South West Region (Devon and Cornwall) Report for AGM 2016

We have approximately 40 members in the region and even though we have lost two this year we have increased the membership overall. It is very difficult for members to attend events with their donkeys due to expense and the bad transport links we have across the counties here.

Our busiest event was the Awards Day in March when three members obtained the Bronze standard and four the Silver. As no one has to transport their donkeys it has proved a very popular event especially as there is a lovely rosette and certificate at the end of a hard days work. Our next event was a showing workshop near Totnes in April ready for the start of the showing calendar. Six members attended and thanks to Jayne for her help.

We were lucky to have a visit from Kaisa of the Donkey Society of Finland in April.

We were able to have some fun doing Agility as Sue from Clovelly came to show us the correct way it should be done as she is a member of the Horse Agility Club and takes part in competitions with her donkeys.

We are very lucky to have the Donkey Sanctuary in our region and some members attended the D.S Donkey Week at Town Barton Farm and enjoyed seeing all the lovely donkeys and mules there.

The start of the show season kicked off with the Devon County Show in May. It is not the easiest show as the ring is very very small, especially for driving, but it is in the middle of the show ground which is nice for the public to see donkeys and so we can be appreciated. The DBS boards were a great attraction to tell the public that donkeys are not just for show. The Royal Cornwall and Liskeard followed by the last show in this region, the Okehampton show. Numbers were very, very low at all the shows and I will not be surprised if we do not lose at least one of them. We have no unaffiliated shows.

The Introduction to Driving Day here in September was popular. All were able to have a go - first at long reining and then a short drive out up the lanes. The donkeys loved it. My own donkeys attended a Western Heavy Horse Society working day with two carts and pack saddle where they were made very welcome and received a lovely horse brass and rosette. There was also a donkey working a cider press. Do try different events with your donkeys as even if we lose the shows donkeys can do different things and get themselves in front of the public. It is not all about POT HUNTING even if it is nice to get rosettes!!

Briony Wild

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