

## Donkey Breed Society

### Report from the Northern Region 2021

It is gratifying to note that the Northern Region has grown in membership, developed new projects, and formed new friendships despite the challenges that we have all faced over the last 18 months. Members have rallied round to support others, at times ventured online and taken part in 'shows' and challenges organised across the UK. Gradually we have been able to meet up, although there is understandable caution. We have however strived keep people in touch with one another and provided opportunities for a smile. Some of us have even managed to participate in real shows as these gathered momentum from early Summer. To have held our Northern Region Show in September, was something we didn't think would happen and when it did, we were incredibly pleased.

#### Ongoing Projects:

**A Fab Farrier's Award** – we are delighted to report that this scheme, that originated in the Northern Region, has now been extended throughout the DBS in the UK. We have six farriers in our own region that have been presented with the Award, in recognition of their care of our donkeys. Fab Farriers must meet stringent criteria. They are nominated by a grateful donkey owner/guardian. All successful farriers are congratulated and profiled in the BFBA trade magazine, *Forge*. It is hoped that future farriers receiving the Award will let non-DBS clients know about the DBS in the Northern Region, through the flyers that will be given to them, along with their certificates.

**War Horse Memorial Organisation** – many members in the Region have supported our National partnership with the War Horse Memorial Organisation. We have promoted the purple poppy campaign by acquiring knitted and enamel badges and some of our members took part in the Walk for War Horse.

**Online presence** – Facebook has been a great source of information and camaraderie for some of our members. The Northern Region has a Facebook page and members frequently share information and news.

#### Training Days and Social Events

Several of us have formed an informal long-reining and driving group at Olwen and Liz's. We have enjoyed Training days, picnics and are learning a lot. We encourage other members to get in touch with their Area Reps and ask if something could be arranged in their area. Enthusiasm and a desire to learn is strong within the Region. Driving, long-reining, ADA activities, coffee mornings, and so much more are enjoyed by many!

**Regional Ramble** 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!



## Awards

**Bronze Awards** 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.)



**Silver Award** Huge congratulations to student member Georgia Davey who attained her Silver Award and her First Aid Award.

**ADA & PRAS** Many of our members attained their ADAs this year and we are extremely proud of them for keeping the ADA flag flying during what have been difficult times.

Junior member Amber Taylor (5) completed her first PRA in the Spring and has now also completed her 50 hours too, on her donkey Missy. They have had a great year getting to know each other now the lockdowns have lifted. Izzy Brewis (4) has just completed her first PRA. Hannah Dickinson is also taking part in the PRA scheme.

**Special Northern Award for a Northern Region member who does something extra special in the Region** This year we launched a special Northern Region Award. Our first recipient was a member of the affiliated Junior Group who had raised £155.00 for the Society over the Christmas period. We felt this was a wonderful thing to do and that Jasmine was a very worthy winner of this new Award. Our picture shows Jasmine presenting the money raised to Treasurer, Sarah Pennell; she is holding her Northern Award rosette, presented by Liz Brown, Chair.



**Juniors** Our juniors range from age 4 upwards and have been active across the Region this year, showing, driving, activity days and social events.

Colley Mill Juniors in Cheshire affiliated to the DBS and Liz, Olwen, Sarah P and Colin (!) joined them for an affiliation party!



**Asspire and Bulletins** May we take this opportunity to say an extremely big thank you to anyone who has ever been in the mag., or the Bulletins. The latter were set up to try and help people to keep in touch and feel cheery during the lockdowns and I know from the lovely feedback received that some people have really appreciated them. They are 'by members, for members' and a lovely record of the donkeys and humans in our Region and the activities they enjoy. I hope that *Asspire* will see pages of great pictures of treks, picnics, training days and lots of other events in the year to come – not quite there yet, but I am sure we soon will be.



**Shows, Driving and Long reining** 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 Liz (left) and Hannah (above).



Little Rosie, who kept us all entertained during lockdown as we watched her grow, also did very well at Penistone Show; much to the delight of her proud humans Terri and John Morris!

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. The full results of the questionnaire will be published at the Region's AGM.

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.

And so it has been, unexpectedly perhaps, a busy year. We still have some more events to follow before the year is out. We are however pleased to report that the Region can only further its commitment to the DBS in 2022, becoming even more involved in a range of events and activities and flagging up our passion for donkeys at every possible opportunity.

Liz Brown, Chair

Sarah Booth, Secretary

September, 2021.