

Never a dull moment in the North!

Report of the Northern Region September 2021

As the Show season began to open in our Region, we had some super-sized shows to get us started, with the The Royal Cheshire and The Great Yorkshire among them! Lots of members also turned out for Bury Show, which was also great fun.

Colin, the Northern Juniors pin-up donkey was in action at Bury, with (right, *clockwise*) Hannah, Izzy and of course Liz! It was also good to see Rueben and Amber at Bury too.

Driving and long-reining have come into the spotlight this year too, with members telling us, in a recent survey, how much they enjoy long-reining and driving their donkeys.



At the beginning of July Northern and National members met at Helen Naden's for a super driving weekend in Cheshire for both donkeys and small ponies. Under the expert advice and guidance of Phillip and Janet Reeves we walked and then attempted to drive a dressage course. Support was differentiated, catering expertly for a range of abilities. Expert or beginner, everyone took away some golden nuggets of great advice. The camaraderie was excellent, so was the barbeque on Saturday night – many thanks to Helen and Steve – and the football wasn't bad either! It was that weekend when we thought it was 'coming home'!! The football might not have done, but the driving certainly did as one thing led to another . . .

Several of us have formed an informal long-reining and driving group at Olwen and Liz's. We have enjoyed Training days, nice picnics and are learning a lot. We would encourage others to get in touch with their Area Reps and ask if something similar could be arranged. Take your enthusiasm and desire to learn to your Area Rep and I'm sure you could be doing all sorts of thing together – so much fun! Driving, long-reining, ADA activities, coffee mornings, whatever!

As can be seen in *Bray Talk* we have also held Training Days for the DBS Bronze Award. These were held at Brown Road (although Liz will always go out to the Areas to run Awards Testing). Eight beautiful Bronze accolades were awarded to: Sarah Booth, Olwen Brown, Hannah Dickinson, Beth Jones, Pam Moon, Sarah Pennell, Alison Sergeant, Graham Sergeant. Well done to all! Now for the Silver Award!! (Clockwise from top: Beth, Liz and Hannah, Sarah Pennell, Graham.)



In July and August, our Treasurer, Sarah Pennell invited members across the Region to take part in a Regional Ramble, either in their very own fields and lanes or by travelling a little further afield, as restrictions allowed. The purpose was to get members and their donkeys or other animals out in the beautiful countryside and celebrating the end of lockdown! The first to take up the challenge were Olwen and Hannah who took to their local lanes with

Colin and Romance. Two lovely accounts of this 'adventurous' ramble and others, will appear in the Autumn edition of *Asspire* (the Region's magazine).

Planned for late August, was a x-Country Trek and Quiz but thanks to some extremely unseasonal weather – the heavens opened for a week! – this was relegated to a Quiz only, given slippery ground. However, there were challenges aplenty during the get together of Northern Region members who fancied themselves as seasoned quizzers!! It was huge fun and much enjoyed by all who attended – Olwen's questions were challenging and brilliantly educational at the same time!

Colley Mill Juniors (now proudly affiliated to the Northern Region) have enjoyed a summer, largely spent outside, and when they haven't been catching up with relatives that they haven't seen for ages, in far flung places, then they have popped up to spend time with Barney, Freddie and Missy. Some received their, 'I know why Donkeys are so Awesome' Awards!! CMJs had a barbeque in July and welcomed new visitors. They are very much looking forward to their Autumn programme of events and fundraising and to visiting, should the Sanctuary open again soon, the donkeys that they sponsor in Manchester, Henry and Tiny Tim.

Lots of varied events continue to take place throughout our Region. In Derbyshire for example, and I know that there are many other members from across the Region doing similar things, there is some super work continuing with Sarah Standing's donkeys and llamas providing therapy for people from care homes with a range of challenges. This is marvellous and we continue to cover such stories in our Bulletins and Magazine.

We are looking forward to Autumn and Winter, knowing that there are still many adventures to be had with our donkeys and with our friends in the Region.



Sarah and Liz.

September, 2021.