

ASSPIRE!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN REGION OF THE
DONKEY BREED SOCIETY



Wishing Everyone a Very Happy Christmas!



At last, we welcome the festive season . . .

Dear All,

Happy Christmas! and let's hope that we can get together in 2021. Despite being limited with what we can do, some of our usual Christmas activities have been able to go ahead safely and our members have been coming up with creative ideas to allow people to enjoy our wonderful donkeys.

I hope you all have a fantastic holiday period and I look forward to seeing you next year.

Liz.

Elizabeth Brown, Chair, Donkey Breed Society Northern Region.



Colin's Column . . .

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



Dear Juniors!

Fancy reindeer not liking carrots! Liz should know because she used to work with reindeer at Christmas, we even had one living with us for a bit. She says it's best to leave out bird seed on Christmas Eve because reindeer like seeds and if they don't eat it all the little birds can feast on it and have a nice Christmas lunch. So, save the carrots for us donkeys and give the reindeer (and the birds) seeds!

Keep safe and have a lovely Christmas!

Love, Colin X





CHRISTMAS CONCERT FOR WAR HORSE MEMORIAL... and our children and donkeys play a starring role!

We can't get out to enjoy concerts
and carols this festive season but fear

not... our friends at War Horse Memorial are putting together a virtual
Christmas Concert on **Sunday, December 20 at 8pm on YouTube**. A
stellar line up of performers have agreed to give their time and talents
for free, but our children and donkeys take centre stage with a wonderful
nativity play, a special reading and videos. The concert opens with the



wonderful Colin Thackery, the Chelsea pensioner who won the hearts of the
nation as last year's Britain's Got Talent winner, and his beautiful performance is
guaranteed to get us in the festive spirit. Other celebrities include Jon Courtenay
the winner of this year's Britain's Got Talent, who has written a special song just
for the occasion - how great is that - West End star of theatre and musicals, Colin
Roy and a special Video performance of the song tipped to be a contender for a
Christmas hit. We will share the video link shortly, but if you google War Horse
Christmas Concert after Wednesday, it will pop up. The concert premieres at
8pm, but don't worry if you miss it, it can be viewed any time after that.

Susan Osbourne, Co-founder and Communications Director, War Horse Memorial.

Sunday 20th December, 2020

8.00 pm

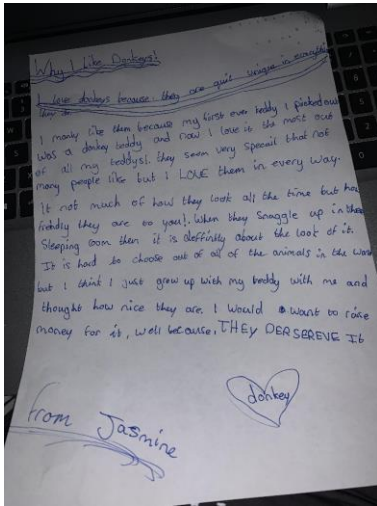
Also featuring, on behalf of the Donkey Breed Society, all the lovely pictures of
past nativities that you have sent in, the Colley Mill Juniors' Nativity for
2020, together with your gorgeous videos of donkeys and horses in their fields.

Thank you Donkey Breed Society!

Check out the WtHMO website from Wednesday 16th December for further
details: thewarhorsememorial.org

Welcome Jasmine – a New Northern Junior raising money for donkeys!

In November, I was chuffed to read this piece from Jasmine, from Haslington in Cheshire who I already knew to be 'donkey-mad' but in her 'Why I like Donkeys!', I found out why and I also know that she is raising money for the Northern DBS, here's why . . .



I love donkeys because they are quite unique in everything

I mainly like them because my first ever teddy I picked out was a donkey teddy and now I love it the most out of all my teddys! They seem very special that not many people like, but I LOVE them in every way.

It's not much of how they look all the time but how friendly they are to you! When they snuggle up in their sleeping room then it is definitely about the look of it.



It is hard to choose out of all the animals in the world, but I think I just grew up with my teddy with me and thought how nice they are. I would want to raise money for it, well because, THEY DESERVE IT!

From Jasmine

(Age 8)



So Jasmine, helped by her sister, has been making dog treat cones and selling them to raise money for us.

To say, 'thank you to Jasmine', the DBS Northern Region and Colley Mill Donkeys decided to present Jasmine with a year's Junior Membership to the Donkey Breed Society. The money that Jasmine has raised, is, at the time of writing over an incredible £100.00!!! We will bring you the total in a special New Year Bulletin. Funds raised will go to support the work of the DBS in the Northern Region *and* drumroll please . . . for our Northern Junior Members to sponsor a donkey at Buxton Donkey Sanctuary!! Hopefully, when we can have visits out the children will be able to take a trip to visit their sponsored donkey.

Jasmine and her family have been continuing to raise funds even as they isolate, with one of the family testing positive for covid-19. Mum Rachael told me, 'the cones are isolated in the boot of my car . . .

people come, and I remotely open the boot. They collect, then leave the money in the boot! All non-contact! Covid won't stop us!' We think this is fantastic!! Well done Jasmine and thank you, we hope you're all out of isolation soon.

And whilst we are talking about charity . . .

A request for rugs caught my eye on Facebook recently and I wanted to share this with you, as I believe it to be a worthy cause. I have promised to send Caroline some rugs that the boys have outgrown. I asked Caroline to tell us more about the Charity she supports and how we might support it too.

‘For many years I have done fund raising for many animal charities including the Brooke , Hope Pastures, RSPCA, Happa and so on. More recently, I am involved in fund raising and collecting rugs for Romanian donkeys, notably those at the MARIUTA SANCTUARY IN ROMANIA. They were recently involved in the rescue of a donkey who had had his ears cut off by an evil man and 11 pregnant donkeys who were going for slaughter. Daniela Popovici has hundreds of rescue animals and would really appreciate our help.

Please, please if you have any spare rugs, headcollars, medications, wormers etc please get in touch. I can provide references and you can view me on Facebook or contact me via email

carolinethomsonhorses@gmail.com

or call/text me on 07745 987365. Thank you so much . Caroline.’

Nativities Past



Whether you were in Church with Wyeknot Donkeys, in a school classroom with Sam or part of the Holy family in a car park somewhere in Yorkshire, one thing is for certain, I am sure you will not forget the gentleness, kindness and softness of the donkey that was a very important part of your starring role.



Christmas Nativities Present

It's not the same this year . . . for everyone usually busy supporting their local communities with the Christmas Story, only a few have managed a long-eared presence. At Colley Mill Donkeys in Cheshire, we held our own little Nativity, adhering strictly to covid regulations, including anti-bac'ing everything, social distancing, bubbles and a very long and wordy risk assessment. It was videoed by the wonderful Colin McPherson so that parents and friends who couldn't be present can enjoy it later, and it will appear as part of the War Horse

Memorial Organisation's Christmas Concert.



Junior DBS member, Izzy Brewis (3), was quite surprised to see her baby sister, Anna, lying in the manger. Missy, Barney and Freddie had a very enjoyable afternoon and behaved very well and the mums had been very creative in making the wonderfully rotund sheep!

The whole Nativity was a gentle reminder of making time to reflect, at this time of the year, and was very much a joint creation.



and other festive events . . .

Here is Pam Moon's wonderful Booboo helping Father Christmas at grandson (Pam's grandson not Father Christmas' grandson!) Rueben's Nursery. I expect the children were so excited when they saw Booboo – what a splendid outfit; a gorgeously Christmassy helper for Santa.



And speaking of nativities . . .

Allison Roberts has kindly shared the following

What follows below is guidance that was issued by the Portsmouth Diocese of the Catholic church in a recent Diocesan e-News (no 298).



The coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on the way we conduct our lives, with many new rules and restrictions governing our health and safety. One area of concern is your Christmas Crib. Although there are several weeks to go before Christmas, you will need to start planning now. You will need to begin with a thorough risk assessment to ensure your Crib is COVID-secure. Here is some further guidance:

1. A maximum of 4 shepherds only are permitted in the Crib.
2. Shepherds must wear facemasks (unless exempt) and strictly observe social distancing (2m or 1m+ with mitigations).
3. Jesus, Mary and Joseph form a family bubble and thus may be placed together.
4. The ox and the ass need Declaration of Non-Contamination Certificates, obtainable from the Department of Agriculture.
5. The Three Wise Men, since they come from a non-Schengen Area, will be subject to a 14-day quarantine, whether or not they have tested negative for Covid.
6. The straw, moss, palm branches and other decorations must be disinfected, with hands washed for 20 seconds after handling.
7. Angels flying over the Crib are now forbidden, owing to the aerosol effect produced by the batting of wings.
8. Shepherds are permitted provided they are not more than 70 years old or suffering from underlying medical conditions or in another vulnerable category.
9. The inn, along with other businesses in the hospitality sector, is closed until further notice.
10. For 2020 only, a Pontius Pilate should be added to the Crib to explain to authorised participants the protocols for washing and sanitisation of hands.

As a friend of mine commented "So long as you've got your ass covered, you'll be fine!"

Thank you, Allison.



Fab Farriers – an update

‘A Fab Farriers Award!’ (AFFA) The Donkey Breed Society’s Northern Region proudly recognises donkey farriers!

This was the headline in the British Farriers and Blacksmiths Association magazine, the *Forge*, that heralded the fab farriers award, started here in the Northern Region!! As you know, it is an award for farriers that take on board the fact that donkeys are different to ponies and horses, that they need to be approached differently, their hooves worked differently and that it is necessary to display patience, are much valued by donkey owners and guardians across the country. In the Northern Region of the Donkey Breed Society we wanted to recognise these wonderful people.

We asked you to put forward their farriers, men and women who had gone above and beyond, for a DBS Northern Region Certificate. This has since become known as, ‘A Fab Farriers Award’! The first four farriers to receive certification were Graham Smith, David Beardmore, Josh Milburn and Darren Slater. First in the line up to receive his certificate was Graham from Grantham, seen above with Sarah Standing who nominated him.



Next, to be photographed receiving his certificate from Magill, one of Sally Lowe’s donkeys (left and below), it was Tom Dyson. And here is Tom, in action, with Sally’s other donkey Murphy.

Well done!!



It's still not too late to nominate your farrier. These are the criteria that he/she must meet and if they do, they will receive a special certificate and a mention in the BFBA magazine! These are the criteria:

Criteria for 'fab farriers':

- 🐴 This farrier has a very real and distinct knowledge of donkey farriery.
- 🐴 This farrier is well informed and on point regarding all things 'donkey'.
- 🐴 He/she knows that donkeys are different from horses and ponies.
- 🐴 He/she goes out of their way to practice with empathy.
- 🐴 He/she has gone the extra mile for members' donkeys – anecdotal evidence would be useful here.

The Donkey Breed Society is pleased to announce that in the New Year, this coveted accolade will be rolled out across the UK, giving the nation's fab farriers the recognition, they deserve!

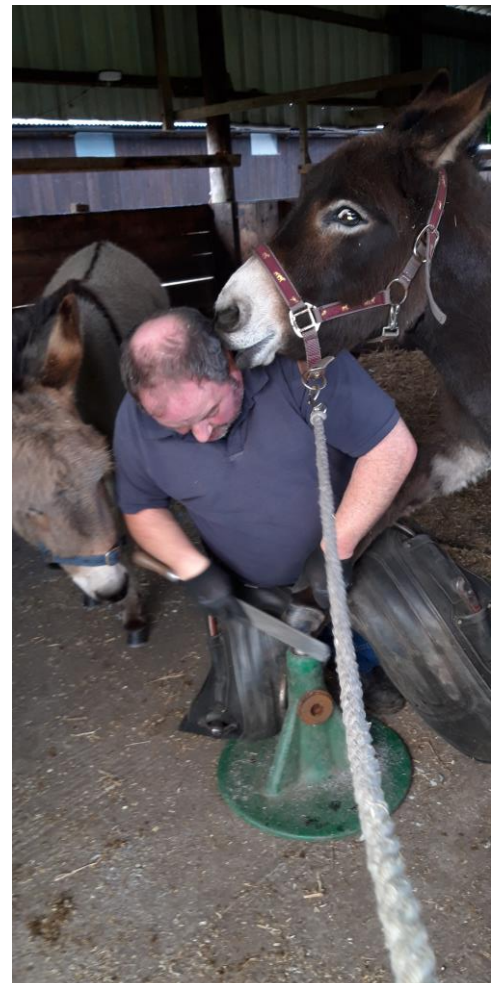
In this edition, of *Asspire*, Pam Moon nominates her farrier:

Mr D'Arcy!

"In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you." Jane Austen writing in *Pride and Prejudice* or Pam Moon, writing in Lancashire?

'I would like to nominate Craig who does my donkeys' feet - Harvey is always wary of strangers and always has been since his colic surgery 13 years ago - he trusts Craig and they work well together!

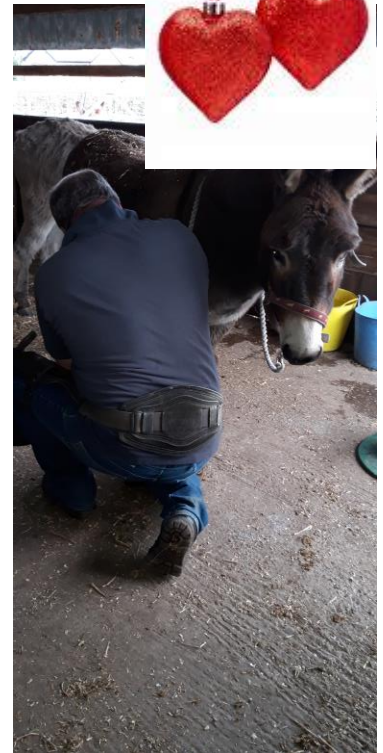
The girls are usually good and no fidgeting. Not today however, when I took these photos - Tilly decided she didn't want to be done, then when it came to Booboo's turn Tilly thought she would supervise very closely and rested her head on Craigs back! Milly was a good girl and didn't fidget. Craig, as ever, remained calm and patient with the donkeys.'





And here are some more pictures of Craig with Pam's girls and you can just tell they adore him.

**A very merry
Christmas to all
our 'fab
farriers'!!**



Any questions just drop me a line. To nominate your farrier, send your nomination demonstrating that he/she is absolutely wonderful and meets the aforementioned criteria to: northerndonks@gmail.com.

Walk for War Horse

Following our partnership in 2020 with the War Horse Memorial Organisation, we are delighted to bring you a letter from Susan Osbourne, Co-founder, who has been working recently with Kendall Young, DBS Regional Delegate from Scotland on a super project that will embrace Scotland in the spring! We are pleased to announce, that this will now roll out across the UK in 2021.

This walk will run alongside much-loved Webster Walks and Regional Walks because we are realising more than ever just how important it is to get out and about, whenever and wherever we can!



WALK FOR WAR HORSE 2021 ...

with the Donkeys of Scotland leading the way



Walk for War Horse hopes to encourage animal lovers across the UK to register interest in trekking the hills and valleys near their homes next Spring, with their horses, ponies, donkeys and dogs, while capturing on film the beauty of the British Isles.

But we at War Horse Memorial take no credit for the idea ... it's the brainchild of your colleague, Kendall Young who lives in Ayr. The idea is that for £10 people can register their participation and share their route. In return they will be given a purple poppy pin badge and a knitted poppy to pin on the collar of their animals and pets to show their support. And there will be prizes for best photos and most miles travelled over April 2021.

COVID-19 has meant that most animal sanctuaries and rescue centres in the UK have struggled over the past months to keep going. War Horse Memorial, through its Animal Purple Poppy Fund, is trying to help the most vulnerable.

At War Horse Memorial we were delighted to agreed partnership working recently with the Society, to further the cause of donkey welfare through a programme of education and support. With fundraising on hold for many charities because of coronavirus restrictions this is a great way to raise money through sponsorship and, because it's not a group activity it's a great way for individuals and families to keep within government guidelines while enjoying the breath-taking beauty of Britain in the Spring.

So how will it work?

Anyone interested should email info@thewarhorsememorial.org to register. For a £10 registration fee War Horse Memorial will send by post a purple metal poppy pin badge and a knitted poppy (like these pictured here) to attach to collars and bridles.

People are asked over the month of April 2021 to record their routes, and the number of miles walked – and importantly, take photos en route. On April 30, 2021 they need to submit their log of miles covered and a selection of three photos that show their part of the country at its best. Judges will award prizes for the best entries in a number of categories.

Kind regards, Susan



Susan Osborne, Co-founder War Horse Memorial and The Animal Purple Poppy Fund. Go to www.thewarhorsememorial.org for more information.

FESTIVE PHOTO GALLERY



And now, time for a little cake . . .

It's another recipe from Joy!!

Mincemeat Cake

8oz SR flour
6oz softened butter or marg
4oz soft brown sugar
2 teaspoons of baking powder
4 eggs
12 oz mince meat

- 🐇 Beat all ingredients together, preferably with electric mixer until well blended.
- 🐇 Spoon mixture into a greased and lined traybake tin.
- 🐇 Level top and bake at 180c for 35minutes.
- 🐇 When cool cut into squares and dust with icing sugar. Enjoy!



And Joy continues . . .

It's a light cake and good for using mincemeat after Christmas. Hope the recipe is okay, have a lovely Christmas everyone!

Joy x

And/or Peppermint Creams anyone?! Very festive and a nice one for the children to make!

- 🐇 1 free-range egg white
- 🐇 ½ lemon, juice only
- 🐇 1 tsp peppermint flavouring
- 🐇 425g/15 oz icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
- 🐇 175g/6¼oz dark chocolate

1. Whisk the egg white in a bowl until stiff peaks form when the whisk is removed. Slowly whisk in the lemon juice, peppermint and icing sugar to a stiff paste.
2. Tip the peppermint mixture onto a work surface dusted liberally with icing sugar and roll out thinly.
3. Use a 5cm/2in cutter to cut out circles and place them onto a baking tray. Chill in the fridge for 1-2 hours, or until the mixture has set.
4. Meanwhile, melt the chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water. (Do not let the base of the bowl touch the water.) **Little people need a grown-up to help here!**
5. Dip each peppermint cream into the melted chocolate and set aside on a baking tray. Chill the peppermint creams until set.

This is a BBC Good Food Recipe from Simon Rimmer.

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 Pam Moon: past, present and future . . .

This edition we turn to total star and much-loved DBS personality, Pam Moon. Truly a legend in her own lifetime, and a further oracle in our DBS hall of fame, Pam is perpetually and rightly credited with helping so many people and their donkeys.

How did it all begin? Pam was first introduced to donkeys as a twelve-year old schoolgirl when a friend, who was helping a lady with her donkeys, asked Pam to join them. They would ride Zebedee and Zykie on their local bridlepaths, which Pam enjoyed immensely. Pam continues, “we had a great time and in December, Zykie gave birth to a beautiful filly foal, ‘Zoe’ – that was me completely smitten!”



Sue, the donkeys’ owner, took Pam and her friend all over the country to shows and driving events, forming a lifelong friendship. Eventually the schoolfriend that had made the original introductions, followed other paths, but for Pam it was just the beginning . . .

“There was no stopping me!” every evening after school and every weekend Pam would cycle to see the donkeys and help with their care. In fact, every spare minute of any little time that she had, Pam wanted to be with the donkeys. It is this total commitment to the beautiful long ears, that appears to be the reason for Pam’s lack of commitment to her school education! However, even though growing up in Altrincham she had always wanted to be a vet, practical application won over theory.

Although she will always be thankful for the opportunities that school did present, and eternally grateful to the friend that introduced her to Sue and the original donkeys, when opportunities presented to do some hands-on work, there was no stopping her! With hindsight, Pam’s advice to her sixteen-year-old self would



be, 'do your homework!' she nevertheless feels that you must follow your dreams and be yourself. She continues, "there is so much pressure on youngsters to be on trend, just be you." These are wise words indeed and it must be said that there are many extremely grateful for the career path that Pam did choose.

It was the wisdom of Dr Elisabeth Svensden, in the early days of Pam's 'donkey madness' that helped to map out the next stage of that career. She went to a talk given by Dr Svensden, who she describes as, 'an amazing inspirational lady' and was totally enthralled. When Bill Tetlow told Pam that he was to be the new Regional Welfare Officer, she expressed her desire to join the team if an opportunity arose. It did. Within a short period of time, a role was available covering the Greater Manchester area and Pam was offered the job on a



voluntary basis. I asked Pam who had been the greatest influence on her at this time. "I can only give all the credit to Bill, he was inspirational, supportive and a brilliant Manager, expanding my area as other Welfare Officers left the company; ultimately covering the whole of the North West and Derbyshire."

It takes a special kind of person to see cruelty on the scale that Pam must have witnessed, and I am keen to find out how she has coped with things that must be so difficult to process. She says, "the cruelty cases are hard to witness. I can remember seeing photos of two donkeys – Laurel and

Hardy on my computer screen, I had uncontrollable tears running down my face. Numerous cases would be donkeys in the field with long feet, no shelter, insufficient food, ice and snow on the ground is just so tough. Holding a corner on a tarpaulin carrying a donkey to the lorry because it was too weak to walk, you find an inner strength to deal with it and knowing life will be better for the donkeys, there is no better feeling than seeing that ramp go up on the lorry knowing the donkeys inside are destined for better things."

It is unsurprising, that today, donkeys continue to be central to Pam's life and that she also cares for four donkeys from the Donkey Sanctuary in addition to her own Harvey, Booboo, Milly and Tilly. I asked her to tell us about her personal herd: "Harvey is my gorgeous 15-year-old stallion, my pride and joy – loyal, faithful, contrary, bloody-minded when he wants to be but boy oh boy, I wouldn't change him for the world (well perhaps a bit when the Vet visits!). I even forgive him for bolting off after being presented with the Driving Championship in 2015! He is never settled in an indoor arena - the trophy was placed on the seat of the cart and fell over and off he went! Booboo is the kindest of donkeys that will do anything for you, she is currently helping with Rueben developing his donkey skills, she is also mum to Tilly, the two-year-old troublemaker, then there is Milly – a gorgeous mare, who has excelled in the show ring and has a lovely kind nature."



A 'national treasure' for the Donkey Breed Society, of which she has been a member for many years, Pam has



made hundreds of friends through the Society and believes that she has learnt much through her membership; citing these as reasons why people should get involved with our much-loved Society. She continues to contribute her time as Registrar for the DBS, which involves putting together the annual Stud Book. This lists all the donkeys registered and having passports with the DBS. However, Pam rues the fact that although there are 'Improving Registers' within the Stud Book, "sadly there is a complacency with the breeding of donkeys and little enthusiasm for getting the donkeys that qualify inspected to progress to the

Pedigree status. I am not really certain where this will take us in the future."

One thing that Pam would advocate for the future of the DBS is that we need the younger generation to get involved in the Committees to carry on the work that is required to carry the DBS into the future; and I think there are many of us that would agree with that.

And Pam has her own plans for the future. On leaving the Donkey Sanctuary, you might think Pam would have a bit of a rest for a while, but absolutely not! She left to set up a Pet Boarding facility for all small pets that are kept in hutches, cages, or tanks and whilst this year has been a challenge, with lots of cancellations, she is optimistic for a busy 2021.

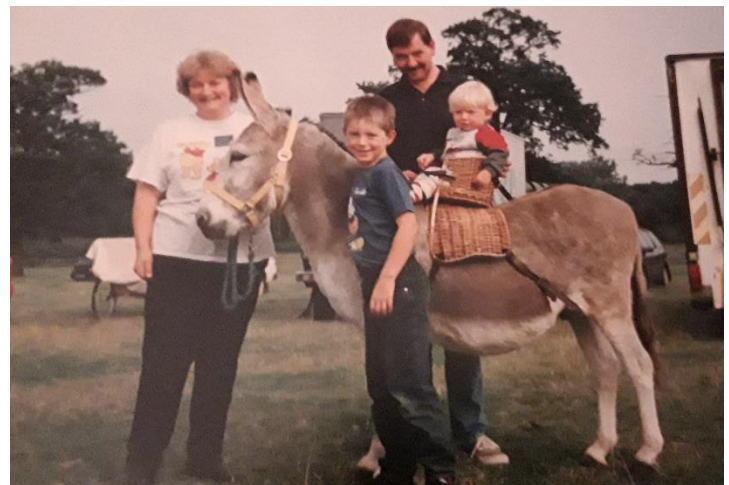
Busy, focused, Society-, Region- and community-minded, it must be difficult to 'switch-off', but Pam appears good at this too!! She enjoys walking gorgeous Flat-Coated Retriever Dexter – who is particularly partial to a beach and swimming. As well as a love of baking (Joy's recipes of course!) Pam has a penchant for jigsaws, and ever relishing a challenge, 'the harder the better' apparently. She also enjoys eating out, although comments rightly, "there hasn't been so much of that this year!"

Grandchildren! A huge, huge part of chilling and enjoying, is of course the grandchildren, Pam says, "to see them growing and developing into wonderful little people is great." Pam has four grandchildren and Rueben



appears to be following in his daddy's footsteps. He is confident around the donkeys and willing to dive in with the mucking out, grooming and caring; always a bonus!! Pam tells me that, "Rueben is a natural rider and has good balance on his noble steed". One to look out for in the future! Just look at that marvellous picture of the family's first donkey Pundit, with 7-year-old Christopher and 1-year-old Philip, taken 24 years ago !!! You can see Steve in the picture too, but Pam is

not giving his age away!!



So how will the Moons be spending this Christmas? With most people's arrangements cast awry this Christmas, Pam and Steve will be spending Christmas Day with the animals and then on Boxing Day, the family that are part of the 'family bubble' will, all being well, come over. I asked Pam what she would wish for her DBS Area in 2021, given that the area has really been hit quite badly during the pandemic. "We have hopefully followed the rules as closely as we can and I hope this horrendous virus that has blighted so many lives and loved ones, will do one (!) and mean we can get back to normality and out and about with and without our donkeys."

And finally, what could Santa find for Pam that would absolutely make her festive season?

"Normality – friends and family hugs!"

I think we would all totally agree with that. It was an absolute pleasure to correspond with Pam and find out about her life experiences past, what she is doing in the present and her hopes for the future. I am sure you will join with me in wishing Pam and her family, and all those DBS luminaries who have allowed us to get to know them a little better in 2020, a very special time this Christmas and a happy and fulfilling New Year!

S. Booth. December, 2020.



All I want for Christmas is:-

We don't do Christmas presents much at our house as we have reached the age when there is not much we want and we would rather spend our money on the animals. Having said this there are three things I need to ask Santa for.

A new sweeping brush.

We are very traditional at our stables we just love a decent sweeping brush. It has to have natural bristles but the problem with this is they wear out very quickly. One of our first shop online purchases during lockdown was two new brush heads. The excitement the day they arrived and the joy of that first sweep. Sad, I know but hey ho. Well, the problem is these two new brush heads have now worn down, we actually dated them so we would know how long they had lasted.

So, all I want for Christmas is a new brush head.



An Empty Muck Trailer.

The trouble with animals is they create a great deal of muck. We have two horses and three donkeys so it sort of builds up over the weeks.

We have an old farm trailer with a ramp and what good exercise it is mucking out the fields and stables and filling the trailer.

We have a friend, a local farmer, who would come and tow the trailer away every so many weeks to add it to his large muck pile. Pete

raises grass fed beef so our muck that he spread on his fields helped to grow food for those who eat beef.

Last year Alan inherited an old tractor which he rebuilt and restored over the first lockdown so now joy of joys he can empty the muck trailer without having to wait for our busy farmer friend to fit us in. The muck still goes to the same farmer but Alan takes the trailer with his newly restored tractor. Oh how he loves this as he can hold up all the traffic as he trundles along.

The point is we can empty more often and I just love to see an empty trailer and I get rather excited at the thought, hence my Christmas request.



Some Good Quality Barley Straw.

My donkeys love barley straw, they would love hay but that is a real treat so barley straw it is. Getting hold of this can prove quite difficult even though we live in an arable farming area. The farmer down the road has tons of the stuff but this all goes to the power stations.

Our local guy who supplies the horses' hay also brings the donkeys' straw but he only has limited amounts as we cannot store more than two large round bales at a time and if the farmer is saving it for us it has to be stored undercover. This sometimes can be a problem.



We have never actually run out but sometimes it is a worry and in the past we have resorted to advertising on face book or asking friends who have farmer friends if they know anybody who has good quality straw.

In the past our search has taken us to some strange out of the way places and we have met some very interesting individuals .

So that is why I would love a ready supply of good quality Barley Straw, my third Christmas wish.

Merry Christmas from Sue, Alan, the donkeys, the horses and of course Coco the dog!



We love Coco!! [SB]



From your Secretary . . .

Greetings everyone! Just wanted to thank you so very much for all your wonderful contributions to our Corona Bulletins and *Asspire* over the past year. It has been great to keep in touch, particularly in these challenging times.

Thank you for continuing to support the Donkey Breed Society through your membership, this is much appreciated, and it is so good to know that some of our subs this year, are supporting several smaller sanctuaries as they struggle to meet feed bills and so on, without revenue from visitors.

I wish you and your families and friends, your donkeys and other animals, a very happy festive season and a particularly positive and happy new year. Sarah xx

Sarah Booth northerndonks@gmail.com

Allison goes Wild with Wicker!

Last year a chum from Wales suggested that my boys needed willow panniers. Why she thought this remains a mystery, although there is a clue in the fact that she had made a woven willow stag as a Christmas decoration to be elegantly positioned in her garden over the festive season. Emails flew back and forth over design, size and dates as she lined up a one-day course with her tutor/mentor. A date in mid-March 2020 was agreed upon; rail tickets purchased, donkeys care in my absence sorted, even meals made for my husband to last the three nights I'd be away. Well, of course that never happened.



In August we dared to rebook the day-long course, but I elected to drive rather than risk public transport.



What fun we had with our expert. Amazingly two matching panniers were completed; they are handsome (and smell wonderful to boot). Home I sped thrilled with our handiwork, but then began the epic saga of finding a way to use them with the boys. After many online searches and chats with harness makers two local, retired harness makers agreed to help.

I had envisaged a thick saddle pad to which sturdy fastenings could be added, possibly with leather reinforcement, but hey who am I to know what could work? A full leather job was the only solution it seems. The idea is based on the saddles used to bring deer off

the hill in the Highlands - I dislike these crossed wooden klibber things - so lots of measuring, trial fittings and, of course, money later the whole thing works.

Dougal, the daftie, after being brushed and brushed for the grand handover went out and rolled in the mud. He wasn't allowed a fitting of the beautiful new rig, needless to say.

Tell me I'm mad: I won't argue. This rig must be the most expensive thing I've procured for these boys - since the saddle came it has rained and rained and I won't get it wet (yet). There are plans to use it for delivering Christmas cards around the neighbourhood then returning home with the panniers full of berry-laden holly, but we'll wait and see if that is possible!



The panniers were designed and we were instructed in their execution by Clyde of Wild Wicker www.wildwicker.com and the saddle by Eskdale Harness who have a Facebook page.

Allison Roberts.

[Fascinating. Thank you. SB]



From your Treasurer . . .

Sarah Pennell Treasurer Northern Region



Hello to all, and hope that you are keeping well.

Thank you to all those who bought the purple poppies earlier in the year, I still have a few if anyone is still wanting one.

It has been a quiet year as far as finances go, with no shows or events, so I am really looking forward to 2021, when hopefully we can meet up again and have some fun.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas, Sarah, Dan and Cole

thepennells@btinternet.com



Sarah's gorgeous boys, Dan and Cole



Taking the Reins: Reflections of a New Rider

Until very recently, my experience of riding was a trip to Blackpool as a child, when my aunt took my sister and I to see the famous donkeys at work, leading youngsters along the seafront before we were granted a turn ourselves. I didn't have the opportunity to learn, growing up, however in the past few months all that has changed, as thanks to Olwen I've been able to pursue this ambition with the ever-obliging Romance, who I steer round the arena or up Gorsey Brow, remembering to keep my heels down and using my legs to guide her turns. It's only now I'm sat in the saddle that I realise what a skill it is to master; seasoned riders make it look so easy! While others more familiar with horses may find a donkey causes a downhill





sensation due to their low withers and tall hips, I can't say I've noticed this myself. It's thrilling to be able to engage with these animals in a new and harmonious way, and much like driving, is an art which requires time and patience to hone. Aspiring aficionado that I am, I plan on joining the Pleasure Riding Scheme in the very near future, to make the most of this fantastic exercise.

Wishing Merry Christmases and Happy New Years to all,

Hannah Dickinson

Hannah thank you, that's so good to hear, do keep us up to date and let us know how things progress in the future. All the very best. SB.

My Journey with donkeys

By Elizabeth Ross

My first encounter with donkeys began at the age of 11 with our school donkey, Paddy, who had arrived a few years earlier with a former head mistress, possibly from Ireland. We never knew how old Paddy was but he was not in his first flush of youth. He led quite a sedate way of life enjoying the summer months in the field in the company of some cattle or sheep and always came to us when we played in the field except when playing rounders in case he got in the way of the ball. During the winter he lived in a "pigsty" – we ensured it was tidy at all times! He was small enough to go through the doorway and was warm and cosy inside. There was no door so he was able to step out into his own personal courtyard on nice days.



Paddy

My next encounter was with Daisy May who my aunt had bought at Beeston auctions. She was a lovely chocolate coloured donkey with white markings and lived in a field at the farm with my horse and several other brood mares and show ponies. My aunt always maintained that if you kept a donkey your horses would never leave home. Not sure if that is true but a good excuse to keep a pet. Don and I started to walk Daisy May, initially up the cart track towards the pub - but not inside! and gradually progressed to walking around the village with the donkey and the dog in tow. I think we became quite a common sight and realised that we were getting this little donkey, and ourselves quite fit. My aunt suggested that should enter her in the

showing donkey section at Woolton Show on August Bank Holiday 1974. Daisy May travelled along with 2 show ponies, put her best foot forward on the day came home with some rosettes to our surprise.

It was always at the back of my mind that one day I would love to have a little donkey like Daisy May of my own. This opportunity came many years later when sadly I lost my little mare, Penny, a Welsh cob/ TB that I had bred 30 years earlier. She was very much part of the family living at home and when "empty-stable syndrome" kicked in we decided to get a donkey. In 2012 we acquired Megan, another little brown donkey with white markings, who was only 2 years old at the time. To our great surprise, 5 months later, she presented us with a lovely little coloured foal, Jacob. They



Daisy May 1974



are very much part of the family and are company for my current horse, Inca, a 22yo Irish draught /TB mare who has been with us since she was 5yo and is still lightly ridden.

Since joining the Regional DBS I have been amazed at what we have achieved with our donkeys and the fun we have had along the way. I never dreamt that we would be joining walks, showing, long reining and even driving as well as management training while visiting various parts of our region and meeting so many like-minded people along the way. Our greatest thanks must go to Olwyn and Liz Brown, Pam Moon and everyone involved in making this happen over the last few years. We have had a lot of fun and look

forward to some sort of normality in 2021 to continue our journey with donkeys.



Inca, Jacob and Megan

Poem for Rosie's First Christmas

I love my mummy very much
She's really oh so wise
She cuddles up to me at night
And brays me lullabies
She's taught me all the donkey skills
To keep my coat so neat
To find the best mud patches
In which to roll's so sweet

She shows me where the grass is good

And really nice to eat
How to be especially cute
So I can earn a treat

She tells me Christmas is soon here

When all the church bells ring
And I must practice braying loud
So I can carol sing

It celebrates a night long past

In a stable far away

Where a donkey very much like us

Witnessed a miracle in the hay

And so at every Christmas since

To recall the part we played

In humble stables far and wide

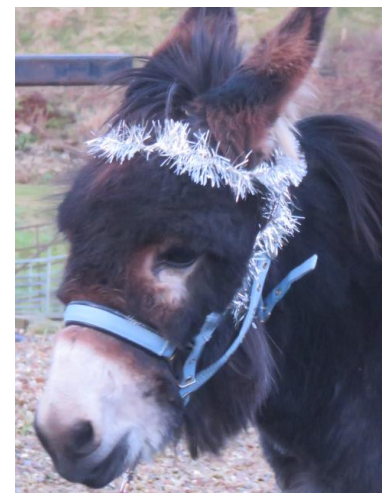
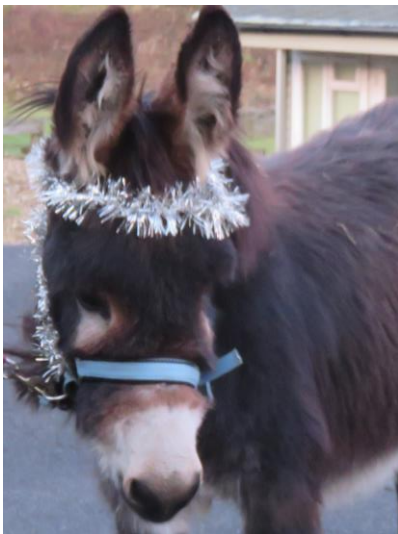
Each donkey has knelt and prayed

Which must be true because I know

My mum is very sage

I hope I'll be as wise as her

When I have reached her age.



Terri Morris

ANOTHER PHOTO GALLERY, SHARING THE DONKEY LOVE . . . and some!



To all our beautiful
long-ears,
HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

XX



Sarah Standing and her gorgeous donks!



And a Very Happy Christmas to all
our other animals too!!

XX

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 – also coordinator for Education Awards taken in our Region.

Area Contacts:

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 – and also all things ADA! - John & Terri Morris

John & Terri: 01274 835520 throstlenest@hotmail.co.uk

Area Rep – Derbyshire – Sarah Hudgins

Sarah: 07971 996817 derbyxracers@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

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.

BOOK REVIEW**The Healthy Donkey by Sarah Fisher and Trudy Affleck**

£20.00 Available from the DBS Store!

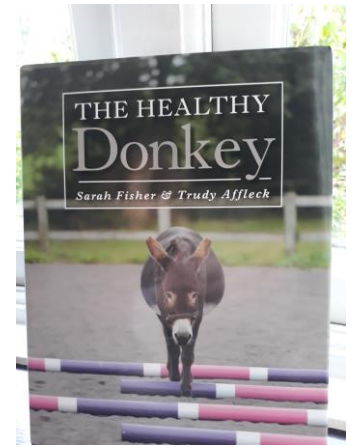
I couldn't wait to receive this as a present, so I splashed out and bought myself a copy to read in the long, dark days of November! As soon as it arrived, I was enthralled. Aside from



all the useful information: the history of the donkey, anatomy, physiology, and conformation, connecting with nervous and novice donkeys, introducing bodywork, it introduces the reader to the 'Tellington TTouch techniques' that I had hitherto not discovered. The latter is a non-invasive system of gentle movements on, and with, the donkey's body, designed to bring about calmness, trust and confidence. Oddly enough, I had been instinctively using some of these with Barney, without knowing of TTouch, so that would appear to underpin its very natural status. It was good to find I was on the right tracks!

Using clear language and an attractive structure, with super photographs, information is easy to access and you can dip in and out of it, and/or come back to any salient points. I would heartily recommend it for newbies, those wishing to extend their knowledge or as an interesting 'refresher'!

Sarah Booth.



The DBS Donkey Store – visit it online! It's for a donkey way of life and not just for Christmas!!

From Christmas cards to everyday cards, clothing from polo-shirts to fleeces and jackets that beat the elements, Hi-Vis that helps to keep you safe and makes you chuckle, a range of books covering all things donkey and some very sweet baby rattles – there really is something for everyone!!



www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk

And finally . . .

A bit of a Christmas Quiz, just for fun!

Is it just me? *Compiled by Allison Roberts*

Do you lug buckets of warm drinking water out to the stable, eschewing the water from the expensively installed stable tap?

Always - score 3
Sometimes – score 2
Never – score 1

Do you feed your donkeys in the morning before you have your breakfast?

Always - score 3
Sometimes – score 2
Never – score 1

Do you warm up their hard feed on the Aga in winter?

Always - score 3
Sometimes – score 2
Never – score 1

Do you tuck your donkeys up last thing at night?

Always - score 3
Sometimes – score 2
Never – score 1

Do you prefer stable housekeeping to home-based housekeeping?

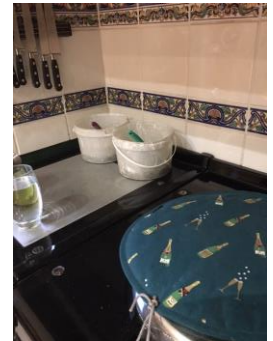
Always - score 3
Sometimes – score 2
Never – score 1

Do you style your muck heap, with evenly-raised outside edges and neatly sloping sides?

Always - score 3
Sometimes – score 2
Never – score 1

Do you go around your paddock picking up windblown straw?

Always - score 3
Sometimes – score 2
Never – score 1



Do you lift the stable mats every day to clear away the tiny bits of bedding that will insist on going under the edges?

Always - score 3

Sometimes – score 2

Never – score 1

Do you read donkey articles twice – the second time to scan photographs to see how other people do things?

Always - score 3

Sometimes – score 2

Never – score 1

Do friends give you donkey-related presents?

Always - score 3

Sometimes – score 2

Never – score 1

Total score

Between 20 – 30

You are an incurable donkey aficionado; you may need another donkey.

Between 11 and 19

What an enviable, balanced life you lead; you need another donkey.

Below 11

You have time in your life for two more donkeys.



Guess the name of the northern donkey!

The following are clues as to the names of Northern donkeys that have featured in past Bulletins or copies of *Asspire*:

- 🐴 Remember the Magic Roundabout? [6]
- 🐴 This donkey shares his first name with Colley Mill's videographer! [5]
- 🐴 Another name for a love story . . . [7]
- 🐴 Shine on . . . [6, 4]
- 🐴 Karen and Tom Burn have one, and so have Sarah and Stuart Booth! [7]
- 🐴 Sue Stead has one and so does Jane Bramwell! [4 or 2,2]
- 🐴 These can make you laugh, a lot (one donkey)! [7]
- 🐴 Porter, composer and lyricist [4]
- 🐴 First bit of cockney rhyming slang for tea [5]
- 🐴 Canine police! [9,5]

Give yourself an extra point if you can name who the donkey lives with (human or fellow equine if humans already mentioned)!!

Spot the northern personality (ies)! [Answers in the New Year Special Bulletin!]

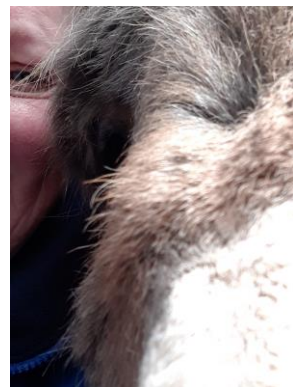
A



B



C



D



E



F



H



G



Happy



Christmas!!