

Donkey Serenade

NEWSLETTER No 15

NOVEMBER 2015

By now you will have heard the rumour - and yes its true!
Santa is coming to Highfield Garden Reserve for an old fashioned Christmas Party with the Donkeys on:

Saturday 12th December 2015 at 2:00pm

Circle the date on your calendar, bring along your friends and neighbours and help us celebrate this festive Christmas time.

Another date for our calendars is **Sunday Feb 8th - Snells Beach Gala**.
Look for the donkeys at this event.



The Bray from Peter Caccia-Birch, Donkey Manager.

I am at the donkey sheds between 8:00 - 9:00am every morning, or phone me 425-6640 or Mob: 021168968. Since the August Newsletter, much activity has been experienced in the donkey herd. Firstly, the two young jacks were castrated in the second week of October. Our Vet, Ross Lynch, assisted by Andrew, swiftly and efficiently performed the operations. Toby and Turvy recovered quickly and without any side effects.

At the end of October, we found grazing for our Ted, on a lifestyle block at Cowan Bay Road, and off he went. At the same time, the three foals were weaned.

They quickly settled down and will soon be run as one herd.

The grass has taken off, which is normal for this time of the year and we may have to restrict grass intake to avoid foot problems.

Tuesday morning is grooming time, thanks to Kirsty, Greta, and Jacqui.

'Aim' also help with the mulching at this time.

The Advisory Committee report that the concrete path in the Hill Paddock has been laid by contractors with a Grant from Auckland Council, through our Local Board. Help is needed to remove the boxing surrounding this path. If you are able to assist with this project please phone Peter CB at the above numbers.



There are many children's books written about donkeys - often they contain messages of value. They are available through local sources and on-line.

Two that I came across recently: 'The Story of Eeyore' who was the naughtiest donkey in the Sanctuary, written by Elisabeth D. Svendsen MBE. The story doesn't talk down to children, instead gives an insight into Sanctuary work along with the life of a donkey. The story is all wrapped round Eeyore, a character donkey who takes advantage of anything and everyone, he gets up to lots of mischief. We can all reminisce about times when we have been naughty, giving adults and children great sharing times recounting naughtiness. A humorous book with good values.

This book is part of a fund raising effort by The Donkey Sanctuary, Sidmouth, UK.

The second book is a N.Z. picture book titled 'The Wonkey Donkey' by Craig Smith and Illustrated by Katz Cowley. As well it contains a music CD. The storyline is a fun idea about being wonkey and will capture children's imagination and could turn into a lovely family fun activity especially when travelling in a car. The pictures are quirky, vibrant and humorous and could lead to lots of having a go drawings.



Grooming at Highfield: the donkeys are looking in great condition thanks to volunteers who regularly give their time and effort to groom them. The helpers are using the new metal brushes donated by a member from our Community. A big THANK YOU everyone, you all help make our Community a special place to live in, and help carry on the dream of Ted & Alison Roberts who gave the land and donkeys to us all.

Please remember to have adults present with children when approaching the donkeys, never forget they can be wild!

And as always, only SMALL treats of silverbeet, carrots and apples for the donkeys - for their health's sake. And keep the gates closed. At this time of the year we have many more visitors and we ask everyone to be vigilant.

A good tip when approaching the donkeys is 'Slow down your body language and move as though you are in thick oil, not always easy for children! The slower, steadier body language will be easier for the donkeys to predict and give them more confidence in what is about to happen'.

On a recent OE, Peter and Val Couling, visited The Donkey Sanctuary at Sidmouth, Devon, UK. and were most impressed with the work being done for donkeys. The 400 acre Sanctuary has 530 volunteers, who work in administration, retail, animal husbandry, and as guides to the more than 200,000 visitors they have each year.

The Sanctuary began when Elisabeth Svendsen, a well known donkey owner and carer was left a legacy from Violet Philpin of 204 donkeys! This changed Elizabeth and her family's life for ever. To accommodate the donkeys they had to sell their home and buy a farm. And so began a new and exciting time for themselves and the donkeys. Dr Svendsen felt that donkeys and mules have helped human beings more than any other animal and yet they have been derided and scorned for many years. And sadly in some parts of the world this is still the case.

The Sanctuary has free admission and parking for everyone. Part of their work is The Slade Centre which offers riding and time with the donkeys for children who have disabilities. "The donkeys bring enjoyment and pleasure into their lives and help with their co-ordination and overall development. The donkeys' interaction with children is amazing. They have a direct calming influence, and are also a focus for a child's affection. Even the most disturbed, agitated or withdrawn child is more relaxed when stroking and talking to the donkeys. A confidence shared with a donkey has no chance of being revealed as it can be with a human!"

After the massive earthquake in Nepal in April, the Sanctuary gave help. Donkeys and mules are so important to the survival of the people in the Himalayas. A number of donkeys were killed, others hurt, while many other donkeys helped with the recovery and rehabilitation process that is still ongoing.

Donkeys are still used today in some war zones. In Afghanistan, where the terrain is rough, many donkeys are used to carry weapons, and it's said that sidewinders are actually fired from their backs.

I urge everyone to google [www.the donkeysanctuary.org.uk](http://www.the-donkeysanctuary.org.uk) and view the goals and the outstanding work being accomplished by this group. Their mission statement notes that there are 'over 50 million donkeys and mules in the world today. Many need care and protection from a life of suffering and neglect, whilst others have a vital role to play in human survival and happiness. They are at the heart of everything we do at the Sanctuary'. The Sanctuary, founded in 1969 and registered as a charity in 1973 by Dr Elisabeth Svendsen, who in 1980 was awarded an MBE for her work. The Sanctuary is now a major charity working for donkeys not only in the UK but throughout the world. Dr Svendsen passed away in 2011, but her work and dream continue on.

(Reference: 'The complete Book of the Donkey', Dr Elisabeth Svendsen MBE)

While I hesitate to liken the Highfield Donkeys and our Society, to the Sidmouth Sanctuary, we do have many similarities ie the gifting, the volunteers and the work. And shows that good people abound the world over and that animals enhance our lives and brighten our days.

Shona Duncan

If you have a contribution or comment for the next newsletter we would appreciate hearing from you.

Highfield Donkey Incorporated Society Committee July, 2015 - June, 2016

President, Peter Couling Ph: 425-5766 Secretary, Helen Whiteley Ph: 425-5516
Treasurer, Ray Harrison Ph: 425-6101 Peter Caccia-Birch Ph: 425-6640
Jenny van der Mespel, Ph: 425-6000 John Montgomerie, Ph: 425-8808
Sheila & Allan Ford, Ph: 425-5061 Lesley Cornwell Ph: 425-4050
Shona Duncan, Ph: 425-6129



Please contact a Committee Member if you have any queries or would like to join us.

Membership Subscriptions for the 2015/2016 year are now due.

We rely entirely on membership fees, donations and legacy gifts to carry on the work for the donkeys at Highfield. A big THANK YOU

Highfield Donkeys Incorporated Society

**Annual Membership Renewal/Application(2015-2016)
\$10 per household**

Post/deliver to:

L. Cornwell, Membership Secretary, Highfield Donkeys Incorporated Society,
483 Mahurangi East Road, Algies Bay 0920, North Auckland, NZ

Enclosing your cheque payable to:

•Highfield Donkeys Incorporated

or

•Direct credit ASB 12-3095 0254516 - 00

(Please ensure you reference the credit with your name and Telephone No.)

Name/s

Contact Address Post Code.....

Telephone.....

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