

Horse's mouth

September/October 2010



*A little horse
with a big
injury*

*Seven rescues
in two weeks!*

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Welcome...

...to the September/October 2010 edition of *Horse's mouth*.

We were beginning to think we would never get a newsletter out this time, as whenever it was close to being finished yet another rescue happened and we had to stop the press!

In the past two weeks we have rescued a total of seven horses, and the centre is now full to bursting.

It has been very difficult, but rewarding, too, as the horses are recovering. Some have bigger problems than others, but we will do what we can to help them all.

It's not been all hard slog since the last newsletter, though. In August we escaped the centre to attend a glittering award ceremony in Torre Vieja - where we were lucky enough to win the main award of the evening.

As usual, we have been supported in our work by some great fundraising efforts, and we've had lots of fun at the centre with our regular open days and events, plus a few special events, too.

Sue and Rod Weeding

Rope leaves horse's leg dying



Just when we thought it could not get any more shocking, a little pony with a big injury arrived at the centre...

The pony, that we called Faith, was found at a local yard, with horrific injuries to her legs.

She had been tethered with a rope around her neck, and when she became entangled it made deep cuts into her legs. The owner did not call a vet or remove the rope, and by the time she was discovered the circulation to her

lower front right leg had been cut off, leaving the flesh dying.

As the dead flesh fell away, bone, tendons and ligaments became visible. Dorothea Dudi von Dewitz, the vet treating Faith, says she has never seen anything like it, and doubts whether any other vets have either. She said she would only expect to

see such a sight on a veterinary teaching model – not a live horse!

Dorothea estimates Faith would have been dead within two days if treatment had not been started when it was by the woman who found her.

Neighbour saved Faith

Faith was only rescued

thanks to Sarah Gibbons of Palms Equestrian, Catral. Sarah's yard neighbours the yard where Faith was kept. She found out about Faith's injuries when a worker from her neighbour's yard asked if she had any ointment to put on a cut leg. Sarah went to look at the horse and was appalled by what she saw. She told the owner a vet must be called, but he refused to allow a vet on the premises.

Sarah phoned Dorothea and under her instruction bought and administered antibiotics and other medications, visiting the horse twice a day, often with the help of her young daughter, Billie. But, it soon became clear that the little horse needed more help than Sarah could give.

Said Sarah, "It was heartbreaking seeing this little horse in such a state. We were doing everything we could, with Dorothea's advice, but the leg was getting worse. I didn't think she could survive much longer without a vet and knew I had to get her out of that yard."

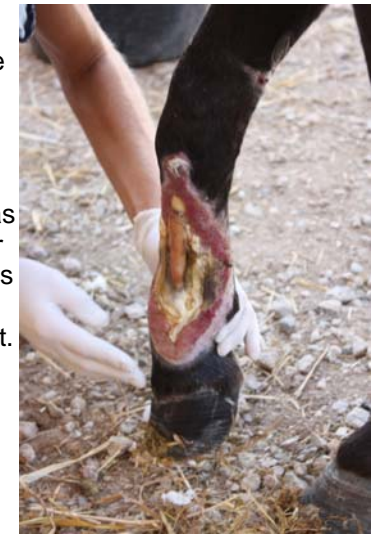
With the owner still banning the vet from the premises, Sarah persuaded him to allow her to keep the horse, that she called Babe, at her yard while its leg was bad to make it easier for her to treat it. As soon as Faith was safely in her yard, Sarah called the vet.

A week later, the horse came to the rescue centre so that the intensive treatment she needed could be continued thanks to the help of all the centre's supporters.

As the horse did not belong to Sarah, we had to get permission from Seprona, the branch of the Guardia responsible for animal welfare issues, to take it. As soon as officers saw photos of the horrific injury they did not hesitate.

Concerned about the state of other horses in the yard, Sarah then made a statement to Seprona, which led to the arrest of two people on cruelty charges.

Despite all she's been through, Faith is a lovely, gentle little horse.



Above: Faith's leg as it was when she arrived at the centre

Below: Faith today, with her leg in plaster



Stem cell treatment used to rebuild Faith's leg

The injury looked too bad to heal, but stem cell treatment is offering a lifeline for Faith...



Nobody knew what to expect - the results have astonished us all

Treating Faith's leg has proved quite a challenge for Dorothea, but she is doing a fantastic job and Faith's recovery is progressing better than anyone thought possible.

As she'd not seen anything like the wound on Faith's leg before, Dorothea had to research the best possible treatments. She pored through reports and scientific papers and consulted with one of Spain's top horse vets, Gaspar Castelijn's in Barcelona.

The result of this research was to try stem cell treatment to help the wound heal. This involves separating platelets from Faith's blood to get stem cells. The stem cells are then made into a gel that is applied directly to the wound. The theory is that the stem cells will stimulate tissue growth.

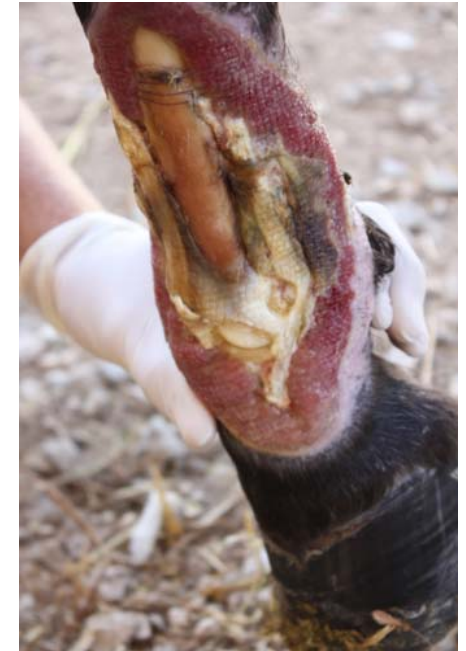
Nobody knew quite what to expect from the treatment – but the

results have astonished us all. Already, just a month after starting the stem cell treatment, there is a real difference to Faith's leg. Healthy flesh is growing and the bone is much less exposed.

Dorothea comes every night to see Faith, check the wound and cut out any infection. Every fourth day she applies the stem cell treatment. All treatments must be done at night to keep flies out of the wound.

Between treatments, Faith is kept with her leg in a plaster cast to support the exposed bone and joint and minimise the chance of collapse. It also helps prevent infection, which is always a danger with an exposed wound.

At the moment Faith has to stay in her stable 24 hours a day to keep her leg as still as possible, but Dorothea believes that she will soon be ready to start physiotherapy.

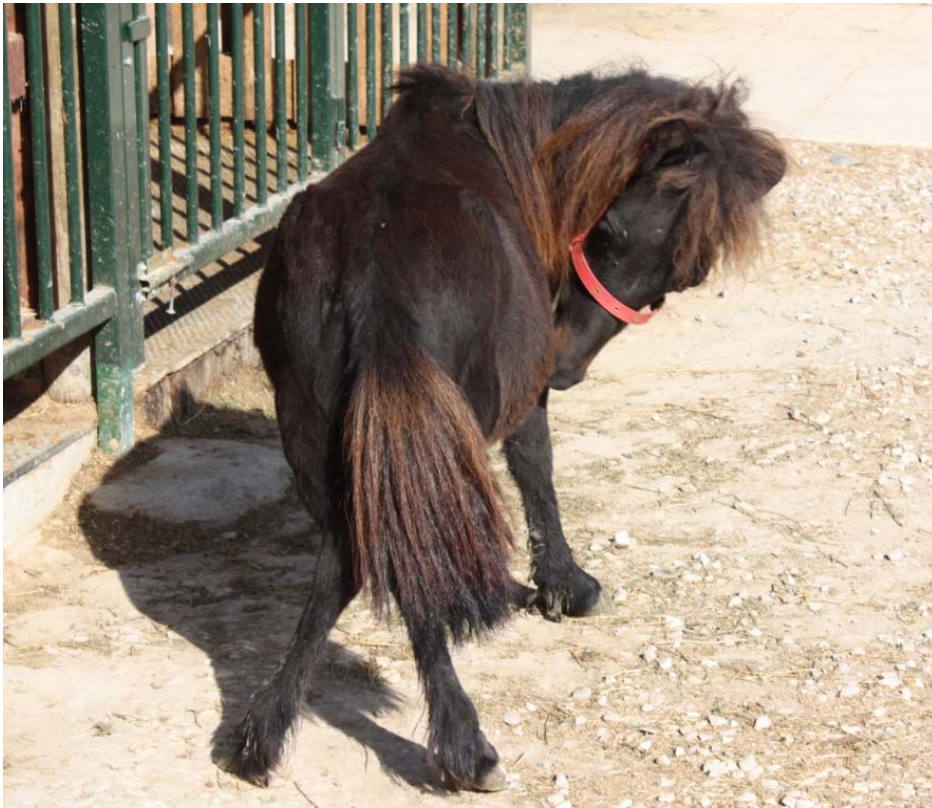


Left: Dorothea puts on the plaster cast

Top right: Faith's leg when she arrived at the centre August 27th

Bottom right: Faith's leg a month later

Meet Samson and Delilah



A busy week saw the arrival of two new horses...

In less than four days at the end of September, two new horses arrived at the rescue centre. Both had been abandoned.

The first was a tiny miniature, our smallest rescue horse so far. Abandoned in Callosa, he was taken to local cat

and dog rescue centre, APADAC, which called us for help.

It was immediately clear that this little horse, not much bigger than a German Shepherd, had huge problems. Deciding this meant he would need a big, strong name, Sue called him

Samson. His mane of beautiful long, dark hair fits the name very well.

Samson has a genetic deformity, having been born with an extra bone and joint in his back legs. This has left his back end deformed and his back legs splayed out.

Although rare, such genetic deformities are known to occur in miniature horses. An operation should be performed in the first four months of life to correct it. Sadly, Samson, who is thought to be around one year old, has been left untreated. We don't know if it is too late for Samson, but we are talking with top horse vet and specialist in leg and hoof problems, Gaspar Castelijns, about Samson's case. If anything can be done, Samson will travel to Gaspar's Barcelona clinic for treatment.

Of course, when the next horse arrived just three days later, she had to be called Delilah.

Delilah was found wandering the streets of Almoradi. She was taken in by the local police, who called us to collect her from the police station.

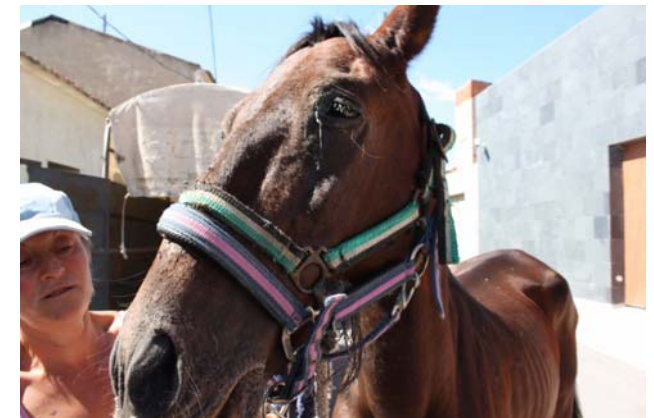
Delilah has clearly suffered serious neglect. She is very malnourished and had bad infections in her eyes and mouth. Her eyes were so inflamed when she arrived that

she looked like a boxer after a fight. She is likely to have been in considerable pain. She seems to be allergic to fly bites and may be suffering other allergies or problems from being fed inappropriate food.

Delilah settled in very quickly at the centre, and is already doing much better.

But, while she was instantly happy in her new stable, it took a little time to coax her out into the fields.

At first, she panicked and charged around, breaking down fences. We think that she was probably kept in a stable most of the time without being turned out.





Cookie comes home

Our tough little mini's back from Barcelona...

In the last newsletter, we brought you the story of Cookie's surgery in Barcelona. Well, Cookie is now back at the rescue centre and doing well.

Sporting special shoes, and with her legs bandaged for support,

Cookie is able to walk a lot more easily.

Before the surgery, Cookie could not stand upright and she would lean awkwardly when walking. Now, thanks to pioneering surgery by

Cookie is able to walk more easily

She will need constant monitoring for laminitis, though.

top horse vet Gaspar Castelijns, her legs are straight and her hooves are in the correct position.

She is a little slow as, being unused to this new, straight position, she is having to learn to walk all over again.

But, her determination to find food always gets her on her feet. If we turn our backs for a minute she will be rummaging around the yard looking for any food the other horses may have left.

We have to put a quick stop to this behaviour as, much to her annoyance, Cookie has to be on a strict diet to minimise the risk of laminitis returning. She is not allowed any rich foods.

In time, Cookie's condition should improve further. The tendons, which Gaspar stretched in surgery, should stretch further with use and the blood flow to her legs should increase.

Another whispering success

Adam Shereston returned to share his horsemanship skills

Adam Shereston was back in September and October to once again demonstrate his incredible horsemanship skills.

Working with various rescue horses, Adam put on a fascinating and informative show. He demonstrated how horse whispering, otherwise known as natural horsemanship, can be used to work with a horse's natural instincts. His method of working offers a gentle way to gain a horse's trust and train it without force or punishment.

Adam travels around Europe demonstrating and teaching his techniques, as well as training horses. Adam can be booked for private work and is always ready to work with horse charities across Europe.

Visit his website www.adamsherston.com or email him at sherri248@hotmail.com for details.

Adam works with Bronte, below, and Hope, bottom



Arrest in starving horses case



Police swoop on man suspected of starving Captain and Hope almost to death...

It's good news all round where Captain and Hope are concerned. Not only are the two horses doing incredibly well, but the person thought to have been responsible for abusing them has been arrested on animal mistreatment charges.

The 19-year-old youth was arrested after an investigation by Seprona (El Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza de la Guardia Civil).

Although we were unable to contact

Seprona when we found Captain and Hope starving in a barn in Daya Vieja, we did get a meeting with Seprona officers in Orihuela a few days later.

They were shocked by photos showing the state

of the horses and consulted their head office in Alicante. This led to a visit from the Alicante boss of Seprona to the horse centre and to the barn where the horses had been imprisoned.

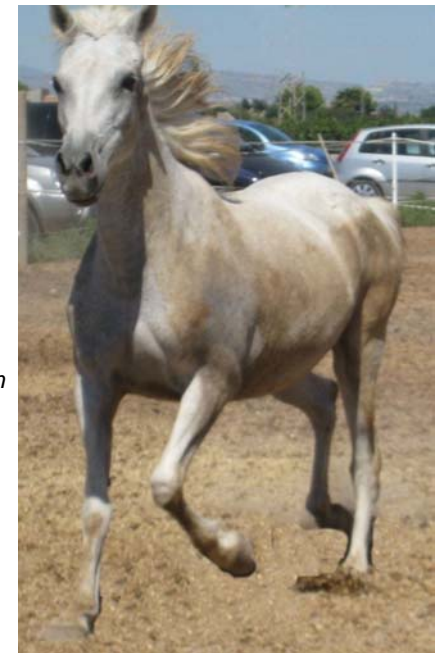
A short while later an arrest was made and charges of animal cruelty brought. We are now awaiting the outcome.

In the meantime, Captain and Hope are improving daily. While Captain is still very thin, he has put on lots of weight and is very happy with his new life.

Hope is virtually unrecognisable. The malnourished, nervous horse that came to us has blossomed into a lovely animal, who shows few signs of having been close to starvation a few months ago.

We have brought her into the arena a few times, once with horse whisperer Adam Shereston, and we have been amazed by how well she moves and what a fine horse she is. Sue thinks it will not be long before she is ready to be ridden again.

Officers were shocked by photos showing the state of Captain and Hope



Hope today, right and main picture

Below: Inside the barn, Captain and Hope were imprisoned amongst rubbish





Norwegian twins help centre

A lifelong passion for horses brought two of our volunteers to the centre...

Anyone who has visited the centre on an open day is likely to have bumped into our Norwegian volunteers, Kate and Solvi Jansen.

The twin sisters do an incredible amount of work for the centre, and are forever running

around attending fundraising events.

But, what most people don't know is just what fantastic experience the pair have working with horses. So, when Solvi turned up with these pictures of her as a jockey and showjumper,

and Kate competing in dressage, back in sixties, we couldn't resist taking the opportunity to publish the photos and to tell you all about Kate and Solvi.

The main photo shows Solvi at Øvrevoll Racetrack in Norway winning by eight lengths

and setting a new track record on her horse, Lucky Chance. Solvi trained the horse herself.

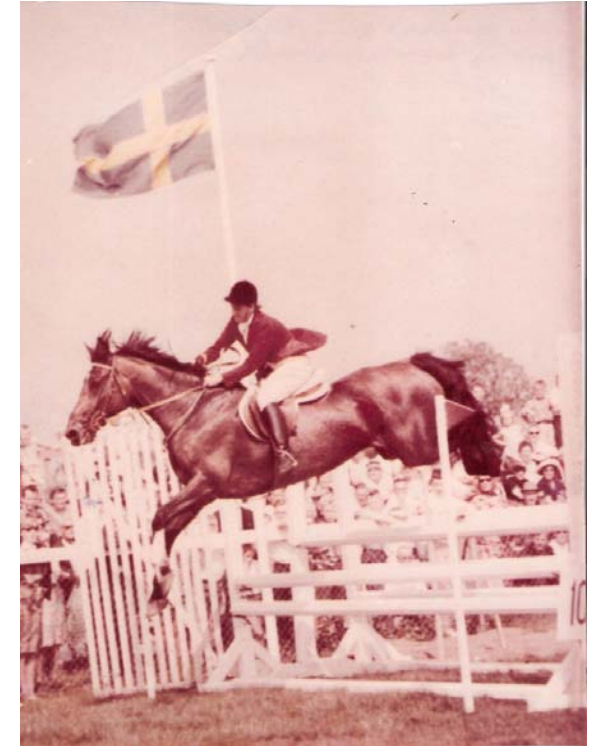
The horse jumping is called Feuerland, and Solvi is riding him here at a competition in Sweden, which she won.

Kate is shown below competing in dressage on her horse, Sambesi. Kate bought Sambesi as a three-year-old when she was 16 and trained him herself.

Kate competed in Scandinavia in dressage and show jumping before moving to Candada, where she trained horses and continued to compete.

Both sisters have retained their passion for horses, which is why they love to help the rescue centre.

As well as helping with fundraising, the twins sponsor a number of rescue horses. And, they recently made a very generous donation to help the centre develop much-needed facilities.



And the winner is ... Us



It was a glittering night of celebrations as we were named winner of the Coastrider Special Recognition Award...

A couple of months ago we were thrilled to be nominated and placed in the final three for two categories in the annual Coastrider newspaper's Pride of Spain Awards.

The winners were to be announced at a glittering ceremony at Torre Vieja Theatre.

Our volunteers turned out in force on the night,

dressed in all our finery, to await the Oscar-style announcement of the results. As the winners were drawn from the envelopes in each of our categories we held our breath – but we didn't win either.

We couldn't be too disappointed as the winners in both categories deserved their prize, and it was an

achievement just to be nominated. Besides, Sue felt a little relieved not to be called to the stage in front of hundreds of people.

The evening was drawing to a close and we'd had a wonderful time. But we had no idea what was about to happen next.

The compere took to the

stage. A final category, not in the programme, was to be announced. It was the main award of the night – the Special Recognition Award.

The compere started giving clues about the winner ... a registered charity ... started by a husband and wife team ... helps animals ... works with the police ... raising awareness about an important issue ... Could it be? – Yes, it was us.

There was no escape after all; Sue had to take to the stage. To rapturous applause, and managing not to fall over in her high heels, she made it down the steps from the back of the theatre where we were sitting to



Dressed to impress: the team in all our finery

collect the award. The judges had chosen us for "the outstanding work (we) have done in not only rescuing horses in distress but raising the issue in the public eye".

Sue thanked the judges

for the award and stressed that we are only able to achieve what we do through the hard work of all our volunteers, the support of the public and the help of the local media in publicising the issue.

Quesada Ladies Club Lunch

We had a fantastic day in September hosting the Quesada Ladies Club.

Sixty ladies from the club came along for a private lunch and horse tour.

A team of eight volunteers were on hand to make sure all went

smoothly, and everyone agreed the day was a huge success.

Pete, the chef, really had his work cut out cooking 78 fish cakes, amongst other things. Our events manager, George, described the grill as looking like the moon's

surface in fishcakes by the end of the afternoon.

As well as it being a fun day, the lunch raised around 600€ for the horses.

To book a private lunch for your group call 652 021 980.

Fundraising events



As ever, we've been overwhelmed by the generosity and hard work of everyone who has raised money for us. Here are just a few highlights...

A Friday night karaoke at the Porter House pub, Rioja Commercial Centre, was the setting for a fantastic fundraising event, which raised an incredible 505€.

A raffle was held by Jo and Tom Walsh, the owners of the pub, with loads of great prizes

donated by local people.

Two of our volunteers, twins Solvi and Kate Jansen, set up a stall, complete with before and after photos, to explain the work of the centre.

Pub goers were so impressed that, a few days later, 20 of them

came to the centre to see the work for themselves.

Saco's bar, El Limonar, also held a great fundraiser for us. Once again the twins were on hand to tell people all about the work of the centre. And, there was a special guest appearance

by Taffeta, our first rescue miniature horse. Taffeta loves being the centre of attention and is always happy to make a guest appearance. Saco's raised 518 euros for us, with 300 of that coming from the Renegades Dance Group.

A special mention has to go this month to our volunteer, Chris. Chris can regularly be found helping out on open days and at evening events.

But her hard work does not stop there. Since she started volunteering with us a few months ago, Chris has become a bit of a fundraising superwoman.

She has dreamt up all kinds of creative fundraising ideas, including making a get well card for Cookie and charging people a euro to sign it. She has also gone to bars with a bucket, organised lucky dips and gone door to door selling bric-a-brac to her neighbours.

Chris's efforts have raised over 1000 euros, and she's showing no signs of letting up yet.

Main photo: Mike Rees, Solvi Jansen, Jackie Heslien, Kate Jansen and Jo Walsh at the Porter House

Right: Chris with Charity the donkey

Below: Sue with Taffeta and Solvi at Saco's bar



Five more horses rescued



Terrified horse helped in dramatic roadside rescue...

An urgent call from Almoradi police led to the rescue of another five horses. Following hot on the heels of the rescues of Samson and Delilah, this rescue means we've taken on seven new horses in less than two weeks, and the situation is getting desperate. Our resources are being stretched to the limit.

However, the horses needed help, and we

had to respond.

The worst of the five was found loose by a main road and police feared it would cause a traffic accident. The other four were left tethered without food or water.

The horse found by the road has an horrific head injury. It was immediately obvious that he was in a dreadful state and we feared he would have to be destroyed.

He appeared brain damaged and staggered unsteadily with his head to one side as he panicked and tried to run away. But, with his balance too impaired to flee, the poor thing fell and we were able to attend to him. While he lay shocked and disorientated we called vet Dorothea, who rushed to the scene.

Dorothea was worried the horse could have

cerebral oedema, and gave him medication to help alleviate this. She said that without x-rays it was impossible to tell how bad the damage was, or if the horse had any chance of recovery.

She was concerned that the horse was in no condition to travel to the centre, but in the end it was decided this was his only chance. With his balance impaired, it was difficult getting him into the trailer, but he made it on board and, thankfully, back to the centre alive.

X-rays later revealed the horse, now named Bronson, has a fracture running from his jaw to his ear to his eye. There is a large hole above his eye. Dorothea has been giving him intensive care and we now believe he is in with a chance of recovering.

The other four horses - two ponies and two miniatures - were all suffering severe malnutrition. One of the ponies is heavily in foal. One of the minis has an eye that is so badly injured that Dorothea will have to remove it.



Photos show the rescue of Bronson, with Sue, Rod and volunteer, Tracy

