

All in a Day's Work

Paddy Barrett - The Donkey Sanctuary

PROFILE

Paddy Barrett works for The Donkey Sanctuary at Liscarroll, Mallow, Co. Cork, as Public Relations Manager.



Photos courtesy of The Donkey Sanctuary

Have you always been interested in what you do?

I was born into this environment; there were always donkeys here at the farm since 1924. Donkeys were very much part of my growing up.

What training did you do to get where you are today?

In 1981 I took over from my late father Garrett Barrett, who was employed as an inspector for the Irish Society of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I received training in this field at the time and in 1984 I went to train on donkey care at The Donkey Sanctuary in Devon England. In 1987 I took on the role as Manager for The Donkey Sanctuary in Ireland. Initially from a staff of three the sanctuary grew to employ staff in excess of 50 full time permanent staff. Staff are employed in various departments. eg. Farm Staff, Veterinary Staff, Welfare Staff and Administration Staff.

Last year a Welfare Manager and Head of Operations were appointed after I decided to concentrate more on Public Relations and promoting the work of The Donkey Sanctuary in Ireland.

Why are so many donkeys in need of care?

At the beginning of the last century, there were approximately 300,000 working donkeys in Ireland. They were very useful animals, carrying peat from the bogs, churns of milk to the creameries and performed many more tasks as well. However by the early 1950s the donkeys became victims of modernisation and many were turfed out onto the side of the road to fend for

themselves. In the last 22 years there has been a vast improvement in donkey welfare in Ireland.

How many donkeys has The Donkey Sanctuary helped over the years?

Over the past 22 years 2,800 donkey and mules have been rescued from all over the country. Many of these are in terrible condition i.e. neglected, distorted feet and some are very emaciated with lice infected coats.

What is a day in your life like?

At present a day in my life as Public Relations Manager is mainly giving talks and power point presentations to National Schools, Colleges (mainly Civil, Social and Political Education classes) Institutions, and Day Care Centres etc. Also giving interviews on radio and television documentaries relating to donkey care.

What is your main aim?

My main aim is to promote the care and welfare of donkeys and mules around the country by educating the public.

What is the best thing about your job?

The best thing about my job is being able to rescue and rehabilitate the very neglected and abandoned donkeys, and witnessing their improvement. I love my job. It takes me to every county in the country.

What is the worst thing about your job?

The worst thing is seeing the terrible conditions some donkeys are subjected to either by ignorance or deliberate cruelty.



Do you work alone or as part of a team?

I work as part of a team.

What advice would you give someone wanting to do your job?

I would advise them to have good communication skills and an ability to get on with the public.

What would you do if you weren't doing what you do?

I probably would have been involved in the building industry.

What is best piece of advice you have ever had?

To have respect for others.