

DBS NORTHERN REGION - THE THURSDAY BULLETIN . . .

Thursday 4th June, 2020

Issue 6 – *We're taking a little break but will be back soon!*

Good morning!



Welcome to Issue 6, the last Thursday Bulletin for a while as the ass-piring journos of the North sharpen their pens and hone their computer skills for the big Northern Newsletter of the Summer! The **copy date is Friday 26th June**, so all pics, articles, anecdotes, news, advice, what we're doing in the lockdown, questions for 'Our Jenny', photos of any crafts in which you have been indulging during lockdown, anything all gratefully received: northerndonks@gmail.com !

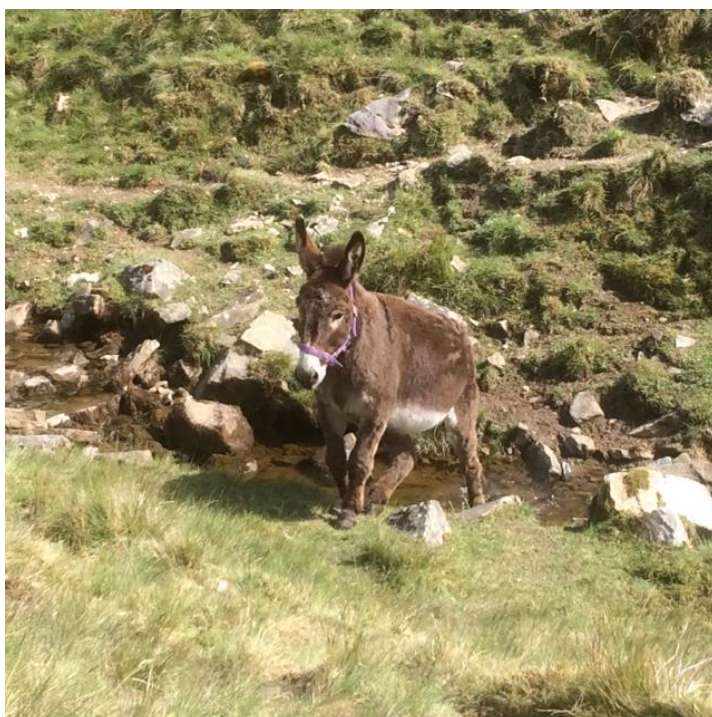


Perhaps life will never quite be the same again, amongst us there may be DBS members/supporters who have lost loved ones and to whom we send our deepest sympathies, who've battled against the disease themselves, who've been in the front line, supported front line relatives and friends, whose minds have been troubled by anxiety, worry and loneliness - and through all this, our long ears, whether we own them, sponsor them and/or just adore them to bits, have been there as a constant. Our comfort. The friends we have made, even through virtual means, we treasure and, very soon, we can extend our friendships by meeting up at non-virtual, and very real donkey gatherings!

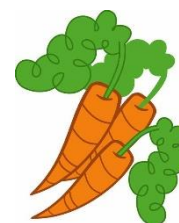
Thank you for supporting these Bulletins.

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

The Region's news, this Thursday . . .



A VERY LOVELY NEWSFLASH!!



Yesterday was Dougal Roberts' 5th RE-Birthday!! **HAPPY RE-BIRTHDAY DOUGAL** from all your friends in the Northern Region. This is what mum Allison had to say: *'It is five years today since Dougal arrived from Sidmouth. To celebrate the occasion, we explored a new valley that we had never dared to descend into before. Down they followed, explored, and then happily followed me out the other side. What fun and joy they bring'*.

Some more pics of Dougal and Hamish on the descent:



catch more pics of this lovely duo later in *The Thursday Bulletin* . . .

Also in the news

✚ **My apologies** to Terri and John Morris – and to the lovely Rosie of course – I incorrectly gave the prefix to Rosie’s name as Wychwood, it is not, it is ‘**Wychbrook**’. So, the little darling is **Wychbrook Desert Rose** and she is still as sweet as ever and learning all sorts of things from mum Cassie! If you’re on Facebook, go to the Donkey Breed Society Northern Region and check out Terri’s lovely videos.

✚ Your luddite of a Secretary has joined Facebook! I must say it’s an eye-opener (see elsewhere in this newsletter) and I’m probably not using it to its fullest extent, but the jury’s still out as to whether or not I would, personally, want to embrace it to any greater degree!

✚ Arnold Schwarzenegger has been sharing pictures of his donkeys sharing his workouts! Oh that old chestnut (or grey!) we do that every morning here in Cheshire!! (Hmmm!!?!)



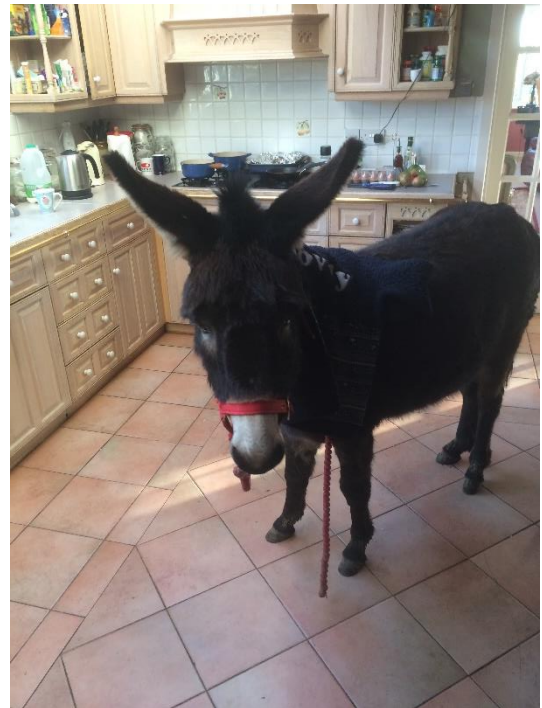
And now it is time to say hello to some gorgeous Northern donks and other animals . . . !

and here they are . . .

I always say it's not a *Thursday Bulletin* without one of Sarah Standing's donkeys – well here is **Daisy 'Standing' in the kitchen!**



And here are Sarah's llamas – with one standing lookout!! Just look at that sky!



Dougal and Hamish go exploring . . . way up in Cumbria where the beautiful forests fold over the gorgeous hills, Allison Roberts' donkeys have been exploring . . .



A sensory experience – wild garlic!



Investigating a new road through the forest and
playing hide and seek amongst the trees . . .



scrambling over dry-stone walls
. . . carefully does it!



wait for me!!

And on Palm Sunday, they went for a long walk . . .



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!

A little more about Hamish and Dougal

Hello from NE Cumbria, where Hamish and Dougal thrive. We live in a remote spot so social distancing is not too different from normal and I do try to do daily excursions . . . the following article also appeared in *Bray Talk* . . .

Being active during lockdown in remote rural Cumbria, where the nearest neighbour is one mile distant, has not been difficult for Hamish and Dougal, unless of course you can count avoiding neighbours who now also exercise on the fells around us.

On Palm Sunday the boys happily wore palm crosses in their gayest head collars (the first Palm Sunday was after all a joyous occasion) and set off one mile down our farm track till the neighbours' property joined our track – that's half the normal distance they'd do to reach our church where they lead the procession.

And they usually do some daily activity around our property which we have maintained during lockdown; for example one day we explored the edge of a forest, where they were thrilled to discover that the grass on the sheltered edges was particularly lush; they even ventured into the trees where they could escape from me armed with head collars and lead ropes.

On another occasion we came across a tumbled down dry-stone wall where the gaping holes had piles of stone on either side that I dared them to clamber over and through. They did eventually, then showed off their new confidence with an insouciance, voluntarily popping over all the other breaches in the wall they found on the walk home. Then again, we once saw a plume of smoke in the distance so decided to find out what was going on – half an hour later we'd found a route along field boundaries to drop down into a valley we'd never seen before; there the farmer was attacking an overgrown hollow to create a charming dingley dell complete with a newly built access road we used on our way out. Social distancing was maintained throughout. The adventures don't stop there – how about the trip to what we now call "Garlic Valley" or learning to negotiate more gates, a project we embarked upon last year to open then pass through and close all the gates on the hundreds of acres we have access to – with over 70 in all and 35 or so accomplished there are 30+ still left to conquer.

Allison Roberts

*Thank you Allison,
your donkeys must
be so happy to
have all that lovely
countryside to play
in! Thank you for
sharing this with
us.*



Unconditional love . . .



Tickles, my 23-year-old donkey is the equivalent to George Clooney. I absolutely adore him! Now, examples would be I kiss and cuddle him in the freezing cold, rubbing his ears warm, whispering, kissing, and massaging his back - he just stands there, relishing every movement. That would not happen to my husband, in fact his aches and pains would annoy me.

Another example, Tickles' dietary needs are paramount, Braeburn apples, ginger biscuits, fresh carrots, bananas, melon, celery, they are hidden in the feed room. When my husband asks for apples or bananas I just tell him we don't have any! If Tickles has any marks, scuffs, cuts, bruises, there is a variety of creams, sprays, lotions, potions, lots of calls to the vet. This would not happen to

the husband . . . in fact, I will tut. Seriously, if he asks me to call the doctors and I am number 7 waiting in the queue, I hang up, no patience!

However, Tickles is different, I hang onto the queue for dear life!!!

Now, you may think this is very unusual behaviour, but remember you must look after the elderly donkey. My Tickles smells so scrumptious, he behaves like a true gentleman, never moans, and never taps my derriere and says, 'put the kettle on love' . . . gosh that drives me insane! But, if Tickles asked for tea, it would be my pleasure, nothing is too much !!



Sarah Standing.

Thank you, Sarah, I just love this – we do love our donkeys soooo much! SB.

A funny thing happened on my way in to Facebook . . .

For someone with an 'ology (as Maureen Lipman used to say) in Language and Literature, and a postgraduate classicist to boot (although I can't remember any of it!), I sat at my computer on the brink of joining Facebook, in fear and trepidation! How utterly irrational some might say! A little while ago however, I connected with my inner donkey . . .

Tasked with joining Facebook (fb) as part of my new role in The Society, I knew I had to 'take the plunge'. 'Do it for the donkeys!' was my husband's cry! 'Take the plunge' was an apt expression as that's exactly how I felt: on the brink of something – a test, a challenge of my ability to grasp an unknown concept - considering whether or not it really was worthwhile. I felt a deep connection right there, to my own dear donkeys and every other donkey that has ever lived. Not wishing to anthropomorphise things, this is how our beautiful long ears

must feel when faced with a new event . . . I felt their quandary, their moment of indecision! I needed time.

As I gingerly tiptoed through the portals of technology, I was extremely wary . . . previous recollections of stuffing up other technological situations surfaced - put a foot wrong and a whole minefield of scary things might be revealed! I think I held my breath on more than one occasion. Find the privacy settings! Find the privacy settings! I knew this had to be my first port of call: look for the familiar, cling on and start to press buttons that indicated that only I could have access, I could make decisions, I could be in charge! This was not coming from any sense of megalomania but a very real desire to feel safe and protected.

What an overreaction you might say, well yes I guess it was but sometimes we just don't know how we are going to react in any given situation – another day, it might have been a breeze, a trot down a leafy lane in beautifully dappled sunshine! That day, it was super-sized, uber-charged scariness in all its obscurity!

To cut a long story short, having ensured maximum security – and I apologise if anyone is trying to reach me (friend me?) through any means that I might have temporarily halted but to which I will no doubt return, confront and understand in due course – I tentatively made my first post and thank you so much for your demonstrations of 'liking it'! A 'well done' has never felt so good! I positively radiated happiness and relief! I had survived the first lurch into the place I needed to go, nothing drastic had happened, my privacy was still intact – I hadn't morphed into the shadows of my former self – I was still in control of me and actually, I had acquired some new skills!! Phew!

Connecting with my 'inner donkey' has been humbling and blessed me with greater understanding – I'm not suggesting putting yourself through something scary in order to gain empathy but maybe, just a little stretch of the imagination, a little flexing of our intuitive muscles now and again, might bring a little light to the paddock of learning . . .

victrix patientia duris – in difficulty, win by patience.

Sarah Booth.

Familiarisation is time well spent. Debbie Street very kindly sent in the following article this week. As she says, while we cannot go anywhere at present, this is an ideal time to get your donkeys used to loading and unloading . . .

Loading tips for donkey owners / competitors.

I have outlined below a well-trying and tested method for loading your donkey into a trailer that forms several steps. I hope it will be of help to you.

Firstly, think about your attitude. Look upon the loading process as a chance to have some fun. It is not about the trailer, or about the desire to get somewhere. When you ride or drive your donkey you build a relationship with him/her. The same can happen when teaching him/her to load. You need to think about how you are relating to your donkey. If you help him/her to overcome fear

whilst clearly repeating what you want, he/she will become more willing to undertake other tasks in the future.

If you approach the trailer with an attitude of 'we don't **need** to go in today, we are just having a play!' the donkey will most likely become curious and go in. If you then wait, and push him/her out again, he/she will most likely want to go in again for another look.

In my experience it is best not to ask lots of friends to gather behind the donkey to force him/her in. When a donkey gets frightened it tends to freeze, refusing to move when requested. Rather it is best to work upon the following with just one calm assistant:

The steps to take.

1) Stand on the ramp of your trailer and ask your donkey to enter by gently moving your leading hand forward and maintaining contact with the donkey for approx. one second. It is very important to allow the donkey to go into the trailer before you.

Then relax your hand and wait for a response. Allow the donkey a few seconds to think (at least 5). Then ask again. If your donkey tries to enter the trailer walk with him/her, but do not ask anything unless he/she stops, simply accompany him/her up the ramp. If he/she stops half way up, ask again, and wait, he/she will most probably move forwards go in.

2) If the donkey hesitates, wait, and then ask again. If he/she refuses to go any further, back out and start again. By backing the donkey out, you are encouraging him/her to move whilst giving a psychological break. This has the wonderful effect of removing fear and building relationship.

3) If the donkey rushes backwards, simply go with him/her, do not try to force him/her forwards, or stop any backwards escape. Simply allow him/her to express anxiety, then start again. If he/she backs half way out, push him/her out backwards altogether, and start again.

4) If the donkey then refuses to move practice leading into other confined spaces ; small stables, alleyways between buildings, generally improve your relationship so you can lead him/her around. Follow another donkey into these situations to make them more forward thinking.

5) Once a donkey gets into the trailer, wait inside with them, thank them, and take them out of the trailer. Then, ask them to enter it again. **NEVER slam up the ramp immediately** as they will probably become very frightened and refuse to enter it the next time. Instead ask them in each day. Once they have gone in three times and stood still while you pat them – with the trailer door open – give them some feed in there.

6) Then, feed them in the trailer regularly until they jump in without fear. It is good at this point to get someone to close and open the door whilst they eat next to you.

7) The final stage is to close the door and drive a few hundred feet before you stop and feed.

8) Make sure your first few journeys are relatively straight and short.

9) **Unloading.** If your donkey barges out of the trailer, ignoring your requests to walk calmly down the ramp it is best to teach him/her to back out. Turn him/her away from the ramp before asking a friend to lower it. Then ask the donkey to back down the ramp slowly. If you have been following steps 1) –7) above, he/she should already be familiar with this activity. If the ramp is very steep put up ramp gates. Otherwise it should not matter if the donkey accidentally steps off the side of the ramp.

An explanation. In point (1) above I suggested that you should ask and wait for your donkey to respond. When he/she does respond refrain from the temptation to encourage by clicking or pulling to make it go faster, or to make it take a final step when it hesitates. This warns the donkey against going in as it is communicating your anxiety. Simply walk alongside him/her calmly and confidently. Only when he/she has had time to think are you at liberty to ask again. Then, if he/she refuses to go all the way in, wait there for a few moments, then back him/her out and start again. To force the donkey all the way in at this stage would teach him/her not to try next time.

A further suggestion.

If there is a front ramp it can sometimes help to open it up to allow light through. If you are asking your donkey in, rather than forcing him/her, there will be no barge through at great speed. If he/she asks to go straight out the front simply ask for a half-halt, then walk out with together. Once you have gained trust the donkey will stand in the trailer happily when both ramps are down or up. If you have a donkey that will definitely barge through, due to previous fears, just open the top door above the ramp and work upon the stages 1) to 8) above.

Final points

When you ask your donkey to enter the trailer space stand to the side. If you fill the space with your body you are not saying, "Look it is safe in here!" you are saying, "I need all the space!" Focus upon the activity as a good relationship building one, rather than a need to get somewhere. Then, when you do need to travel you will find your donkey loads much faster than your husband, children and the dogs!

Happy loading, Debbie Street.

Below – Steps One to Four: As the donkey steps forward straighten your elbow so that you direct it up the ramp.



continued on next page . . . /

Below - Step Five: When a donkey stops half way up the ramp DO NOTHING. This is the donkey's thinking time. If you try to push it up now it will back out.



Below – Step Six: If it stands for a considerable time, start again, from your position on the ramp. If it refuses to move on the ramp, push it backwards to the bottom of the ramp and start again.



Below – Step Seven: When the donkey moves up the ramp and half-way into the trailer simply pass the end of the leading rope from your right hand to your left **AND WAIT**. If it walks all the way in – DO NOTHING - simply wait until it turns around to come out.



Below – Step Eight: Play around with steps 1-8 as though you were schooling your donkey. Do not be too particular. Once it has been in and out a few times you will find it chooses to stand in there to get some peace.



Below – When loading two at once allow them to go in and out until they feel comfortable and relaxed.



Debbie, this is super advice, thank you so much for sharing this with us.

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 I.jane.bramwell@gmail.com

Area Rep – Northumberland – Geraldine Burton

Geraldine: 01434 681335 gadburton@yahoo.co.uk

Did you know . . . ?

It is said that there are 40 different types of carriage. How many can you name? This little conundrum should keep you pondering for a while!

Try to think of them before you resort to looking them up!!

Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles Puzzles

Just a little bit of fun! How many donkeys were pictured in Issue No.5 of *The Bulletin*? You could not count the same donkey twice!! Answer: 33

Just a little bit more fun . . . can you name these carriages:



A



B

C



And finally . . .

IMPORTANT: we are gearing up for July's *The Big Northern Newsletter*! I really will need *your* help with this – lots of readers' pics, stories, anecdotes, what we have done during lockdown, advice, cautionary tales, why donkeys, beautiful moments and so on! We will have an interview with a much respected member of the Northern Region (hmmm – start thinking – who might that 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!! All contributions to me by Friday 26th June please. northerndonks@gmail.com

Stay safe everyone and thank you for supporting the Northern Region's
Thursday Bulletin!

