

Friends of Marwari / Kathiawari Horse UK
in tandem with
Indigenous Horse Society of India

BIT DONATION SCHEME

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What types of Bit can I donate?

A: All types of snaffle, pelhams, curbs are accepted. Mullen mouth, happy mouth, stainless steel, nickel are all very welcome. Anything in common use in UK, except Bitless bridles or Gags as correct fitting cannot be guaranteed.

Q: What size of Bit can I donate?

A: Preferably they should be sized between 4" – 5" wide at the mouthpiece as these breeds have small mouths.

Q: Is there any other equipment I can donate?

A: We can accept Rubber bit rings/guards, Leather Pelham roundings, curb chains and In-hand Bits. Please contact us if you need advice.

Q: Will my Bit be used?

A: Yes, so far 100% the Bits which have kindly been donated have been useable, and have been given directly to Indian recipients.

Q: How do I know my Bit won't be sold on, or melted down?

A: It is thought unlikely because we give each Bit to individual horse owners, breeders, trainers, or traders, and we explain to them the merits of the new bit, and how it can benefit their animal.

We do understand that there is no guarantee that the Bits will not be sold on, but so long as they end up in a horse's mouth, as opposed to one of the crudely filed bits, then a horse is benefiting.

Q: How do you choose who to give the Bits to?

A: We rely on the IHSI and our Indian contacts to guide us. In the first shipment we gave approximately 35% of the bits to the known "big players" at the horse fairs, as they are influential, the remaining 65% were given to the individual owners or small time traders.

Q: What are you doing to educate the local Bit manufacturers in India?

A: At the fair we were approached by two Bit manufacturers. We explained how our western Bits benefit both horse and rider. They asked if they could have some Bits to copy. We gave them each an eggbut snaffle and a full cheek French link, and made them understand that the mouthpieces must be smooth, and they should copy them exactly. They both understood and went away happy with new projects to work on. We told them we would return next year to get their feedback, and if successful we would give them more styles to copy.

Q: Why do the Indians use these cruel homemade Bits?

A: Because in the rural areas at present there is no alternative. Western style Bits are rarely found outside the city based polo yards. These cheap homemade bits have evolved into items of torture due to the rider wanting a 'quick fix' in being able to control his horse.

Q: How are you addressing the education issue?

A: Firstly we are looking into a number of projects:

- a) The IHSI has suggested that we look into producing a DVD in picture format of 'good biting', to be screened in the evenings at the horse fairs. Later, if the response is positive, we could produce a DVD in pictures of good basic horsemanship.
- b) In tandem with IHSI we are forging links with Indian NGO's (Non Government Organisations) who already have stalls at the horse fairs administering equine first aid. So far the feedback from them has been positive about our Bit Donation Scheme. They understand that a lot of what they are doing is reactive ie. fixing the mouth wounds after they have occurred. Our scheme aims to be proactive; by giving an alternative, kinder, western type of bit we hope to avoid the horses' mouth getting hurt in the first place. We hope we can work in tandem with them.

Q: How is the Bit Donation Scheme funded?

A: It isn't!. So far the scheme has not cost us, or you, a penny. All correspondence and press releases have been done by email. All Bit donations have been collected by a network of 'Friends'. The first shipment of Bits was transported in general luggage. The team entirely self funded their trip.

Q: How else can I help?

A:

- You can join us by becoming a member, you will receive regular newsletters. You can download a membership form and details from our website 'About Us' page: www.friendsofmarwari.org.uk
- You can also make a donation, cheques should be made payable to "Friends of Marwari Horse UK" and sent to: Friends of Marwari / Kathiawari Horse UK, The Stable, Willey Place, Chamber Lane, Farnham, Surrey GU10 5ES
- You could start your own collection point. We can help you with posters and press releases that can be tailored for your local area, contact us for more info by email: info@friendsofmarwari.org.uk