

# HRH The Princess Royal reopens the gates to the world's Oldest Horse Charity

Submitted by: Insight Marketing Concepts

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The Horse Trust's Home of Rest for Horses (<http://www.horsetrust.org.uk>) has been officially reopened by HRH The Princess Royal. The Horse Trust is the world's oldest horse charity and its Home of Rest had been closed to the public for almost nine months for essential repairs. The official opening event was attended by over 200 of the charity's partners and supporters, including representatives from the Army, RAF, Police, many of the UK's leading vets and some of its long term donors.

Her Royal Highness was given a tour of the new stables, and new facilities built to help the charity continue to provide the best possible care for their herd of 100 retired working horses and rescue horses. HRH also met a number of the charity's equine residents including 19hh Big Klyde who was one of the largest police horse in the UK before his retirement and rescued foal Teddy who was found abandoned on the side of the road at only 8-weeks old.

The charity was established in 1886 as the Home of Rest for Horses after their founder Ann Lindo was inspired by the novel Black Beauty to help the working horses of London. The charity has gone on to help thousands of working horses from London cab horses, pit ponies, War Horses serving in WW1 and police horses.

Today the charity specialises in providing a dignified retirement for working horses who have served our nation, including horses who have served with the Military, Police and Royal Mews.

Joey, the star of the National Theatre's internationally acclaimed stage production of War Horse, made a special appearance to support the re-opening of The Horse Trust. During the event Joey met real life War Horse Commando, who the War Horse company have sponsored to help The Trust pay for Commando's care in his retirement. Commando recently retired to The Horse Trust after serving with The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment where he had served with The Blues and Royals for 10 years. Commando is one of few horses that participated in the Royal Wedding in 2011 and both the Golden and Diamond Jubilee parades. Commando was also the bearer of Her Majesty's Blues and Royals Standard and an Officer's Charger. Commando was described by officers as being, "the perfect Cavalry Black". The War Horse company also presented a signed drawing of Joey by award-winning designer Rae Smith to the Horse Trust to display in its new museum.

The story of War Horse Joey is strikingly similar to that of WW1 War Horse Roger who retired to The Horse Trust's Home of Rest for Horses after WW1. Roger was a German Officer's Charger who was found riderless on the battlefield during the infamous Battle of the Somme. A British Army Officer 'captured' Roger and bought him to safety. Roger then served as the Officer's mount for the last 2 years of the war. At the end of WWI Roger's British Officer bought him back to England and paid for Roger to spend the rest of his days enjoying a quiet and dignified retirement at the Home of Rest for Horses.

Metropolitan Police Horse Ganemedes was formally retired at the event and received on behalf of the charity by HRH The Princess Royal. Ganemedes, a 15.3hh 15yo bay gelding, served with the Met for 11 years and has retired as he suffers from intermittent lameness. Ganemedes has undertaken all forms of

police work including patrolling London football matches, and facing violence to bravely protect the public during the Israeli demonstration and the student demonstrations. Despite his small size, he is very brave and very fast and is always "first in" on patrol and in riots. His rider, Constable Samantha Riggs, says "I will miss him a lot, there is no other horse like him". The Thames Valley Police also supported the event with two mounted police officers in attendance. Laurent Perrier kindly supported the toasts at the event.

The Horse Trust's Chief Executive, Jeanette Allen said:

"We are honoured that our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, has visited us to formally reopen our Home of Rest for Horses. This official reopening represents the beginning of a new era for our charity. For the past 127 years The Horse Trust has helped improve the lives thousands of horses, ponies and donkeys and these much-needed new facilities will help us to improve the lives of many more."

The Horse Trust (<http://www.horsetrust.org.uk>) is holding their Horses, Hounds and Heroes Family Fun Day (<http://www.horsetrust.org.uk/news/current/horse-trust-news-2013/horse-hounds-and-heroes-family-fun-day---sunday-16th-jun>) on Sunday 16th June from 11am to 5pm. The event aims to celebrate the men and women who serve our nation in the Military and Police and the animal's that serve alongside them and raise essential funds for the charity. The event will include displays from the Military's Defence Animal Centre's Canine Squadron, army farriers and Veterinary Corps (who can currently be seen in ITVs 'Animal Heroes'). Thames Valley Police Horse Romulus will also be formally retired on the day. There will also be a dog show which is being run by local dog rescue charity Stokenchurch Dog rescue  
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Photography of HRH The Princess Royal at The Horse Trust:

HRH The Princess Royal at The Horse Trust-Image#1  
(<http://bit.ly/HRH-The-Princess-Royal-at-The-Horse-Trust-1>)  
HRH The Princess Royal at The Horse Trust-Image#2  
(<http://bit.ly/HRH-The-Princess-Royal-at-The-Horse-Trust-2>)  
HRH The Princess Royal at The Horse Trust-Image#3  
(<http://bit.ly/HRH-The-Princess-Royal-at-The-Horse-Trust-3>)

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Notes for Editors:

1. The Horse Trust, founded in 1886, is the oldest horse charity in the UK. Based at Speen, Buckinghamshire, it provides a place of retirement for working horses. These hard-working equine public servants have served their country or community in the police, military or charities such as the Riding for the Disabled Association. The charity also gives sanctuary to horses, ponies and donkeys that have suffered and need special treatment. The Horse Trust funds non-invasive research that advances knowledge of equine diseases, improving diagnosis and treatment and reducing suffering among equines worldwide. The charity also offers training for professionals and owners, with a focus on equine welfare and quality of life assessment.

2. The Horse Trust depends on the support of the public to look after retired working horses. It costs the charity an average of £12 per day to look after each horse at the sanctuary, which includes the costs of grooms, forage, farriery and veterinary care. To donate to The Horse Trust, please visit [www.horsetrust.org.uk](http://www.horsetrust.org.uk), or contact the charity on 01494 488 464 or [info@horsetrust.org.uk](mailto:info@horsetrust.org.uk)

3. The charity has recently undergone extensive repair and renovation work to build new and updated facilities to provide the best possible care for their retired or rescued horses, ponies and donkeys. The Horse Trust is open to the public Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday from 2 – 4pm. Entry is £5 per car or £3 per care for OAPs, disabled visitors and police or military personnel.

4. War Horse is currently in its sixth year in the London. The show, which has now been seen by over 1.7million people in London and by over 3 and a half million people worldwide, is based on Michael Morpurgo's novel about a boy and his beloved horse. It is directed by Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris and designed by Rae Smith, with puppet direction, design and fabrication by Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler for Handspring Puppet Company. War Horse can currently be seen in Australia, is on a major US Tour, and this Autumn begins a tour of the UK and Ireland. The first non-English speaking version of the play opens on October 20 in Berlin.