

Who is calling the shots?

Our foster-carers are an indispensable part of the Sanctuary's work so we often visit them to see if they need any help or advice (it's also a chance to determine if the donkeys are getting the better of them!).

On numerous occasions we've discovered that the 'darling' donkeys have trained their devoted human-carers very well indeed.

One recent visit revealed another delight: this carer had readied the donkeys to be transported back to the hospital for dental work. But we had to laugh at seeing them with their 'goggles' on!

Our sweet carer had put their headstalls on back-to-front! (And yes, we've since demonstrated the correct procedure).

A happy ending...

Our long-time carers Steve and Jane MacDonald (Kempsey area) were devastated when their GSDS-fostered donkey of 25 years passed away.

So they eagerly visited us when I reported having an absolute darling that they should meet. "Susannah" desperately needed some one-on-one love as she had lost her sister some time ago and had not made another special friend.

Steve and Jane fell in love with her and she settled in immediately. This marvellous family is whole again.



Susannah and Steve (he's on the right).



'Jenny Mills' and 'Biddy Wimble' ready for transporting (well, nearly). Amazingly, these two have a stable with a 'sun room'—our foster-carers are invaluable. Florian (German Wwoofer) assists David (equine dentist) with Jenny Mills. Ann secures them in the float.

Cars and coaches—you help us help the donkeys

Coach groups continue to visit, us with many bus companies often doing repeat visits—with people who have been before!

Many tours are 'mystery' ones we see the passengers' faces break into smiles upon seeing the donkeys. And private cars are very welcome to visit when we are hosting a bus group. You'll see much more, including our

presentations and enjoy one of our exceptional BBQ lunches; please call Jo-Anne for details.

Why not organise your own bus visit?

Just get your local coach company to call us for information: 02 4996 5596



Welfare Officers & Help Lines

Dr John Kohnke BVSc RDA

Call: 0419 995 626 for free advice on feeding and health care of donkeys.

Hunter and Myall Lakes
Craig & April Sevenoaks 02 4996 4757
April O'Neill 02 4981 8605

Sydney Metropolitan
Geoffrey Farrance 02 4572 3472

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

Merrima 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

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'Donkey Serenade': Jo-Anne Kokas OAM, Editor/Writer © GSDS Inc., 2010

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Donkey Serenade

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NEWSBRAYER • SANCTUARY HAPPYNINGS • DONKEY BRAYINGS

What frightened Celia?

It has taken nearly 12 months since Celia's arrival for us to handle her! We don't know what trauma she's suffered but she has been harder to win over than a donkey straight from the wild.

Ann Daniel* (Head Groom) had decided to make Celia her special project and I have been teaching her how to handle difficult and nervous donkeys. We practice natural equine handling (or natural horsemanship) as we don't rush or force any animal into submission.

Getting Celia's teeth fixed was a recent major victory—we could see they hadn't been attended to in her 20 years! Surprisingly, she took it well and holds no grudge (not even to our vet Stephen who did the needling).

Ann's gentle nature and endless patience has achieved much with Celia, and I now feel confident leaving her in charge of the important Sanctuary work, including settling in new donkeys with their different problems; both medical and psychological—see photo bottom of next page.

I'm always on hand if anything tricky crops up, but Ann's genuine love for the donkeys (and the various other GSDS animals) is proving invaluable.

*Ann has been a volunteer for several years and her skills include overseeing the kitchen during our superb 'Christmas in July' events and our weekly bus groups. Aside from being Head Groom and an outstanding cook, she is also (according to Di Bennett) our 'head donkey slave'.

Vale Sheree

We are still shocked with the tragic loss of Sheree Edlington who recently suffered a second (and this time fatal) stroke—at only 42!

A former caretaker at GSDS Farm, Sheree loved the donkeys and used her skills in 'natural horsemanship' to great advantage with them.

In accordance with her wishes, we held a service for Sheree at the Sanctuary and placed her ashes in the Garden of St Francis. We also ensured that her favourite donkey and horse were in attendance.



Christmas in July

Join us for masses of food, fun and some donkey-foolery at our famed Christmas in July celebration. You'll delight in the games and mixing with our other supporters while feasting on some homestyle country cooking.

You'll be amongst friends whether you come as part of a family, a group or on your own. This is one of our most popular events so book your seat now, call Jo-Anne on (02) 4996 5596 (and you'll be helping the donkeys).



We're really struggling,
please help.

Many of our fantastic supporters are finding it harder to make ends meet and their financial support has dropped off alarmingly.

And while we scrutinise every dollar spent, the expense of keeping about 114 donkeys on the farm is becoming ever more difficult. We waste nothing and recycle everything but, without significant fund-raising, our future looks bleak indeed.

I apologise for having to bring such a woeful tone to Serenade but we need help now—any size donation will help us continue to rescue and rehabilitate the donkeys.

Please see overleaf for an indication of what running the Sanctuary costs.

Jo-Anne Kokas, Secretary and Founder



Tough times—urgent help needed

2009 proved a very slim year for donations to GSDS and 2010 continues this dangerous trend. While we remain committed to providing for the donkeys' daily needs, we can't continue without urgent help from you and our other all-important supporters.

To give you an idea of the funds needed here's some of the work we do and the costs we face.

On arrival a donkey is:

- microchipped, de-wormed, deloused... \$150+ each
- bathed and treated for any injuries
- given a health-check, often resulting in a vet's visit
- seen by the farrier (some need weekly attention for months at \$33 per visit)
- inspected for dental problems, \$120 plus any extended treatments
- checked for need of chiropractic help—\$120 per visit
- assessed for special dietary needs to counter abuse or ill-health
- readied for on-going healing (swabs, dressings, medicines, injections...)

And additionally, we must cover farm expenses, including: fuel, machinery repairs, maintenance of fences and yards, electricity and wages for two part-time workers.

Our fund-raising events have not bought in anywhere the amounts needed

DonKeyno failed to even cover the value of the prizes; Christmas catalogue sales were very disappointing; and the television and other publicity brought in little interest and even less donations.

Open days Despite everyone's efforts, our '09 International Day of the Donkey (IDD) and Christmas Pageant days saw attendance figures plummet. We always receive a lot of praise for these gala events but they need to be restored to previous ticket-sales for us to be able to afford to host them.

Thoughts warmly welcomed Aside from donations we are always grateful for ideas as to what will promote the Sanctuary and replenish its resources. Please don't hesitate to contact us.

Do try to join us for our special events (Int. Day of the Donkey and Christmas in July). You might ask your local vet if they would host a donations-box (and material explaining our organisation) or sell fund-raising chocolates—please contact Jo-Anne to discuss possibilities. And we would love you to make an appointment to visit us and see how well your donations are used.

We have been saving donkeys for over 20 years but we need your support to keep going:

Tax deductible donations can be made by cash, cheque, money order or bank transfer: The Good Samaritan Donkey Sanctuary, Account 1022 1064, BSB 062 813.

Periodical payments (no matter how small) give us a more secure base and you can use the account information above.



Ongoing frustrations If you have sent an email to me and haven't heard back, I apologise. Unfortunately, we are beset with email hassles that see me often able to receive but not send.

Please call should you not get a speedy response (similarly, our new fax fails to communicate reliably).

All in a day's dental work:

*Top: Stephen (Vet) injecting "Shell-Bell", one of the older jennies.
Middle: Equine dentist David Cooper, Ann and Andrea Brewster (volunteer and vet-nurse) working on one of the Dairy Donkeys; dear old "Biddy" opens wide for the dentist.
Bottom: Ann gently handles a now relaxed and intrigued Celia.*



Now, this won't hurt a bit...

Equine dental work continues with a number of donkeys as money permits.

It is a time-consuming and expensive procedure, particularly when so many donkeys require a vet to sedate them before the dentist can work on them.

Various aged-donkeys also need to be transported from their foster homes to the Sanctuary hospital as some need extensive dental work, followed by close observation to ensure there are no post-op problems (photos below).

Our latest round of dental work saw all donkeys safely returned to their pining carers (we're blessed in having such dedicated people minding these special donkeys).



Total Field Days and beyond

This is a big annual event. We have a good position, near the horse-demonstrating pavilion, and the donkeys get a great deal of attention.

GSDS donkeys were also on display at the farmyard tent and our tireless volunteers ushered the public over to our stand for information on the management of donkeys.

Easter was not as busy as usual, with no engagements for Palm Sunday but Anzac Day saw us at Clarence Town's dawn service. It went beautifully.

We have continued presenting our 'talks' in the Sydney-Newcastle area and raised interest in visiting us from a few bus-groups.



Terry Daniel (GSDS Committee member + Ann's husband) with Lesley (Dutch Wwoofer) presenting the donkeys to the assembled arena audience.

Charlie to the rescue

Charlie Irwin has answered our need for a crush. He's built it to our specifications and it will be installed shortly. This will be an invaluable addition when we are dealing with untrained—or abused—donkeys.

Many thanks to Charlie and also to WSPA for their wonderful contribution (photos in our next edition).

Generating a lot of good feeling

Due to ill health, Anthony Merlino has recently had to surrender his short-eared, bushy tailed donkeys to GSDS. Graciously, he also donated two life-saving generators. We are so grateful to him—they've long been on our 'wish list'. And Anthony has also given us some much needed fence posts.

If you can help by sponsoring the upkeep of these beautiful ponies, please contact Jo-Anne.



Anthony's wonderful ponies have quickly settled in to life with us.

Grass roots support

We suffered a lot of storm damage in June, the lower paddocks being hit hard again with erosion of the top soil. Fortunately, Alex and his trusty tractor 'Shirley' managed to reclaim much of the soil and grass runners.

We will have to protect the re-growth by fencing off the lower sections of the bottom paddocks. This will let the grass develop strong roots and make it flood tolerant (Anthony's posts will be a god-send).

Please remember that you can sponsor a paddock—or a garden or tree—at GSDS. It's critical support and it is also a chance to be part of this great animal welfare organisation in a very practical way.

And we always welcome hearing from anyone who longs for the farm life—willing workers are our lifeblood.



Natasha and Kate hanging around with other celebrities in the Hall of Fame.

One of the stars at Randwick Race Course, the Merrick & Rosso show and our high-achiever at the Australian National Dressage Championships... Natasha is a standout with her celebrity appearances.

All of this work, and her many other Sanctuary duties, has prompted us to select her as our Donkey Star for 2010.

Natasha was thrust into the limelight last year as an extra at the Randwick race course where she assisted Nikki and Kate (2 of our older Celebrity donkeys) with the Merrick and Rosso 20/20 cricket sketch.

Performing flawlessly, she was then requested to do a live sketch ("Bring your donkey to work day") at the Foxtel studios. Once gain she performed beautifully. In fact, her performance was so good that she and Kate have

their photograph hanging on the Hall of Fame wall, along side various actors, prime ministers, and outstanding sports celebrities.

Next up: the Double Dan Natural Horsemanship team requested a PR-donkey to take to the Australian Dressage Championships in Sydney. Natasha was our automatic selection.

Her performance was brilliant (see last issue of Serenade) and she received high praise and admiration, along with a good deal of interest in donkeys. (disappointingly, this didn't translate into any monetary support).

Natasha has worked tirelessly and created a lot of interest in the Sanctuary's work: please see Serenade Extra for her sponsorship form.