**Regional Report for Northern Ireland**

Many of our members attended Newry Show at the beginning of June. There was an amazing turnout of donkeys with their handlers. A ‘big thank you, must go out to the judge on the day, Mrs Caroline Giles-Lee who travelled quite a distance to be with us.

Lurgan Show show-cased the epic sight of 8 juniors out with their donkeys proudly presenting them so professionally. We congratulate each and every one of you. You were brilliant!!

The ’Traditional Working Class’ is a massive crowd puller and proved extremely popular on the day of the show. Keeping the tradition alive, the displayed showed a range of working attire from creels to ploughs and everything in between. Congratulations to the ‘Travelling Saddler and Dave the Rave on winning this class.

Behind the scenes of each show, there is always helpful advice and support and there is no better person for the job than Lucy Cushley from the Irish Saddler who is always on hand to shorten, lengthen and fix harness that needs any final adjustments before heading into the ring!!

A massive congratulations to all the prize winners and thank you to our DBS judge, Mrs Caroline Giles-Lee for giving up her time to judge the classes, it wasn’t an easy job.

**Armagh County Show**

Some of our members made there way to Armagh Country Show. It was great to see a good attendance. Miss Jane Bruce was the judge on the day and she was super impressed with the turnout of donkeys. Congratulations to all who took part. For some, it was a little too much so a ‘power snooze’ was in order!! (Damien Tumelty and Jackie Gibson from Castlescreen Farm)

**Trim Haymaking Festival**

The ever-popular Trim Haymaking Festival returned this year and saw many of our members travelling to the south to take part in this amazing festival. For some, it required an overnight stay!! As you can imagine there was lots of craic to be had with ‘Hello Dixie!! (Thanks Caolan!!) being imprinted in our memories for ever.

 Our society thrive at events such as this as everyone can get involved. It’s a real ‘step back in time’ allowing us to relive history and walk the foot steps of our fore fathers. A big ‘thank you’ must go to Declan Feeney as without his lorry many of these events would be impossible to get to. Also, to all who hooked up trailers and offered to take implements and donkeys to the events, thank you. Please visit the highlights on our Facebook Page.

**Newry Show**

Donkey classes were returned to Newry Show this year, and the society didn’t disappoint. With a few ring manoeuvres and rosettes sought, the classes kicked off with our very own DBS judge, Miss Jill Castles. Miss Castles was very impressed with the turnout of donkeys before her and congratulated everyone because in her eyes, they were all winners.

**The Donkey Breed Society NI Championship Show**

The Whip and Collar Club hosted the return of the DBSNI Championship Show. This has been amazing achievement by the committee to get this up and going again. The show was held in the stunning grounds of Shane’s Castle, County Antrim. Our DBS judge on the day was Mrs Carole Travell with her partner David who did an excellent job with the stewarding. The Championship Show secured a range of sponsorship from many local businesses and further afield. A massive thank you to everyone involved. It was a real team effort that made the day a great success.

**Castlewellen Show**

Castlewellen Show has to have been the best so far. With 16 donkeys in condition and turn-out, 14 donkeys in gelding and stallion and 22 donkeys in the local donkey class, 8 juniors and double digits in the famous ‘Traditional Working Class, the judge on the day, DBS Mrs Helen Horsfall had her work cut out. How she managed to keep track of the classes is beyond us but she did a great job and was very encouraging and supportive.

Also, we welcomed new members on the day. It was great to see them out with their donkeys and having a good time among the society.

**Claragh Bridge Vintage Club Event**

The Donkey Breed Society NI members took part in the working Display at the Claragh Bridge’s 20th Anniversary Vintage Day. It was a great day with an amazing atmosphere and it proved very popular. We got a great round of applause from the public after we had completed our demonstration and many people came and spoke to us about our display and are beautiful animals.

**The Whip and Collar Driving Club**

The Whip and Collar Driving Club held a super event at Danescroft Equestrian Centre, Lisburn. The classes were free for all to take part in. A ‘big thank you’ must go to the organisers of the event.

**Community Events**

With the show season winding up shortly, some of our members and their donkeys went out into the community to share joy and smiles. These events included, annual Summer Fetes, Nursing homes and Summer Parties.

**Booley Festival**

The Booley Festival in Hilltown saw some of our members taking part in a parade up through main street and providing a static display over the weekend. These events are a perfect way to showcase our society and our donkeys whilst celebrating the heritage of days gone by.

**Coming up……….**

The showing season will be pretty much coming to an end. However, the society have a few more events coming up before turning in for the winter. Some of our members will be taking part in the Harvest Festival at Cultra and it will be the beginning of the ploughing season too. So, there will be lots going on before getting the slippers on and sitting beside the fire cleaning harness for next year!! Also, we will be looking forward to our AGM coming up in the New Year.

**Anne Brown**

**Regional Delegate and Area Rep for Northern Ireland**