

ASSPIRE!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN & SCOTTISH REGIONS
OF THE DONKEY BREED SOCIETY



Miss Mop, much loved and fondly remembered (see pp 11-12)

DBS Northern &
Scottish
Regions ...



it's your Spring Edition!

Dear All,

Explain please! The first of April was decidedly warm, even hot – how come?

Suddenly, sleeves are short, shoulders go back, heads are lifted to the welcome sun and then all sorts of happy thoughts come flooding in – there is a long season of donkey things to contemplate!

Where is home for you? For me, I live in Cumbria ("England!" as my mum would exclaim) and that has been home for 43 years already but without a shadow of doubt, home for me is Scotland. How fortunate that I live a mere nine miles from the border, with a foot firmly in both camps. And so it was an easy decision to spend a day at the Royal (Dick) Vet Hospital in Edinburgh with fellow DBS members. Our party was made up of members from both sides of the border – faces to match to well-kent names, new friends to make and hopes for more rendezvous to come. We've had some super feedback from those that attended (please see pp 5-7), it was a fascinating visit.

Asspire now reaches donkey people in Scotland and England. What was a massive geographic spread when our readership was just for Northern Region members is even more vast now that we encompass, however unofficially, Scottish members too. That makes involving all members an even greater challenge, yet a very happy one too, with all sorts of possibilities for sharing our love of the long ears going forward. Perhaps online

activities present one way of overcoming the distances between members? If you have ideas of how we can share our mutual interest do let me know; I'm more than willing to elaborate those ideas, with a little help, of course.



Allison's gorgeous donkeys enjoying spring sunshine on the Cumbrian fells.

For more donkeys warming their backs and ears, turn to the back pages! (But don't forget to read everything else in the middle too!!)

There is a growing calendar of events to share and enjoy; with this unexpected warm spell the Northern Region Spring Show suddenly seems quite soon and that's a real marker of the coming summer. We have attached the schedule for you!

Wherever you call home enjoy this edition of *Asspire*. Wherever you call home let's share some quality donkey time!

**Best regards,
Allison.**

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



In the news this Spring ...

Get well soon Philip!

Sending very best wishes, from all of us in the Northern and Scottish Regions, for a speedy recovery to Philip Moon following his recent injuries that will see him out of action for the next six weeks and hopefully no longer. We look forward to seeing you out and about soon Philip – your mother needs you!



Shows and events update . . . (see also p.27)

Our Northern Region Show will take place on: Sunday 4th May

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

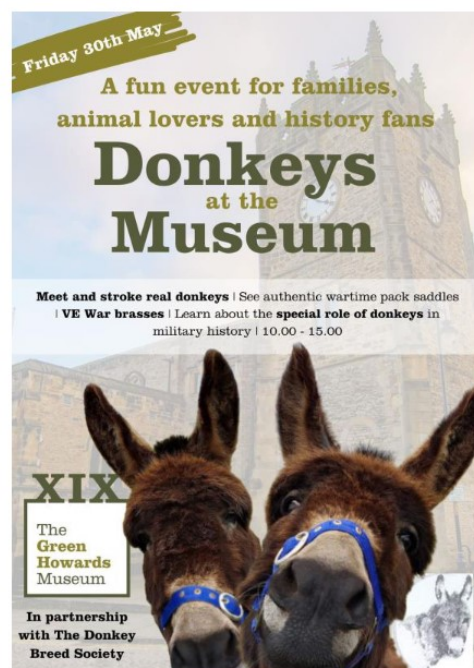
Entries close 27th April.

Schedules from/entries to: Pam Moon 07842 535993 email: pam.moon@talktalk.net

Northern & Scottish Events Calendar April – September 2024

In with this *Asspire*, Northern Spring Show Schedule and Abram Hall Schedule 'bundle' you will find the Northern Events Calendar – enjoy and please support all the brilliant smaller shows that have donkey classes. Come along as a spectator we would love to see you.

Exhibition update . . .



Where next for the 'Richmond Poppies'?

Currently at The Green Howards Museum in Richmond, North Yorkshire, the Poppies will be going down south in June. They will visit the Three Counties Show at Malvern for one day only, Saturday 14th June, and will then journey to the REME Museum in Lyneham, Wiltshire where they will be part of an Exhibition that will open to the public on 1st July for two months.

Prior to all that however, there will be donkeys at The Green Howards Museum, Richmond, N. Yorkshire on Friday 30th May – come and meet Maurice and friends, doing their bit to support our wonderful Tour! Grateful thanks to Marie Bates and Long Ears Donkey Centre.

For further information: Sarah Booth, northerndonks@gmail.com.

Charities update . . . We continue to fundraise in earnest for our donkey statue that will stand in the Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation's site at Pozières, in the Somme region of northern France, commemorating all animals that have lost their lives or have been injured in major conflicts. Our goal is £5,000 and through the hard work of fundraisers like Olwen and Eva we currently have £1,531.06 in the fund.

We are offering members and friends the opportunity to donate in memory of a special equine or human, to be remembered in a special commemorative booklet that will accompany the Purple Poppies' 2025 Tour and their visit to the REME Museum in Lyneham, Wiltshire – please see p16 for further details as to how you can help to support this project.

We also continue to support *Safe Haven* and there will be some exciting news forthcoming as we help to raise funds during their special 25th anniversary year. We will let you know as plans evolve.

National AGM Update - Get ready to welcome everyone to the North!

After four years of Zoom AGMs and following many members responding to the questionnaire for more social gatherings – we are in the planning stages of potentially hosting the national AGM at a lovely venue in Wilmslow, Cheshire **on Saturday 15th November**.

Please mark this date on your calendar – this will be a prime opportunity to meet members from other regions, there will be the normal formal business followed by lunch and then afternoon awards, we have then reserved a three course meal, after dinner Speaker and then Jane Bramwell is going to be entertaining us all with her wonderful singing for us all to sing and dance along with giving us all the opportunity to catch up with friends we haven't seen in such a long time. Then if you want to stay over, the hotel is offering a good rate for B & B.

If the proposals are given the go ahead - full details, booking form and menu choices will be attached to our monthly e-news. If you do not receive e-news or access to the internet please let Pam Moon know and she will ensure you are on a mailing list to receive booking forms in person or through the post.

Pam Moon pam.moon@talktalk.net

Liz's Teeth and Eyes talk - All those who attended Liz Brown's in-person and online talk re 'Teeth and Eyes' agreed it was a brilliantly informative lecture. It was recorded and you will shortly be able to watch again, or for the first time, when it is linked to the DBS YouTube channel. In the meantime, if you link to [Donkey Breed Society - YouTube](#) you can catch Anna Harrison talking about worms, vaccinations and other things! We will let you know the link to Liz's talk soon. Thank you so much Liz, we all discovered so much new and very useful information. **SB**.

Driving Clinic – Four Northern Region members plus an observer took part in the Driving Clinic held recently at Brownroad Farm. I used my Shetland pony 'Teddy' to demonstrate and for them to drive for two reasons: he is a super pony for beginners obedient, unflappable and patient - in March, 18 local Pony Club members had a go at driving him! The other reason was not to compromise the judges who attended. Sad as it is, there will always be someone who would complain if I had shown my donkey under a judge who had driven it on the training day.

Subjects briefly covered were: harnessing up, fit of harness, putting to (the carriage), driving position of the whip, correct rein handling, giving a show and ring manners.

It is rewarding to encourage members to drive. Thank you to Pam Moon for your help, I really enjoyed the day. **Olwen Brown**.

A Trip to the Vet!

On 18th March a group of Northern and Scottish region DBS members and friends visited Edinburgh University Equine Hospital, also known as the Royal (Dick) Vet School of Equine Studies, or even The Dick Vet! The tour was conducted by Pdraig Kelly, a renowned equine surgeon, and Director of the Equine Hospital. He was both informative and engaging; our tour showcased the exceptional veterinary care provided by the hospital.

Here are some observations from the visit:

Staff and Expertise: The hospital comprises a skilled team of over 50 professionals, veterinary surgeons, interns and grooms, working together to support the health and well-being of equine patients.

International Connections: The hospital has connections with the American Fondouk charity looking after working animals in Morocco with student exchanges in both directions fostering shared knowledge and learning on donkeys across borders.

Hospital Design for Comfort and Stress Reduction: Every aspect of the hospital is designed with the animals' well-being in mind. All surfaces are non-slip, the covered trot up area felt like fine sandpaper underfoot. Externally there is extensive use of rubber matting providing a soft anti-slip surface which protects joints and tendons. The visitors walked on it with a jaunty stride too.

Sliding stable doors have bars from top to bottom, allowing even the smallest of equines to have a view. Gemma Pearson who is renowned in the area of equine behaviour advises methods of animal handling and building design to minimise stress. The special relationships between donkeys are recognised and it is routine for a friend to accompany the patient and they are fully accommodated and planned for during the stay particularly managed pre and post operative care. The multi-disciplinary approach aids both the physical comfort and emotional well-being of patients.

Teams and skillsets: The Roslin Institute pioneering Bioscience (of Dolly the Sheep fame) is a short walk across the yard. The synergy fosters the exchange of knowledge between professionals, leading to improved veterinary practice, timely and accurate diagnostic provision, better disease management and accelerated scientific discoveries.

Pdraig raised the subject of donkeys and their predilection to aggressive sarcoids. This is a subject under study at the Institute which holds numerous samples of frozen tissue from donkeys to aid research. The ongoing fight to genotype and find an answer to Grass Sickness continues. A genetic link to snake venom is currently under study as a potential cure. It feels like there have been many false dawns on the trail of this pernicious disease.

Diagnostic imaging: In Pdraig's opinion, imaging is key and must be integrated centrally to consolidate and optimize diagnosis and treatment. Each CT imaging machine costs £1.5m and has a 10-year life span. Fundraising for this vital equipment is ongoing and essential. All contributions gratefully received!

With luck none of us will have to visit the hospital in an emergency situation but rest assured that it is there on high alert 24/7 to offer outstanding care to all our equines.

What a very enjoyable, educational outing we had.

Alison Robertson

And here are some individual recollections of the visit -

The first is from Alison Wilson, a Scottish DBS member who has been a client of the hospital.

“As a horse and donkey owner for the past 30 years, I am more familiar with the Dick Vet than I would ideally like to be, having visited with a range of equine ailments including choke, broken jaw, smashed splint bone, infected tendon sheath, and navicular. The most recent patient in the trailer has been my donkey Moses, who needed three teeth removed. All this has meant I’ve seen a fair bit of both the old and new buildings at the Bush campus – but always in stressful situations. So, it was a relief to be guided round under the expert tutelage of Padraig Kelly, Senior Surgeon and Director of the Equine Hospital.

We followed the path that a newly-admitted case might take, from reception to the trot-up areas, to the stables, the treatment rooms, operating theatres, recovery boxes and ICU, finishing with a view of the fields where the ‘teaching’ horses grazed – horses mostly donated to the hospital to allow students to see equine anatomy in real life and practice skills like bandaging.

It was a fascinating two-hour tour – many thanks to the DBS, the Dick Vet and Padraig Kelly for organising it.”

Then Julie Connolly from Cumbria offered this -

“When Allison (Roberts, not to be confused with Alison Robertson!) organised a tour to the equine department of The Royal (Dick) Vet in Edinburgh, I jumped at the chance to be part of it. It was so lovely meeting DBS members from Scotland and Yorkshire. Our love of donkeys brought us together to discover the amazing work carried out there. We were shown around the state-of-the-art facilities. I was struck by the calm and professional atmosphere throughout the equine department. Any horse, donkey or mule that is referred here will receive the very best evidence-based veterinary treatment, delivered with kindness and compassion.”

And then here is what Eve Standen (right) from Yorkshire has to say:

“What a brilliant opportunity I had to look round Edinburgh University’s equine veterinary hospital in March. We got to see every part of the hospital including the operating theatre and recovery boxes. Padraig talked us through how they assess the animal when it comes in. We then went through to the dentistry part of the hospital. We looked at some extraordinary skulls and teeth, we also looked at the tools they use for teeth work. We saw a radioactive horse and a horse in ICU on



a drip. We then went to look at the padded recovery box where we talked about how donkeys can stay with their companions as much as possible if they have to come into the hospital. After that we went up to the viewing area where students can watch operations taking place. The facilities were amazing and everything was super clean and tidy. I learnt loads and am even more inspired to be a farm vet."

You can see from the photo that Eve is not yet in her teens!

To round off this report Allison Roberts, the event organiser, told us she found a Northern Region rosette in her car as she was parking at the hospital and thought it'd be fun to award it to Emma MacDougall, the lady in the admin department who organised the visit. Here is the email she sent -

"Hello Allison,

Thank you so much for a lovely and fun gift!

We have hung it on our door – for all to see.

Great to hear that you had such a lovely time today. Hopefully see you in the future 😊

Best Wishes."

Emma MacDougall | Vet Services



If there is somewhere in your Region/Area that you would like to visit, and you think others would enjoy it too, get in touch with Allison allisonroberts254@outlook.com because if anyone can organise a visit, Allison can!



Have you heard the expression, 'butter wouldn't melt . . .'?!

It's Colin's Column!!

Hello Juniors,

It seems a long time since I wrote to you. I hope you all had a lovely Christmas with lots of carrots – sorry I mean presents; carrots are always on my mind!

Talking about food, we donkeys had a secret, but sadly Olwen found us out. We like to linger on the horse yard on the way to our winter field which hasn't got much grass (it does have a lovely winter shelter which we nibble for a snack). The big horses often drop us hay over their stable doors but Wash, Liz's ex-racehorse has been giving us treats by dropping his feed bucket on the yard. There is usually some feed left inside for our treat. Today he put his bucket full of posh feed over for us! We were excited and started to gobble it up. Olwen came into the yard early and caught us eating as fast as we could. I'm afraid we were very naughty and when she tried to take the bucket away we pushed her over.

Olwen was very cross with us, she told us food for big horses wasn't suitable for little donkeys and could make us get too fat. I don't think we believed her but trotted away into the field very quickly. Honestly, we didn't mean to hurt her and the food was delicious.

The weather is getting warmer and we are getting itchy. It is a good idea to examine your donkey if they are itchy, to find out why. There are many causes of itchiness – our winter coats will be shedding (falling out) soon and make us want to scratch. Winter dust from rolling, which has kept us warm is now not needed so we scratch to get rid of it. There are little insects called lice which like to live in our coats. I don't know where they come from, they are tiny, Olwen calls them 'biddies'. Check your donkey closely. If you can borrow a magnifying glass –



you have to pretend you're a detective – part your donkey's coat in lots of places, especially on the neck. Lice lay little white eggs which are stuck on hair.

If you find any lice eggs tell your vet and ask for a special solution to bath your donkey with, to kill them. It is best for a grown-up to do this but remind them to wear rubber gloves and a mask and to do it on a warm day.



My friends Barney, Missy and Freddy Booth with their scratchers!

My donkey friends who live with Sarah told me about a wonderful scratching brush which is attached to the wall. I told Olwen about it and she said she will get us one for Easter – hurrah, better than an Easter egg. It will also be better for

Olwen as our favourite scratching place is a full wheelbarrow waiting to be put on the muck heap. We enjoy knocking them over but Olwen doesn't enjoy having to sweep up all the muck.

[Note: Sarah bought hers through Amazon last year, prices may have changed since then.]



I'm looking forwards to seeing you all again at the Spring shows. The babies are coming to some shows this year. Olwen says I mustn't call them babies anymore; Vera is two and Bobby is 3! They are going to be called 'the youngsters', doesn't that sound posh!

Lots of love,

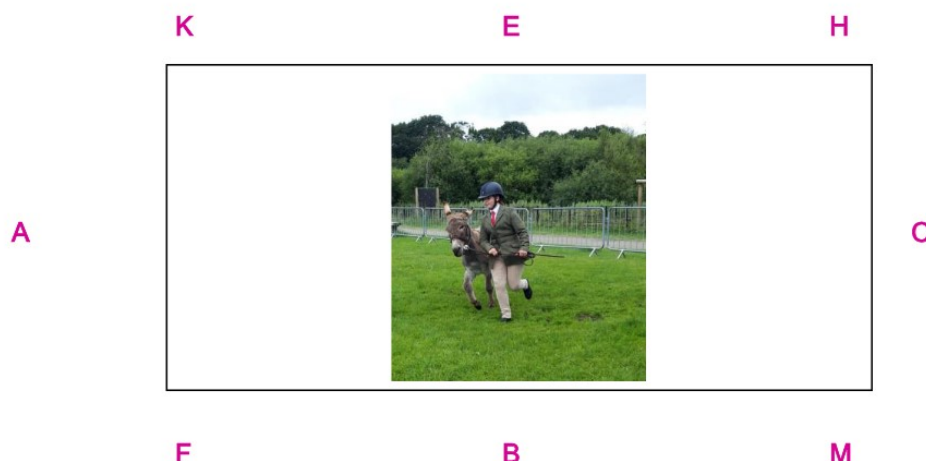
Colin X

Just for Juniors! *(+ anyone else up for a challenge!)*

Those of you that may be long reining your donkeys, riding donkeys, driving and so on (and some will be doing this with ponies too) may have noticed letters at the sides of the arenas in which you are training and/or competing.

Question: can you remember the order of the letters?

Have a look at the Arena below:



This is the simplest layout of letters. Your task this spring is to learn where the letters are so that if you are asked to cross from M to K, you know where to go, without spending ages looking for the letter K!

Some people use a 'mnemonic' (a pattern of letters and associations) to help them remember, for example, if you go round clockwise from A: **A**ll **K**ing **E**dward's **H**orses **C**an **M**ake **B**ig **F**ences. Or, if you go the other way: **A** **F**at **B**ig **M**other **C**at **H**ad **E**ight **K**ittens or **A**ll **F**at **B**rown **M**ares **C**an **H**ardly **E**ver **K**ick!

So, your challenge: **learn where the letters are and see if you can make up your own mnemonic to remember them by!** Send your mnemonics to me and we'll put them in the summer edition of *Asspire!* northerndonks@gmail.com.

Older Juniors: find out where P, R, S and V go and add these to your plan and your mnemonic. You can then add G, I, X, L, and D to your plan! Take a pic of your completed plan and send this in too!

For very tiny Juniors, you could use a picture of an animal for example, to help them learn the letters. Help them to draw/colour these in, pop them in a poly pocket or laminate, and then get a grown up to nail or staple them in place! Nothing like starting early! Send us a pic of your amazing work – however old or young you are!!

Can't wait to hear from you!

Miss Mop, Mammoths and Mules!

Karen Inkster shares memories of a very special donkey and tells us of her mules and mammoths.

I've owned horses for a number of years now, but when a friend said "*I don't suppose you would consider taking on a neglected 30-year donkey who is otherwise going to be put to sleep*", I entered the world of donkey guardianship (I never say I own animals, as we all know that really, they own us!).

With that, Miss Mop entered my herd of 6 rescue horses. I was smitten immediately and overnight I became a self-confessed donkey lover. She arrived starved, petrified, matted, overgrown feet and recovering from laminitis. The first 2 nights my rescue dog Rosie and I slept in a tent in her wee field with the door open, trying to show her we were friend not foe. On the third day she walked up to me, placed her head in my hand, and from that day forth, she never left my side. Miss Mop and Rosie shared a special friendship. Although the horses (after 3 days of snorting, prancing and galloping, with a 100m exclusion zone round this hairy beast that was clearly NOT a horse) adored her and she fitted in very well, Rosie and Miss Mop could often be found hanging out together. She was also my side kick. If I was in the field, she never left my side, she would run up to me braying, demanding hugs and ginger nut biscuits. She would stalk me in the house, moving from window to window and smearing snot all over them in the hope I'd come out and give her some attention. Everyone who met her absolutely adored her and she soaked up all the love that came her way. Sadly, after just five months, her heart gave up. Rosie and I were there and I held her head as she took her final breath. I took some comfort in knowing she died with a full belly and as much love as she could hold, but I was utterly devastated.



Some months later a lady got in touch with me asking if I'd take on two abandoned donkeys. Enter Dinky and Denny. They are quite a pair. Dinky is an absolute diva, whilst Denny is very shy. The horses took to them instantly and the donkey love I had inside me surfaced once again.

A couple of years ago I started looking into mules. I did lots of research and reading and came up with the question of "why aren't there more ridden size mules in the UK"? Mules are tougher than horses, require less feeding or supplements, have stronger hooves, are more resilient to disease and are very sure footed. I started to look into adding a mule into herd, but I couldn't find any in the UK. I looked at Europe and found some, but they were expensive and now that we aren't part of the EU, it's very expensive to ship equines over. I have a couple of lovely mares, so I thought, well I could breed some, so I looked into AI. There were no mammoth donkeys at stud in the UK, no fresh AI, so I looked at importing frozen semen. But then I spoke to my vet, who said success rates of frozen semen weren't good and it would be very expensive. Now my mammoth donkey hunt started!

Earlier this year I bought two mammoth donkeys. A one-year-old Jack and a pregnant Jenny, enter Ollie and Sal. They have settled in very well and Dinky and Denny have some new donkey friends. Hopefully Ollie will be a good stud Jack and in time, he will be able to service my mares and I'll get some ridden size mules. Ollie and Sal aren't related, so it's also possible to breed mammoth donkeys. Sal is wonderful, so gentle, kind and she loves being groomed and having cuddles. Ollie is a typical one year old and is full of beans, constantly trying to get everyone to play and trying to make friends with the cats, dogs, geese and hens! I'm now on a whole new learning curve of breeding and foaling. Every evening is spent watching seminars, reading books or asking questions!

Miss Mop was a very special donkey and I miss her every single day. I had a fundraising day at my yard in her memory and we raised over £5,00 which was divided up between animal charities and some was spent on vet treatment for Dinky who at some point has sadly broken a bone in her hoof. If it wasn't for her, I'd never have had the joy of becoming a donkey lover and guardian. If you'd like to follow our journey or learn more about the herd, please visit EquineUnlimited.co.uk



Thank you Karen for sharing your donkey journey. SB

A very special Tour . . .



2024 York Army Museum



Cumbrian Museum of Military Life



Cheshire Military Museum



2025 The Green Howards Museum, Richmond, N. Yorkshire

. . . where next for this poignant display?

The Northern Region's stunning display of beautifully crafted purple poppies that commemorate our silent allies: the animals that have sacrificed their lives for us will be moving to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) Museum in Lyneham, Wiltshire for the summer. Currently at The Green Howards Museum in Richmond, North Yorkshire (until the end of May), the poppies have already been viewed by over 15,00 people and are attracting an amazing following.

Gifted in 2023 to the Donkey Breed Society (Northern Region) by a group of crafters from Richmond, North Yorkshire and displayed on camouflage netting donated by Catterick Barracks, it seemed right and fitting that a commemorative tour should allow the public to 'remember the animals', particularly as in 2024 official recognition was given in the UK to *International War Animal Day* (24th February each year); commemorated with Australia, New Zealand, France, Canada and the United States.

Our host Museums have been absolutely fantastic in raising awareness of the Poppies and their ethos, surrounding our display often with their own in-house artefacts or bringing further pieces in from other museums. It has been a real education to work with their curators. Alongside each display we have offered craft workshops run by members of the Donkey Breed Society (Northern Region) and have welcomed donkeys on a special 'Donkeys at the Museum' day, to welcome the public to the exhibitions/displays. **On 30th May this year, Marie Bates' gorgeous donkeys from Hartlepool will be at The Green Howards** and, in the summer, donkeys from the Western Region will be visiting the REME Museum. Check out their website

www.rememuseum.org.uk

Donkeys at the Museums

As you can imagine, people love meeting the donkeys and the message their presence carries, resonates with many and with all ages. We have provided sheets of suggested craft and research activities, differentiated for a range of Key Stages, as part of the museums' schools visits programmes. (Copies available from northerndonks@gmail.com.) Schools/students/pupils that forward their work for inclusion in forthcoming exhibitions receive a certificate. As well as us receiving some thought-provoking and beautiful work, the name of the DBS is shared with many, as together we unite in commemoration.



Pat Mather's Gary and Eeyore at York



Janice Brown's Wyeknot Donkeys in Carlisle



Olwen and Liz Brown's Colin and Diccon, Terri and John Morris's William and Nell and Sarah Booth's Missy in Chester.



This year, we have been crafting grey poppies to be interspersed with purple as we also remember the non-commissioned and commissioned farriers that worked alongside the equines in WWI. Their stories are often harrowing but their work was so important to alleviate suffering. If you have stories of equines, their handlers, riders or farriers in theatres of war past or in more recent times, we would be so interested to hear from you. Kindly contact me at northerndonks@gmail.com.

Thank you. Sarah.

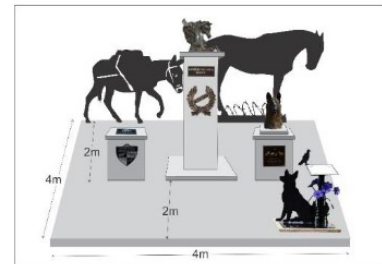


Our very important project - an update:

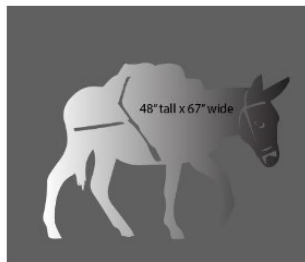
Donate in memory of a special person or equine.

As you know, the Northern Region of the Donkey Breed Society is supporting the creation of an international statue commemorating war animals.

Located in Pozières, in the Somme region of northern France, our donkey will stand alongside a horse, a dog and a pigeon as a permanent reminder of the sacrifices made by animals in war. Interest and support in the project is amazing. **Yet we need more funds! We would love you, our brilliant friends and supporters to be a part of this – we are looking to raise £5,000 to make this a reality.**



As we look towards the Tour of our Poppies venturing down South to the REME Museum we are pleased to announce that those donating to the Statue Project may do so in remembrance of a special person or equine and that this will be referenced in our next Commemorative Booklet that will be issued as we reach the REME Museum. We will also send you a copy of the Commemorative Booklet as a thank you.



To make a donation via bank transfer, kindly use direct payment:

sort code: 30-96-26 A/c: 59780068 Ref: PozMemorial

and then contact Ms A Potter, Treasurer, Northern Region of the Donkey Breed Society: adelep1816@gmail.com to confirm your payment and advise us of the name of your 'special person or equine' – in doing so, you agree to us publishing their name(s) together with your own, or you may wish to remain anonymous in which case, please indicate this in your email.

Thank you so much for your support. We will keep you updated on this very important project.

The Donkey Breed Society (Northern Region), War Horse Memorial Organisation, Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation.



Images by kind permission of Nigel Allsopp, President Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation.

Donkey Breed Society Registered as a Charity 292268

How you've been raising funds . . .

Eva rides for Donkey Statue Fund

Northern Junior member Eva, from near Bradford in Yorkshire has completed a challenge for the DBS Northern Region Donkey Statue Fund as set by Caroline Birkett, renowned British Dressage judge!

Caroline challenged Eva to take a prelim 7 dressage test with Caroline's horse Jack, and, if successfully completed Caroline promised to make a donation to the statue fund!

Eva did brilliantly! Her mother has sent us some photos. She thinks the last one shows what Jack thought!

Huge well-done Eva from all of us and a huge thank you to Caroline for her generosity and of course, thank you Jack!

S Booth



Shining a light on International War Animal Day at The Green Howards Museum

On a chilly Saturday in February, The Green Howards Museum together with the Northern Region of the Donkey Breed Society hosted a craft workshop. This was part of the captivating special exhibition "**Animal Allies: Discover the Silent Partners of the Armed Forces,**" currently running at The Museum until December 2025 and featuring our Poppies until the end of June.

Visitors were invited to decorate little glass tealight holders and take their work home complete with a small 'candle' to be lit on Monday 24th February, which was **International War Animal Day**. They were also engaged in creating felt poppies.

As we know, **International War Animal Day is observed in Australia, New Zealand, France, Canada, Great Britain and America each year on 24th February.** It asks us to stop and remember the horses, donkeys, mules, dogs, pigeons and other animals that have sacrificed their lives, for us, in wars past and in more recent conflicts. The Exhibition explores the diverse ways in which animals have been integral to military operations, uncovering the remarkable roles that they have played throughout history.

Visitors thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful '**Richmond Poppies**' – a cascade of **crocheted purple poppies crafted by a group of makers from Richmond, North Yorkshire** on loan from the Donkey Breed Society (Northern Region). These delicate yet powerful symbols serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made by both human and animal participants. This year we have begun to incorporate grey poppies into our display to commemorate non-commissioned and commissioned farriers that supported the serving equines. They played such a vital role and we need to commemorate all that they did, often in horrendously challenging circumstances.



Two of the original Purple Poppy makers, Valerie and Lynn from Richmond, shining a light on International War Animal Day, with Pam Moon of the Donkey Breed Society, Northern Region.

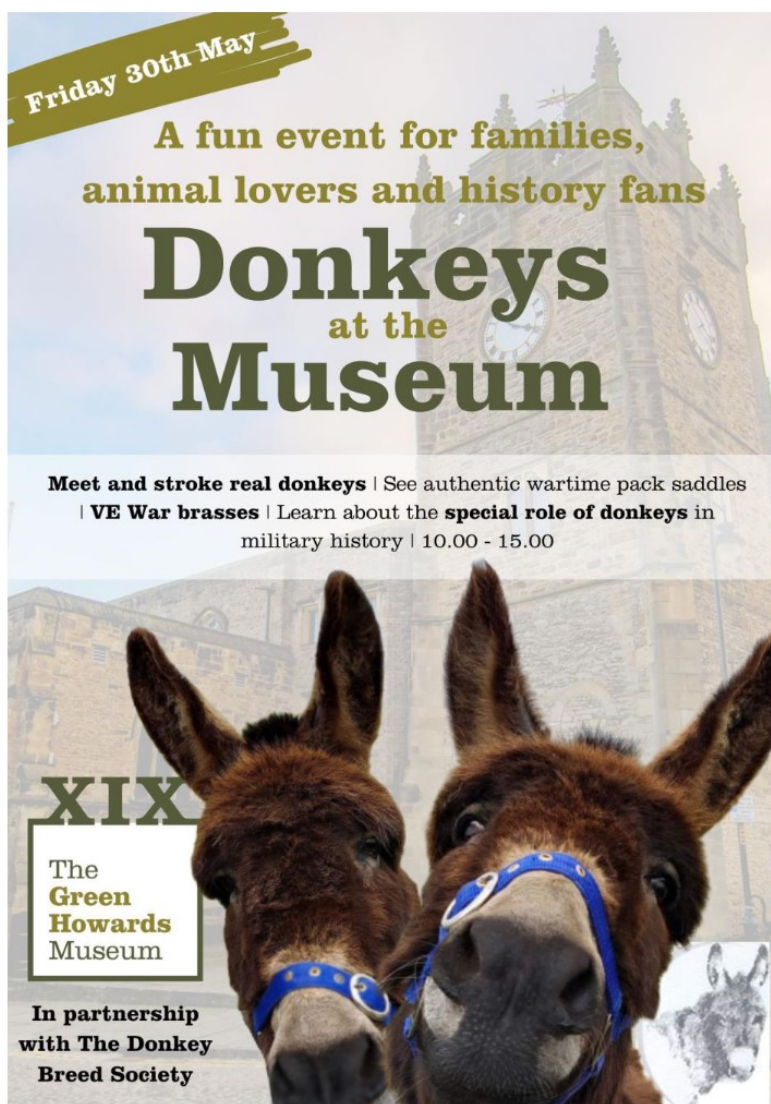


Julie Connolly, DBS Area Rep for the Lake District shares purple poppy making skills with visitor, Mortimer (right and below left).

Grateful thanks to Sarah P., Allison, Pam, Julie and Bill who supported this day.



On Friday 30th May, from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm, the Green Howards Museum in Trinity Church Square, Richmond, North Yorkshire, will welcome DBS Northern Region Member Marie Bates' wonderful Blackberry Donkeys, heralding from Long Ears Donkey Centre near Hartlepool. Visitors will be able to meet and stroke the donkeys and learn about the special role of donkeys in military history.



Please do get in touch if you require further information. I have taken the liberty of sending out the poster with your copy of *Asspire* so that you can download and print or send to friends and family that might live in the area, or are visiting at half term, and wish to join us on the day! Look forward to seeing you there!

Back in the dark days of lockdowns, I always remember announcing the birth of 'Rosie' in 'No.5' of our series of Thursday Bulletins – how lovely it was to have something to celebrate. She was indeed . . .

A Very Timely Arrival

Terri Morris



With their own unique sense of humour and sneaky ability to make their humans look like idiots, our precious donkeys can try our patience on the odd occasion I think we might all agree! But they can also save our sanity.

Over the past few weeks I've noticed there have been some programmes on both radio and television recalling those awful days 5 years ago when we were told that we would all have to be 'locked down' to try and stem the spread of Coronavirus, and suddenly I found myself taken back to that strange Spring of 2020 which, for us, was both horrible and also rather wonderful.

Of course, it was a trying and frightening time for most people. Nobody knew what would happen next and, if Covid had not personally affected us, we were still seeing terrifying scenes on our TV screens of what was happening in hospitals all over the country and abroad. Shut away at home seeing no one except John and the nurse who came once



a week to treat my bad leg, I felt very cut off from the world. But we were lucky in that we had our donkeys and, in particular, one very special arrival to brighten our days. For it was during that very Spring that our Cassie gave birth to her daughter, a beautiful little filly foal that we christened Rosie.

It was even more fortunate that Rosie arrived a couple of weeks earlier than expected before we'd had time to get too depressed and I still remember that bright sunny morning when John came rushing into the house to inform me that we had another donkey. And, yes, there she was tottering around the stable and yard with her clever mum who, although this was her first foal, had managed the birth quite happily by herself.



From then on it was wonderful to be able to watch this charming little creature growing bigger and stronger as she learned to explore her new world. It was quite life-enhancing to see her galloping around the field getting into all sorts of mischief and I must have spent hours playing with her and sitting in the sunshine taking hundreds of photos of our beautiful baby and her proud mum.



However, it wasn't only us who were able to enjoy her antics because we have since learnt that our neighbours living in the cottages that border our fields were also able to watch her and find solace in her youthful exuberance during that difficult period.

Thinking back over that time makes me realise how truly blessed we are to have our donkeys. They are wonderful animals and have the ability to brighten the darkest of days – as we definitely discovered with our very special Lock Down Baby.



Memories

Olwen Brown

When I was looking at my collection of donkey ornaments, three stood out – three pairs, for the memories they evoked.

Jaffa the Shetland pony and Peter, our first donkey

We got Jaffa for three-year-old Liz. One day, when taking her for a ride, a couple we met offered us their donkey – our first of a long line, called Peter.

Peter and Jaffa were inseparable. I saw these ornaments in a china shop, side by side in the window. They are still side by side in my china cabinet.



Buttercup and Jenny – Crown Derby paperweights



When I first saw 'Buttercup', I had to have her, expensive as she was. The expression on her face and the tilt of her head made me think of the real Buttercup, Liz's second donkey. When talking to an artist friend who lived in the cottage next to the donkey field about the likeness, he informed me that a designer of the paperweights once stayed with him and spent a long time photographing my donkeys.

Jenny is retired and still with us. She looks exactly like the paperweight, an ordinary donkey who has given us some superb foals, not noted for her looks but for her personality.

Victorian Ornaments

I bought these two from the estate of the late Sue Stirling whom I am sure older members will remember. She was the founder of the Beechfield Stud which produced champion donkeys both for their looks and their driving abilities. (The stud prefix is carried on by Pam Moon.)

They bring back memories of a lovely lady who was always willing to help or give advice.



What lovely memories, thank you for sharing them Olwen.

If you have anything that evokes special memories for you, please do share too!

We'd love to hear from you: northerndonks@gmail.com.

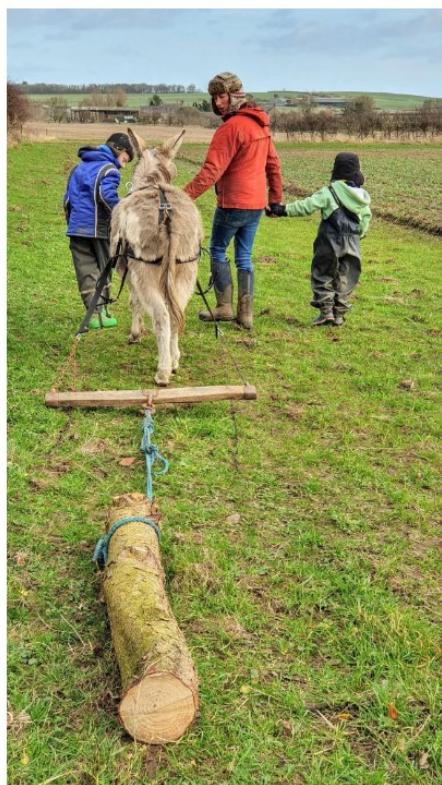
ADDA!

Find out more and give it a go!

Pam Moon, in her previous life worked for the Donkey Sanctuary; it was she who was responsible for Dougal entering our lives as a foster boy to join Hamish. And I think she quickly saw that I enjoyed spending lots (lots!) of time with them, so she encouraged me to register them for the active donkey scheme run by the DBS. Reader, I did. The scheme certainly has ensured my donkeys have lots of new activities, while it has given me a structure that keeps me trying all sorts of challenges for them.

Participating in the ADDA scheme, as it is now called, certainly doesn't mean you have to invent outlandish or complex activities for them. It simply is about keeping your donkeys active, doing new things. It asks you to show that your donkey has done eight different activities over twelve months. It doesn't really matter what these eight activities are just as long as you clock up eight different occasions and can give us evidence of them. You might encourage your donkeys to do these new things in their paddock, their manege, or beyond the boundaries of their normal world. On wet days you might even encourage them to do something new and different in their stable!

Here are some examples of things that would certainly count. Just look how many of them your donkey(s) can do or could be encouraged to do.



You can see that almost anything goes!

If you could do – or already have done – these sorts of activities with your donkeys you could join in the ADDA scheme. What you submit can be a diary of activities, a photographic record of all eight activities with a simple explanation of each activity together with its date, or any format that clearly shows off your active donkeys. A rather smart rosette then wings its way to you, as proof of success.

So, you can register now and include anything your donkeys did between 01 August 2024 up till 31 July this year.

Registering is easy – just follow the link on the ADDA page on the DBS website. At a mere £5 per donkey it is great value.

Allison Roberts



And Pat's been working with Gary and Eeyore, teaching them some new skills . . . thanks for the great pics Pat.






Joy's Spring Recipe


'A really nice chocolate cake!'


from Joy – wishing us all a Happy Easter!


6 1/2 oz plain flour
2 tablespoons cocoa
1 teaspoon Bicarb
1 teaspoon Baking powder
5oz castor sugar
2 tablespoons syrup
2 eggs
1/4 pt corn oil and milk


 Sieve flour, cocoa ,bicarb and baking powder into a bowl make a well in the centre.

 Add sugar and syrup.

 Stir in eggs oil and milk.

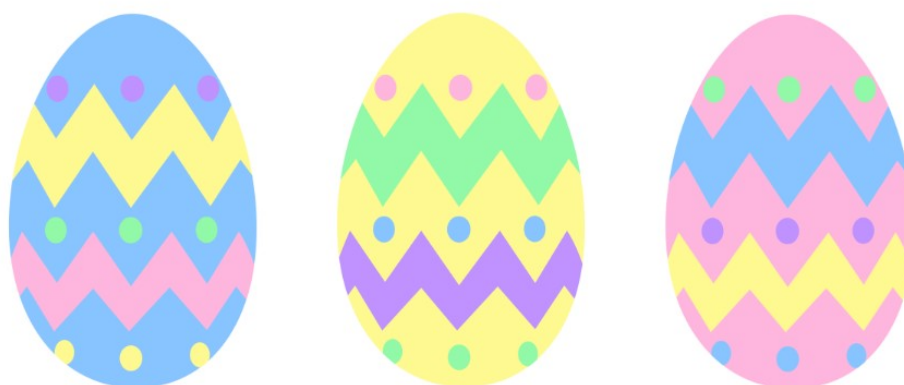
 Beat well to make a smooth batter.

 Pour into two 8 inch round tins.

 Cook for 30 minutes at 160°.

Lovely with fresh cream or ganache with mini-Easter eggs on top! Yummy!

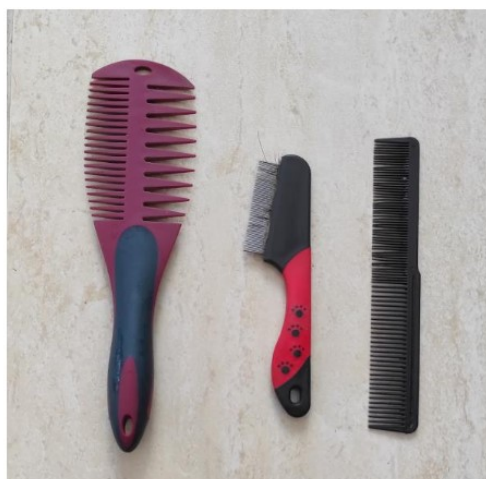
Enjoy!



Show and Tell

The handy little regular feature where readers share their top products/gadgets that they couldn't do without. Whether in the stable, yard or field and for big or small effect, if you find it works a treat, we want to hear about it! Allison Roberts asks those in the know!

From Annie Rushton-Green



Super bur removers!

Left to right is a horse mane/tail comb, middle a cat flea comb and on the right a human comb. I use whichever I find best depending on how deeply tangled the burs are and where they are on the donkey.

Tip: always wear gloves as the tiny hooks are awful if they get into your skin (they are like splinters) and avoid getting them anywhere near their eyes.

Thank you Annie!

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

'Show and Tell' to Allison Roberts allisonroberts254@outlook.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

Phone Hillview on 07835 433747 or find them on Facebook.

Phone Eskdale on 10228 794020.

Quote the code DBS10 when making a purchase.

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 Regions, 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 Regions this Summer.

Saturday 26th April

SHOWING CLINIC

at Brownroad Farm SK14 6EB

From 11.00 am Please bring a picnic lunch. Lots of useful tips and support for newbies and old-hands alike! Find out how to turn your donkey out to a high standard, various dos and don'ts, ring craft and how to have a cracking good time! Please ring Olwen for further information and to confirm attendance: 01457 762336. This is a very popular annual event.

Sunday 4th May

NORTHERN REGION SPRING SHOW!

at Pam's!

Entries close 27th April. Just time to enter on line/by phone!!!

Schedules attached or from: Pam Moon, 07842 535993 email: pam.moon@talktalk.net

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

Sunday 25th May

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!

JUST ONE PLACE LEFT!

Sunday 22nd June – Painting with acclaimed artist and DBS member, Joss Goodchild.

To be held at Pam's PR4 4LD – super opportunity to paint your donkeys or a donkey of your choice (from a photograph) – Contact Allison Roberts allisonroberts254@outlook.com 01697 748311 for further details.

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.

For Sale . . .

Is Anyone Looking for Harness & Cart in the North?

I have for sale a Bellcrown exercise vehicle to fit up to 12.2hh. The wheel size at 80cm is larger than most carriages in its class which gives an elegant edge over competitors. The shafts remove for travelling. Shaft width is adjustable to fit your donkey at any stage in the season. It has a mesh floor, a winding body to adjust balance. This is a comfortable ride, light and balanced. It has been barn stored since the end of 2019 season. Cover and spanner for locking nuts are included.

Also for sale is my Zilco driving harness specified for a big donkey. It took a lot of trial and error to put together a set that was comfortable and safe for my donkeys. It will fit a standard donkey and includes girth sleeves and all extras to optimise comfort and performance. There is a range of driving bits also available for sale.

If you are interested in all or any part of this package which is in very good condition ready to go out and win prizes please contact me to discuss. Located Central Scotland.

Alison Robertson 07860 342404 krobertson@btclick.com



If you have anything to offer for sale, please contact northerndonks@gmail.com and we will include it in the next edition. Please note however, that purchasing is purely at the risk of the buyer and that the DBS (Northern or Scottish Regions) cannot be held responsible for the condition of goods for sale, terms of sale or any misrepresentation, this is between seller and buyer only. Thank you.

Useful Contacts

NORTHERN REGION

Northern Region Chair and Regional Delegate: Allison Roberts allisonroberts254@outlook.com 01697 748311

Vice Chair: Liz Brown, 07517382472

Northern Region Secretary (WHMO Link & Fab Farriers Link): Sarah Booth, 07970375562 (phone signal is awful, so leave a message or text me and I will get back to you!) northerndonks@gmail.com

Northern Region Treasurer: Adele Potter adelep1816@gmail.com 07825741158

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

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

Area Rep – Derbyshire & South Yorkshire – Janet Thornhill

Janet: 07976 556649 janet66thornhill@gmail.com

Area Rep – Cumbria - Julie Connolly

Julie: 07501 331014 julieconnolly1@aol.com

Area Rep – Northumberland – Geraldine Burton

Geraldine: 07833 602311 gadburton@yahoo.co.uk

SCOTLAND

Regional Delegate – Kendall Young 07736 960081 kendallyoung99@ymail.com

Regional Chair – position vacant

Regional Secretary - Jacqui Methven minijax@icloud.com

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Lothian, Borders & East Dumfriesshire (to Dumfries):

Alison Robertson 07860 342404 krobertson@btclick.com

Ayrshire, West Dumfriesshire & Galloway:

Kendall Young 07736 960081 kendallyoung99@ymail.com

Ian Thompson 07747 017655 kmec@hotmail.co.uk

Tayside, Stirling & Fife:

Lizanne Kempself 07803 583055 scottishdonkeys@gmail.com

Highland/Grampian: Vacant

Strathclyde, Argyll & Bute, Greater Glasgow and Forth Valley:

Jacqui Methven 07966 255508 minijax@icloud.com

Membership!

Don't forget to check your Membership status – have you renewed it?! Why not treat a friend?!

You can renew your membership on the National DBS Website:

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



And finally, just before we close this edition -
a few more lovely donkeys, and people, enjoying the
sunshine!



These gorgeous donkeys are Henry (above) and Jenny (right). Heather, their guardian, told me all about them recently and said: 'behind Jenny is the large ash tree branch that fell down a few weeks ago in the field behind the donkey field, I dragged it across then tossed like a caber over the post and rail. They love it, and now the bark is almost chewed off I use it to drape any enrichment like herbs or the odd banana skin or haylage should cold bad weather return, until next autumn when it will be firewood for the human stable!' Heather credits Pam and Joy for all the help she's received since becoming their important human! She recently joined us for Liz's 'Teeth and Eyes' talk which was great.

Heather is also into her *fifteenth year* of volunteering with The Donkey Sanctuary, which is brilliant, and says that she lets people know about the Donkey Breed Society and the Northern Region when they visit. She has very kindly let us know when the Sanctuary at Flash is open this year. 'The Open Day dates for the donkey sanctuary are all **Sundays: 4th May, 1st June, 6th July, 3rd August, 7th September.** Time: 10 am to 3 pm. The postcode takes you to Newton Farm, SK17 9QQ.

The donkey sanctuary website [Buxton | The Donkey Sanctuary](#) has a car parking booking system, morning and afternoon, this is to help with expected numbers for the catering and to try and have a steady flow of visitors, not all at once in the morning and much quieter later. The cars are not checked in as such and no one will ever be turned away, it's just to help with managing the day better, a steady flow of visitors is a much happier experience for everyone, so do use the website just to let them know'. [Thank you Heather! SB.](#)



The Colley Mill mob are enjoying the Cheshire sun!

(above and below)



Feel the warmth on your coats little guys – Sarah Standing's donkeys and ponies in Derbyshire



Warm ears in the sunshine of the High Peaks as Olwen ponders on what makes donkeys tick . . .



A very warm spot indeed!

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 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.

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