



BEARS MATTER

Issue 3, Dec 2011/Jan 2012

'Adopt an animal, become its voice, learn everything you can about it and work with people that want to better its existence, too.' Anon

Charity Status Granted

More power to our paws!

We start this issue of Bears Matter with the wonderful news that the Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears was granted charitable status on the 27th September 2011. It was very much hoped that this would happen before our first birthday on 10.10.11 so our dream came true! Becoming a charity will open numerous new doors for us and allow us to be even more effective in our work to help end cruelty to bears.

'Bottoms up' to our first year!

We have been continuing to work incredibly hard for the bears and within our first year, we have achieved our goal of doing something to help every species of bear. Since our last newsletter here's what we've been doing....

We are supporting the work of 'Polar Bears International' based in the US and dedicated to the worldwide conservation of the polar bear and its habitat through research, stewardship, and education. They provide scientific resources and information on polar bears and their habitat to institutions and the general public worldwide.



© Robert & CarolynBuchanan/PolarBearsInternational.org

Experts in polar bear science predict that as the Arctic continues to warm due to climate change, two-thirds of the world's polar bears could disappear by mid-century—although hope remains *if* action is taken to greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We are also supporting the work of KWPLH based in Indonesia whose Sun Bear enclosure is currently home to five sun bears that were rescued after being taken from the wild and kept illegally as pets.

KWPLH aims to instil a more positive attitude toward Sun Bears and their conservation and ultimately reduce trade in wildlife, and create support for forest conservation activities.

Their stimulating enclosure promotes natural behaviour, which is highly beneficial for the health and welfare of the bears.



Photo courtesy of KWPLH

The current residents are Bennie, Idot, Harris, Batik and Anna. Anna often bosses Harris and Bennie around, but Idot pushes her around!

We have assisted The Wildlife Trust of India's work to protect sloth bear dens during the weaning season, so that the cubs can't be stolen to be used as dancing bears.



Photo courtesy of WSPA



Sloth bears are often used as dancing bears and suffer immense cruelty through this practice. Often these bears go blind from malnutrition or being beaten around the head to perform.

In August we assisted with the care of two brown bears called Marko and Maria who are brother and sister.

Marko and Maria had been held captive in Albania since they were tiny cubs. They had been held in a small cage outside a restaurant in Tirana, Albania in appalling conditions.

While arrangements were underway to move them to the Liberty Bear Sanctuary in Romania there was a short delay while all the paperwork was completed. We provided funds to assist with the day to day costs of ensuring they had a good diet and care while they awaited their journey to the sanctuary. They are now safe and sound in their new home.



Marko and Maria



Photo courtesy of Patricio Meza Saltos/SIMBOIE

The Spectacled Bear is one of the world's rarest species. They are under severe threat from hunting and habitat destruction.

We are supporting the work of the Andean Bear Foundation to save this unique bear from extinction through their in-field scientific studies and through the rehabilitation and release of captive bears.

Coming soon....

The Giant Panda 'It's not black and white'

Early next year, we will be launching our first awareness campaign highlighting the complexities facing the Giant Panda and efforts to save them from extinction.

Following the recent arrival of 'Sunshine and Sweetie' at Edinburgh Zoo, we would like to look deeper into the issue of Panda Conservation.

With only one unsuccessful attempt at returning a captive bred panda to the wild, the ongoing destruction of their habitat and breeding programs in China 'renting' pandas to zoos around the world for millions of dollars, the issue of keeping this mesmerizing bear from becoming extinct, is far more complex than simply trying to get them to breed.



**Panda conservation...
It is definitely not black and white.**

Adoptions

In the last edition of Bears Matter, we highlighted our 'Adoptions' program where the Foundation will 'adopt' some rescued bears in sanctuaries around the world. This way we support the ongoing care and recovery of these bears, and we commit to caring for these special bears, for the rest of their lives. The first bear we adopted was 'Bodo' rescued from the brutal bear farming industry in China and we are delighted to introduce the second member of our adoptive family, 'Max'...



Max, before rescue

Photos courtesy of WSPA

Captured as a cub from the wild, Max spent years of his life chained to railings and was used by his owner as a tourist attraction. By night, he was caged in a 4 metre sq. area next to a small restaurant and then during the day he was dragged by a rope around his neck to be chained to railings 10 metres away. This was his miserable life, day after day, all for souvenir snapshots.

Poor Max endured this pitiful existence without sight, as when rescued and examined, the vets found that he had detached retinas and was completely blind. This may have happened at birth, but is more likely to have been the result of a trauma to his head as a cub.

Thankfully, Max was rescued and taken to the Liberty Sanctuary in Romania.

The Winton Bear Foundation has adopted Max to help care for him for the rest of his life and help the amazingly hard working staff at the Liberty sanctuary in Romania and their efforts to rescue abused and exploited bears in their country.



Max, after rescue, safe in his new home never to be exploited again

BEAR sanctuary



You can read more about Max and the Romanian Sanctuary in the wonderfully illustrated new book by Victor Watkins, which describes the creation of the bear sanctuary in Romania, the problems faced, and the determination of those involved in ensuring the success of the project.

A proportion of the sale of each book will go to the Romanian Sanctuary. For more information visit

www.bearsanctuary.com

The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears' vision is for a world where no bear will ever again be hurt, exploited or tortured for human gain, profit or entertainment. Where bears can live free from fear and peril inflicted by humankind and can be their majestic selves, living full and natural lives.

'We'll never make the world a perfect place, but we can make it a better place.'

This is a very good time to give you an update on our first adopted bear 'Bodo' and our continued support of Animals Asia's wonderful and vital 'Bear Enrichment Programme'. The programme, significantly improves the lives of bears rescued from bear farms by helping to allow them to play, have fun and express normal behaviour which in turn, can reduce their fear and distress, reduce discomfort and help reduce pain, injury and disease.

You may recall in our previous newsletter, we had funded the cost of a firehose hammock and a log wall and we have received these wonderful pictures through just in time for this edition of Bears Matter and we're sure you'll love them. True to form and poignantly symbolic, the first bear to try out the hammock was our gorgeous, mischievous Bodo!



Bodo, pictured in his horrendous 'crush cage' before his rescue from the brutal bear farming industry.

Enough is Enough

All photos courtesy of Animals Asia





TOPPING UP 'THE HONEY POT'



Because the Bear Foundation is progressing so well, so quickly, we've decided to have a dedicated fundraising section in the newsletter. This will cover events that have happened, that are coming up and ways you can help. Funds raised are put into a pot of funds affectionately known as 'The Honey Pot.' These funds are then distributed at regular intervals to projects around the world, working to help bears and protect them from abuse and cruelty.



In July and December we held Summer and Christmas fairs in the Corn Exchange in Haddington, East Lothian.

We had a huge variety of stallholders, a facepainter and Santa paying us a visit during the Christmas Fair.

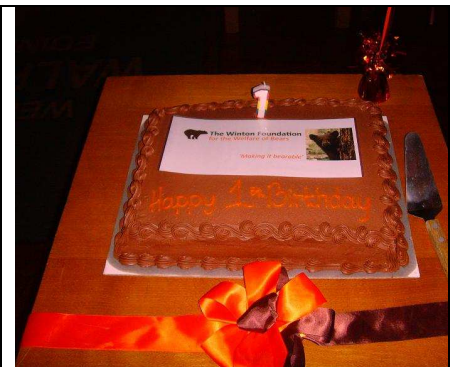
Thank you to everyone who exhibited and supported both fairs.

The two fairs raised just under £800.00



We celebrated our first birthday on the 15th October with a 70's and 80's night held in Edinburgh.

It was a perfect way to mark our first year of helping the bears. A great night was had by all and we topped it off by raising £447.50!



Lesley completed her 'mini triathlon' on 11.11.11 by walking 3 miles, cycling 6 miles and swimming 2 miles, making a total of 11 miles. Her endeavours raised £622 and she would like to thank everyone who supported her.

As the Bear Foundation was launched on 10.10.10, and 11.11.11 was marked by the triathlon, Lesley is looking for suggestions for a suitable challenge for 12.12.12 to raise more money for the bears. Lesley says, any suggestions, keeping the '12' theme – send them in – but don't make it too hard!!



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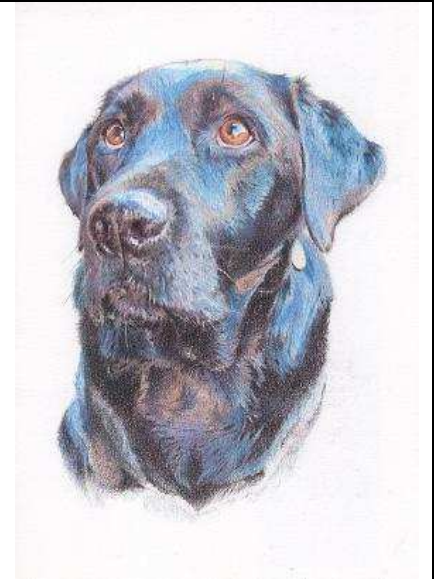


We are continuing to work closely with the incredible East Lothian based pet portrait artist Kate Donohoe.

For every commission coming from a Bear Foundation supporter, Kate will donate 10% to our funds.

If you are interested in getting Kate to do a portrait for you, get in touch with us – she does vouchers too – ideal for Christmas presents!

As you can see, Kate's work is absolutely stunning. She did have a very beautiful model though!



Our Facebook star - Lisbeth

facebook

A massive thankyou must go to Lisbeth Rieshøj Amos based in Denmark, who responded to our appeal in our last newsletter for help setting up a Facebook page. Lisbeth has worked tirelessly since then setting up and maintaining our Facebook page. It has helped get us to the next level of social networking and 'thankyou' seems too small a word for the hours and hours of hard work she's put in.

We currently have 285 followers on Facebook so please visit our page (it can be reached via our website) and join us if you haven't already done so and please help spread the word by sharing with your friends.

Our continued thanks also go to Peter Haddow for his ongoing work on our website. Keep an eye out for changes being made to the website over the next few months and the addition of easier online giving.

CAN YOU HELP? Next year we want to concentrate on growing the Bear Foundation on as many levels as possible to name a few - increasing our supporter base, raising more awareness and most importantly, growing our network of volunteers. Do you have any spare time to help? It can be as much or as little as you like. We are looking for people to organise or hold fundraising events in their areas or become more involved in general with the Bear Foundation's work and administration. If you are interested in helping, please do get in touch – even if it's just to find out more!

Coming up



International Save Bears Day, February 21st, 2011

Last year we launched our 'Put a Pound in a Pot Appeal' to mark International Save Bears Day on 21st February. Supporters were asked to put a pound in a pot every day from February 1st to the 21st to raise £21. This year, we'd like to break last years total of just over £300 by asking if you can put 'Put a Pound in a Pot' a month earlier from January 1st to February 21st. That way, each person taking part would raise a fabulous £52 just by putting a pound away a day. Please help us smash last years total.

Thank you for your support!

Contact Us

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Please make any cheques payable to 'The Winton Foundation'