

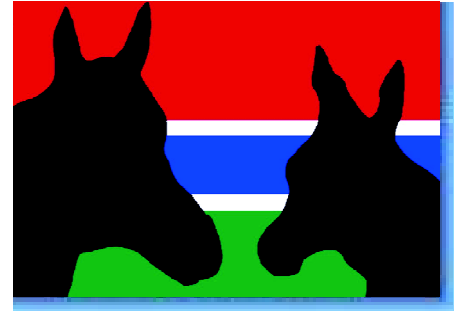
The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Fighting Poverty – Feeding Families

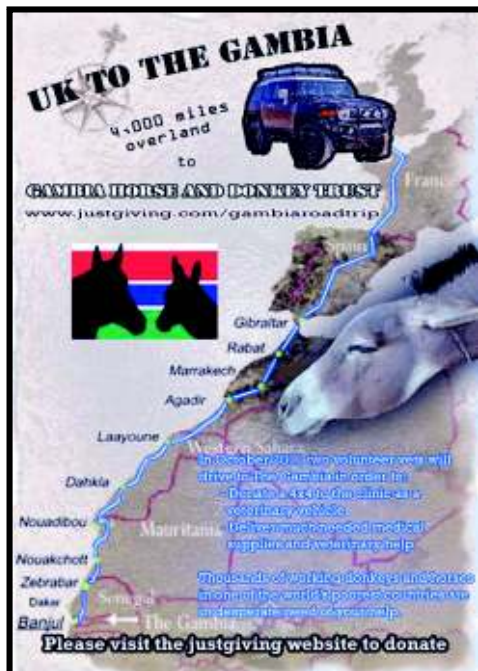
Registered Charity No: 1096814

Autumn Newsletter 2011

The Vetericyn Expedition 4,000 miles to The Gambia



We are extremely grateful to vet Patrick Sells and Laura Heaps who came up with the idea to drive a vehicle to The Gambia for us. Patrick was unaware at the time just how desperate we are for another vehicle. Gambian Roads are tough on any vehicle and the quality of the fuel that we are able to purchase in the remote area in which we work causes continual concern and even engine damage.



We needed to find a left hand drive, low mileage, and affordable 4x4 which will hopefully last us for a few years. Patrick was following every avenue and Neil White, who works in the motor industry, looked at over 200 vehicles before calling to say he had found one. It was a MAZDA B2500 with low mileage in perfect condition but with only one small hitch, it was in Spain!

With a lot of help from a great many people and companies, the vehicle has been prepared and is now on its epic journey.

Neil White of TW White and Sons very kindly gave it a full service and provided spare parts, all FREE of charge.



Daniel Gibson of the PR company **thefishareloose** kindly agreed to publicise the trip and, as a charity, give us free PR help for a year!

Recently a huge lorry drew up outside and when I saw the contents which had come from Audevard, a French drug company, I could not believe my eyes. There were things we have dreamed of but never been able to afford such as wound gel (in large quantities) and milk powder for orphan foals. This gift had come in support of Patrick's expedition initiative and was supposed to go out with the vehicle but we felt the border posts may be suspicious of containers of white powder! Patrick and Laura will also be stopping enroute to help another equine charity in Morocco and to take some supplies to them.

Vetericyn are the main sponsors of the trip and we are very excited at the thought of using their product, not only on wounds, but as it has particularly strong anti fungal properties, it may be our answer when dealing with the increasing number of epizootic lymphangitis cases that we see.

Epizootic lymphangitis A problem we see all too regularly in Gambia. It is a disease that is prevalent in many parts of Africa. It requires careful and dedicated treatment but our staff are having good results using potassium iodide and iodine. We hope the vetericyn will help improve our success rate

Continued page 2

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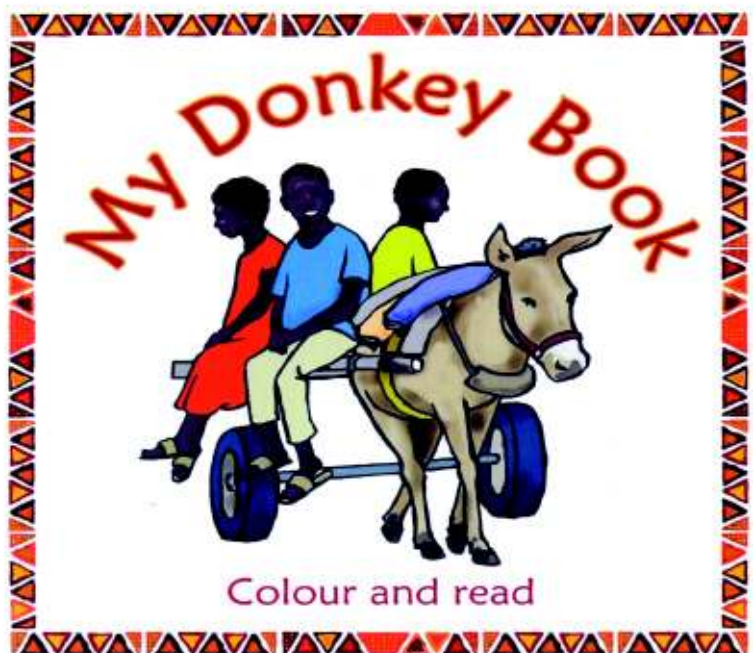
Heather Armstrong, Brewery Arms Cottage Stane Street, Ockley, Surrey RH5 5TH

Tel: 01306 627568 Email: heather@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

Web: www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

The Donkey Book

We now have a lovely little 'read and colour' donkey book which will go out to as many of the school children in our area as possible. We also hope that in the future, if funding permits, every child in The Gambia will receive one when they go to school. Big thanks must go to Mary May and her son-in-law Greg, who put the book together, and to David and Sue Hewittson-Brown who helped with the logistics. I know a lot of people gave their help and advice with the book and we would like to give our thanks to everyone involved. The book is also available to buy online and would make a delightful Christmas gift at £5 incl. postage.



Not only does this little book introduce the children to Horse and Donkey at a very impressionable time, it also gives them something that they own. Educationally it is also a lovely introduction to books and something to colour – a very rare treat as paper or drawing is scarce. The schools project continues to work well in schools with GHDT staff going into schools to work with the classes. That in turn encourages better donkey care and awareness of what the charity can do for them and their animals. The children know that the staff will always help them and take in a donkey if need be.

Continued from page 1

Sincere thanks to everyone who has helped to make our dream of having a new vehicle come true. Although we hear a great deal of bad news in the media I never cease to be amazed how many really good, generous and helpful people there are in the world. Most of all heartfelt thanks to Patrick and Laura and we wish them a safe and enjoyable journey.



Postscript: If there are any mechanical engineers out there who wanted to volunteer their time to come and service our vehicles in The Gambia from time to time, we would make you very welcome!

**THEFISHARELOOSE
PUBLIC RELATIONS**

THANKS TO

Dan Gibson thefishareloose PR
Vetericyn VF -
Audevard -
Virbac -
Boehringer-Ingelheim
Elanco
Tutavet
Mitchell Skoda
The Open College of Equine
Studies
Hallmarq
The Gambia Experience
Veterinary Endoscopy Services
Rossdale and Partners
TW White and Sons
Cheryl Stear
Elsevier

Vetericyn



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The Horse and Donkey Show

December sees 'Show Time' in Sambel Kunda. The Show provides an opportunity to involve the whole community in the work of Horse and Donkey. It brings together communities, officials and animals from far and wide, giving animal owners and handlers the chance to show off their horses and donkeys. As is the case everywhere, 'mine' is always the best, whatever the opinion of the judge!

Unlike animals in UK where horses are kept for pleasure, the Gambian animals are working animals and very few are ridden. The animals are the rural transport system, the farming draught system and the means of trading. A donkey provides the first rung of the ladder out of extreme poverty. A horse is the next step between 'doing ok' and trading, with associated benefits. The animals are worked hard and it takes considerable commitment to have them in 'Show Condition'.

One of the joys at the show is that the improvements can be measured year on year. A visitor from Europe is still likely to be shocked at some of the things they see – some harness wounds may be seen, but most are now old scars. We still see poorly fitting harness and the use of the barbaric Sengalese bits – despite the thousands of donated snaffles sent out. But every year, bit by bit (*excuse the pun*) there is recognisable improvement. Where there was previously a choice of 2 or 3 really lovely stallions (including the beautiful Lion from Missera) there is now a huge class full of them. They will certainly return the following year 'considerably better' having seen the standard and finding out how to improve their care. All over the world a rosette is a huge motivator and The Gambia is no exception!!

Last year's Supreme Champion was a beautiful mare with foal at foot – the "wife" and foal of the lovely Lion who has himself been three time supreme champion. The concept of breeding to improve stock has arrived, and we are sure that will be even more evident this year.

We have always had an endless stream of amazing donkeys with their very charming, youthful handlers. Now bathing, pampering and preparation are the order of the day,

The show makes a huge difference. It gives an opportunity to those who are too shy to ask for help to come along and join in the party. There are plenty of people there to identify the animals that need help and our staff are on hand to encourage the less confident handlers to find out what we can do for them and who to call if there's a problem. The vets and farriers are always busy. The harness stall stock rapidly depletes and the equine dentists are a source of interest and amusement. Above all the community meets Horse and Donkey and sees what it is all about.

This year the show will be kept much as before, without expansion. 2012 is the Olympic Year, it is also our 10th Anniversary so the Special plans are on hold for that.

The show is costly to put on. We give substantial cash prizes (in Gambian terms) and that is what motivates the horse owners. We also have huge rosettes and lots of trophies, pony show style with something worth hanging up to make the neighbours envious!

Could you be a Sponsor for the Show this year? The entry numbers are huge – we need lots of rosettes and prizes. If you or your company could support a class at £70 or even a special prize, a bag of 'for attending' rosettes, etc, we would be very grateful and there will be lots of photos! Please contact Heather and she will give you full details. The long term impact of this investment is hugely significant.

Ann Varley October 2011



Lion (above) his mare Tiger and foal are below



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Web: gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

The holistic approach to helping horses and donkeys



The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust has identified poverty and lack of knowledge as the main two causes for the problems that we deal with on a daily basis. The vast majority of people of The Gambia are genuinely responsible, kind and caring people but the challenges in keeping animals healthy in The Gambia are enormous. Not only are there many diseases, but it is also frequently difficult to find food (there are no local feed merchants here) There is also a shortage of veterinary support and even when it can be found there is another huge problem which is found in human medicines as well, and that is the problem of counterfeit drugs. It is hard to imagine that there are people who make money out of selling packets of so called drugs that have no active ingredients in them at all.

Education is one way we can help people and make them aware of what can be done. Our education teams are busy training and providing continuing professional development for farriers, harness makers, paravets, farmers and school children to improve the knowledge of horse and donkey management in The Gambia. In the long term, if the animals are better managed and in good health, they will in turn be better able to increase their owners' income as they can take surplus crops to the market which provides money for the family. Trade is the vital ingredient to improving the local economy.



We are constantly trying to find ways to relieve the poverty that occurs in the remote rural area where we work and recently invested £250 to send four ladies from the surrounding villages down to the coast to receive training in soap making, batik, tie dye and bead making. Two of the ladies had never been to the city before so it was a real eye opener for them but they returned making soap and "Omo." which they can sell to the other ladies in their villages. (And very good soap this is too.) They have also been making beautiful bead key rings, necklaces and bracelets, which we sell on our website or to visitors to our centre. The money made by this group all finds its way into the local economy and indirectly helps the horses and donkeys.

Rather than invest charity funds in the usual rubber support bracelets, which are so popular with British charities at the moment, we have devised our own little bracelet, a simple string of beads, made by the village ladies in the colour of the Gambian flag (and our logo) which we sell for £1. This helps the ladies,

the horses and donkeys and enables our supporters to demonstrate their support. We also sell beautiful hand painted bird pictures that have been created by a local artist and we take every opportunity to benefit the local communities through promoting their arts and crafts.

Our gifts are small and inexpensive and they will show the person that you give it to that you care, not only for them, but for the people who created the gift as well. For more information please visit our website at:

www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

News on the School Bus

After building the nursery school last year, we were left with the problem of how the very tiny children would be able to get to school and we came up with the idea of a donkey drawn school bus. Shortly afterwards the Gambia Government also approached us with the idea of developing a school bus drawn by donkeys.

We were fortunate enough to win a grant to build a prototype here in UK which can be replicated in Gambia. We are very grateful to The World Association for Transport Animal Welfare and Studies (TAWs) who have a lot of experience in such matters. They have kindly agreed to develop the design for the vehicle and test it in UK before sending it to The Gambia. This is a very exciting project for us to undertake and should bring great benefits to the children.



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Vicky Savage's achievements

We would like to express our gratitude to Vicky Savage who completed the Grafham Water Marathon and raised a fantastic amount of money for us. Her effort was so huge that she was the 1st place female runner, and was 9th runner overall, in a time of 3 hours and 47 minutes! That alone is an incredible achievement, and the fact that she managed to raise over £500 for us at the same time is an additional wonderful achievement. Vicky had already given up some of her precious time by volunteering for us in The Gambia, and to go the extra (26) miles and run this marathon to raise funds for us as well is above and beyond the call of duty! We would like to say a HUGE congratulations to Vicky for such a wonderful achievement, and thank you very much for your amazing effort and support. **Please sponsor her if you can** <http://www.justgiving.com/vicky-savage>

Well done Vicky and Hannah.



If there are other fit and athletic people out there who would be willing to run and raise funds for us in our tenth anniversary year we would love to hear from you. Better still come out to visit us in Sambel Kunda and get some serious training in whilst you are there!



The Sambel Kunda Clinic Trust

Some of you may know that in addition to our horse and donkey work, we also work closely with Stella's School Scheme www.sssgambia.co.uk and a primary care clinic www.sambelkundaclinic.org that was set up for humans. Sadly, the kind family who funded the clinic are no longer able to continue funding but have donated the building so that we can continue providing healthcare in our very remote area. The three charities, school, health and ourselves are known collectively as "Stella's charities" If you know of anyone with particular interests in community healthcare who may be interested in supporting the clinic, please put them in touch with us.

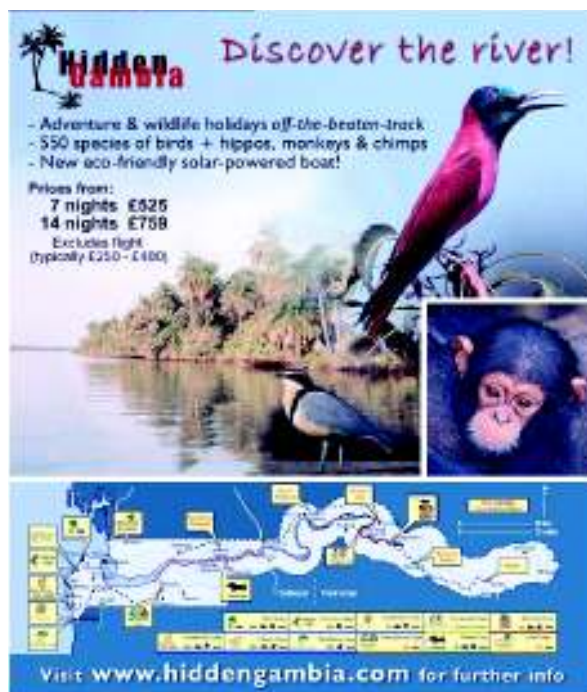
A new Isolation Block – Hannah and Sue

When horses come into Horse and Donkey we often have no idea what is the matter with them – but they all need our attention. We need to have somewhere where they can be monitored frequently but away from the other equine residents until their problems have been diagnosed and treatment is underway. We can bring them back to either the Stallion or Mares block when the time is right. In the meantime we need an Isolation Block

Hannah McIlwraith ran in the London Marathon, in the Spring and Sue Silk kindly made a donation to add to Hannah's total sum to contribute towards this project. At the moment building work is being deferred until after the rains and harvest are over. Once completed, we can safely keep Strangles cased etc away from the other animals until they are better. Thank you Hannah and your sponsors and Sue for supporting us. Any more runners for 2012? It would be good to have a H&D team.



This little boy had fallen off his donkey and broken his pelvis and his femur. He was initially treated at the clinic, before being taken to the main hospital two hours drive away in the 'horse and donkey' vehicle. By sharing our resources we are able to help the community



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When I suggested to a colleague in Senegal that she take a week's holiday and accompany me to visit a remote project in the heart of The Gambia specialising in horses and donkeys, the reaction was one of shocked amusement. "Can't we go to the beach?" We were working with an organisation called Kiva, (www.kiva.org) a Californian based microfinance NGO with a mission to alleviate world poverty through person to person lending. Alongside microfinance my other passion is animals, more specifically, investigating ways in which animals can live peacefully alongside humans, to the mutual benefit of both. I decided to go alone.



Whilst researching The Gambia for a much needed break from the dusty towns of Northern Senegal I came across the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust. I was immediately captivated by the concept of the project; that by promoting animal welfare and best practice, the livelihoods and revenues of their human dependents could be dramatically improved. A few emails with Heather secured me an invite and a day's travelling in cramped mini-buses and on motorbikes brought me to Sambel Kunda. The following week was to be one of those unexpected life affirming experiences that makes travel worthwhile.

The Donkey Project is an innovation which initiated in 2006 and has put 122 healthy donkeys into the field. A donkey provides not only essential power to till the fields and perform other laborious tasks such as helping collect firewood, it also improves a farmer's ability to access markets, allowing him to travel further distances to get better prices for his produce and providing other sources of income.

I decided I needed to understand how this organisation works. Travelling through the villages I met a number of farmers who are proud custodians of a Project donkey. We talked over how the donkeys contributed to their lives, the economic benefits were emphasised alongside important social work. "If a family member is sick, he takes him to hospital" says one farmer, fondly stroking his donkey's ears.

What interests me about the Donkey Project are its many similarities with microfinance. In both, a large upfront capital investment is required to provide or improve a revenue flow. The investment needs ongoing maintenance, either in the form of interest payments or in food and care. The investment allows the recipient to greatly improve production, lower production costs and access markets that might previously have been out of reach. Could this work with the Donkey Project?



As with microfinance, the Donkey Project also has a strong social focus. One farmer tells me how the additional income the donkey provides allows him to send one in two of his children to school. Realising that promoting animal welfare and conservation requires the engagement of the local community, the GHDT has approached local development holistically, providing local villages with boreholes for water, supporting schools and a clinic. By engaging with the local population, the GHDT has better helped them in turn to engage with their working animals. Noticing that equines are almost always cared for by children, the GHDT organises an education programme, visiting local schools fortnightly and offering classes in equine welfare.

As I bounce along on the back of Saloum's motorbike through the green fields of The Gambia, my mind is awash with the possibilities for financing donkeys. I see pictures of donkeys appearing on the Kiva website with descriptions of the people they will help and the work they will be asked to do. But as we travel onwards and Saloum introduces me to donkeys called Kent, Moses and Sue, and the proud Gambians who care for them tell me how they fared in this year's show, my wayward thoughts desert me. There really is nothing else to do but smile. *Tim's article has been reduced to fit the newsletter. The original + his photos can be found on <http://fellowsblog.kiva.org/2011/08/31/of-chinese-proverbs-and-gambian-donkeys/>*

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Sponsorship

Many horses and donkeys arrive at our the Centre for an 'outpatient visit'. This may be for treatment, harness, farriery or just advice. At other times the staff go out on motorbikes to provide emergency care. Some animals are so sick they have to be hospitalised with us for a while. Some times their long term



future has to be considered and we do have some long term residents. Some of these animals are fit and well enough to go out on day loan but return at night. Others work with our staff and one or two special cases just need long term tender loving care as their circumstances have been so horrific, they need the security of a home they know and a familiar routine.

Through the Website we have some of our long term residents – horses and donkeys - available for Sponsorship. Their details and stories are shown on the website. Giving sponsorship of a horse or a donkey as a gift is a lovely way to show someone that you care for them whilst helping an animal in need at the same time.

How much does it cost?

The sponsorship fee is £24 per year and you will receive a Sponsor Certificate, details of the

horse or donkey you decide to sponsor, together with a newsletter of the animals progress and an update as information comes in. We realise that in these troubled economic times it may be difficult to find £24 so you may prefer to choose to pay by direct debit at £2 per month. This is a good way to give a gift (or even several gifts!) and pay it off in easy instalment.

How do I sponsor?

You may sponsor a horse or donkey by email or via the post. If sponsoring by post, please contact:

Sue Adams
23 Davis Court
Marlborough Road
St Albans AL1 3XU
Tel. (44) (0)1727 838585



Tallah, who broke his leg, is one of our long term residents and can be sponsored

Gambia Experience!

We are lucky to receive a great deal of help from various companies, but one in particular has been outstanding in its support of our work and that is The Gambia Experience. They have not only flown us and our many volunteers over to The Gambia with courteous efficiency, but they have provided raffle prizes and help in many different and sometimes unusual ways. They do a great deal for the charitable sector and have quite deservedly won awards for their excellent service and work. **THANK YOU** to all at **Gambia Experience!**

Proud supporters of
The Gambia Horse & Donkey Trust



www.gambia.co.uk
0845 330 4567

ATOL 1866

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Happy Christmas



Christmas Card time!

We have very striking Christmas Cards and many others available that are blank for all occasions. Some are Gambia based, as on the left – both shown here are very popular. All are available from Heather and the details are on the website.

The On Line Shop

Heather has been recently out in Gambia and will have brought home new stock for Christmas. There are likely to be some new items. The local bead bracelets, necklaces, bags, keyrings, etc are most attractive. The Donkey colouring book as mentioned on page 2 of the newsletter is also available along with tie dye and batik fabric, posters, etc. Everything from the shop is made in the Sambel and the surrounding villages and provides an income for the women who make these items.

Monthly Direct Debit

A small charity needs a regular income to pay staff, maintain its resources and 'keep the show on the road'. A monthly Direct Debit provides the ongoing income to run Horse and Donkey and to support its work. Information and forms are available from Heather.

Gift Aid and Just Giving

It is fun organising an activity with friends to raise some money for Horse and Donkey – this soon mount up but registering yourself with us for Gift Aid makes a huge difference as it give a big % more! There are lots of other schemes, particularly through the web to support a charity eg through your regular shopping. Every little bit does add up and really helps.



Thank You Thank You Thank You



We would like to say thank you to everyone who has given us their help, whether it is as a volunteer, a fundraiser, a donor or even if you have given your time. There have been some remarkable fundraising initiatives including a fantastic dog show and a very memorable party in Cheltenham. So many people have done so much for us and we are very, very grateful to you all. If you ever feel low, please remember that there is a great deal of good in this world and to each and every person who has given us their help I would like to give our sincere and heartfelt thanks to you all and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year

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