



BEARS MATTER

Issue 9, Dec 2014/Jan 2015

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

Welcome to the ninth edition of Bears Matter. Another incredibly successful six months under our belt as the Winton Bear Foundation nears its 5th Birthday. Here's what your invaluable support has helped us achieve since the last newsletter.



We continued to work incredibly hard to raise funds for sweet Grace, the very special bear resident at the Woodlands Wildlife Refuge who we took under our wing after meeting her at the Advancing Bear Care Conference in 2013.

Grace had a condition called Osteodystrophy which meant her bones developed abnormally, resulting in little stumpy legs. Sadly it was also thought that Grace was blind.

Our raffle in June 2014 raised £300 and another in August raised £310.

The 'Bears 'n' Buddies' bear that we raffled in August was won by Helen Ashworth. Helen very kindly donated it back to our Fostering Compassion project for the children to enjoy during their workshops to help them learn more about bears.

Helen decided to name the bear...Grace.



Farewell Grace

2002 - 2014

It is with a heavy heart that this newsletter comes with sad news about Grace. Grace suffered a physical downturn that Tracy Leaver her 'bear mom' and the vets at Woodlands Wildlife feel was most probably caused by a clot or a stroke. On October 9th 2014, the heartbreaking decision was made to let Grace go and she passed peacefully, cradled in Tracy's lap enjoying grapes and acorns. Tracy says...

"While my heart hurts with this loss and she will be missed dearly, she is now a beautiful spirit in the sky dancing with other bears that have passed through Woodlands and then beyond before her. She can now run fast and climb high with no visual or physical impairments. I thank her for what she brought to Woodlands and all those she touched in some special way. I know we all have good memories of Grace and I find myself smiling at those through my tears. I am happy she is free... God speed and thank you Grace."

To read more about Grace and Woodlands Wildlife's Appeal in her memory visit <http://woodlandswildlife.org/grace>

Our Tribute

We feel it is fitting that the Winton Bear Foundation also provide a memorial for Grace as she was so special to us and to you. We are in the process of arranging for a special bench to go in the grounds of WWR situated by their Education Centre. As Grace always loved her Christmas tree, we would also like to arrange for a special pine tree to be planted beside her bench. More details will follow next year.

Oliver

Sadly, Grace wasn't the only loss the bear world suffered in 2014. November saw the passing of another very special bear called Oliver. Oliver was rescued by Animals Asia after spending THIRTY years on a bear farm and enduring the most vile of incarcerated existences. Distressed, physically & mentally damaged, unresponsive and in constant pain, the Animals Asia team rescued him from his hell. He became known affectionately as their 'Broken Bear' and was adored by many.



Much loved and cherished at Animals Asia's Chengdu sanctuary the last few years of Oliver's precious life were just as they should have been, happy, free and loved by millions.

Sadly following deterioration in his health, the painful decision was made to let him go on November 12th but he will never be forgotten.

Despite the horrific wrongs inflicted on this beautiful bear on the bear farm, in the safety of the sanctuary, his forgiveness and resilience shone through. He was an inspiration to millions, a beacon of light and a symbol of hope for all bears still trapped on bear farms.

Animals Asia will mark Oliver's life each year on November 12th, the anniversary of his death. We are in no doubt, this will be supported by the many, many people touched by Oliver and his story. You can make a donation to Animals Asia in Oliver's name at any time – to continue the campaign to end bear bile farming – just follow this link to their In Memoriam page here: <http://bit.ly/1usTlys>.



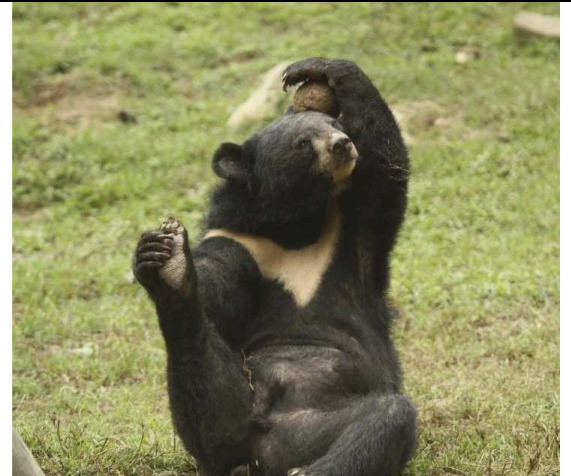
Rest in peace Oliver
You were a remarkable bear

After a very successful six months, we were able to make another distribution of funds in
December 2014

We are always happy to support our friends at Animals Asia and their ongoing efforts to bring the brutal practice of bear farming to an end.

As we have recently sent funds for their China Sanctuary and their Peace by Piece project, this time we wanted to buy a little gift for their Vietnam bears. Since they loved their coconuts so much the last time, we decided to buy each of their 110 bears a coconut for Christmas. We donated £250 which would allow for this, plus the purchase of nine rubber tyres for each bear house which provide wonderful enrichment for the bears.

Photo courtesy of Animals Asia



The new bear will enjoy an enclosure like Max's

The Liberty Bear Sanctuary in Romania received £100 – to help with the building of a specially adapted enclosure for one of their blind bears rescued from terrible conditions in a zoo.

He is unable to stay with the other bears because of his handicap so the only chance for him is to have an enclosure like Max, their other bear (who we have adopted and pictured to the left) where he will be on his own but with great facilities including a swimming pool, den and an area with grass and trees only for him.

Photo courtesy of Victor Watkins

We made another donation of £100 to Wildlife SOS in India – to assist with the ongoing care of their bears rescued from the miserable existence of life as dancing bears.

Photo courtesy of Wildlife SOS



Also receiving £100 was Get Bear Smart in Canada. We made another donation towards their ongoing tree planting programme which we have supported before.

This fabulous project helps to keep a plentiful supply of lush berry trees in the wild to help prevent the bears from wandering into town and subsequently into danger.

Photo courtesy of Get Bear Smart

For the first time, we made a donation to Bear with Us, a new beneficiary based in Canada.

Bear with Us work to rescue and rehabilitate orphaned and injured bears and promote human-bear coexistence.

We sent them £100 to assist with the ongoing care of their two resident ex circus bears Molly and Yogi, with them for 20 years.

Photo courtesy of Bear with Us



Yogi

And last but by no means least...we will be covering the cost of a second print run of our joint flyer with Five Sisters Zoo – ‘The unbearable facts about bears in entertainment.’ Since we last printed this leaflet, followers of and visitor numbers to the zoo have vastly increased, so we feel this is an opportune time to rerun this educational leaflet to raise awareness of the cruel exploitation of bears. The leaflet will be tweaked slightly and updated to record the bears’ progress since rescue. To read the current leaflet in full follow this link to our website

<http://wintonbearfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Flyer-Bears-in-Entertainment.pdf>



HOW YOU CAN HELP THE WINTON BEAR FOUNDATION – AT A GLANCE!

For all you busy people, here, in brief, are ways you can help...

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Make a donation✓ Set up a direct debit✓ Become a volunteer for the Winton Bear Foundation✓ Donate tombola items | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Help fund/sponsor any part of our Fostering Compassion programme✓ Become a volunteer for the Fostering Compassion project✓ Hold your own fundraising event |
|--|--|

Anything you can do to help, big or small, is greatly appreciated!

How to contact us or for further information:

By Post - The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears (SCIO), 54 West Windygoul Gardens, Tranent, East Lothian, EH33 2LA, U.K. **By e-mail:** info@wintonbearfoundation.org **Website:** www.wintonbearfoundation.org
www.fosteringcompassion.org

Telephone: +44-(0) 1875 614 899 or +44-(0)7904 733 137 **And don't forget – Facebook too!**

Please make any cheques payable to ‘The Winton Foundation’

You can now donate online too – visit our website for details.

Wildwood Trust's Bear Rescue

You may recall in our last newsletter, we were delighted to share with you that as of July 2014, we were giving our backing and support to Wildwood Trust's Bear Rescue. The Wildwood Trust are based in Kent, U.K., and recently launched a massive appeal to raise £50,000 to come to the rescue of two bears in desperate need.



The bears known as Milcho and Gosho had been abandoned in a barren pit in a disused breeding centre in Bulgaria called Kormisosh and since 1993 had lived a life of misery and neglect. The bears received only basic care and had never been outside of their concrete pens, never seen a tree or walked on grass.

The Wildwood team did a remarkable job of fundraising to achieve their goal of rescuing the bears from their torment. We made an initial donation to them in July of £200 and in November ran another raffle for them. Our raffle started with two prizes donated by Angela Kyle and Elaine Edwards and grew to a massive 16 prizes thanks to the fabulous generosity of Fiona George, Julia Attwood, Lynne Chitty, Nicole from Stone Willow Jewellery, Helen Allmond, Wendy Chambers and Lesley Winton who all donated prizes making this our biggest raffle yet.

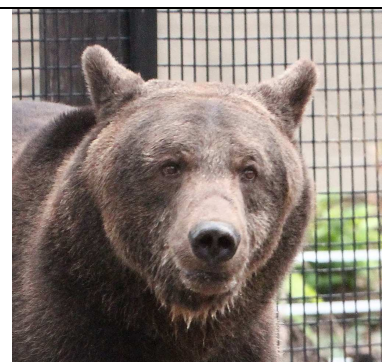
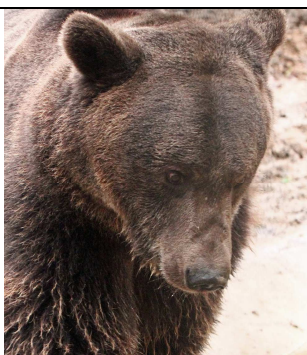
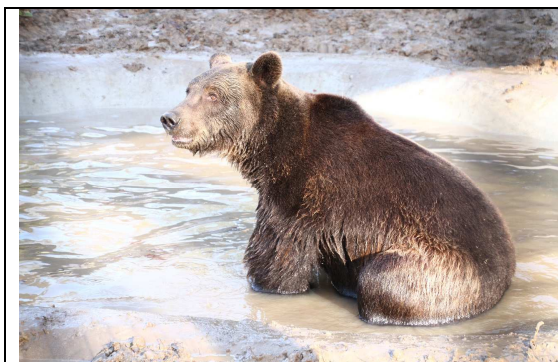
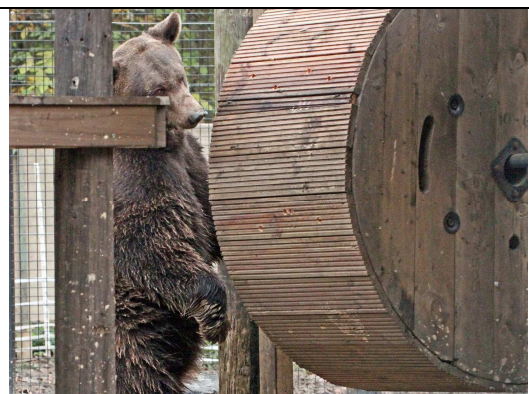
One of the bears in the barren enclosure

During the raffle, we received the most fantastic news from the team at Wildwood. The bears had been rescued and were already safe and sound at their new home in Kent! It was just the most brilliant piece of news to share with our supporters as we were raising money for the two Bulgarian Bears. This spurred you all on so that we could raise as much as possible to help fund their enrichment, medicines and food to help them recover in their new home.

Thanks to the generosity of everyone who supported the raffle we raised a massive £553.00. The Winton Bear Foundation made this up to £600.00 which we sent to Wildwood for the care of their bears. They sent us these wonderful pictures of the bears enjoying the grass beneath their feet, the water on their bodies and the love and care they so deserve.....Oh and the giant wooden wheel that spits our tasty nuts and treats when spun around!

We will ensure their big wooden wheel stays full of treats. The bears pull down on it to make it spin and as it does, peanuts fall out! After receiving no stimulus in the dreadful barren pit they were stuck in in Bulgaria you can just imagine how beside themselves with excitement and awe the bears are, at this wonderful game, which builds their strength, practices logical thinking and provides them with an important, high calorie snack too. Fantastic!

All photos courtesy of Wildwood Trust



The money we have donated and will continue to donate will go towards enrichment for the bears and help with their ongoing food and veterinary bills. We very much look forward to helping play a part in giving these gorgeous bears the life they so deserve.



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, are coming up and ways in which 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.

A huge thank you goes to the wonderful children of Primary 1 & 2 of Prestonpans Infant School in East Lothian, Scotland. The children had been learning all about bears around the world and they asked if we would come and tell them more. We attended the school and told them all about the bears we've helped and Grace's special story too.

The children loved Grace so much they all drew beautiful pictures of her with her much loved Christmas tree!

My mince pie's in here somewhere!



Thank you Prestonpans Infant School for helping us. We send you Big Bear Hugs!!

They held a special bake sale for us and raised £32.03 after making and selling bear shaped biscuits. They presented us with this lovely cheque from the 'Bank of Prestonpans Infants'



Our special little thank you card to the children (left)

Since our last newsletter our online fundraisers have raised £863 and 2014 has seen us pass a milestone of distributing more than £10,500 to bears in need around the world. We are now supporting 27 projects in 11 different countries.

We may be small, but we are definitely making our mark and making a difference.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us achieve the success we have to date.



Next year sees us celebrating five years since we started.

Look out for exciting updates in this connection to mark the occasion!

We are looking for volunteers to take on a variety of roles to help support the ongoing growth of the Winton Bear Foundation. If you would like to find out more please email lesley@wintonbearfoundation.org



© Winton Bear Foundation

Our remarkable Fostering Compassion project continues to go from strength to strength gaining great respect and praise from participants and professionals alike.

The project began in 2013 with a group of 10 children in one small area of Scotland. After successfully securing our first grant, in 2014 we were able to help 50 children in three regions.

Following receipt of a second grant, in 2015 we will be able to welcome 90-100 children into the programme from five different regions of Scotland.

A huge thank you goes to the dedicated, hardworking and skilled volunteers who help make this project such a success.

**To read more about Fostering Compassion please visit our dedicated website
www.fosteringcompassion.org**

As another year draws to a close, all that remains to be done is to pass on our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to you all – our supporters, our volunteers, our fundraisers and our beneficiaries. Without you, we would never be able to achieve as much as we do.

We anticipate that 2015 will be a very exciting year for us with plans for growth so we can help many more bears around the world. We will also be celebrating our 5th birthday with a number of exciting events and activities.

This newsletter will close remembering Grace and Oliver, two very special bears.

So that leaves us to wish you

*Merry
Christmas*



And may all your dreams come true in 2015

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

“I love the Winton Bear Foundation as it helps so many bear organisations by pulling together individual donors - I could never afford to support them all, so I support WBF. It is my favourite bear charity - it's like a special offer - help more than one bear charity for just one donation.”

The words of Julia Attwood, Winton Bear Foundation Supporter.

Mailing List - If you are receiving this by ‘snail mail’ and now have an e-mail address, please could you let us know as this helps us cut down on costs. If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, just get in touch. Also if you have any friends, family or colleagues that you think would like to be added to our mailing list, simply send us their e-mail address – but please ensure you get their permission first. Thank you for your continued support. (Scottish Registered Charity SC042614)

Remembering Grace and Oliver



May your spirits soar

