**SOUTH EAST REGIONAL REPORT FOR THE AGM 2016**

Another year seems to have flown by as I reflect on what has been a busy year. I have enjoyed being involved with decision making and discussions on council; along with taking part in various events that have occurred across the country and more so in my own SE region.

This time last year many of our members were in Ireland. I myself was unable to attend as I was looking after everybody at home although my girls did attend and had a wonderful time. However since then our region has been busy and has put on lots of varied events for our members. These have included a walk in celebration of Her Majesty The Queen’s 90th birthday which was very well supported with donkeys, mules and a pony attending accompanied by over 35 members, which was just brilliant. The weather was super as was the hospitality, the walk and afternoon tea too. We have also hosted a fun day kindly sponsored by one of our regional members which was a great success and those who attended had a wonderful time. Thanks again go to our host and sponsor. I would like to emphasise that should any member across the country wish to attend any of our events then you would be most welcome, you just need to get in touch.

Along with these events our members have been out promoting donkeys at other events including New Year’s Day parade, Palm Sundays, Donkey Day Out, photo shoots, nativities and other activities. Along with these my family have attended Connect With The Countryside which is a huge educational day for school children about the countryside, farming and animals; attracting over 3000 children which is always a busy but fun filled day. This year the donkeys came out in the top 3 for the most popular part of the day which is a great achievement for us, bearing in mind the amount of other aspects and groups that are in attendance. But everyone loves a donkey and it is such a good promotional tool for both the donkey and the society.

There have been 6 affiliated shows in our region this year, this has included South Eastern Donkey Show (SEDS), Surrey County, Cranleigh, Chertsey, Edenbridge & Oxted and Ardingly Autumn show; many having very good entries and of a very high standard. I thank those people across the country and our region for supporting them and encourage you to continue to do so, especially Edenbridge & Oxted as we have fought hard for our classes to come back, so now we have to work even harder to retain them.

A couple of highlights for me this year were firstly taking part in the Sunday brunch programme. I was immensely proud of my donkeys and how impeccably behaved they both were; after having to travel up in a lift and stand on bright green plastic grass just to name a few things. But also our donkeys have been very fortunate to be a significant part of the Ellen Kent international opera which has been on tour across the country with great success. Our donkeys thoroughly enjoy taking part and we have ensured we promote the DBS to its best capacity, including waiting outside until the performance has finished to answer questions about donkeys and raise funds.

On a slightly more personal note and less regional our donkey has featured in the Durrell’s on ITV and is soon to be performing in the new series so look out for him. We are extremely proud to be invited to join the cast of a very highly credited show.

Between the shows our region has held its local AGM which was very successful with an amazing speaker who indeed captured everyone’s imagination about the world of carriage driving. We also had a raffle and the shop was in attendance. We will soon be holding our Christmas lunch and indoor donkey show; everyone is welcome should you like to attend just please get in contact and I can give you the details. Our events for next year are already being planned with a touch of gold in tow.

To conclude, I must of course mention that none of the events mentioned above would have been possible without firstly the members making an effort, but also the people who give up their time voluntarily, people who allow us to use their property, their homes, their donkeys and those prepared to travel to share their knowledge with fellow enthusiasts. Without all these people it would not be possible. So all that’s left for me to say to members old and new. I hope you had a good year but more importantly a big thank you. Enjoy your donkeys. Coral Weaver