

Devon Horse & Pony Sanctuary with Brantome Police Horses

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2021



Welcome to DHAPS Summer Newsletter

Hello and welcome to DHAPS summer newsletter and supporters of Brantome Police Horses who have just started to follow Devon Horse & Pony Sanctuary.

This is a new chapter in the life of both sanctuaries.

There is so much to talk about that it is difficult to know where to begin, so let's start with the arrival in Devon of six retired Metropolitan Police/Therapy horses and two miniature donkeys, Harriet and Edward.

Lewis, Johnny Johnson, Gallipoli, Ranger, Kingston, and Guardian arrived at the end of June, where they have been 'in retirement' at our sister charity Brantome Police Horses.

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Ask anyone that is retired, and they will probably tell you that they have never been so busy. It is the same for these amazing horses. Over the last 12 years they have been engaging with thousands of visitors at our sister organisation Brantome Police Horses and working with children and adults with a whole range of mental health issues, disabilities and learning difficulties.

They really enjoy interaction with their admiring public especially Lewis, who often thinks that visitors have only come to see him and why are they bothering with all the rest. Such a different story to when we first offered him a home for life when he would try to hide all 18.3 hands of him in his stable with his head stuck in the corner thinking no one could see him, now he wants to be the centre of attraction all the time.

However, it is time to for them all to slow down a little and enjoy their beautiful new environment in Devon.

These boys have been through so much in their careers. They have been brave warriors and protected the streets of London . We are very pleased to be able to offer them a kind and loving home until the end of their days to thank them for serving our country. Unfortunately unlike Police officers , they do not come with a pension and the Police force do not have sufficient resources to look after their old horses in retirement. So we ask you to help support them. Please look at the website on 'How You Can Help 'page or the 'Donate' page to help towards their feed, their pedicures, their teeth and their general well being.

<https://www.dhaps.org.uk>

They will still have a few visitors to keep their days interesting, but these visits will be small in numbers.

We want the emphasis to be on people of all ages who will benefit from spending time with them and of course we hope that supporters of Brantome Police Horses who want to meet up with old friends will stay in touch and visit if they can.



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We were very pleased to be able to re-open our gates on the 19th July 21 observing the current Covid restrictions and immediately we were able to help a very brave young girl. For confidentiality purposes we cannot identify anyone who comes to see us unless they give permission and in her case she wouldn't be old enough and it wouldn't be appropriate.

She was accompanied by two carers, who's dedication and compassion was humbling.

After her first day it was clearly apparent that her time with the naughty donkeys, and the gentle giants had really helped her. She told us this was the best day she had spent in a very long time and found it very therapeutic. She enjoyed herself so much that she came twice more that week and wants to be a regular 'helper' at the sanctuary. The horses certainly did a very good job.

Covid has had a devastating impact on the nation's mental health and small sanctuaries such as ours are rare and incredibly valuable.

We are immediately helping people with other problems including anxiety attacks, depression, and disabilities.

Our method is simple we don't offer horse assisted therapy, there are no therapists we let the horses work their magic.

We are first and foremost an animal sanctuary, so we keep a careful eye on the animals to make sure that the visits don't have a detrimental effect on the horses, and we are careful not to let them do too much. As far as they are concerned some very nice people come, make a fuss of them and groom them and maybe give them a treat.



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Going forward with the Sanctuary and it's visitors.

Although remote, visiting has always been a part of what the sanctuary offers, it is now becoming more and more popular with people that would like to be with the equines for one reason or another, which brings us on to a nice little story which involves a lovely gentleman who visited us recently and is confined to a wheelchair. He had come along to sample our 'same height viewing experience' This is where you are seated at head height with the likes of Johnny & Lewis, two of our retired Metropolitan Police Horses. The experience was amazing and he just couldn't get over how close he could be with them. Unfortunately due to inadequate disabled WC facilities his visit had to be cut short.

Since July 2020 we have been in contact with Dartmoor National Park and subsequently submitted planning to have a small disabled toilet installed to allow us to have all the necessary facilities in place. Also a change of use. Now after some 13 months delay we are still no further forward in implementing a crucial facility to enable us to open to all walks of life.

Amanda Sutherland LLb (Hons) PG Dip LPS a top Planning Solicitor has very kindly donated her time and expertise to assist the charity in our dealings with the planning authorities. We would like to thank her for taking time out of her incredibly busy schedule. Thank you for your support, advice and expertise, without which we would have struggled to continue to give these wonderful animals a forever home.

If you would like to show your support to the Charity in making it accessible to everyone please feel free to contact Dartmoor National Park planning with your thoughts. They can be reached at planning@dartmoor.gov.uk, quoting Application no: 0583/20



An image of a composting toilet for the disabled similar to the one we require



Image to show how disabled people can interact with the horses

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Chris Hills, who helped run Brantome Police Horses has moved back to Devon with his family and will continue to look after the residents. He has great affinity with animals especially his beloved Police Horses. His all-time favourite Police Horse was Walter, a quirky Metropolitan Police Horse who we said a sad farewell to a few years ago. But the likes of Johnny, Lewis and Rio will keep him very busy. His new role as General Manager is to make sure that the sanctuary survives and we maintain a small and intimate residence where all the staff and volunteers know the history and show love and care for the horses, ponies and donkeys.

Three rescue ponies have found new loving permanent loan homes this summer 'Peaches' who is a difficult case as she is sensitive to rich grass and contracts laminitis very easily has gone to an experienced home with Emma and her children. She is adored and loved by two little girls and is having a wonderful and useful life.

Victor and Rudolph have gone to a lovely couple who together with their family have given them an amazing home where they are loved and given the best of care.

Vera is about to go out to a fantastic home. Joy worked with us for a while and developed an affinity with Vera. She is now able to offer an experienced, loving home to a Dartmoor pony who at one time, faced a bleak future before she came to us.

Amber our little moorland pony, is still having trust issues. This little pony was thrown out onto the moor when her elderly owner died, and this poor animal couldn't cope with the harsh rigours of Dartmoor. A farmer took her in, but she had obviously been on the moor for some time, he didn't want to keep her so asked if we would offer her a home. Ponies that have lived most of their lives as pets would find it very hard to adapt to a solitary life within a difficult terrain such as Dartmoor. We are hoping that now we have more volunteers, there will be time to really show her lots of love and care so she will start to trust again. Fingers crossed as she would make a lovely companion pony for someone one day.



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Fiesta who has been with us since 2011 is still in residence. This poor horse has been through so much in her life and we have no idea how old she is. We believe that she was stolen at some point in her life as she is very well bred and had such grace and poise. When we were asked if we could offer her a home, she had been rescued by a girl who knew very little about horses but couldn't let this horse down. She was abandoned behind a Ford garage - hence her name along with 4 others. Horse Watch took the others in not realising there was a fifth horse round the corner. She had many injuries probably due to years of abuse and racing a cart at high speed on the road. She had also been hobbled with wire which over the years had eaten into one of her back legs, but how despicable is this, she had been used as an ashtray with many cigarette burns all over her body. She was literally skin and bones and could hardly hold herself up.

Ann one of our volunteers who has just celebrated 10 years with us, has always loved her as they started their time at DHAPS together. She makes sure that she indulges her every whim, is totally spoilt and given lots of hugs and as the years have gone by Fiesta has begun to trust again. Unfortunately, arthritis has set into her back legs, but as long as she is happy and we can keep her relatively pain free she will always have a home.

Herbie, our Miniature Spotted Horse has just celebrated being 30 years old. He has been in our care since 2011. He was used for breeding purposes by an unscrupulous person who had many stallions in one field. They would fight to the death. One day when the RSPCA were called yet again, they found many dead animals in the field with 19 year old Herbie suffering from loss of blood and terrible injuries. After gelding and a long convalescence with the RSPCA they asked if we would give him a home and so now he and his harem of two girlie ponies live contentedly together.



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We don't like to talk about money and we would like to say that we are a wealthy charity but we certainly are not. Like most charities nowadays we struggle to keep going. We are a small charity who likes to think that we know our horses, ponies and donkeys inside out. Everyone who helps here, knows their stories and how they came to be in our care. Not all animal charities can say that. On our website on the Donate page there are all different ways you can help us. So, if you can help in any way, we would be so very grateful. <https://www.dhaps.org.uk>

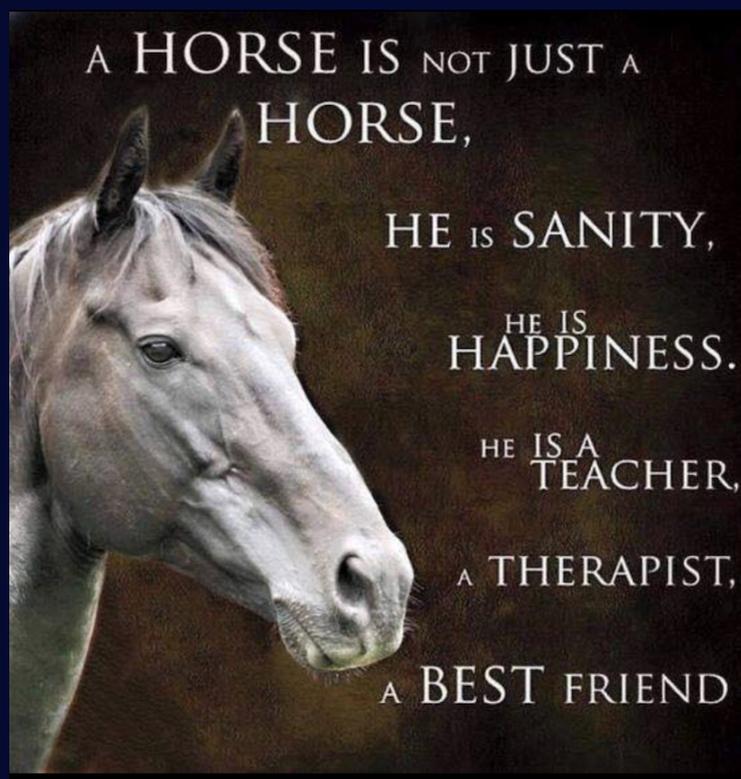
PLEASE, please, please! like comment and share on all our social media posts on FB and Instagram, this is so important for us.

Just as a footnote, Edward and Harriet, our miniature donkeys, have caused a stir since they arrived from BPH in France. The residents already here have never seen or heard anything like it. They are extremely naughty. If you put anything down, such as a brush or feed bowl, they make off with it. They are constantly getting out of their enclosure, and they delight in having everyone running around after them. It's the highlight of their day. They make you smile every time you look at them and you can't help but laugh at their antics.

Like all our animals they bring joy into many lives and touch many hearts.

We will close this newsletter with hope for the future and hope that Dartmoor Planning will see sense and try to work with us.

Roland, Alison, Chris and all the staff and volunteers wish you a great summer and we shall look forward to updating you all with our Christmas/New Year newsletter.





"Saving just one horse will not change the world, but surely it will change the world for that one horse."

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