



- Tackling the issue of agonising harness wounds
- The working elephants of Myanmar
- The Land Girls and working horses in the Second World War



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## WELCOME

to the latest issue of SPANA News.

I've recently returned from Odisha, a poor state in eastern India that was hit by a devastating cyclone at the end of 2018. During my time there, I saw first-hand the significant impact of SPANA's emergency project in the region. By intervening quickly, and in the right places, we were able to save the lives of many animals that had been wounded during the disaster, or were under severe threat from disease. You can read more about our emergency response, which your support made possible, on page 14.

In our special appeal on page six of this issue, we are asking for your help to tackle a problem that our vets throughout the world encounter more than any other – harness wounds. These painful wounds are often the result of ill-fitting, inappropriate equipment, with owners frequently resorting to whatever materials they have available or can afford. The misery caused by harness wounds is widespread, but – with your kind support – we can treat these wounds and, every bit as importantly, stop them from occurring in the first place.

On page 10, the spotlight is on our work in Morocco in North Africa. SPANA has been treating animals and educating owners since 1925, when our founders Kate and Nina Hosali began working there. Despite our long history in the country, our team in Morocco is as ambitious and determined as ever to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of animal welfare.

This year marks 80 years since the start of the Second World War. In this issue, you can find out more about the one million horses working on Britain's farms in 1939 that, alongside the Women's Land Army, had a vital role – helping to feed the nation throughout the war.

Finally, on behalf of our teams working to improve the lives of animals around the world, I'd like to express our heartfelt thanks for your kindness and generosity. SPANA could not achieve anything without you.

*Geoffrey Dennis*

**Geoffrey Dennis** Chief Executive

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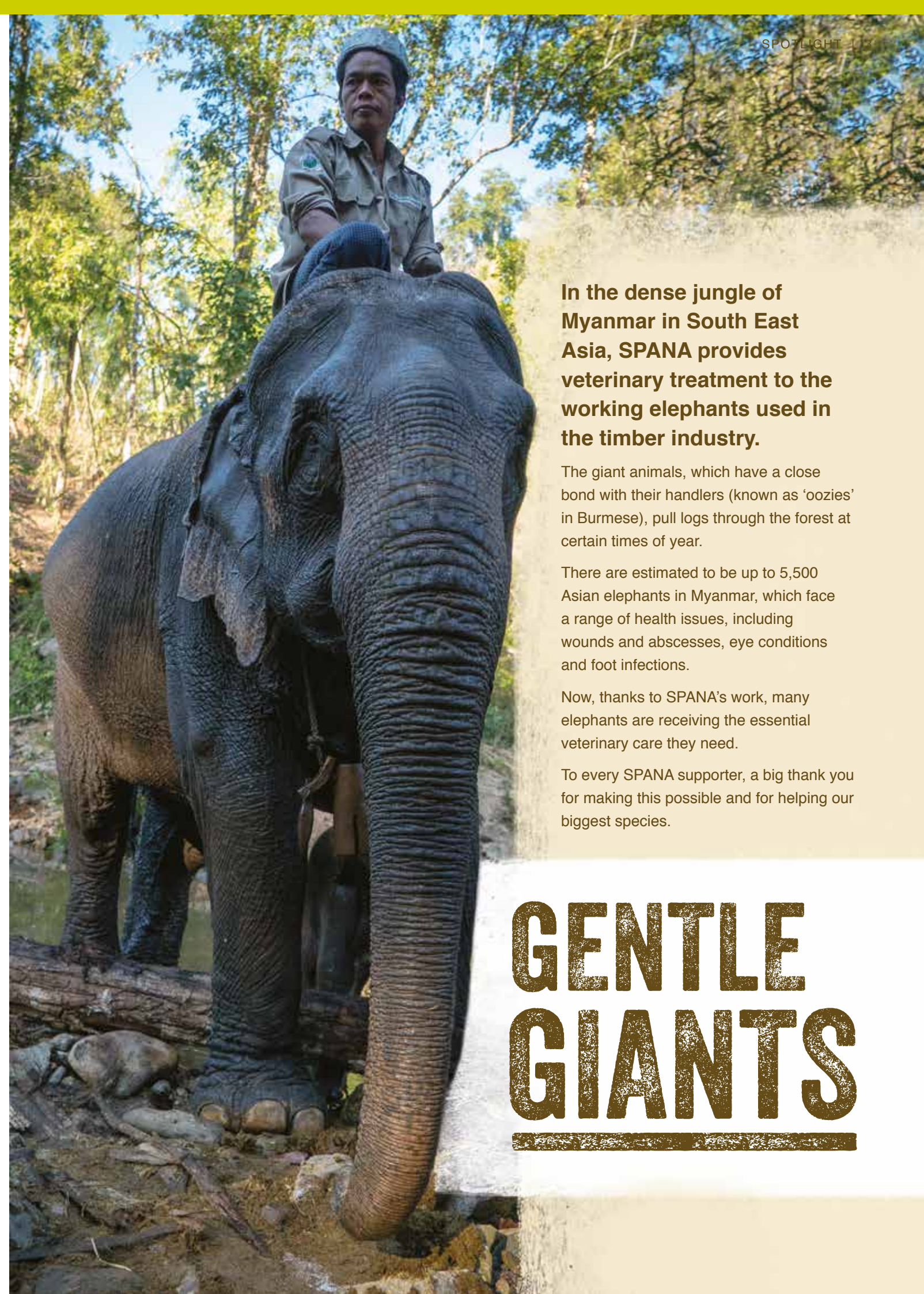
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Registered charity no: 209015



SPOTLIGHT 113

**In the dense jungle of Myanmar in South East Asia, SPANA provides veterinary treatment to the working elephants used in the timber industry.**

The giant animals, which have a close bond with their handlers (known as 'oozies' in Burmese), pull logs through the forest at certain times of year.

There are estimated to be up to 5,500 Asian elephants in Myanmar, which face a range of health issues, including wounds and abscesses, eye conditions and foot infections.

Now, thanks to SPANA's work, many elephants are receiving the essential veterinary care they need.

To every SPANA supporter, a big thank you for making this possible and for helping our biggest species.

# GENTLE GIANTS



# SPANANA IN THE NEWS



## Rebuilding lives in Iraqi Kurdistan

**SPANANA has launched a new veterinary project in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq, protecting the welfare of working animals in the region, which in turn will help families rebuild lives shattered by conflict.**

Working with a local partner, SPANA is supporting a new mobile veterinary clinic that will visit around 200 villages in Kurdistan, providing free treatment to working equids that belong to farmers who cannot afford to pay for veterinary care.

# 200

**SPANANA is supporting a new mobile veterinary clinic that will visit around 200 villages in Kurdistan**

It is estimated that at least one third of these farmers are refugees or internally displaced people, including many who fled Mosul after the deadly battles with Islamic State forces.

The clinic will run for five days each month, followed by a day of community training, which aims to educate at least 180 animal owners about the welfare and basic healthcare of their working animals.

Many people in the region are utterly reliant on working animals. As well as transporting people, crops, and water, donkeys in Kurdistan also act as 'shepherds' for their owners' sheep and goats.

The project is an important boost for animals in a region where they endure many challenges, such as poverty, hunting, infectious disease and the complete lack of animal welfare law in Iraq.

The clinic will also monitor the situation of the local Kurdish horses. The breeds are unique to the region, but there are concerns that their numbers are declining.



## Donkey protection in Ethiopia

**As part of our rapidly expanding work in the country, SPANA recently began an emergency project in Shashemane, Ethiopia, to ensure working animals have access to vital water, feed and shelter.**

Over the past four years, the area has been severely affected by drought, flooding and conflict. Plummeting crop yields, and a lack of water and pasture, have had a major impact on both local communities and the animals they depend upon.

In many cases, people must travel up to 20km to fetch water. Women and children are usually responsible for this task – facing security risks in doing so – and they rely heavily on working donkeys to help with water collection. Donkeys are also used to carry firewood and transport goods to market.

In partnership with local organisation CDI, SPANA is working to alleviate the impact of the emergency on working animals by improving access to water, feed and care, as well as by developing the capacity of the community and local government to respond to emergencies and the needs of working animals.

As part of the project, SPANA has constructed donkey protection areas in local marketplaces, where animals are often left for long periods. This has included the building of water troughs and a water line to supply them, feed banks, and shaded areas to protect the donkeys from the intense sun.

Training in emergency resilience and animal welfare has also been provided for government officials and 100 local women, who will manage the donkey protection areas.

More than 6,600 animals will benefit directly from this project, which will help protect them from the effects of drought and other crises, now and in the future.

## An inspirational story for children in Mali

**A new book has been produced by SPANA to educate children in Mali about the emotional and welfare needs of animals.**

The story focuses on a donkey called Dankoroba, that is distraught when his best friend is sold. Dankoroba escapes from his pen and gets lost looking for her in the city, before the pair are eventually reunited.

The story teaches children that animals have feelings, as well as highlighting their basic needs, such as being kept with other animals.

Written by SPANA's Curriculum Advisor, Christelle Chenard, the book also includes beautiful watercolour illustrations (pictured) by artist Ruchi Mhasane.

SPANANA received a generous grant to produce the book from the QATO Foundation, which supports the promotion and safeguarding of animal welfare, health and wellbeing.

The book is printed in French, but has also been translated into Bambara, one of the most common languages in southern Mali. It will be provided to teachers for use in class, along with lesson ideas.

Author Christelle Chenard said: *'Storytelling is a powerful way of educating children and changing attitudes. Forming a strong emotional connection to the characters helps children to develop empathy and leaves a lasting impression.'*



## Guy de Giraudeau

Everyone at SPANA offers their condolences to the family of Guy de Giraudeau, who passed away last year. Guy served as Chief Executive of SPANA from 1986 until 1990, having originally joined the charity's board in 1985.



**SPECIAL APPEAL**

# BATTLING WITH HARNESS WOUNDS

Nutritious feed and three weeks of rest helped Raza on the road to recovery

Last year, an estimated one in four working animals treated by SPANA were suffering with wounds. It remains the single most common clinical problem that our vets treat.

As a SPANA supporter, you will be aware of the challenges working animals face. The majority of horses, donkeys and mules are depended upon in their communities to pull back-breaking loads. Without adequate harnessing, their job is even harder.

10-year-old Raza is a Marwari horse, a breed native to the Jodhpur region of India. Raza works on a farm in the eastern state of Odisha, India, helping his owners, Ali and Sita, harvest just enough crops to feed their family of four.

When the opportunity arises, the carthorse also transports guests at wedding ceremonies, enabling Ali to make a small but meaningful wage.

In some of the world's poorest regions, proper equipment is either unaffordable or simply not available to buy. With only a make-do harness at Ali's disposal, each time he halted

Raza, the cart would collide into the horse's tail end.

**When hauling hay one afternoon, Raza stumbled on the uneven path causing the cart to crash into his rear where an open sore was already festering. Overloaded and unable to keep his balance, he fell hard onto his frail front legs and wounded both knees.**

Fortunately, SPANA's mobile clinic was there to help. The vet carefully cut away hair and dirt that had become matted in his tail wound, and thoroughly cleaned and sterilised Raza's injuries. He then gently applied antibiotic ointment to fend off infection, and instructed Ali to clean the wounds twice a day while his horse was recovering.

The vet stressed that Raza's injuries could have easily been prevented with improved harnessing. He replaced the broken breeching strap

and showed Ali how to modify the harness, adding soft padding to protect sensitive areas of the horse's body.

Raza is just one out of tens of thousands of animals our vets treat for agonising harness wounds every year. Common injuries our vets encounter include wounds on the chest and back, where straps are pulled tight and cut into the animal's neck. Abrasive makeshift materials, such as rags, metal and plastic, chafe and rub the skin raw. This can develop into serious – even fatal – infections.

**Hundreds of thousands of equids battle through their working lives with unsafe harnessing. Deep wounds, chronic infections and painful sores that have no chance to heal; this is the reality for animals working under these conditions.**

While we will continue to provide immediate treatment, we know that prevention is key in tackling this issue in the long term. SPANA's community training programme educates owners in correct husbandry and humane practices, equipping them to provide a safer and more comfortable life for the animals they so desperately rely upon.

Many more animals need to be treated, their owners educated, and humane equipment widely distributed. SPANA's skilled teams are on the ground and need help to put these practical measures in place.

Please, if you can, support this special appeal and help stop the suffering caused by poor harnessing.



Raza's festering harness wound needed urgent treatment before infection set in

## HERE'S HOW YOUR SUPPORT COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

**£24**

**Comfort** – Your gift could provide soft padding for one animal, protecting its body from harness wounds and making each working day more comfortable.

**£45**

**Treatment** – Your gift could relieve the suffering of a horse like Raza, by providing essential treatment for painful, non-healing wounds on its back, chest and legs preventing fatal infection.

**£120**

**Protection** – Your gift could help protect ten or more working animals by funding one community training session, equipping owners to harness their animals humanely, and empowering them to spread knowledge in their community.

To make a donation, please use the donation form enclosed, call 0300 033 4999, or visit us at [www.spana.org/harness](http://www.spana.org/harness) to donate and watch our appeal video ▶



Harness wounds make working life miserable for donkeys, horses and mules alike



# PREVENTING THE MISERY OF EYE DISEASE

From glasses and contact lenses to regular appointments with the optician, most people try hard to protect their eyesight for as long as possible.

For working animals, maintaining good eye health is just as critical. But, unfortunately, eye disease is one of the biggest problems we see in working donkeys, mules, horses and camels. SPANA vets carried out 10,666 treatments for eye conditions in 2018 alone.

As well as being extremely painful for the animal, eye disease can often lead to vision loss, as well as further complications from secondary infections. What's more, eye diseases can prevent an animal from working, causing hardship for the families that rely on them for their livelihoods.

Cuts to eyelids are particularly common, often caused by ill-fitting equipment, such as blinkers and blinders, as well as by protruding objects, like thorns or exposed hooks and nails. Every laceration is different, and treatment will depend on the size of the wound and the

level of infection. Where possible, vets will stitch the cuts, which can help improve the chance of a speedy recovery.

Corneal ulceration is another ocular condition that is regularly seen in our clinics throughout Africa and the Middle East. These ulcers are painful lesions on the surface of the eye, and can be caused by infection, foreign materials, and scratches from harnessing equipment.

Ulcers around the eye area are very painful, and require prompt treatment to prevent the condition escalating. Vets will supply anti-inflammatories for pain and treat the eye with appropriate bacterial or fungal eye medication, as well as covering the eye and resting the animal. In more severe cases, surgery may be required.

Working animals often work in dusty environments, in close contact with other animals, and using shared, dirty equipment – all of which are risk factors for conjunctivitis. Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the pink tissue (conjunctiva) that surrounds the eye, causing the area to become painful, red and swollen. Conjunctivitis can be treated with ointments and drops; if left untreated it can develop into eye infections.

Sophie Parratt, Veterinary Programme Advisor, on treating an often preventable problem that can cause great suffering for working animals



Many of the painful and potentially blinding cases of ocular disease our SPANA vets encounter are avoidable with practical steps, like proper management of equipment, and good hygiene practices. That's why a prominent aspect of our work is actively engaging with communities and teaching owners best practice, as well as providing education to help them identify animal health problems at an early stage.

Eye disease can cause agony and distress for animals, in addition to other long term complications. But, thanks to SPANA supporters and everyone who kindly donated to our sightsaving appeal this spring, we are able to treat many thousands of animals and stop these problems from occurring wherever possible. It couldn't be clearer just how important it is to avoid this suffering and prevent blindness in working animals.

# 10,893

the number of eye treatments SPANA provided in 2018

# TEACHING HORSE CARE TO CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Nestled in the hills in Cato Ridge, fifty kilometres from Durban on South Africa's Indian Ocean coast, lies the Coastal Horse Care Unit (CHCU), an equine rehabilitation and rehoming centre.

A recent addition to the stables, paddocks and farmhouses is an education centre – home to a children's education project funded by SPANA. For this project, staff and animals at the centre regularly welcome a group of children to take part in a week-long residential visit. The groups – usually boys, though they have held a girls' camp – come to learn all about horse care: vital knowledge for children living in poor, rural townships where horses are their only form of transport.

Children often take responsibility for their families' horses, riding them to tend to cattle before school or at weekends. It can be surprising to see a small boy proudly leading several horses across the plain, but it is precisely this pride in the care of their horses, and an affinity with the animals, that helps staff identify suitable children for the camp.

For the boys, it is often the first time they have spent away from home. The camp starts early – by 7.00am they are mucking out the stables and grooming the horses, learning the correct techniques

and importance of bonding with the animals. The days are packed: lectures on animal sentience follow hands-on activities where the children handle bits of tack and parts of skeletons, to better understand horse anatomy and the impact of ill-fitting equipment. Each session is conducted in Zulu, the children's first language.

Later, an excursion to the jockey academy, racehorse stables, and vet practice in the wealthy equestrian district Summerveld, gives the boys a unique opportunity to meet and talk to people who have made their careers riding and caring for horses. Meeting a Zulu vet was an inspirational experience for the group; on leaving the camp, the majority said they now aspire to be a vet when they grow up.

At the end of the week the boys are presented with prizes for their hard work and enthusiasm. They leave with the knowledge and

skills to be able to provide good care for their horses, and the will to make a positive change in their communities. I met one graduate of a recent camp and asked him what he took away from it. He replied: *'We learnt a lot. We mustn't beat the horses, just talk to them. A horse is like a human that doesn't talk... it has feelings.'*

It's clear just how transformational this camp is for the children attending. This unforgettable experience, unlike anything they have done before, is bringing about deep-rooted changes in their relationship with animals and is equipping them with lifelong skills. Thanks to the SPANA project, in communities where horses are integral to daily life, young people are leading the way in ensuring animal welfare continues to improve for years to come.

Hannah Meese, Curriculum Advisor, talks about SPANA's education project that is transforming the lives of children and animals in townships





# PROFILE MOROCCO

## 1925

the year SPANA began working in Morocco

### SPANA OPERATIONS

SPANA has been improving the lives of animals in Morocco for more than 90 years and the charity runs more centres here than anywhere else.

In addition to our veterinary work, SPANA has a long-established education programme, which teaches more than 25,000 children about animal welfare each year. As well as lessons in SPANA centres, our mobile exhibition unit tours schools in rural areas, reaching children across the country.

Our community training programme is also addressing the causes of preventable sickness and injury, alongside promoting proper animal care.

Among many other projects within Morocco, SPANA oversees a licensing scheme to monitor the welfare of Marrakech's calèche horses, which pull tourist carriages. The charity also builds and maintains water troughs on the city's main routes to give working animals access to water.

In the Atlas mountains, a mobile clinic regularly provides treatment for working mules, and an annual 'Best Kept Mule' ceremony recognises owners that take the best care of their animals.

- Five veterinary centres in Casablanca, Chemaia, Had Ouled Frej, Khemisset and Marrakech
- Two mobile clinics, including one in Marrakech, visiting smaller towns and villages, plus remote communities in the Atlas mountains
- 37,731 working animals treated last year



### MOROCCO AT A GLANCE

**Population:** 34,314,130  
**Area:** 710,850 km<sup>2</sup>  
**Location:** North Africa  
**Capital city:** Rabat  
**Estimated working animal population:** 1,569,000 donkeys, horses, mules and camels

## CASE FILE



*'Mounir is very precious to our family and you have saved him. Thank you SPANA.'* Omar

## Urgent surgery for Mounir

**When five-year-old mule, Mounir, was brought to the SPANA centre in Marrakech, our team of vets knew that the problem was serious.**

His owner, Omar, had become concerned about some growths that had developed on his mule's chest and groin.

Luckily, despite living 40km away, Omar's neighbour knew SPANA and recommended that Omar should take his mule for treatment. SPANA vets had previously performed successful surgery on the neighbour's foal, which had been born with a deformity of its leg.

On arrival at the centre, the vets examined Mounir and identified numerous tumours – known as sarcoids – which would require urgent attention. Without surgery, Mounir the tumours could grow very large, risking trauma that could lead to ulcers and infection.

The team prepared for surgery and put the mule under general anaesthetic. SPANA vet Dr Boubker, who led the surgery, had to be very careful in ensuring that all of the tumour cells were removed.

Fortunately, there were no complications and, after surgery, Mounir – who helps Omar to make a living by ploughing and transporting vegetables to market – spent two weeks recovering at the centre, before returning home.

Omar said: *'Mounir is very precious to our family and you have saved him. Thank you SPANA.'*



### PERSONAL PROFILE Q&A Professor Hassan Alykine, SPANA Morocco Country Director



#### How long have you worked for SPANA?

I started working with SPANA in 1991, at a veterinary centre about 200 miles north of Marrakech. This was two years after graduating from the Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II, where I also worked as an assistant

professor in the Department of Medicine and Surgery for equines and small animals.

I was appointed as Morocco's country director in January 2014, after having had responsibility for SPANA's Casablanca centre since 2008.

#### How important are working animals in Morocco?

Like in many other African countries, working horses, donkeys and mules continue to play a crucial role

in people's lives and in the economy. They remain an important means of traction in agriculture and are relied upon by many for transporting goods and people, both in rural areas and around large cities.

#### What are the challenges facing working animals?

There are obvious problems facing working animals, like harness wounds and lameness, but these problems are often compounded by a lack of appropriate animal welfare legislation. SPANA in Morocco faces all of these difficulties, but we're making real progress.

#### What is your proudest achievement at SPANA?

One of the main obstacles to animal welfare in Morocco is the lack of legislation. So, one of SPANA's greatest achievements in recent years is contributing to the development of laws (in 2016) for the protection of carriage horses in Aït Ourir (near Marrakech) and mules used in the tourism industry in Imlil in the Atlas mountains. Both of these laws have greatly improved the welfare of these animals.



# SPANNA AROUND THE WORLD

Introducing just a few of the tens of thousands of animals we've helped recently, thanks to your kind support.

## MYANMAR



### A BABY ELEPHANT WITH AN ITCH

The SPANA mobile clinic in Myanmar visited a village where working elephants and their handlers (oozies) live. The team met a one-month-old baby elephant calf that was bathing in the river, enjoying splashing his mother, 43-year-old Chit Phyu Naing.

The elephant's oozie, Cwin Naing, explained to the vets that the baby was suffering from problems with his skin. The SPANA team examined him and identified that he had both urticaria and pruritus – an itchy rash that causes constant and frustrating discomfort. Although far more common during the humid monsoon season, the cause of the problem was warble fly, which lay their eggs on other animals, before the larvae hatch and travel under the host's skin.

Despite its thickness, elephants' skin is very sensitive and susceptible to parasites and other conditions. Elephants often use mud and baths to get rid of insects, as well as to cool off.

To treat the baby elephant, whose name was Htay Phyu Naing, the vets gave him an injection of ivermectin, medication used to treat parasites.

They also gave the calf vitamins to assist with his recovery and growth, as he was very small for his age. Standing at around two feet, he was not actually able to get to his mother's teats for milk. To help him out, his oozie, Cwin Naing, had built a small step so that he could reach.

50-year-old Cwin Naing thanked SPANA for helping the calf. The oozie was extremely proud of his elephants and the strength of the mother.

Thankfully, the baby's skin problem was quickly relieved and, before long, he was able to concentrate on playing in the river again, with no itchiness to spoil his fun.

When 36-year-old Mohammad leaves for work in the morning in Nouakchott, Mauritania, he's never without two trusted workmates – his donkeys, Mejibir and Artugro.

The pair pull a cart of construction materials for around six hours each day, providing an income for Mohammad and his four children.

Recently, when Mohammad was out working with his donkeys, the cart overturned, which made Artugro stumble and fall. Mohammad noticed the donkey was limping and that he did not look well, with his skin hot to the touch, so he took him to the SPANA centre straight away.

The SPANA vets found that the donkey's shoulder had twisted and was inflamed, causing him severe pain and discomfort. They gave Artugro painkillers and anti-inflammatories to reduce the swelling. They kept him in the centre for five days of complete rest and to monitor closely that his shoulder was healing.

Five-year-old horse Rayen was brought to the SPANA mobile clinic at the Feriana souk in Tunisia after a vehicle clipped him by the roadside.

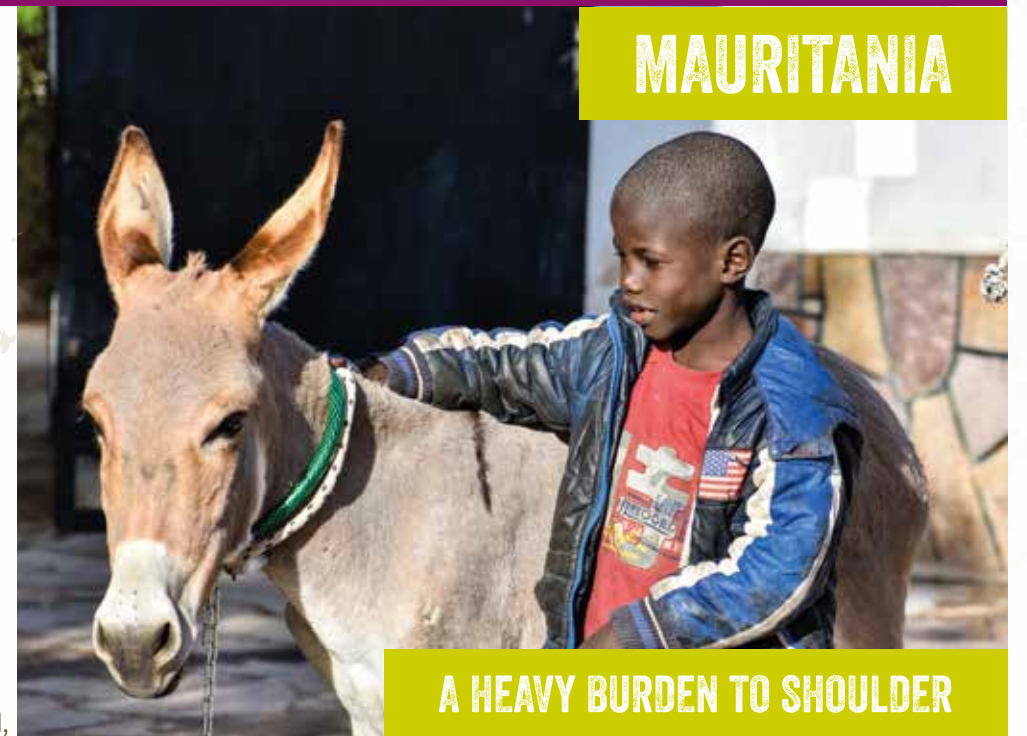
The accident had left Rayen with a nasty, eight-centimetre wound on his left cheek – just missing his eye.

Rayen's owner Sami Rached had waited anxiously for the SPANA mobile clinic to arrive, but the wound had worsened by this time. On inspection, SPANA vets found that the open wound was swollen, and was surrounded by pus and dead tissue.

The team responded immediately to prevent any infection from spreading further, cleaning the wound and using an antiseptic spray. They then prescribed a six-day course of antibiotic injections for Rayen.

Working animals pulling carts are often very vulnerable on the busy roads of Tunisia, particularly in rural areas, where cars and trucks speed past, perilously close.

## MAURITANIA



### A HEAVY BURDEN TO SHOULDER

Thankfully, Artugro was making good progress and recovering well. The team told Mohammad to continue resting Artugro and advised him not to overload his cart, to prevent similar accidents occurring in the future.

Mohammad said:

*'SPANNA is very special to the people here. I have no money to pay for medicines, but they always help our animals. Thank you for everything you do for us.'*

## TUNISIA



### RAYEN ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

The vets advised Sami that Rayen would need to rest for three weeks while the wound healed fully.

Sami was extremely grateful to SPANA for helping Rayen. He said: *'I am very thankful to SPANA for their efforts in helping our animal's health.'*



# SAVING ANIMALS STRUCK BY NATURAL DISASTER IN INDIA



**Chief Executive Geoffrey Dennis visits Odisha, in eastern India, to see first-hand the impact of SPANA's emergency project following last year's devastating cyclone.**

In October 2018, a very severe cyclone moved across the Bay of Bengal and battered the east coast of India. Bringing torrential rain and gale-force winds, the destruction caused by the storm was terrible. In one of the worst hit states, Odisha, heavy flooding and landslides led to at least 77 people, and many animals, sadly losing their lives.

In the immediate aftermath of this appalling disaster, SPANA undertook an emergency project to save the lives of animals in the region and help affected communities to rebuild.

Earlier this year, I visited Odisha – one of India's poorest states – to see the impact of the project and assess the recovery that has been made.

From the state capital of Bhubaneswar, I travelled three hours south by car to visit two villages that were badly affected by the cyclone, Aliabad and Biripur. It was

in these areas, which have large animal populations, that SPANA provided significant assistance.

Working with a local partner organisation, APOWA, we ensured that veterinary care was quickly available following the cyclone to help animals that had been wounded. Many trees and buildings had been flattened by the storm, with dangerous debris flying around, which caused a great deal of harm to both humans and animals.

In the next stage of the project, we helped move animals to higher ground, found them temporary shelter and provided food, water, vitamin supplements and a series of vaccinations to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Administering vaccines and providing fresh, clean water were key priorities, as there was a real threat from water-borne disease.

In total, well over 5,000 animals were saved thanks to the project – mostly working oxen.

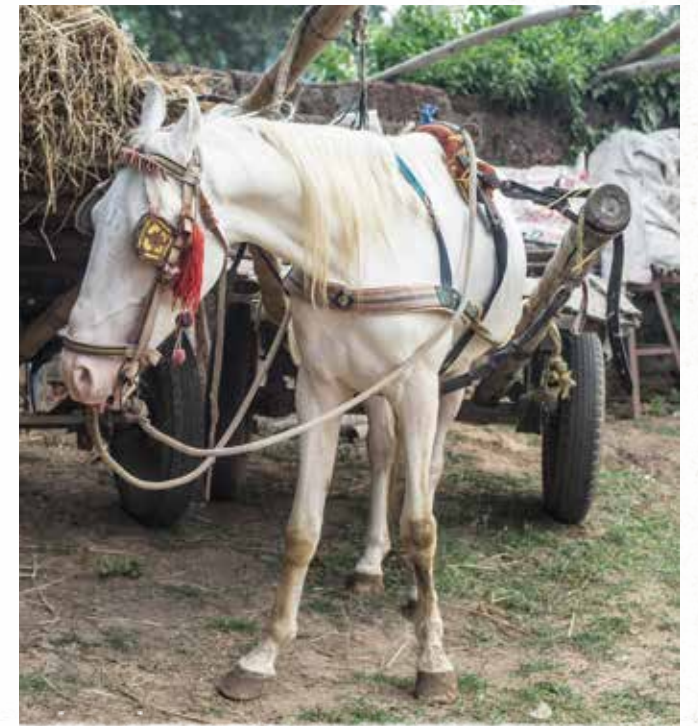
**5,000+**  
the number of animals saved  
thanks to the emergency project

We set up an emergency team that stayed in the area until villagers and their animals could safely return home and start rebuilding their lives.

During the visit, I had the opportunity to interview many local villagers and animal owners. Two of the villagers, Abhi and Kalu Das, lost a number of goats in the storm, but all of their oxen were saved and, due to our assistance, are now fit and working in the fields again.

It was clear just how considerable a difference this project has made from the incredibly positive reaction of the villagers who came to greet me. The people in these very poor communities expressed their gratitude for the help we gave in saving their working animals – in turn ensuring that their livelihoods were protected.

Our next step is to ensure that communities are better able to cope when disasters occur and that the welfare of animals improves in the long term. To achieve this, we will continue delivering community training, as well as broadening our education programme in the state. Providing advice on how to prepare for future emergencies in this cyclone-affected region is inexpensive, but will certainly reduce future suffering.



SPANNA, rightly, has a reputation of being an effective, hands-on and practical charity. I was delighted to see the impact we are making during this visit, and we are already drawing up plans to expand our work in this region.







Credit: Chronicle / Alamy

**As the 80th anniversary of the start of the Second World War approaches, Chief Executive Geoffrey Dennis reflects on the vital role played by the Women's Land Army and the working horses that helped feed the nation.**

Last year marked 100 years since the end of the First World War – a conflict in which millions of people and animals tragically lost their lives on the frontline. By 1939, and the outbreak of the Second World War, the use of war horses and other animals in direct conflict was thankfully less common.

However, on the home front, horses and other working animals had a very significant part

to play in Britain's war effort – in the struggle to provide food for a besieged nation.

Maintaining a constant food supply was absolutely critical for Britain, which imported more than two-thirds of its food before 1939. The Atlantic became a key battleground, as the Germans targeted shipping bound for Britain in an attempt to restrict supplies and starve the country into submission.

But, Britain had acted. In June 1939, a few months before war was declared, the Women's Land Army (WLA) was reformed.

First established during the Great War, the WLA – or the 'Land Girls' as they were known – was a rural workforce of women who stepped in to boost Britain's food production, working on farms in the place of the many male agricultural workers who had joined the armed forces.

Given a uniform and a basic wage, the Land Girls – of which 17,000 had enrolled by the start of the war – were expected to learn quickly about farm work, life on the land, and, very often, how to work with animals.

In 1939, working animals were still very much part of daily life in Britain. Around one million horses were used for work on farms, outnumbering tractors by 30 to one.

Horses were used for a huge range of tasks – ploughing fields, hauling hay or manure, and pulling carts to deliver crops and vegetables. Many women on dairy farms were asked to handle the milk round, and were put in charge of a pony or horse and float.

More than a third of the women had come from large cities, and most had only ever had fleeting interactions with large animals previously. Basic training was offered, which made for some steep learning curves.

One former Land Girl recalled struggling with a pony to pull a cart up an icy hill in winter. Eventually, she took off her own shoes and socks and put them on the horse.

The unique conditions of wartime also created some memorable moments for the new farm workers. Another woman remembered working with an old horse on a farm that was on the flight path of British bomber planes returning from Germany. The horse would stop and stare at the planes for several minutes every time they flew over – making jobs take twice as long!

The workers were also given training in how to respond to potential gas attacks, including protecting horses and ponies by soaking bandages and draping them across the animals' eyes.

For many young women, WLA service was their first time away from their homes and families. It wasn't surprising, then, that animals became a source of comfort, as well as being their 'colleagues' in the fields. This connection is still felt today by many women in developing countries, who are often responsible for looking after the family's working animals, but are equally dependent on their animals.

Similarly, just like in Britain 80 years ago, working animals continue to have a fundamental role in food production in the world's poorest countries – pulling ploughs and transporting produce.

And, just like in wartime Britain when the country could not afford any interruptions in its food supply, maintaining the health of working animals is critical today. In poor communities, if an animal is unable to work due to sickness or injury, then a family's livelihood disappears.

At its peak, there were more than 80,000 women serving in the WLA, and by 1943 they were producing



Credit: ©Imperial War Museum



around 70 per cent of Britain's food – a truly remarkable achievement. As a nation we owe so much to this army in the fields and, on this significant anniversary, it's so important that we recognise the enormous contribution of the Land Girls – and the animals that stood side by side with them.

# 80,000

the number of women serving  
in the WLA at its peak



# LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

**Our vision is a world where every working animal lives a life free from suffering and is treated with compassion. Please consider including a gift to SPANA in your Will – and help us make that world a reality.**

SPANAs unique combination of treating, training and teaching programmes will create a more compassionate future for working animals. But we can't do it without you. With gifts in Wills funding half of everything we do, your legacy – whatever the size – could play a vital part.



## TREAT

Our dedicated vets work where the animals work. Not only saving lives at our fixed clinics but travelling thousands of miles all year round to bring a lifeline to desperately ill or injured working animals. SPANA is and always will be a practical, hands-on charity. We promise to always be that lifeline. Your legacy could help us keep our promise.



## TRAIN

Community training prevents needless suffering for animals, helping owners understand the importance of well-fitted harnessing and quality farriery in keeping their animal free from avoidable injury. Gifts in Wills help our community trainers to work hand-in-hand with our vets, so that while we treat, we also train. This sustainable change will benefit millions of animals for generations to come.



## TEACH

In the world's poorest communities most children grow up surrounded by animals that are seen as little more than tools or transport. SPANA's education programmes change ignorance or fear into understanding and kindness towards all animals. A legacy to SPANA will help us foster compassion that will last a lifetime.

**To request a copy of our free legacies guide please tick the appropriate box on the bottom of the enclosed donation form and return it to us.**

**If you have recently included a gift to SPANA in your Will, please do let us know as we would love to have the chance to say 'thank you' for your kindness. If you prefer, you can call Penny in our friendly legacy team for an informal chat on 020 7831 3999 or email her at [giftsinwills@spana.org](mailto:giftsinwills@spana.org).**

# SUPPORTER NEWS

**GET INVOLVED, HAVE FUN AND HELP WORKING ANIMALS WORLDWIDE**

## GOING THE DISTANCE FOR SPANA

**We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who pulled on their running shoes and went the extra mile for SPANA in 2018! Twenty one inspiring supporters took part in walks and runs throughout the year.**

Some of our running champs include Will who took on a whopping 33 miles in the Endurancelife Suffolk Ultra, plus we had a fantastic team of 10 runners take part in the scenic Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon – thank you to David, Chris, Jo, Katy, Dom, Pip, Nick, Chris, Louise and Catrina! Georgina and Alex donned Santa suits and ran the festive 5k London Santa Run. A huge congratulations to all of our runners in 2018 for raising over £16,200 between them.

**You're all SPANA stars!**

## THE GRAND TOUR

**SPANAs planning to hold a new supporter tour of Morocco in spring 2020.**

This trip will provide a unique opportunity to see first-hand how your donations are changing the lives of working animals, as well as giving a chance to visit some of Morocco's most famous attractions.

**To find out more and register your interest, call our supporter care team on 020 7831 3999 or email us at [events@spana.org](mailto:events@spana.org).**



Alice took on the Amsterdam Marathon



Lorraine walked 5km carrying a rucksack full of weights to represent the long journeys that working animals do daily



Rosie walked the 14k City to Surf in sunny Sydney

**If you'd like to run for SPANA in the Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon this October, call Jessie on 020 7831 3999 or visit [www.spana.org/events](http://www.spana.org/events) for information on running and other challenges you can take on for SPANA.**

## STOP PAIN WITH A HOMEMADE NOSEBAND COVER

**In the countries where SPANA works, we often see wounds on the noses of horses, donkeys and mules.**

The working animals we treat are always grateful for new noseband covers to protect their noses from badly-fitting bridles.

**To find out how you can help by making some soft noseband covers for hardworking animals, please do get in touch.**

**Could you host a stall, put on your running shoes or give a talk to make a big difference to animals in need? Or maybe you have your own novel ideas to raise funds. Whatever you decide, we're here to help. Call our friendly community fundraising team on 020 7831 3999 or email [events@spana.org](mailto:events@spana.org).**





# Eat cake, change lives! 20 July 2019

The SPANA World Tea Party is back! It's time to get out your cake tins, fill the tea pots and invite your friends round for a tea party with a twist.

You can keep it simple and have a traditional afternoon tea or spice things up with one of our special World Tea Party themes from around the world. Whatever you choose, it's a great opportunity to enjoy spending time with friends, family, neighbours and colleagues while making a big difference to the lives of hardworking animals in need. You can hold your party on our World Tea Party date of 20 July or on any date that suits you.



## Get your free pack now

for everything you need to host the perfect party including posters, coasters and invitations, plus lots of special recipes from around the world and even a 'pupcake' recipe for your pooch to enjoy!

*'Hosting a SPANA World Tea Party brings together family, friends and neighbours. It is an opportunity for a great social occasion and catch-up. More importantly, the tea party is a great way to promote all the fantastic work that SPANA does in helping both animals and humans alike.'*

Margaret Farley has hosted three World Tea Parties raising over £2,000. Thank you, Margaret!



**QUICK!** The first 50 postal pack requests will receive a special gift of FREE tea kindly provided to us by the Mazawattee Tea company!

Get involved in our animal cookie decorating competition to win a fab prize! Order your pack for more details.

Call 020 7831 3999 or go to [www.spana.org/teaparty](http://www.spana.org/teaparty) to order your pack today

