia* antibodies were found in some serum samples, and molecular-based testing confirmed the presence of the parasite.

According to the researchers *Besnoitia* cysts should now be included as a differential diagnosis for sarcoids in Britain, at least in donkeys.

The first case triggered a collaboration between a team of clinicians from The Donkey Sanctuary and a veterinary parasitologist from the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science at the University of Nottingham.

Dr Rebekah Sullivan, co-author of the report and a vet at the Donkey Sanctuary, said: "Given the relative proximity to other European countries, where clinical besnoitiosis is apparent, our findings will inform British vets of the potential for this emerging disease so that they can better recognise the pattern of clinical signs during clinical examination."

Dr Elsheikha added: "It is absolutely essential – particularly now – that vets in the UK learn more about besnoitiosis, so they can identify and protect donkeys potentially at risk.

"Knowledge obtained in this study should improve our response to this emerging parasitic disease in donkeys in the UK, especially with the few treatment options and the unknown routes of transmission."

Several serological methods and screening strategies have been developed to help guide veterinarians to earlier diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

Gereon Schares from the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut, Federal Research Institute for Animal Health, in Germany, and co-author of the report, said: "This study is particularly important because by using a suite of molecular methods we were able to confirm for the first time in Europe that the parasite agent involved in these cases is specifically *Besnoitia bennetti* and infection can be shown by serological methods."

The correct identification of *Besnoitia* cysts in skin biopsies taken from UK donkeys does have a clinical advantage for veterinarians, providing more accurate prognoses where a skin mass has been identified.

"It can no longer be assumed that skin masses are either neoplastic in origin or inflammatory, such as eosinophilic granulomas, for example," said George Paraschou, co-author and pathologist at the Donkey Sanctuary.

Eight of the 20 donkeys identified with *Besnoitia* cysts are still alive.

### ROUTE OF TRANSMISSION

Since its discovery, the route of *B. bennetti* transmission has not been clearly defined by scientists. Attempts to identify the definitive host

for *B. bennetti* have been unsuccessful, precluding researchers from understanding more about the parasite's life-cycle.

"All the donkeys described in this case series were kept in large groups on sites within a limited geographical range in East Devon and Dorset in England," the researchers wrote.

It is possible, they said, that some factors specific to this group, such as the potential for transmission by blood-sucking insect vectors, may have aided *B. bennetti* transmission in these donkeys, similar to *Besnoitia* infection in cattle. However, the role of insect vectors in the transmission of donkey besnoitiosis has yet to be identified.

"Given the large number of donkeys kept on these sites, and the low case incidence, it can be assumed that the transmission rate remains low. However, we cannot be certain that we have identified and diagnosed all cases so far.

“  
Knowledge obtained in this  
study should improve our  
response to this emerging  
parasitic disease in donkeys...  
”

"Further studies are required to identify potential perpetuating factors, such as underlying disease, co-infection, the presence of potential wildlife reservoirs, or climatic conditions."

They say that ongoing monitoring and investigation of clinical cases is justified to learn more about any negative impact the presence of *Besnoitia* cysts may have on the donkeys.

"Given the lack of effective chemotherapeutic treatment for besnoitiosis, further research is required to determine the optimal treatment regimen, if any, for *B. bennetti* infection affecting donkeys.

"In the cases presented here, it is apparent that symptomatic treatment of associated inflammation is all that has been required."

They continued: "Given the relative proximity to other European countries, where clinical besnoitiosis is apparent, UK veterinarians should be aware of the potential for this disease and the pattern of clinical signs during clinical examination."

More effort is also needed, they say, to understand the parasite at a genetic level. This will improve the understanding of the epidemiology and the spread of besnoitiosis in donkeys and other equids, which may ultimately impact clinical management of equine besnoitiosis."

*First record of besnoitiosis caused by Besnoitia bennetti in donkeys from the UK*

*Hany M. Elsheikha, Gereon Schares, Georgios Paraschou, Rebekah Sullivan and Richard Fox*

*Parasites & Vectors (2020) 13:279 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13071-020-04145-8>*

# Registrar's Roundup

with Kerrie Haynes-Lovell



Registrations	Registration no.	Owner
Yurrah Mollycoddle	20/001MO (molly mule)	Fiona Mottram
Pine Ridge Bella	20/010JE	Karin Targo
Karina Park Shadow	20/002JA	Kerry Wailes

Transfer #	Name	Registration #	From	To
20/26	Crofters Brae Charlotte	18/010JE/EI	M Lawson	Joan Young
20/27	WattleWoods Wee Tashmo Grace	18/027JE/AM	Hazel Knight	Stella Wakil
20/28	WattleWoods Wee Vandal	16/1/58CA	Hazel Knight	Stella Wakil
20/29	Rocking Donkey Benebell		Stella Wakil	Mich Cameronj
20/30	Eagle Rock Rosie	12/014JE	Jen Dalitz	Karin Targo
20/31	Eagle Rock Fancy	12/009JE	Jen Dalitz	Karin Targo
20/32	South Paddock Dusty	09/005JE	Mary Jones	Amity Bradford
20/33	South Paddock Mushroom	09/006JE	Mary Jones	Amity Bradford

## Please help



### ADSA needs an Administrator now, details are in the ad.

It's not a hard job. It would suit someone who may not be as active with donkeys, or may not even own a donkey but would still like to keep an interest in our longears.

Why not contact Christine and talk it over?

## The Affiliated Donkey Societies of Australia

### WANTED: ADMINISTRATOR

**ADSA are seeking a volunteer to take on the role of Administrator as soon as possible.**

The Administrator, Registrar and Donkey Digest Editor perform the three key functions of ADSA.

As the Administrator, you will be required to carry out both administrative and treasury duties.

Although the workload is not particularly high you will need to be organised, able to meet deadlines, have reasonable computer skills including using internet banking and a basic knowledge of bookkeeping. You will work closely with the Registrar, Editor and each State Treasurers particularly at the commencement of September, December, March and June each year. Most contact is through email. You will also be responsible for arranging for the auditing of financial records for 1 July-30 June each year, and organise a Biannual General Meeting every two years. This meeting is now held via video conference.

**If you think you may be interested in taking on this important role then please contact the current Administrator Christine Trotter on 0417 348 819**

**or email [cljgypsy20@gmail.com](mailto:cljgypsy20@gmail.com)**

**Please do not feel committed if you want to make initial enquiries as I am happy to answer questions.**





# Donnie the Pin Up Donkey

**D**onnie, or Blithe Moon Hubble, is featured on the front cover of the 2021 Calendar Animals Helping Humans (by Animal Therapies Ltd). Donnie is pictured with client, Cooper who made an instant connection with Donnie out of all the animals on offer at a therapy session.

Owned in Victoria by John and Judy Wright, Donnie is just one of their five donkeys that engages in donkey-assisted learning for children and adults with emotional and social needs. Although the Wrights also have horses it is the donkeys that provide the majority of the services, ensuring the client has a unique interactive experience. For those interested the Calendar is available via their website [www.animaltherapies.org.au](http://www.animaltherapies.org.au)

**Calendar boys: Cooper & Donnie getting to know each other.**



Judy Wright with her calendar star Donnie.

## Gloria joins NRG Team



Boyce Deverell & his new bundle of fluff - baby Gloria.

**B**oyce Deverell's NRG donkey 'Pauline Hanson' had her first foal late in the evening on Wednesday 23rd September. 'Gloria' came into our world with Aunty Jedda right by her side braying as loud as a could be, while Boyce and his wife Glen were there offering support. Also helping out was 10-year-old granddaughter, Lucy who gave Pauline comfort and words of encouragement through the whole labour. Gloria, named by grandson Rueben, believes she is a racehorse and gallops around the paddock, making it difficult for her mum and aunty to keep up. She is one delightful little angel, healthy and happy, and right at home at "Loch's Hill".



Pauline & foal Gloria are the centre of attention at the NRG stable.



# Bridlewise

## Browbands and nosebands

*Correct fitting of bridles on any animal is important but never more so than with donkeys and mules whose long ears are one of their most precious attributes.*

*A couple of the most frequent mistakes we see concern the width of a browband and the placement of a noseband. We are using a bitless bridle here but the same problems occur with any bridle or, in the case of the noseband, any halter.*



NO

**What's wrong with this picture?** The donkey is wearing a pony-sized bitless bridle which, at first glance, looks to fit the animal. However, the browband



is too tight. It's pulling on the headpiece and giving it nowhere else to go except to cover the sensitive base of the ears. After a while, this will make the donkey sore – like wearing the same shoe that gave you a blister. If you continue to use this bridle setup, the base of the donkey's ears will become more and more tender. You won't necessarily see a rub mark but the soreness will be there. Keep going and it may manifest itself in the donkey becoming head shy – flipping its head up when you approach, unwilling to have you touch its ears or actively resisting attempts to halter or bridle it.

X



YES

**Here's the same bridle** – pony size – fitted with the larger cob size browband. As you can see it's a lot less squeezey, still well fitting, not loose and sloppy,



but well away from rubbing on the base of the ears. Donkeys often require a bit of mixing and matching when putting together a bridle for them. Their heads are wider than horses and it's not uncommon for them to use a larger sized browband on a smaller sized bridle.

✓





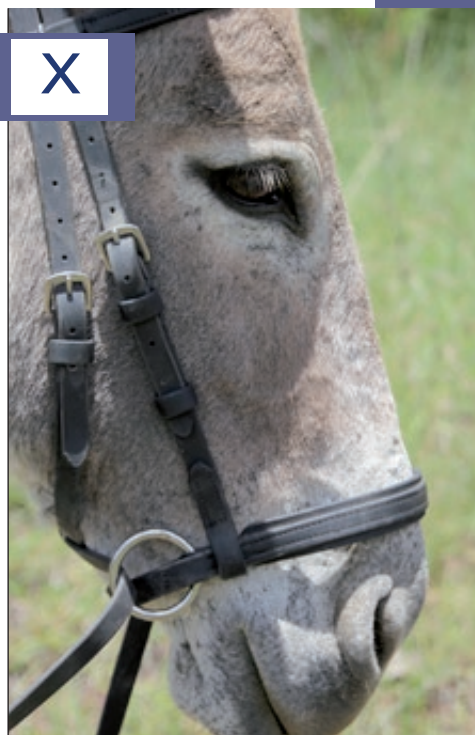
# NO

# X

**What's wrong with this picture?** The noseband is too low on the donkey. There is only one finger's width between the noseband and the lips of the animal.



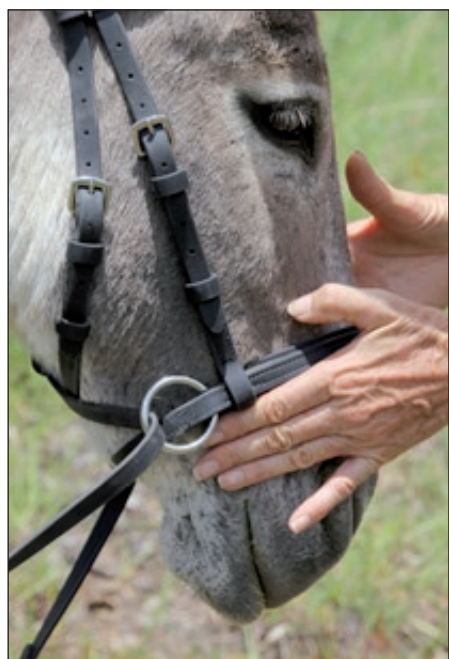
Nosebands that are fitted low like this sit too close to the nostrils – we have even seen some fitted so low down they drape across the nostril itself – and have the potential to interfere with breathing when doing strenuous exercise. It can also be a source of annoyance to the animal, admittedly more so with horses than donkeys and mules.



# YES

# ✓

**A well-fitting bitless bridle** – browband the right size and noseband the right length. The noseband should be long enough to allow three fingers to fit



in between the noseband and the lips of the animal. Any longer and the buckle should be taken up until the length is shorter. If you are using a bit, the same measurement applies – just place your fingers against the skin above the bit. The noseband should be three fingers' width above the bit. Next time you put a halter or bridle on your donkey, step back and check the overall fit first. Is it good? Does it need fine tuning? An odd advantage we have noticed with donkeys as opposed to horses is that the correct place for the noseband to sit is often at the junction

where the face colour changes from dark to the lighter muzzle but certainly no lower than this. No, this trick doesn't work for solid-coloured donkeys but it is another long ear peculiarity you can use in your favour.



Thanks to our bridle model La Chica and our hand model Carol Stephens.

Story: Christine Thelander    Photos: Ian Shawsmith



# Galloping Gourmet



Elevate your cooking from the ordinary to the extraordinary with these recipe suggestions from our Galloping Gourmet.

**DONKEY DROPS** - yes, that really is their name.

**Why make Rum Balls** – ho hum – for Christmas guests when you can make these little beauties instead?

**Donkey Drops,**  
also known among the less sensitive as Donkey Balls

## Ingredients -

No baking required. Makes 50.

- 250g Granita biscuits
- 250g Malt biscuits
- 1 can Condensed milk
- 280g packet Marshmallows
- 250g Butter
- 1 cup Desiccated Coconut for rolling

## Method

1. Crush biscuits (if you have a food processor, it's perfect for this recipe).
2. Cut each of the marshmallows into 6 (I use kitchen scissors).
3. Melt the butter over a low heat or in the microwave.
4. Place crushed biscuits, marshmallows and condensed milk into a large bowl.
5. Add sufficient melted butter to ensure that the mixture sticks together when rolled into balls.
6. Take a small amount of mixture, squish it together and roll into a ball, then roll in the coconut.
7. Continue with the rest of the mixture, place the donkey drops on a plate and chill in the fridge for at least 30 mins. Store in an airtight container in the fridge also suitable for freezing for those times when you need a sweet treat.

**TIP:** There are many varieties you can make, including rum balls without the rum for the kids. Try adding chocolate to the coconut balls or 'donkey drops' to enhance the realistic resemblance to... well... you know what.





## DONKEY DUNG COOKIES - for the more risqué entertainer

### Ingredients -

Easy to make, no bake, makes 50 little shits

- 2 cups sugar
- 6 tablespoons cocoa
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon Vanilla
- 1 cup shredded Coconut
- 3 cups rolled oats

### Method

1. Combine Sugar, Cocoa, Butter & Milk in a saucepan. Bring to a boil & add vanilla.
2. Remove from heat & stir in coconut & oats.
3. Drop by teaspoon onto wax paper and chill.

**TIP:** Instead of rolling the mixture into balls (like the Donkey Drops), flatten it out in very irregular shapes before putting on a tray in the fridge. Hey presto, you've made very realistic looking Donkey Dung Cookies. I suggest you don't tell your guests what they are eating until after it has gone down the hatch. That could lead on to a fun party game called "Guess which donkey the dung came from."



## MOSCOW MULE COCKTAIL

This cocktail's origin has nothing to do with Moscow or mules, but after a few sips of the vodka, ginger beer and lime concoction, no one will care.

Invented in the 1940s, the classic Moscow Mule has never gone out of style and still gives a kick, particularly in summer when the refreshing ingredients and icy copper mug combine to quench thirsts.

### Moscow Mule variations

Variations use different liquors in place of vodka, with the name changed accordingly. Perhaps one will become the best Moscow Mule recipe for you, or one of your favourite things to mix up for guests. For instance, some variations include:

- **New Orleans Mule:** Bourbon and coffee liqueur.
- **Gin-Gin Mule:** Gin.
- **Mexican Mule:** Tequila.
- **Aussie Mule:** Bundaberg Rum.
- **Irish Mule:** Irish whiskey.
- **Glasgow Mule:** Blended Scotch whisky & St-Germain liqueur.
- **Dead Man's Mule:** Absinthe and cinnamon schnapps.
- **Southern Mule:** Southern Comfort liqueur.

### How to make a Moscow Mule Cocktail

#### Ingredients -

- 2 oz vodka 60ml
- 0.5 oz lime juice 15ml
- 5 oz ginger beer 150ml

#### Method

Fill a mug up with ice (traditionally a copper mug, but feel free to use a glass if no mug is available). Add vodka to the mug, then lime juice, and top off with the ginger beer. Optionally garnish with a lime wedge, and enjoy.

Why is a Moscow Mule served in a copper mug? Copper is a superior thermal conductor, so copper mugs respond to the temperature of what is inside, keeping it chilled or warm depending on the beverage. When containing a Moscow Mule, copper mugs become cool, creating a chilling sensation when sipped.





## SINGING HINNIES

Singing Hinnies are a traditional griddle cake from Northumberland in northern England. They are typically made with flour, butter, lard, salt, baking powder, milk and dried currants.

### *How did Singing Hinnies get their name?*

Hinny is supposed to be a term of endearment (like "honey") in the dialect of the region, and "singing" is supposed to represent the sound they make as they are cooking on the griddle. A gentle fry can sometimes become a high-pitched squeal.

Singing Hinnies are scone-like, very filling and the dough contains no sugar, relying on sweetness coming from the dried fruit. They are great snacks and also freeze well for reheating later.



### Ingredients -

- 225 grams (8 ounces) unbleached all-purpose (plain) flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 100 grams (4 ounces) cold butter (or half butter, half lard), cut into cubes
- 50 grams (2 ounces) dried currants (can substitute any dried fruit on hand)
- 4 to 6 tablespoons milk or buttermilk

### Method

1. Add the flour, salt, and baking powder to the bowl of a food processor, and pulse to combine all ingredients.
2. Sprinkle the butter cubes over the flour mixture, and pulse until the mixture is crumbly (alternatively, you can cut the butter into the flour with your fingers or a pastry cutter).
3. Remove the mixture to a bowl and toss in the dried fruit. Add in the milk bit by bit as needed and mix by hand until you have a firm dough.
4. Roll the dough out to about 1/2 inch wide, and cut with a 3 inch round biscuit cutter. You could also make 2 larger rounds and cut them into 4 wedges.
5. Heat a griddle or large cast iron pan over very low heat. Lightly butter the griddle/pan, and cook the rounds on one side until browned. This will take about 8 minutes. Turn the scones over, and cook on the other side, again, over very low heat. To check to see that they are done, pick one of them up and tap it lightly - it should sound hollow. Each side should be browned as pictured.
6. Serve with butter and/or jam, honey or even rolled in caster sugar.



# THE NRG TEAM – LOVING YOUR HORSES AND DOGS TOO



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# MULEMANSHIP

## Three Things I Learnt By Riding With Joe Wolter

By Sari Maydew

Reprinted from The Mule, Britain



**B**ack in April 2017, my husband Ben and I took his horse and one of my mules, Xato, down to Devon in order to ride with American trainer Joe Wolter. It was Joe's first clinic in the UK and it was an opportunity we did not want to miss. Joe is a superb horseman and he also knows mules, which was really my main motivation for going as it's quite rare to find trainers with mule experience in the UK.

Getting there was an adventure in itself, as we hired a lorry for the event and Ben got lost on the way to pick it up. When we finally loaded the equines, we realised that the partitions were not set up for a 16hh mare and a 15.1hh draught mule; so we unloaded again, rearranged the partitions, and reloaded the mare. Xato, unfortunately, refused to get back on. His mule logic told him that he'd been on once, it hadn't been very comfortable, and he wasn't getting on again! Three hours later we eventually got him on board, but that delay, combined with a 100-mile journey and roadworks causing the motorway to be closed a few miles from the venue, meant that we didn't arrive until 11pm. Thank goodness we'd given ourselves an extra day each side of the clinic for travelling!

Still, it was an excellent clinic and I learnt a lot from it. Xato and I should have been riding with Joe again this year, but sadly Covid-19 put a stop to that. Maybe next year - I'm told Joe still speaks fondly about my big mule.



**Here are my three big lightbulb moments from the 2017 clinic:**

### **1. Go with the mule so the mule can go with you.**

This was the big one; the idea that, instead of trying to block an unwanted behaviour, you go with it and then turn the mule or horse's idea into your own. For example, imagine that you are riding along and your mule spooks right. For me, my immediate reaction would be to try and block it (you may be a much better rider than me, of course!); I would want to take up my left rein and apply my right leg. Joe's suggestion, however, is to take what the mule offers you and direct it. Instead of trying to block him with your left rein, you would pick up on the right rein and bring him round in the direction he's already travelling. "If the horse (or mule) doesn't feel like he is trapped or confined, if he feels like he can move, then I can get with his movement and just try to direct it," Joe said. "It leads to a better feeling from the horse towards me, and I'm not so abrasive – I'm not so confrontational."

By shutting down their movement, we are taking away their self-preservation. This is not going to create a harmonious relationship and, with something like a mule for whom the ability to trust and depend upon his rider is paramount, it's going to lead to some bad situations. It took me some time to get my head around this because it's so ingrained – particularly for someone like me, who has a bit of a phobia about being bolted with. I'm still struggling to get my head around this and overcome the muscle memory that wants me to grab the reins and pull the plug. But when you think about it, it makes so much sense.

Giving up control – or what we perceive as control – is hard, really hard. By working with them rather than against them, we help to install the feeling that going with us is a good decision. When they know that they can move their feet if they want to, they are actually less likely to do so. This is something I learnt with Anna Bonnage, who my other mule Marty went for training with, but I definitely needed to be reminded of it again because I am a colossal idiot.



### **2. Ask for something you know you can get.**

Essentially: if you're having trouble, go back to something you know your mule can do easily. They gain confidence from completing the task and understanding what's being asked of them, and you can then go back to the more difficult exercise. To add to this, I have also realised that the same method is true for people. If you're a timid rider, don't force yourself to ride past the "scary" corner or through the open field right away – when you're struggling with your nerves, do something you know you and your mule can do without fear and then go back to the other thing later. You will both benefit from this.



### **3. "It's not training – it's a series of puzzles."**

Again, this was further reaffirmation of something I learnt with Anna, and with Harry Whitney before her. This is one of the reasons why I believe in learning with as many different trainers – within a certain paradigm – as possible, because very often they are teaching the same thing but from different angles. Something you learnt and thought you understood with one trainer may take on a whole new layer of understanding when explained by another. Plus, if you're anything like me, it helps to be reminded of things which you may have known but forgot that you knew...!

Rather than approaching it as training, we should be attempting to ignite the mule's curiosity and ability to think for himself. By presenting him with a series of puzzles to figure out, he learns by discovery rather than being told what to think. This is easier to retain and creates a more willing, confident mule. Ben summed it up when he said: "By developing the curiosity more, they won't need to get to where the self-preservation comes in because you allowed them to figure it out."



# Packing Your Donkey or Mule

Part Three by Tim Daniel, Wilderness Expeditions



*Last time I went into detail about various pack saddle designs.*

*Now let's talk about the accessories you may need.*

## Pack Saddle Accessories

There are a number of items that can enhance the use of a packsaddle. These are listed below:

**Pack Bags:** Pack bags are the most common container used to carry cargo with Australian packsaddles. In North America these are known as "Kydaks" or "Panniers" and are used more commonly with the Crossbuck type saddle. Traditionally, Australian pack bags are made of leather. Leather is very robust and looks impressive but unfortunately leather is very heavy and requires a lot of maintenance, especially in the tropics. Wilderness Expeditions uses good quality heavy duty canvas. This material has proven to be durable, waterproof and easily repaired if damaged. Our pack bags have a double skin at the bottom and overlapping weather flaps under the top flap to aid waterproofing.

The ideal pack load for a mule is 28 wide x 14 high x 10 inches deep (710 x 355 x 254mm). Pack bags should not exceed those measurements.

Normally pack bags are fitted with rings or loops that hang from load hooks on the arches. The best suspension point is from just below the top rear of the bag. Many pack bags are built with a dowel handle at the top of the bag and the rings or loops are attached to this handle. The pack bags illustrated below are designed for a dowel handle to be inserted through the webbing loops. In my opinion and from experience, this arrangement places the pack bags too low on the animal. WildEx is modifying our pack bags by relocating the rings to the horizontal webbing strap on the rear of the bags.



**Rip-Stop Canvas Pack Bags as used by Wilderness Expeditions.** 50cm wide X 35cm high X 20 cm deep. (20W X 14HX 8D inches)

**Pack Surcingle or "Wantie Strap":** A pack surcingle is used to consolidate and steady the load and prevent it from being dislodged from the load hooks. It is a broad strap 9-14ft long fitted with a buckle. We make ours from 50mm polyester webbing with a leather or vinyl facing to reinforce the portion punched with holes for the buckle.



**Pack Surcingle or Wantie Strap.**

**Pack Cover or "Wantie":** This is a heavy canvas sheet normally of 1800x1800mm (6x6ft) hemmed with eyelets arranged around the edges. This is used to cover the load in inclement weather or to protect the load when scrub bashing. A Wantie is also used to cover loads when on the ground, cover saddlery from rain and dew, as a picnic cloth and to cover animals before loading during rain as a temporary rain coat. A Wantie can also be used as the skin of a coracle to ferry pack loads across water crossings. If the size is increased to 2400x1800mm (6x8ft) a Wantie can be used as a flysheet to sleep under. The Wantie is arranged over the load with the ends tucked under the arches to provide a ventilation tunnel, and lashed in place using some light line.



**Charlie demonstrating fitting of a pack cover (Wantie).**



**Load Rope:** A length of 12 metres (40ft) of 8-10mm rope used to lash down top loads. We use double braid polyester yachting line. When fitted with a hobble swivel it becomes a night line to secure the animals.



A Load Rope fitted with a hobble swivel.

**Baggage Ropes Assemblies:** These are a device used to rig side loads such as boxes or insulated containers, bags of chaff and other loads that will not fit in a pack bag. They were issued as part of the equipment of an Army Packsaddle. They enable a prepared load to be handled and slung from the load hooks similar to a pack bag. Baggage Ropes are an assembly of two parallel ropes each of 13.6ft (4.1 metres) long to form two "legs". Each leg has a prepared eye at one end of a bight formed by splicing, and is joined to the other leg with a strap approximately 16 inches (45 cm) from the top of the eye. The strap maintains the ropes at the correct distance apart when preparing a load and corresponds to the spacing of the load hooks. The strap may incorporate a buckle to allow for adjustment. The British Pattern was fixed. The Australian Pattern had leather protective coverings over the eyes and the joins of the connecting strap. Two harness rings are fitted on the legs of the bights. The load is slung from the load hooks on the saddle using these rings, not the eye of the ropes. The rings may be moved along the rope to correctly position and balance the load. Baggage ropes are used to rig loads in pairs, one to each side.



A replica Baggage Rope made by the author.



Ration boxes rigged with replica Baggage Ropes.

**Loading Boards:** These are a wooden board used to widen a saddle to increase the gap between a load and the animal to ensure the load does not contact the hips or shoulders. It can also be used to protect the saddle from loads such as barbed wire. A pair of loading boards may also be used to support a stage to carry a difficult top load. The boards are hung from the load hooks and lashed to the quarter panel. The boards need to be large enough to exceed the width and depth of the quarter panel. Two lengths of timber batten, about 75mm x 50mm, are glued and screwed to a sheet of 12mm plywood about 100mm from the ends, to rest on the outer edge of the quarter panel. The battens are drilled with holes at top and bottom to enable lashing to the saddle and load hooks.



Loading boards made of plywood by the author.

**Universal Carriers:** Another item that was issued with army pack saddles. These are a set of 1 inch wide slats that can be used to carry awkward loads. The load is partially enclosed by the slats and held in place by a strap at each end. A 100mm wide board is fitted with rings to hang from the load hooks. Four short slats 23in long, match the width of the quarter panel so that they do not rub the animal's shoulder or hips. The remaining 8 slats are 30 inches long. The Assembly is 33 inches long. The slats are riveted or screwed to wide leather or webbing straps. The retaining straps are fixed to the headboard and return is made to a slat above the height of the load then back to a buckle to allow adjustment. The size for a donkey should be reduced to about 80% scale. The slats can be made from plywood or aluminium tube. These work well on roads and cleared tracks but will catch bushes and vegetation if used in bush.



Universal Carriers made by the author from dimensions printed in Army Manuals.

**Canvas Slings:** Similar to a Universal Carrier these are made from canvas and can be used to carry awkward loads such as firewood, an esky or a bag of feed. The model pictured is from the Outfitters Supply catalogue.



**Neck and Bell Strap:** A neck strap aids catching the animal. If marked with the owners details a neck strap provides identification if the animal strays or becomes lost during a trip. The traditional saddler in Mareeba made up my neck straps that included provision for a horse bell. Belling your animals when off duty is a means of keeping track of their location when they are out of sight. It is very reassuring to hear a bell located where it should be at 2.00am. The bell strap has two extra straps, one to hang the bell from and the other protects the main strap from wear. Our straps are made from vinyl covered webbing for durability but they can be made of leather for aesthetic reasons if desired.



**Hobbles:** Hobbles may be a controversial item. They are very useful to aid containing animals. Animals need to be trained in their use and packers need to be practiced in applying hobbles. Hobbles can be joined and carried by the animal as a necklace. Hobbles for donkeys need to be narrower than those for a horse. Straps made of nylon and other non-natural materials may cause "rope burns" around the fetlock.

**Choices of Girths:** Girths (Cinches or Chinchas) are offered with different end fittings:

- Single or Double Buckled, or
- Ring

Buckled girths are fastened to the saddle girth point with buckles. The girth point is punched to receive the buckle tongue. This is the traditional English and European method. Buckled girths are available as single or double buckle types. If using a single girth then I would use a double buckle to aid tightening the girth and to provide insurance should a buckle break or a hole tear. If using two girths then single buckles are sufficient.

Ring girths are fastened to a corresponding ring on the girth point by lacings (latigoes). This is a very convenient means of fastening girths and provides for more variation in adjustment than buckles. The lacings are fixed to the girth point using a sewn loop

and passed through the girth ring and back through the girth point 2-3 times to provide leverage. The running end is then doubled through the rear of the girth point ring then under the return to provide a slipped cow hitch. These can be made up easily from good quality polyester webbing. Note to place a twist in the fixed loop when sewing. The twist makes the loop lie flat when fastened to the girth point ring.



A Ring Girth lacing or pull up strap of 1" webbing.

#### Materials:

- Corded
- Leather
- Webbing, or
- Firehose

Corded girths are adequate for packsaddles. If using a single girth, a wide "roper" girth can be used to provide better distribution. Corded girths will collect burrs and Speargrass seeds. Leather is traditional and will not collect seeds and burrs, but requires maintenance and is expensive. I strongly advise against using neoprene and other artificial webbing material or "anti-gall" girths. This material may be suitable for short duration equine activities but the continuous movement and sweat generated under a pack saddle will strip off the animal's coat and cause galls. I have found that girths made of "Firehose" to be my preferred material. These are expensive but are worth the money. Toowoomba Saddlery sell blanks that can be made up into either a ring or buckle type and can have centre dees or a surcingle keeper added. If using two girths then the girths should be fitted with centre dees to "hobble" the two girths together and prevent them from separating. The girths are joined with a lacing or short strap.



Double Buckle canvas "Firehose type girth with centre dees (Toowoomba Saddlery Catalogue).



A Cord Ring girth with centre dees (Toowoomba Saddlery Catalogue).

Some donkeys and mules with narrow shoulders may require the girths to be crossed to prevent the saddle creeping forward. The front offside is fastened to the rear nearside and the rear offside is fastened to the near front girth point. The girths cross at the sternum. Ensure that the girths used are not fitted with centre Dees as these will rub and cause galls. This method is recommended in the Army pack transport manuals and my experience indicates that it is an effective method.

When applied, the pack surcingle or Wantie is placed over the top of the front or crossed girths. The girths require a "keeper" to retain the surcingle in place.

To gain familiarity of the range of girths available I recommend that readers view Toowoomba Saddlery's website: [ozsaddle.com](http://ozsaddle.com)



Already wearing its pack saddle, a mule is unloaded from a C-47 somewhere in China. It wasn't unusual for as many as six or eight mules to be in a single load contained in rope "stalls." Photo: Stan Piet.

#### NEXT TIME:

I always gain much satisfaction from looking back along my pack team with neat well balanced loads, and with several clients on the treks, all enjoying the solitude of the bush yet still living with a modicum of luxury afforded by the hardworking team of donkeys.

In my next article, I'll talk about how to load a pack animal and keep it there!





# TO MAKE A MULE

By Mats Niia Bergstrom

Stud Norrgården, Långstrand

Reprinted from Swedish Donkey Society's magazine

Svenska Asneforeningens

Two of the best things in life are donkeys and Norwegian Fjord Horses. For a long time, we planned to combine the two to produce a mule. In 2018, we finally had the opportunity with a young Fjord horse filly and a young donkey colt of the breed Grand Noir du Berry. Our mule breeding project had started.

The mule is a hybrid of two species, produced by a donkey stallion and a horse mare. The donkey has 62 chromosomes and the horse 64. The offspring therefore will have 63 chromosomes – an odd number – and will not be able to reproduce. The law of nature seems however not to be foolproof, as it has been reported that a very limited number of mule-mares have produced offspring.

There are very few mules born in Sweden as a result of a planned breeding program. Mules born “by mistake” do appear now and then, but to produce a mule from selected breeding animals needs planning and preparation. The donkey and the horse do not speak the same language and it is not for certain that any of them will be very much interested in breeding activities. Even if a successful mating takes place the fertility rate is lower than with breeding within the species.

The best chance to succeed is by choosing a young breeding pair where neither the donkey stallion or the horse mare have covered or been covered by a partner of its own species. It is preferable if the donkey stallion has grown up together with horses and it is good if the stallion and mare can be put together for a period before the breeding season starts so that they will get to know each other. For that reason, our donkey colt grew up with our horse colts and in late winter/early spring he and the Fjord mare were



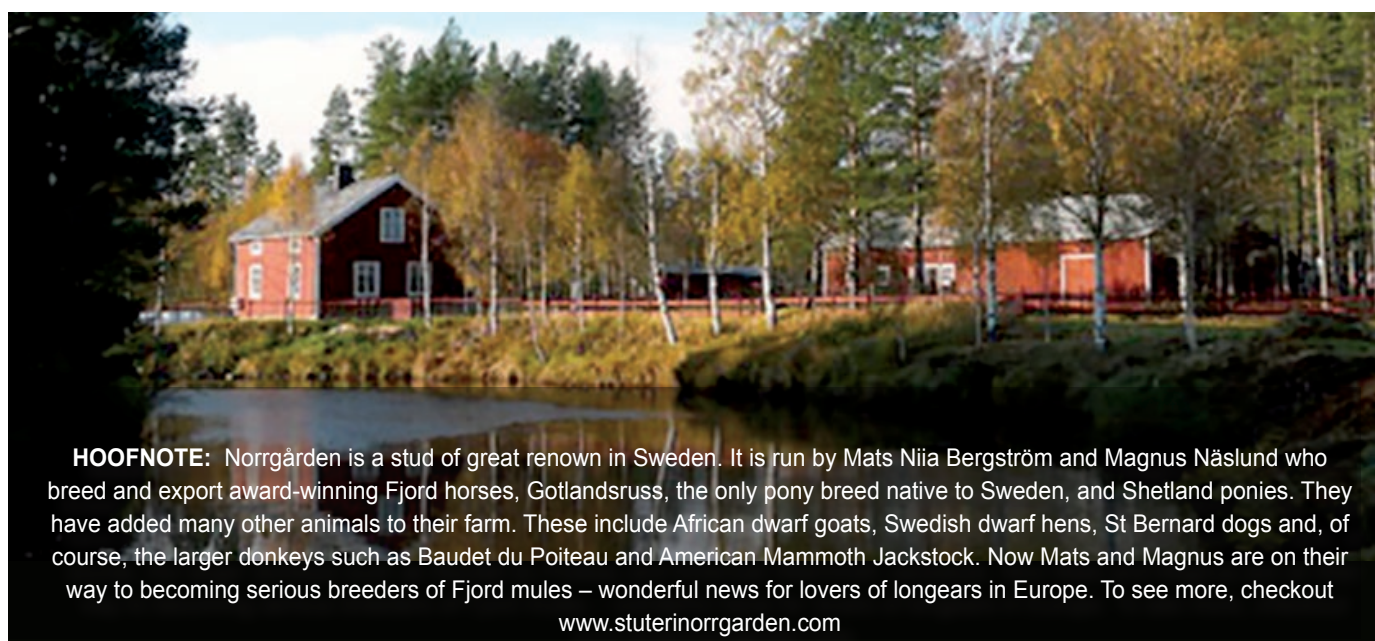
put together in a paddock. They immediately became good friends and they developed a good social connection. The breeding succeeded and the mare became pregnant.

About eleven and a half months later our long-awaited mule foal was born. It was a beautiful filly foal who had inherited her mother's colour. We name our foals in alphabetical order and 2019 it was the letter M. The foal was given the name Norrgardens Mula. Mula is the Swedish word for mule.

Mula's mother produced another mule-foal in 2020, this time a colt foal named Norrgardens Nalta Eljest. That means “a bit odd” or “a bit unique” in an old Swedish dialect. In 2020, we have covered two Fjord horse mares with our Baudet du Poitou jack and hope for two mule foals in 2021.



Mula, the first Fjord mule bred in Sweden at Stud Norrgården.



**HOOFNOTE:** Norrgården is a stud of great renown in Sweden. It is run by Mats Niia Bergström and Magnus Näslund who breed and export award-winning Fjord horses, Gotlandsruss, the only pony breed native to Sweden, and Shetland ponies. They have added many other animals to their farm. These include African dwarf goats, Swedish dwarf hens, St Bernard dogs and, of course, the larger donkeys such as Baudet du Poiteau and American Mammoth Jackstock. Now Mats and Magnus are on their way to becoming serious breeders of Fjord mules – wonderful news for lovers of longears in Europe. To see more, checkout [www.stuterinorrgarden.com](http://www.stuterinorrgarden.com)



# FROM THE RIDGE

With Fiona Mottram

**B**etween lots of rain – plus days forecast as rain – and a rumbling sore back, Blithe Moon Key aka Kiewa and Keysoe Shane aka Snowy have progressed to the stage of being ridden around my small training ring at a walk. The Myler bits seem to suit them well. They have also continued to go on trips off the property to gain more experience of the wider world when I can get someone who likes walking to help by leading them while I ride the calm, good example of Keysoe Tambo. Both Kate Lawless (a DSV member now freed from Melbourne's lockdown restrictions) and local friend Berry Johnson have assisted with this.

On impulse, I bought another mule because she was located nearby, needed some handling, and was advertised at \$500. I most definitely was NOT supposed to be buying another longears! Her name is Molly (an over-used name for female mules but she did respond to it) and she is now registered, vaccinated for tetanus/strangles and microchipped. Her previous owner had regularly got her teeth done and her hooves were only a small amount overgrown. She is a grulla colour all over – like the brown underside of a mushroom. Except for being larger at almost 11hh approximately and approximately 10 years old, she could be a twin for my former mule Possum who now lovingly belongs to DSV member Nina Sampson. (It was wonderful to see Nina and 26yo Possum out in harness last weekend at Southern Cross Harness Club. They covered 6km of the Saturday's outing. Strangely, they chose to turn around at Toms Cap Winery as the furthest point travelled away from camp. Nina swore that they didn't go into the winery to munch on grapevines or sample any liquids!)

There is something about Molly's personality that really attracts me. She is very clever, but I can't quite put my hoof on what the other charm



**How tall is this grass tree flower spike? Fiona Mottram riding Keysoe Tambo & leading Blithe Moon Key. Photo: Kate Lawless.**

is that appeals to me. Perhaps it was because Molly seems to crave attention but was quite nervous and determined never to be caught. "I'll bliss if you pat me over the fence but not let you anywhere near me if you are on the same side" kind of attitude. Even in a very small yard, it took her previous owner about 10 or more minutes to catch her. And I think Molly was genuinely frightened of being caught and was not just playing a game.

To my surprise, it was easy to train Molly out of both the 'can't catch me' behaviour and the extended rearing, kicking tantrums she put on when tied up. It helps that she is greedy because it meant she was a willing participant in clicker training!



**Keysoe Tambo gets a few zzzzzs during the lunch break at Hedley.**

It was easy to get her from the open paddock at home into a relatively confined area. All I had to do was call my other donkeys and mules down the hill into the yard. Molly naturally came along with them. I then removed all the other equines from the yard, leaving her by herself. First, we practiced her not moving away when I approached. If she stood still when I took a step towards her, I'd use the clicker and offer a treat. Molly was happy to tiptoe forward, snatch the treat from me, and reverse backwards rapidly. Soon I could walk right up to her for the click and treat. Next, I practiced the reverse. I would walk further away. If Molly made any move towards me, she got the click and treat. Soon she was following me around closely or hurrying over for her treat. The third exercise involved her having to sniff and then touch a halter, first from in front of me and later in



**Southern Cross Harness Club at Carrajung: Fiona Mottram ready to start with mule Daisy – Photo: Steve Tiller**





**Fiona Mottram practising bridge crossing over Stockyard Creek at Foster with new mule Molly.**

a position standing by my right side. This was followed by her getting a click treat for lowering her head into the halter while it was being held open. In no time, we were putting the halter on and off in a relaxed manner. Her fourth lesson consisted of reinforcing that I could walk up to her with a halter and put it on for the click and treat. What a marvel that girl is! Training to stand still patiently while tied up – whether in the open or in the float – only took one lesson. When she stood still - and even better let her body relax Molly got a click treat. I made her stand quietly for periods of increasing length before the click treat was awarded.

While all the mules I have owned have responded well to clicker training, Molly is the most responsive and quickest learner. We have now begun training with wearing a bit and bridle and had our first long-reining lesson. Using my experienced Shetland-x mule Daisy as a calm companion, Molly has also been out for walks including bridge crossings. Molly still needs the clicker method to accept new things as her nervous energy returns when something different is introduced. Her previous owner, who specializes in off-the-track trotters and pacers in need, is thrilled that Molly has found her niche home. In time, I hope Molly will make a harness mule or at the very least, a small but sturdy pack animal.

With the Covid-19 restrictions progressively easing in Victoria, it has been a huge pleasure to resume harness club outings and camps again. Mules Daisy, JoJo and Milo have all been out in a socially distanced way with the Club's group of ponies and horses. They have been full of excitable spring energy and often led the way in the Club's circuit outings. Yahoo!



**Kate Lawless and Blithe Moon Key negotiate a wet section of track at Hedley.**



**Berry Johnson & Daisy enjoy lunch at Buffalo on the Great Southern Rail Trail.**



**After opening a rail trail gate near Fish Creek Berry Johnson and Molly return to the 4-wheeler cart pulled by Daisy and JoJo.**



## Did you know?

With the rise of Christianity, some believers came to see the cross-shaped marking present on donkeys' backs and shoulders as a symbol of the animal's bearing Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

During the Middle Ages, Europeans used hairs from this cross (or contact with a donkey) as folk remedies to cure illness, including measles and whooping cough. Around 1400 AD, one physician listed riding backwards on a donkey as a cure for scorpion stings.



# South Australia

with Leanne Christie



## Play Day Fun For All



**T**he South Australian Donkey Society recently had a wonderful day out at an equestrian obstacle clinic in the Adelaide Hills. Antola Lodge is a beautiful property owned by Paula Van Eck who last year opened a fabulous obstacle course for pony clubs, groups of friends, riding clubs and of course donkeys to explore! Our first date for the event was cancelled due to bad weather but our second booking was a charm, we had perfect weather.

Six donkeys attended, Robyn and Graham Day's Savannah and Jackson, Evelyn and Aimee Hay's Polly and Willow and myself and Andrew's young minis Jeffrey and Jacob. This was our boys' first time out with other donkeys so we were interested to see how they would handle the excitement of seeing other long ears. They were curious and friendly but quite calm, much to my relief. In fact, all the donkeys behaved impeccably and I think Paula was a confirmed donkey lover by the end of the day. She kindly took many photos for us as we were all too busy concentrating to stop for photos!

The obstacles consisted of wooden bridges, tyres, podiums, tarps, flags, see-saws, wobble boards, gates and jumps, noodles and streamers to walk through, suspension bridges, and even a water pool that bubbled up when hooves stepped on it. Unfortunately (or fortunately according to Jeffrey and Jacob) this one had to be avoided by us as the holes were too big for mini hooves.

Some of the donkeys were a little hesitant to start with but each time they completed an obstacle their confidence grew and soon they were all happily jumping, climbing and crossing all sorts of different surfaces. The scariest thing for both my boys was Evelyn's granddaughter in her pram! They were sure that the four wheeled contraption was going to eat them so our homework for the next week was to get an old pram and use it to cart feeds out to the paddock morning and night. Now the pram is Jeffrey's favourite butt scratcher!

Our two-hour session flew by and after some hilarious posing for group photos with mixed success we had a relaxed morning tea and a chat while the donkeys all had some hay to recharge all that energy they had burned off. We're greatly looking forward to returning to Antola Lodge next year to do it all over again.



Graham Day & Jackson followed by Savannah leading Robyn Day.



The march of the minis: Andrew Dawe & Jeffrey ahead of Leanne Christie & Jacob.



Jackson being led by a headless Graham Day.



Evelyn Hay & Willow follow Aimee Hay & Polly to the top of the podium.



Andrew Dawe & his mini Jacob.



# OUT & ABOUT with Oliver

## My fellow donkeys,

There is not much happening up here at the Prickle Farm. This Corolla virus has stopped everything; there are no shows or field days so there has been no training going on. Despite all this I work my heart out during the school holidays when my tormentor arrives. She is on me bareback and bridleless and soon halters me and goes and saddles and bridles me up and then works me tirelessly, sometimes for as long as ten minutes. I don't mind telling you it is a wonder I don't get Corolla virus after exhausting myself like this.

You really can't believe the way humans hurl insults at you. As you probably know my physique is to die for and I am without a doubt the most magnificent donkey in the universe so what does the human do? He calls me obese and puts me in the Jenny Craig paddock for 16 hours a day. I am only let out for about eight hours in a bare yard. I sometimes have to resort to breaking into the feed shed just to get sustenance. The other day I was staggering around in a weakened state after having nothing for 16 hours when the human came down to let us out of our incarceration. He had a halter in his hand and he put the halter on my magnificent head and led me away, I was devastated when he put my snigging harness on. Pretty soon, I was hauling felled tree branches down to the fire dump while the lousy little shortears that resides with me gutsed on grass and spilt hay! Is there no justice in the world?

I must have done six trips dragging branches to the heap. I worked for nearly twenty minutes and only got a couple of mouldy Arnotts Milk Arrowroot biscuits before I was let go in a debilitated condition from overwork. I reckon I have done about one hours work this year which is far too much in anyone's book. Next day I got my own back though; when the human let us out of our miserable prison he forgot to put the barrier up outside the feed shed and the cry was heard "Someone is in the feed shed!" When the human saw the knocked over feed drums he was heard to say "That bloody donkey!!!" Now I ask you why did I immediately get the blame? I was nowhere in sight (I made sure of that). Did some itinerant wandering donkey come in off the street? Just because the miniature shortears are not big enough to reach the top of the drums why were they not suspected? Anyway, even though I had nothing to do with the tipping over of the drums the lucerne was very nice and enjoyable after a starvation diet.

I'm sorry fans but due to my weakened condition that is all I can write. I'd like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and remember not to forget to hug your donkey and secondly-

**Always remember  
DONKEYS RULE.**

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



My Corolla virus mask is helping to keep me safe.



On no, the human's put a halter on me. That can only mean one thing.



Yep, he's got me snigging tree branches down to the fire heap. I'm too obliging so he takes advantage of me. I'll have to do something about getting meaner.



# Wisdom of the Elders

**T**rees may provide adequate shade for common or garden variety donkeys, but when the mercury rises above 38 degrees in Queensland, internationally travelled donkeys, such as Despina, require something more civilised. Finding the tack room door open, Despina wasted no time in establishing herself in front of the breezeway fan.

Now thirty years old, Despina travelled across the Tasman as a foal with her mother and owners Harry and Anna Coghill when they relocated to Queensland. Despina is currently enjoying retirement with other long and shortears at Split Rock Mountain Premier Horse Agistment, run by Carol Stephens.

As Anna observed, Despina has travelled the Tasman with some of New Zealand's finest racehorses, so she has definite ideas about her station in life!

**Photos:** Carol Stephens



Despina quickly established herself in front of the breezeway fan when she found the tack room door open. With temperatures nudging a sweltering 39 degrees, she stayed there all day, leaving only to relieve herself before hurrying back. She did the same the next day.



Despina's two passions in life are eating and exploring, not necessarily in that order.



The feed room after Despina got the munchies.



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# Remembrance Day

## Boddington, Western Australia



**S**tella Gallack's jenny Dandylou represented the animals at war at the local town's cenotaph on Remembrance Day, November 11.

Dandylou was very respectful, standing quietly at the socially distanced ceremony, even when the bagpipes started up.

According to Stella, Dandylou is the perfect donkey to take on outings where the public is involved.

"She is part-Poitou and very chilled out – one might say 'bone idle'. I do show her but she is too relaxed and has no show presence. She generally doesn't trot out at a show until we leave the ring – bless her. In the working class, she never balks at an obstacle, but it is at her own pace. She never refuses a jump, she just crashes through. She is affectionately known as 'Dandy-bloody-Lou'!"



Why is that bagpiper following me?



Standing respectfully as the Last Post is played.



A pick of green grass is always appreciated, especially when no-one is looking.