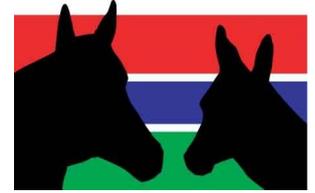


# The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Fighting Poverty – Feeding Families

Registered Charity No: 1096814

Spring Newsletter 2015



## In this edition:

- Horace's health scare
- Heather Armstrong reflects
- Veterinary workshop at GHDT



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[www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk](http://www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk)



## GHDT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

The building work at our new centre in Maksutu is now well under way and we are absolutely delighted to hear that once again Vets with Horsepower are fundraising for us towards the new centre. This centre will be far more than just another equine rescue centre, we hope it will also be a resource for training both Gambian and overseas vets as well as providing support for the animals in the coastal region of The Gambia and their owners.

Our new centre will consist of an equine hospital, stabling for 25 in-patients, offices, a visitor centre and a lecture room together with accommodation for volunteers, students and staff. Vets who have been out to help us in The Gambia and are familiar with what is needed have contributed to the design of the hospital. Staff for the new centre are being trained at Sambel Kunda so that when we open at the end of November we will be able to function immediately. We are desperately seeking funding for both a Gambian and an expatriate vet to oversee the running of the facility and to train students. Future volunteers will be fortunate to have access to the wonderful Maksutu cultural forest and base camp which is adjacent to the new centre.

We will still be welcoming both veterinary and administration volunteers for both centres, so if anyone has an interest in working in Africa perhaps you would consider working with us.



The beginnings of the new centre



The new stable block being built

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# VETs with HORSEPOWER ride again for GHDT

We feel unbelievably privileged to report that the amazing VETS WITH HORSEPOWER TEAM will again ride this year in support of The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust. This year their tour will cover The British Isles and Ireland and proceeds will help to equip our new centre being built in Makasutu. Please help raise funds for us by supporting their efforts through their fundraising page [www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/VwHP2015](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/VwHP2015) .

We are so grateful for their continued support and cannot thank them enough for enabling us to change the lives of so many of the working equines in The Gambia.



## Veterinary Workshop at GHDT

In February we held a very successful three day Continuing Professional Development workshop for 33 delegates from the Government Department of Livestock Services at our centre. We would like to say a very big thank you to Claire Hodgson and Imogen Burrowes from XL VETS in UK who came out to teach at this veterinary workshop. They were excellent trainers. We would also like to thank Dr Kebba Daffeh who is a gifted speaker, covering the subjects of emerging and re-emerging zoonotic diseases.

Not only did Claire and Imogen do a fantastic job of teaching but they also attended the local markets with the mobile clinic and treated hundreds of horses and donkeys performing mini miracles. One animal that we were convinced would die rallied round and made a spectacular recovery under their care. Another perk that came with their visit was that Claire is a superb chef and had been short listed to appear on Masterchef so we ate very well! We hope they will visit again very soon.

Thanks are also due to Louise McDonald and friends who raised funds to purchase stethoscopes, thermometers and pen torches for each of the delegates.



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# Horace suffers a health scare



Horace being scanned

Back in early February we reported some very worrying news that our dear friend Horace had become extremely unwell. Horace came to us in poor condition. The cartilage around the base of his ears has been broken so he has limited movement of his ears, he has most of his tail missing, probably through being attacked by other male donkeys, one of his legs had obviously been broken and healed itself, it is now slightly crooked, he has a ripped lip, a big dent in his forehead and had been fending for himself on the streets and suffering for years. On top of this he is also very old and has tooth problems.

We have seen this old warrior's real character come to the fore and it has been a pleasure to see this sad, tired, "shut down" old creature coming to life, both mentally and physically with the care and attention that he receives at GHDT. When he became unwell everyone was very concerned, but we were lucky enough to have a wonderful vet, Juliette Edmonds from Tyrrells Equine Clinic, visiting us at the time and she performed every examination possible to find out the cause of his illness. It seems that the cause of his problems were his kidneys. For the time being he seems to be on the mend, let us hope that this brave old man is given some more time to enjoy his life at GHDT. **\*\*STOP PRESS\*\*** We have just heard that Horace is now feeling so well he is chasing the ladies !

## Naughty, noisy Neil !

He may be small in stature but one of the biggest characters at Gambia Horse and Donkey is Neil. He has his own paddock with wire imported from UK to keep him in and other animals out as he is not very keen on sheep, goats and dogs. He has in the past got us into big trouble by injuring trespassing ruminants but he adores attention and hugs and although he drags Ngara, our donkey manager, at high speed to and from the paddock when he is actually put to work he is probably the slowest donkey in The Gambia. Having said that he has walked the length of The Gambia pulling a cartload of photographic equipment, a journey of some 970 kilometres on a charity expedition to raise funds for Gardens for Children. He came back in superb condition which just goes to prove that providing donkeys are well cared for, well harnessed and well fed they have ability to cover great distances and work hard.



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](mailto:ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk). Thank you !

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# Our Director, Heather Armstrong reflects on challenging times



The last year has been something of a rollercoaster. On the one hand we had the wonderful support of Vets with Horsepower and the many other individuals who have given support for the new centre at Makasutu and on the other hand we had to contend with a poor rainy season and harvest and the Ebola crisis which meant we were without volunteers for six months and had to cancel some of our planned workshops and our annual show. Despite that, our staff rose to the challenge magnificently and achieved their usual miracles. When times were tough and they needed assistance, an email with pictures of a particular case was sent to the relevant veterinary specialist and advice was given. We are very grateful to all those vets who have not only visited us, but who continue to be on called for emergencies such as these. We are so lucky to have your help.

Now we are looking ahead to what 2015 holds for us. Building of the new centre is well under way and we hope it will be completed by November. In order for our work to be sustainable we must train more Gambian professionals, not only in farriery, dentistry and harness making, but we must also give as much help as we can to help build Gambian veterinary capacity. The new centre is the perfect vehicle to do this as we shall have training facilities and we hope to link with the University and Gambia College so that they use our centre as a resource for their students. We hope to also attract students from overseas who may want to gain knowledge of tropical diseases. Our sincere thanks to XL Vets who have now assisted us by providing trainers for two CPD (Continuing Professional Development) workshops which have been very well received. We have also joined forces with Vets United who not only provide veterinary training, but cover a wider variety of species, they are not strictly horses and donkeys but we are more than happy to let them share our facilities for the sake of animal welfare.

Once again we shall be celebrating World Animal Day and World Rabies Day and will be collaborating with others to raise awareness of the issues involved via radio programmes.

With two centres to run, we will have to double our fundraising to keep it all going. One of the best ways to help us to budget is through regular giving. If you are able to take out a Standing Order for a set sum a month, however large or small, it would be a great help to us. I would like at this point to give my heartfelt thanks to those who already give regularly, some have been doing it since we started the charity and you have really helped to keep us afloat during the troubled times of the recession.

It is very easy to look at the bigger picture and overlook the individual animals that come into our care. To us every individual animal is very important. Mainly, we like to restore them to working condition, many animals die well before old age, but there are a few tough individuals who have worked hard all their lives and just need a little love, food and contentment in their twilight years and we consider it our privilege to be able to do this. They earn their keep as demonstration models at our workshops!

There is a lot going on and a great deal of planning to do and all of it is having a positive impact on animal welfare as well as helping the owners and their families. None of it could have been done without YOUR help, together, we are making good progress. Thank you for your help and support.

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Just a few of the orphan foals we  
have helped recently.



## Kniveton School

We would like to say a very big thank you to Lyn Board and the staff, parents and pupils of Kniveton School in Derbyshire. Lyn and her team have regularly donated funds to buy donkeys, harness and carts for various villages and as a result have brought great benefits to the villages that have received the gifts. They do it through GHDT as they know that the donkeys will be well cared for as they are checked on a monthly basis. The carers come to us for training in management and welfare and the donkeys are provided with harness made and fitted by our staff and carts that have been built to special specifications to ensure that they are better balanced and easier for the animals to operate.

These donkeys bring great benefits to their communities and are used for farming and transporting passengers as well as collecting school supplies from the main roads to the more remote villages.

Perhaps their most important use is in carrying sick people to the nearest clinics which could be many miles away. THANK YOU Kniveton School. It is wonderful to think that young children in UK are bringing such huge benefits to children in need in The Gambia through their fundraising.

If any other schools would like to follow their example and perhaps fundraise for a cart (£175) please contact us for further details.



Donkeys and carts kindly donated by Kniveton School

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# Rhona becomes a grandmother !



Rhona & Stella



Rhona's grandson

Our congratulations go to Rhona, our donkey who is the first lady of GHDT ! Very recently her daughter, Stella, gave birth to a little boy so Rhona is now a granny! Rhona has been living at GHDT for many years after she was badly abused whilst working on a farm. Rhona's shoulders were completely red raw from harness wounds due to an ill-fitting harness, and continuous use on the cart despite her wounds. Rhona was initially seen at one of our mobile clinics, and during this time a BBC Scotland film crew were filming our work in The Gambia. They were absolutely horrified at the terrible state of Rhona and they were glad when she was hospitalised at our centre.

Rhona is the sweetest girl ever, with a huge appetite and she is constantly on a diet! She is a fantastic demonstration donkey and is always used for our workshops, she also visits the local school to help teach the children how to correctly care for their own animals. Many of her offspring have gone out as project donkeys to help farmers who are too poor to purchase a donkey of their own. Rhona was named after the BBC Scotland Sports Presenter Rhona McLeod.

## 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.

**TO DONATE PLEASE CONTACT the address below  
or our website at**

**[www.gambiahorseanddoney.org.uk](http://www.gambiahorseanddoney.org.uk)**

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# Mustapha's Story

## Disability does not mean inability

Mustapha is a remarkable young man who sadly developed hydrocephalus in his early twenties which caused him to lose his sight and threatened his life. Through our sister charity The Sambel Kunda Village Clinic [www.sambelkundaclinic.org](http://www.sambelkundaclinic.org) and some very generous donors, we were able to send him to UK for treatment. Sadly, the surgeon was unable to restore his sight, though Mustapha has been restored to full health otherwise as a result of his surgery. Mustapha came to join the staff at GHDT as we were so impressed at his "can do" attitude when he calmly said "Disability does not mean inability" on learning that his sight could not be restored.

Mustapha is a natural joker and keeps the staff laughing, and they in turn give him any assistance he may need and take him to football matches and other events. His duties include taking care of his horse Gibby, cleaning tack and making fly fringes from old string girths. Recently we received a visit from Heather and Chrissie Ritchie who travelled all the way up to us to provide training for Mustapha. Heather runs a charity called Rug Aid [www.rug-aid.org](http://www.rug-aid.org) and teaches rug making to visually impaired people in The Gambia. Her daughter Chrissie also works as a rehabilitation trainer for the visually impaired and they provided training for him. We are hoping that Mustapha will be able to make beautiful donkey themed rugs before too long so that he can earn some extra income for himself.



## Edrissa's Cart—How ripples of kindness impact lives



Some time ago, there was a devastating fire in the village where we are based. It began quite close to us and caused severe damage to two homes. If it hadn't been for community cooperation and considerable courage on the parts of many people, it could have been a lot worse. One man called Edrissa, who is a particularly hardworking man, lost everything. Little by little he has rebuilt his home, but he has never quite been able to raise sufficient money to buy a new donkey cart.

In UK a kind hearted member of the Vets with Horsepower team wanted to give a gift to someone very special. She donated a GHDT meaningful gift voucher of a cart. This cart was given to Edrissa. He is absolutely delighted and now feels that he can get his life back on track again. It is an incredibly generous gesture to give a gift to a complete stranger. Someone who you are never likely to meet or have the pleasure of seeing the difference that your gift makes to their lives. It is our sincere hope that the people involved in this story will one day meet. If you want to keep the ripples of kindness flowing, please consider giving one of our meaningful gifts, they really can have a profound impact on people's lives.

## Standing Order Forms

If you are able to give a regular monthly donation to help with our general running costs, please contact us for a standing order form. You can do this by email ([ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk](mailto:ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk)) or telephone (01306 627568).

Alternatively, please feel free to download the form from our website, on the 'How You Can Help' page.

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# Thank You!



We would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has helped us in any way, whether it is donations of money, equipment or your precious time. We simply could not do the work that we do without your generous support and we are very grateful to each and every one of you.

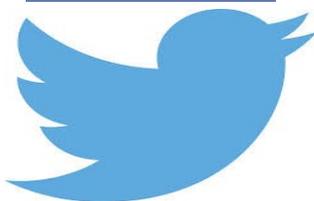
Unfortunately we cannot list everyone that we would like to due to shortage of space but special thanks must go to the following , Professor Derek Knottenbelt and the Vets with Horsepower Team, The Jean Sainsbury Animal Welfare Charity, XL Vets, Wendy and Jim Richards, Jolly Rockers, Madeleine Lawless, Kathy and Barbara Sharman, Sue Ashton, Gill Devlin, Sue Silk, Lyn Board and the staff & pupils of Kniveton Primary School , Kessock Equine Vets, Imogen Burrowes and Claire Hogdson, Julliette Edmonds, Dr Kebba Daffeh, Amber Batson & Priory Vets, Shirley Watts, Jane Lennox, Blissland Harness Makers, Brockham Overseas, Nicky St Lawrence, Peter Pemberton, Alice Noakes Trust, Rachel McCall, J Golding, M Thiemann, Dena Schwartz, Vicki Miller, the Bunn family, Rogerson Charitable Trust, Mrs Lamb, Louise MacDonald and Paula Sells and family.

Heartfelt thanks to NFU Mutual and to everybody who donated at their offices throughout the country, we recently went to collect all the donated equipment from their Head Office. We were overwhelmed by the quantity of equipment that had been donated,



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Follow us on



Don't forget that you can give flowers whilst also giving to us at the same time! Simply go to the Charity Flowers website or call them on 0870 5300600 to order your beautiful bouquet today, and don't forget to mention GHDT!

## GHDT Wish list

**Black stable matting**

**Stables door fixtures and fittings**

**Iodine and hibiscrub**

**PVC fencing ( sounds luxurious but the termites eat our wooden fencing)**

**Electric fencing ( to keep the baboons away)**

**Veterinary diagnostic equipment**

**Microscopes**

**McMasters slides**

**Bits, bits and more bits ( 4—4.5 inches are preferable but no larger than 5 inches)**

**Pony & cob size headcollars**

**Girths ( for making breast harness and breeching)**

**Farriery equipment**

**Reflective jackets & vests**

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