

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Fighting Poverty – Feeding Families
Registered Charity No: 1096814

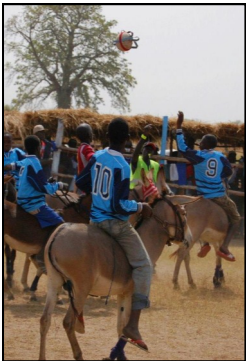
Autumn Newsletter 2012

Time To Look At Progress:
10 Years On

In the Spring newsletter, we reflected on our achievements of the last 10 years. Now we would like you to see what that means, as we reflect on the differences between year one and today.



- **Expertise** is now available throughout the country, thanks to the training and development of our Gambian staff, para-vets, farriers and harness makers. Essential services can now be provided for working equines in a number of rural areas.



- **Collaborating**—We believe in working in collaboration with as many groups and organisations as possible—together we can create positive changes. Our team work with veterinary surgeons from the UK and the Gambian Department of Veterinary Services amongst many others.

- **Education Links** – As the children are often the main carers of the family animals, we knew that to make long lasting changes in animal management practices we must capture the imagination of the children. Involving the children ensures the future. Through the School Education Programme and weekly Donkey Club meetings we are able to do just this, and the superb condition of these children's donkeys is proof of the success of these projects.



- **Community Links**—Whilst it is important to improve the lives of Gambian animals, we never forget the importance of the quality of life experienced by the animal's owners. Poverty is widespread in Gambia, and through our GHDT projects and other community focussed projects we aim to continue reducing the levels of poverty of the Gambian farmers.

- **The Concept of Care**—It can be difficult to develop the concept of caring when death is inevitably around the corner, even when support, medication and education are available. Owners are now proud of their animals, so have become more willing to seek preventative care and 'give treatment a go'. Now the community is happier to accept castration and even euthanasia when necessary, as they become ever more involved in wanting the very best for their animals.

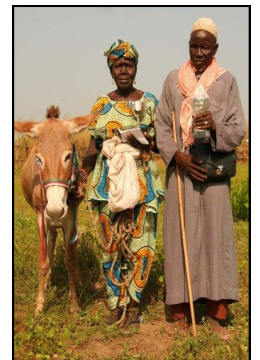
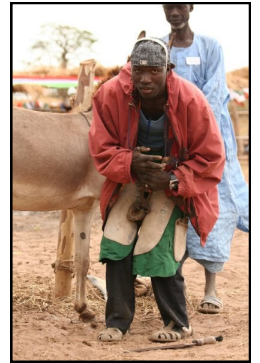
- **Encouraging Responsibility**— Through witnessing positive changes in animal health, welfare and productivity the community has become more involved in taking good care of their animals, and has seen the benefits first hand. The community is now equipped with the skills to take more responsibility for themselves.

"It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do little - do what you can."

~Sydney Smith

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New Initiatives

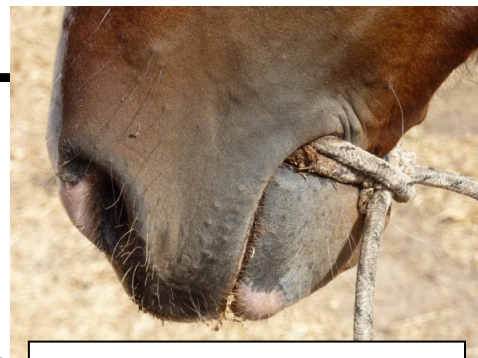
A More Sustainable Bit

Since we opened our centre we have been very grateful for the bits that people have donated to us, to exchange for the harsh Senegalese bits that cause horrific injuries to animal's tongues and lips. We have always been aware that this is not the most sustainable option and have been actively looking for an alternative.

We are very excited to announce that we could have found just that! The **President's International Award** is an educational programme for Gambian youths, enabling them to develop a range of skills, including metal work and fabrication. We approached them to enquire about working together to develop a kinder alternative to the widely available Senegalese bits. They were delighted with the idea and immediately set to creating straight bar snaffles.

After some initial tweaks to the original prototypes we now feel that the bits are acceptable for use and the first batch of locally made straight bar snaffles are now being issued by our mobile veterinary team. We are eagerly awaiting the response from the farmers themselves.

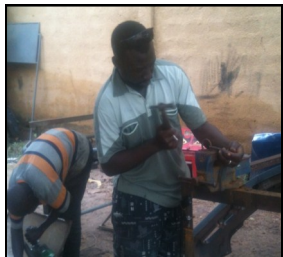
Collaborating with other organisations is, we believe, one of the keys to success, especially if everyone involved is able to benefit. This project means that youngsters gain valuable training in creating more humane bits, the project can earn an income, more humane bits will become more widely available throughout the country at a price easily affordable to Gambian farmers, and of course the animals and their owners will also benefit hugely. The majority of equine owners in The Gambia would gladly use a more humane bit but they have just never been widely available..... until now!



These pictures (above and below) show traditional biting practises seen not only in The Gambia, but across Africa.

A rope and half hitch around the jaw, cuts off the circulation of the tongue and cuts the lips, chin and tongue leaving the horse/donkey unable to eat and drink. This may seem cruel but it is cheap and accessible. To stop this practice we need a cheap and accessible alternative made locally.

The Senegalese bits are made from poor quality metal with a rough finish and the basic design causes much suffering. Again, to change local practice there has to be an affordable and widely available alternative.



If The Boot Fits!

Troika is a long term resident at the GHDT centre, who was found a number of years ago on the side of the road in terrible condition. Although it was initially thought that she would have to be put to sleep, Troika had other ideas, and after a long drink and a stomach full of food her will to live was very apparent. Troika had a severe infection in her hind leg, and although she regained full health, the damage to her leg was extensive and after a little time her hoof sloughed off and was unable to re-grow, leaving Troika with 3 hooves and one soft stump.

Because of this injury it was of course impossible for her to go out to work and so she was fostered for a number of years by a British nurse and her husband. When they left The Gambia, Troika returned to GHDT, and this is where she shall remain in capable, caring hands.

For several years Troika has managed well on



her stump, but we have always been on the lookout for a long term solution for her, due to the extra strain caused on her back.

We were delighted when the **National Centre for Prosthetics and Orthotics** at the **University of Strathclyde** agreed to tackle the challenge of designing and developing a prosthetic hoof for Troika!

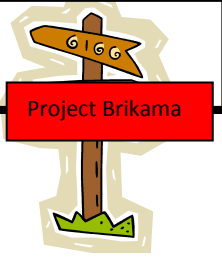
The new prosthesis is currently on its way to The Gambia for Troika to trial it. We are extremely grateful to Elaine Figgins, Director of the Centre and Bill McKinnon, the prosthetic technician who manufactured the prosthesis for Troika. This is a wonderful example of the things that can be achieved when collaborating with other organisations and we hope we will soon be able to provide you with images of Troika making use of her new hoof!



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Exciting New Developments



We are very excited to tell you of our plans to open a second Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust centre. The new centre will be based in a more urban area, closer to the coast and will enable a whole new catchment area to benefit from our services.

Our existing centre has resulted in a great improvement in the welfare of working animals in the area around Sambel Kunda and we feel it is now time for our work to reach further afield. The centre at Sambel will remain as the field centre up river, with stables, facilities and resources as now but the new centre will allow further development of staff and a flow of expertise between the two bases.

The needs of the equine population in the Sambel region have been at the extreme end of equine science and the charity has been fortunate and grateful to the Veterinary expertise from so many of the University Vet Schools and Equine Practices who visit. This has been a 2 way process with CPD and research opportunities never previously imagined.

It is not that we now 'know how to do it', we are always learning but there are Horses and Donkeys in the country with totally different problems who are also in need of our care.

The new centre will be closer to Gambia College, therefore enabling us to access and develop the expertise available in the target area.

Whilst the rural communities and working animals will continue to require our support, we have recognised that the needs of the more urban animals must also be part of our work. To get this important project off the ground we will of course need your help to finance the development.



'For Hire' ranks and 'Cart Parks' in urban areas



Introducing the 333 Club—An Exciting Project Requires Us All To Help

The 333 Club is our new initiative to fund the opening of the new centre. Our target is **£100,000** and of course this requires some serious fundraising!

After much deliberation and some long walks with the dogs, the 333 Club was developed. What this means is that we need 300 people (or clubs, groups, organisations) to raise just £333 each to reach our target. £333 is a feasible amount of money for anyone to raise with one or two small scale fundraising events or challenges, so we just need to find 300 people who are willing to accept the challenge!

Members of the 333 Club will be presented with a certificate of membership, will be welcome to visit our new centre when it is opened, and we are working on being able to provide members with other benefits and bonuses, particularly if they visit The Gambia. All members will also have their names (or name of their organisation, school, college, place of work) engraved on a plaque which will be displayed at the new centre.



Our great Gambian team keenly await the new challenges ahead

If you are interested in learning more about the 333 Club, or you would simply like to become one of the first members of the 333 Club please contact Heather Armstrong on 01306 627568 or email Anna at anna_ghdt@hotmail.co.uk We can provide you with a fundraising pack to help you with ideas to raise your £333 and we will be extremely happy to help you publicise any event or activity that you do for the 333 Club.

If you are personally unable to help, **please** help us by informing your local Pony Clubs, Riding Clubs, Veterinary Practices, Schools, Colleges, Universities, or place of work and encouraging them to get involved too. Many hands make light work!

Please help us to make this new venture happen. So much has been achieved in the past ten years - now it is time to look forward to what we can achieve in the next ten years!



If you feel that you need inspiration, please watch this video online which summarises our work over the last ten years:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lhs4_DDgG0

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The Needs of Urban Horses and Donkeys

The first time traveller to The Gambia, usually flies into Banjul International airport, having left a western culture a few hours previously. Looking out of the window of the plane you see a very different country – very red, very dusty and very tropical. The plane doors are opened and you are welcomed by the warmth and sunshine. You are in Africa. As you drive to the hotel, what very often hits people hard is the culture change of seeing cars and lorries with horse and donkey carts running alongside them.

At this point you know you are in a totally different culture and it can be a cultural shock. Many visitors to The Gambia stay within the confines of their hotel, but many see the horses and donkeys in the city or on the beaches as a problem that needs to be addressed.

We recognise the many problems and the need to address them and this is what we intend to do with our new project, in association with the Gambian Veterinary Authorities.



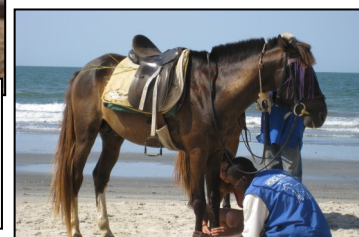
The traffic is manic and amidst the chaos and speed, horses and donkeys are at work day and night. Accidents involving horses and donkeys are all too common.



To minimise overloading of carts education is required



Donkey 'garages' are found in the road behind the highways – these areas are a great platform to go to, to provide education and support. The urban culture is very different but with knowledgeable, trained staff we can address the problems.



The animals often provide the family income and many cart drivers are young men who need to earn a living in the city. Through education and awareness we can improve the lives of the animals, and their owners will realise that a healthy animal is also a much more productive animal.



We also need to provide assistance to the beach horse operators. Poorly fitted saddles and riders who are too heavy for the horses are specific problems. In order to improve the animal welfare standards and improve the service offered by the beach operators we are in dialogue with the Gambian Veterinary Authorities as to how best we can assist them. We hope to provide educational workshops on equine and business management, and also an equine vaccination programme.

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Time To Celebrate 10 Years and Enjoy

Charity Awards

With 2012 being the year of our tenth anniversary, we were delighted to be shortlisted for a prestigious Charity Award in June. We were



Heather and Anna celebrating

shortlisted from hundreds of entries in the **International Aid and Development** category alongside just 2 other charities. We were selected

'For using imaginative projects to reduce rural poverty, improve equine management and welfare and provide employment in rural areas by organising the training of equine support technicians such as farriers, harness makers and para-vets.' We were honoured to attend the glitzy award ceremony in London and were surrounded by delegates from mostly very large

charities who do incredible work both in the UK and around the world; it seemed impossible that we had been selected!

The HALO Trust, who specialise in the removal of hazardous debris of war, went on to win our category and although we did not win our category, in our minds we were already winners simply for being shortlisted, and were delighted to receive a 'Highly Commended' certificate.

The HALO Trust went on to win the overall best charity from the 32 charities attending the awards, so we were proud to have come second to such a prestigious charity.

We could not have been shortlisted for such a prestigious award without such wonderful supporters who have enabled us to fund our projects, and we are truly grateful to you all.



Dr Heather Armstrong

It is with great pride that we announce that our Founder and Director, Heather Armstrong, has been awarded an **Honorary Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery** in recognition of the outstanding service that she has provided in the areas of animal and humanitarian welfare in The Gambia. This is a very well deserved honour and we are pleased that Heather's tireless work has been officially recognised with this outstanding award.

Much has been achieved by Heather, with relatively modest expenditure. Heather has involved a wide network of individuals and institutions and continues to work in a holistic manner.

The daily work of the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust continues to ease the burden of poverty through many diverse projects, from mobile veterinary clinics to the designing and building of donkey drawn 'school buses' for nursery school children who are too young to walk to school.

All those who know Heather will no doubt agree that this a very well deserved award for someone who works so hard to improve the lives of others. Congratulations Heather.



10th Anniversary Dinner Dance - After several months of frantic organisation the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust 10th Anniversary Dinner Dance finally took shape on 22nd September 2012, at the All England Showground, Hickstead. With 130 attendees we had the perfect sized party accompanied by excellent food, good wine and plenty of dancing! We would like to express our warmest thanks to all those who were able to attend, as well as everyone who contributed in other ways towards the wonderful evening. We are extremely grateful to the Bunn family for providing us with the fantastic venue, and also to the Gambian Drummers and 'Men in Sheds' for their fabulous live music which succeeded in getting just about everyone onto the dance floor!

Thanks to everyone's generosity we raised just over £6000 from the evening, and it was wonderful to personally thank our supporters for their support over the past 10 years.



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Meaningful Gifts—A Fun Way to Help

Do you need to buy a gift for a friend or family member but cannot think what to get them? We can help you to find a really unique gift and help relieve poverty at the same time! We can provide you with a gift certificate for any of the following or we can forward it directly to where it is required.

Here is just a sample, look at the website for even more.



BIT - £5.00

Not only will the donkey have a kind bit but with these being made locally, it supports the young people who make them.



HARNESS - £15.00

Poorly made and badly fitting harness causes awful wounds. A locally made set is made to fit, and supports the harness makers. Using local sourced materials ensures sustainability

A CART OF HAY £18

To feed to our hungry in-patients. Hay is purchased from local farmers and through buying it we help provide an income for the families who make it.



A DAY OF TEACHING ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE £25

Through learning about their animals the children are able to see them as sentient beings, resulting in them taking much better care of them.



TRYPANOSOMIASIS TREATMENT KIT - £12.00

Trypanosomiasis is one of the biggest threats to the health of working equines in The Gambia. It is a blood borne parasite which attacks the red blood cells, causing weakness, anaemia, loss of appetite, and eventually death if left untreated. It is a perfectly treatable disease, yet thousands of animals die each year because their owners are unable to afford treatment.

Our trained staff and para-vets are able to take blood samples to test for the disease - if the disease is found to be present treatment can be given and lives are saved. This can all be done out in the field enabling us to go to the animals rather than them having to come to our centre.

Other Meaningful Gifts available include:

PAIN RELIEF KIT £10 WORMING KIT £5 SWINGLE TREE FOR CART £10 MOBILE CLINIC TEAM £60 CART/PLOUGH £175

To purchase a Meaningful Gift please contact Anna at anna_ghdt@hotmail.co.uk or call her on 01978 710292

CHRISTMAS CARDS

The previous pages show us moving forward into the next 10 years with optimism, but we also have to keep everything else working! Christmas is a great time to combine gifts with the supporting the work of the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust.

We have a selection of new Christmas Card designs this year, some of which can be seen here. For the full selection of designs available please visit our website. If you would like to order cards, please contact Heather on the details at the bottom of the page.

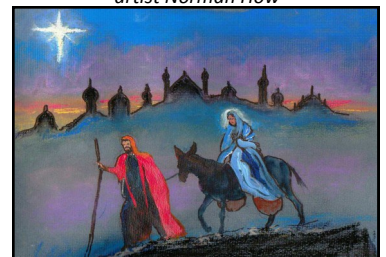
A pack of 5 cards is £2 plus p&p

Decided that this year you will cut down on sending Christmas Cards but would like to donate to GHDT instead?

Why not consider letting your friends know that this year, due to the number of people in the world who are less well off than yourself, instead of sending cards, you have decided to make a donation to the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust? If you let us know your email address, we will send you a Christmas email certificate thanking you and your acquaintances for your donation, which you can then pass on to your friends so that they can appreciate the reason for the lack of a card this year!



Some of our new card designs, courtesy of artist Norman How



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Eto—A New Patient With a Familiar Problem



When Eto's stable caught on fire, Eto was tethered inside and unable to escape; the story is all too familiar and reminiscent of the story of Phoenix who resides at the GHDT centre. The burns that he has suffered are extensive and his future is currently uncertain, but he has a fighting spirit and his progress so far is promising.

Our team of staff have been working around the clock to ensure he is kept comfortable and his burns are being treated with **fresh aloe vera** and '**Botanica**' cream. The Gambian climate allows us to grow fresh aloe vera at our centre, and we use it straight from the plant, making the best of the plants soothing and healing properties. Eto is a young stallion who was being used by several families for working the farms, prior to his accident.

This means that whilst he is suffering from his injuries, the people in his village are also facing difficult times without a working animal during their busy farming season. It is unknown at this stage whether the extent of Eto's injuries will prevent him from ever returning to work but we remain hopeful for both him and the family who own him.

Follow us on Facebook to follow his progress and our other up to date news and pictures.

www.facebook.com/gambiahorseanddonkey

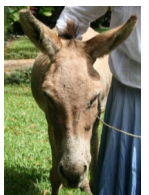
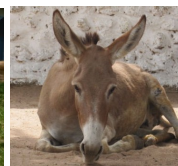


The Donkey Project

Many of you will have been involved in the Donkey Project. Sadly we had to close the project to new sponsors because during the height of the Neurological Disease many of our donkeys were affected and sadly died. Although this disease is still much in evidence, everyone is now more aware and it is better managed. However, the remaining donkeys and offspring of those who succumbed to disease continue to do admirable work, helping families and schools with essential farming and transportation duties. The herd continues to grow, with many of the female donkeys (some with male English names!) having their own foals at foot. Despite our sad losses, this project has been successful and will continue to be, as the foals of Project Donkeys reach an age at which they too can be trained to work. All donkeys are still routinely checked every month and the recipients are all incredibly grateful for their donkeys.

Sponsor Animal Scheme

Don't forget that we are still running the sponsor scheme for our horses and donkeys. For just £24 a year you can sponsor one of our animals, for yourself or as a gift for someone else. You will receive regular updates and photos of your chosen animal, along with a certificate of sponsorship. This scheme helps us to continue providing top quality care for the animals at our centre.



In Need of a Break?

One of our volunteers and friends, Alex Coombs has set up a Visitor Lodge in a neighbouring village in The Gambia. This is quite close to our centre and offers a very peaceful holiday opportunity for somewhere to stay.

www.gambiaaccommodation.co.uk



If you want to contact Horicon in a hurry, phone Heather who will call Sambel for you

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A Sad Farewell to Cynthia Haydon

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of Cynthia Haydon, who died on 16 September 2012, aged 94. Cynthia and her husband Frank were famed for their worldwide involvement with Hackney Horses. Cynthia was a wonderful, long term supporter of the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust, and for many years Cynthia made sets of harness to send out to Gambia. As well as helping the horses and donkeys in The Gambia, this has also inspired the local harness makers to see that they too can really make a difference if they can resource suitable materials. The collection from Cynthia's memorial service has very kindly been donated to the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust.

Cynthia will be greatly missed by many people and animals throughout the world.



THANK YOU—THANK YOU—THANK YOU—THANK YOU—THANK YOU!

Lack of space prevents us from naming all the people who have helped us so much in so many ways, we are always extremely grateful for any help we receive, but here are a few who we would like to mention, including the donors of the wonderful raffle prizes. Thank you all so much.



A very Special Thanks to Liz Serinken

We would like to offer a very special thank you to our dedicated webmaster, Liz Serinken. Liz has worked with us almost since the charity began and everything that she has done for us has been on an entirely voluntary basis. Liz is extremely dedicated to our cause and is wonderfully efficient at updating the website whenever needed. Whilst others have come and gone, Liz has continued to work with us and we would be lost without her. Thank you Liz, for all the wonderful hard work you have done for us over what has now become quite a number of years!

Thank You to: Strathclyde University, Glasgow University, The Donkey Sanctuary, The Brooke, Shirley Pugh Foundation, The Jean Sainsbury Animal Welfare Trust, The Animal Protection Trust, Animals Worldwide, The Sylvia Waddilove Foundation, E.M. Ellis Trust, Darren Brown, Linda Jones and family, Anna Pugh, Michael Mallinson, Sue Silk, Ann Varley, Gotherington School, The Bunn Family and Hickstead Ltd., Men in Sheds, Stephanie Gallo, The Gambia Experience, June Waring, Glenn Elliott, Glenda Maclean, Saisons, Bill and Liz Bryce, Cotswold Farm Park, Wrea Green Equitation Centre, Sue Ashton, The Crown Pub, Capel, Dineke of Biels Carriages, The National Stud, Footsteps Eco Lodge, The International wine competition, Garth Armstrong, Kati Lawrence, WVS, The Royal Veterinary College, Helen Whitbread of Deben Valley Equine Vets, Flint and Denbigh Pony Club, Jim and Wendy Richards, Coltsfoot Equestrian, Cwmchwefru Cottages, Sarah Deakes (Gables Farm B and B), Brunning and Price, Tesco, Britvic.

Our very sincere thanks to everyone who continues to support us with our work—we cannot do it without you!

Would You Consider Giving a Monthly Donation?

Times are very difficult for everyone at the moment—we need your help **more than ever** if we are going to survive, so if you can help in any way at all we would be extremely grateful. Regular monthly donations are very valuable to us, as they enable us to budget more easily for future months.

If you would like to organise a monthly donation, please set up a standing order using our bank details:

Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Account No: 19505043

Sort Code: 60-11-17

If you would like any further information about setting up a regular donation, please contact Heather using the details below.

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