

As we were going to print with our newsletter we received the devastating news that Lazarus, the horse who inspired us to found our charity had died at the age of almost twenty years . He had been with us for just short of 17 years. This is a tribute to a great horse.

Lazarus



Many years ago our co-founder, Stella Marsden, was sent out by the Wildlife Department to investigate a baboon that was being held in captivity. Whilst she was there she saw the horse pictured on the left above. Apart from being emaciated, he had was so weak he had fallen on a fire and burnt his leg badly. He was so thin his hip joints were protruding through his skin. She sought out some food and water for him and went off in search of a vet who could euthanize him. It is a remote part of The Gambia and it took four days to find a vet. When they arrived back at the horse Stella said there was just something about the horse that told her he was not ready to die. He had managed to stand and with the little food and water she had given him was tottering about and trying to eat. She continued to provided food for him and visited daily.

Shortly after this episode, she was due to come over to UK on leave and showed the pictures to her sister Heather Armstrong, the Director of the charity. She said that there were more and more horses like this one who was named Lazarus because he rose from the dead and that something needed to be done to help them and on his back The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust was born.

Lazarus and Stella had an incredible bond with each other and he seemed to know when she was around. The staff said they knew when she was in the village because Lazarus would start to whicker gently to greet her.

Lazarus gradually regained his strength and although he was a bit of a character he was always incredibly gentle and loved people and attention. He was nicknamed the Boss by the staff and was allowed to get away with lots of mischief because he was the boss. He was able to undo stable doors and slip off headcollars and was frequently seen streaking across the African Savannah at high speed in search of a mare .



The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

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Lazarus inspired us daily with his passion to overcome all obstacles both mental and physical and his absolute joy of life.

We have so many happy memories of fun times with him such as the time we took a picnic on the back of the cart to a local viewpoint and whilst we were eating it Lazarus untied himself and made his own way home for his dinner leaving us to carry everything home ourselves, or the time we had a Ministerial visit and whilst presenting him to the Minister, Laz, who had never seen The Director in a skirt before grabbed the hem and lifted it over her head. Lazarus would turn his hoof to everything, cart work, ploughing, he loved being a demonstration horse and he loved going for hacks, he even had the great honour of having a set of harness made and given to him by the late, great Cynthia Hayden. He helped us in so many ways and always shared his stable with a succession of his pet bantams who would raise brood after brood with him in his stable.

In his later years Lazarus started to develop arthritis but more disturbingly he started to have bouts of colic which became increasingly severe. It was due to a serious colic that he was put down on the 18th November 2018.

Lazarus was given a Gambian burial with prayers and all the staff present and was laid to rest under the big old tree in the yard. He leaves a huge legacy and we owe it to him to continue what he began.

We would like to give our sincere thanks to Alex Raftery and Lauren Gummery and our staff who cared for him during his last illness. Thank you Lazarus for your love and loyalty and rest in peace old friend.



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