



EAR EAR – OCTOBER 2021

The newsletter of the Eastern Region of the Donkey Breed Society

Hello! I do hope this newsletter finds you well. As the season changes to autumn and we begin to reflect on the year, although not quite back to normal. We did manage to do quite a lot in the east! The Eastern Region has had a fairly busy summer with events including training days in both Hertfordshire and Suffolk as well as a long rein/drive event earlier in the season in Cambridgeshire. These events were amazingly well supported by members from across our large region as well as by those travelling across regional borders to come and join in! It's been so lovely to see some familiar faces as well as many new ones and people really enjoying getting back out with their donkeys.

The Eastern region had a great day out at the Gransden Show in Cambridgeshire with many members of the public enquiring about donkeys and what we do with them, as well as many non-members telling us about their donkeys and what they get up to. We put on a display in the main ring with members from across our region (and others) demonstrating, long reining, driving, pack work including a variety of standard as well as miniature donkeys.

Unfortunately The Eastern Region Autumn Donkey Show (ERADS) was sadly cancelled due to the fuel crisis and a dodgy weather forecast. But this will hopefully go ahead next year! Another sad cancellation is our Regional Christmas lunch. There is just too much uncertainty to make booking viable as no-one is sure where will be open and whether the caterers will be able to operate. The final thing cancelled, which we have only just heard about, is the London New Year's Day Parade. This is always a great day out, but sadly not in 2022. You will see a piece in Bray Talk asking for people to express interest, but please now ignore it (but mark the date for 2023!).

I feel that there is a large portion of our eastern membership who are new to donkeys and the society and are coming forward to our training days to "meet other owners" just as much as to learn what and how to do things with their donkeys. I hope to address this by organising and helping other members facilitate informal and purely social events in the coming months and into 2022, with the aim of connecting owners and making a space to "talk donkey" without the structure of a training day.

Tom Bysouth (Regional Delegate to Council)

Walking challenge 2021

forget to get your 'claims to fame' into Annette (details in the 'contacts' list at the end of this newsletter. All you have to do is just take a donkey for a walk, and clock up the miles! Keep a record of your walks and the mileage covered and let Annette know when you manage 25 miles, then 50, then 100. A well-deserved rosette can be yours if you just let Anette know by 12th November.

War Horse Memorial

As we've mentioned before, the DBS is now in partnership with the War Horse Memorial organisation (the purple poppy people). You can help by knitting a purple poppy. Poppy knitting patterns can be obtained from the Society Secretary Carol Morse 01732 864414 dbsecretary@donkeybreedsociety.co.uk Carol will give details on where completed poppies must be sent in order that they can be sold for War Horse (and thereby other animal charity) funds. If you'd like an enamel poppy, we do have some available at a suggested donation of £2, We hoped we'd be getting together a bit more than we are now planning to, but if you fancy a poppy, let Carole know and we'll see if we can get one (or more) to you.



Second Thursday of every month

Informal donkey get-together at Annette's nr Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

These continue as often as restrictions have permitted. They are great fun as well as being an opportunity to train your donkeys – or yourself if you are new to donkeys, or thinking of getting some, and would like hands on experience. The Venue – Gate & West Farm, Lawshall, Bury St. Edmunds. IP29 4PT. Please contact Annette to learn more. These are very social events and always thoroughly enjoyed.

Opposite – Halloween fun with Jude Pearce's minis.



Training days in the Bucks Area

2 very successful training and social days were held in June and August, with people travelling from far and wide to come and join in, with or without donkeys. At the first we had separate groups covering body condition scoring (too fat / too thin), agility with simple things you'd have at home, harness fitting, have a go at long –reining and we all had fun working out how to fit the pack saddle someone brought along. There was lots of time for social chat too.



At the second event we had a go at agility with 2 gorgeous minis who had come up from Kent to enjoy some training. We also had a demo on fitting fly rugs, everyone had a go at long-reining and then a short drive round in the arena (I hasten to add the arena was a very safe place and this was using a very well trained donkey). I think it's fair to say several people got the bug!

Fab Farrier Award

Thank you everyone so far that has sent nominations of their Fab Farriers, farriers who have been doing great work caring for donkeys' feet. If you haven't yet nominated your farrier and think they are worthy of this award please consider nominating them. Farriers must have a distinct knowledge of donkey farriery, be well informed on all things donkey, know the differences between donkeys and other equines and go the extra mile for our long eared equines. Successful applicants will receive a certificate as well as being featured in the British Farrier & Blacksmiths Association magazine, 'The Forge'.

This is a great opportunity, not only to thank those farriers who go the extra mile for donkey feet, but also to increase the profile of donkey feet, and the farriers who really care for them, amongst the professional farriery body for the UK – a real 'win win'!

To nominate your farrier contact Annette Staveley 01284 830240 astaveley1@hotmail.com

Didn't we have a lovely time, when several of us turned up at Reach, near Newmarket, for a walk / long-rein and drive on 27th June. The weather was kind and the whole day was so well organized! A nice large concrete parking area, and someone to keep an eye on the trailers and lorries as we were out and about. A very well marshalled route of quiet roads and fenland tracks. We ended on the village green with soft drinks and a few nibbles and lots of local villagers came to meet us – well, when I say 'us' I mean the donkeys, all of whom behaved impeccably. Huge thanks to Joss Goodchild for arranging the day and it was fantastic to see some new faces bringing their donkeys out for the first time.



Reach, Newmarket, Cambs Sunday **Walk / ride / long-rein / drive**

We hope to be able to have another similar day before the end of Spring if we can, dependent on weather and the cattle being taken off the National Trust land. If you're interested in joining in – walk, ride, long-rein or drive - please get in touch with Joss as this is likely to be a 'last minute' thing, once the weather forecast for any proposed weekend is known

Reach Village, Cambridgeshire. Post code CB25 0JF

Organiser: Joss Goodchild. Tel. 07788 810090.

Email: Jossbmg@icloud.com



New Junior Club

Annette is planning on starting a club, especially for Juniors, at Gate & West Farm, Lawshall nr Bury St Edmunds. Do you have a child or grandchild, or know of any children (or their parents!) who may be interested? Possibly just during school holidays. Get in touch with Annette to find out more and see what would work for all involved. It's a great chance for children to have fun with donkeys and learn at the same time (no need to own a donkey as Annette has plenty! ☺). Contact details at the end of this newsletter.

Gransden, Cambs Show Stand & Display

On Saturday 25th September we made our now annual trip to Gransden Agricultural Show, near Sandy in Bedfordshire. It is a lovely little show with cattle and sheep and goats, plus vintage tractors, horses and local trade stands. The best bit of all (of course!) is the Donkey Breed Show pens and Society stand where members of the public can come and see some of the donkeys, ask questions and buy Society Christmas cards, or make a donation for a purple poppy. Every year we get more and more visitors, and we are certainly fulfilling our charitable aims by answering questions on welfare and training as well as opening some eyes as to what can be enjoyed with donkeys.

With many thanks to members, especially Linda Swain who took the majority of the photographs for us.



As well as the stand and pens, we also do a short display in the main ring, with many others donkeys arriving to take part. We had some new faces this year which is wonderful to see. With Jude Pearce and her minis, Heli and Stuart from Kent with their minis too and Tom and Debbie McKay driving their pair. Our stalwarts of John and Diana Dunstan, plus Annette Staveley, and Carole Travell with members Rob Sims and Tom Bysouth were also there and put on a grand display of led inhand, standards and minis, long reined, driven and donkeys carrying packs. All took it in their stride, from the long-timers to the babies – nothing fazed them including the large and VERY noisy vintage tractors! We have been thanked by the organisers and invited back for next year so please, if you fancy a day out, can help man the stand (answer questions, sell cards or just let others have a ‘loo break’), or would like to take part, with or without your own donkeys, then pop the date in our diary NOW. Saturday 24th September 2022.



Christmas Cards

Have you bought your Christmas cards yet? Would you like some 100% recyclable (no plastic used) cards, with a wonderful festive donkey scene, that also help with Society funds? If so, you can purchase these cards either online via the website (or ring Carol Morse in the office on 01732 864414) for a price of £4.50 per pack of 10, or 5 for £18, including postage. Or, if we can arrange for you to collect from a committee member, they are £4 a pack, 5 for £16 (no postage included). Contact Carole Travell caroletravell@btinternet 07889 162715 to see if we can sort out collection



Getting to know you – this time it's Diana Dunstan



How long have you been involved with donkeys and how did you get started? - A very dear family friend, Fred Pearson, bought a field and asked me how to find some donkeys to put in it. I jokingly suggested looking in the yellow pages, not really expecting anything.... but there under Donkey Keepers and Breeders, was the Sandon Saddlery Donkey Stud. We booked a visit and very quickly two grey mares arrived along with lots of advice from the stud manager, Joan Howard - Carter. Inevitably the mares went back to stud in due course and as a result produced two beautiful foals, one brown, one grey. We caught the showing bug and went to many shows. I bought the brown foal in the autumn. Apsley Minstrel and I did all kinds of things, and he was wonderful and frustrating by turns. He had a very overdeveloped sense of humour, and delighted in making his handler/rider look foolish. His favourite pastime was bringing in the harvested hay, and he was expert at stopping in the right place for unloading. So I first became involved with donkeys in 1977, and here I am still, a DBS member since 1979. How many do you have, and what do you do with them? - At the moment I have twelve, and they do all sorts of things! Several take part in the ADA scheme, and do nativities, Palm Sunday parades, school visits, and are ridden or driven. But probably my biggest interest is the show ring. The two oldest donkeys who are Solace aged 30 and Amos aged 31 are retired and live a pampered life in a small paddock at the back of the house, where I can keep an eye on them!

What has been your best moment (or several moments) with your donkeys? - That's a difficult one! I have been very fortunate to have the opportunity to drive Amos on three separate occasions in the main arena at Burghley Horse Trials, as part of the DBS donkey driving display. I have also driven him (in pouring rain) down the Mall after one of many appearances in the London New Years Day Parade. But I think that the best moments have been seeing four of my grandchildren winning the Junior Rider Championship at the DBS Supreme Championship Shows, mostly riding Amos, but one rode our coloured donkey, Cody. Two more granddaughters are waiting in the wings, so who knows!!!

Do you have other pets?- I have a piebald cob called Soloman, who is the gentlest horse I have ever known (and he loves the donkeys). We have geese and chickens too. But the head of the four legged family is definitely our seventeen year old Siamese cat Tomasina, who rules her subjects with a rod of iron, and keeps us all on our toes.

You – family etc? - My long suffering husband John, who on the quiet is very fond of our long eared family, especially Tansy. He specializes in creating eccentric looking muck heaps helter skelters being the best. We have three children, who have all been junior members in the past, and six grandchildren, four of whom have been juniors too. (The youngest is two years old and is already a dab hand at mucking out!)

What else do you do in the wider DBS? - I am on the Shows and Judges committee, and am Shows Administrator. I send out the DBS rosettes to the show secretaries, and collect all the results sheets which are used to calculate the winners of the various DBS showing awards. I am also on the Education and Youth Committee.

Top tip for donkey owners (or best advice you were ever given)? - Have patience with a donkey. Take your time to introduce new activities and tack and be prepared to do things little and often. Once you have a donkey's trust, they will do anything for you.

Any big plan for next year?- Fingers firmly crossed..... get out to some shows!!

PRECIOUS GIFT. Joss Goodchild

I now know that twelve months in the life of an (unexpected) donkey foal flies by in the blink of an eye. Peppercorn gave birth to Gift on 5 July 2020 with minimal fuss, despite being only a 3 y.o. herself. The shock of finding our new donkey was actually in foal paled when we compared it to the sense of responsibility we felt as a bundle of legs, ears and damp hair slithered onto the stable straw.

Whilst Peppercorn and Gift braved the big new world, settled into their surroundings and calmly accepted the attention of visitors we walked around in a daze. With help and advice (Carole) we learnt about foal slips, new, safer stable routines (providing water buckets without handles, feed buckets for sharing, extra care with bedding implements), installed a camera to check on both (a hundred times a day) and barricaded even the slimmest gaps in field fencing. We took infinite photos and pontificated about Gift's first steps on a lead rope.

These days we hold forth about the steps she takes to pass a bus in the village, or a lorry or two dogs on a lead. Or stand under an umbrella or weave around cones or simply edge up to us at every possible opportunity for a cuddle♥





Who's Who

– please make contact if you need any help or have any ideas or suggestions.

Regional Chairman Tom Bysouth Thomas_Bysouth@hotmail.com 07596 167314

Regional delegate to National Council Tom Bysouth Thomas_Bysouth@hotmail.com 07596 167314

Eastern Treasurer David Poole c/o Carole

Eastern Secretary Carole Travell See below

Committee member Jane Brind janebrind@gmail.com

Joss Goodchild jossbmg@icloud.com or 07788 810090

Area Reps (all committee members)

Bedfordshire: Diana Dunstan, 01462 713796 dianadunstan@yahoo.co.uk

Bucks – Clare Bysouth 01442 825879 clarefrances33@gmail.com

Cambridgeshire: Liz Wright, 01354 741538 ewright757@btinternet.com

Essex: West - Carole Travell, 07889 162715 caroletravell@btinternet.com, East Jane Brind
janebrind@gmail.com

Hertfordshire Maggie Taylor 01582 768746 Maggie.taylor3@hotmail.co.uk

Lincs / Leics – Chris Voight silvetouch@btinternet.com 01406540874 / 07515 632472

Northants: Sarah Hemmings, 01327 341507 hemmule@aol.com

Suffolk/Norfolk: Annette Staveley, 01284 830240 astaveley1@hotmail.com



Formal notice of AGM 2022

The Annual General Meeting of the Eastern Region of the Donkey Breed Society will be held at 10:30 am on Sunday 20th February, in the reception area of the Holiday Inn, Lakeview, Bridge Road, Impington, Cambs CB24 9PH (2 mins from junction 32 of A14). This will be followed by a meeting of the Regional Committee.

If you have any matters you would like discussed, or wish to make your apologies, or need further details, please contact the Secretary, Carole Travell.

caroletravell@btinternet.com 07889 162715

