

ASSPIRE!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN REGION, WITH THE
SCOTTISH REGION, OF THE DONKEY BREED SOCIETY



It's the summer
edition!



Dear All,

Now then, here is our late summer edition of *Asspire*! Yes, summer is certainly drawing in her skirts making way for autumn to take centre stage. I for one am happy to welcome in the cooler weather; no more tormenting flies to trouble donkey legs, no more days of enforced inactivity while the humid air drains everyone's energy and no more lush grass proving irresistible to donkeys (here even the rushes on the fells around us have been super-lush this year to the extent that, after our neighbour/farmer pasture topped the rushy abundance a few days ago, I was able to rake up beautiful sun-dried rush "hay" yesterday which the donkeys are enjoying now the welcome rain is pinning them in their stable). It's a tad perplexing that the lush grass here comes after a drought of many weeks' duration. Here in Cumbria we are 20 inches down on our rainfall compared to this time last year! But the drought may be over now.

Why not make yourself a cup of something "steaming and fragrant", sit down with it and enjoy this latest *Asspire*!

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

This summer . . .

It was with great sadness that we said farewell to Terri Morris



It was a shock to hear of Terri's passing, after a short illness. We will miss Terri enormously and, on behalf of us all, we send our love and support to John her dear husband, and their families and friends. At Poynton Show, last weekend, friends from the Brownroad Group stood with John and received beautiful rosettes in memory of Terri. She will always be remembered. Obituaries from Olwen and Pam follow (p.3).

The Poppies' Tour saw two 'donkeys at the Museum days' at the REME Museum, with lots of support from colleagues 'down south'. But where are they going next?



We are pleased to announce that the Richmond Purple Poppies will be travelling to Warwick at the beginning of October, to The Museum of The Queen's Royal Hussars. Find out more on page 21.

Something exciting is stirring in the Lancashire countryside and beyond and we want you to be a part of it! *Not just any old walk, this will be a DBS (NR) special!*

Reserve the date for a very special Walk and Picnic! Check your emails over the next week for details!

When: Saturday 27th September Where: Rivington Pike, Lancashire PARKING: BL6 7RU

Details: Meet at Rivington from 10.30 am for a prompt 11.00am start!

For how to find the parking area and maps of the proposed route please send an email to donovanross@talktalk.net. *Everyone welcome – including equines and canines! (See also p.30.)*

Northern donkeys celebrating success at The Championship Show!

It was a fantastic day out and yet again, Northern donkeys and humans did very well indeed! Reports from the Northern show scene can also be found in this edition of your favourite mag!!

Teresa 'Terri' Morris

27th February 1949 – 27th June 2025



It was with great sadness that we received the news of the death of Terri, a long-standing member of the Donkey Breed Society and valued member of the Brown Road Group.

Terri was well known for her work running the Active Donkey Award from its inception. She put many hundreds of hours into working out individual awards and presenting them at the AGM.

Along with her husband, John, they were strong supporters of the Donkey classes at Shows.

Terri's funeral was supported in person by 15 members of the Northern Region of the DBS (with others accessing via the webcast), who sent a wreath in the form of a donkey's head. Terri's beloved donkey William and her little rescue dog, Newton, accompanied her to her grave in a woodland glade.

We all send our sympathy to John with our love and support.

Olwen Brown. Area Rep., for Cheshire & Greater Manchester, Northern Region of the DBS.

No-one could dispute Terri's absolute love for her donkeys – so proud of them and what they achieved – her absolute detail on the cleanliness of their bridles and mane trimming was impeccable.

Terri and her ever faithful husband John attended as many events as feasibly possible – both with and without the donkeys – their support of the Donkey Breed Society was truly immeasurable.

Going back to the 1980's the Morris's set out on their donkey showing journey and were soon welcomed into the gang enjoying the camaraderie and very quickly embraced all things social. They were fortunate to get Junior members helping them at Shows with Georgia and latterly Eva – both lucky girls to have the opportunities.

Terri was instrumental in setting up the original ADA Scheme, which encouraged members to do different activities with their donkeys, over-seeing awards being given out at AGMs to all recipients.

Terri and John over the years bred a few foals, with the latest being Rosie, who was shared with us in 2020 during the worst of Covid.

Terri was always one to ensure you had her on your quiz team – she had a broad knowledge of so many things and frequently ensured a top placing if she was on your team. Terri had a cheeky sense of humour, to hear her laugh and see that twinkle in her eye was so lovely.



We will truly miss Terri at all events and be assured she will be remembered in a lot of ways.

Rest easy Terri x

Pam Moon Area Rep., for Lancashire, Northern Region of the DBS.



This year, the Donkey Breed Society's AGM will be held in the Northern Region

This is going to be a very special event . . .

It isn't too late to book for our AGM - we have fulfilled minimum numbers to satisfy the hotel booking but now we need to boost those numbers to make the occasion an even bigger day (and evening).

The AGM is at The Stanneylands in Wilmslow on Saturday 15th November - the day part of the AGM is just £12.50 (subsidised for members only) - this gives you morning refreshments, lunch and afternoon refreshments. The evening will consist of a 3-course meal, followed by live entertainment from one of our talented members. Overnight stays are available. For a booking form either contact Pam Moon pam.moon@talktalk.net or Carol Morse carol.morse@talktalk.net ASAP.

As usual we will hold a super raffle on the day and after the formal part of the day we will be giving out awards to National members.

Book now to avoid disappointment - any queries, please shout up!

Pam.



Please join us!



It's Colin's Column!!

Colin ponders on donks & humans, old and new!

Dear Juniors,

It seems a very long time since I last wrote to you, I hope you have enjoyed your donkey friends this summer.

I have a new friend, Tiffany had a little colt foal in May, he is grey and called Otto.

Otto loves to gallop and buck around the field, he says hello to us through the fence but he isn't allowed to play with us until he is bigger.

I have had a disappointment! Olwen told me I wasn't going to the Championship Show this year. At this news my ears flopped down and wouldn't come up all day. I am staying at home to look after Bobby and Barney. I was very upset until Olwen told me that as I was getting older, I need to do less work. I agree and wish all those who are driving 'Good Luck'! Perhaps I will do some Junior classes next year.

It's a bit unfair because Olwen is old, much older than me and she is going to the Championship Show!

The small orchard is next to our field gate, the apple trees are laden with fruit. I am trying to work out how to get to them to help Olwen pick the ripest. I haven't found the solution yet. Try, try, try again is my motto. It is time to begin to prepare for the winter, sorting out your stables and making sure you order plenty of bedding and especially hay – yum, yum!

Lots of love,

Colin X

PS This is my new friend Otto, at 5 weeks old! He's a Champion!



Super to hear from some of our juniors about things that they have been doing this summer . . .

Starting with a brilliant account from our latest Junior member, so a very big DBS Northern welcome to – **drumroll – Alfie and his donkeys!** Mum, Meg, tells us that Alfie is absolutely thrilled to be a part of the DBS and has proudly worn and shown his badge to anybody who stands still long enough! She continues: ‘he has written a small paragraph which I’ve copied and pasted below for you . . . it took a long time . . . but he was very determined to do it for you. I’ve also attached a couple of photos of Alfie with our Donkeys (don’t worry they are on a strict diet!). Meg.’

From Alfie aged 8.

We had our donkeys on loan for Christmas then we were excited to buy them. They are called Brenda and Blodwyn.

They are the friendliest donkeys ever and they got used to different noises from the yard and the sheep and pigs quickly.

Last week we took them out on the beach and they needed to share the horsebox with a friend’s pony. They were very good walking along the beach and we had a picnic with them.

They didn’t like going down the steep sand dune and they didn’t like water.

I would like to take them out more and do more things with them.



Alfie, thank you for telling us about Brenda and Blodwyn, what a brilliant owner you are, providing lots of activity for them. Very well done, they are so lucky to have such a great home. All the best. (Ed.)



From Amber aged 9. Ready, Freddie, Go!



Freddie is 11 years old and has lived with my granny for 10 years with his best friend Barney and then for about 5 years with Missy as well. He has not been ridden until this year. My legs are too long to ride Missy, so it was time to encourage Freddie to start learning how to be ridden!

I started to do easy things with Freddie so that he doesn't get confused. I have lessons at Oakhanger Riding Centre sometimes in Alsager and it has helped me progress in my riding. Olwen has been kindly letting me ride Colin at some shows to get my



confidence up. She has also given Freddie and me lots and lots of advice. We had a great lesson before the Championship Show. Olivia has been helping train Freddie to be a good riding donkey. So Freddie has improved with the team of Olwen, Liz, Olivia, Eva, me and granny, a bit. We were so proud of him when he was second in the novice at the Championship Show. Tracey helped us too for granny because granny hurt her arm.



Well done Freddie! He did brilliantly and he has lots of lovely rosettes! We are so proud of him, he is getting to be a very confident donkey.

Amber T.



Thank you Amber, you are giving Freddie lots of confidence, well done!

And a Fab Farrier Award goes to . . .



Sarah Standing of Derbyshire has nominated her Farrier, Simon Warwick of Breaston, Derbyshire for a Fab Farrier Award.

Sarah tells Asspire:

Simon has educated me about feet, legs, muscles, nerves, so much. I respect him – his fees are worth every penny; he deserves a Superior Above n Beyond Award!!

Simon certainly goes above and beyond to be the most valuable person to me. He takes his time, he is passionate that owners understand their animals' feet and he explains in simple terms the hows, whys, musts, remembers. How to stand around the animals has been useful too. He's left equipment in the stable so they can

browse through, sniff, touch, shift without fear of the unknown!

A farrier for 38 years, Simon explained that Blossom, [one of Sarah's donkeys] has wide feet for a donkey, most are small and round hers are not, so when her feet grow they spread stretching the white line, this enables grit and also dirt to get into the foot causing seedy toe and also allowing stones to lodge in the gaps.





Putty, cream to prevent seedy toe, tools for removing small stones and oils to prevent dry hoof accompany Simon's tool box.



We were delighted to send a certificate to Sarah for her 'Fab Farrier'.

Congratulations Simon!



Remember, what suits one donkey will not necessarily be appropriate for another. Be guided by your 'fab farrier'/vet as to what would be the most appropriate course of action for *your* donkey's feet and health.

To find out more about the care of donkeys' feet, go to the DBS YouTube Channel and why not check out our website www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk.

If you would like to nominate your farrier for a 'Fab Farrier Award', tell us why your farrier goes the extra mile, provide anecdotal evidence and a pic, and send to me at: northerndonks@gmail.com.

Please note that as a Society, the DBS does not provide recommendations of farriers, veterinarians, and other services associated with donkey care – the practitioners above have been nominated by individual owners/guardians.

Thank you.

It's Show Report time . . .



Our first few shows in the region at Abram Hall, Northern Region Spring Show, Bury and Great Yorkshire were reasonably well supported, other smaller shows have really suffered with entry levels which will sadly lead to us losing some of them. I know everyone can't do them all but it really is a 'use it or lose it' scenario. Sadly, with the loss of the Morris team entries, they affect lots of shows. Fortunately, we have managed to keep the Junior exhibitor Eva, who showed their donkeys, active in the show ring.

What is great to see is potential new exhibitors in our region who will hopefully get to Keighley and maybe a previous exhibitor, who has acquired a lovely gelding, will be back in the show ring soon.

The other thing that is really enlightening is our junior exhibitors: their numbers are really quite healthy at the moment and it is great to see them all getting on so well and encouraging each other to get the best out of the donkeys they are handling or riding. Our Juniors did well at the National Show: Eva, Olivia, Izzy, and Amber with their donkey entrants Tilly, Gorse, Missy, and Freddie – bringing home lots of ribbons, silverware and other goodies – well done gang! Missy and Freddie also went on to do well in other fun classes.

More about Northern Region successes/placings in the Championship Show follows on pp 13-14.

Poynton Show was the weekend after the National Show and enjoyed good entries and lots of fun – Joy Wilcox gets a special mention here – she is an amazing lady keeping Poynton Show as a lovely end of season event. Beechfield Stirling Moss once again took the breed ribbons, Liz Ross took the driving ribbons and the children had a super time – the picnic provided by Sarah Booth was so yummy.



Must just mention one more show in our Region – Keighley on the 6th September, here's hoping for a few more entries to support this lovey show (I am told there might be a mule there).

Now is the time to submit showing results and points – send them to pam.moon@talktalk.net so we can compile our Northern Region Awards!

See you all soon.

Pam Moon.



Our own,
Northern
Region
Spring
Show, some
pics!



Just a few that I managed to snap as I was walking round – remember to send me *your* pics from the shows to northerndonks@gmail.com! Then we can create cracking displays! I am not a photographer!!

However, what a lovely day it was – blustery skies, lots of fun and plenty of cake!! (Ed.)



Abram Hall Fun Donkey Show

by Jean Marsden

This was the second year that the Donkey Fun Show took place at Abram Hall thanks to the generosity, help and kindness of everyone involved and the weather blessed us too.

As well as the five Donkey Breed Society breed classes, there were eight additional classes which covered performance, obedience and how donkeys of any age enrich the lives of their owners and handlers.

Donkeys were ridden and long reined in some classes and tackled sixteen obstacles in the Handy Donkey class which included a staircase, balloon arch, backing, carrying a burden and so much more, also including some quite spooky obstacles, but the competitors took their time and showed just how a donkey can approach and manage the out of the ordinary.

The DBS classes champion was won by a beautiful coloured donkey called Rosslyn Pandora, owned and handled by Eileen Barnes. The Overall Champion Donkey was awarded to Toadflax of Brown Road owned by Olwen Brown, who also owned the Reserve Champion, Brown Road King Cup. He also took Reserve in the DBS Championship and was handled by Olivia Mingham. The Overall Champion Handler and Reserve was a Sister Act! Olivia Mingham and her younger sister Amelia. Well done girls.



Another high performer on the day was Amelie, owned and handled by Elizabeth Ross who took home 3 x 1st, a 3rd and 5th and was awarded the DBS Best Local Donkey rosette.

The very final award was presented to a gorgeous little grey donkey called Miss Wickham, owned by Sarah Booth and shown by her grand daughter Amber Taylor. She was chosen by our VIP judges for the day Mr & Mrs Bentley, from Blackpool, who have owned and shown donkeys for many years. It was agreed that Miss Wickham was the donkey that they would most want to take home and, not surprisingly, she won the award last year too.

We are looking forward to continuing with our Donkey Fun Show next year and hope that even more donkeys, handlers and spectators join us in raising money towards our Northern Region's DBS charities to help donkeys in war zones and commemorating those who were involved with the World Wars.



Above (l to r): a little Moon makes her debut at Abram Show; Miss Wickham (aka Missy) with Mr and Mrs Bentley and Amber. Riding back to the boxes after a very happy day.

The DBS Championship Show

Moreton Morrell, August 2025

We are delighted to announce that Regional members gained the following accolades:

Youngstock Gelding Champion
Youngstock Championship Reserve

Beechfield Stirling Moss
Beechfield Stirling Moss

Pam Moon
Pam Moon

Adult Gelding Championship Reserve

Brownroad Kingcup

OE & EO Brown

The Champion Foal
The Sire of the Champion
The Dam of the Champion

Brownroad Coltsfoot
Eddiestone Master Matthew
Perehill Tiffany

OE & EO Brown
OE & EO Brown
OE & EO Brown

Champion Young Handler
Reserve

Olivia Mingham
Eva Potter

Champion Young Rider Reserve

Amber Taylor

C&T Juniors 3-8 yrs

2nd Miss Wickham

Izzy Brewis

C&T Juniors 9-12 yrs	1 st Freddie	Amber Taylor
C&T Juniors 13-15 yrs	1 st Beechfield Stirling Silver	Eva Potter
	2 nd Brownroad Gorse	Olivia Mingham
Best C&T Female	1 st Perehill Promise Me That	Pam Moon
Novice Donkey	2 nd Freddie	Sarah Booth
Geldings 2yrs old	1 st Beechwood Stirling Moss	Pam Moon
Junior Adult Geldings 4-7yrs	1 st Brownroad Kingcup	OE & EO Brown
	3 rd Brownroad Gorse	OE & EO Brown
Junior 2 yr old filly	1 st Brownroad Marsh Marigold	OE & EO Brown
Junior Barren Mares	1 st Perehill Promise Me That	Pam Moon
Junior Brood Mares	1 st Perehill Tiffany	OE & EO Brown
Senior Colt/Gelding Foals	1 st Brownroad Coltsfoot	OE & EO Brown
Exercise Vehicle	1 st Arcadia and Habanero	Daniel Street
Junior Whip	1 st Arcadia and Habanero	Daniel Street



A huge well done to everyone – donkeys and their humans - that took part and/or supported The Show in any way. What a lovely event it was.



Summer Picture Gallery – a few more pics . . .



Beechfield Stirling Moss at Poynton



In sync: Poppy and Philip at Great Yorkshire



Seb at Poynton!



Little Sienna practicing at Poynton!

The Richmond Purple Poppies journey 'down South'

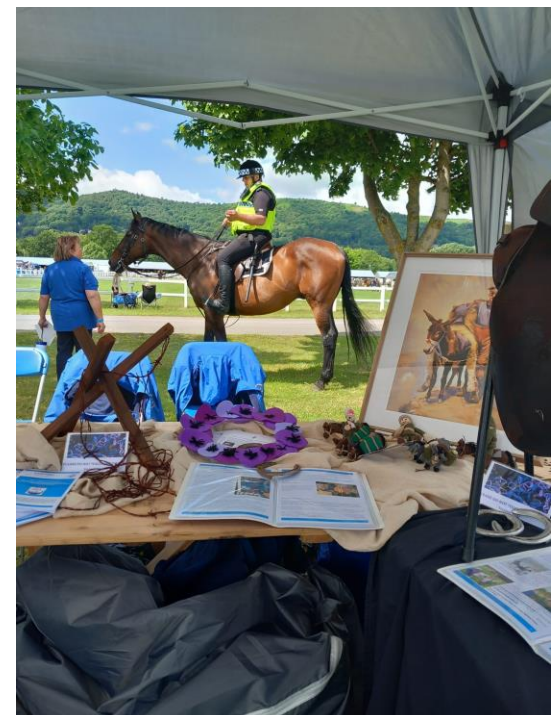
Following their highly successful participation in the Animal Allies Exhibition at The Green Howards Museum in Richmond, North Yorkshire, The Poppies journeyed down to the Royal Three Counties Show in Malvern prior to taking up a two-month summer posting at The REME Museum in Lyneham, Wiltshire.

Cotswold Corner, Mounted Police and a grand day out with Anna and Tracey from Warwick – not forgetting a chance meeting with Adam Henson!



Having been offered a spot at Malvern and it seeming like too good an opportunity to miss, we took the Poppies and other artefacts from our display and with the help of wonderful Anna Turner and lovely new DBS member Tracey, set up in the 'Cotswold Corner'. Networking with fellow exhibitors and the public and telling them about the Richmond Purple Poppies and the DBS was top of the agenda. There were plenty of opportunities to do both. Our 'next door neighbour' from the mounted police was incredibly helpful and helped to prevent the gazebo from flying into the next county, he is also into WWI re-enactment so we had plenty to talk about.

It was very warm and after a re-camp to the Pony Club's marquee due to the windy conditions, who should we spot walking past but Adam Henson from Countryfile! I greeted him and ushered him into the marquee to see



The Poppies. He was fascinated and listened carefully to our story – who knows, perhaps they will feature on Countryfile at some point in the future? We will let you know if they do!

As we all know, the weather became even warmer . . .

North and South work together on a very hot day in July

Members of the Southern and Northern Regions got together in an extremely hot corner of



Wiltshire, at The REME Museum in Lyneham on Sunday 13th July, to share a 'Donkeys at the Museum' day. Supporting the Tour of the Richmond Purple Poppies, Clare, Roger and Paula brought gorgeous donkeys Lottie and Dandy to meet members of the public. The South's Regional Delegate Trudy Affleck attended the event too.

Many thanks to Zoe and everyone at The REME Museum and of course to Clare and Barbara, Trudy and the team for coming to the Museum and for being such brilliant ambassadors for the DBS and The Tour. Your support means a lot. Huge thanks to the total stars, Lottie and Dandy - your public loved you! Your participation really made people reflect on the importance of commemoration.





The REME's Master Blacksmith Don Mallett, LWCB, FWCB, AWCBC created three beautiful poppies to travel with The Purple Poppies, commemorating the roles of 'Smiths and Farriers commissioned and non-commissioned in WWI. We are very moved by this gesture.

We will be working with Don from the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths and also with the Worshipful Company of Farriers as we collect research, anecdotes and discover artefacts that will broaden our knowledge of their work. We feel it is so important that their knowledge and skills are remembered and that they are remembered as individuals, alongside the animals and the military personnel that they worked with. They were a vital part of the team.

Back in the Peaks, Olwen, Olivia and Sarah, Diccon and Missy visit a Primary School Fete



It was a day of intermittent mizzle and the temperatures dropped somewhat when we journeyed through the Peak District to visit the primary school attended by some of the pupils that contributed work for our Exhibition at REME. The welcome however, was warm! The donkeys were total stars and we enjoyed meeting people and telling them all about our Richmond Purple Poppies and our statue project. We were delighted to be able to present certificates and rosettes to Caleb and one of his peers. Their work about farriers has become an important part of our travelling Exhibition.



Caleb and his family went down to the REME Museum in the summer holidays to see his work on display. His granny kindly wrote to us afterwards:

'We had a great time at the museum this morning, Caleb and his sister Indi were very interested in everything. The lady on reception was brilliant with them, pass on our thanks for making the visit so special.'

We did indeed and we are grateful to the Museum for giving free passes to our Primary School exhibitors.

Well done Caleb!

Donkeys at the Museum #2 with Island Farm Donkeys

Flying the flag for the DBS and their own gorgeous donkeys at the second Donkeys at the Museum day, was **Island Farm Donkeys**. We are so very grateful to John and Linda for taking Little Nelly and Gin to REME and supporting The Poppies' Tour – amazing. And, Don Mallet was there too – thank you again Don!



[Home - Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary](http://www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk)

Where next for The Richmond Purple Poppies?

We are delighted to announce that we are off to
The Museum of The Queen's Royal Hussars in
Warwick!

[QRH Museum](http://www.qrhmuseum.com) www.qrhmuseum.com



This fascinating Museum provides a wonderful timeline from 1685 to the present day with fascinating artefacts and lots of incredible information about the antecedent regiments that have contributed to the regiment as it is today. The Museum also houses the Parker Gallery with many of the items on display bequeathed by the late Major Sir Michael Parker KCVO, CBE (MJP) and his family. A prominent member of The Queen's Own Hussars, he went on to organize over 300 official national, international and royal occasions. Famously, the Royal Tournaments and tattoos national and international and many major royal events for Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



We are honoured to be displaying our Richmond Purple Poppies, together with other artefacts, and those provided by The Museum, in the Parker Gallery. The Exhibition will open on Thursday 2nd October, with activities for schools during the day, a visit from local donkeys and an official launch in the evening. It promises to be a memorable day.

Left: An interesting piece that caught my eye, a copy of the Salamanca Donkey. *'The Salamanca Donkey is associated with the 4th Dragoons and their capture of Joseph Bonaparte's silverware in the Peninsular War. It is one of many artefacts displayed in the Regiment's Messes that remind the Hussars of their heritage.'*

Sarah Booth.

How media representations shape our ideas of donkeys and other ways in which they may be perceived . . .

We are delighted to bring you an exclusive article from Dr Fiona Handyside, from the University of Exeter, written for *Asspire* about the work staff and students have undertaken with donkeys.



In January 2025, staff and students at the University of Exeter embarked together on a unique learning experience through a collaborative venture between the department of Communications, Drama and Film at the university and The Donkey Sanctuary in Sidmouth. The students undertook ten weeks of study that combined philosophical, ethical and ontological engagement with how we perceive donkeys (and the category of “the animal” more broadly) with close attention to how donkeys are depicted in film, television, and allied media and an ability to interact with donkeys at the sanctuary and learn more about the scope and variety of research work undertaken there. The ambitious aim of the study was to take seriously the idea that working alongside donkeys would enable us to generate new forms of understanding and appreciation both of the complexity of donkeys as a species and as individuals and reconsider how media representations shape our ideas concerning donkeys.

The initial impetus for the module came from Colin Farrell thanking Jenny the donkey as his co-star on *The Banshees of Inisherin* (McDonagh, 2023) when he was awarded The Golden Globe for Best Actor for his performance as Padraig in the film. We wanted to think about Jenny the donkey then from multiple perspectives – as a key character in the moving and complicated story the film tells us about life on its fictional island; as an embodied sentient being whose performance was enabled by



Credit: slashfilm.com

the actions and gestures of the actor Jenny the donkey; as a representative of our ideas about what donkeys are and do. Alongside this film, we also analysed donkeys in children’s animation; donkeys in religious films; films that centre donkey’s experiences and characteristics; documentaries about donkeys. This was then combined with a field trip where we were introduced to various groups of donkeys living at The Donkey Sanctuary and enjoyed individual encounters with them. We were also invited to participate in a tester session of

donkey mindfulness and given an insight into the complex research carried out into donkey wellbeing and the pioneering approach the sanctuary takes to qualitative assessment of donkey's emotional responses.

It delighted us but did not surprise us that there was great media attention generated when we informed the media about this course. The idea there is something inherently silly, quirky, or amusing about donkeys and studying them of course informed some of these responses. However, we also found that we were able to engage people quickly both with the complex reality of donkeys' adaptive responses to their environments and why it might be a valuable aspect of a rounded education for students hoping to work in the creative industries. While we may be more used to thinking about donkeys as labour in agricultural, industrial and tourist contexts, donkeys on film sets require careful organisation of the filming process and high standards of care and attention. Furthermore, how we represent "animals" on screen is not a neutral activity, but one that creates and confirms prejudices and misunderstandings or potentially new awareness and insight.

Finally, this is a moment in an education where students are constantly encouraged to critically engage with representation where we broaden the scope of our enquiry beyond the human centric and ask what is fair representation if it does not also include other creatures? The most radical element of our module is also its most playful. It is the moment when Jake nudges against you to demand his ears are scratched, or Ruby nibbles on your jacket, or any of the other experiences the students and us shared at the sanctuary. It brings home to us that donkeys are not allegorical, metaphorical beings or comfy toy companions, but fellow creatures with whom we share the planet.

Dr Fiona Handyside.

Director of Education and Student Experience for the department of Communication, Drama and Film, University of Exeter.

Students meeting donkeys at Sidmouth



[Donkeys take lead role in new degree course](#) - you can link to an interesting little video of Fiona and the donkeys here!

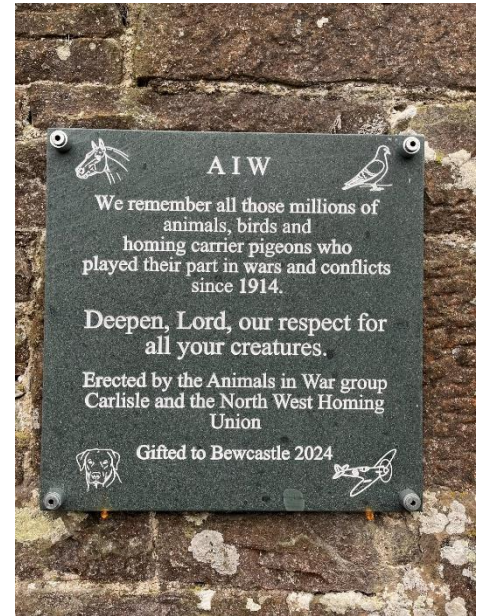
Thank you to Fiona for this thought-provoking article and we wish you and your students well.

And before the summer, there was spring, and our Northern Region donkeys represented all donkeys, everywhere . . .

Bewcastle honours animals in war on 08 May 2025

This was the 80th anniversary of VE Day and coincidentally was World Donkey Day 2025.

This coinciding of dates was, on my part, no coincidence – rather it seemed the absolutely best possible date for us in Bewcastle to dedicate the plaque, proudly mounted in the churchyard on the wall of our little museum, that had been generously donated by a local Cumbrian group who aim to keep animals in war in the public eye.



Living in our parish is Bishop John Richardson, retired from formal duties but fundamental to the life of the community. He led the short but poignant service of dedication. Here is his brief address -

“It so happened that a fortnight ago one of my nieces came to visit us all the way from Australia along with her two teenage daughters - bright as buttons!

“Before you go,” I said, “you must pop in to see our little museum. It’s a gem. Since it’s almost all in pictures even I can understand it!”

We got as far as the museum door when one of them said to me. “What’s that plaque up there all about? I love the animals on it.”

I told her how during the last two world wars horses, mules and donkeys, spaniels and collie dogs and even homing pigeons were used at the battle front - horses, donkeys and mules to haul heavy carts laden with ammunition; dogs to suss out enemy booby traps, and pigeons to fly back home to their handlers with messages attached to their tiny pink feet.

“Many of them,” I said “came from local farms all around.” Her eyes widened. “I had no idea” she said “about all that. How sad. But how wonderful to remember them in this way. Did most of them make it home when the war ended? “

“No,” I said. “that’s perhaps the saddest bit of all. Many of them, horses in particular were simply shot where they stood because it was thought too costly to bring them home.” At that point she shed a tear.

In this beautiful place visited by literally hundreds (if not thousands) of people each year, we do well to remember the part that animals played during the war years - their courage and loyalty; to honour, to respect and to say thank you to them, remembering that animals are just as much part of God’s creation as we are.

So, thank you to those who have inspired and paid for this plaque. As that young lady said, it’s poignant and it’s beautiful.

We shall end with a simple prayer.

Bless, O Lord, this plaque which we hallow in your name. May it remind all who see it of the selfless courage and loyalty of all those animals who played such a vital part with us in war.

As we remember them, we ask that you will help us always to share with all God’s creatures something of the love and kindness that you show to us.

We ask this in the name of Christ, Our Lord. Amen”.

Everyone who attended wore purple, as did Hamish and Dougal, sporting their purple lead ropes.



Allison Roberts.

And, at Chatsworth in the Peak District . . .

Shani Marshall sent us this splendid picture of donkeys Treacle and Puck on Palm Sunday, at the beautiful church of St Peter's Edensor, on the Chatsworth Estate, in the Peak District.



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NEW FEATURE ALERT!!

'Readers' Pet Sanctuaries'

Keeping content fresh, we are pleased to introduce a new feature, where you get to tell us about your favourite Sanctuary or place of Rescue(s).

This edition, Julie Connolley tells us about Barnhill Donkey Retreat, Sleagill . . .

Just outside the rolling hills of Shap, in Cumbria, I recently met an amazing lady called Linda Gilbert who rescues and rehabilitates donkeys.

I'd heard many positive stories about Linda and the work she does at Barnhill Donkey Retreat at Sleagill, so I thought it was about time I went to meet her!

I received a warm welcome from Linda and her donkeys, many of whom have very upsetting and harrowing stories before Linda rescued them. The process of rehabilitation can be long and arduous, all the while working closely with her vet and farrier.

Linda opens her doors to the public Monday to Friday 10am -12noon, she doesn't charge visitors as she feels that many are unable to afford to pay and they are the ones that benefit hugely from seeing and interacting

with the donkeys. Groups of Cubs, Brownies and schoolchildren regularly visit, enjoying learning about and interacting with the donkeys. Also, Linda arranges meet the vet and farrier days, where visitors learn about the importance of caring for a donkey's feet and teeth and the unique nature of donkeys. As you can imagine the cost of rehabilitating badly injured and ill donkeys comes with considerable cost. Linda must rely on donations from visitors who feel that they can afford to give something towards her work and she also has a lovely little shop on site selling donkey themed gifts.

Linda's website - www.barnhilldonkeysretreat.co.uk has a wealth of information about many of the donkeys she has rescued, some quite hard to read along with photos of their condition on arrival, but out of that it's uplifting to see how Linda's love and care has changed many donkey's lives for the better.

Here's an exert from her website explaining how her donkey rescue journey started.

"The journey started in 2003, when we were asked would we take Murphy Donk, by a rescue centre. Murphy had been tied behind a van and dragged around a field, resulting in horrific injuries to his legs and body. Murphy was seventeen years old when he came to us, he lived the last two years of his life with us and our lovely mare Bridie.

It was not until 2012 when Ebbs came along as company for my mare Tessa after we lost Bridie at 28 years old. Ebbs was the one who opened the gates for abused, starved and unwanted donkeys.

Never did I think that there would be so many donkeys in need of help.

This website highlights their story, from having no hope to welcoming children and adults alike despite their sometimes-horrific past and injuries, the donkeys show no malice just grateful thanks, a trait some humans should learn.

While most of the donkeys that arrive find new forever homes, some will always stay, I call them the vulnerable ones, these donkeys have their own page, which I hope gives some understanding and insight to what they have suffered and have come out the other side as "Little long ear" hero's.

There have been forty-two donkeys re-homed in pairs and all loving and living their lives to the full, we will continue to take in and where possible re-home the donkeys

We are a small yard that concentrates on getting those donkeys that have been dumped, abused, and given up on the chance to see what their life should be like and has become. The greatest number of donkeys that have been at any one time is twenty-one.

It is thanks to the many visitors, nursery groups, Brownies, Rainbows, families, and individuals who come along and spend time and show the donkeys that life is in fact good, helps so much, in return the donkeys give love back"

One donkey in particular touched my heart, several years ago Velvet Breeze (V-B) and her mum Mistral were found tied to Linda's gate, V-B had a stab wound to her left eye, which had to be removed urgently by Linda's vet.

Here's a photo of Mistral and V-B shortly after her eye was removed, they are now thriving and will stay with Linda for the rest of their lives.



Julie Connolley

Tell us about your favourite Sanctuary, send your article and pics to northerndonks@gmail.com. Please note that the views expressed are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the Donkey Breed Society.

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 to small effect, if you find it works a treat, we want to hear about it!



My indispensable shedding comb - Alison Wilson

I can't be the only donkey owner whose donkey sheds his winter coat in August and regrows it in September. The best tool I've found for helping this process along so he doesn't overheat in our increasingly warm summer months is the shedding comb. It strips the winter coat out in hugely satisfying quantities (and the jackdaws make short work of picking up the combings for nest refurbishment). Judging by his cooperation, my donkey finds this process reasonably pleasurable and will happily stand for it without being tied up. Thank you Alison, Ed.

Why not share your totally indispensable top stuff, email: northerndonks@gmail.com!



A little bit of Joy . . .

Joy shares her gorgeous Tea Loaf Recipe with readers

6 oz sultanas
6oz soft brown sugar
1 large egg
½ tsp cinnamon
Pinch of salt

6 oz currants
275 mls strong tea
10 oz SR Flour
½ tsp nutmeg

Soak the fruit and sugar in tea overnight. Then, mix in the remaining ingredients. Bake at 160c Fan. 45-55 mins or until a skewer comes out clean.

So simple!

This makes 2 x 1lb loaves or 1 x 2lb loaf.

Joy tells me she uses mixed fruit! Sounds scrummy!





A Reminder as to What's on:

JUST SOME OF THE EVENTS WE ARE GOING TO IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS!

Please note that all members, from all over the Regions, are warmly invited to attend events across the Regions – 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.

Shows, Exhibitions and Events update . . .

SEPTEMBER

Keighley Show Saturday 7th September [KEIGHLEY & DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL SHOW](http://keighleyshow.co.uk) – Livestock, horses and other animals, large and small, are interspersed with horticulture, handicrafts, children's amusements, trade stands and many special attractions. (keighleyshow.co.uk)

Again, donkey classes re-introduced last year – a lovely show, lots going on to see.

Bowes Show Sunday 8th September [Bowes Agricultural Show](http://bowesshow.org.uk) (bowesshow.org.uk)

A proper village show – plenty to see.

Stanhope Show Saturday 14th/Sunday 15th September [Stanhope Show](http://stanhope-show.co.uk) | [Weardale's Premier Show](http://weardale-premier-show.co.uk)

A lovely show needing support.

Eggleston Mickleton Saturday 14th September [Country Show](http://country-show.co.uk) | [Eggleston Show](http://eggleston-show.co.uk) | Entries needed, a lovely little village show.

RESERVE THE DATE for a very special Walk and Picnic!

When: Saturday 27th September

Where: Rivington Pike, Lancashire PARKING: BL6 7RU

Details: Meet at Rivington from 10.30 am for a prompt 11.00am start!

For instructions as to how to find the parking area and maps of the proposed route please send an email to donovanross@talktalk.net and Don will reply with the attachments. The paths are rough in places so walking boots are recommended. Please carry a mobile phone, food for a picnic lunch and appropriate clothing.

There are stretches suitable for long-reining but definitely not for carriage driving. Passports and insurance should also be carried.

You will not want to miss this – please keep an eye on your emails for a very exciting exclusive linked to this event!

AND BEYOND . . .

From Thursday 2nd October – The Richmond Purple Poppies Exhibition reaches The Museum of The Queen's Royal Hussars in Warwick. Full details to follow.

The National AGM

Saturday 15th November

Wilmslow, Cheshire

This year, hosted by the Northern Region! See Pam's preview of this important event on p4.

For further details/information relating to the AGM and forthcoming Shows contact Pam Moon

07842 535993 pam.moon@talktalk.net

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.

Last call for this year's Photographic Competition Entries!! Please get your pics to our Judge, Bill Tetlow billtetlow@gmail.com by **1st November** – as long as there is a donkey or donkeys in the pic, send it/them in – we could be featuring your photos in our next edition of *Asspire!*

Winners of the last photographic competition:

1st Prize: Vicky Steele

2nd Prize: Allison Roberts

3rd Prize: Sarah Booth

Well done everyone!

Useful Contacts

Northern Region Chair and Regional Delegate: Allison Roberts 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

Northern Region Treasurer: Adele Potter 07825741158 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

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 – for the moment, please contact Allison Roberts (details as above). Thank you.

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

Regional Chair – position vacant

Regional Secretary - Jacqui Methven minijax@icloud.com

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!

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

And finally,

A plea to all Members:

‘donkeys and their humans need you!’

If, like us, you are passionate about the donkeys in your life, whether you are an owner, guardian, or just a total obsessive fan of the long-ears (or all of those things combined) please do tell people about the DBS. We need to boost our numbers, how awful it would be if The Society dwindled – all that wealth of donkey knowledge that keeps donks happy and healthy, sliding into oblivion to the detriment of ownership/guardianship and donkeys in the future.

So, if you have a particular skill (good with computers, social media, organising a craft day, coffee morning, teaching, writing, stirring the troops, equine knowledge or whatever!) do let us know – a few hours every couple of months could help to keep our Society moving in the right direction!

Please get in touch, there’s a definite bonus too – it’s lots of fun and brings oodles of happy vibes!

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

Eva Potter with Champion Foal Brownroad Coltsfoot (aka Otto, owned by Olwen and Liz Brown) at Poynton . . .

What were they doing?

It will all become clear, shortly!

A question for very small juniors: how many picnic baskets in this edition of *Asspire*?



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 Regions! Send pictures, articles, snippets of news from the autumn/winter months, to northerndonks@gmail.com to reach us by Wednesday 3rd December.

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