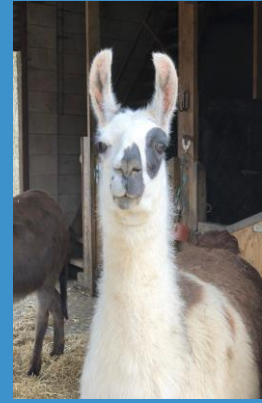
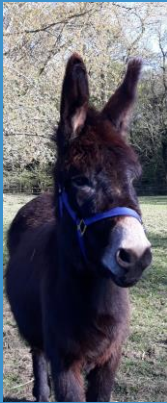


ASSPIRE!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN REGION OF THE
DONKEY BREED SOCIETY



Summer, but not as we know it!

Dear All,

Welcome to the Summer edition of Asspire! It's been a strange summer; I would usually have seen a number of you at shows around the country and we would be looking forward to the Championship Show. I hope that you have all been safe and well and that despite not being able to go out and about with our donkeys that you've had lots of fun with them. There have been lots of opportunities to compete however with the advent of lots of online shows and events. Even some online dressage groups have opened their entries to donks. The eastern region has come up with the 'Boris Challenge' - a series of challenges to ask your donkeys to do and if you complete them there are fantastic rosettes to be won. Online showing has opened up the showing world so even if you have no transport you can still join in. All you need is a donkey and a camera! Let us know how you've got on! My donkey Eddie came 5th in the Lexington Carriage Classic- a large American driving competition out of 17 donkeys and mules! They don't usually have donkey classes and were overwhelmed by the support for them.

Hopefully we can start meeting up again soon as long as sensible precautions are taken. I can't wait to be able to chat about donkeys again!

Stay safe

Liz,

Liz Brown, Chair, Donkey Breed Society, Northern Region.

Welcome one and all, and a particularly big Northern welcome to our new members

We welcome eight new members to the DBS Northern Region so far this year, and three juniors, we hope you enjoy your first Northern Summer Newsletter. Sally McAlpine is a new member who kindly volunteered to write of her experiences, to get our Summer edition underway . . .

I'm a new member to the Northern Group and as members are being encouraged to bring new people to 'the fold', I thought I'd tell you of my experience so far and say 'Hello'.

I joined in January and within a short time received a lovely welcome folder with information about donkeys and my membership details. A few weeks later I had a call from Pam Moon introducing herself and offering any help I might need. At this point she would learn if new donkeys were coming to the club or if I was just interested. I couldn't tell her I was joining with a string of donkey friends sadly, but that my interest had finally prompted me to join up and feed my curiosity to learn more about life with donkeys.

As a child my love of donkeys was probably fuelled by a (now) vintage Ladybird book called 'Ned The Lonely Donkey'. It's a little book with lovely pictures and a rather sad tale about an independent donkey that has a happy ending.

In the '90s I read a couple of Dr Elisabeth Svendsen's books on donkeys and their care, but it never seemed the right time to take the plunge. Looking back, I think I was right, but from here on, things may be different. Having kept farm and domestic animals from small to large through my life I have a quiet confidence with general stock care skills. If we seriously planned to keep donkeys; with a few adaptations, it could maybe be possible here at our new home of three years. Now is my time to read, listen and learn more about these lovely creatures.

Bray Talk arrived in the post which really impressed me, and I so enjoyed it. I was beginning to realise how much I was getting for my membership fee.



A favourite little grey at Sidmouth Sanctuary 2010



An Illustration by P B Hickling - Ned the Lonely Donkey by Noel Barr

I was delighted to see a Donkey Show planned near Preston which I knew wouldn't be far and made a note to definitely try and go along.

The next news was lockdown and we all know what we're having to deal with. To my delight a newsletter came into my email inbox. More about donkeys! Not just that but support and friendly chat to all the members. Many thanks to Sarah. I have already said this to Sarah, but, "The northern donkey world has a reassuring gentleness about it which feels happy and calming."

Then, joy of joys, *The Donkey* magazine arrived! Next, I gathered we would have the Summer Newsletter to look forward to....

When the time is right and lockdown is eased, I look forward to attending an event to meet some of you and your donkeys in real life. I

very much enjoy seeing the donkey pictures in the newsletter and reading about how you keep them all amused. (And the other way round!)

So after just 4 months of membership, my experience has been very positive already, enjoyable and almost comforting in these uncertain times.

Sally McAlpine.

Thank you Sally and welcome aboard! Enjoy!

So what do *you* say when someone asks you what the Donkey Breed Society is all about?

Check out our 4 Aims and know how you can talk about, and meet them!! (Find them in full on the DBS website and to share further ideas re involvement contact Sarah Booth northerndonks@gmail.com.)

DBS AIM	Meaning . . .	What you can do to help the DBS meet this aim
DBS Aim 1 To preserve and improve the standard of donkeys in general by breeding and to encourage the use, appreciation, well-being and protection of the Donkey by the general public and members of the Society.	We strive to ensure the health and happiness of <i>all</i> donkeys from conception (with judicious selection of stallions) to senior years care and all the wonderful opportunities inbetween; we want <i>everyone</i> to know how to achieve this!	Enjoy showing how your happy, healthy donkeys are benefitting from getting out and about – through a variety of activities, shows, training days, contribution to community events. Let your donkeys live the example that ‘active donkeys are happy donkeys’.
DBS Aim 2 To promote public education in the various arts and sciences in connection with the donkey and the use, appreciation, care and management thereof.	We reach out to a broader public through all the lovely events and social interaction that ADA (Active Donkey Awards) and the Education Awards programme encourage. We look to put on displays around the country/region/area that promote all aspects of the donkey through a variety of media.	Get involved with ADA and find out how you can take Awards, you do not have to own a donkey to enjoy these activities! Let your arts and science skills do the talking about The Society. Help to build a celebration of ‘all things donkey’ that can be displayed around the Region. Share the DBS with others.
DBS Aim 3 To prevent the cruelty of the Donkey . . . cooperate with people and societies who provide for the care and protection of the Donkey . . .	We share resources with and between welfare societies and agencies. We know who to contact if we need to raise concern and, very importantly, we promote and share great practice in looking after our donkeys.	Make sure you know who your Area Rep is (see end pages), so that you can share any concerns that you might encounter. They will be able to suggest what can be done next. Get to know others with donkeys, in your area and invite them to training days!
DBS Aim 4 To promote and finance research into matters relating to the Donkey and the publication of the results thereof.	We have an Educational Bursary Fund that can award small amounts to students seeking to improve the welfare of the donkey (see <i>Student News</i> in this issue) and can provide Education Fund Grants to those organising training events.	In addition to supporting fundraising and training days, you might have contacts with further education/agricultural colleges/universities that might be interested to receive details.



Me in 2019



Me as a foal in Ireland



My friend Hannah long-reining me

Colin's Column . . .

Hello Juniors!

I've not got much news (except that the grass is growing-yummy!) so I thought I would tell you the story of my life. It has been written for me by my good friend Hannah.

Chapter 1: My Early Life

Fourteen years ago, a little longhaired foal was born in Northern Ireland. Me! I had lots of donkeys to play with, and we all lived out in a yard eating hay out of old baths! When I was a yearling, me and my friends got to go on the ferry to England, and taken to Cheshire, where a lady chose a pair of us to keep her donkeys company. Yours truly and his pal Guinness, no less! The others —a mother and son— didn't like us very much, so I have to confess we earned a reputation for running away and causing trouble. Well, eventually this became a bit more than our poor owner could handle, so she asked Olwen to teach us how to behave properly before we found a new home. But, luck of the Irish, she said we could stay, and I've been at Brown Road ever since! Here I learned to lead in hand, have my feet picked out, and mind my manners for the farrier (honest!). Though I wasn't as brave as Guinness, I met some folks who really helped me calm my nerves and settle in. Huge thanks to Celandine, Bertie, Eeyore and Romance —donkeys past and present— for such a warm welcome!

Instead of a wooden stable, our herd shares a shippon, which is another name for a cowshed, only there aren't any cows! The clever thing is, because it's made of stone, it's cool in summer and warm in winter! Can you believe it's a whopping three hundred years old? What better place to spend my first two years at the farm, having acres of fun, just like the good old days. Why, under this very roof my brothers and sisters used to tell me about their wonderful adventures! I always dreamed of winning a rosette of my own when I grew up...maybe even a trophy! Of course, that meant I needed to train!

Keep an ear out for more next time,
Love Colin xx Thank you to Olwen and Hannah for helping me write my column!

JUNIOR NEWS . . .

All over the Region everyone breathed a sigh of relief when lockdown started easing and riders and handlers could be reunited with their donkeys if they don't live with them. In Lancashire, Reuben is looking very laid back viewing the world from a different height and in Cheshire, lots of getting to know



Missy was going on – Missy is very hairy and Amber and Izzy thought they could make another donkey with all the hair that came out when they groomed her! They also discovered that she loves having a bath. The girls have joined the DBS' Pleasure Riding Awards scheme.

Amber and Izzy have been riding and looking after Missy.

Older Juniors we really do want to say, from all of us in the Northern Region, that we wish you all the best if you've been having a confusing time trying to prepare for exams and then



Reuben's enjoying sitting on lovely donkey, Harvey - great balance Reuben!

finding they're just not happening. It must be so disappointing but hopefully you'll be getting things sorted by now and maybe have even gone back into school. We are thinking of you and look forward to seeing you again soon.

Daniel Street has been perfecting driving skills with mum Debbie, in lockdown. Daniel, we're also looking forward to seeing photographs that you have taken, in the Newsletters, before too long!



STUDENT NEWS . . . ecology, conservation, animal sciences, veterinary medicine, zoology . . .

whatever it is you might be working towards, maybe even journalism or teaching, you can guarantee that there is someone amongst our membership who might be able to help you, should you ever need a chat about a particular career path. Did you know that if you are studying something donkey-related, the DBS Educational Bursary Fund exists to provide small bursaries to students? In fact, students of any age, may benefit to assist with the acquisition of books and publications or tools and equipment that would enable the student to improve the welfare of donkeys, primarily in the United Kingdom but also throughout the World. Additionally, requests for financial support towards the costs of publication of theses on the donkey can also be considered. I only discovered that recently, and I think it's brilliant. We do send good wishes to our student members, we know that for those of you about to embark on further education/university these are particularly worrying times but do know that your DBS Region is rooting for you and we know you can smash it!



From your Secretary . . . I do hope you enjoy reading our Summer Newsletter. This has been the most extraordinary summer that I can remember – no shows, no crunching out of the yard at an unearthly hour, no getting together under a haze of citronella-scented summer skies (although there was a bit of a lovely gathering in Cheshire recently, see elsewhere in this issue!) but I guess we have to get it in perspective and embrace the bigger picture, hoping those days will return; for now it's best to continue to be as safe as possible.

I have really enjoyed putting all your great articles together and would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all who have participated in this newsletter and in all issues of the *Thursday Bulletin*. It was a particular honour to interview Bill Tetlow for this issue and, as always when talking to donkey folk, one picks up great little golden gobbets of good advice. When sharing fripperies about farriers, Bill told me of a farrier in Ireland who had told him that donkeys should have, 'hooves like yoghurt pots'! I think this is a wonderful analogy that perfectly reflects their more upright stance. So apt in fact, I just had to pass it on! Have a good summer! Don't forget to share your newsletter with friends and encourage them to join the DBS and our much-loved Region! Sarah Booth northerndonks@gmail.com



From your Treasurer . . . Hello to all and hope you are all well. I know that the last few weeks have been difficult for all of us and there is still an uncertain future for many. The DBS relies on membership fees to generate most of the income we receive, and this income is vital for our continued success. Might I ask any members who have not yet renewed their membership, to try and complete this if at all possible (it can be done online via the DBS website <https://www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk/>). I understand that this may be difficult and if anyone would like to have a chat, in

confidence, about this then please do contact me on the email below.

Looking forward to getting together soon,

Sarah Pennell Treasurer Northern Region thepennells@btinternet.com

Focus on: Browse, The Morning Routine and Sourcing Straw Feed . . .

Browse

Donkeys are natural browsers, as those who have any wooden surfaces well know!

At this time of year, everything in the garden, lanes and hedgerows is growing rapidly, (especially dock and nettles!) a lot of browse can be gathered in a short time.

Donkeys are firmly kept out of our gardens (we hope) as they are full of beautiful but sometimes poisonous plants. In between these plants, browse can often be found - otherwise known as weeds! Most go on the compost heap but others such as dandelions, grass and sow thistle make excellent donkey delights.



Along hedgerows, young shoots of hawthorn, hazel and even holly can be gathered. Do not hack into hedgerows at this time of year to avoid disturbing nesting birds. Fresh shoots of bramble are also welcome.

It's worth cultivating some quick growing hazel to provide browse all year round. I cut mine back in autumn to ensure a growth of new shoots for the next year. An added advantage of growing hazel for keen gardeners is a ready supply of pea and bean sticks as well as nuts for Christmas!



Never feed browse from sycamore, ash or oak or from fruit trees that bear stoned fruit such as plum or cherry as they are poisonous, and sycamore can cause a disease called atypical myopathy which is frequently fatal.

Nettles are very nutritious but are best cut a couple of days before feeding. Once wilted, they will be enthusiastically eaten. Mint thinned from the veg patch is also a treat.

Be careful if you can't identify a plant don't feed it to your donkeys.



Browse I use wilted nettles, sow thistle, dandelion, common thistle, cleavers, spearmint and peppermint, new shoots of wild rose, bramble, hawthorn, hazel, holly.



Olwen Brown

Thank you, Olwen, that is really useful. Just a thought: if anyone out there has brilliant artistic, photographic skills and would like to compile a top A4 handout/poster entitled 'Browse', that could be displayed and handed out at shows and so on, please send to me at northerndonks@gmail.com. We will pop the DBS logo on it and also give you and Olwen credit – consider it by-members-for- everyone! Educating the masses! SB.

Food Glorious Food!

The sound of my back door closing from the kitchen sends tsunami waves to all my animals outside, yes, it's the a la carte menu of breakfast all inclusive!!! Now, all the lunatics have an assortment of greetings, whilst running up to the stables from the paddocks, the sounds of braying, neighing, heads of llamas raising high as they run like basketball players. Who catches the first treat? It's lovely to see. So, it starts, there are heads all on top of each other, hairy bodies shoving the other hairy body away, a kick to say go away, another animal bottom shoving, WHY? to get to THAT FRONT FENCE for breakfast!! However, all the animals have their own designated area to eat peacefully. That's really important to me that they eat without the stress of other animals eating what is not their food. Donkeys must not eat llama feed; the camelid vet explained the consequences to a donkey's digestive system.



First job, the most important one, the big breakfast kiss, individual cuddles to the donkeys and ponies, usually a huge snog on their faces, oh yes yummy mummy kisses! Llamas have a little pat on their backs - too scared to snog in case one nips me!



So, when I've entered the stables, the ponies walk into their own stable, then the donkeys wait inside the middle of the stable, I then close the shutters so the llamas eat outside. Somehow, I wade through 5 donkeys to get inside the feed room. Oh dear,

that's very challenging. However, I gather a huge handful of barley straw, then aim high throwing it over the donkeys, this gets them away from the feed room door. The ponies are served Spillers Happy hoof for laminitic ponies, molasses free, the four donkeys have Top Spec Donkey Forage Balancer, as for Tickles who is 23, he is given TopSpec feed balancer.



Sarah's donkeys minus Tickles

I open the back shutter, all the donkeys come out except Tickles. He knows he eats peacefully in his stable and as the other donkeys walk out, his stable door is slightly open, he nudges it a bit further and I give him his feed, all done. He is King Tickles don't forget, he doesn't eat with the young hooligans!!

The all-inclusive breakfast starts, all heads down, munching, chewing, bowls moving, scoffing pellets, cracking apples and carrots, a little cough or noses sneezing such delight watching them all eat, then they check each other's bowls to make sure they are empty.

Tummies full, they start on barley

straw, who can nose dive into it first, who gets the first wee and poo in the middle of the pile, and so it goes on, once a week I'll hand out half a banana each, oh their mouths do a 360 degree lick, so funny. Llamas do not eat celery or bananas they have apples and carrots.

So, food glorious food it is ...

Sarah Standing

Thank you Sarah and thanks for all the lovely pics of your donkeys that appeared in the Bulletins too!

The Last Straw!

Does anyone else have this occasional problem with straw feed? All of ours comes, as it always has, from a local dealer but at least once a year the two boys turn up their noses at what is on offer.

We buy packs of 21 small bales at a time so the frustration is huge when suddenly what was acceptable yesterday is ignored today, especially as they have munched happily through some of the 21 bales.

Here's what happens then - I ratch out a new bale, open it and offer it to the boys who may or may not disdain to eat it. It's great if they do but often they won't so down comes a third bale and on the process goes. Open bales are messy and magically seem to increase in volume once open. The dilemma is then what to do. Do I buy a new batch or do I persevere with opening more and more?



Tickles eating on his own

It's nearly the new season when this year's barley straw becomes available so if I can hang on we will be able to access the fresh supply. My dealer has one more pack of this old batch available but it will be from the same delivery as the now untouchable lot.....

Luckily I have six old bales from one previously eschewed batch, augmented by five from one before that. You've guessed it... I now have an open bale from each of these to tempt the boys to add to the loose bulk in the barn; at last I have found something they will eat.

Perhaps the sheep will accept the broken bales, as fodder or bedding, I care not which, so long as order returns to the barn and we can survive till the new season's straw arrives. That has to be acceptable. I may have to secure a year's worth up front as I understand barley straw will be in short supply. I'd better hang on to the new leftover bales which may be needed and acceptable later in the year. What a palaver!

And here's an update on the straw saga.... today I bought 12 bales to add to the cocktail in the barn and what a difference that has made for the boys – they are attacking it with obvious enjoyment, a fact that merely highlights how much they tholed** what was previously on offer.

Onwards we go . . .

Allison Roberts

****tholed** I'm afraid I had to contact Alison about this word, it was not one that I had encountered before. Fortunately Allison did not take umbrage but provided the following info: *to thole* is to put up with or to suffer and is probably Scottish in origin. I love it when regionalisms surface and am happy to receive whole articles in dialect! Personally, I think we should keep dialects alive.

This led me to think about regional words article and Allison progressed this to think about where the names of our donkeys originated? Hamish and Dougal – very definitely Scottish – and, says Allison, 'my two really got their names from the comedy programme on Radio 4 called "I'm sorry, I haven't a clue" where there is often a clip in which two old Scots characters enact a sketch..... English friends often talk to me in that gentle teasing (I hope) ham Scottish accent so the boys feed them famously.... the sketch always starts with that greeting, "Hamish!", to which comes the reply, "Dougal, you'll have had your tea." I maintain the Edinburgh folk say that to visitors on arrival!!

So readers, let us know the origins of your donkey's names and you might wish to share some local dialect too. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you Allison – and thank you Dougal and Hamish, your free roaming has graced our Bulletin and Facebook pages during lockdown and reminded us that freedom is out there somewhere!



The DBS Interview: in each seasonal newsletter we turn to a well-known, respected, and revered member of the Northern Region and find out a little about them, their donkeys and where their donkey journey has taken them to date.

Getting to know . . . Bill Tetlow

It has been said over the years that men from Yorkshire wear their Yorkshireness 'like a uniform or a suit of armour', well recently I had the pleasure of interviewing Northern Region DBS legend, and Yorkshireman, Bill Tetlow, who has certainly battled for his beloved Donkey Breed Society over the past forty-four years! A long time indeed and in his words, 'how scary is that?', although the idea of Bill being scared of anything is something I would find hard to fathom – this man continues to be an absolute stalwart of our Society and we have many reasons to be grateful for his dedication, determination and input.



When I convey legendary status, Bill feels this is rather over the top, and suggests that his reputation is probably for standing up and speaking out, when he feels strongly about something he believes might impact the DBS in a negative way. He realises that to 'speak tha' mind' does not always make for popularity but such is his passion and belief in the Society, and in donkey welfare, that there are certain things that have to be said. I ask Bill about the changes he has brought about that have made him most proud and he cites 'regionalisation' as one, second as having three judges judging at the Championship Show, to create balance, which makes very good sense and third, as editor of the DBS website, increasing monthly visitors to the site from 300 to over 2,000 a month; which, as I embark on my PR role for the Society, I think is brilliant and I will certainly be taking Bill up on his expertise and offer of support!

'It was an uphill battle to get the DBS to adopt the idea that regionalisation was the way forward,' Bill tells me and, in 1999/2000, as Vice Chair, with Rosemary Clarke as Chair, they travelled 'the length and breadth of the country attending meetings to explain what the advantages of regionalisation would be'. Initially, the concept was rejected but they must have 'planted seeds' as regionalisation as we know it today was adopted within two years and *all* the regions were represented on Council; an understandably proud moment.

Where did standing up for donkeys and their humans originate? I asked Bill if he could remember his first encounter with a donkey and barring the inevitable 'ride' at the seaside, it was buying their first donkey 'Emma' that was to spark a life-long love. Emma was just twelve weeks old when Bill first saw her, it was another twelve weeks before she could come home. In a couple of weeks Bill was, 'donkey daft'! There

followed a trawling of the Halifax Public Library to take out all books relating to donkeys and in one was the address of the DBS, the rest as they say is history!

Over the years Bill has, through his various roles within the Society and his work as a Senior Welfare Officer at The Donkey Sanctuary, influenced many new and not so new donkey owners/handlers, I wanted to know who had influenced him the most . . . 'different people at different times. The person that did the most to encourage me to show my donkeys, drive my donkey, get involved with the DBS was a most wonderful man called Richard Crosby. Richard lived in Chesterfield, in the village of Wingerworth where he kept and bred donkeys. The High Mount Stud was phenomenally successful in the 1970s/1980s at both in hand and driving. Richard was a man who was generous with his time and freely gave advice and was the first to congratulate you even if on the rare occasion you were placed higher up the line than he was. Later in life Betty Svendsen was a great influence when I became involved with donkey welfare when I went to work for her at The Donkey Sanctuary. But without Richard's influence I probably would have never done what was the best job in the world for me, working as Senior Welfare Officer at the Donkey Sanctuary for seventeen years.'



I am keen to know if approaches to donkey welfare have changed since Bill became involved. 'Donkey welfare is much improved [since] the early 1970s, but there is a dark cloud on the horizon, if the down turn in the economy because of the effects of Covid-19 is as bad as the economists have predicted, we could see all kinds of problems as people can no longer afford to keep their donkeys and pay for food and vet bills; this could lead to lots of welfare problems and organisations like the Donkey Sanctuary being swamped with donkeys.' I share Bill's concern and I suggest that the roles of our Area Reps could be particularly important here in maintaining vigilance and keeping an ear to the ground in their areas, providing good, positive support where perceived necessary. It must have been a challenging role, working in donkey welfare and at times probably very emotional. Bill agreed but said that the overriding purpose was to educate and support errant owners; any negligence was often caused by ignorance, it was about talking to them and getting them to understand how to look after their donkeys, and not flood the Sanctuaries' already stretched facilities.

Linked also to welfare, I want to know whether one of the Society's key aims, that of approaches to donkey breeding, has also been subject to change over the years . . . 'I think that the lack of the number of different non-related stallions has not helped to progress the quality of our donkeys. Also, a problem that has plagued the DBS, as long as I have been involved, is that everyone goes to the successful stallion, which is fine, everyone wants a winner, but doing this means that we have an ever decreasing gene pool which is not a healthy situation . . . looking at the DBS now, there is probably only Carole Travell who has a selection of outcross stallions, when at one time there were several studs like hers. The one person who understood this was Tom Hindle who had a stud in the late eighties, but unfortunately ill health cut short a lot of what he could have achieved. I think if you were to ask Carole who had the biggest influence on her approach to donkey breeding, my guess is, she would say Tom'.



Bill's best photo: 'Jason and Ben'

I am totally fascinated listening to Bill recall days gone by and when we continue our interview, which was conducted part-written and part-*Zoom*, thanks to limitations imposed by the pandemic, Bill offers to let me have some photographs to share in the Newsletter – knowing his skill as a photographer (another accolade at which he scoffs, but more of that later) I readily take him up on his offer – so at your leisure, enjoy a little bit of bygone DBS later on in this issue!!

Knowing that Bill is a member of the Driving and of the Shows and Judges Committees, and having heard so many bemoaning recently the fact that shows just aren't what they used to be, and not solely because of the lockdown, I ask Bill to take a trot down the annals of time and take a look at shows . . . 'sadly there has been a steady decline in the number of exhibitors not only at the local shows but also our Supreme Championship Show. The first time we won the Driving Class at the

Halifax Show with Emma, there were ten driving turnouts in the class. At the same show there would be ten or more in the mare class and the same in the stallion and gelding class, large youngstock classes and lots of fun classes. Compare that with today's entries when you will be lucky to get two driving turnouts and three or four in each of the show classes. The first time I went to the Championship Show, Tom Hindle asked me to show a colt for him, there were sixteen in the two and three year old cold class; I remember it well as I was stood fifteenth, compare that with the number of entries now. Why has this happened? Well I suppose some of us have got older and retired from showing and there is nobody following on, some blame the cost, but showing donkeys was always expensive. But there has to be more to it than that because in the northern most part of the region John and Lorraine Rae are achieving miracles, areas that have not had donkeys at shows before are getting the number of entries we used to get in the mid-1980s, so I guess you ought to do an interview with them and ask them their secret!' And that I will!!

In terms of showing practice and preparation however, I always think one encounters some beautifully turned out entrants in donkey classes, does Bill agree? Here he beams as he prepares to further entertain with a lovely anecdote: 'it is good to be able to say something positive, I think [turnout/presentation] is as high as it has ever been. Donkey owners have a good reputation for turning out in a professional manner. I remember years ago The Great Yorkshire Show sending out a memo criticising exhibitors for the poor standard of turnout for a prestigious county show, at the end there was a paragraph which said, 'this of course does not refer to the donkey exhibitors who are always turned out immaculately', how I wish I had kept that memo!'

The amount of experience that Bill must have gleaned over all his forays into the world of our glorious long ears, has no doubt given him tremendous knowledge and insight into their world and I wondered if he felt there was one thing that sets them apart from all other equids? He considered for a moment and then said, 'they are more like 'the family dog', in that they display a greater sense of 'personality' and do you know, I know just what he means! They are not an easy subject to photograph however and for a man who loves photography and has been doing it for most of his life, and having been the official photographer at the Championship Show for twenty-three years, Bill would offer this good piece of advice, 'if you are going to photograph donkeys you need the patience of a saint. They stand up straight, but their ears are laid flat, you get the ears up and the legs are all over the place. But when you get it right, it is well worth the effort. So photographing donkeys taught me a vital lesson, if you want to have a decent looking photo of anything, be

patient, take your time and you will be rewarded with a decent image'. We agree this is a good metaphor for lots of things in life – perhaps lockdown has taught us this too.

And so, to lockdown, with a garden abundant in wildlife and in the most idyllic location, I imagine that Bill has been snapping away for fourteen weeks, and I am not wrong. He has also been running a photographic competition on his Camera Club website every week. 'Every second week the competition is open to non-members and I am pleased to report that Pam Moon has entered every one of them, she has yet to get into the top four but she has been close on a number of occasions!' Check out Bill's Camera Club website: www.mashamphotographers.com. What are Bill and Carol looking forward to most as they emerge from lockdown: 'well the donkeys are enjoying retirement, so it has not made a great deal of difference to them. Carol is back playing tennis at least once a day, so she is very happy, during lockdown she was cycling between forty and fifty kilometres a day to keep fit. Me, I am looking forward to getting up the Dales with my camera and taking photos and enjoying the scenery. But things will not be back to normal until the members of our camera club can get together, go up the Dales, take photos and end up in a tearoom enjoying tea and scones and putting the world to rights'.

I ask Bill if there is anything he has learnt about himself from the lockdown experience and in addition to reiterating how much he has missed getting out into the hills for his long walks, he says he has also realised a need to talk to people. Well I hope Bill enjoyed talking with the Region! I certainly enjoyed listening to him. I do hope he continues to say it as it is, when it matters, because it is a sign of caring, underpinned by a love of donkeys and a kind heart. Whether that is meant to stay hidden beneath the Yorkshire armour I'm not sure, but it was a privilege to encounter and I switched off our *Zoom* connection knowing that there are probably many more pots of knowledge to dip into again and lots of lovely anecdotes to enjoy, in further issues.

Sarah Booth. June, 2020.

Looking back at lockdown . . .

What did you do, what did you discover about yourself, your donkeys and those around you? It has been, in varying degrees, a time of challenge, anxiety and yet also, camaraderie. We kept in touch through a variety of means, including the *Bulletin* and Facebook. We've laughed and no doubt cried at times, we've felt a whole gamut of emotions. Here's what Sue, Pam and Terri got up to . . .



Our Life During Lockdown by Sue Stead

For almost 11 weeks we have been at home or at our field which is just along the road from our house. We think ourselves very lucky because we have had our animals to care for so this has given us something to focus on. The animals, three donkeys, two horses and one dog have kept us busy. We walk onto the stables every morning about 7am taking the young dog with us. We put the horses and donkeys out, muck out, sort waters etc for the day. We then

come back home and have breakfast then a relax for about 30 minutes.

On what I call 'donkey days' I will return to the stables to play with my donkeys, grooming, exercising and generally enjoying them. I drive them in the field and in our arena. I long reign both in the field and arena and set up obstacle courses to take them round. It is both a challenge for me and the donkeys as both myself and the two girls are not getting any younger, Jacko of course is a young lad so I tend to do more with him to keep him engaged.

The husband has not been riding for the majority of lock down as advised by the powers that be, mainly because he has two spooky horses and we did not want any mishaps. He is back riding now and both him and the horses seem to be enjoying it. Lots of maintenance work has been going on and the donkeys of course always want to get involved.

In the afternoons we return to the stables to lay down beds, fill up waters and provide hay and straw for the night, all the animals are in at night. Mucking out in the field is done daily so again we are kept busy. Then again home again for a cup of tea and make dinner. After dinner we go to the stables, bring the donkeys and horses in, feed them and a final muck out of the fields. This is when the dog has good run round when all the big animals are safely inside. When counting our daily steps, it's usually in the region of 15000-20000 so no visits to the gym are necessary. We realise we are very lucky to have the set up we have but also realised early on that we had to keep well for the animals so we have been sticking to our own company, shopping on line and generally being antisocial for the best of reasons.



Coping during Lockdown by Pam Moon

I bet you are all sick of the words Lockdown and Corona, to some people it has meant isolation, separation from loved family and friends and not being able to visit people we really want to, I really feel for you and hope that the easing back to some sort of normality will offer some comfort.

To others it has been an opportunity to do jobs at home that otherwise would still be on the back burner – that's me – fences treated, stable repairs, field shelter and hard standing done. The other task I was feeling exceptionally guilty about was Harvey's "best" harness – we moved house a year last December and I didn't drive him in the show ring last year, so his harness was still in its travel box – last week I stripped it down to every last buckle and conditioned and cleaned it and it has come up beautifully. A good time to check all leatherwork for repairs.



Also taking advantage of less traffic on the roads I have been taking Tilly out for walks, she has met bikes, prams, puddles and lots of adoring public with dogs, she has crossed railway lines and taken it all in her stride, now the roads are getting busy again it won't be so easy but hopefully she has taken on board some of her experiences. Milly has been long-reining and although very green is responsive in her lessons, but like so many donkeys her mind wanders back to being with her pals, short lessons ending on a good note seem to be working well.

New Junior member Rueben Moon has had his first proper sit on a donkey – Harvey looks like he is having a doze whilst Rueben was quite happy, when social distancing is relaxed we will be able to do it properly.

So here I am thinking of you all, welcome to new members in the Lancashire area (and other areas), if you need anything donkey related please shout up, I will do my best to help.

See lots of you soon, Pam.



Rosie, Our Very Special Lockdown Foal by Terri Morris

Last year, when we dropped off our mare, Cassie, to spend some romantic time with the Browns' very handsome stallion, Eddie, we had no idea that the resulting foal would be born into such a strange and rather frightening world. If we'd had the gift of clairvoyance would we have still gone ahead? I don't know – but I do know that our beautiful Wychbrook Desert Rose, or Rosie as she has been called from the first moment we saw her, is the one thing that has kept me sane over the past few worrying months.

Cassie breezed through her pregnancy although, as her bulge grew progressively larger, we did start to wonder whether she might be having twins! Her due date was not actually until the end of May but we were getting impatient for something to happen and I think she was too because, when John went to let the donkeys out on the morning of 7th May, he was amazed to discover a little newcomer in Cassie's stable. Still wet and slightly wobbly, the foal had obviously not long been born but clever Cassie, despite being a first time mum, had dealt with the birth most efficiently and was already bonding with her beautiful daughter.



Since that miraculous moment we have spent so much time foal watching and – in my case – taking endless photos that lockdown has if not exactly sped by then at least gone more quickly than it might have otherwise done. Every new achievement – Rosie's first attempt at a bray, her first roll, her exuberant zoomies around the field, grooming with her mum, trying on her new little headcollar etc. etc. – have all been noted and marvelled at. To these proud "parents" she is, of course, the most wondrous foal ever to have been born!



Incidentally, just in case you're wondering about her name, you may like to know that it comes from my great love for Australia, particularly the Northern Territory where we've spent several fantastic holidays cuddling baby orphan kangaroos in Alice Springs. So, like her mum whose full name is Brownroad Desert Cassia after a wild flower that grows there, Rosie is Wychbrook Desert Rose in honour of the state flower of the Northern Territory. And she is as beautiful – and tough – as her floral namesake!

And as we began to emerge . . .

It was the Driving Weekend at Helen Naden's! 'Practice without Pressure'!

Undeterred by rain showers and on an historic day – the one where pubs and hairdressers opened in England – the dedicated drivers and would-be drivers of donkeys and small ponies, travelled to Cheshire to stretch out their legs, respect social distancing and do what they enjoy doing most!

I joined them on the Sunday and, having never set foot in a carriage in my life, quickly donned my riding hat and sat alongside Olwen who was there, driving the ever steady Teddy, more of that later.

Helen's ménage was looking great, it was still under construction when I had last visited, but it is big and beautifully situated amid rolling countryside, a wonderful situation for a weekend of driving. Helen and Steve

had made everyone very welcome and worked really hard to ensure all appropriate measures were in place both in the chalets and around the farm.



Super long reining from Daniel and Inspector Hound

Coaching during a range of activities, giving the benefit of advice gleaned from a vast knowledge and experience of driving ponies, was Jill Pickup. There was a pretty even



Debbie and Daniel Street with the lovely Inspector Hound

split between donkeys and ponies and the first day was given to dressage, with singles, two pairs and a team. I asked Jill how the experience had been for her? 'It was an eye opener! Donkeys can do it!! I hadn't experienced donkeys being driven before – I've seen both ends of the spectrum of ability this weekend!' she laughed, 'I would love to drive a donkey'. What Jill was impressed by was the accuracy of the driven dressage. She offered hints to those who had prepared by learning the test beforehand and was delighted to report that, 'all improved enormously and executed their tests with elegance'. But of course, us donkey folk wouldn't expect anything else! If you want to try the test yourself, search *Indoor Carriage Driving Paces and Precision Test 2017-18 B*, print it out and have a go!

On Sunday, following Saturday night's reveries that for many included a 'socially distanced' dip in a hot tub and a great catch up (we won't mention at this point the veterinary-themed stories – this is a high-quality Newsletter!!) it was back to the ménage and out with the cones. Everyone walked the Course and then had three goes. Everyone agreed that this was brilliant – in fact, 'practice without pressure'! And, as Jill said, 'the

fact that it was not competitive was very valuable. It was unusual in this respect, but it worked and was a chance for people to get some practice in, in a relaxed environment'.

Sadly, for Helen, Pippin picked up a possible stifle injury, although it was really useful that Liz was on hand and able to bring immediate veterinary advice to the situation. We wish Pippin a straightforward and swift recovery.

Whilst a lot of the pony contingent present are Trials enthusiasts (combining cones, dressage and obstacles – often at amazing speed!),



Hapgood driven by Debbie Street

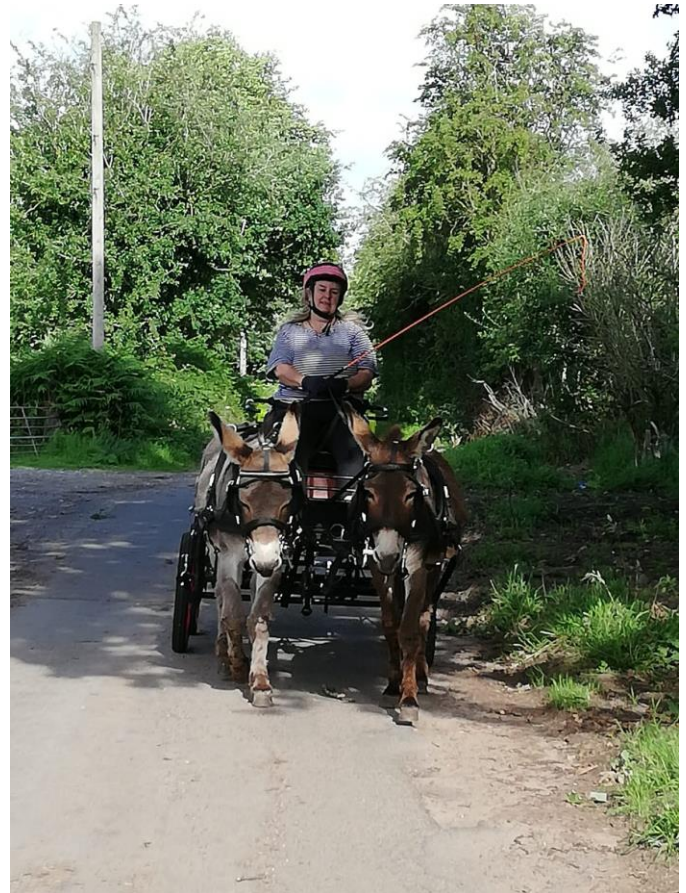
the donkey contingent kept their end up and took an interested trot round the course. Jill mentioned that she was extremely impressed with Debbie Street's donkey's cantering!

I know that those participating would wish to thank Jill for her expertise over the weekend, and Helen and Steve for their hospitality and willingness to host such an event in difficult times. It was a great get together – our DBS Chair, Carol Travell was there and enjoying her birthday weekend, there were gorgeous donkeys, and carriage driving enthusiasts with very lovely small ponies too and Daniel Street who was a delight to talk to, a photographer in the making and didn't once look fed up at being surrounded by lots of adults!

I can't wait to start driving! Having a little walk and trot round with Teddy was delightful – if you have never experienced it before,



do ask someone if they can show you how it's done. The only way I can describe it, is like fulfilling that desire when young to perform circus tricks with four in hand - to be standing on the



DBS Chair, Carole Travell takes to the Cheshire lanes

back two ponies, looking down on the front two, watching them move forward! Perhaps that's just me!?! One thing that will be difficult will be to stop using my seat and legs!! How brilliant though that we can do this with

our donkeys and as ever, the camaraderie of horsey and donkey people takes some beating!

Olwen Brown, Teddy and Jill Pickup



This is *your* Region . . .

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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 Trot Down Memory Lane, courtesy of Bill Tetlow









Steady as you go! Photo: Sue Stead

It has been a confusing time everyone, but we are getting there.

*Keep safe
and emerge slowly!*