

SWHP

The Horse Hospital

Newsletter of the Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies

Winter 2014

INVALUABLE COMPANIONS

About 50% of the horses and ponies rescued by SWHP go on to be full time companions, leading very useful lives and fulfilling worthwhile jobs. Even the animals that initially have riding homes often become companions later and when the time comes for them to take life a little easier. In an ideal world our horses and ponies would start their ridden education around the age of 4 or 5 depending on their physical and mental maturity. However with resources and staffing levels at the SWHP often stretched we sometimes make the conscious decision that a young horse could go out to be a companion on a long term basis. One main consideration is that they need to go to knowledgeable people who will continue their education and handling and be conscious of their weight. As many of you will know a companion needs just as much care, attention and money spent on them as a ridden horse or pony.



We felt this would be a great opportunity to highlight some of our companions and to tell their stories :- Jasper, a Shetland stallion, was found wandering the roads with Belle, a Shetland mare in foal, back in March 2013. They had escaped from a field where they had been abandoned the previous year. No owner could be traced and no one came forward to claim ownership of them. Jasper was castrated at Abbey Vets and in June last year he went out to a new home with the specific job of being a companion to an event horse. Jasper is now seen regularly at competitions with the Matthews family where he travels in the horse box – he has quite a following.

Jasper taking part in wedding proceedings with Pip Winter, Georgina Pring and Withy

BLACK JACK

He was signed over to us with 4 other horses back in 2009, his owner had serious health issues and unfortunately could no longer look after them. The other horses were re-homed very quickly as riding horses; however we realised that there was an issue with Black Jack's back and following investigations by our vet he was diagnosed with kissing spine and sadly is unable to be ridden. However he has been out in a couple of fabulous companion homes and has recently been re-homed as a friend to an elderly Clydsdale, where he is settling in really well. We usually find it more difficult to re-home bigger horses as companions as most people request smaller ponies. However in this instance he was just the ticket and we hope he stays with his new keeper for many years to come – he is such a sweetie.



Black Jack 'photo bombing' Clyde's picture

COMPANIONS – ORCHARD TRUST

Toffee Apple and Marble have been at the Orchard Trust for the last ten years as companion ponies. Tracey at the Orchard Trust has kindly written a report to explain their valuable roles:-

Marble and Toffee-Apple live on the Orchard Trust Smallholding in Lydbrook and are a fantastic addition to our centre. Their daily needs are met by students who attend the centre for education and day care activities so there are plenty of willing hands to help out with grooming, foot care and cleaning the paddock.

The ponies help students learn how to care for animals and provide a real hands on experience. Students learn the need to be gentle and calm when working around the pony and over time build trust between handler



*(above) Marble playing football with a horse toy
(left) HRH the Countess of Wessex saying hello to Marble*

and animal. They also support verbal communication skills among our students; it's very encouraging to hear a student on the autistic spectrum quietly chatting to the pony they are working with.

We also ensure that our more profoundly disabled students have contact time with the ponies, they especially enjoy patting and running their fingers through the ponies mane, for some students it's very exciting being 'up close' to such a large animal. The ponies appear to have a special sense of the need to be calm and gentle and can be seen standing beautifully for students, enabling them to touch and stroke them easily.

During the summer we had a visit from HRH the Countess of Wessex who was pleased to meet both Marble and Toffee. After receiving a stroke and a few kind words from HRH, Toffee provided light entertainment in the form of trying to eat a piece of paper HRH was holding.

FIELD OFFICERS

Our charity is blessed to have a number of dedicated, experienced horse people who volunteer to carry out the annual home visits of SWHP horses and ponies out in adoptive homes. We are also extremely grateful to Redwings, who for many years have helped us with our home visits. They have a number of Field Officers in areas where we do not and they carry out a large number of our home visits.

The SWHP currently own and are responsible for 340 equines, 265 of which are out in permanent homes. This is an average of just over 20 horses and ponies receiving a visit every month. Karen, who works one day a week in the office, is responsible for liaising with all the field officers and over the last three years she has really got to grips with making sure everything happens when it should – no mean feat.

We have a rule that we only re-home within 100 miles radius of our stables in Monmouth, to keep the travelling time to a minimum for the equines but also to allow the home visits to be facilitated easily. However we have some horses and ponies who have moved with keepers to further afield. We have some areas in the country (for example Devon) where we find it more difficult to arrange the home visit. We do pay travel expenses and if you feel you would like to volunteer your time and become a field officer for us then please get in touch for a chat about what it entails.

GRAZING

We are always looking for well fenced grazing sites – preferably with someone on site to keep an eye, but not essential. Conservation grazing using native ponies is becoming more common and is thought of very positively by ecologists and conservationists. If you think you can help or know of anyone who might be interested in investigating this type of conservation then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

GINGER

We were contacted by a member of the public in September of this year who was worried about an 18 year old chestnut mare that he had seen with long hooves and in great discomfort. Jenny and Sian made plans to meet with the owner and were shocked when they saw the pain the mare was in and the conditions in which she was living. Her hooves were very long and they suspected that she had advanced stages of laminitis. It was agreed that Jenny would return with a vet a couple of days later. During this time, and unbeknown to us, the owner arranged for someone to come and trim the mare's feet. Unfortunately too much hoof was taken off causing Ginger even more discomfort. We were desperate to get her back to the SWHP to give her the pain relief and care and attention that she needed. The owner agreed that we could take her in and have her x-rayed to see how serious her condition was; then a decision on her future could be discussed. Her x-ray results gave us serious cause for concern and showed

pedal bone rotation. After further discussion the owner agreed to sign her over to our care. We are working with our remedial farrier and the vet to assist with her recovery, and she has made great strides. She is now going out in the ménage and is much more comfortable; she has even been seen skipping. She is the sweetest of horses and we do so hope we can give her the quality of life she deserves.



Ginger where she was found



Ginger 04.10.14

RONNIE

One evening in September we received a phone call from a distressed couple who had been taking their dog for a walk near the reservoir above Fforest Coalpit. They were so concerned by what they found that they gave up their walk and went to the tourist board in Abergavenny. Fortunately the tourist board had one of our leaflets and they were put in touch with us. They had found a little foal of about a month old, all by himself, dehydrated and with a damaged eye. Ann and Becky went straight out to see if they could locate him and against all odds they found him curled up in the bracken, damp, dejected and exhausted. He was not far from the carpark and we believe that someone had dumped him there.



Ronnie 2nd day at Coxstone

Ann and Becky knew they had to act fast and catch him whilst he was lying down as even the most exhausted foal can manage to get away if feeling scared and threatened. Ann managed to catch him and they took him straight to Abbey Vets where he was put on a saline drip and was given foal milk and a shot of long lasting antibiotic for his eye. We were told that he might have to have his eye removed, but for the moment it was important to get him hydrated, safe and warm.



Ronnie 30.10.14 looking happy

He came back to Coxstone that evening. The next day he was feeling much stronger and with special care he made a wonderful recovery. His eye has also been saved and we believe he has some sight in it. He is starting to gain weight and is one of the many here who gets the best of grazing in Jenny's garden – never mind the flowers!

MARLEY

We received a report of an orphan foal who was standing by its dead mother on Ebbw Vale Common in May 2014. We contacted the council and they advised that the R.S.P.C.A. were involved and were going to attend the report.

Later that evening Jenny received another call from the lady who made the original report to advise that she had waited and waited with the foal, but that the R.S.P.C.A. had not arrived. She decided she couldn't leave the foal to fend for itself over night, and so took him in and asked for our help and advice. We went to collect the foal from her that evening and brought him back to Coxstone where we were able to give him foal milk and keep him safe.

The next morning we took him to Margaret who is a long term supporter of the SWHP and is very experienced at raising orphan foals. It just so happened she was caring for Banjo, an orphan foal who needed a friend. Marley was the perfect new companion. As Margaret was already getting up during the night to feed Banjo she said to us "I'm already getting up for one foal, I might as well feed two".

Margaret has done an amazing job with Marley and Banjo and must have spent a fortune on foal milk and foal creep pellets. At one point Marley was getting through three pints of foal milk every three hours. In September Marley and Banjo came to Coxstone on their holidays for a couple of weeks and what a stunning pair of ponies they are. Marley has grown into a very big boy. Once he is weaned Marley will be coming back to Coxstone and we will be looking for a lovely temporary home for him whilst he is growing up. We must say a huge thank you to Margaret at the Old Forge Tack Shop in Wormbridge, Herefordshire - he couldn't be in better hands.



Marley and Banjo



Marley with Banjo in the background at SWHP

FELLA

During the winter months the Society tries hard to maintain a presence in South Wales by monitoring the many herds of semi feral ponies living on the hills and mountains. This allows us to quickly spot any problems and also to assess where and how much hay may need to be fed. We aim to visit at least once a week but do often find ourselves having to attend more often than this.

Just recently, purely by chance, we came across a severely lame young pony who was clearly in a lot of pain. He was removed that day to our centre so that we could give him



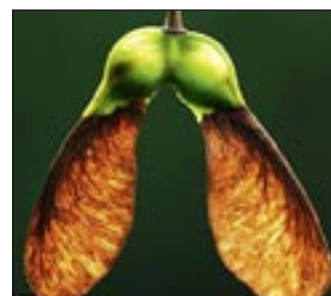
Fella when he first arrived at Coxstone

pain relief and assess his injury. After being seen by the vet it appears that he has a fracture which is possibly some two months old. With box rest and daily care we hope that he will make a good recovery.

SYCAMORE THREAT

As we are writing this winter's newsletter we have received a tragic report that one of our young horses has been put to sleep due to sycamore poisoning. The keeper, who was understandably distraught, asked us to make sure that this important message appeared in our newsletter.

Here is the scientific bit: There is a toxin present in the seeds and saplings of the sycamore tree called hypoglycin A. If this is ingested by an equine it is thought to sometimes cause atypical myopathy which is a fatal muscle disease. There seems to have been an increase in reported cases over the last few years and no-one seems to know the reason for this. Please be vigilant and take any necessary precautions to protect your equines.



FUNDRAISING

What a report we have for you this newsletter - people have been doing some wonderful things to raise money for the SWHP. Charlotte Benton swam the English Channel in 14.5 hours, through sewage, jelly fish and alongside ferries and huge tankers. To date she has raised a well deserved £10,188.95 split between us and 3 other charities. Rhiannon Jones threw herself out of a plane – admittedly she was strapped to a handsome young man, but still it takes a certain amount of courage; she raised £2500 split between ourselves and one other charity. The ducks sailed down the river in Abergavenny raising £1,675 – thanks as always goes to Sian Lloyd, Trustee, who organises this event every year. Maggie King is up to her wonderful tricks of money making again. Along with a band of loyal supporters she has raised £3660 so far this year. Maggie has a target of £800 to raise on her stall at our Christmas Open Day and any donated items will be very welcome.

I have only reported on a handful of people who have gone to great lengths to support our charity and there are so many more of you out there – You know who you are. THANK YOU. Please let us know if you are thinking of raising money for us and we will help in any way we can. It doesn't matter how big or small a fundraiser you organise, every penny goes towards helping the horses and ponies here, and every penny matters.



*Rhiannon Jones
skydiving*



*Charlotte setting out on her
amazing channel swim*

Some sad news is that Annie Peacock who has been chair of our fundraising committee for the last three years has resigned from her post as she is embarking on a new business venture. We wish her all the success in the world and would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her time and effort. Sue Hughes, who has been on the fundraising committee for many years and who has been involved with the charity for the last 13 years has taken over the 'reins' as chairman. We wish her the best of luck, we are all behind you Sue. The SWHP fundraising team work tirelessly to raise funds, they ran a very successful fun ride and fashion show during the last 6 months alongside many other events, and we'd like to say a huge thank you to all the team who volunteer their time and expertise. Please do get in touch if you would like to help or join our fundraising team.

SWHP CHARITY BEAR UPDATE



Bear is going from strength to strength with Charles Matthews & family. For his full story please see the success stories page on our website.

BANKERS ORDERS / STANDING ORDERS

We wanted to pass on our sincere thanks to all our members who have set up a bankers order with us and who donate either monthly or annually. These donations add up to give us a considerable amount of money which goes to help with our vital work.

If you would like details of how to set up a bankers order then please just drop us a quick e-mail, phone us or go onto our website under page 'How to Help'. We would be very happy to send you a form.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER – Annual Christmas Open Day at the SWHP 11am to 3pm.

For full details of all our events please visit our website www.swhp.co.uk or call us on 01600 750233

CHRISTMAS CARDS

CHRISTMAS CARDS – This year’s Christmas Cards, 8 cards per pack – 2 of each design. £3.50 per pack collected from the SWHP or Wye Valley Country Stores, Wonastow Estate, Monmouth. £5.00 per pack posted. Also available at our CHRISTMAS OPEN DAY – Sunday 7th December 2014.



Alex,
Cecil
and Homer



Jake



O’Neil



Valentino

LEGACIES

Legacies are very important to the Society. Without these vital sources of income we would not be able to carry out our important work of Rescue and Rehabilitation. Please do consider supporting us by leaving a gift to the Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies. Any bequest, however small, really will make a difference.

I (Full Name).....

Of.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

Have remembered The Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies in my Will / Codicil

Signature.....

Date.....

Please return this form to: The Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies, Coxstone, St. Maughans, Monmouth, NP25 5QF. (Registered Charity No: 266247)



Eloise 2006



Eloise 2007



Mrs Tiggywinkle 2010



Mrs Tiggywinkle 2014

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