



Donkey Serenade

NEWSBRAYER • SANCTUARY HAPPYNINGS • DONKEY BRAYINGS

Our best ever Christmas

Our latest Christmas Pageant was the best ever! We are getting better and better at it each year if we don't say so ourselves.

Over the past couple of years we've added much more content, including stories, actors and costumes, so that it now runs for around 1 hour.

People came from near and far to attend and everyone was in awe of this year's presentation. The weather helped as it rained all around us on the night but not a drop fell on the Sanctuary farm. A miracle!

And this year we even had a real new born baby playing the part of Jesus! Mark and Di Bennett's new grand-daughter, Maisie Grace Bennett, was perfect on the night and received a certificate recognising her contribution and congratulating her on her first public performance.

(Di, Committee member & Events Co-ordinator, is our head 'donkey slave').



Our faithful reproduction...

Donkeys—the coming and goings

More donkeys and a miniature pony have arrived through surrender and rescues. Many have been placed in foster care and other applications are being processed at the moment.

Some time ago, Brady Halls (Channel 9, ACA) did a story on 'guard donkeys' which resulted in many hobby-farmers, with pet sheep or small commercial flocks, contacting us for donkeys to protect their flocks.

Several were approved as carers and a few donkeys were allocated. They're now working successfully in their new roles (and doubling as much admired and appreciated family pets).

A number of donkey loving carers in-waiting were also allocated compatible donkeys. And we're happy to report that these foster homes are very happy with their donkeys. Best of all, these lucky donkeys are thriving on the one-on-one personal attention. This is soooooo good for everyone.

Cavalier: Valentine donkey, 2009

"Cavalier" was one of three donkeys surrendered to GSDS, arriving with his very best friend Rocky.

One of the lucky ones, Cavalier had been very much loved and cared for by his owner. But being only partly-trained meant he came with 'attitude'.

However, following several lessons in discipline, he is of a much nicer disposition; even becoming one of our reliable Celebrity-donkeys which are taken on various outings.

And he's also one used for the welcoming of bus groups to the Sanctuary farm. Cavalier has quickly become a valued member of the GSDS and enjoys meeting people and showing them his farm.



I'm proud of my new home and I love giving our visitors a big 'donkey welcome'.

LAST CHANCE
FOR TICKETS

Donkeyno

Donkeyno is drawn on Easter Sunday and we have great prizes so please take a few tickets to be in with a chance—only \$1 each.

If you're keen to help us in some way, please help sell some of them on our behalf. Send us a self-addressed envelope and we'll mail you the tickets, a receipt and all the information re our superb prizes.

Thanks; we're feeling the recession-pinch so please contact Jo-Anne as your support will be doubly appreciated.



Heavenly, luxury-spa accommodation at Carriageway and a life-like companion: just two of our marvellous prizes.

YOU'RE VERY WELCOME TO JOIN US

Come one, come all

Our hosting of coach/bus groups has always been popular with many repeat visitors. Some of the groups have been 'mystery tours'; the passengers had no idea of their destination. However, it's always a surprise as they drive in and see all the donkeys.

Coming by car, why not join us? Please call Jo-Anne to arrange coming during one of bus group days. You will see much more and be present for the talk. And we have the video's going on these days as well as an exceptional BBQ lunch. Bus group days are interesting and enjoyable.

Your visit will be complete with catered picnic lunch and it helps our very heavy workload to have visitors at the same time.

Contact Jo-Anne to learn more: 02 4996 5596



Saving on postage and office work

As of 2009, those with email will now receive Serenade and any other information electronically. We'll email you when it's available on our website: www.donkeyrescue.com.au

Receipts Everyone with email will receive receipts towards mid-year, all in one envelope and ready for tax time. This is excepting for cash we receive as we'll return a receipt immediately to confirm delivery.

Direct Credit Please ensure you include your name in the deposit details. Our account number is: 1022 1064, the BSB is: 062 813.

Not always a bed of roses

On the not-so-good side of running the Sanctuary we have had some recent sadness — beginning with, but not confined to, the loss of Alice.

We would like to thank those who sent donations to cover the cost of Alice's funeral. Receiving almost \$300 extra than the cost of the funeral, we were able to help pay off the feed account. Bless you all for your generosity; Alice deserved the best and she received it both before and after her death.

Unfortunately, we've also been saddened by more deaths amongst our older donkeys—losing 5 very old donkeys in the last 6 months.

Two (Donna and Judie) both suffered strokes (we do wonder if the heat had something to do with it, we will never know). Three other oldies (Jasper, Heidi and Ruth) died peacefully in their sleep.

During a conversation with long time supporter, Shirley Brine (SA), we touched on the problems and expense caused when a donkey dies.

Shirley asked how we dispose of the bodies. I explained that usually we bury them (Alice was, and will be, the only one cremated).

Burying them is a big effort and it requires a backhoe. But it can be a real challenge getting one quickly and, of course, they don't come cheap. Unfortunately, the Sanctuary couldn't afford to buy such equipment.

To our delight, Shirley has bought the Sanctuary a big strong tractor which will help with burials (heaven forbid) but also much much more.

The old donkeys are extra special and losing several within a short period of time has certainly knocked us about and left us with an empty feeling.

We do miss them as they give a special something when being loved and cuddled; it's a privilege to care for them.

Shirley's outstanding generosity means Alex is now awaiting delivery. This machine will be invaluable for a lot of our work. Thank you Shirley.

The fire season has put much demand on him (he's a volunteer fireman in his spare time!) and he was recently maintaining a day and night vigil, at the Sanctuary. Luckily, we have the on-site caravan for times like this.

Irish Wwoofer discovers Australian ant-hill

The scene: 3 of our Wwoofers in the paddock picking up you-know-what.

Irish Wwoofer rakes an odd looking mound to level it out. Said Wwoofer then launches into an Irish jig, hastily followed by a Highland-fling, and then some amazing somersaulting and disrobing, all whilst running round the paddock!

German and Japanese Wwoofers stare on in wondrous disbelief.

Sighting her I first think 'snake', but soon realised she's being attacked by ants as she streaks past us towards the house (Japanese Wwoofer, in heels, hurriedly in-tow, retrieving discarded clothes and shoes while de-anting them).

After applying much 'stop-itch' cream to Irish Wwoofer, she vowed to never flatten out an ant-hill again.



Wwoofers Mahu (Japanese), Dennis (German) and Kate (Irish) demonstrate what not to do with ant-hills.

Every donkey should have his/her day...

Serving with our air force during the war, Bruce Burchfield was stationed at Lake Trasimeno, Italy. It was here he and his colleagues were 'adopted' by a very special donkey which they named Dennis.

Sometime later, their Commanding Officer had received notification that King George VI was to visit the base. This created a storm of activity for days as preparations were made for this momentous occasion.

With the arrival of their royal visitor, a guard of honour was formed and the King began inspecting his men.

But as the inspection proceeded the hosts were gripped with silent panic as Dennis suddenly arrived, taking his position at end of their line.

The King continued speaking to some of the troops, nodding to others and proceeded down the line until arriving at Dennis.

He looked at Dennis and Dennis looked back at him.

Turning to the C.O., the King enquired "Is he your mascot"?

The C.O. replied: "He's a regular."

"Does he have a name?" queried the King.

"Yes Sir, his name is Dennis" answered the C.O.

With a twinkle in his eye, the King said "Would you like me to knight him?"

Taken aback, the C.O. replied, "Yes Sir".

The King strolled over to a willow tree and returned with a branch. Stripping it clean, he tapped the donkey on the shoulders: "Sir Dennis".

When the guard of honour was dismissed, the crew raced back to their quarters to tell those not in the parade: "Guess what, the King has just knighted bloody Dennis!".

Probus talks, spreading the word

We were invited to give talks at both the Chatswood Probus Club and also on January 8, the Asquith Mixed Probus Club. To our delight, these were very large groups with the Asquith talk being packed and offering standing room only!

It was great to see so many people interested in learning about the work we do with the donkeys.

I presented a talk on the Sanctuary and Di Bennett provided a superb recounting of Simpson and his Donkey at Gallipoli. There were a few tearful eyes in the audience by the time she finished.

There was great interest and many questions followed.

We had a lovely time with many friendly faces and I am sure we'll get a bus group for one of our popular picnic days.



Sandy has the room interested: Chatswood Probus



Full house and full attention: Asquith

Our wonderful young helpers

Breanna Gray from Kurri Kurri organised for a group of her fellow school students to raise money for our sanctuary; buying some much needed headstalls. A very special thanks from us to Breanna for her thoughtful work and valuable gift.

Jodie Kolt's girls. Shamefully, I omitted thanking Taylah and Kalesha for all their work during International Day of the Donkey.

Working tirelessly all day with face painting and decorating, they went even further with some of the children getting snakes and lizards painted on their legs!

Thank you so much girls. Your hard work and support added hugely to a very successful day.

Nine year old Mary Pilkinton heard about the Donkey Sanctuary and was keen to help us.

So, with her 9th birthday coming up, she asked her friends to donate money to our sanctuary—rather than buying her a gift!

The very popular Mary had 16 friends turn up and they raised a grand \$300 for the donkeys. What a fantastic effort Mary.

Everyone got a Certificate of Appreciation from the donkeys. And it's lovely that young ones want to get involved with helping the donkeys.



We wish everyone a very happy and quiet Easter. Please reflect on the tireless work of donkeys in the days of Jesus — their being used for almost everything. We must honour their service both in history and the present JO-ANNE
Please note...the donkeys have had their summer-break and the sanctuary re-opened for visitors on March 17, St Patricks Day.

A little donkey goes a long, long way

Many people are aware that I milk jenny donkeys.

Recently, my dairy donkeys went dry so I put out a plea for a milking jenny among owners and breeders. Fortunately, Faye Brown (central Queensland) offered me one of her wet jennies: "Sasha" a proven performer.

I contacted Raoul and Rebecca McKay (our wonderful horse transport company "Equine Answers Horse Transport") asking for help with travel from central Qld to GSDS. They responded immediately and Rebecca, an experienced horsewoman, offered to milk Sasha during the trip to keep it flowing during the long trip.

Arrangements were made to collect Sasha from central Queensland and deliver her to Equine Answers Horse Transport's base on the coast. Rebecca then settled Sasha for a couple of days while milking her 3 times daily.

Due to the heat, Raoul drove down through the night and arrived here at around 1am Tuesday morning. He said he would put Sasha in a stable and not to bother getting up, he didn't want to disturb our sleep.

I replied that I'd get up to help him and, in any case, I knew the dogs would wake me up when the truck arrived.

However, instead of driving down the drive way, Raoul quietly parked that enormous truck (as big as the Queen Mary) at the gate and walked Sasha

down the drive, placing her in the prepared stable. Not even the dogs heard him!

The following morning saw the wwoofers make a fuss of Sasha, petting and brushing her and ensuring she was very comfortable with hay, special mix and carrots.

Sasha's such a lovely little jenny that everyone falls in love with her and even Rebecca (Equine Answers) wanted to keep her!

Many thanks to Faye Brown (Sunrise Donkeys) and Raoul and Rebecca (Equine Answers Horse Transport) for the very special care and handling during Sasha's long trip to GSDS.

If you're transporting anywhere in Australia, please consider using Equine Answers Horse Transport, they handle their charges with kid gloves: phone 0412 493 577 or 0412 075 688.



Behind the scenes but not out of sight

Recently, we replaced the office's main computer. Ingrid is now setting up a new database and putting a lot of time into it making it simple for me.

I'm also receiving other office help with Maura Skipsey coming in most Sundays. She's revamping our tight space to make it more efficient while also handling some of the emailing. Hugely appreciated Maura.

Rachel Sullivan, of Asquith, organises much of our media PR, press releases and other promotional work, including chasing up fund raising ideas. We are so grateful to her for the effort and her ideas. Thank you Rachel.

Susan Strachan has taken on the preparation of our "Serenade Extra" while also devoting time to reworking our flyers. Many thanks Susan.

Lynne Taylor is now preparing Prayers for People and Pets (PPP) for me. She also helps with Media PR and press releases. Thank you Lynne.

Richard Lever, is our good all-rounder. Along with PR, he pitches in when needed. Our talented electronics wiz, he's been the IDD clown, Santa, a leprauchau and sooooo many other characters. He delivers always.

Last, but not least, is our Committee but I will have to tell you about them and the volunteers and Wwoofers in another issue.

DONATIONS? Please deposit directly to our account: Account no. 1022 1064 BSB: 062 813 or you can use our website: www.donkeyrescue.org.au

Welfare Officers & Help Lines

Hunter and Myall Lakes
Sandy Kokas 02 4996 5596
April O'Neill 02 4981 8605

Sydney Metropolitan
Geoffrey Farrance 02 4572 3472

Central Coast NSW
Don Ash 02 4390 3437
GSDS Equine dentist:
Sharlene Goodworth 0412 199 008

Lake Macquarie
Peggy Seipel 02 4977 2781

Mid-north Coast NSW
Sister Helen 02 6562 2313

Far-north Coast NSW
Margaret Bennett 02 6649 4648

Port Macquarie
Fran Barratt 02 6584 9497

Merriwa Veterinary Hospital
Dr Ted and Jennifer Finnie 6548 5171

Hawkesbury District NSW
Tracy Porter 0408 411 966

*Tamworth, Armidale, Manilla, Barraba,
Gunnedah districts*
Jill Howard 0427 441 899

Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Bowral districts
Margaret Barlow 02 4256 2683

*Queensland South,
Eastern Wide Bay, Burnett*
Michelle Stevens 0417 953 855

*Gympie and surrounding areas,
Queensland*
Sue Clark 07 5484 9255

Townsville area and Queensland Far North
Vicki Stuart, Mick Small 07 4788 8995

Tasmania
Gayelene Harrower 03 6229 3326

Contact Us

GSDS Inc please write to us c/- Post Office Clarence Town
NSW 2321 Australia

All enquiries to Secretary Jo-Anne Kokas OAM, Founder
Tel: +61 (0)2 4996 5596
Fax: +61(0)2 4996 5545
email: admin@donkeyrescue.com.au

Management Committee Geoffrey Farrance *President*
Peggy Seipel *Deputy President*
Jo-Anne Kokas *Secretary, Editor*
Di Bennett *Events Co-ordinator*
April Sevenoaks *Minutes Secretary*
Sharlene Goodworth
Craig Sevenoaks

Donkey Manager, Inspector Alexander (Sandy) Kokas
Tel: +61 (0)2 4996 5596
Fax: +61(0)2 4996 5545
email: admin@donkeyrescue.com.au

Administration Ingrid M Mogensen *Bookkeeper*
Paul Jacques *Auditor (Brookvale)*
JP Grogan *LLP*

Patron Jo-Anne Kokas OAM
Life Members Alex Kokas

Honorary Life Member Dr Elizabeth Svendsen *MBE*
The Donkey Sanctuary, Devon, UK

