

## ***The Donkey Sanctuary of Nerja, updates***

### **Eco donkey, this time with solar power !**



We rather like this donkey and sun power idea idea, being tried out in Africa. There is a battery under the seat which stores the power from the solar panels and provides power for the lights at night, as well as mobile phone charging during the day, anyway, it makes a nice picture, and we are trying to work out if we can use the idea for the rescue crew!

### **Rubbish eco donkeys & Busmans holiday !**

In case you wonder what our rescue crew does for their holidays ( holidays, some hope !) well, the answer is they go and see more donkeys, in Castelbuno, in Sicily !

In Castelbuono the donkeys represent a part of the big project that is called "Save the world" and by 2007, the Mayor, Mario Cicero, realised his ideas to replace four waste trucks with six donkeys, especially in the old part of Castelbuono. In replacing the rubbish trucks with donkeys, Mayor Cicero also took into account that the residents wanted more rubbish collections, and he says " as it has turned out, the donkeys are far more quicker and efficient at removing the regular waste and as a result, in 2007 the waste collection has increased from 140.239 kg to 2.468.147 kg and more importantly, there was an increase of about 20 per cent to 829.956 kg of separated waste."



The donkeys don't work more than five hours a day, and carry about 100 kg of waste for one route and their equipment consists of two containers, one for mixed and the other one for organic waste. Moreover, there are many other positive aspects due to this project, not least being the fact that the residents of Castelbuno now feel they have a satisfactory and reliable waste collection and re-cycling system in place that can be built and expanded upon.

Ps The eagle eyed readers amongst you may recognise Harriet (who founded Nerja) in the first picture !



## ***Baby donkeys – Pinky & Perky***

Well, they are both now at the stage when they are not babies any longer, and the old problem of spring turns a young mans fancy etc has arisen !!!, and when Perky “jumped” on Jim the rescue when he was trying to patch a damaged fence, enough is enough, and we need to have the vet in for a bit of the old nip and tuck, so to speak !

A donkeys idea of endearing itself to its intended parter involves setting about biting their legs to try to get them onto the ground, then chew away at the neck, before trying to, well enough said ! But as for Jim the rescue, he received quite a few love bites before he managed to escape, and we would love to be a fly on the wall when he tried to explain them to his better half !

Seriously though, it is accepted that more people die from donkey rage than in plane crashes, and as Pinky and Perky have tried, very hard, to become “involved” with our elderly ladies (and just about everyone else ) in the last few days, we had no option but to purchase more fences and use vital space to keep the pair of them apart from everyone else, so if anyone would like to sponsor our vets charges of 300 Euros each for their operation, we would be ever so grateful, and we can then (after a couple of weeks) return again to near normality.

Reading this back, it feels rather odd that we are asking rather than adopt a donkey, to please sponsor a nip and tuck !!!!!

## ***MORE BABY DONKEY STORIES, TREVOR, ZIGGY AND STARDUUST***



We still can't get over the idea that the kids club persuaded us to call a Spanish donkey **TREVOR** !, but that is another story, but we thought you might like to see this rather nice picture of them all together, settling down against the howling gales !

Picture aside, the time is shortly approaching when we shall also have to ask the vet for more nip and tuck on this lot, so at this rate, we will need to be out and about with the proverbial begging bowl, for the next 1,200 Euros !

Regular supporters, without whose support over the last four years we would undoubtedly have closed, know only too well of the problems we have had with the special new licences we need to keep cats and dogs under new (and welcomed) animal welfare laws, but we never expected we would be caught up in the need to spend so much money on new kennels, runs and isolation areas for dogs and cats. Whilst, thanks to many locals and visitors who have purchased new kennels, paid for gates and fences, we now have enough resources for dealing with a dozen or so dogs and the same number of kittens, in emergencies, we are still a long way short of being able to house the number of smaller animals that continue to be dumped, or brought to us. The alternative if we do not keep them is the local pound and inevitable death..

As we review our costs daily, and with all the extra expense for new kennels and isolation areas for cats and dogs, we were wondering if it would be cheaper to board out the dogs and cats. We found it very useful to read in the Costa Animal Society (CAS) newsletter that their kennel costs for 25 dogs is €1,050 a week plus another €1,000 a month for the vets bills, making €5,000 a month in all. That soon put paid to that idea, especially as that is just about what we have to pay out for everything in a quiet month.

Shortly after reading the CAS newsletter, CAS has launched a major publicity campaign saying they are broke and for the first time, can't pay their monthly bills. Whilst we sympathise with them we scratched our heads and managed to come up with the fact that in August of last year, we actually ended up 312 Euros ahead, the first time in 13 years !

Course, that was short lived, as our number crunchers pointed out (a) that was because we hadn't paid some bills, and (b) we forgot about our 48,000 Euros owed in loans !

Luckily, we are down from our previous all time high a few years ago of over 50 dogs and 30 odd cats, to currently about 15 dogs and puppies and less than a dozen cats and kittens but the stumbling block in our financial planning is that our primary aims are to rescue and care for rather larger animals, weighing up to 500 kilos instead of 10 kilos for dogs, so our boarding costs might be a bit higher. At the Nerja sanctuary alone, we currently have 15 donkeys, three mules, one horse, ohh, plus three pigs, two turkeys and 14 chickens but no partridge in a pear tree. This gives some idea of what that lot costs but the way it is going, we think the turkeys, chickens and pigs had better watch out for our cost cutting measures.

### ***MORE RESCUES THAN EVER***

We have had ( more ) terrible winds in Nerja and we lost donkey roofs etc but also our donkey fences, still it keep us all busy and as they say, idle hands etc., what a laugh !

We mentioned last time that had undertaken a record 26 rescue calls in 48 hours, well the winds continue, and we are still receiving more rescue calls than ever and as a result, we regretfully are more than full, yet again, and we have to continue the unacceptable practice of "parking" ill and elderly animals in fields to keep an eye on them and to try and patch them up there, as we just don't have enough room in the sanctuary, and apart from all else, this takes up more valuable time, and costs even more money.

The "parking" of elderly, ill and injured animals is quite different from our normal routine of just tying up wandering animals where they are found, and waiting for their owners to collect them. With the elderly, ill or injured animals that we need to bring into shelter and care, we just don't have the room to accommodate them so there is nothing else we can do but tie them up safely and make them as comfortable as we can. Yet we feel terrible about it as many of them need shelter and continuous care, and the makeshift tarpaulins and plastic sheets we use to try to provide basic shelter just gets blown away in these high winds and the animals are left exposed to the elements which is frankly, unacceptable, but the reality is that unless we can find larger and permanent land and premises, we just have to make do and mend as best we can.

More detailed article available via SOLTALK APRIL ISSUE

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or, also available via our site [www.donkeynewsletter.com](http://www.donkeynewsletter.com)

***( you might have to cut and paste the above links )***

### ***MORE SPANISH VISITORS***

We are delighted that we are now receiving many more Spanish visitors than ever before, especially at week ends and public holidays, and we are doubly thankful that our Saturday kids club has many more bilingual kids than ever as they are a great help with non English speakers, and after all, this is Spain. It is not just English kids who speak Spanish, but we have Spanish kids as well, and whilst some speak English, many don't, hence why we rely upon the bi lingual local kids quite a bit.

On a serious note, we are changing all of our signs and notices over to Spanish first and English and other languages (when we can) further down, so please persevere when visiting if you can't find the information in English and ask you just look a bit further.

Spanish visitors is a very good sign as they are almost all families, and usually come as 3 or even 4 generations at a time ! And if we are to educate all sorts of people on the need to care for animals, then we firstly to get them in to us !



## THE FUTURE !

Yes, optimistic as ever, we believe there is a future, thanks to all of you whom loyally support us, but where we are located in Nerja continues to be a problem as the Town hall has now published a plan to build hotels along the area ! As well as widening the N340 road, which will probably include us, but time will tell.

We are also full to capacity, (truth be known, we are over capacity) and also have some 17 sick and elderly animals who really should be with us, rather than stuck in the fields with the attendant problems of having to visit them 3, 4 or 5 times a day and night.

We have been looking for years to try to find some permanent or long term land that would be suitable for us, but with the increase in local schools and local kids and families visiting us and learning about animals, we are loathed to move from Nerja, but prices of land here remains far too high for us to be able to afford anything large enough to accommodate us.

However, we might just yet be lucky as we are in talks with a local, and prominent Spanish family, who have suggested they would be willing to sell us 50,000 meters of lovely land, complete with suitable tree areas for shelter etc., and with direct access to the main road, with no track ! And within easy walking access of a fantastic beach, bordered by National park land and a river, may sound too good to be true, not at all, but the stumbling block is the cost of buying it and putting the infrastructure in place.

Now, you may also say what on earth do you want with 50,000 meters of land, well it is actually 25,000 m<sup>2</sup> but they are willing to include another 25,000 m<sup>2</sup> close by, which an awful lot of it is also a mountain ! , but it does have flat areas bordering directly onto a river, and could make a wonderful nature reserve for other rescued animals. Not least the tortoises !!!!!!!

So, what would we do with the 25,000 m<sup>2</sup> that borders the road on one side, a wood on another, and a river at the bottom ! Electricity nearby and water on site. It has bags of accessible land to accommodate our needs for rescued animals far into the future, and all we need to do is find the dosh !

***We need about 500,000 Euros and wonder if there is any fairy persons out there, or lottery winners who could help us out !  
We can but live in hope !!!!!***

Thats it folks, must dash and lots of love and kisses from all at Nerja

