

## EEYORE NEWS April 2002

Hello from all the donkeys! Thank you for adopting one of us last year. We had a good year, but it was a difficult one for our people.

The year 2001 started very well with a large number of visitors coming to see us during February half-term holiday and then suddenly on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> there were no children to take on rides and no one to feed us carrots. Our people looked very worried and were talking all the time about something called Foot and Mouth Disease. They told us it could not hurt us, but that it could be very bad for our friends the goats, sheep and pigs. We did not have anymore visitors for about seven weeks. The sheep had to be put up at the very top of the Park and the goats and pigs had to be fenced off, so that they could not be fed carrots or be petted by visitors. We were luckier: we started getting carrots again!

Annie the sheep, who was hand reared and thinks she is some sort of dog, was not at all happy at being shut away with the rest of the sheep. She sulked for months and has only just forgiven our people and allowed them to pet her once again. She is much happier now that she can sneak into the shop and help herself to carrots from the crate.

Gertie the saddle back pig went to visit the boar at Liskeard at the beginning of February. She was due to return the weekend that Foot and Mouth started, but movement restrictions meant that she was stuck there for more than six months. Unfortunately the stress caused her to lose her piglets, but she was very well looked after by the farmer and came back looking fat and healthy.

We had to say goodbye to Holly the oldest donkey in February this year. Her eye sight had got so much worse, that she could no longer wander the Park, as she had done without getting lost. She had also lost nearly all her teeth and could hardly eat and was just fading away. We all, donkeys and people, miss her very much, but the Café was named after her and her picture is on the wall. She had a very long life (45 years) and a very happy last ten years with us.

In the middle of the summer a man living nearby came to see our people in despair. He was moving to live in France and because of foot and mouth he could not take his two pet rare breed soay sheep with him. He needed a new home for them urgently or they would have to be put down, but needed a licence to move them. He got the licence the day before he left for France and they came to live at the Park. They are much smaller than our other sheep and as they are dark chocolate brown in colour have been named Galaxy and Mars.

Arkle has once more been out and about representing the Park. He went with Happy to Liskeard in August for the Children's Play Day, to Tavistock for

Dickensian Evening with Colleen in December and to carry Mary in a nativity play at a church in Plymouth just before Christmas.

Copper & Karina have also been out on trips to Callington Gala Day on 14<sup>th</sup> July and to Trago Mills at Christmas

Many of you, who have adopted one of us before, will remember from the last newsletter that Poppy, who had come to live with us from Bodmin Moor, was we all hoped expecting a foal in the spring. Our people do not know quite what happened, whether she lost it the previous winter in the far field or whether it was a phantom pregnancy, but no baby arrived.

The Donkey Park has entered the computer age and you will now find all about us on our Web Site: [www.donkeyparks.com](http://www.donkeyparks.com)

We did not see nearly as many visitors last year as we usually do, they stayed away because of FMD, which made things very difficult for our people, because they still had to feed all twenty-six of us and pay our vet bills and the farrier to trim our feet. The one good thing that came out of a bad year was that the Park was awarded a small, recovery from foot and mouth grant, which helped to pay for the conversion of an old pick-up truck into a rather smart donkey box, so that we can now go on outings in a comfortable box instead of borrowed trailers. If you live in the area you might see us going by one day. There are big pictures of Grizelda, Roy, Nelson, Georgina and Hugh on the outside.

Father Christmas came back once more to visit us (he likes it so much here). This time he said he was too busy to have a holiday like he did last time, so he set up his workshop and finished making his toys right up till Christmas Eve! Lots of children had a donkey ride to the workshop and then went in to tell Santa what they would like for Christmas.

We all hope to see you again this year. All the other animals and our people have asked us to say a big big thank you for all your support.

Love and a very loud eeyore