

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Fighting Poverty – Feeding Families

Registered Charity No: 1096814

Autumn Newsletter 2015



SO MANY HUNGRY MOUTHS TO FEED

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust has had an amazing year and it has been quite an emotional roller coaster. Thanks to Vets with Horsepower, the Jean Sainsbury Animal Welfare Trust, the Elise Pilkington Charitable Trust, Dr. John Raeside's family and friends and members of the 333 Club, the new centre is approaching completion. Thanks again to Vets with Horsepower we shall also be able to equip it. A truly wonderful medical equipment company called BCF Technology have donated a state of the art digital X ray machine which will enable us to not only take x-rays but also email them to experts abroad! Words simply cannot express just how grateful we are to everyone who has helped and continues to help us.

Due to the West African Ebola outbreak last year which did not affect The Gambia directly but still had dire repercussions for the country, we were unable to attract vets and volunteers. But our Gambian staff put the training they have received from the many volunteer vets who have visited in the past, to good use and achieved great things. I would like to congratulate them on their achievements and at the same time remind them that there is so much more for us all to learn.

We have held three successful workshops for the Government's paravets and we are very grateful to the Department of Livestock Services for their kind and enthusiastic cooperation. We would also like to give our thanks to the XL Vets, the German charity WTG and the Gambian vets who contributed to the training. Gradually the knowledge given is spreading through the participants who are posted throughout the country and this is bringing better health care for working animals.

All these wonderful events have been tempered by sadness as well, the loss of some good four legged friends who were an important part of our close "Horse and Donkey" family, dogs Poppy, Lulu, Suzie and Rocky, our much loved cat Toubab, and Rhona, a donkey, who was the first lady of GHDT and a very special girl. They were all with us for many years and are sadly missed.

If our new centre can be used as a resource for students from all over the world as well as The Gambia we can hopefully make it sustainable but until then we need all the help we can get to continue our work. Costs are escalating in The Gambia and food for people and animals alike is enormously expensive. You have all been very generous with donating equipment, but our thrill at the donations is in part offset by the fact that we still need to find in excess of £1,000 for each shipment. Salaries, animal feed, medication, fuel and vehicle maintenance all cost money and we need to raise a great deal of money to fund it. Each training workshop costs us about £2,500. Our little team do a wonderful job but we need all the financial support that we can get. We beg you to dig deep this Christmas, let people know about our work, make sure you fill in a gift aid form with your donation, consider us in your wills and either hold a fund raising event or support one that is being held in your area if you can. There are many horses and donkeys like Horace (pictured above) who need your help.

We wish you a happy & peaceful Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.



Happy Christmas from Horace !

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ANIMAL SPONSORSHIP AND GIFTS AT GHDT

You can sponsor one of our horses or donkeys for one year at The Gambia Horses and Donkey Trust and in doing so you will be helping toward the running costs of our centre. Meaningful Gifts can be purchased for differing amounts, please visit our website pages on "How to Help".



Phoenix, who was badly burnt in a stable fire is available to sponsor- £24



Trypanosomiasis Treatment Kit - £12.00



One cart of hay - £18

A SAD GOODBYE TO RHONA

Last May was one of the saddest times for all of us at Horse and Donkey as we had to say goodbye to our beautiful donkey, Rhona, who had been with us for the last ten years, Rhona originally came to the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust in a terrible state having been very badly beaten. She made an excellent recovery under the care of GHDT and clearly realised that she had landed on her feet. Rhona was a wonderful demonstration donkey at our workshops and went to the local schools to help in our education programmes. She was a wonderful mother and loved interacting with people, which is surprising given that she had been very badly treated in her previous life. She was a very empathetic character and was regarded with great affection by all the volunteers and staff. She has been buried in the garden at Horse and Donkey where she belongs. She is greatly missed by all.



Scenes from daily life at The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust, no two days are ever the same !

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How Your Support Saves Little Lives

We have recently seen many more sickly and orphan foals arriving at The Trust including little Smudge who came to us with his mother as a very poorly little soul. He had a raging infection and a problem with urinating via his umbilicus. After round the clock attention he had rallied so well from all of his ailments that we were shocked to find one morning poor little Smudge had gone completely blind seemingly overnight. We reported it to Professor Derek Knottenbelt, from The Vets with Horsepower team, who responded immediately with tests for our staff to carry out and a request for photos of his eyes. There is an app that can be downloaded onto a smart phone that makes it almost like an ophthalmoscope. You can use it to take pictures of the inside of the eye and then email those pictures to an expert. The wonders of modern technology ! We followed Professor Knottenbelt's instructions for treatment to the letter and hoped against hope that his sight would return. Smudge is now making good progress and his eyesight seems to be back to normal and he is a bouncing cheeky little chap. Your monetary donations make it possible for us to be able to nurse littles ones like Smudge back to health. On behalf of Smudge we would like to thank Professor Knottenbelt for his kind help and you our supporters for making it possible.



Smudge, very poorly at 2 days old



Little Smudge now, making progress and making a friend

POLICE PROGRAMME AND ROAD SAFETY

Our campaign to encourage people to wear High Viz clothing, has been well supported by the Gambian police. We have been honoured to be invited to participate in their radio programmes on road safety for cart drivers. This has naturally led to talks on animal welfare as sick animals are not as alert in heavy traffic and contribute to the high accident rate. We are very grateful to the Police Force for allowing us the opportunity to "spread the word" We are always collecting High Viz equipment to ship out to The Gambia. Please contact ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk if you have any that you would like to donate.



Would you like one of our fundraising packs to help you to come up with an exciting fundraising idea, please email ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk. Thank you !

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Christmas is coming !

Christmas is only just around the corner, so please remember to purchase your cards from us. We have a fantastic selection at £3.50 per pack of 5 cards, so if you would like to order some, please visit our website.

This year we have a special card featuring our very own Horace as the star ! Our wish is for every horse and donkey in The Gambia to have an environment free from hunger, disease and pain and your contributions and donations help us to achieve this. Thank you for your support.



WORKSHOPS

We have held three training workshops this year for Government Livestock Assistants. Two were purely for equines and production animals and we are extremely grateful to XL vets for providing the trainers.

We partnered the third with a German charity called WTG who provided veterinary and animal welfare training mainly for dogs, together with training the few Gambian vets we have in new techniques of spaying and neutering dogs. We took the opportunity to vaccinate several hundred dogs against rabies and the balance of the vaccine went to the Government Veterinary centre at Abuko for the staff there to use. Our own teams attended to the many horses and donkeys that were brought in for treatment at the workshop. We would like to thank Gambicats & Sue Stage for lending us their holding crates.

We are very grateful to WTG for their cooperation and we look forward to welcoming them again for the next workshop in January. We feel that by working in cooperation with other organisations so much more can be achieved.

The Government Livestock Assistants do a wonderful job in difficult circumstances. Most of the training they receive is geared towards production animals and by giving them more equine veterinary and welfare skills, we hope to improve the lives of the animals all over the country. This will achieve what we set out to do, namely to give Gambians the skills to address the needs of their people and animals.



ONE VERY LUCKY DONKEY

Our team were recently called by the police to attend a road traffic accident. They found a female donkey with a young foal at foot with a severe injury on her rump where she had been hit by a mammy wagon. There were no visiting vets at that time and the staff decided between themselves that for the sake of the foal they must at least try to treat rather than euthanise her.

It took a great deal of time to get the wound clean and they had doubts about whether the blood supply would be compromised, but they persevered and we are all delighted with the result. The police were wonderful and requested the driver to cover the veterinary costs. This little donkey was subsequently named Lucky by the staff!



Lucky as she was found



The wound healing well



Lucky going home with her very grateful owner

MAKASUTU—THE NEW CENTRE

The building work continues at Makasutu and the end is now in sight. We hope to have it ready and functioning by early next year. We have had a number of setbacks which have delayed completion but we are now on the home straight. We hope it will become a resource for veterinary students from all over the world as well as helping the working animals of The Gambia and their owners.



The new Administrative & Accommodation block at Makasutu

TEXT DONATIONS

We have a new and very simple method for people donating to the GHDT! Just send a text that says GHDT01, followed by the amount you would like to donate, to 70070 - for example text GHDT01 £2 to 70070. The GHDT gets the whole £2, nothing is taken from it by anyone, and if you also agree to GiftAid it, the GHDT get extra too! Please help to spread the word about this new easy way to donate - let's see how much we can make!



Spread the message around your office or work place and see if you can get other people involved too! We all waste a pound or two throughout the day, so how about spending it on helping horses and donkeys in The Gambia today instead? Thank you so much !

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VOLUNTEER VETS—YOU SHOULD BE VERY PROUD

We would like to say a very big thank you to all the volunteer vets who have donated their time, knowledge, equipment and medicines for their generosity and dedication to working equines. Thanks to the training they have received from you, our Gambian staff have achieved some outstanding successes as with Lucky featured on page 5. Many of you wonder if you have managed to achieve anything meaningful in your short stays. We can categorically assure you that you have made a big difference and the many outstanding treatment successes that our staff have achieved is down to the training they received from you. Thank you all very much!

PROJECT DONKEYS

A few years ago we started a programme where donors could purchase a donkey for a needy family. The new carers had to receive training in donkey care and management, build it a shelter and promise never to abuse it otherwise the donkey would be withdrawn and reallocated elsewhere.

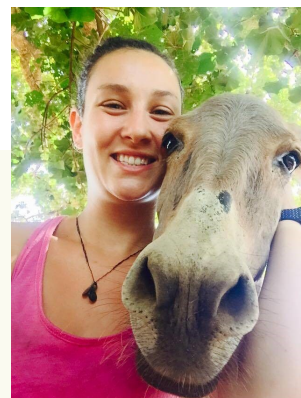
Unfortunately due to the dreaded neurological disease claiming so many of our project donkeys we stopped seeking for donors as we found it too hard to tell them their donkey had died. One of the conditions that we made with the new guardians was that the first foal of every project donkey must return to GHDT for training and reallocating. We hadn't anticipated how productive our original donkeys would be when given good care and we are now on the third and fourth generation of donkeys. If your donkey died, you will be glad to know that your legacy lives on as is the case of grandbaby Easterton who was donated from Milngavie in Scotland.



A recent grandbaby of an original project donkey called Easterton

WELCOME HANNAH !

We would like to give a warm welcome to Hannah Sadgrove who is joining us as our administrative volunteer all the way from New Zealand. Our volunteers need to be strong, capable, calm and have a lot of common sense. In her first few weeks Hannah has had emergencies of every kind to deal with and has met all the challenges head on. Thank you Hannah, we hope you will enjoy the work as much as we all enjoy having you.



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DIGITAL X-RAY SYSTEM DONATED FOR THE NEW CENTRE

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust are delighted to announce that veterinary diagnostic imaging specialists BCF Technology have donated a brand new Carestream Vita Flex Digital X-Ray system and generator for use in our new centre being built in a more urban area of The Gambia. The Vets with Horsepower team rode motorcycles around the British Isles and Ireland, delivering high quality lectures and raising money for The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust. BCF hosted the talks to vets and horse owners at their new global headquarters in Bellshill, near Glasgow.

Professor Derek Knottenbelt said, "We are absolutely astounded by the amazingly kind donation of a digital X-ray system and generator. Never in my wildest dreams did I think we would have such a system that could be used at the equine hospital in the Gambia. BCF have supported us every year since we started Horse Power CPD back in 2010. We are completely blown away by such a generous donation. It will make a real difference to the lives of those we are trying to support and the care of their working animals – thank you BCF."

Gavin Mitchell, BCF Managing Director commented, "Derek and his team are a true inspiration and we are proud to support them. They are a very special bunch who make a major difference to the lives of many. We are absolutely delighted to be able to help this year by hosting and supporting one of the events. We knew Derek wanted to kit out the equine hospital in Banjul, Gambia that they help build last year. We really wanted to support Derek and his team and knew the X-ray system would be ideal."



Pictured right, The Vets with Horsepower Team 2015 being presented with the X-ray machine

Sambel Kunda Clinic

Many of you will know that in addition to GHDT we run two sister charities, Stella's School Scheme, <http://www.sssgambia.co.uk> to provide education for children who would be otherwise unable to afford it, and The Sambel Kunda Village Clinic <http://www.sambelkundaclinic.org> which is a primary health care facility for the people of the remote community in which we work.

The clinic provides treatments and health education and we work with the Government health services to provide ante and postnatal and vaccination clinics for the mothers in our community. GHDT has the only vehicles in the area, so our vehicles double as ambulances if patients need to be referred to hospital. We need money for maintenance and to develop the clinic facilities, but we only need £300 per month to maintain the service we provide, (that is just 60 people giving us £5 per month) but we are desperately short of funds and we will have to close the clinic within the next year if we are unable to drum up more support.



On my recent trip to The Gambia I witnessed two desperately sick people with severe malaria, recover, thanks to the timely intervention of Burra, our nurse practitioner. They would surely have died if they had to take the 3 hour trip on a donkey cart over rough bush roads to the nearest clinic. All life is precious, so if you know of anyone who could help us, perhaps even a corporate sponsor, we would be more than grateful.



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Thank You!

Unfortunately we cannot list everyone that we would like to due to shortage of space but special thanks must go to the following .To everyone who has helped us in anyway, we want to say a big thank you, we deeply appreciate all that you have done for us!

We must especially thank Derek Knottenbelt and the Vets with Horsepower Team as well as the companies who supported them so well, NFU Mutual, Norbrook, Kruise, Zoitis, Intervet, Boehringer Ingelheim, Succeed, Freedom Health, MSD, BCF Technology, Bayer Equine Solutions, Newmarket Equine Vets, Liphook Equine Vets and the many other vets in practice who gave their support, as well as supporters Sue Silk, Katrina Ellis ,Linda and John Willmot and their friends and helpers, Ros and Russell Harris, Shirley Watts, Wendy and Jim Richards, Vicky Miller, Debbie Hinton, Joy Parker, Jeanette Aron, Ann Varley, Hickstead, Sue Ashton, Dena Schwartz and friends, WTG, Elizabeth Bachtaler, Aniwells for their wonderful Filtabac. Finally we must not forget the wonderful volunteers who come to help us. You brighten our days and give the animals in your care so much love and support, we couldn't do it without you.

Thank you, Thank you , Thank you !!!!!



EUROPEAN SADDLES MAISIE

This stunning little lady (pictured right) called Maisie is a great example of someone coming forward to save the life of a little foal. We were very concerned about Maisie's future as her owner had to sell her to pay off a debt. At the time she was far too young to be sold on and we feared she would end up in a downward spiral. We desperately needed funds to purchase Maisie and make sure that she had a good future ahead of her. She was in a poor condition and had a very nervous disposition, European Saddles heard of her plight and very generously donated the £200 for us to purchase her and keep her safe. Our dedicated team have worked hard to gain her trust and she is now in a healthy condition. We are very grateful to European Saddles for stepping up and are always looking for financial assistance to save another " Maisie". We would be glad to hear from any other corporate body that feel they could help us in the future.



Need a scrap car removing from your drive, for FREE? Simply contact Giveacar at www.giveacar.co.uk or on 0207 7364242 to organise your free collection, and your scrap car will be transformed into a cash donation for GHDT!

Follow us on



OUR MISSION

At Gambia Horse and Donkey "Our Mission" is to improve the quality of life of the working equines in The Gambia and the quality of life of the people too. To create an environment where the horses and donkey can live free from pain and suffering. We believe in providing the Gambian people with the skills and knowledge to prevent and solve their own problems, creating a long-term, sustainable solution for the future.

Our promise to you, who donate to help the plight of the working equines in The Gambia, is that every penny goes straight to the welfare of these animals. Heather Armstrong, our Charity Director, works on a voluntary basis. We currently have only one paid part-time member of staff in the UK and the rest of our team are either paid Gambian staff or volunteers.

Please help us achieve our goals and donate generously, help us make a difference to the working equines in one of the poorest countries in West Africa.

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