

WINTER/SPRING 2021

DONKEY NEWS AND DO'S

*Donkey Society of Western Australia,
Inc: www.donkeywa.org.au*



On the cover: Shadow and Brave now owned and cared for by Jennifer Fox. See Page 4 for their story.

From the Editor

Hello fellow donkey lovers. I hope this newsletter finds you all well and that you have all been able to make the most of this lovely spring weather with your animals. This is my first newsletter as the new editor and I would like to thank the previous editor, Katie Larsen, for doing such a great job of keeping the newsletter going and for her help in this transition period.

Everything has been going well here at the Poultney Farm, with Mum and I certainly making the most of a bit of free time and lovely weather. The next month or so is looking quite busy for us both with many shows, clinics and events, before comes the very busy harvest time! I hope to see you out at some of the upcoming donkeys days and especially the Kelmscott show which is always a great day out.

I hope you all enjoy the latest donkey news inside, and please remember without your help of providing stories and interesting articles, this newsletter would look very empty, so please send your donkey news to me at poults@bordernet.com.au and look out for it in the next issue!

Sarah Poultney

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One of my all-time favourite photos with my boy, Ma Ha Wai Tama.

Presidents Report

By Mary-Anne Equislave

Another year and another period of uncertainty about what we can and can't do but as usual we have our lovely donkeys and we have managed to keep them busy. We have had our usual walk ride drives (Serpentine and Darling Downs) and of course the Quindanning races where the donkeys proved to be very popular and even managed a photograph in Hoofbeats magazine. It has been lovely to watch more and more people become donkey owners with the support of experienced members. One thing I love to see is when donkeys need to be rehomed and members are able to assess them and move them on to live with families that meet the donkeys specific needs and personality. This gives the best outcome for all concerned, thank you to everyone involved.

One of the big stories has been the three donkeys in Oakford that were in need of urgent assistance, thank you so much to the members involved in resolving the situation and finding an excellent home for them and supporting the new owner in caring for the donkeys. It was not an easy situation to work through, but it was done with respect for all concerned and no judgement, the focus was the welfare of the animals.

We had our AGM in July, welcome to the new committee and thank you to all who attended, we enjoyed lovely hot pork rolls courtesy of the Larsen family.

There is no Royal Show for the donkeys this year but at this stage Kelmscott show is still going ahead. Last Sunday we all met at Dawn's where we enjoyed the opportunity to practise the various skills we will need come showtime. Dawn was a very capable judge who had us all line up and one by one we did the trot out, ok so some donkeys trotted, and others were too tired, but we all had fun. We then went through the obstacle course, long reined and some donkeys were ridden. It was a lovely morning in the sun, some of us learnt we have a lot to work on, but I am sure it will all be right on the day.

As for my donkey he has been busy with his own work. He had a very important job recently when he took Neville to St Barts in East Perth to meet the men who live there. This was Neville's first "job" and he performed well. The only hiccup was when we arrived and let down the ramp on the float, we saw poo from one end to the other and all over the donkeys, we had a significant audience but typically they didn't care - once again the donkeys get away with everything.

We have a day coming up towards the end of the year where we will practise floating and trailering donkeys in preparation for the bushfire season, I look forward to seeing you all there.

Mary-Anne.

Calendar of Events

September 2021

To be advised. Possibility for a Donkey Display at the Royal Show.

October 16th

Kelmscott Show - details to be advised.

November 21st

Anneli's donkey meet and greet, float training/fire plans

BYO Lunch etc

START: 10am

VENUE: 315 Holmes Rd, Forrestfield

CONTACT: Anneli Ph: 0415 244 368

December 5th

Christmas Lunch at Anne's

Bring a plate of food to share and an item for the raffle

START: 11 am

VENUE: 24 Wills Pl, Oakford

January 9th 2022

Half yearly meeting
BYO lunch/drinks etc.

START: 10am

VENUE: 80 Mills Rd W, Gosnells, WA

February 13th

Walk/Ride/Drive - Serpentine
BYO lunch/drinks etc

START: 10am

VENUE: 260 Utley Rd, Serpentine

Tale of Two Donkeys By Jennifer Fox

Where do I start? From the beginning or work backwards from where we are now? As some of the members will know, Brave and Shadow came into my life permanently back in January. They are apparently father and son, now aged 19 & 21 yrs. For those of you not familiar with these two, they are Irish/English donkeys, too tall for minis at 9.5 hands (38 inches) and have a pedigree to boot. They are sired from an imported American Jack, thus the Indian names of Kiowa Brave and Chief Grey Shadow. I'm their third owner and hopefully their last. I first met them by chance, back in October 2020 and at no time imagined they would later become mine.

Brave and Shadow first came known to the Donkey society ladies in 2015 when their first owner got to the age of 82 and could no longer care for them and needed to rehome them. They were grossly overweight and had really (really) bad hooves. Helen even wrote a short story about them for one of the newsletters. After a spell of rehab, they were taken in by another society member where they lived with her for 6 years before she very kindly gifted them to me. After some health issues, she felt she no was longer in a position to give them the time they deserved so wanted to do right by them.

Now, going way back in time, I had the privilege of riding/looking after an 'Australian Teamster' by the name of Pedro when I was a teenager. He was an ex-feral donkey (I grew up in South Australia where there were a lot at the time). I used to ride him bareback. He belonged to friends of the family, and I had access to him on weekends. From what I remember I could do most things with him except go near him when he was eating. This relationship only lasted a couple of years, as I transitioned over to horses (as a lot of my school friends at that time owned horses), but as a result of knowing this beast, I have always held spot in my heart for donkeys vowing one day I would own my own.

In the ensuing years, life happened. I left school, got a job, met a boy, travelled, got married, had kids etc, etc and 40+ years passed. My extended and immediate family all knew I wanted to own a donkey right from the start (I still had my copy of Christine Berry's 'Donkey Business' that my dad bought me at the time of Pedro) so when husband and I moved to our 11 acres 6 years ago, everyone started asking "when are the donkeys arriving??"

By this time though, I had started to think my opportunity was passing as I was getting older, and it seemed almost impossible to find an ex-feral donkey, or rather I didn't have a starting point to source one. I had made a few enquiries about donkeys for sale, even over east, but everything seemed to fall flat. It was hard to find a large riding donkey. I had gone as far as inquiring about importing from NZ. I then found the Donkey Society and things moved forward from there.

Once a delivery date was established, hubby and I swung into action, putting up extra fencing, building a shelter shed, installing drink and feed troughs etc. I was so eagerly anticipating their arrival. I even lay in bed at night imagining donkeys up in the paddocks and me interacting with them. The big day finally arrived. I was so nervous, not knowing what to expect. Taking on two donkeys was a big responsibility, a commitment I had not taken lightly, and while I knew about donkeys I considered myself a first time owner. Once off the trailer, they looked a little dishevelled and bewildered so I filled their trough with hay and we left them to settle in.

Life with donkeys had begun and it didn't take long for me to realise a piece of advice I had been given, 'forget anything you have been told they (donkey) do and start as if from the beginning' was very true. Most of what I had been told about these two was the opposite of what they would do and I eventually put that down to them sussing me out as much as I was trying to suss them out. They were both gentlemenly in nature though and would stand to be haltered and lead easily. Both still had a weight issue, but I had made it a priority to get them off oaten hay, get them moving, get them fitter and try and get the weight off. Other society members had been great with providing information and resources, so we were on our way.

The previous owner had told me that they were not 'touchy feely' donkeys and that they don't come to you, you have to go to them. Mmm I thought, not on my watch, so that was one of the first things I worked on. By employing different tactics, including treats, at numerous times throughout the next few days. By day three I had Brave coming to me, and then meeting me at the gate only a few days later. Shadow was more cautious only coming because he didn't like to be left behind. If I tried walking straight up to him, he would move away. I continued working with him as he would come with Brave but stand an arms length away so I would take one step toward him, holding out the treat so he would reach out and sniff it but before he could take it, I would take two steps back, encouraging him that if he wanted it he had to come into me. Sometimes he would hold his ground so I would simply walk off in a different direction with him watching as if to say "hey!" then come back and try again. Over the following days my tactics worked.

Tale of Two Donkeys cont.

I started off by keeping them in a small paddock for the first week as I didn't want to be chasing them all over the bigger paddock if they weren't going to come to me. Reward based training was working. We fell into a routine of breakfast, then halters on and a walk around to the property or out up the road to graze for an hour or so before coming back to be turned out into the main paddock. Lunch then waiting at the gate to be collected and returned to the smaller yard for dinner. If I was late getting their breakfast and they caught sight of human activity, we heard about it. At this stage Brave seemed to be the main man, happy to come, happy to be brushed, happy to follow on lead. Shadow was a different matter, ever cautious, I would always have to wait for him to make his mind up if he was indeed going to come to me, I usually had Brave haltered and ready to go, sometimes already out the gate by the time Shadow had come to the gate. I tried to make it his decision to come otherwise be left behind.

Another thing I was told is they didn't like the chap who used to do their hooves and would take off up the paddock if they saw his ute coming. This was another thing I thought I would have to work on, but both were very compliant at me picking up and cleaning all their feet. They had their feet done just prior to being delivered so I had a few weeks to find a farrier. The first two I contacted were no go, so I thought it can't be that hard to learn how to do them myself. Once again, I contacted my 'go to' donkey mentor and discussed my thoughts and options. She lent me a DVD set by a well known donkey farrier in the states, which was a terrific learning tool, then I signed up for an online farrier course for donkey owners. I bought a set of tools and away I went. Both donkeys were very edgy around me carrying a bucket (or anything for that matter) and especially having gloves on so I would lay all the tools out and bring the donks to that area. It was only later I happened to see a post on a community notice board for a heritage barefoot farrier coming to our area, so I sent a message asking if he would come see two donkeys. I had noted that Shadow's left hind hoof twisted in as he walked (he was doing this when he arrived) and I wanted to know from someone experienced if this was a balance issue or something congenital. The farrier was a very calm, unassuming young man who talked quietly and scratched the boys before I walked Shadow up and down for him. The farrier did a light trim to both hind feet and said he was back in the area in 4 weeks so would come check him again then. Those two trims were enough to get Shadow walking without that foot twisting in.

The only time the boys were NOT nervous of anything in my hands was seeing me carrying the feed container and as Shadow was more suspicious than Brave, I started wearing gloves to give treats, if he wanted that slice of whatever, he had to take it off the glove. I would also pick up their feet with gloves on but not actually do anything, just tap then put down. In regard to giving treats, another member gave me a great tip. A donkey doesn't know if you've given the whole carrot or just a slice. To them it's still a treat. Made great sense for reward based training, especially as I was finding I had a donk who loved his food, but looked at me with suspicion and at this stage didn't like me touching him.

After about 4 months I felt like I was getting nowhere with Shadow, the two donkeys were chalk and cheese. My relationship with Brave had come on in leaps and bounds but I just couldn't seem to connect with Shadow. He was tolerant of me but that's as far as it went. I was hoping for more than tolerant. I was questioning my own abilities and even started to wonder if I was the right owner for him. It wasn't going how I imagined. I lamented this to my 'go to' gals, and they just encouraged me to just hang in there. It later occurred to me that maybe I was the problem by putting too much pressure on him to 'perform'. After all, they are now heading into senior years, and as such I should be giving them the respect they deserved, who was I to start giving out orders? I realised in that moment that I didn't really 'own' these donkeys I was merely fortunate enough to be their caretaker.

From that moment on I gave Shadow space. He would still approach while I was brushing or ear rubbing Brave but stand off slightly. He would follow Brave around the paddock who was follow me and that was ok, but then, ever so slightly, things started to change. If he was standing alongside Brave while brushing, I would casually reach over and give him a couple of little scratches before he moved off. He started allowing a little touch here and there but was still inclined to move off. I changed tactics once this started to happen. If I felt him tense to move off while I was touching him, I would anticipate his move and stop and move away myself. The logic behind this was I was releasing the pressure on him, asking no more than what he already gave. It seemed to work, as over the following weeks, he has allowed more and more.

I would go sit and talk to them, and during these times I got the impression that maybe he was unsure of what I was asking of him, just from reading his body language. This thought developed further after talking about his behaviour in general with my mentor, who commented that it sounded like he had always been a follower.

Tale of Two Donkeys cont.

For me, that totally made sense. He was a follower, plodding along after Brave and now here was someone who is asking things of him, putting pressure on him and he is not sure how to, or if he wants to, oblige. Part of my early frustration with him was while leading them. He would always swing in directly behind Brave instead of walking alongside. Even when getting him to walk parallel he would lag till he could go behind. I also wondered that if Brave now accepted me as 'team leader' had Shadow felt he was further down the pecking order? Brave was the boss of the two, so how did Shadow perceive me? Is this why he moved away from me?

Another aspect of caring for them I decided to ease up on was monitoring their food and weight loss. As with humans that are obese, it didn't happen overnight, and while my intentions were good, they were not going to slim down in a blink of the eye, they had been this way for years (literally). In the first month they were down 10kg or so each, simply from exercise and diet change. I gradually weaned them off their oaten hay and they had free (dry grass) grazing during the day. I set up a track system for them so they could move more not just stand in the paddock. I have since bought another solar energizer to set up a second track system as we head into spring/summer. As our property turns green over winter, we keep the paddocks mowed to minimise the risk of founder. They still get their straw/hay breakfast but get to graze the rest of the time.

Our property is rectangular in shape, so they are able to walk the boundary fences on both sides to and from different paddocks up to designated grazing areas. I change it around to make it interesting for them. Something I have noted from this management, especially for Shadow, is he no longer bolts his food down as he first did when arrived. he would literally stuff his mouth of anything offered. Now he just grazes as equines are designed to do. Even eating his hay, it's not gobbled. I have the equine vet coming again in October for a follow up on their teeth as Shadow started dropping food (quidding I think it's called) so they have both had their teeth looked at and floated. They were sedated for this, so I had them both drenched and wormed at the same time.

So, fast forward to now, things have really turned a corner. I have a 'don't touch me' donkey coming to me of his own free will, sometimes before Brave has even seen me. He initiates ear rubs, allows butt scratches, and more recently brushing (I still keep the sessions short). He no longer turns his head when I reach out to rub his forehead. I can call them both down from the top paddock (most of the time) or if they are free wandering and I want to put them away, I can pat my thigh telling them to walk on and usually they will follow. We often see them chasing each other and on one occasion rearing up and play fighting. While I can spray Brave for flies without haltering him, Shadow will only stand still if haltered. I spray him gently and give him a treat before changing sides. Wouldn't say he enjoys it but I'm sure he will eventually realise the relief and get used to it. I have been touched deeply by the change in Shadow, and believe firmly that they teach us just as much as we teach them. I may not have got my riding donkey and that's ok, cause instead of owning one I now have two, and they are probably more suited to where I'm now at in life and a good fit for them as well.



From left to right: Brave and Shadow enjoying the grass and sunshine.



Pictured above: Shadow.

Neville's Note

Hi everyone, I hope you are all well. Wow Wee haven't we had a lot of rain lately. I thought at one stage Mum might have to get me a snorkel and flippers!

Over the last few months, we have been able to get out more. We went to Mereana's for a walk and had a lovely time even though it was a hot day. We also went to my Aunt Jacque's farm in Serpentine, the Quindanning Picnic races and a walk at Darling Downs.

I tagged along with Legacy to my first Donkey Therapy session at St Bart's all the way in the city and it was fun. I hope one day to be as relaxed as Legacy doing this, but it was all a little strange, but the smiles on all of the men's faces made me feel really good!

Legacy stayed with me while his Mum went on a holiday. It was cold and wet most of the time he was here, but on one of the days that the sun was shining, Mum and Katie took us both to the beach. It was nice being out in the sunshine with my brother.

Our walk in May deserves a special note as it was on World Donkey Day. Myself and a heap of donkey buddies joined lots of people and some doggies to raise awareness for working donkeys. In some countries donkey owners need a little extra help to look after them properly. After the walk we all had lunch together.

Anyway, time for me to go. Keep safe everyone and I hope to see you all soon at our next outing!

Neville.



Above: Fun at the Quindanning Races.

Below: Legacy and Neville.



Above: Legacy and Neville enjoying a walk with some snack stops.

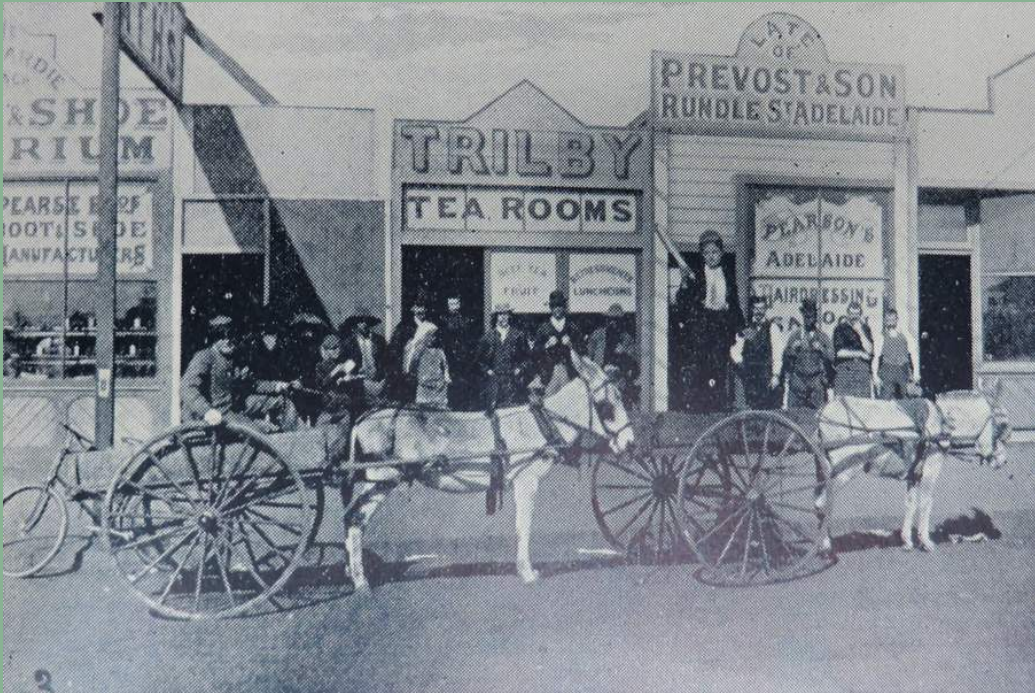
Below: A fun day out at the beach.



Fun Photo

Member, Helen McIntyre, recieved this photo from an ex member and kindly sent it in, thankyou Helen for sharing!

This photo was taken of donkeys at Coolgardie in the 1880s. The photo was taken by photographers Nixon & Merrilees who took lots of photos in the early days and thankfully they thought it a good idea to print many in albums, some of which have survived and are in the State Library.



Committee:

President: Mary-Anne Wallace

Vice President: Rachel Larsen

Secretary: Katie Larsen

Treasurer: Stephanie Green

Events: Leslie Pascoe and Dawn Maton

Committee: Anneli Madden, Anne Wright and Dawn Maton

Editor: Sarah Poultney

Duffy's Journey at the Poultney Farm

Wednesday 24th February 2020 and Sarah and I left the farm heading to Helen McIntyres property in Martin to meet Duffy who had come from Robyn's property at Badgingarra. Duffy had arrived at Robyn's property some 8 years prior after her husband had found him at the Sale yards after arriving with a truck load of cattle from the north. Duffy had been purchased as a gift for Robyn celebrating their anniversary, instead of a diamond ring.

After 8 years of ownership, Robyn had made the difficult decision to find Duffy a new home and Sarah and I had gladly offered to take him on as new training project to do together. With Sarah's finishing year 12 last year and deciding to try her hand at farming with Geoff and I on our wheat and sheep property and with Duffy looking to be a large donkey able to be ridden, we were very excited to get Duffy back to our farm.

When we got to Helen's, Duffy was in the back yard enjoying a cuppa with Helen, Andrea and Lesley. He wasn't the least bit bothered about anything much and totally impressed us with walking on Helen's veranda, allowing us to pat him, stepping down steps and generally was as cool as a cucumber. I must admit, after smooching him and getting to know him a bit, I was very sure Duffy would end up being a very special donkey to us. We even managed to get the height measuring stick next to his shoulders and decided he was 12 ½ hh. This made him a great size to be ridden, let alone his stocky statue. It is true to say here that his weight was definitely a concern with the bulging crest and bottom but looking into his sweet face and eyes, I knew Duffy was a super special boy. Duffy hadn't had much training where he had previously lived so I was interested to see how we would get him onto our donkey trailer.

Helen directed some good reversing skills on my behalf, and we pulled up in the 'perfect spot' for the loading to take place. Andrea climbed aboard our trailer taking up the front position with a long heavy duty lead rope. She wound this around our front bar a few times and with gloves on her hands stood ready for action. Next Sarah put the lead rope on Duffy and led him to the foot of our trailer. We then attached Andrea's long lead rope to Duffy as well. We had a nice bowl of donkey goodies sure to tempt even the fussiest of eaters and then set to work coaxing Duffy onto our trailer. Helen stood one side of Duffy and me on the other side with Lesley. Helen had the bar about a metre long ready to put on Duffy's bottom when we needed. We coaxed Duffy on board the trailer praising him for moving forward, lifting his hooves a little to assure him it was ok and rewarding with food with each positive step forward. At times Helen and I would move the bar across Duffy's bottom and on the count of three, move the bar forward pushing Duffy forward until his weight went forward and then we would release. I think the whole exercise took about 10 mins to get him aboard so once again. Yep, these donkey ladies sure know what they are doing.

We must also point out here that the day before, Helen and the marvellous donkey ladies had collected Duffy from Badgingarra performing this loading technique and bringing Duffy closer to us. This meant that he didn't have a huge 5-hour trip (one way) all in one day and took the pressure off Sarah and I. Thankyou ladies. Totally appreciate the effort of each and every one of you to make this happen.

We got Duffy home and were keen to get him comfortable with our donkeys. Our four boys were halfway down in their 50-hectare paddock, so it took them a while to realize that there was a new donkey on the block to come and meet. Each side of their paddock had Sarah's two horses adjoining it. Duffy's companion had been a horse, so it was no wonder that initially he sought the comfort and security of the horses and not the donkeys.

We led Duffy to the water trough in the donkey's paddock where he drank earnestly. Another 37-degree day so no wonder he was so thirsty but initially he didn't understand how this trough worked and with his halter still on battled so we decided to get a portable drinking bowl for him to drink his fill whilst getting accustomed to everything else new in his world. With the unending heat and knowing how important it is to keep the fluids up for donkeys to stop colic, we were more than happy to continually check this water bowl to make sure Duffy was getting enough fluids.

Slowly, Tane', Archer, Tama and Donovan made their way up to Duffy and you could tell he really had no idea about them, thinking that he was more a horse. Our boys were trying very hard to be friends with the constant mouthing, but Duffy blatantly declared he wasn't going to mouth them back so then it was on.

Duffy's Journey cont.

Tama was the most outspoken about this 'rude' behaviour and set about teaching Duffy a lesson. Sarah and I were watching the conversations between Duffy and our herd and just hoping for a quick 'make up session'. Every time Duffy came near our donkeys either Tama or Donovan would put their heads down, their ears back and charge at Duffy. It was sad seeing that Duffy chose to hang out over the fence with Amber, one of Sarah's horses. They would both rest either side of the fence next to each other and Duffy made no effort to integrate with the donkeys. Each time Sarah and I would go out there to spend time with our donkeys, Duffy was keen for a pat, but our donkeys would chase him away. After two days of this behaviour, Duffy was up near me as I patted our donkeys and all of a sudden, Tama put his head down, ears back and charged Duffy. It was horrible. Tama chased Duffy for at least 200m intent on grabbing hold of Duffy's bottom, above his tail. They galloped away and then, in true donkey style, both decided they were a bit hot, so the game stopped. They panted and puffed for a few minutes and then Duffy decided to circle around Tama and head back to where I was 200m away at the water trough. Tama took chase again, with the same intent as last time making me totally cringe. It ended up with Duffy landing a well-placed hoof print on Tama's shoulder and with that the chase was finished. I am not sure what all the boys were really saying in that behaviour, but I am super relieved to report that, Tama decided not to challenge Duffy anymore so neither did any of the other donkeys. Phew.

Over the next 10 days Duffy now decided he is definitely belonging to the donkey herd and chooses them over the horses. It is interesting to note though that he doesn't really always have to be right close to the donkeys either. At times our initial four would be grazing together and Duffy would be 500 m away in another area. This character trait of Duffy's makes me interested to see if he will be a donkey happy to leave the herd for rides or walks out on his own. He appears very self-contained not herd dependent.

The first week, we left Duffy's halter on so we could catch him whenever we went up to him in the paddock. Due to it being such an open space, we realized if we couldn't get close to him then starting on any teaching and training would be near impossible. We decided that one of the first lessons must be to teach Duffy to pick up his hooves happily. We took him into Sarah's round yard and began desensitizing him to the fly veil and doing hoof training. It was interesting to note that Duffy has such a curious nature and isn't genuinely scared of anything. As Helen says he is quite ignorant. Due to being in a safe environment with Robyn and never being asked to do anything, he never had any bad experiences so doesn't have that questioning that something bad is about to happen. Truly he is such a clean slate to work with and with his curious nature is a dream.

One of our hoof training sessions was carried out in their 50-hectare paddock due to it being convenient for us. Hats off to Sarah here for the knowledge she has with her horse training. Using pressure release and the situation definitely getting ugly before settling and a good lesson being learnt by Duffy, we feel like we definitely made good progress that day. I feel so blessed to be doing this whole adventure with Sarah. She has learnt so much with her donkeys but especially from all the horse clinics she has been too, and her natural feel and intuition makes me very proud to witness her journey. Duffy is a lucky donkey to have her skill set onboard in training him to saddle.

I have also been taking Duffy for some nice 3 km walks which I am sure he loves. On the first one of these I noticed that Duffy was keen to keep walking after I stopped and gave the command to Woah spinning his bottom away from me and ending up facing me. So, I then decided to walk close to the fence so he wasn't able to do this. He then decided to push through me so I would give the command to woah and raise my arm close to him in front of his face as a physical distraction and block. This worked well and we practice walking each side so he doesn't just get latched on me walking on his near side.

We also noted that Duffy is wary of the motorbike, so many times I head out to the paddock with my bucket of brushes, Indi on the back of the quad bike and an apple or carrot or two sometimes to coax him near. Our donkeys aren't scared of the motorbike either so that is great for Duffy to see that they don't fuss. He is definitely getting more comfortable with the bike each day.

Duffy loves a smooch and his lip goes out and he opens his mouth as if he is going to yawn. It is unlike what our other donkeys do and is definitely Duffy cute. To say this gorgeous donkey is finding a special place in my heart is an understatement. I love spending time with him and learning more about him each day.

So here we are some months down the track. Duffy arrived in February and it is now September. I certainly wasn't wrong when I said I think Duffy might find a special place in my heart. He is such a loving and sweet boy.

Duffy's Journey cont.

In August, Donovan had two bouts with colic and when the vet was drenching him in the crush, Duffy just couldn't help his curiosity and was so keen to come as close as he could to see what all the fuss was about. The other three donkeys were keeping as far away as possible not wanting the vet to signal them next, but Duffy just wanted to join in. Quite hilarious really. He was trying to drink the oil, lick the bucket, etc etc.

We have been doing simple training sessions of first 'sacking out' and then having Sarah sitting on Duffy's back which has progressed to being led by me with Sarah sitting bare back for small walks

We have done many obstacles in our Sarah's arena to the obstacles around the farm. Duffy came not tolerating dogs at all and now he doesn't fuss with them at all. Our most recent achievement with Duffy is how well he does when Sarah trims his hooves. Robyn admitted that Duffy was more than a handful when the farrier came, and I was so delighted to send Robyn some photos when Sarah trimmed his hooves last week as he stood calmly with his hoof in the hoof stand with not an ounce of trouble. Yes, he is a very special donkey indeed.

So next we will move onto training to being ridden in saddle and our long-term goal to teach him to be in harness. It is so nice to have Duffy on our farm with us but also the fact that we aren't in a hurry to teach him everything at once. Because there are other animals here able to be ridden etc, it means that we can just do things nice and slowly with Duffy so there is never any rush or with any hint of stress. With no time frame it just flows nice and smoothly.

The thing I love most about Duffy joining our herd is the fact he has learnt how to be a donkey. No more does he seek out the horses instead preferring to interact with his newfound donkey friends. He loves our herd and has learnt so much good donkey behaviour from meeting his new buddies. He has especially bonded with my Archer. They often are seen tearing up and down their paddock having such fun together. Finally Duffy has found some special friends who understand and have taught him how to talk Donkey.

By Elizabeth Poultney.

Photos below from Duffy's training and adventures so far.



Preparing for Collie to Darkan Trek

Five donkeys, three driven, two pack animals and so far, Mereana, Lesley and Dawn will be undertaking a 46.5 km total trek from Buckingham (Collie) with the first stop at Bowelling Station covering 18 kms and then bush camping overnight.

2nd day onto Boolading covering 16 kms and bush camping again.

3rd and final day on to Darkan. A total of 12.5 kms. Hopefully meeting up with the backup crew who will take us home.

The preparation so far has entailed contacting local landowners to permit us to utilise their paddocks for safe overnight stays for donkeys and their humans. We also have to carry sufficient food, water and shelter for both the donkeys and humans for the whole trek and arrange pick up at the end of the trek.

To be continued...

By Mereana Lewis.

Handy Colic Prevention Recipe

Get 1-2 cups of psyllium husks and mix with as little molasses as possible. Mix together with a cutting motion. When you can crumble the mixture to a damp bread crumb consistency press the mixture onto a baking tray covered with glad wrap and then place the tray in the sun. The sun will dry the mixture out and help it to hold together. Store in an airtight container and use as required.

Psyllium is primarily used to assist in the removal of sand collections in the intestinal tract of equines, so therefore can help prevent sand build up and sequentially, sand related colic.

Recipe credit- Helen McIntyre.

Tipperary Stud Foaling News

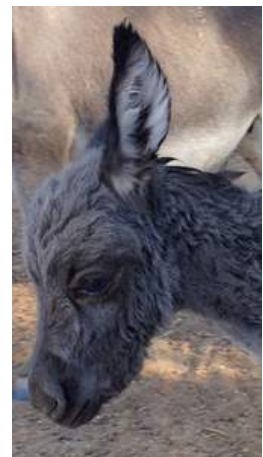
2021 has so far been a year of foals for Tipperary Miniature Donkey Stud. On 16 January Willowdale Tipperary birthed a male foal Tipperary Phoenix, and her best friend Joy's Bella Cristi, not to be outdone, gave birth to a little jenny Tipperary Bella Cara a few hours later. Both foals were sired by Malakai Zeus. Phoenix' colouring is very similar to his dams, light grey dun. Bella Cara is also grey dun but unusually has nil light points.

A little later in January, on 27th, Tipperary Paolo was born to Donkey Magic Thumbelina, sired by Clovercrest Pompeii. Paolo's colouring was very dark, almost black at birth but has lightened to dark chocolate to date. Like all Pompeii foals, he has a distinctive small white star at birth, which gradually diminishes to a few white hairs on his forehead. We call it "Pompeii's Stamp of Authenticity" as his foals never fail to bear his mark.

On 7th April Daisy Downs Holly birthed Tipperary Hermione, sired by Clovercrest Pompeii, a sweet very fluffy jenny who is a dream to photograph. Again grey-dun like her dam, and with Pompeii's white star mark, she proceed to charm everyone immediately and wanted to befriend all the other donkeys straight away. After a few days of trying to "protect" her from the herd, Holly gave up and permitted Hermione to mix with them all. She loves attention from humans, donkeys and dogs alike. At 5 weeks old, together with her dam, Hermione attended the "Animal Aid Abroad" walk for International Donkey Day in the hills and behaved impeccably. That day she won many hearts.

Holly's bonded friend, Daisy Downs Honeysuckle, birthed her male foal Tipperary Zander on 10th June, sired by Malakai Zeus. Light grey-dun like his dam, Zander was born with a strange lump-like feature on his lower lip. We took him with Honeysuckle to vet Duncan Hargest on 18th June. The lump turned out to be a totally benign, an odd-looking bunch of skin cells attached by a thread. Duncan simply removed it without any problem. Zander is a very confident foal and never fails to interact with his humans when we are in the paddock. His favourite trick is stopping us from poop-scooping by placing a front hoof in the scoop, so we are forced to stop and give him the cuddles he is seeking.

The first three foals are now weaned from their dams and play and snooze together happily. The two younger foals join in too. Much time is spent watching their antics. They now know their names, are easily haltered, walk nicely on a lead and give up their hooves for the farrier. After their weaning from Mum, Phoenix, Bella Cara and Paolo learned over 4 days of one hourly lessons each day, to load easily on a trailer or in a float. All are ready for their new homes with their new families. Phoenix and Paolo will be going together to a small acreage in Yallingup and Bella Cara to Bedforddale to a veritable menagerie of farm animals, where she will be companions with a miniature pony. By Margaret Lockyear.



Above: Bella Cara on her birthday.



Below: Zander on his birthday.

Left: Hermione on her birthday.

Right: Phoenix on his birthday.

Bottom left: Paolo on his birthday. Note the Pompeii mark.

Below: Bella Cara at the ramp, Phoenix on the left, and Paolo sight unseen on their final day of loading training.

Unstressed, happy foals.



Below: Hermione at 5 weeks old on the Animal Aid Abroad walk.



Three Days at the Poultney's

It all started on Monday the 13th of September when Lesley arrived at Mereana's at Quindanning. It was a quick load up and out the gate and off to East Pingelly.

On arrival at the Poultney's, we again did a quick unload and were out with Civray and Clyde whilst Elizabeth and Sarah saddled Tama and Tane'. We were off to Milton Rock to view the wildflowers and enjoy the flowering countryside. All was going well when we stopped to make some minor harness adjustments. It was then that Tama responded to some silent conversations that he and Clyde had been having. After separating the two, we found we had some broken harness. This resulted in us leaving Clyde's cart in the paddock. Motto of the story is give the donkeys time to reacquaint before heading out for a drive. Also remember to allow space between your animals if possible.

After returning to the homestead, we unharnessed and unsaddled and then Mereana and Elizabeth went off to collect the abandoned cart. This in itself proved to be another entertaining story. Just remember it was boggy, wet, uneven ground, knee high grass, snake infested even though they may or may not have been sleeping, getting very dark and two humans do not pull a donkey cart well!

The next day began with teaching Duffy to load on the trailer. This proved superfluous as Duffy worked it out for himself, mostly because there was food involved. He also had to run through all those mundane obstacles, walking over tarps, bagging out, standing on tyres which he excels at. In the meantime, Lesley and Mereana were inspecting the damage to Clyde's harness from the previous day. Luckily, we were able to "borrow" replacements from Elizabeth (these may unfortunately not find their way back to the Poultney tack shed). Next, we were off again with Clyde and Civray harnessed, Tane' in saddle and Sarah riding Perdita (her Australian Andalusian) accompanied by Misha (Sarah's 7-month-old kelpie pup) at 11 am.

Transversing the farm we found ourselves confronted by a "lake" which we had to cross. This was easy for Perdita who basically doggy paddled her way to the other side while Misha was splashing around in delight. Civray bravely walked around the edge of the 'lake' whilst Clyde ate his way through the crop – don't tell Geoff!

We eventually ended up stopping for our picnic lunch at Gardener's sheds about 5 km from home. Luckily, we had yards for the donkeys and Perdita whilst we perched on tree stumps and some very old and dirty chairs. After a short rest we were off again traipsing through the paddocks. We had an interesting time which included spotting a very big fox, watching Sarah stay seated on a frisky, bucking Perdita and Clyde for some reason enthusiastically cantering. To make matters interesting, Misha managed to find innumerable bones which she managed to leave right in the middle of our path – thankyou Misha!

We were now homeward bound and just to add a bit of interest, Mereana decided she would be adventuresome and ride Tane' the last stretch. It was entertaining seeing her "attempt" at mounting. We were now in the home ward stretch and it was Lesley and Clyde's time to show their colours. When asked to halt, Clyde said "I can see the home paddock...." so Lesley repeated the request which resulted in an interesting discussion....

Three Days at the Poultney's cont.

It was now 3pm and time for refreshments so we unharnessed and headed back to the house. Our break was not for long. Elizabeth and Sarah wanted some advice with their donkeys' hooves, so Mereana commenced a mini teaching session. It was also now Archer's turn to show his colours by practicing his loading skills on Mereana's trailer. We also took the opportunity to look at needed adjustments to Elizabeth's four-wheel cart. You won't believe we had now completed our donkey activities for the day, and it was only left for Elizabeth and Sarah to do their normal evening routine. We still had the next days outing to enjoy but for now it was showers, dinner and typing this article.

Our last day dawned bright and sunny which we watched rise as we trotted down the road (much to Lesley's horror as she is NOT a morning person). This early start at 5am, was due to the fact Sarah was due in Williams that morning. Joining the usual bunch, Tama, Civray and Clyde was Archer being ridden by Elizabeth. We didn't have long but managed to include a couple of water crossings and the need to negotiate one steep riverbank. We were waiting for all the dandelions to open to the sun but even they were still in bed by the time we returned to the delights of a Devonshire Tea, compliments of Elizabeth.

After saying goodbye to Sarah, Elizabeth took Mereana and Lesley to see the Everlastings at Milton Rock and then on to find some Spider and Donkey Orchids. We also saw our first snake of the season!

Unfortunately, the time had now come to pack up and depart. The pleasure of times away like this are hard to explain, no worries, just you, the countryside, and your donkey!

Again many, many thanks to all the Poultney's for a wonderful, wonderful stay. By Mereana, Lesley, Elizabeth and Sarah.



Images from left to right.

Top row:

- Tama and Tane all ready.
- Quick adjustments.
- Duffy loading like a star!

Middle row:

- Lesley and Civray looking back at the elusive water.
- Mereana and Clyde choosing to brave the crop instead.
- Perdita leading the donkeys.

Bottom:

- Getting ready to go again.
- Lunchtime display.
- Lots of farrering help!

