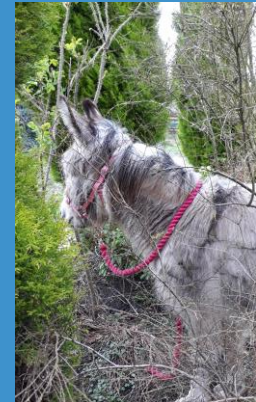


ASSPIRE!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN REGION OF THE
DONKEY BREED SOCIETY



Spring has sprung!

Dear All,

It would seem that Spring has sprung in a way we hadn't expected. I do hope this finds you and yours well and safe. It follows that there will be a lot of cancellations and we will endeavour to bring you those that affect us, as and when they are received. See also later in this newsletter for postponements for April and May.

So much work goes into the planning of events and it is always sad to have to cancel or postpone them, but we do want to ensure maximum safety; there's always later in the year or indeed next year. We can still walk our donkeys out locally or do some extra training with them – check out the suggestions later in the newsletter; we'll all be vying for handy/agility donkey honours when we get back out there!

If you are at all concerned about *anything* during this time of isolations (accessing feed for your donkeys if you are poorly or whatever) or you just want a chat, do get in touch with your area rep in the first instance, or with Sarah Booth or myself. Sarah will be emailing out a news update every other Thursday and if you want to send a message out to the Region, just email northerndonks@gmail.com and she will pass this on.

Best regards, Liz. (Liz Brown, Chairman, DBS Northern Region)

Colin's Column . . .

Hello Juniors!

I am thoroughly enjoying a well-deserved rest with my friends at Brown Road Farm. It has been wet and windy but at last the sun is shining and I am enjoying standing in the sunshine and feeling the warmth on my back.

We will have to wait for a few months until we next meet up but there are plenty of donkey things we can be doing! If you have a donkey you might like to try – with a grown-up – the 'handy donkey' fun exercises on the next page. Do remember though that we need time to work out whether what you are trying to teach us is safe, and if we can do it . . . don't rush us! Olwen says ten minutes at the most and then try again later, and she's right! Wear your riding hat too!

There are some indoor activities attached to this newsletter (you might not want us to come inside for these!!) and don't forget to email pictures of your activities to northerndonks@gmail.com, we would love to share them!

Love Colin xx

(the thoughts of a much loved and very versatile Northern donkey!)



Activities for Juniors!

Older juniors, how are you getting on with your Awards? Do get in touch and let us know what you have been doing. northerndonks@gmail.com

**Younger juniors, I'm attaching again the activity sheet from last time – let me know how you got on!!
More activity sheets to follow with the Thursday Bulletin!**



Your donkey . . .

This is my donkey. She is called Missy. She is very cheeky and likes carrot tops and being groomed. She lives with Barney and Freddie, my granny and grandpa's donkeys. She tells them what to do!

Amber, Age 4

NEWS . . .

Covid 19 update from The DBS: Having carefully considered the current Government guidelines regarding social distancing, the DBS are cancelling all their organised events for the next few months. We are all aware that the current situation is exceptionally fluid and can change negatively or positively at short notice. It is not therefore possible to set a firm timetable for when events should recommence however, we will continue to monitor government advice and inform members accordingly via the website, social media and the normal networks of officers.

In the meantime, we ask all DBS event organisers to take appropriate action and to endeavour to keep possible attendees informed as far as is practical.

Please keep healthy everyone – normal activities will return as soon as we are through this.

Carole Travell, DBS Chairman

Cascade Baby Bundles – For some time now Olwen has been working with a group that supports babies from families in our community of Greater Manchester, who are experiencing hardship. To raise funds, she has knitted these adorable characters, that fit snugly over a chocolate orange ‘egg’ – just in time for Easter!

Cascade Baby Bundles is a charitable organisation supporting families in need by distributing new and pre-loved clothing and essential items to their little ones. To find out more about this brilliant cause, check out www.cascadebabybundles.org.uk or info@cascadebabybundles.org.uk or call Olwen on 1457 762336.



ADA - Active Donkey Awards!

I feel sure that even in these troubled times, there are donkeys out there in their local villages delivering essentials . . . I can just see side paniers full of loo rolls and other essential items!

Quite seriously, I expect there are such acts of kindness happening, it's great for the local community and obviously great to keep your donkey active. As I've said before, people really do smile when they see our donkeys! I got in touch with Terri recently and asked what the situation is, given that our ADA donkeys have had their wings clipped. I wondered if extra categories might be introduced that could count towards the Scheme, perhaps making training videos with your donkey, to share on the website? Just a thought, that could be useful if we're likely to be holed up for a while. I will get back to you at some point with an update.

If you still haven't enrolled, 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 get active!

‘A busy donkey is a happy donkey!’ *(Rosemary Clarke)*

Keeping your donkey occupied . . .

In these Covid times you can't get out to a show or training event but what you can do is inject some fun into donkey time at home. With variations on 'agility donkey' and 'handy donkey' on the horizon, create your own 'tests', keeping it safe, attainable and . . . fun for you both!

Here are some ideas (cribbed from experience of 'handy pony' – so do let me know what you are doing with your donkeys [Sec.]):

Bending poles /cones

Putting on a plastic mack/cagoule

Washing line, hanging and gathering of various clothes

Walk over carpet or tarpaulin

Back into a little space (cones or similar)

Pick up and rattle a tambourine or open an umbrella

Throwing balls into a bucket

Possibly against a background of balloons and/or bunting or scary flappy tape!

Then there's the 'Performance Class', that might replace 'Pet Donkey', and which focuses on behaviour and manners. Some of the things we could be looking at here are:

Stand still and then you step away, your donkey should not move!

Lift front two hooves (obviously at different times and you do this, your donkey isn't expected to do it spontaneously!)

Trot a small circle, evenly

Reverse

We will bring you more ideas in the fortnightly bulletin! Please contribute your own ideas too,

northerndonks@gmail.com and I will share them with the Region. Thank you! Sarah.

Ask 'our Jenny' . . . the regular feature where we put your questions to Jenny from the Region. A veritable oracle, font of all wisdom!

Dear 'our Jenny',

This year I will be showing my donkey in-hand for the first time. What sort of bridle should I be using and is there such a thing as a 'best bit' or does it depend on your donkey, or on the class you are entering?

Jenny says: We had a brilliant training day at the end of February and talked about this very subject!! So, read on to find out about in-hand show bridles and bits. Thank you to Ali and Beth for modelling the bridles!! The bridle on the left, with the metal straight bar bit is for stallions, giving that extra control. The rubber bit on the right is for all others. A smart brass studded browband and brass bit rings make for a very smart turnout. Lead reins must be attached to the bit with either a Newmarket coupling or a 'butterfly' attachment.



Figure 1 Newmarket Coupling



Figure 2 Butterfly attachment

Don't forget that there is a super section on the DBS website all about showing, covering rules, classes, points and with the Affiliation Form and Points Card too. You can find all this and more at: <https://www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk/about-donkeys/activities/showing/>

Some useful suppliers of donkey tack (bespoke and otherwise):

J. Houghton & Son, Darwin – harness saddlery and leather goods made to order to customers own requirements (established for over 100 years) www.darwensaddlers.co.uk/

Saddler's Den, Southport – saddle fitting service and bespoke bridles. Repair service too. <https://saddlersden.co.uk/>

Bridles, saddles and associated parts from Dinky Rugs – useful go to for day to day equipment and they're very helpful on the phone! Will craft rugs to fit your donkey. <https://www.tackandturnout.co.uk/dinky-shop>

Finding out about . . . Helen Naden

I managed to catch up with Helen, inbetween the biblical rain storms of March and just as she takes a sabbatical from donkeys, following a long and illustrious donkey career.

Success has been much deserved and the result of tremendous hard work and an unwavering love of her donkey family. And yet, a 'dynasty' of gorgeous donkeys, with all but one achieving British Championship status, might never have materialised had not a fall from a pony at the age of five, resulted in a lost nerve! With donkeys considered a more gentle option, just two years later Bimbo (Demelza of Sunny Glen) came into Helen's life and stayed until her graceful passing 35 years later; leaving a proud and successful progeny. Son of Bimbo, the much adored Tabo [pictured above with Helen], is an amazing 39 years old and was having a well earned rest in his paddock, when we went out to visit the donkeys. Dear, clever Tabo, is a total legend, having done the unbelievable double, winning the In-Hand Supreme Championship in 1989 and then the British Driving Supreme Championship in 1995 - a truly versatile chap with great form.



For Helen, a love of shows was embedded in those first forays into the ring prior to the age of ten! Just two years after Bimbo arrived, Helen went to her first Poynton Show, 'and,' she continues with a tiny hint of justifiable pride, 'I've only missed one since then!' Speaking with Helen, in the kitchen of her lovely Cheshire farm house – tastefully decorated and with an enveloping sense of comfort, where big labradors cooched up on squashy beds and sofas – you begin to understand that her love of showing and driving is all about the donkeys, and more latterly ponies, and how clever *they* are, how *they* have achieved much through careful nurturing, there isn't the merest sense of self aggrandisement or 'pot hunting' to be found; in spite of the tremendous success that she has achieved.

With a brilliantly quick brain that can recall dates, events, lineage and all the shows attended and positions attained, I am left flabbergasted (if not a little envious, as I have never had a good brain for dates!) by Helen's energy. A total passion and focus that has driven three generations of 'Supremes'. All carry the prefix 'Ta': Tabo, Taboo and most recent Supreme Champion Tao! Helen tells me that she read in a copy of *Horse and Hound* once that the procedure on prefixing was to have a mix of the sire and dam's names.

We talked of the past big shows, The Royal, Great Yorkshire and other shows of that ilk and of those that have been lost over the years – Helen reckons that there have possibly been as many as 25 shows alone in the North. A sad demise. Travelling to these shows and practising for them against a backdrop of life challenges/changes, never mind often driving up to 200 miles a day in her work role as representative for an ophthalmic company, is a total measure of commitment. The same commitment that nursed stallion Tao through impacted colic, peritonitis and the removal of a sarcoid.

Helen works from home now, overseeing the three stunning log cabins, complete with hot tubs that have been built on the family farm (and have already been booked out for the 'Driving Weekend' at the beginning of July!). And, although Tao will possibly continue his role as a working stallion, it is possible that the driving bug is biting deeper and that Helen's two ponies will fit the bill for a fresh new challenge.



If you have been to Helen's driving weekend, you will know just what fun it is and desperately looking forward to the next one (first weekend in July, fingers firmly crossed). Helen stresses that the emphasis is on *fun*! I tentatively asked what she felt made for a good driving donkey. It would seem that 'a confident donkey is preferable, a nervous one being harder to teach' (so that's my Barney out then!). With a ménage currently under construction and the surrounding farm set in an idyllic location, it should be a great weekend!

It was a pleasure to meet Helen's ponies – here she is [below right] with from left to right, Pippin, a Welsh Section A, Supreme Champion Tao (understandably wanting a look in!) and Basil, a stunning New Forest pony. Pippin was in an extremely bad way when Helen 'rescued' him from a market, not that you would ever know now, he is beautifully put together and there's more than a hint of star quality about him. Basil came from the salt flats down near the New Forest and is a classic example of his breed. Helen is really looking forward to seeing what these ponies can achieve – she's already on the driving trials scene and relishes the challenge of a new set of skills to be learned. With its dressage, cones and obstacles Helen describes this as a longer learning process.

Once again, I see that energy, drive and determination shining through as Helen talks about the future. The same passion that made the little girl from the housing estate in Bramhall, Stockport save up her pocket money so that she could have a foal from her lovely little donkey mare, Bimbo. And what a good job she did!

So, it is time to focus on the ponies for a while, as Helen says, 'so different from donkeys' and as she tells me what it is about donkeys, 'they are more stoic, thinkers and . . . there's something about a donkey's nose!' I don't think it will be too long before she's doing things with them again, after all, she's never been without them!

[Thank you, Helen, for making me so welcome, I thoroughly enjoyed meeting your lovely donkeys, ponies, dogs and cats! Thank you for sharing your story. Sarah Booth.]



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!!)

We hope you found the Northern Region Calendar, sent earlier in the year useful! However, there follows an important update for April and May:

APRIL

19 Juniors Club – Postponed in favour of a Virtual event! A special email and video just for juniors will arrive in your in-box on the 19th April! Join in the activities!!	Brown Road Farm SK14 6EB Ring Olwen to confirm attendance please 01457 762336.
25 Walk & Picnic at Rivington Pike POSTPONED - possible reschedule later in the year	Park in Lower Barn Car Park BL6 7SB Visitor info: https://www.visitnorthwest.com/sights/great-house-barn

MAY

17 NORTHERN REGION SPRING SHOW Judge: Mark Kerr. POSTPONED – possible reschedule later in the year	Chain House Lane, Whitestake, Preston, Lancs. Includes driving classes. C/d 11 th May. Sec: Pam Moon, Beech Grove, 75 Chain House Lane, Whitestake, Preston PR4 4LD. Email: pam.moon@talktalk.net
24 Walk & Picnic at Erddig STOP PRESS The National Trust has now closed parks and grounds. We will let you know when this event can take place. For now, postponed.	Wrexham LL13 0YT Park at the Event Field. Visitor Info: https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/erddig

These are, sadly, uncertain times for all events planned for this summer and updates will be given as and when they are received.

Contacts:

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

Sarah Booth – Secretary northerndonks@gmail.com 07970 375562

Sarah Pennell – Treasurer thepennells@btinternet.com

Olwen Brown – Brown Road Group 01457 762336

For Area Contacts, see handy information sheet sent with last newsletter OR the Northern Region page on the national website.

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 . . .

A few conundrums to challenge you if you're feeling fed up!



A fine eye – but to whom does it belong?



B. Name the human behind the ear!



C. Name the distinguished member with two posts sticking out of her forehead!

Northern Scramble 1

All the following words link to 'the North' or are associated, in some way, with donkeys!

1. XLAFHAI
2. NSAGIHVS
3. CRANEBLA
4. OEIIDN
5. LFEDI HLESETR
6. OAGREF
7. RYKO ITRSMNE
8. HSWO TEEUTITEQ
9. LBESABMR
10. BLEDSIR
11. ESAHRNS
12. OPNYNOT

Northern Wordsearch 1

B	E	P	X	W	J	L	O	H	H	G	D	Q	F	D	R	E
E	H	M	H	G	Q	P	G	S	Z	D	V	F	W	I	Y	Z
N	A	P	M	E	G	S	P	T	D	B	A	N	I	L	O	C
N	R	E	A	U	U	I	T	F	A	S	A	I	B	H	G	D
I	S	O	R	A	U	N	D	A	C	Z	W	W	E	X	S	L
N	A	R	E	C	T	T	C	R	L	P	V	U	I	T	Y	D
G	M	S	P	R	A	X	Y	S	E	L	D	U	F	A	P	R
T	G	U	V	T	K	K	O	M	Q	P	I	L	T	B	X	I
O	E	R	F	R	N	H	J	Z	P	E	R	O	X	O	N	V
N	H	C	I	I	N	O	I	G	E	R	F	C	N	E	G	I
V	N	I	D	S	Y	U	F	E	P	Q	G	B	W	G	E	N
Y	A	N	R	E	H	T	R	O	N	M	M	M	L	Y	L	G
M	O	G	H	I	O	S	S	Z	E	H	A	T	R	E	D	H
V	R	L	F	H	I	W	L	F	M	R	X	D	C	K	I	H
H	J	E	K	Z	D	P	S	J	K	W	W	S	A	N	N	I
E	S	I	L	T	D	X	T	E	V	H	H	L	L	O	G	A
X	Y	P	M	M	V	U	T	F	B	R	T	N	K	D	I	G

And the words you need to find:

Region Northern Erdigg driving Dinky Bennington Newmarket
 surcingle Tabo Colin ADA DBS stallion gelding mare
 donkey

Enjoy! It's just for fun!!

[Answers in the Thursday
bulletin!]

