

SWHP

The Horse Hospital

Newsletter of the Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies

◆ Summer 2011

Unloved and unwanted

We have for about 15 years been called out at all hours of the day and night by both the Police and concerned members of the Public regarding Coloured Gypsy type cobs wandering on to the Motorways, illegally tethered on Industrial Estates, dumped on private land, and being found to be starving and injured.

Some have even been killed on the road and railway line, it is as distressing for us as it is for the general public and horse lovers to witness these scenes.

These problems are not just confined to the Monmouthshire area but stretch along the M4 Corridor from one end of South Wales to the other and even over the Severn Bridge.

This year the situation has escalated out of all proportion and during this past winter we have been faced with feeding hay to up to 70 horses at a time in one field alone. Back in October we had to take in 13 young colt foals aged between 4- 6 months old who had been dumped in a wood without food or water. One had to be put to sleep as it was being eaten alive by maggots and several had lung infections that required intensive nursing and medication. No-one was prepared to help but with the assistance of the Redwings lorry they were transported back to SWHP to receive all the vital nursing care required. They have made good progress and with a generous donation by Pets at Home have been castrated, micro chipped and started their inoculation programme for Tetanus. In 3-4 years time they will make lovely Riding Ponies.

There was much media publicity regarding approximately 250 of these horses in the Bridgend area where the many problems are making life very hard for local residents, especially those with horses, being faced with cobs getting loose on the road around their properties.

In virtually all cases as the horses were not being fed they were continually escaping from the fields looking for food. The fencing in the



Top: *Pets at Home presenting Jenny with a cheque.* Above: *five of the 13 colts*

fields was so inadequate, rusting and broken barbed wire with rotten fence posts that it was not difficult for them to escape. The fields are nearly always filled with various debris and sharp metals that are dangerous to horses and indeed any stock. It is a heartbreaking sight when confronted with fields with large numbers of horses and finding several lying dead and many in a shocking condition.

Due to the economic climate we have been inundated with calls from owners unable to afford to keep their horses. Like all Equine Charities we are stretched

to the limit and are only able to take in and manage the sick and malnourished.

It is a totally frustrating situation in knowing who the owners of these large groups of horses are but without them being micro chipped we are unable to prove ownership and certainly no-one admits to being the owner. We are advised on good authority that one of the most reckless breeders and dealers in this area has in the region of 1800 horses and ponies with no doubt more foals due this Summer. This is totally indiscriminate breeding of animals that have no future. In July 2009 it became law for all foals born after this date to be micro chipped., We currently have 54 horses and ponies being nursed back to health at SWHP and only two were found to be micro chipped.

In a period of 3 months the Police in the Newport area alone received in the region of 500 calls about loose horses. Two of our Volunteer supporters were involved on many 'night missions' trying to catch and contain some of these loose horses to keep them safe and indeed we have 17 of them here. SWHP have attended meetings with the Police and also the First Minister

Continued overleaf

Rupert & Jessie

In March 2011 we took in two horses Rupert and Jessie from different places and at different times, but both with a common theme. They were extremely thin and needed to be put in our sling system as they were too weak to get up once they lay down. Only once before in the history of the SWHP have we had two horses in slings at the same time and that was when we first had Biscuit and Connie, both of which are happy and well and out in homes. Rupert was helped for three and a half weeks and Jessie for five days. Both had severe gut damage from having heavy worm burdens and although we did all we could we were unable to save them. This is the sad part of our work, but at least their last days were spent being looked after and cared for. We are also very lucky to have a stable with a winch system that was designed by Alasdair,



that allows us to have multiple horses in slings at one time and although we were unlucky this time we have had huge successes in the past with horses that have started off in our sling

system. The important point to remember is that if they need to be in the sling, then they are in a serious condition and their outlook is very much in the balance.



Bluff

We were called by a kind farmer and his wife as they had found a little colt foal that had been abandoned by his mother on Hay Bluff at just a couple of days old. They took him in and fed him overnight, but soon realised that they could not cope with the 2 hourly feeds. They rang us for help and we contacted Joanna Vardon of the National Foaling Bank. Joanna runs an organisation that puts owners of mares who lose their foals together with owners of foals who have been orphaned or abandoned. Joanna does a marvellous service without payment and at her own expense. She knew of a Shetland mare who had just lost its foal and so we were able to put the two together. The mare initially accepted the idea of this little foal for 24 hours but then decided against it, which is a huge shame. Our latest update is that Bluff is being fed foal replacement milk by the bucket and he is very happy with goats as his new friends.



Main story continued from cover

Carwyn Jones at the Welsh Assembly to raise our very serious concerns that something must be done!

The Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies has been inundated with calls for assistance from concerned members of the public, horse owners and the Police for horses found abandoned, neglected and injured. Many have been injured from wandering on to the roads causing great risk to Motorists.

None of these horses are microchipped which has been a legal requirement for foals born after July 2009 which means the owners cannot be traced. We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure effective enforcement of microchipping and Equine passports as laid down in the 2009 Legislation. Our online petition can be signed by accessing this website <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethorme/e-petitions/sign-petition.htm> which closes 30th September 2011.

Lottie & Archie

We received a call at 11pm from a lady who had found a foal in the river with his mother who was in a very poor state standing on the bank. The lady managed to get the foal out and phoned us. Our field officer in the area went and collected them and stabled them overnight, and the



following morning we went and picked them up. We were told that the mare had foaled in a very dirty shed and the grandson of the owner had been left to look after them and six other horses, whilst he was off on holiday. There was no food or water in sight. The grandson had been told

that once she had foaled that she should be let out into a steep field which had a river at the bottom of it. The mare was so desperately thirsty that she had gone straight to the river with her foal in toe and that was when the foal got into trouble and couldn't get out of the river. The

Left: coming off the trailer; Above: grazing in the garden a few days later.

RSPCA are also dealing with this man and he has many other horses which are in a bad way. Lottie is starting to pick up and the little foal, Archie, is doing really well.

Jack



We were contacted by the owner of a livery yard who was very concerned about a horse that had just arrived with her. Ann, who works here, went to see him and realised that she knew him when he was a much loved horse. Jack had been sold on in good faith and had fallen on bad times ended up in a dealer's yard in a desperate state. We hear far too many stories of Ex-racehorses falling into the wrong hands, and we are so pleased to report that Jack is making a good recovery now.



Meredith (also known as 'The Pog')



Meredith when we took him in (above) and now happy in his new home wearing his sweet itch suit (left)

The Police rang us during the night to ask if we could help with a colt pony that had been tied to a lamp post for four days with a rope around his neck getting tighter every time he pulled. The relevant authorities all new about him but had done nothing. When we collected him he looked so dejected and we had him back here in a cosy stable by 1pm.

This is just another example of a colt which has been abandoned. Currently colts are not holding their value and are worth next to nothing at the sales. On top of this they are expensive to castrate and so the majority of our calls lately

have been to help colts. We hardly ever find filly's abandoned or unwanted.

He is now in a wonderful home and is loved for his cheeky character. He has been castrated and is settling down well. Here he is wearing his 'POG Suit', as named by his keeper, doesn't he look great? He is just one of our ponies that suffer with sweet itch which can cause some horses and ponies great distress. Sweet itch is an allergic skin disease and certain horses are allergic to the saliva in the bite of a species of midge called *Culicoides*. Once a sensitive horse is bitten by this fly, it will have an allergic reaction at

the site of the bite. Many horses will rub themselves raw to try to relieve the irritation, and this suit prevents the midges from being able to bite Meredith in the first place.

This is a good time to mention that we are very lucky at the SWHP to be supported by suppliers of natural lotions and supplements to help with our equines itches and ailments. We have a page on our website called 'Products we use' and there is a list of companies and products which we find very helpful. Please drop us an e-mail or phone us if you have a horse or pony with an itch or ailment and we might be able to point you in the direction of a product that could help.

Sunny

Sunny was signed over to us by his owner back in July 2007 as a yearling. He had been born with a very bad case of sway disease which affects the hocks. There was a 50% chance that he would not come right and his owner wasn't able to give him the care he needed. At the time we had a yearling called Harvey who was desperate for a play mate and so it made perfect sense for us to take him on and to give him a chance. Sunny and Harvey spent a lot of time on their back legs playing with each other and were great friends; we are sure that this really helped Sunny to strengthen his legs. Four years on and here he is pictured out hunting. His keeper is taking him slowly and giving him the



care he needs. He is a fantastic, kind, genuine horse and we are really pleased we were able to give him a chance. His owner never followed up on his progress and so we hope that she gets to see this and to know that he is doing really well.

Cobweb

We took her in from Gelligaer Common in an emaciated condition back in April 2002. She was covered in lice and had a severe worm infestation. Today she is in tip top condition and with a wonderful family where she is winning ribbons.



Fundraising

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been fundraising for us. We are always amazed and sincerely grateful to all our supporters that quietly go about raising money for the SWHP. One such event, which has brought in a total of £10,000 over several years, is the Christmas Flower Festival at Llanvihangel Court, Abergavenny. The Abergavenny Flower Arranging Society has supported us with the four day event for many years and we would like to say how much we appreciate all their hard work. The flower arrangements are always stunning, enhanced by the beautiful setting of Llanvihangel Court.

If you would like to raise money for us why not have a coffee morning, organise a dress down day at work or school, every little or big amount helps us so much. Please send us an e-mail or give us a call and we will help in any way we can to assist your event.

We are going to register ourselves with Virgin Money Giving website so that anyone wishing to hold a sponsored fundraising event can use this fantastic facility. Full details of how it works and how to use it is on our website www.swhp.co.uk



Menna riding Bella who raised money for us by doing a sponsored Ride

Dates coming up

- SWHP AGM Thursday 30th June 7.30pm at The Priory, Priory Street, Monmouth, NP25 3EX – Light refreshments available, everyone welcome.
- SWHP Summer Open Day Sunday 3rd July at Coxstone
- Duck Race & Teddy Bears Picnic on Sunday 18th September, Swan Meadows Abergavenny. In aid of Inca who had been abandoned and whose foal had sadly drowned.
- Possible FUN RIDE – Autumn 2011 – please check our website.
- Three courageous ladies are doing a Sky dive for us on 12th June 2011. They have set up a face book page and you can see details on our website of how to sponsor them.

Talks—Do you belong to a group and are always looking for a Speaker? We are happy to come along and give a talk on the work of SWHP and sometimes can even bring Sebastian our miniature Shetland mascot. We have visited schools, homes for the elderly and W.I groups so just contact us to arrange!

Stamps—Yes, we still need those used postage stamps so please keep sending them to us at SWHP!

Every penny counts—What to do with those pennies and two pences weighting heavy in your pocket? Go to our website www.swhp.co.uk and print off a label for our Pennies for Ponies found under our fundraising page. Just stick it on to a large jar or plastic milk bottle and when full just count those pennies and send us a cheque for the amount. If you prefer just send us a SAE to Coxstone and we will send you a label.

Bequests—We really don't want to rush anyone off upstairs as we value your support! But please think of us in making your Will. It's not something anyone wants to think about but it is important to you and your family. If you need any advice on this please speak to your Solicitor or contact our Administrator Andree Davies in complete confidence for information.

Facebook

Late in 2010 an SWHP volunteer decided to produce a Facebook page on behalf of the Society. Like it or hate it, Facebook has its uses and it has certainly helped to get the Society and its work known, to a wider audience. Initially, it was difficult to get the page known, as you would expect - staff and committee recommended it to friends, we posted pictures of horses needing new homes, our latest rescues and updates on their progress and gradually our following grew. In February we posted details of the three ponies, who's owner was/is threatening us with court action - that brought us a lot of support. For the first time we had people volunteering to help us

from all over the UK! Great news! We asked if those people who were following us, with adopted SWHP horses and ponies, could post their photos, with some up to date information. We had a great response and it was wonderful to see our rescues again - now in loving homes - how their lives have changed.

In the middle of February with 260 'friends', we spilled the beans on the terrible situation in Bridgend. You will have already read the story in the newsletter. The results were incredible, suddenly we had 'friends' all over the world it was almost impossible to keep up with the amount of posts we received on our Facebook page with wonderful

offers of help and support. The resulting media attention was overwhelming, sometimes not particularly accurate but it all resulted in public awareness.

We have now over 1700 'friends' who have a constant update on our latest rescue and their progress. It also gives us an opportunity to publicise our fundraising events, horses that need re-homing and enables us to receive information from the public. Maybe one day, because we are not afraid to take a stance, we will be able to create enough public pressure to force changes - for laws to be upheld and the suffering of fields of neglected cobs, a thing of the past. That would be brilliant!



2011 – NEW ADDITIONS

So far in 2011 we have taken in 27 new horses and ponies all needing our help and attention. We knew that it had been a busy start to the year and we expected it with the current financial situation and the bad winter we had all had, however when we compared the numbers to previous years we were quite shocked.



2006 – 14 horses/ponies

2007 – 20 horses/ponies

2008 – 34 horses/ponies (including family of 6 Thoroughbreds)

2009 – 23 horses/ponies

2010 – 35 horses/ponies (including 10 colt foals)

2011 to the end of April 27 horses/ponies



As you can imagine this increase of new equines needing our help has put a great strain on the finances and staff, and we would like to thank all our staff, helpers, members and fundraisers for supporting us through the beginning part of this year. We are hoping that the intakes will slow down but we are aware that these are difficult times and we'd like to assure you that we will help as many equines as we can within our capabilities. The pictures around the edge are just a selection of the horses and ponies taken in so far this year.



Photos clockwise from top left: Lucky; Rupert; Inca; Hero; Baloo; Dee-Cee-Elle; Eddie and Louie; Hamish; Lady B; Fly and Bee; Isla and Rhia II; Puff; Abbie and Barney; Jack; Jessie; Bluff; Lottie and Archie; Coco; Flora.



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