



# Donkey and Mule Protection Trust NZ

*NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANISATION INCORPORATED #1638328*

**[www.donkey-mule-trust.org.nz](http://www.donkey-mule-trust.org.nz)**

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## **Newsletter No. 8**

**August 2011**

## From your Editor

It is deepest winter with hail, frost, showers and cold temperatures.

Donkeys and mules will need their straw and hay kept up to them to keep their stomachs full and their bodies warm. They should have a shed and also if donkeys are living where there is a good rainfall they also need a cover otherwise they will get wet through to the skin and chilled when they go out to graze.

However, even though it is winter it is also proving to be dangerous for laminitis! Perhaps it can be put down to global warming. I do not know, but winter used to be safe from the danger of laminitis but clearly not any longer. I talked about laminitis in the last newsletter and make no apology of talking about it again as it has such serious ramifications for us if our donkey or mule develops it. But the dangerous conditions for laminitis now seem to be present all year round. These past few weeks I have heard of quite a number of donkeys and small ponies succumbing to laminitis when it has been cold. But I understand that frosted grass is a real danger as the frost kills the grass which under stress becomes very rich in sugar and when eaten by equines it is particularly dangerous for those laminitic prone. Even though the temperatures have been cold our grass has been growing here and the donkeys have been getting far lusher, short, sweet feed than I realised.

There is a very interesting newsletter about donkey care called Kohnkes newsletters to be found at [www.kohnkesown.com](http://www.kohnkesown.com) Have a look; I am sure you will find them most informative.

In the past few months there have been a few Trust donkeys that have moved home for various reasons. The Trust is very aware of the need to ensure that the homes that its donkeys are entrusted to are completely suitable and that they will be well looked after. Trust homes are checked to make sure that the particular needs of each donkey are understood. We are lucky to have such caring people stepping up to take care of our donkeys, some of which are old and fragile.

*Andrea Thomson*

## **Wendy of the Trust**

Wendy moved home in July as her previous career (who was very sad to see her go), went overseas.

Wendy's new home was approved in August and has good fences, pasture, water supply. Her new carers are mature experienced donkey owners and have had donkeys for about 16 years. Wendy's new paddock mate is a donkey gelding Murphy who lives near South Kaipara Heads. Murphy is a friendly, non-aggressive gelding donkey whose previous companion had died.

Wendy had a good trip down to South Kaipara and after she was unloaded lead down the drive and through the trees towards her new paddock.

Wendy trotted the last 30m until she reached Murphy, to whom she was introduced, and after less than five minutes it was decided that there were no problems, so her halter was taken off and she was let go. Wendy and Murphy wandered around the paddock together, checked out the shed and then ignored the humans who were anxiously watching them! They were checked again about half an hour later and they came over together like a well-established pair of friends for a carrot, and both donkeys are happier with their new company.



*Wendy and Murphy*

## **From the Chairman**

Twenty months ago our heavily pregnant jenny broke through an electric fence overnight. Approximately 7 hours after her foal had been born I found it tangled in a wire fence down a steep slope in the bush. Mother refused to feed it, big time! We were of course most unhappy about the situation but had to take personal responsibility for the result. I have to confess that listening to the Moreporks late on a brilliant, moonlit summer night was one of the compensations, as is also the lovely donkey we now could not bear to part with. My point is that taking personal responsibility is an essential part of animal ownership, even if it does cause some real problems at times.

Sometimes I'm finding it a bit difficult to understand people who don't accept that responsibility for their animals! I thought the two went hand in hand. Generally the Trust or Rescue and Rehoming Centres can and do deal with these situations but the ones we don't hear about, or hear about too late are of significant concern.

So unlike the much more extreme "Oranges and Sunshine" relocation of thousands of (unwanted?) UK children where no-one took responsibility for the end result and simply shipped them to Australia in the 1950s, we are trying to locate and overcome deprived donkey and mule situations.

The Trust has defined a working agreement with a range of Rescue and Rehoming Centres to provide support and assistance for their efforts, because they do the hard work in finding and rehabilitating unwanted or neglected donkeys and mules, often with the involvement of Trust representatives or Trustees. Now we are putting that working agreement in to action and one of the side effects will be that healthy animals will no longer become Trust Donkeys or Mules because they will be found permanent homes.

That still leaves us with the undefined problem. Where are the animals that are being neglected that we don't know about, and how do we find them? So we are now considering ways to reach people who need help with their animals, whether they recognise that or not. That raises the question of balance. It is difficult to provide timely support and advice without becoming a busybody! Anyway, life is a constant balancing act but we are

doing our best to provide information, locate needy animals and correct the situation through a variety of channels.

And in the meantime great new homes have been found for three Trust donkeys in the past few months and I welcome our new caregivers!

All the best,

*Neil*

## **Paddy (aka Dillon) of the Trust**



*Paddy of The Trust*

Paddy is loved very much at his new home where he has a Clydesdale cross horse called Roman for a companion. He and his friend make a comical duo with the big and the small but Paddy is in charge!!

The neighbours have already started looking out for Paddy and he has regular visitors from neighbours up the road (two children and their mother). Paddy is in good condition (chubby!) even though he has been on a hill paddock and getting a lot of exercise. He does get treats but only carrot and apple. But as you can see in his photograph he is in good condition and his coat is beautifully healthy and shiny. He is well looked after. Paddy has a bit of seedy toe which is proving tricky to get on top of. But his feet are trimmed regularly. Paddy's carer did buy him a grazing muzzle to try and

slim him down but he became so upset by it that she soon gave up the idea of using it.

Paddy's teeth were done late last year as part of his annual check up like all Trust donkeys. He is handled and groomed regularly.

## **Lulu of the Trust**

Lulu who is 35 years old, moved homes in April and her carer reports that she has settled well. She gets a groom every other day which she really enjoys and her skin, muscles and general wellbeing is benefiting from a weekly sports massage. Lulu is lucky as her carer is trained in equine sports massage. As you can imagine from such attention her eyes are much brighter and she is managing to get up and down the gentle slope to the stables. She generally prefers to sleep in the stables each night.

Lulu's paddock mate is Atlanta, a 10 year old Jenny, and they are now very good friends. Lulu is holding her own at feeding and grooming time (when pecking orders can be accentuated) and is a very good natured, kind donkey. It took six weeks before she let her new carer pick up her front feet but she is learning to trust her. Lulu's hooves are in excellent condition.



*Lulu of The Trust*

Lulu's droppings were a little loose when she moved home but, as she had been wormed prior to arriving, this was probably a result of her age and possible digestive history. Lulu and Atlanta get a small strip of fresh grass every second day or so and hay. She also gets a hard feed of a small mixture of FiberPro, Oaten/Lucerne Chaff and Lite Brew. She has a pinch of kelp powder and a sprinkling of garlic on her feed. She appears to be able to chew her food adequately, despite having a slightly lop-sided jaw (it bulges slightly on one side). Her jaw muscles get a massage each week to alleviate any muscular discomfort.

Like all Trust donkeys Lulu has an annual dental treatment by a vet who is a qualified in equine dentistry.

## **Jasmine of the Trust**



*Jasmine of The Trust*

Jasmine is very happy and settled. She has finally, after nearly two years gained enough confidence to stay put without running away in fright, when her career walks up to her to handle her or give her a cuddle. She is in with three other donkeys prone to tubbiness and has made particular friends with Thistle, a calm, sensible and knowing gelding. Though she can be seen at different times of the day with the other two jennies tucking into the straw in the feeder or walking around the paddock on the lookout for a previously

missed bunch of grass. Jasmine is still very tubby even though she has lost weight since she came. Her carer did try a period of strict diet control to get her weight down more but she became so abnormally fixated with eating virtually everything in sight, that she was in danger of becoming psychologically disturbed and so she was let out to run with the other 'tubbies' and accept her fuller figure but with a with a healthier attitude to life! Jasmine gets good exercise every day having a long paddock to move around in and she walks up and down with the others several times a day.

Jasmine is a lovable donkey and she went to the vets last year as companion to a friends very ill donkey while it stayed there for about a week. The vet nurse never fails to ask after Jasmine because her special personality made a strong impression on the staff.

### *Website:*

The Trust has a website at [www.donkey-mule-trust.org.nz](http://www.donkey-mule-trust.org.nz).

It has information about the Trust.

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