

# ASSPIRE!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN REGION OF THE  
DONKEY BREED SOCIETY



DBS  
Northern Region . . .

it's the Spring Edition!

Dear All,

It's the spring equinox today! Somehow it seems the arrival of spring is temptingly close – daffodils are daring to dance in the gentle breeze that has replaced the biting east winds that have plagued us all winter long although there is still that daily dose of rain yet again today. On the upside I thrilled to hear the larks this morning, causing me to pause my paddock duties and taste the joyfulness they offered.

Anne of Green Gables once said “..... there will always be more springs.” And Charlotte Bronte (who would have been in our region after all – did she own donkeys, I wonder) wrote this in Jane Eyre “Spring drew on ... and a greenness grew over those brown beds, which freshening daily, suggested the thought that Hope traversed them at night, and left each morning brighter traces of her steps.”

We can see in this bumper edition of *Asspire* that spring seems to have infected us already with heaps to read and enjoy as well as the promise of happy donkey-centred activities to enjoy and share – I hope to see you at some of these events, but now I'm off to the paddock to check if Charlotte Bronte's greenness is growing over the paddock yet.....

Best regards,

Allison. (Allison Roberts, Chair & Regional Delegate, DBS Northern Region)

Welcome to all our new and returning members this Spring!

## Don't sit on your laurels! Begin the Chair's Challenge this Easter!

The Olympics in Paris this summer are but a few months away. Competitors are intensifying their preparations. Spectators are getting excited at the prospect of athletes pushing themselves to the limit and beyond. So, let's take a leaf out of their book and set our donkeys challenges of an Olympian nature.



*Missy standing on a feed sack!*

So, this challenge is in two parts. The first part is the preparation phase which starts over the Easter period, from the **28<sup>th</sup> March – 14<sup>th</sup> April**. In this phase you need to select one discipline for your donkey that they've never done before. Then start them off on their preparation phase – introduce them to the new skill that they will have to master and start them on the journey to a medal – or in our case a rosette! (My boys have never done agility in the menage, as I've always preferred roaming the fells with them, so I'll set them off to practice a few activities like jumping, trotting over poles, bending through cones or something like that – there are lots and lots of possibilities). You can choose any activity so long as it'll be new to the competitor donkeys.

The second phase will be in the summer during the Paris Olympics - **26 July and 11 August between the opening and closing ceremonies** - when you will record their ultimate achievements.

So over Easter choose your Olympian challenge, tell us about it by emailing [northerndonks@gmail.com](mailto:northerndonks@gmail.com) and send pictures of introducing the challenge to your donkey(s) together with a few words describing the challenge and their first reactions.

After 11 August send in evidence of their achievements. The awards ceremony will take place at the Northern Region's Autumn Show and if you're unable to attend we'll send your winner's rosette by post.



*Stand!*

### Ready, steady, GO!



*Training your donkey to do their own poo picking? Wowza! Can Harvey do it yet Pam?*

## In the News this Spring

### Shows update . . .

**A FUN SHOW for EVERYONE!**

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April**

**Abram Hall Riding Centre WN2 5XA – Schedule attached!**



An exciting handy donkey course and lots of fun classes with the emphasis on fun and trying out something that you and your donkeys might not have experienced before! **A Fun Show** – a show with a difference!

**Our Northern Region Show will take place on: Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May**

**Schedule and entry form attached! The countdown begins to getting your entries in!!! Get on to Pam NOW!!**

**Entries close 12<sup>th</sup> May.**

**Schedules from/entries to:** Pam Moon, 07842 535993 email: [pam.moon@talktalk.net](mailto:pam.moon@talktalk.net)

### Northern Events Calendar April – September 2024

Also in with the *Asspire* and Northern Spring Show Schedule bundle you will find the Northern Events Calendar – enjoy and please support all these brilliant small shows that have donkey classes. Come along as a spectator – we would love to see you and don't forget to evidence your picnics throughout the year to be in with a chance to win the Picnic Challenge! (See back pages!)

### Exhibition update . . .

**Introducing the 'Richmond Poppies'**

**From April 2024 – Dec., 2024 (inc)**

Having been gifted to us by a team of talented crafters from Richmond, we decided to curate a display and take this beautiful creation on 'tour' to raise awareness of the important sentiments behind IWAD, and the support that it is given by the Donkey Breed Society and the War Horse Memorial Organisation. Discover more in this and future editions of *Asspire*.

The Poppies will be visiting various Regimental museums across the Region and the Poynton Show as a one-off special appearance:

April – May	York Army Museum, 3 Tower Street, York YO1 9SB
June – July	Cumbria's Museum of Military Life, The Castle, Carlisle OA3 8UR
August 24th	Poynton Show, Poynton Show Ground, South Park Drive, Poynton SK12 1BS
October – December (inc)	The Cheshire Military Museum, The Castle, Grosvenor Street, Chester CH1 2DN

Further information: Sarah Booth, [iwa.donkeys24@gmail.com](mailto:iwa.donkeys24@gmail.com).

## It's Colin's Column!!



*There are lots of purple poppies in this magazine. This is Amelia and me learning about Purple Poppies last November.*

Dear Juniors,

I'm sure you are all looking forwards to nicer weather so that you can have fun with your donkey friends.

Will any of you be taking part in any Easter activities? Please write and tell me about them if you have. I am going to Church on Palm Sunday and to an Easter Egg Hunt on Good Friday, I hope I will find some.

I've had a sore foot but it is better now. It was called a foot abscess and was very sore. A foot abscess starts as a tiny, tiny hole in the sole (bottom) of the hoof which lets nasty bacteria (germs) in. It must be nice and cosy for them in there because they multiply and cause pain.

I held up my poorly hoof so that Olwen would notice it. She told Liz and Liz put a poultice on my foot. The poultice was a piece of padding with a medicine in it which pulled the nasty stuff out of my hoof. It was held in place by a BABY'S NAPPY, imagine that! Liz (she is a VET and I don't like her) told me that a tiny baby's nappy was the same size as my foot. I was insulted, I didn't think my foot was like a baby's bottom!

I had to have the poultice changed every day. First of all, I had to put my foot in hot water to clean it, that wasn't too bad, the poultice was put on, then the nappy. It was all covered with black tape to keep it dry.

The bit I didn't like was the first time it was done because Liz had to find the tiny hole with her hoof knife, I was very naughty and kept snatching my leg away from her. It's no use arguing with Liz, she is a VET and said it was for my own good. Liz was right, after treatment my hoof got better, I was very pleased.

Do you know who a Farrier is, another name is a Blacksmith? It's a person who shoes and trims hooves. Darren, our farrier had a look at my poorly hoof and said I didn't walk properly on it, I don't put my feet down flat. I was surprised. I like Darren, I behave for him but not always for Liz because she is a VET, but I quite like her when she feeds me – FOOD!

I hope to meet some of you at the FUN SHOW in April, I'm looking forwards to it.

Love,

Colin X

*Darren visits us all at Brown Road Farm, he's so good and calm that some of us fall asleep!*



## The Diary of Marion & Heidi (age 2 ½)

We continue a new series in which much-respected judge, Graham Steeden writes of his blossoming friendship with a very special donkey, Marion, and Heidi (age two and a half!). In this extract, it's Autumn . . .

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> session was much more productive than the previous ones. The weather was fine, the blackberries were ripe in the hedgerows and Heidi was eager to set out for a ride on Marion. We chose to go towards the parish church. Heidi was less shy today and Marion appeared keen to be tacked up and on her way. Heidi soon spotted the enormous ripe blackberries which gran and I picked for her (and ourselves). These regular halts tested Marion's obedience, "stand Marion . . . walk on Marion", which she passed with flying colours.



*Marvellous Marion*

Heidi's confidence had certainly increased and she decided to take her feet out of her boots (which were still left in the stirrups), then placed her stockinged feet over the front of the saddle, looking at me out of the corner of her eyes. So, gran and I explained Health and Safety rules to Heidi as we carried out a risk assessment for both child and donkey. Heidi reluctantly put her feet back in her boots in the stirrups. With the aid of more blackberries, we continued our ride along the lanes. When we passed by the church and turned back towards the farm Marion started really walking out, but still stopped when requested, "stand Marion".

Back at the farm Marion was untacked, lightly brushed, then rewarded by Heidi before being turned out in the meadow with her friend Poppy. Today had been excellent for us all.

*Find out what Heidi did next, in the Summer edition of Asspire!*

## We want to know more in '24!

### A Message to Junior and Student Members . . .

We would like to know more about your donkey activities this Spring and Summer! Whatever your age, what have you been doing? You could be writing about donkeys, photographing them, doing some research, drawing them, visiting them, showing, long-reining – mucking out! Whatever you've been doing we want to hear about it for a 'Junior and Student Members' Special in Autumn/Winter 2024'.

All published submissions will receive a lovely rosette! Send your news to Sarah Booth at [northerndonks@gmail.com](mailto:northerndonks@gmail.com) by the middle of September.

# International War Animal Day

## Donkeys pay their respects on International War Animal Day



Booboo

On Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February at 11.00 am donkeys and their humans belonging to the Donkey Breed Society, paused to honour *all* animals involved in theatres of war around the globe, past and present.

At Jimmy the Donkey's memorial in the Park in Peterborough donkeys, members of the Eastern Region of the Donkey Breed Society and friends, came together for this important act of commemoration. Other organised events included blessings for donkeys and ex-racehorses on Cumbrian farms that had sent horses to war in WW1 from a Bishop in Bewcastle, Cumbria, a visit to Leyland Cenotaph, Lancashire, where Pam Moon and Carys Aspey took a picture of Pam's great grandad and his horse Tom, a gathering of DBS members for lunch in the Southern Region, a further gathering in Northern Ireland and a walk with donkeys in Castlewellan Park and children in Cheshire 'planting' memorial

crosses in remembrance, to name but a few. In addition, various crafting activities took place, along with gentle moments of reflection in yards and fields across the country.



Gill and Holly from Hope Valley Saddlery, Somerford Park, Cheshire.



Becca, Seb, Freddie, Molly and Amber off to take part in their commemoration.

## A Special Report from Top Student Carys!

### **International War Animal Day - 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 - by Carys Aspey**

On Saturday it was International War Animal Day, this day is to remember the important role that animals play (past and present) in wars.

I went with Pam Moon and her family to the Leyland War Memorial with beautiful BooBoo the donkey. Pam is the owner of BooBoo and she has 9 other fantastic donkeys at home.

It was an amazing time and people even stopped to give us donations and to stroke BooBoo. I don't think many people have seen a donkey before and they were even more surprised to see BooBoo outside Tesco!

Thank you Pam for inviting me to such a special donkey day.



*Carys Aspey, DBS Student member.*

*Carys is also a regular reporter on Training Days, for Asspire.*

**Our Northern Region was involved in many ways. We have already heard from Carys about her wonderful visit to the Cenotaph in Leyland and a trip to Tesco, now we hear from our Chair, Allison Roberts . . .**

### **The Donkeys, Horses and The Bishop**

*Allison Roberts.*

All over Britain animal lovers marked the first UK International Animals in War Day on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024; Bewcastle in the remote, rural north east Cumbrian fells was part of that movement.

Not many people know of Bewcastle – if you key the name into Google it suggests you mean Newcastle – it's a hill farming community with residents who recall their grandparents talking of the First World War. We count ourselves fortunate to share this place with Bishop John Richardson, now retired but still very active.



To mark the day Bishop John agreed to come up to our home to give a benediction over our two donkeys, Hamish and Dougal, who stood attentively, aware of how special this was (above).



After this we moved on to another short ceremony, at Murray Holme (left), home to two retired race horses, The Crooked Oak (aka Albert), a 32 year-old veteran, and his stable mate, Lottie's Last (aka Peggy-Ann). Here were gathered a dozen others who had family connections to former soldiers.

Here is Bishop John's very short but moving address and prayer –

*What we are doing here this morning is more than just asking God to bless these much-loved animals which live at Murray Holme - important as they are.*

*For the first time ever we are joining with people from Australia, New Zealand, North America, Canada and France to mark the inauguration of INTERNATIONAL. WAR ANIMAL DAY, a day when officially we remember and say thank you for all those millions of animals which have taken part in wars and conflicts during these last 90 years.*

*Foremost in our minds most likely will be the horses, mules and donkeys which in the First World War were deployed particularly in carrying huge loads of ammunition, medical supplies and rations - often through deep, deep mud. Thousands of them died through sheer exhaustion, others from shell fire or caught up in barbed wire. Michael Morpurgo's story of Joey the War Horse comes to mind, but alongside them countless other animals too. In the desert - not horses and donkeys but camels; and with them dogs and pigeons which carried*

messages, even canaries to detect poisonous gases. Currently in the Ukraine and Gaza dogs are trained to sniff out bombs, booby traps and IEDs.

For all of these we say "Thank you" this morning.

But there is one particular, powerful and special link between all that and this part of our world. For, as some of you will know, it was from tiny rural communities like Bewcastle that soldiers went to the front taking with them their own horses from their own farms. Three in particular went from here with their own horses to join the Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry -

ROBERT ELLIOTT from Stoneknowe and Whittingstown

JAMES TELFORD from Holmehead and

GEORGE EWART from The Bush.

All three soldiers returned home safely. Only one brought his horse home. But we don't know what happened to the other's horses. Enough to remember that before they went to the front, and in happier times those same horses must have worked the fields and fells all around us.

ROBERT STOREY from Noblestown also served with animals when he joined the Veterinary Corps and was awarded a gold watch for his services.

This morning, we remember these animals with pride and gratitude, celebrating them with our purple poppies and purple wreath. And I for one feel privileged to be part of it all. - joining with millions of others the world over - all doing the same.

So, let's now keep a short silence for you to use in your own way, before ending with a PRAYER. Nowhere could I find a suitable one, so I've written one of my own, which I hope you will feel expresses what many of us would perhaps want to say.

So first let's be quiet..... And now to the PRAYER which goes like this

-

"Lord we remember before you today all those millions of animals who have shared in the wars and conflicts of recent years. Thank you for what they did and what they gave - often in pain and the surrendering of their lives. Deepen, we ask, our own respect and friendship for all your creatures whom we delight to think of us as friends - like us, part of your glorious creation.

We ask this in the name of Jesus who so often used animals to illustrate the wonderful stories He so often told.

And may the Blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. AMEN".



As I was preparing events and articles for IWAD, Terri Morris kindly sent me this article that she had written about when she and John visited Melbourne, Australia. I'll let her tell you . . .

## The Story of Simpson's Donkey

During the recent discussions about the Donkey Breed Society's involvement in the International War Animal Day which will be taking place on February 24<sup>th</sup> it was mentioned that Australia is one of the countries that has been observing this tribute to the part animals have played in time of war, and I was reminded of a visit we made to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne on one of our trips to that beautiful country a few years ago. It is a fittingly impressive building and, as we were strolling around the surrounding parkland, we were pleased to see a monument commemorating the role that horses have played in war. However, as our particular interest in equines involves those with slightly larger ears, we were even more delighted when, close by, we suddenly came upon a statue of a donkey looking almost out of place in these solemn surroundings. So, of course, we rushed over to it to read the inscriptions and take photos.

It turned out that this particular statue was in fact the first one to be erected when the park was established and, known simply as The Man with the Donkey, is meant to represent the valour and compassion of the Australian soldier. I believe there are similar statues in various other cities in Australia including the capital, Canberra.

Before coming across this memorial, I knew very little about the story of Simpson and his donkey, but this unexpected discovery prompted me to seek out further information on this inspiring episode from the First World War. One book that I found by an Australian author, Jackie French, called 'The Donkey Who Carried the Wounded' is actually a fictionalised account but does contain notes on the research she did into the subject. It certainly gives one a feel for what it must have been like to be part of that disastrous campaign in Gallipoli in 1915 and is well worth a read if you can get hold of a copy. It also gives the donkey a reasonably happy ending after the hard time he endured, which is pleasing if pure speculation on the author's part.

As with all legends there are several conflicting versions of this one. Simpson, the brave stretcher bearer who came across a donkey and decided to use it to carry wounded men through the hell of the battle field to the dressing station, was not even an Aussie but a Brit named Jack Kirkpatrick – John Simpson was a name he'd enlisted under to conceal his real identity - who had jumped ship in Australia before the war and had made a living in various ways before joining the ANZAC forces as a means of getting back to England with the ultimate aim of fighting in France. And, after he was sadly killed on one of his perilous missions leading his donkey, at least one other man, a New Zealander, took over his work of transporting the wounded in the same way.

Duffy, the donkey, may also have been one of several donkeys used and it is not even certain how he came to be at Gallipoli although some donkeys may have been transported there from Egypt and the Greek island of Lemnos to be used for carrying water. The exact details have become unclear with the passage of time.

However, what is indisputably true is that both donkeys and mules went through that awful campaign, faithfully doing the bidding of their human handlers and enduring the appalling and terrifying conditions alongside the troops, and we should never forget their sacrifice. They deserve to be remembered just as much as the soldiers who suffered – or maybe even more so since animals do not choose to be caught up in the wars that mankind inflict on each other.





Thank you to Terri and John Morris for these images.



We are taking these images with us when our 'Richmond Poppies' go on tour (see NEWS) throughout the Northern Region this year. We will be bringing you news from 'the tour' in the next edition of *Asspire*. In the meantime, if you come to any of our 'Richmond Poppies' locations this year, do take some pictures and forward them to us and pop them on our Northern Region's fb page. Tell us what you liked most about the display and where you would like to see it go next year. Thank you. SB.



International War Animal Day is on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

Each year, from then until Armistice Day we will actively, wherever possible, remind the public of the roles played by animals in theatres of war around the globe, in the past and in the present day. How? By wearing our purple poppy pin or crocheted/knitted badges and thinking about how we will mark this important event next year.



(Photos: Pam Moon.)

(A beautiful logo, thank you to Rosemary Clarke and to DBS Northern Ireland.)

## CRAFTERS' CORNER

Great Event coming up soon . . .



Roll your sleeves up and join us making donkey images using glass fusion techniques!



Thursday the 9th of May, 11:00-14:00-at Crafty Diane Gift and Art Gallery, Garstang, near Preston, PR3 0JJ.

**The Price is £55 for DBS Members and £60 for Non-Members** This includes all materials, equipment and light refreshments.

**We will be creating up to two pieces using simple glass fusion techniques** which differ from glass staining.

See photos for examples of what we can create. The Christmas tree decoration is from A Touch of Glass Studio, Argyll but we will be doing something similar, as well as being able to create a donkey profile on glass that can be back lit to great effect if we're speedy workers.

**We will be guided by Diane from Crafty Diane Gift and Art Gallery; it's not too complicated – more fun than anything! And it can all be achieved between 11.00 till 14.00 including a short break for lunch (you can bring your own snack or use the on-site cafe).**

**Check out** <https://www.craftydiane.co.uk/craft-courses-lancashire> to see the lovely work Diane produces and where she's based.

As is always the case for craft activities wear comfortable clothes that you don't mind getting arty mess on; alternatively bring an old shirt or apron to cover your clothes. There is ample parking at the venue.

**To reserve your place email** [allisonroberts254@outlook.com](mailto:allisonroberts254@outlook.com) **by Sunday 24th March and confirm payment has been made online to . . .**

Northern Region of the Donkey Breed Society  
 Sort code: 30-96-26  
 Account number: 59780068  
 Reference: 09 May 24

Alternatively, you can pay by cheque made payable to the Northern Region of the Donkey Breed Society and sent to High Grains, Bewcastle, Carlisle, CA6 6PT

See you there!  
*Allison Roberts.*



*Tell us about your crafting experiences!  
 Better still, show us what you've been up to!*

Have you crafted anything lovely recently? Have you taken some stunning pics (if so, don't forget to enter the photographic competition at our Spring Show, see details in the Schedule!)? We want to share in your creativity. Look forward to being published in *Asspire!* Send pics and a little bit about what you did to [northerndonks@gmail.com](mailto:northerndonks@gmail.com).

**My top tips for creative challenges this Easter:**

- ✚ Try painting a donkey on a hard-boiled egg\*! (Or pebble!)
- ✚ Create a montage of donkey pics in the shape of a donkey!
- ✚ Take a selfie with a donkey – you could both be sporting Easter bonnets! Handmade by *you*, of course!



\*You must only use edible paints/food colouring!

## LOOKING AFTER TICKLES & LOUISE

IT'S LOVELY TO HEAR FROM SARAH STANDING AND FIND OUT HOW HER ANIMALS ARE GETTING ON – IT'S CERTAINLY A CHALLENGE AS THEY BEGIN TO AGE . . .



I haven't written any articles in a long time for Asspire, all is good thank goodness, but...

recently this year I've had to make a few changes in feeds including medication. However, I quickly became aware since the rain was relentless most days, that keeping them indoors required more stimulation.

Now, every year both Tickles and also Louise my llama, are getting older so obviously that's where I noticed more changes - with my elderly donkey Tickles 26 years old, and my llama Louise who is 15yrs. The life span of a Llama is 15 /20 years so I've read. Louise currently this year has shown a huge decline, it's incredibly upsetting as I've had her since she was 2 years old. Obviously, being indoors my barn allows the 5 donkeys to roam freely with adequate space, however, with 4 llamas too, I noticed how much slower Tickles and also Louise walked towards the piles of hay in the barn. The other animals wouldn't allow them to reach the hay to

eat, they manoeuvred their bodies at the same time as kicking their back legs, so..... this made me rethink how to manage such behaviour without any harm to Tickles or Louise.

The changes were Tickles had his breakfast with hay and barley in his stable on his own, the same applied to Louise. - they could both relax and eat, not having the other donkeys eat their food. I needed them to eat, not to lose body condition. They are both very frail.

The changes with Tickles' teeth through his age are that his teeth are flat, there are no sharp edges to help his chew, his rotation in his mouth is completely different now as he drops his hay, or there are clumps of hay where he's simply unable to chew properly. Louise the llama is the same, they both eat slowly, they walk slowly, their eyesight now has changed dramatically, it's as though everything is blurred to them, but.....they rely on smell to eat.

However, when encountering objects around the barn they both simply become uncertain as to what the object is. Examples such as a wellington boot, brushes, buckets, even head collars that are hanging on pegs, they both stop with fear. The animals are unable to talk, it's watching how they all respond to each other, they are so territorial, so being confined indoors can't be the same as outside where there's no



restriction in space. What I'm trying to explain is that all elderly animals changed slowly over time, in particular I noticed Tickle couldn't move away from other donkeys who could harm him. He's unable to balance himself as his legs are not as strong now, the same applies to Louise.

As we would with humans, we need to recognise the obvious differences, so that we can try to make everything better, more comfortable, so through observation this has become important to me. In the evenings, Louise has her own stable, with ample hay, barley straw, also her evening meal. I leave the heater on too. The same applies to Tickle, he has the heater on with a double stable with his wife Daisy. All these changes give me peace of mind. It's wonderful that the cameras in the barn allow me to watch all the animals, I can see Louise snuggled in her hay, her ears twitching, her fragile body comfortable. Louise is extremely thin, to look at her body covered in fur would give the impression that she's fatter, not the case. I'm fortunate that all my llamas allow me to stroke them, feed them, kiss their faces, I can feel her frail bony back bone, skinny legs, so it goes on. The same applies to Tickle, frail, slow, the most beautiful animals coming to the end of their lives. I don't know when, but..... I will do what whatever it takes to give elderly animals as much love as I can, this is done through kindness, patience, compassion, also observation for they are our teachers, we learn through them, not the other way round.

To be totally honest, watching your donkey, pony or llama try to run with a herd can be heartbreaking, they simple do not have the ability, Tickle is unable to balance properly when his hind leg comes forward to scratch his head, ears or the sides of his body, the same applies to Louise the llama, they learn how to adapt by rubbing their bodies against the walls in the stable, I've observed this, they sleep longer, rest more, they're in no rush unlike the others to go outside, it takes them longer to walk, that's if they can be bothered. The others, I've noticed, do not wait, only Daisy for Tickle, the llamas do not wait or worry about Louise. When I hand feed them, they take longer to take it from my hand, they used to snatch the carrot or apple, now they

take it slowly, perhaps not showing interest in the apple, it's sad 🙄 their deterioration compared to the other animals is so obvious as the others are younger, stronger, far more confident than they are.

It's a massive learning curve for me, as I prepare myself mentally for the obvious to happen, Tickle is groomed softly, his thighs have lost muscle, his legs are weak, he's always close to me, just hovers slowly, content that I'm there. He shows an interest by leaning his head next to me with a nudge, he wants to be noticed, he no longer plays with the wellington with Cuddles who is 7 now, he no longer chases in the paddocks, he simply does not have the energy anymore. My pony Dolly is 23yrs, her back legs are weak, she is unable to run around with the two Shetlands now, so really this year so far is constantly observing the welfare of my older animals. Of course I know that I'm incredibly lucky they are still alive, obviously I know that compared to others that have lost animals in different circumstances, but..... as animal lovers, we sure do understand the huge impact of animal welfare.



I recently went to Iceland, luckily I saw the Icelandic ponies, gosh... they are literally in the middle of nowhere, freezing 🥶 what an education, their survival astounds me, mine are in a barn with heaters 🙄 anyway, I just wanted to share .....Sarah Standing xx

Sarah's Donkeys in Derbyshire - indoor play in the barn (right)!



WHILE OVER IN ICELAND ...



A little chilly . . . some very hardy ponies!

(Pics: Sarah Standing)

## ANOTHER FANTASTIC GATHERING AT OLWEN AND LIZ BROWN'S HOUSE ATTENDED BY 20 MEMBERS IN PERSON AND 5 ON ZOOM!



### PAM MOON REPORTS . . .

Anna Harrison is Vet Adviser to the Safe Haven for Donkeys in the Holy Land.

Anna used her excellent presentation skills to enlighten us on the history and current work of Safe Haven and how they manage their herds of donkeys in relatively small areas with no grass at their 3 sites – they primarily eat coarse straw supplemented with plentiful browse. The donkeys have access to large shelters. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the donkeys are in perfect body condition and do not succumb to some illnesses that we experience with donkeys in the UK.

Safe Haven has a small dedicated team to care for the donkeys and also has 3 mobile clinics to treat horrific wounds and routine treatments for working donkeys out in the field, mainly those working in the construction industry. Their new project in the El Saf region of Egypt involves helping donkeys working in the brick kilns – that work is gruelling involving huge weights the donkeys are made to pull and always being cajoled to go faster by the children driving them – education and welfare is key here and massive inroads are being made to educate the people and improve lives of the donkeys.

I think we can safely say our donkeys live the best life over here.

The next part of Anna's presentation covered the unique features of donkeys that equip them for life in a desert environment rather than the UK and the challenges donkeys face living here. Anna went on to cover colic and hyperlipaemia and how to avoid it with great advice on diet, routine dental treatment, worming and poo picking. Out in the yard Anna demonstrated some skills we should all have – taking the donkey's pulse, temperature and respiration rate.

We had a raffle on the day which, along with donations, made £187 for the Safe Haven.

Some members kindly offered to donate goods and Anna said that headcollars, Sudocrem and noseband covers were always gratefully received. Just let me have them and we will get them to Anna. We also have a sewing pattern for chain covers to protect the donkeys' noses – if anyone is handy on the sewing machine and wants to help by making some, then please email me and I will forward you the pattern.

Huge thanks to Olwen and Liz for hosting the day and to Anna for coming so far North to share her experience and knowledge with us.

Pam Moon [pam.moon@talktalk.net](mailto:pam.moon@talktalk.net)



*Pam (l) and Anna (r) celebrate a successful presentation.*

## More pics from the Training Day



*Taking temperatures and feeling for pulses – it's very useful to know your donkey's normal rates. As a guide:*

*Heart rate (adult): 40-48bpm    Temperature: 36.5-37.5*

*Respiratory rate: 16-20 breaths per min.*



[About Us - Safe Haven for Donkeys \(safehaven4donkeys.org\)](http://safehaven4donkeys.org)



## And there's more . . . March's Training Day at Brown Road Farm

Members of the Northern Region took part in sections of their Bronze & Silver Awards at the March meet up. Bronze Tasks to be assessed included:

- Approach donkey and put a halter on
- Tie up with quick release knot
- Pick up feet
- Discuss importance of grooming.

Note that more information about the Awards can be found on our website: [https://www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk/our-](https://www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk/our-charity/education/)

[charity/education/](https://www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk/our-charity/education/)

Why not ask your Area Rep to help you complete yours by arranging training days in your area?

Ring Olwen for further information and details of how to go about it, and who may assess you. It's not at all scary, it's just a great way of learning more about Donkeys, how to keep and handle them and hopefully receiving a pin badge and beautiful rosette for your efforts!

### Nicola Stuart



*Nicola (top of page) and other members of the Northern Region begin work on their Awards! Those with clipboards or pieces of paper, are often assessors – but they're not a bit scary!*



## Show and Tell

One of the many great things about *Asspire* is seeing what other members do, how they manage their donkeys, so here's a new piece for the magazine. We're going to invite you to share your ideas with everyone in future editions for the things in your donkey management that you can't do without.

For starters here's what Janet Thornhill claims she can't manage without! This is what she says, "I've had my hay savers for years and this year I modified them by drilling holes in the bottom to both let water drain out and to enable me to fit rope loops so I can attach hay nets inside. I have three of these which my herd of five share and I have very little waste hay!"



These are made by Parallax Plastics. Their website shows the main stockists in our region are urbanhorse [www.urbanhorse.com/parallax\\_horse\\_hay\\_saver\\_slow\\_feeder](http://www.urbanhorse.com/parallax_horse_hay_saver_slow_feeder) and JSW <https://www.jsw4jumps.co.uk/shop/yard-stable/the-hay-saver-blue/>

Pam Moon in Lancashire has a different "can't do without" – "I acquired this from a great friend, a hay/straw bag holder. It gives you two free hands to pull the bale to pieces and stuff the hay and straw into the hay nets - straight forward design but a real time saver."



While Pam's friend made this for her, you can find similar ones online from a variety of companies – search for "hay net filler". Prices start around just under £30.



One of Julie Connolly's favourite bits of kit for her donkeys is a Borstiq Hoofpick Brush. It consists of a regular hoof pick and a brush on each side. "The stiff brush easily and gently removes stubborn grit and dirt from their hooves so it's ideal for donkeys prone to abscesses/seedy toe. The softer brush removes mud from the outside of their hooves and lower legs."

It costs about £15 online from several websites.



Debbie Hornby has a different claim, "There are two things I couldn't do without. First is StableLine's Sulphur & Rosemary Cream. It's so good on wounds and especially fly bites as it takes the itch away.

Then I couldn't do without Lincoln Grooming Blocks. I go through several of these every spring in helping to remove Nelson's and



Donkan's winter coats." Most tack shops will stock these for anywhere between £4 and £6.



Lastly, here are two musts in Allison's medicine chest. "Determined to find a product that would heal and then prevent mud and rain scabs that was made from natural ingredients I came across Equinat from Aromesse. They manufacture natural health care products for horses and donkeys (as well as for dogs and humans).

Big Dougal has only once had scabs from mud fever – because after three days of using Aromaheel the problem had gone completely. And better still, there's a companion liquid that you can use to



prevent the bacterial attack in the first place. Now, if he's going out onto wet ground, I apply a little. It works every time. (It even worked on cuts on my hands too!)"

Buy it direct online. <https://aromesse.com/collections/horse-natural-healthcare-products> (they offer a discount if you buy both at the same time).

**PS** Just to say, I bought one of the hoof pick/ brush things that Julie C recommends and it has revolutionised hoof cleaning - so much easier, effective and much more practical than any other one I've ever used. (In all the 14 years and one week I've shared with Hamish!) **Allison R.**

*Go on, share your totally indispensable top stuff . . .*

*'Show and Tell' to [northerndonks@gmail.com](mailto:northerndonks@gmail.com)!*

### Discounts for DBS Northern Region Members . . .

**We are delighted to announce that Hillview Equine and Supplies Ltd of Hollin Lane, Macclesfield, SK11 0NL, Macclesfield and Eskdale Saddlery of 4 High Street, Longtown, Carlisle, CA6 5UE are joining Quattro the rubber stable flooring specialist in offering DBS members in our region a 10% discount.**

Hillview are generously offering this to customers in store, while Eskdale will send parcels anywhere in the UK and will source specialist donkey kit and have experience of sourcing specialist bits for donkeys. Eskdale ask that first time you make a purchase you show them your DBS membership card.

To contact Quattro email [colin@quattorubberandresin.co.uk](mailto:colin@quattorubberandresin.co.uk)

Phone Hillview on 07835 433747 or find them on Facebook.

Phone Eskdale on 10228 794020.

**Quote the code DBS10 when making a purchase.**

# Your news and pictures on a theme

## of 'Palm Sunday'



Keep your pictures coming in, we can always show them in our next edition! Thank you to everyone who has been out and about in their communities, in whatever form this may take.

You may remember, if you have been reading *Asspire* since 2020, that Sarah Standing's donkeys took part in a Palm Sunday broadcast by Kegworth Baptist Church. Well, they've been broadcasting again.



Sarah has just provided me with the link should you wish to share in this experience and see them on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/YKm4VCGyPI?si=f0YVUiPo-JhSsze> - well done donkeys!

### And now to Castleton . . .

Familiar faces on a gorgeous day and the donkeys are Tommy with Joy, and Wesley with Jane. Jane said they were lucky to have Joy there to help!

Thank you for sending in these lovely pics.





## A Reminder as to What's on:

**JUST SOME OF THE EVENTS WE ARE GOING TO IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS! Check out the attached Calendar too for events May – September!**

*Please note that all members, from all over the Region, are warmly invited to attend events across the Region – you don't have to stick to events in your area – travel a little and enjoy a lot! We will keep you posted on a variety of events/activities in the Region this Summer.*

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April**

**HANDY DONKEY & FUN DAY at Abram Hall Riding Centre WN2 5XA**

An exciting handy donkey course and lots of fun classes with the emphasis on fun and trying out something that you and your donkeys might not have experienced before! **A Fun Show** – a show with a difference!

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May**

**NORTHERN REGION SPRING SHOW!**

**at Pam's!**

**Entries close 12th May. Just time to enter on line/by phone!!!**

Schedules attached or from: Pam Moon, 07842 535993 email: [pam.moon@talktalk.net](mailto:pam.moon@talktalk.net)

**CHECK OUT THE CRAFT CLASSES TOO!!! Cakes, Crafts and Photography!**

*For further details/information relating to all forthcoming events and if you are wanting to organise an event of any sort in your area, please ring Olwen on: 01457 762336 we can then provide support if needed and help to let everyone know about it!*

**Message to all members who wish to embark on their training towards DBS Awards:** If you wish to attend a session, or to find out more about the Awards, contact Olwen on **01457 762336**. We can suggest ways to prepare for your Awards, in your Area and then how to organise testing.

## Useful Contacts

**Northern Region Chair and Regional Delegate:** Allison Roberts [allisonroberts254@outlook.com](mailto:allisonroberts254@outlook.com) 01697 748311

**Vice Chair:** Liz Brown, 07517382472

**Northern Region Secretary & Hon. PR Officer UK:** Sarah Booth, 07970375562 (phone signal is awful, so leave a message or text me and I will get back to you!) [northerndonks@gmail.com](mailto:northerndonks@gmail.com)

**Northern Region Treasurer:** Adele Potter 07825741158 [adelep1816@gmail.com](mailto:adelep1816@gmail.com)

**DBS Awards Regional Link & Training:** Olwen Brown 01457 762336

### AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Introduce yourself to your Area Rep and say what you would like to see happening in your Area. Area Reps are always keen to hear your ideas and if you can volunteer some help at any time, that too would be most welcome, although not obligatory!

#### Area Rep – Lancashire – Pam Moon

Pam: 07842 535993 [pam.moon@talktalk.net](mailto:pam.moon@talktalk.net)

#### Area Rep – North & East Yorkshire/Cleveland

Caretaker rep Allison Roberts (details as above)

#### Area Rep – Cheshire/Greater Manchester – Olwen Brown

Olwen: 01457 762336

#### Area Reps – West Yorkshire – John & Terri Morris

John & Terri: 01274 835520 [throstlenest@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:throstlenest@hotmail.co.uk)

#### Area Rep – Derbyshire & South Yorkshire – Janet Thornhill

Janet: 07976 556649 [janet66thornhill@gmail.com](mailto:janet66thornhill@gmail.com)

#### Area Rep – Cumbria - Julie Connolly

Julie: 07501 331014 [julieconnolly1@aol.com](mailto:julieconnolly1@aol.com)

#### Area Rep – Northumberland – Geraldine Burton

Geraldine: 07833 602311 [gadburton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gadburton@yahoo.co.uk)

### Membership!

**Don't forget to check your Membership status – have you renewed it?!**

**You can renew your membership on the National DBS Website:**

<https://www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk/membership>

**Thank you for being a member, your support is much valued.**



*Barney, Freddie, Stuart and Missy successfully completed the Chair's Winter Picnic Challenge! Well done Mr Booth!*

And finally,  
Some people bag Wainwrights, can  
you bag the most picnics at  
Shows and other DBS Northern  
Region events in 2024?

Keep and create a log, diary, scrapbook,  
collage, piece of embroidery, montage or  
however you wish to present your record of  
DBS Northern picnics enjoyed with your  
donkeys or other people's donkeys!

Share it with us and you could win a lovely  
rosette and prize!

Rosettes too for the most 'unusual' location  
that you and the lovely long ears enjoyed a  
picnic in/at, in 2024!

Closes 26.10.24.

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 from the late Spring and Summer months, to [northerndonks@gmail.com](mailto:northerndonks@gmail.com) to reach us by the middle of September.

Please note that views expressed in this Newsletter are those of contributors and not necessarily representative of the Donkey Breed Society.