

DBS NORTHERN REGION - THE THURSDAY BULLETIN . . .

Thursday 21st May, 2020

Issue 5



Good morning!

Who would believe that when we make it to Issue 6, it will be June and goodness knows how many weeks we will have been in some sort of lockdown!! As we are beginning to emerge however, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all those who have helped to keep us connected thus far, through your gorgeous pictures, and articles that have been both heart-warming and hilarious! Following the next issue we will take a little break from the Bulletin as our regional Newsletter comes out in July! That is the bigger-than-a-bulletin, the big buster of a Northern Newsletter that promises great summer reading!! (*Needless to say your contributions are needed!! You know where to send them!!* northerndonks@gmail.com)


However, without more ado, here is the news . . . take a deep breath, because it's very exciting and very positive this week!

Stay safe, take care, take the reintegration slowly, Sarah x



The Region's news, this Thursday . . .



 **Congratulations! She's arrived!** Huge congratulations to gorgeous mum Cassie and to human parents Terri and John Morris on the birth of Wychwood Desert Rose

– Rosie. Two weeks old today, Rosie was born two weeks early, but mum and Rosie are doing well. More pics later in *The Bulletin*. And, keeping it in the DBS Northern family, Liz Brown's stallion was the daddy!! Awww!



Trot on!! It only looks like the Driving Weekend at Helen Naden's is on!! Yippee!
Helen writes:

'At time of going to press we have decided to carry on with our Donkey/Small Pony weekend on 5/6th July. [Booking form and programme attached. SB] This of course could change if the virus starts to peak once more. A couple of alterations to the programme already mapped out is we will not be cooking the food for you on the BBQ on Saturday night. Those who have booked lodges will have their own BBQ and you are also welcome to bring disposable ones if you wish. We can still have our get together round the pond whilst

observing a safe distance from those not in your group.
Also, the camp will now be restricted to 25 people. There are currently 11 booked to come, so if you would like a place please contact me ASAP!!'

helennaden@btinternet.com



And now it is time to say hello to some gorgeous Northern donks. . . !

It's a Rosie Morris special!!



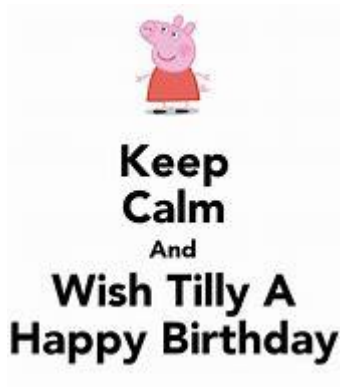
Well done Cassie, and welcome Rosie!! With love from all your friends in the Northern Region xx

Wouldn't be Thursday without a few pics of Sarah Standing's lovely donkeys . . . so helpful when they can take each other for a walk!!! The picture on the right shows



Daisy taking Tickle for a walk – read more about these special donkeys later in *The Bulletin*.



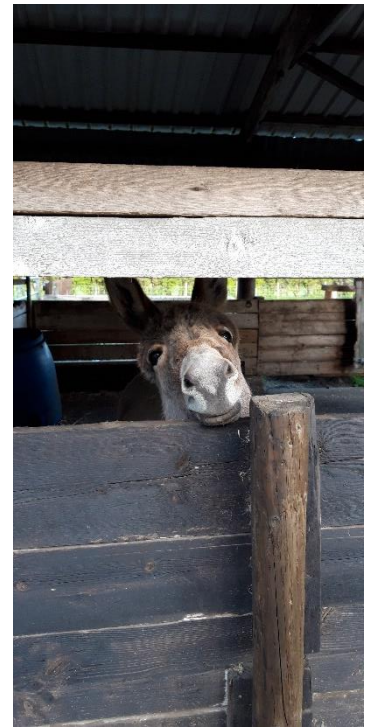


Happy Birthday Tilly Moon!

Two on the 26th May!

From everyone in the Northern Region!

From l to r: Tilly with Milly and Boo Moon! 'Cor! When will this isolation end?'



A Message from Pam Moon: *'stay safe, stay positive and we will be out and about soon with our donkeys xx'*



Friends for ever

Saracen and John-Jo MacKenzie – totally adorable and flying the flag for donkeys in their mid-thirties!

‘Age is just a number darling!’



It's a big hello to Treasurer, Sarah Pennell's lovely donkeys, Cole and Dan, this week too.

Sarah tells us: 'I thought I'd send you a few photos of some things the boys and I have been getting up to in the last week. We play a game of hide the treat, under big flowerpots and they soon got the hang of turning them over to find the goodies. The other photos are of our preparations for joining the circus - not quite jumping through hoops!'



Above and right: Dan

Far right: Cole



Did you hear the one about . . .?

Barney and Freddie Booth do
'conspiratorial', very well!

A Message from Barney Booth: *'not long now, I can almost smell the picnics!'*



Pictures for future editions to: northerndonks@gmail.com.

Readers' Stories

Our brilliant readers have been putting fingers to keyboards this fortnight and, doing it for the Region, have come up with some delightful articles. Grab a cuppa, sit back, and enjoy!

Ever wondered what you can get up to in lockdown if your passion is driving? I asked Debbie Street if she would let us have a peep into her world and she sent me this lovely article:

Donkey Driving Enterprises on Lock Down.

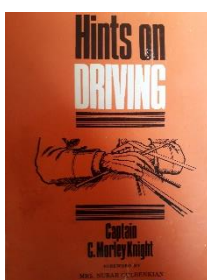
The Street family and their donkeys and what we are getting up to.

This year has been like no other. Suddenly I have had no work, no contact with friends or family outside our household, there has been no school for Daniel, and no one has been down with us to our field to see or learn to drive our lovely donkeys. Mike has been working from home. I have been teaching Daniel. We have taken up cycling, and we have been taking cooked food around to the elderly. The Corona Virus lifestyle rules. At first it was frightening and devastating.



Yet once again our donkeys blessed us with their peacefulness. I am sure many would agree with me that the extra time afforded by the lock down has brought many treasured moments. I have been able to spend many hours just 'being' with our donkeys and horses. In the case of the older equines this is a blessing indeed, grooming and scratching, or just sitting or standing with them in the field has brought much learning and pleasure indeed. Watching the youngster's full play has been as fascinating as a Shakespearean production.

Rest time indoors has been a chance to revise skills and to re-read the already worn driving books upon the shelves. To reflect upon excellent practice described by experts from time gone by. To re-examine where my day to day driving practises have come from.



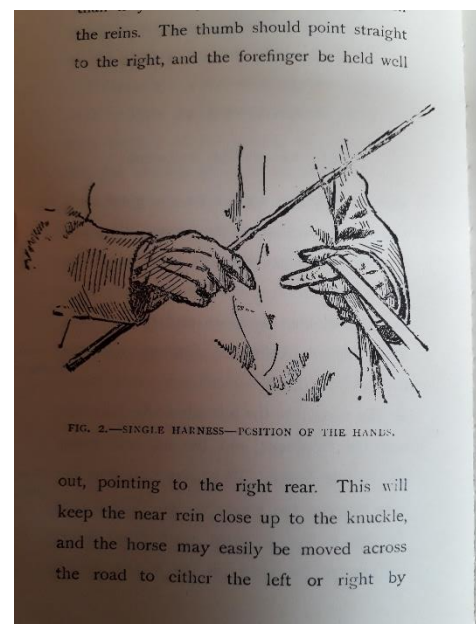
I have been sharing information from my two favourite books on Facebook; [Hints on Driving by Captain Norley Knight \(1884\)](#) , and [Driving, The Badminton Library by the Duke of Beaufort first compiled in 1882](#) . I have been encouraging all students of donkey driving to buy copies, they can be found second hand on line. Hints on Driving was said to be the British Driving Society's Bible as 'if properly studied, should turn the tyro into an accomplished coachman, and cause the expert to become a really excellent whip!' (Whip means the Driver.) The Badminton library's book of Driving is a compilation of articles about many aspects of driving and

coaching that includes some anecdotal stories from the old coaching days. (I have to add here that I first studied these books in 1980, when I first started driving donkeys, not in 1880 when they were first published!)

One important feature of driving using the English Coachman's Hand as discussed by Captain Norley Knight is the use of the 'Crab Claw'*. Take a look at the cover of the book. When driving English Coachman's, the index finger and the thumb do not grip the reins. The reins are gripped by the lower three fingers only. (I was told as a youngster, by the Coachmen still alive in those days, to pretend I had just taken a pocket watch out of my waistcoat, holding it so that I could see the time, without pulling the chain too tight that was fixed to the pocket.)

The crab claw is crucial for the protection of the driver's arm, shoulders, and posture. (Crucial for those with arthritis or pain conditions.) It is even more important for the protection of the equine's mouth, as it makes it very hard for the driver to inadvertently pull or hold the reins too restrictively. Many driving donkeys do not trot out well because drivers do not realise their finger and thumb are gripping the rein and stopping the forward movement.

To understand why, lightly hold the reins coachman's style with a closed finger and thumb, like a lightly closed fist. Now move your arm and feel the muscles in the biceps, the back of the hand, the triceps, and the shoulder and neck. Check how freely you can move your hand forwards and backwards, up and down. Now, open your index finger and thumb keeping your lower three fingers closed, and round your wrist so that your index finger points to your right hip. Now repeat the movements above. You should feel that the arm and wrist lose all tension, your shoulder and neck is free and yet the nails of the lower three fingers can push firmly into the centre of the hand.



The Crab Claw becomes even more important as your driving progresses as you can fold reins to turn, holding the fold between the thumb and the middle joint of the index finger. This makes pair, tandem and team driving light and pleasurable.

During Lockdown it has been important to exercise our driving donkeys so we have been driving them in our field in pairs, so that we can exercise everyone within the exercise time allowed by the government rules for lockdown. Daniel has been having driving lessons as part of his home-schooling P.E time. We have been filming and sharing some teaching videos on the Donkey Driving Enterprises Facebook page explaining coupling reins, harnessing up, and putting a pair to safely.

I have also been teaching Daniel the three main safety precautions when harnessing or unharnessing a single equine. I have shared them here as they are often not publicised widely enough:

- 1) Never take the reins or bridle off when the equine is in the vehicle.
- 2) Always fasten the belly band (balance strap) when you do up your girth. If you forget to fasten it later and get into the vehicle without it on you will tip up backwards. If the traces are too long your shafts may escape the tugs and the back of the seat will actually hit the ground. If you habitually fasten the belly band when you fasten the girth you cannot forget, and this cannot happen.
- 3) Always fasten the traces first, then the breeching. Remove the breeching first, then the traces. If the equine tries to move forwards attached only by the breeching the carriage cannot follow; only the harness around its hindquarters is fastened to the carriage which is very dangerous.



I understand that people are intelligent and make use of hard hats and fluorescent jackets where they deem it necessary; teaching upon this subject is common across many sporting disciplines, and is covered in basic riding or cycling road safety courses.

So I do hope everyone is safe and enjoying their donkeys. We are so blessed in these days to have these animals as part of our household.

Debbie Street.

* The Crab Claw is the term to describe the shape made by the thumb and index finger when the lower three fingers grip the reins. Upon looking down the driver's first finger points towards his right hip. His thumbs naturally lie parallel to it. So the image he sees is like a crab claw.

There will be more from Debbie in our next Bulletin too! Thank you Debbie.

And, thank you to Sue Stead for the following article, it is fascinating to learn how her passion for donkeys was ignited!

My Life with Donkeys

How did everyone become involved with donkeys ?

This is my story. After 33 years working in early years education I retired, the question was what to do now? My husband had recently learnt to ride, a mid-life crisis at the age of 48, he had accompanied our niece, aged 14, to the local riding stables and shall we say got the bug. A few years down the line he now had his own horse and was competing at events, we then acquired our own land and built some stables and another horse was added.

The problem was when one horse went out the other became very distressed, so we needed a babysitter, enter the donkeys. I do not do horses, I have never ridden, I find them quite scary, so I suggested a donkey as I like donkeys. After a great deal of research 2 donkeys were purchased from a source recommended to us by the Donkey Breed Society. Alan was adamant that the donkeys would not just stay in the field and eat grass, they had to do something. The two we acquired were already trained to drive and ride so that just left me to learn.

I loved them from the start, we bought them home at the end of August and they soon settled in and the horses accepted them quite well.

As we went through that first winter the only problem was that Jojo donkey had a weight problem, we tried everything to bring it down gradually but nothing worked and as we got into the spring the penny dropped, she just might be in foal. We contacted the man we had bought the girls from, not possible said he, but we were not convinced. At the beginning of May Jojo dropped her udders and panic mode set in. As a couple we have never had



children, we have never bred puppies so no experience in the maternity department.

We set up a camera in the stable, separated Millie the other donkey into her own little section of the large stable and waited.

Jacko was born on the 11th May the same day the niece who had introduced Alan to horse riding was getting married in the Lake District! The result was, I went to the wedding,

leaving Alan at home to look after mother donkey, baby donkey and his own mother who had been blue lighted into hospital the night before.

Jacko will be 11 on the 11th May this year and we have come a long way together.

The niece who started it all is now a GP and has three children, she is at present working for the NHS at the hospital in Basingstoke and we hope she stays safe in the present situation.

So, I took on two donkeys aged 60, and ended up with three which I love and cherish.

Sue Stead.



A Cautionary Tale

Buyer beware: Tickles and Daisy, their story . . .

Looking for donkeys was an easy task, well so I thought. How naive I was. I was recommended to visit a so-called respectable chap who seemed to know his stuff, asked me questions as to why I wanted donkeys, what premises I had, and he seemed knowledgeable. Impressed by his questions, I could not fault him. I also learnt that he was perceived as an upstanding member of his local community. He told me how he would think about my interest, saying he would call back within a few weeks. After a month, I called again, reminding him about our conversation. (He had forgotten to return my calls!) Anyway, I reassured him that I was a very caring person who would love to care and cherish donkeys from him, I had the right premises with stables, land, and a reputable vet.

Upon my visit, we entered a very beautiful farm: ponies, horses, a riding school with lots of people in the stables - the works - I was so impressed and excited. I couldn't contain my excitement in meeting the owner and the donkeys. The owner was very complacent, either you wanted them or not, he had plenty to sell. We entered a wet stable, standing at the back were three donkeys, no hay, no straw, nothing. I found this strange, however, who was I to question why. The donkeys were small in weight and height. One grey male, two dark brown females. I asked their age, to be told the boy was 3, the two girls around 18 months. Oh, so adorable, I wanted the three, but at £450 each, we decided just to have one male, one female.

So, thrilled that I had passed 'the exam' with him, I was now elated to have the promise of the donkeys being delivered within the week. I was so busy buying hay, barley straw, water buckets, head collars, grooming kit. I waited for them to be delivered, one week nothing,

two weeks nothing, excuse after excuse. Bear in mind it was now February, I was concerned about them, being so young and in that dark stable. The weather was so cold, damp, it was a horrible winter.

Eventually they arrived, oh it was so beautiful seeing their arrival, watching them enter their new stables, everything ready. We decided to call the little boy Tickles, the little girl Daisy. After a few days, they had diarrhoea - terrible. I contacted the seller. He explained how stress of travelling could be a cause. I noticed however that these two donkeys were not well. The vet arrived to examine them, to my horror I was told that Tickles was 15, Tulip was 2. He carried out several tests: their worm count was 3,500; I was beyond upset and furious. They had no vaccines, no passports, their feet and teeth had been neglected. They were considerably under nourished, they had rain scald, mud fever, sore gums; their welfare was zero, and to think how I was questioned, how I had paid the full price . . .

I confronted him, only to receive a lot of unpleasant verbal back. I reported him to the Donkey Sanctuary in Devon, and I remember contacting, as luck would have it, Pam Moon who understood how I had fed a bad habit to a man who didn't care, all I could do now was keep up my love and care for these donkeys.



Now Tickles and Daisy are thriving, of course it was very expensive, but they deserved every penny. Now I have another three donkeys who arrived needing a level of care, they arrived through liaison with Pam as part of an RSPCA rescue. Without Pam, I would have struggled. To this day, I call her asking her questions when I get terrible worries and panic attacks about the donkeys welfare, I have to get everything right, it's my duty to make sure they never suffer abuse or neglect ever again. Pam is a wonderful lady, she always helps me mentally and emotionally, I am truly grateful to her - thank you Pam.

So, please remember that animals do not talk, their owners do and sometimes, what they say is just not right. I learnt a very valuable lesson, never ever buy from strangers, get in touch with the donkey experts. Be a part of a group you can trust, not greedy people who abuse you for money.

Sarah Standing

All Sarah Standing's donkeys having a little holiday in Buxton when Sarah was poorly – she went to visit them and started singing to them . . . then, to the amusement of the staff, they all joined in, happy to see their mum again!!

Thank you to Sarah for sharing her experiences of acquiring her donkeys.



Ring up a Rep!! Your Reps are here for advice/support/a friendly chat:

Area Rep – Lancashire – Pam Moon

Pam: 07842 535993 pam.moon@talktalk.net

Area Rep – North & East Yorkshire/Cleveland – Pat Mather

Pat: 07850 584785 pat_mather@msn.com

Area Rep – Cheshire/Greater Manchester – Olwen Brown

Olwen: 01457 762336

Area Reps – West Yorkshire – John & Terri Morris

John & Terri: 01274 835520 throstlenest@hotmail.com

Area Rep – Derbyshire – Sarah Hudgins

Sarah: 07971 996817 derbyextracer@hotmail.co.uk

Area Rep – Cumbria - Ann Marie Harrison

Ann Marie: harrison.anm@hotmail.co.uk

Area Rep – South Yorkshire - Jane Bramwell

Jane: 01433 620110 l.jane.bramwell@gmail.com

Area Rep – Northumberland – Geraldine Burton

Geraldine: 01434 681335 gadburton@yahoo.co.uk

Did you know . . . ?

Back in the day, gorgeous donks from Scarborough joined in VE Day celebrations. [Shared last week by Scarborough Museum.]



Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles

Just a little bit of fun! How many donkeys are pictured in *The Bulletin* this week? Do not count the same donkey twice!! [Answer in Issue 6!]

Solution to Northern Wordsearch 3

g	i	e	t	t	e	u	q	i	t	e	s	g	w	m	o	l
k	t	q	w	h	g	c	q	r	d	h	s	w	s	a	p	m
l	e	k	a	e	n	c	f	g	a	l	g	i	s	r	o	g
u	d	m	s	w	q	m	m	t	c	g	n	l	e	t	o	n
m	e	n	i	h	g	a	a	k	r	n	i	s	n	i	k	i
s	e	r	q	u	a	d	r	i	g	a	r	o	r	n	d	r
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f	g	u	e	o	e	h	f	u	o	c	n	f	c	g	d	t
e	n	d	n	l	r	g	p	p	g	s	n	f	i	e	w	p
c	i	g	f	k	r	p	d	f	h	p	e	l	r	a	d	i
a	w	c	r	l	e	k	u	f	a	g	d	e	r	g	n	l
l	s	m	k	r	t	a	k	i	o	r	t	k	u	e	l	l
q	c	s	w	s	w	k	w	w	a	t	o	q	c	e	e	e
q	e	d	s	a	t	r	o	r	a	l	l	o	c	h	h	n

Next time, there will be more puzzles, more news, more pics and hopefully lots more contributions from *you*!! Don't forget to get in touch, northerndonks@gmail.com – let us know, what have you and yours been up to?

IMPORTANT: we're gearing up for July's *The Big Northern Newsletter*! I really will need *your* help with this – lots and lots of readers' pics, stories, anecdotes, what we've done during lockdown, advice, cautionary tales, why donkeys? beautiful moments and so on! We have an interview in the pipeline with 'donkey royalty' (hmmm – start thinking – who might this be?) and lots more regular features . . . send your questions to 'Our Jenny' and of course there will be Colin's Column and much more – be a part of it and get in touch!!

And finally . . .

Balaam and his donkey

Most of us are very familiar with both the stories of the donkey in the stable at the birth of Jesus and Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday.

There is however a lesser known story in the book of Numbers in the Old Testament (Ch.22 v.15-30). Prophets were the messengers who brought the word of God to the people but on this occasion the Israeli prophet Balaam, was prepared to curse the Israelites on request of their enemies, thus disobeying God's instructions.



Balaam set out on his donkey with two servants but as he was riding along the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a sword in his hand. The donkey turned off the road but Balaam was angry and beat the donkey. As they progressed, a second time the angel blocked his way and again Balaam beat his donkey. The third time the angel stood in a narrow place where there was no escape so the donkey laid down beneath Balaam.

He was so angry and yet again beat his donkey but the donkey opened his mouth and said, "what have I done to you that you have struck me three times; am I not your donkey which you have ridden all your life? Have I been in the habit of treating you this way?" Then Balaam saw the angel of God standing in the road with his sword in his hand and knew his donkey had saved his life.

Donkeys are wise and intelligent, faithful and gentle. Perhaps next time we are frustrated because they aren't doing what we would like them to do, we could stop and reflect, what is it they are trying to tell us?

Just think, maybe they are seeing an angel!

Carole Aconley

Stay safe everyone.

