

# Tamar

# Donkey Sanctuary

At the Tamar Valley Donkey Park

**Newsletter October 2016**

Charity No 1138221

Well doesn't time go quickly, it's 2 years since I was able to corner **Old David** to dictate this newsletter to him since my last, maybe it's because I am becoming an older donkey and I hear time goes faster the older you get! Our sanctuary is now in its 27th year and I have been here 17 years. You know some of us have been here since 1989 and are getting very old so as well as getting new friends I have lost some old ones to, I will tell you about them later.

**Brenda** our green donkey box has done us great service since it was purchased by funds donated by a lady called **Brenda** several years ago. **Brenda** the box has taken donkeys out to many events to raise funds for our sanctuary as well as to special need young and old for donkey interaction. We have collected some of our new friends in her along with donated hay etc. **Brenda** unfortunately failed her MOT big time and was past economical repair for our sanctuary to undertake. We now have a new to us (older than **Brenda**) box called Ruby because she is red. As our sanctuary funds are limited, **Ruby** was bought by young **David** (the husband of our sanctuary manager **Tamsin**) and will be shared with taking his daughter **Bethany** to events on her horses and our donkeys out and about. This is a good arrangement as Bethany's events are normally at different times to our requirements.



**easyfundraising.org.uk** is a great way to raise money for charities like ours. When shopping online you can go via the easyfundraising website and choose your online shop.

You don't pay anything extra, but the stores make a donation to us. You will find us listed as **Tamar Donkey Sanctuary**.

Us donkeys have had 5 new long eared friends join us. At Easter this year **Bronte** and **Lacy** were in urgent need of a home, as their elderly owner had had a stroke, our vet who was also his vet immediately brought them to us.

Last October **Dotty**, **Saffy** and **Betsy** came from a farm just over the river

Tamar in Devon. They had been on the farm for a number of years with a couple of different owners, on the last change of ownership the new landowners tried to look after them, not very successfully, for about a year but then asked if they could join us and were transported here in **Brenda**.

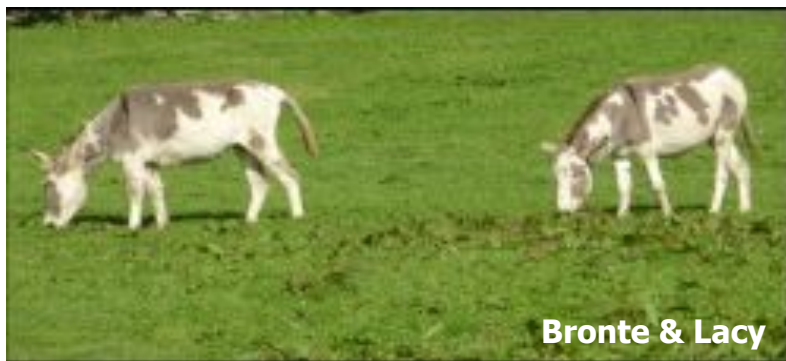
We have also been joined by 4 goats and 2 sheep. **Sam**, **Simon** and **Sparky** who are Anglo Nubian goats were born to a milking herd but were no good for milking! The farmer phoned Tamsin and asked if she would take them in. They are some of the cheekiest goats you could come across. **Pugh** a young Pygmy goat came from a lady who had many goats, however **Pugh** kept jumping over fences and getting into next door gardens and eating their runner beans!

**Skye** the sheep was dropped off by a local farmer whose ewe had had too many lambs. **Skye** has grown into a very pushy sheep and lives in **Old D's** garden with **Mars**, **Jess** and **Minty**. In May this year we took in **Minty** a Greyface Dartmoor sheep who had lost her companion, she is settling in well with the others in **Old D's** garden.

We have been out and about at many events and been asked to more, but it is very difficult for our helpers to agree to all requests, as the Park is also open for visitors daily during the summer. The first outing for **Ruby** was to the Saltash Regatta with **Jacko**.

We are all chomping through £300 worth of hay and straw every 3 weeks as well as having our feet trimmed every 8 weeks at an approximate cost of £400 and our equine dentist visits every 6 months.

So you see it's not cheap to keep us in the manner we expect and don't ask **Julia** about the VET bills!



Bronte & Lacy



For those who have supported us for many (donkeys) years, just to let you know that **Tamsin** got the 5 years all clear after her breast cancer and us donkeys and our human family would like to thank you all for your support and prayers during that time.

Our local visitors will probably have read in the local press about the vandalism that happened in the woods in March 2016. The old aviary where the ducks now live had its doors ripped off and windows smashed and the fences of the pig enclosure were damaged. We were overwhelmed by the response from our supporters with offers of help and donations. This has not only allowed us to put right the damage in the woods, but also refurbish some other parts of the sanctuary, including turning the area around old donkey station into a paddock to allow donkeys to graze at the bottom of the park. The added bonus of this is that some of us can be seen from the car park.

**I would like to thank again on behalf of all the donkeys and staff those who messaged on Face book and donated.**



We had two visits this year from **Freddy** the

Holidays. **Freddy** is the mascot for Killigarth Manor Holiday Park. **Grizelda** (now our oldest donkey) and **Colleen** had visited Killigarth Manor in August 2014 to publicise our sanctuary to their holiday makers. The entertainments team at Killigarth read about the vandalism and decided to hold a fundraising event at their holiday park for us over the Easter weekend. Freddy's first visit to our sanctuary was to film him with us donkeys as well as shots of him going down the drop slide, to put on screens around Killigarth Manor. **Freddy** returned for his second visit a few weeks later with a "large" cheque for our sanctuary of £240. We are again so grateful to Freddy and the team at Killigarth Manor.

August Bank Holiday Sunday **Jacko** our stallion went for the day to Killigarth Manor to promote our sanctuary to their visitors. He had a lovely



**Fox** from John Fowler

Well **Old D** says we are an Old Donkey Home as we have lost some of our dear friends from the herd this last year or so, **Colleen, Gemma, Happy, Poppy, Dolly** and **Kiltie**.

**Colleen** (40+yrs) was amongst the first 14 donkeys rescued from Eire in 1989 when the sanctuary first opened. She was full of character, when she was part of the donkey riding team she would undo the lead ropes

of the other donkeys and let them off around the park. **Colleen** was called "grumpy" by most of the young helpers but to **Old D** she was "his girl". **Old D** and **Colleen** had a bond and she would go anywhere with him, she would go in and out of churches, up and down steps and even a lift! **Colleen** loved going out at Christmas as she knew she would get mince pies and the orange and apple from the mulled wine.



**Colleen**



**Gemma**

**Gemma** (32 years) arrived at the Donkey Park in 1989, her past history was unknown, but when she arrived she looked rather fat and shortly afterwards had a foal.

**Poppy** (25 years) came to the Park from Bodmin Moor in December 1999, she suffered from a condition called COPD (like human asthma), which was managed through soaking her hay and living in as dust free environment as possible.



**Poppy First & Cup  
Yealampton Show 2006**



**Happy**

**Happy** (29 years) came from a sheep farm because he had a habit of chasing the sheep! We taught him to give rides until he retired, which kept him busy and out of trouble.

**Happy** had for many years been treated for a liver problem, which led to heart failure and **Poppy** had too few teeth left for her to eat. A sad decision had to be made and they were euthanised together, as they had been sharing the same paddock for a long time. They were left overnight in the paddock at the bottom of **Old D's** garden so the rest of the herd could enter and pay their respects

and say goodbye. **Old D** sat with a glass of red in hand on a tree stump with his cat **Spotty Dotty** at the bottom of his garden watching them come in to **Poppy** and **Happy**. They all eventually came some slower than others but all of them stayed around until it went dark, they then returned to the main top field. I understand that **Old D** felt quite drained, but uplifted that the sanctuary had given them a good life to the end.



**Dolly** (28 years) who only came to us a few years ago with her daughter **Daphne** developed a growth on her hock, which could not be cured. Since losing her mother **Daphne** is a very different donkey and just loves roaming free with our visitors. We believe that **Daphne** knew her mother had a problem and had been very protective of her.



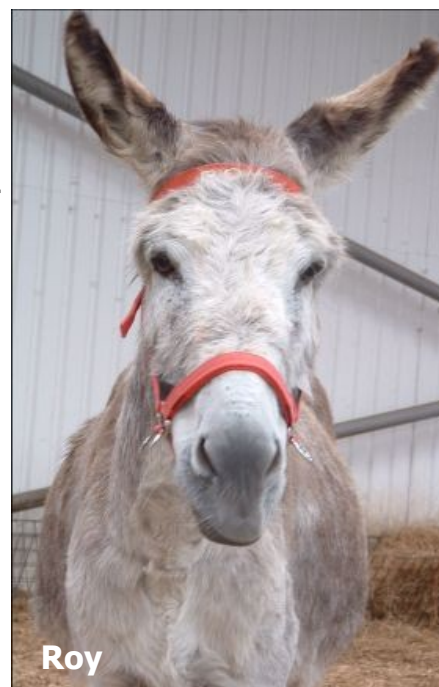
**Kiltie** (30 years) had been bred to work in the peat fields in Ireland, but was too small and therefore her future was uncertain, so she came to live at the Donkey Park in 1990.

Just as **Old D** was laying out this newsletter my friend **Roy** was not himself so the Vet was called. He was treated for colic and given medication including

morphine. **Tamsin** stayed up most of the night with him with the Vet calling again. In the morning he was no better so the Vet euthanised him. The Vet said he had an impacted Cecum.

Our herd of Pigmy Goats are ageing and as a sanctuary we are not into breeding them, we have lost **Benji**, **Charlie** and **Harvey** this year and they are missed greatly.

**Popeye** the Kune Kune pig's arthritis became so bad we had to say a fond farewell to him. **Daisy** his partner has settled down to single lifestyle and talks to **Charlie** and **Percy** through the fencing.



In the last newsletter I told you that I kept hearing **Old D** going on about a "**Gove**" effect well it's not stopped! **Julia** tells me he has been one of the many in tourism who have had meetings and correspondence regarding it. **Old D** has written to not only the **Prime Minister** but many others on the affect it has had on the South West economy. One study showed that Devon & Cornwall lost £87 million in one year due to the "**Gove**" effect and that many businesses are closing up or drastically changing direction. Us donkeys have noticed that we do not see any school age children now weekdays in term time, only mainly mature visitors with dogs as we are "dog friendly".



**Old D** has insisted I add that "**Tourism is not against education**".



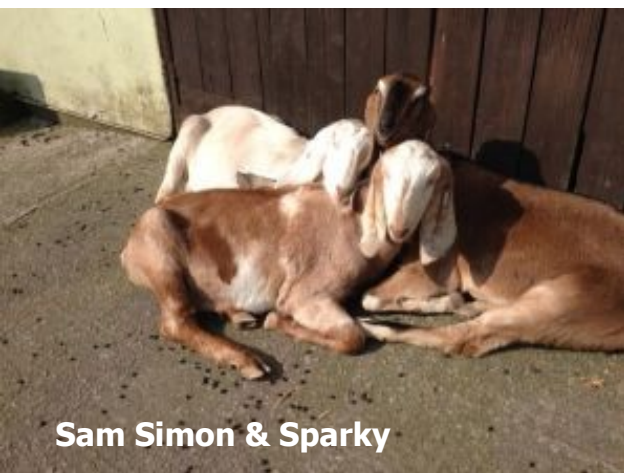
Our **Muffin** the Mule ride is a hit with the little ones after its renovation by a retired electrical engineer from Whitchurch.

**Muffin** had spent his first 40 years giving rides on Herne Bay Pier and was then stored in a barn, all its mechanism had seized up due to the sea air.



We would like to thank **Richard** for his hard work getting **Muffin** going again and painting him so beautifully.

**Jacko** and some of the boys spent the summer in a new paddock down by the car park. The fencing for this paddock was made possible by the generous donations following the vandalism. **Jacko** had taken a fancy to one of our new residents (**Bronty** or **Lacy**) and needed to be moved as he had tried to get over the fence but got caught up! The vet visited to check him out but each time she put her rubber glove on to check his "bits" he sat down, as if to say you are not going there! He is fine now.



Many different medications as well as treatments are carried out by our animal care staff to treat us donkeys and other rescued animals. This year we seem to have had the vet out to x-ray a number of times which is very expensive but necessary.

Sam Simon & Sparky



One of our cooks got married this year and asked if it was possible to hire the Donkey Drop-In for their reception.



She preferred to pay the park and the money go to the welfare of us donkeys than a function room. After some thought it was decided it was worth a try to see if it

worked and could possibly be done again to raise funds to help the upkeep of us donkeys and the other rescued animals.

It was very successful and their guest enjoyed themselves very much. The only down side **Old D** said was he was hoovering till 2am and again on the Saturday morning putting things back in place from 7.30 am so the park could open at 10!



We have noticed that **Old D** has started looking rough around his face again this year, he stops shaving to grow his beard to be **Santa** in the Grotto at Christmas. Every year he says it will be his last time but come 25th July the birthday of both his Granddaughters **Mollie** (21) & **Bethany** (14) he says OK for another year. He says he does not want to disappoint our faithful regulars, who say he's the best **Father Christmas** ever. **Julia** has been told by Grandmas, some in tears that he was great and they loved the children being told the Christmas

story to learn why we have presents at that time of year.

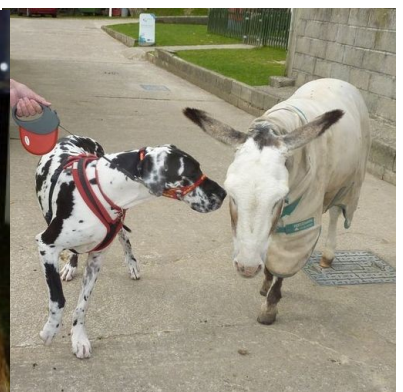


Our charity shop in the Donkey Drop-In has grown from a handful of books to a display of a couple of hundred books and DVDs.



The second-hand goods section has a constant turnover. One of our yearly pass holders has taken it

upon herself to arrange and tidy the display each time she visits for which we are very grateful.

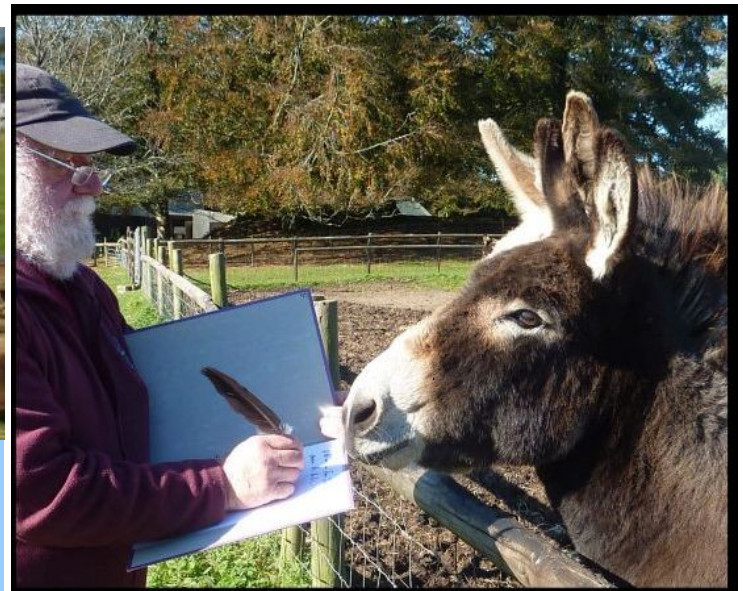




The winter storms caused some damage around the park and even blew a trampoline up onto the Donkey Drop-In roof. **Old D** at 73 years went up a ladder to tie a rope on it to pull it down but it would not budge. It was decided to leave it and see what the following nights wind would do. As hoped the high winds brought it down, but also unfortunately damaged the other trampoline in the play area even though it had been secured down, so two trampolines had to be scrapped and replaced in the spring.



**Jacko** spent a lovely couple of hours in July visiting St Anne's Saltash a residential care home. It brought back many memories for some of the residents of donkeys on the beach when they were young. The caretaker was more than happy for **Jacko** to trim the grass lawn for him.



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Charity No 1138221

Well that's the dictation over for this edition from your on the spot reporter **Sasha**, as you see **Old D** still uses a quill pen that shows how stuck in the past he is!

**A big Eeyore from all the donkeys**