

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Fighting Poverty – Feeding Families

Registered Charity No: 1096814

Autumn Newsletter 2017



MIGHTY OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW

2017 marks our 15th anniversary and when we founded the charity we never dreamed that in just fifteen years there would be a growing band of Gambian Animal Advocates spreading the Animal Welfare message wherever they go! With the opening of our new centre which was purposely built close to the University of The Gambia and The Gambia College, we have frequent training visits from the students and some are sent to us for a few weeks to gain practical experience. It is wonderful to have vibrant young people with such a thirst for knowledge around us and I think we are learning as much from them as they are from us. The students are taught by

**“The greatness of a nation
and its moral progress can be judged
by the way its animals are treated.”**

Mahatma Gandhi

Dr. Kebba Daffeh who is an inspiring teacher, and our own staff and visiting veterinary volunteers contribute to the curriculum.

September 28th marked World Rabies day and October 4th World Animal Day and the Animal Advocates excelled themselves with another high profile march to mark the occasion. There were more members than ever on this march. They were joined by representatives of almost every other animal linked organisation in The Gambia including The Department of Livestock Services, The Wildlife Department, Livestock Marketing, Livestock Owners Association and the Gambicats charity.

Samba’s Restaurant provided delicious food for 250 people on the march and the students and schoolchildren who participated performed dramas demonstrating a very clear understanding of animal welfare and its issues.



*An inspirational message! Together we can improve Animal Welfare in The Gambia.
Image by Myrthe Oskanp Schreuder*

The World Animal Day march was led by a talented Scout band, *pictured right*, and by the end of the

day all the Scouts were enrolling as Animal Advocates too! It is keeping us busier than ever as more and more people are reporting cases of animals in need. The Animal Advocates are to be congratulated on their initiative and on the great work they are doing.



The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Brewery Arms Cottage, Stane Street, Ockley Surrey RH5 5TH Tel 01306 627568 Email - ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk
www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

GHDT NEWS



Wassadu & Josh

Josh the donkey and Wassadu, the landmine victim, have settled into their new roles as training animals and love to be the centre of attention. It is lovely to see both centres buzzing with activity and to know that these animals are playing their part in educating young Gambians.

Our canine family at Makasutu is growing. Mak the pup has been joined by Fifty who comes from the camp next door but who now spends a lot of time with us. He seems to enjoy being a house dog. One of the new members of staff also brings his dog, Tiger, to work with him. Tiger is a friendly dog and loves the company of the other three dogs

Our Director was recently surprised to hear through the grapevine that a new pup had joined the staff at Makasutu. No one said anything, but her suspicions were aroused when she kept seeing a puppy in the pictures that the staff send her daily. When she questioned them, the staff said that he had just walked in and he seemed very hungry so they fed him, called him Rasta and had him vaccinated against Rabies! The dog food bills go up, but it is good to know that we have a caring, animal loving staff!



Makasutu GHDT dog family



Congratulations to our Director, Heather Armstrong.

We would like to congratulate Heather, our Director, on being awarded Associate membership of The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. This is such an honour for both her and for the charity.

Animals are an important and integral part in Heather's life as is the veterinary profession, so receiving this award is very special indeed. She thanked all the members of the veterinary profession who have been out to volunteer with the Trust and who, in doing so, have left an incredible legacy of knowledge and training in The Gambia.

During the lifetime of the charity three of the vets who have visited and given their help have gone on to become Presidents of The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. Does this suggest that people who share their knowledge so generously and assist with charities go on to great things, or is it perhaps the experience they gain through doing it that gives them the edge?



The Vets with Horsepower team

One of the highlights of our year was that we were given money by Vets with Horsepower to enable us to purchase a horsebox to be used as an ambulance/mobile clinic.

We saw a model that we liked but sadly came to the conclusion that it wouldn't cope with Gambian roads as the chassis was too low. We are now having to think again regarding the model but we hope that the vehicle will be out there and running early in the New Year.

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Brewery Arms Cottage, Stane Street, Ockley Surrey RH5 5TH Tel 01306 627568 Email - ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk
www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

"GIVE A BIT" APPEAL



We recently had a bit appeal on our Facebook page, it went viral and many people commented about it, but very few bits and head collars were sent. This was possibly because everyone thought we would be inundated after such a response! Our second attempt was more successful and several boxes of 4.5" bits and pony and cob head collars have been shipped to The Gambia.

We hope it will arrive in time for the show so that a great many animals can be helped in just one day. We would like to thank everyone who has donated so generously. It will make a great deal of difference to the lucky animals who receive them .

THE SHOW

As we go to press we are busy making preparations for the annual show. This is the first time that the show will be held at the National Showground at Abuko which is close to the capital so we really don't know what to expect! Our show at Sambel grew year on year as word spread, but nowadays we have the advantage of radio, the press and social media.

We have a number of supporters coming out to help us and some of them will also be judging for us. We use the shows as a training tool to encourage people to take better care of their animals and to share management information. The general public enjoy it and learn a lot too so it is a fun way reward the people who take our advice. It is also a means of encouraging those who need a little help. There is nothing like seeing a well cared for animal winning prize money to make people want to emulate it.



Teamwork



A very proud owner



We have many ways of accepting donations:

- ONLINE - Via <https://www.justgiving.com/ghdt> or via the 'Online Donations' tab on our website
- VIA FACEBOOK - Simply click on the 'DONATE' button and follow the instructions
- VIA TEXT - Simply text GHDT01 followed by the amount you would like to donate to 70070 (e.g. GHDT01 £10)
- VIA POST - Simply send an old fashioned cheque to our postal address
- PAYPAL ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Brewery Arms Cottage, Stane Street, Ockley Surrey RH5 5TH Tel 01306 627568 Email - ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk
www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk



A letter from our Director, Heather Armstrong

It has been a challenging but rewarding year for us at GHDT. The staff have taken up the challenges of a lot more people coming for training. We now have the University and College students, regular school visits, students from overseas, our apprentices and on top of this, the Government have also sent staff for training and on "placement" with us.

There have been some real highs followed by dreadful lows this year. The highs have been mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter and include the honour of being made an associate Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, I still cannot quite believe it has happened! Another high was being given money for an equine ambulance by Vets with Horsepower. I have dreamed of having an ambulance for years !

Most of the lows were caused by losing some very old equine friends to suspected equine Herpes Virus and the neurological form of Trypanosomiasis. These animals are so badly missed. I began to question what we were all working for and the staff all became very demoralised by having to stand by and watch the animals in their care going down hill and being unable to do anything about it. We all invest a great deal of time, love and energy in our patients and some, like Mo and Hope, who were orphans, remained with us for many years and were very much part of the GHDT family.

I am pleased to say that The University of Glasgow and in particular, **Dr. David Sutton** and **Lauren Gummery** hope to come to the rescue with more research to try to find a cure. It may take a long time but at least something positive is being done. We are planning to be far more proactive in trying to prevent this disease that has increased dramatically in the last ten years or so. We are looking into efficient tsetse traps and fly repellents so if anyone has any good well tested fly treatments, please do let us know.

We are grateful to the kind people who send us messages thanking us for the work that we do, we simply could not do our work without the help of our supporters. It doesn't matter whether it is a donation of money or a bit of head collar or whether it is your time, voluntary help or fundraising, it all helps us to do what we do and it is we who should be thanking you for enabling us to do the work.

We are now able to treat more animals and train more people but two centres means a much larger financial burden so we need your support now more than ever before. I hope you will see from this newsletter that real progress is being made and I do hope you will continue to give us your support.

A great deal of our work is carried out by volunteers so our administrative costs are kept to a minimum. This means that the help that you give really does have a positive benefit on the animals and their owners.

We welcome visits and we do hope you will come and see for yourselves the impact that your support is having.

With best wishes and many thanks,

Heather

*Our much
loved Hope,
who we lost
this year*



The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Brewery Arms Cottage, Stane Street, Ockley Surrey RH5 5TH Tel 01306 627568 Email - ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

FUNDING NEEDED FOR HAY

One of our biggest expenses each year is purchasing hay. We cannot go to a hay merchant and buy it. We have to go out to each individual farmer and negotiate for his little pile of hay. This takes hours of work for the staff who go out on their motorbikes as each farmer may only grow an acre or two of groundnuts. We then need to hire a small lorry which is capable of travelling cross country in the bush to each little allotment and collect it up. It is a huge expense for us, but if we leave it till later in the year the price goes up as much of it is exported to Senegal. The charity treats more animals year on year and despite our planning we always seem to run short before the new season begins. This year we were having to pay up to £8 per sack in order to bridge the gap before the new harvest began. If you are able to help us by fundraising towards a £100 lorry of hay we would be more than grateful.



Our Apprenticeship Programme

The one gift that you can give to someone that no one can ever take away, is a good education.

The apprenticeship programme has been a great success. We decided to start it because there is such high unemployment and so many young people felt forced to go “the back way” to find a better future for themselves in Europe. With your help we were able to take on ten apprentices, five at each centre. They work with us but receive daily training in all aspects of animal management including cattle, sheep, wildlife and conservation. We hope that at the very least they could go back to their communities and set up a small business as animal health technicians but certainly it will make them more employable. Some of them have already used their knowledge to assist the Government with livestock vaccination programmes. The apprentices work with us and we provide training, daily meals and a small allowance for them to take home each month. Our group of 10 apprentices are becoming very knowledgeable and are very enthusiastic learners. There is some competitiveness between the two groups who alternate between Makasutu and Sambel Kunda. We are pleased to say that one apprentice who had made some poor life choices before coming to us and was sadly lacking in self-confidence, decided to apply for a place at University and was accepted. He now lives at Makasutu and works with us at weekends and evenings but cycles to University each day. There is also the prospect of employment for several of them in the not too distant future, so we are delighted at the success of the venture. If anyone would like to consider sponsoring an apprentice for next year when the new batch begin in April, the cost has risen slightly to £500.

We would like to give our thanks to the people who sponsored these apprentices,. We can assure you that your gesture has had a very beneficial impact on their lives and the knowledge they have gained will serve them and the communities and animals that they serve, well into the future.



One of our apprentices hard at work

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Brewery Arms Cottage, Stane Street, Ockley Surrey RH5 5TH Tel 01306 627568 Email - ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk
www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

A Regular Gift is an invaluable way to help us at the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust. We need to be able to care for sick and injured equines and also our resident horses and donkeys with the knowledge that a donation comes in every month that allows us to plan ahead more effectively. With your help we can continue to forge ahead with future projects such as maintaining our mobile clinics, running two hospitals and the implementation of pioneering and exciting training courses, both to improve the lives of the working equines in The Gambia and to help the young people to find employment. Please consider taking out a Direct Debit if you can. Thank you.



A Christmas tribute to the donkey

Seasonal songs, Christmas readings and Community Carols



Helen Hardwick

Warren Shattles

Philip Robinson

Jules Date

... and our 2 four-legged friends
Smokey and Blue

Donkeys play such an important part of the Christmas story, we invite our supporters in the Surrey /Sussex/London area, to join us at 6.30pm on the 23rd of December at St Mary Magdalene Church, South Holmwood RH5 4JX for a Christmas Tribute to the donkey. It will be a lovely start to Christmas and mulled wine and mince pies will be served. Tickets will be £15 and are available from the GHDT office.



We are very grateful to the very talented singers, Vicki Edmundson and the Reverend Barbara Steadman-Allen for making it all possible.

Langbaba is honoured by his community

Langbaba is the General Manager and Public Relations Officer of **GHDT** and the administrator of our sister charity, **Stella's School Scheme**, in the up country region and has worked with our charities for many years. He has boundless energy, is very hard working and has an ability to make the impossible possible. He appears to know everyone in The Gambia and is constantly greeting long lost friends! He always gives 150% to any task assigned to him. Along with his tireless work for **GHDT** he cares deeply about providing education to those who would normally not be able to have it and has spent hours of his time organising tailors to sew uniforms or engineers to install bore holes and solar power to the schools we support. He was recently given a well deserved award by his community for the support he gives to the youth in sport and community development, so we are very proud of him.



Langbaba receiving his award

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Brewery Arms Cottage, Stane Street, Ockley Surrey RH5 5TH Tel 01306 627568 Email - ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk
www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

We wouldn't be able to achieve so much without the help of our wonderful volunteers and staff, we thought we would share some images of volunteers past and present at work. They relieve suffering, share knowledge and bring so much comfort to the animals in their care



If you wish to receive future newsletters in digital version please email the office.



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
Facebook and
Twitter



The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust
Brewery Arms Cottage, Stane Street, Ockley Surrey RH5 5TH Tel 01306 627568 Email - g PDT@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk
www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU !

As the charity grows, it is very difficult to name individually all the wonderful people and organisations who have helped us but we must of course name Vets with Horsepower who have made such great things happen for us. To the vets and researchers who come out and help to treat the animals and share their knowledge, the singers who will give their talents at our Christmas Tribute to the donkey concert, Smokey and Blue the donkeys and their owner Vicki, who so valiantly fundraise for us, the enthusiastic Gambian Animal Advocates who are so hungry for knowledge and share the animal welfare message, the many very humble donkey and horse owners who so kindly give our staff little gifts, perhaps of green tea or by sharing their meal to show their appreciation, all the kind and generous folk who responded to our bit and head collar appeal, the children who send their pocket money and the people who send donations large or small of money or equipment, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Without you we could not do it so we regard each and every one of you as a part of "Team Horse and Donkey".

YOU are making great things happen!



MEANINGFUL GIFTS THAT REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Do you need a gift for a friend or family member but don't know what to get?! Why don't you consider our unique gifts and help to relieve suffering and poverty at the same time!



Bit—£5



Worming treatment—£5



Swingle tree—£10



Pain relief kit—£10



Trypanosomiasis Kit— £12



Harness—£15



One cart of hay - £22



Education team—£25



Cart or plough—£75



Mobile clinic—£60

The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Brewery Arms Cottage, Stane Street, Ockley Surrey RH5 5TH Tel 01306 627568 Email - ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk
www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk