

TAMAR DONKEY SANCTUARY

AT THE TAMAR VALLEY DONKEY PARK

Newsletter November 2011

Charity No 1138221



On the spot reporter Sasha

Hello from the Donkeys, as you may know **Colleen** has always dictated our yearly newsletter but as she is now getting on in years (just like she would say about Old David) we decided that Sasha, who is always so vocal, should do it this time.

Hi I'm **Sasha** I was born at Sorley Tunnel (now closed) a farm park near Kingsbridge in Devon on 25th May 1999. The Children of Chernobyl who were over here on a respite holiday gave me my name. The Children of Chernobyl Network still bring children over today and they are given a free day out at the Donkey Park each year, so I still keep in touch with them.

Mature David (I don't like to call him "old") collected me in December 2000 and took me to some paddocks just up the hill from the Donkey Park to be a companion to a very old donkey named **Tilly** who belonged to Sue, who lived next to the paddocks. I was with **Tilly** there until January 2008 when Tamsin persuaded Sue that it would be best for us to be on the Park so that Tamsin would be able to do some intensive treatment on **Tilly's** feet for her. We knew all about the park and the donkeys, before we walked down to the park, as we communicated by very loud eeyores down the hill. **Tilly** and I settled in with all the other donkeys very well but by the summer after so much treatment the vet said **Tilly** was not getting any better, so I said a very sad goodbye. The other donkeys especially **Mary** took care of me and we are together as much as we can be. Tamsin has had to get up in the night to bring me in from the top field to be with **Mary** to stop me eeyoring when I have been left out with the boys by mistake!

After last years newsletter went out Tamsin, one of our people, took a phone call from a lady who said that she had read in the newsletter about us needing a replacement donkey box. Brenda the lady asked how much we could get one for and very generously sent us a cheque which was enough to pay for three quarters of the cost of an old but serviceable box.

In early summer a local farmer and his herdsman called to ask if we could take in a lamb that had become a pet rather than part of their flock because of her poor sight. Next day they arrived with **Maisie** who was put in Mature David and Julia's front garden with **Mars** and **Jess**. I am sure they will not object to me saying that they both left with tears in their eyes. **Maisie** has settled in very well, the vet says she is almost totally blind but she has now learnt to find her way around the garden with no problems and has bonded very well with **Mars** and **Jess**.

Lily the miniature Shetland pony came to us in the summer when her owner had to go and find a full time job so did not have the time to look after her properly. **Lily** had unfortunately been bred too small so does not have her knee and hip joints properly developed. This makes her look a bit like a pig when she runs or trots, she is very sweet and has settled in well with **Minty-Moo** and **Mini-Moo**.



Colleen mentioned credit crunch in her last newsletter and we still keep hearing these two words plus recession. What we hear is that the number of visitors this year has been a few more than last year, but nowhere near as many as before the recession. We also hear the visitors are spending less in the café and shop, so there is less money coming in than last year. Our people had hoped by now to have done some fundraising activities through our charity but due to them being poorly it is now planned for next year. The cost of our hay and straw is still going up as well as all the other costs the park has. So we all want to say a really **big** thank you for all your support.

You may have seen on our Facebook page that we said a very sad goodbye to **Oliver** the sheep with the big horns known as **Ollie**. If you spoke to him he always replied with a baa. His arthritis just got too bad and he had difficulty walking. We also said goodbye to **Nobby** the goat and **Freda** the large white goat who had been with us since 2000 and was at least 15 years old.

Before we started opening daily at Easter all the children's outdoor play was upgraded and moved to in front of the Donkey Drop-In play barn and a fence was put up between it and the boys paddock to stop us donkeys getting down the park. It means that **Grizelda** can now join **Colleen** as our roaming greeters, as before the fence was put up **Grizelda** would run down the park through the woods, drop down onto the road and trot along the road to a field of lush grass she particularly likes. The donkey walkway inside the barn was removed and replaced by a carpeted pedal tractor area. This was done in part to lessen the dust in the barn and knowing that some fairly draconian "advisory" rules (not laws) were coming in regarding touching animals. You will now possibly find that some places like us will not let you touch animals, it is so sad. **Annie** our "dogsheep" just disregards any new rules and takes advantage of any visitor, pushes her way into the barn to get to the office for a rest and to eat some shredded paper or the grass in the outdoor play area she likes so much. Mature David jokes that she will get him locked up by the authorities but **Annie** is **Annie!**

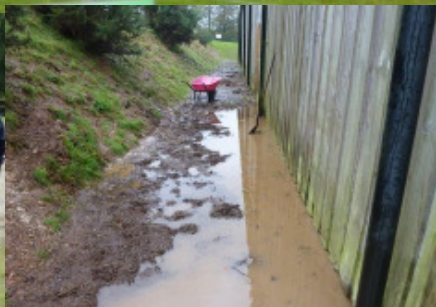
Our donkey box has been put to good use; we call it Brenda after the lady who provided most of the money to buy it. **Colleen** is already booked for nativities; carol services and fundraising visits to shopping centres. The box will also be used to pick up the new carpet for the tractor area in the play barn, that was unfortunately flooded on the first day of half term holiday in October a few weeks ago, which you can read about on our "news page" at www.donkeypark.com

Us donkeys thought that little green men were arriving in space ships when we saw two big round things fly across the park, but it was only the two small trampolines that took to the air on the same wet and windy night that the barn got flooded.

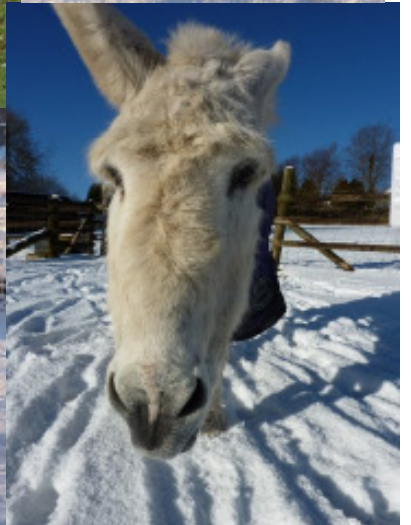
Since we got our charity status our people will be able to claim back "gift aid" on the donations you send to our charity. Our people hope this will be a great help in giving us extra funding during this long recession.

During the last year us donkeys (28) have all been doing well and only had the vet out for routine things like "dentals" and who likes the dentist! On the other hand our people have not had such a good year as just a year ago (Nov/Dec 2010) Tamsin found a breast lump, Julia lost the sight in her good eye and mature David lost his brother all in a few days. Tamsin had a major operation a few days after Christmas and then 6 months of chemotherapy followed by radiation treatment. Julia had surgery for a macular hole in February. More information is on the "news page" at www.donkeypark.com. Us donkeys have given them lots of nudges and more affection to get them through and they would like to thank all those who have been thinking of and praying for them. Thankfully they are on their way to recovery.

I have been asked to say how proud everyone is of Bethany (age 9) who has coped extremely well with having her mother Tamsin seriously ill. In the summer she did the Race for Life in Plymouth as she said " for my mummy". Bethany will hopefully be the next generation to look after us donkeys and you will see a couple of pictures of her with her horse Fizz. All the staff wore **pink** that day and used a **pink** wheelbarrow for work even **Colleen** had a **pink** scarf.



**Tamar Donkey Sanctuary
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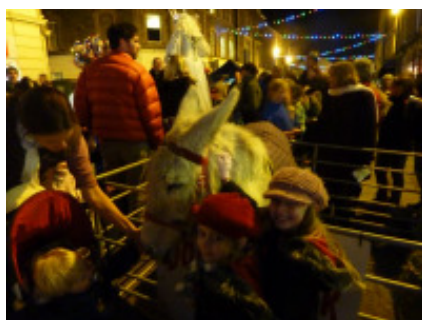


**Www.donkeypark.com info@donkeypark.com
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Well let's end on a high note. We heard our people talking the other day that we may be starting donkey rides again next year, as us youngsters have passed our tests to do rides. Its also nice to see Tamsin bouncy again, Julia happier with her sight being almost back to normal and finally Mature David will be locked in the Grotto for December so that all the children can come and visit Father Christmas at the Donkey Park.

Love from all the Donkeys with a Big Big eeyore

PS Well Christmas is on the way as **Colleen** went off at a trot to get into her donkey box to attend the annual Dickensian Evening in Tavistock on 25th November. **Colleen** says she had a great time with hundreds of people around and lots of people putting coins into the collecting buckets to help pay for our hay and straw.



A note from the Editor

We have had a couple of visits from the "public protection" department of the council who really seem to want people not to touch animals. They want us to run "hot" water across the park to the far side so as soon as someone has made a fuss of the "boys" in their field, they wash their hands straight away instead of walking back to the toilet block a few yards away. The donkeys have asked if they should insist that visitors wash their hands before they touch them and maybe provide a certificate of proof! Two donkeys are normally in the play barn for petting and grooming, but the authorities may insist that no donkeys are allowed in there, because on the other side of the barn (on the far side of 2 barrier walls) visitors can sit down and eat. You may find that "Farm Parks" in your area may not allow you as much contact with their animals as you have had in the past. I do know that some have substituted real animals for "plastic" ones to satisfy authorities. If the occasion arises please do voice your comments.