**SOUTH REGIONAL REPORT – AGM 2019**

We have had another busy season including a cones event which once again was good fun and well attended. We also had a long reining training day in April and another planned for November.

The highlight of the season must be our trip to the Isle of Wight to visit Carisbrooke Castle and of course seeing the donkeys there. We had a private tour with Hannah Brewer who is the Stable Manager and she very kindly showed us round all the sites within the castle grounds which included the well house.

Donkey Jack gave us a demonstration on how he worked the treadwheel to bring up the water from a 49 metre deep well! He walked on the wheel which did 2 turns and then he stepped off (he had done his bit!) It was quite amusing to see .They have four donkeys Jack, Jill, Juno & Jigsaw who do shifts of two hours a day doing their demonstrations, they are very well trained they know exactly what they are doing. I think the four J’s could show our donkeys a thing or to! Apparently all the donkeys names began with a ‘J’( I hope I heard correctly) and this is because Charles 1 used to sign his name ‘J’ . Charles 1 was a prisoner back in 1647 at the castle.

They have had donkeys working at the castle since 1669 they were used to draw water up from the well which was sunk in 1136. They use a wooden wheel (the wheel we saw is 431 years old and was installed by Sir George Carey cousin of Elizabeth 1). There is a lot of history at Carisbrooke Castle which I do not think I am qualified to report!! but now we have Hannah as our Isle of Wight Area Representative I’m sure she can give us a report on the history of the castle and the donkeys.

One of our walks was at Malshanger Estate near Basingstoke where 17 donkeys attended! It was a lovely walk and day passing by fields of lavender. A big thanks to Judith Williams in organising this.

We had another walk at Peppard Common near Reading which too was well attended with 10 donkeys and 18 people; a lovely walk through the woods where it was nice and shady. We were then treated to a Ploughmans lunch provided by Jane and Vernon Lewis, so a great thanks to them too.

A Fun Day was held at Judith Williams’ farm near Newbury, Berkshire which was really good fun having set a course of various obstacles, provided us with a BBQ for lunch then we went on to play musical hula hoops !! I would like to thank Judith for hosting this and all her organising, this she had obviously put a lot of thought into the various obstacles and work setting it up.

We had to cancel our yearly outing in the New Forest followed by a pub lunch due to rain which was a shame as it is well supported. We were going to drive 3 miles on quiet country lanes to the pub, then take the donkeys out of the carts where there is a special hitching rail for them, and humans could sit close by and have their food & drink, then a 1 ½ mile drive back. It was just a change from driving in the enclosures (New Forest). Hopefully we can do it next year.

We did manage to have a walk on Highcliffe Beach on the 20th October which was lovely with the sun out !!! After the walk we sat in the car park and had our picnic.

Apart from all our events we have been to various shows across the South and some of us farther afield.

The year seems to have flown by but overall we have had plenty of events and hope to have many more next year. We have our Southern AGM and planning meeting in February 2020. The regional Christmas lunch this year will be in Andover, details will be sent out soon.

As you all know we are hosting this national AGM this year and we hope you all enjoy the day/evening.

Maureen Thorne, Regional Delegate