

ASSPIRE!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN REGION OF THE
DONKEY BREED SOCIETY



Festive Greetings!

I hope this finds you relaxed and looking forward to the festivities!

What a fantastic year for the DBS across the Northern Region. In shows, driving, training days and walks with our donkeys (and alpacas!) they and we, have had a great time and the Northern Region has excelled in *a//* activities!

Christmas appeal: I was going to appeal this Christmas for a Treasurer for the Region. Bill stepped down over a year ago now, but I would like to thank him for keeping an eye on things over 2019. Christmas has come early however, and Sarah Pennell has volunteered to be our new Treasurer! Thank you, Sarah, and welcome to Donkey Finance!

New Year's resolution: there will be a big drive this year to increase our Junior membership in the Region. Not an easy task, but important to ensure the future of the Society and all associated activities.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a new year full of donkeys!

Liz.

Elizabeth Brown, Chair of the Northern Region of the Donkey Breed Society.



Colin's Column . . . (the very first from a much loved and very versatile Northern donkey!)

Hello Juniors!

My name is Colin, I am a large brown donkey and I live with my 6 friends on a farm on top of a hill.

I have had a very busy summer going to lots of donkey shows. I go in lots of classes and do driving too; my favourite class is the ridden class because I like children.

I'm having a long rest from shows now that it's winter but I'm still busy helping Father Christmas as well as going to churches to carry a little girl dressed as Mary in the nativity services.

I'm also getting excited because after Christmas I'm going to a **donkey party!** It's on the **5th January 2020 at 2pm at Brown Road Farm**. There will be donkey games and goodies to eat. I hope there will be some carrot cake! Come and join us and bring your friends but please let my owner know so that she can make enough cake!

Happy Christmas!

Love Colin xx

ADA - No, not the name of one of our Region's donkeys (although I suppose there could be an Ada out there) but the '**Active Donkey Awards**' and we are fortunate that our Region's own Terri Morris is the DBS Administrator of the Scheme. Check out the DBS website and/or *Bray Talk* for further information and then email Terri at throstlenest@hotmail.co.uk if you would like to enroll!

I had a lovely email from Terri the other day who said, 'As our William is about to start his full diary of Christmas activities (the first is at Silsden this coming Sunday actually) I was looking through some previous photos to get us in the mood and thought I'd send you these two to give a taste of Nativity parades.' So good to see our donkeys making people smile!





It's the Christmas Quiz!!

Questions for everyone!! 'Northern Nutters' - are you ready?!

The Arts:

- ❖ What is the name of the donkey in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*?
- ❖ What links 'Puzzle' and 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'?
- ❖ 'The Donkey Cabbage' is a fairy tale, but where is it from?
- ❖ Why might Olwen's *Romance* know TroTro?

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Donkey know-how:

- ❖ What is a 'hinny'?
- ❖ Draw a donkey, showing the following: f---o---; ch-----t; -o-l; -o-n; --el; p-s-----.
- ❖ When packing, donkeys should pack no more than ??% of their bodyweight.

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Tacking up and donkey driving:

- ❖ Draw a 'walsall clip' and say where you might find one
- ❖ Without one of these your ride might be over before it started
- ❖ What is a 'roger-ring'?
- ❖ A whipple tree is also known as?
- ❖ How might a Travois come in handy?
- ❖ What is a 'Pickaxe Formation'?

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Know your DBS:

- ❖ How many regions are there?
- ❖ How many national committees?
- ❖ What does PRAS stand for?
- ❖ What are the four key aims of the DBS? Clue: 3 Ps and a P&FR.

[20]

Know the North!!

'Dark and true and tender is the North'.

- ❖ Name four types of heavy industry that dominated the North in the 19th and early 20th centuries.
- ❖ The North, particularly Lancs but also Yorkshire and the North East, had a tradition of 'matriarchal families' - what does this mean?!
- ❖ What was 'clogging'?
- ❖ What is Parkin? [And, can someone make some for the next meeting! Or at least send in a traditional recipe please!]
- ❖ Acclaimed series' set in the North: BFTB, OFITN, CO, S, LTIH

[12]

TOTAL: 50

(Answers next time!)

Recently, at our Northern Region AGM as we chatted prior to proceedings, Bill Tetlow's lovely videos of DBS events past were playing in the corner of the room – such lovely memories. Making no apologies for nostalgia, we kick off what we hope will become a regular feature, looking back at some past times cherished . . .





Your Questions Answered . . .

To rug or not to rug? That is the question we put to 'our Jenny'

Dear 'our Jenny',

My donkeys are turned out during the day and come in at night to a cosy stable (which they share). Their field is not exposed and there is a field shelter - although it's not their first port of call in a storm - they can come back into the yard and shelter. At what point should I put rugs on them - if at all?

Jenny says: My first reaction, is don't! However, this depends on lots of things. For example, what part of the country you live in, whether you have a field shelter or not. If there is lots of wind and rain and your field has little natural shelter or some sort of built shelter, you might need to resort to rugging. Other things that need to be taken into consideration of course are whether your donkey is a stallion, or if it is a poor animal and whether it is clipped. It is common sense really - but, if in doubt, ask someone in the DBS Region who lives nearby to pop by and see what they think - or come along to a Training Day and have an informal chat about it. We often know what we think is the right thing to do but it's always good to ask if you're not sure - nobody's going to be judgemental!

Sec: we did in fact talk about this at our recent Training Day in November.

If you have any questions to put to 'our Jenny' send them to her, c/o me at northerndonks@gmail.com and I will pass them on. (Mysterious thought: I am not 'our Jenny' - hmmm!! 'Our Jenny' is in fact the DBS Northern Region's answer to 'the Stig'!!)



Finding out about . . .

Northern Region writer, Claire Fretwell



In September after their '*mammoth* move downsizing from our small holding in Herefordshire to return to our roots near Poulton-le-Fylde' I met Claire and Bryan at the The Northern Region Show. Their large vehicle was festooned with pictures of Claire's donkey books – there are over 54!! I wanted to know why she had chosen to write so many . . .



It all began with my Great Aunt Nancy, a Yeoman farmer's daughter, who I 'take after' — we have both moved too often (she twenty seven times — myself nine), Aunt Nancy & I were both, most of ALL, passionate about donkeys.

My paternal Grandparents brought me up due to my Mother's acute allergies and I spent chunks of my childhood and teens living with them. They were *incredible* Grandparents — the instrumental influence on my life and FUN!!! I was lucky to have Gran till I was thirty-seven years old.

I first met donks with Aunt Nancy, Uncle Rick & Gran & Grandpa on Rossall beach when aged four and the affinity was instant!!! My husband, a retired farm manager — also bred Shires, was missing them and as a surprise birthday present, I bought Fran and Molly; over the next few years we acquired another six donks, some neglected and gave them endless **love**.

In 2009, I said to Bryan in our Herefordshire orchard — I want to do something different, *purposeful* and write and the donks would be a START!!!!!! My mother possesses a literary bent; writing poems and short stories as a hobby. "Claire, ALL you talk about is donkeys — I do *hope* you are NOT going to turn into a donkey!!!"

National poetry competitions, academia and travel aplenty has clearly informed Claire's love of writing. Following crucial research in America, into allergies, with accompanying weighty tomes supporting her findings, we first meet Claire's donkeys in a cookbook '*Cracking Craves*' (2015) . . .

Specialising in corn allergies — I included eleven tales about our donks and highlighted Molly who was allergic to oats! The vet was *puzzled* – I was NOT!! The *reaction* was *startling*!! Then, Bryan, my husband gave me a *challenge* — the stories have to be *conversational* and he *queried* could I do it??!! I was *incensed*!

However, I could NOT have done this massive writing project without Bryan's extensive knowledge and *quirky* input. Donks need a HIGHER profile — I wanted to *highlight* them and attract MORE young people to appreciate them. I write with a *dynamic*, modern, *edge* in a *unique* style — covering bullying, snobbery, peer pressure, competitiveness, technology, road congestion, recycling, climate change, loneliness, decency, dishonesty, ageism, discrimination, throw-away society, the perils of being in the spotlight and MUCH MORE. One of my favourite tales is how Herbie asks his 737 Turkey friends a favour to chip an outline or two of donks on the Wiltshire downs —he is beside

HOW YOU CAN FIND A DONKEY TALE . . .

Explore Claire's writing further, at: www.donkeytails4U.com — books available as an E book/kindle and in traditional format mail order from Claire.

Please send and SAE for details to: Donk's Den, Öland, 85 Bispham Road, Great Carleton, Nr. Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire. FY6 7PL. Tel: 01253 896445.

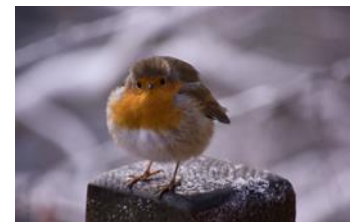
Dangling Donks (book ten) is available from Olympia publishers:
Olympia Publishers (part of Ashwell Publishing Ltd)
www.olympiapublishers.com Tel: 0203 755 3166

Or order direct from:
Amazon.com | Amazon.co.uk | Amazon.in | Barnes & Noble | Waterstones

himself as there are only white horses — donks **must** take precedence!

Claire tells me that Book 49 is a 'scream', as is Book 34 where the donks make a hit CD! Book 39 apparently covers a 'non-conventional wedding, but who marries who?' These unique books, that have been written with love are also extremely humorous. Huge thank you to Claire, and to Bryan, for bringing literary donks to the Northern Region!

In the next edition of *Asspire* we will be finding out about another illustrious Northern Region member!! Cue follow spot sweeping over the Region – it could be . . . you!!! (Sleep easy though, we will ask you for an interview first!!)



Let's make it a HAPPY NORTHERN REGION NEW YEAR!

As we look ahead to 2020 here are some dates for your diaries/calendars:

29th December - Shared Christmas Lunch at Brown Road SK14 6EB

5th January - Colin's Donkey Party at Brown Road SK14 6EB

9th January - Training Day - 'Tests' at Brown Road Farm, SK14 6EB

16th February - Training Day - at Brown Road Farm, SK14 6EB

15th March - Training Day - 'Show Prep. & Etiquette' at Brown Road Farm

18th April (tbc) - A Walk and Picnic at Rivington Pike

17th May - Northern Region Spring Show

16th & 17th June - Royal Cheshire County Show

Date to be confirmed - Romiley Show

8th August - Halifax Show

22nd & 23rd August - DBS Supreme Championship Show

31st August - Poynton Show

4th - 6th September - Chatsworth Country Fair

26th September - Northern Region Championship Show



Further details to follow. We are planning to send out a bumper Spring/Summer Calendar in March - Regional Reps, please let us know what is going on in your part of the Region so that we can support one another's ventures! Social events, walks, treks, rides, driving, shows, training days and, importantly, junior events (our goal for 2020 being to increase our junior membership) - let's get them all in the Northern Region's Calendar.

Contacts:

Elizabeth Brown - Chair, Northern Region elizabetholwenbrown@gmail.com

Sarah Booth - Secretary, northerndonks@gmail.com

Sarah Pennell - Treasurer, thepennells@btinternet.com

Olwen Brown - Brown Road Group 01457 762336

IF YOU HAVE ENJOYED THIS EDITION *OF ASSPIRE*, WHY NOT HAVE YOUR SAY IN THE NEXT ONE!!

Contribute to future copies of *ASSPIRE*, sharing your knowledge throughout the Region! Send pictures, articles, snippets of news to northerndonks@gmail.com.

Please note that views expressed in this Newsletter are those of contributors and not necessarily representative of the Donkey Breed Society.

And finally . . .



We asked you what your donkeys might just like to give to you, this Christmas, and your responses were heartwarming:

Hi Sarah, My boys would definitely give me another pair of arms so that they can both get scratches and hugs at the same time! Sarah Pennell, Cole and Dan

We're hoping that our precious mare, Cassie, is planning to give us the gift of a beautiful foal - although that won't arrive until early summer! Terri and John Morris

My donkeys would give me a cement mixer, for more hard standing! Pam Moon

Megan would give me driving lessons, because she enjoys it so much! Liz Ross

As they are besotted with our carrot tops, Jake and Spike would give us extra carrot seeds for Christmas as we grow our own! Julie Connolly

This is making me feel very festive indeed! *A while back my Barney gave me this . . . not the blue vase but the sculpture in front of it! This gave him the nickname of 'Barney Hepworth' for obvious reasons! Can you guess what it is made from?! What a clever donkey!*

Sarah Booth.



**A Very Happy and Contented Festive Season
and a Brilliant New Year
to all our Wonderful and Special Donkeys!**

