**WESTERN REGION NEWSLETTER**

**Donkey Breed Society**

**Committee :**

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**Judy Lane**

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**And Worcestershire**

 **July, 2017**

**From the Regional Delegate :**

Dear Western Region Members,

 2017 has brought the Golden Jubilee of the Donkey Breed Society,celebrating 50 years of activities with donkeys and the enjoyment of their loyal companionship.

 Our own regional celebration will coincide with the issue of this Newsletter, and has made possible by the generosity of Sheila Bell and her helpers who have combined it with her annual lunch party at Ballis Wood Cottage, Little Dewchurch. Herefordshire.

 At the party we shall launch the Western Region Golden Jubilee Prize Draw, the proceeds of which will go towards the Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary Hospital Appeal. The Equine Hospital was officially opened by the MP Ed Vaizey, in the Autumn of 2016, but equipping it continues to be an expensive project and we hope we can raise sufficient funds to make a handsome donation. John McLaren who leads the Island Farm team of workers and volunteers has just joined us as our Area Representative for Oxfordshire.

 You may like to recommend a visit to the Island Farm web-site or to find them on Facebook., when selling tickets. You will find news of events which you might like to include in a summer holiday day out with children or friends.

There are some excellent draw prizes for donkey lovers and ‘lay’ persons alike, so please do your best to sell the tickets. A list of prizes with a few more details than we can get on to the tickets is given below.

 The draw will take place over the weekend of the DBS AGM and Dinner at Puckrup Hall Hotel, Nr Tewkesbury on 24th/ 26th September. The Western Region are pleased to be able to assist the DBS in the hosting of this event and we hope that our own regional members will give a very warm welcome to those travelling from all over the UK to Puckrup. The Hilton Hotel chain have held the prices quoted during preliminary investigations in 2015, and those who would like an overnight or weekend stay will find the rates reasonable for the pre- Christmas period. Do please support the DBS Golden Jubilee Dinner held on the Saturday evening, 24th November. You can choose to gather your own party to occupy a table of 10, and it will be a great way to celebrate friendships made through those lovely long-ears of ours.

GOLDEN JUBILEE DRAW PRIZES:

A portrait of your favourite dog or donkey by well-know animal artist Claire Verity. She has recently been commissioned to paint Frankel foals by a Race horse stud.

A bumper Christmas hamper in a wicker picnic basket, containing seasonal foods from producers of fine quality fare in our Western Region.

A bespoke donkey head collar or in-hand bridle in English leather made by a saddler to measurements supplied by the winner..

A week’s holiday in a 4 \* Holiday Cottage in the Wye Valley AONB., (excluding heating costs) Web-site gives full info. Sleeps 4 in two en-suite bedrooms.

Bottles of a well-known brand of champagne. A £20.00 Garden Token

A Donkey Weight Tape. A donkey soft toy.

And other small prizes. (more contributions will be gratefully received.)

Safeguarding. Many of you will already be aware of the Government’s recent moves to spread the responsibility for watching over children’s safety by encouraging organisers and volunteers to make early intervention in cases where any form of abuse could be taking place. The new Safeguarding legislation has replaced the CRB check with a Disclosure and Barring Service, (Yes, you have spotted it; they have hi-jacked the DBS acronym.)

 “Mind your own business” has often been a firm deterrent in the past when intervention has been attempted, but some of the recent tragic cases of brutality, starvation and neglect might well have been prevented had adults in contact with the victims been more vigilant and made it their business to voice concerns to those in authority. The DBS screening service attempts to eliminate people already known to be unsuitable to be in contact with children, and gives confidence to Organisers that those who offer themselves as Voluntary helpers can work without supervision.

Abusers are often the most unlikely people and deceitful in their attempts to make contact with young children in order to groom them for sexual abuse or radicalisation.

Every organiser of community events for unaccompanied school-aged children must now get themselves screened, so that those with a criminal conviction, or on the Child Protection Register are deterred from volunteering as the adult in charge, and cannot slip through the net. There are two levels of screening. Organisers are encouraged to apply for full screening to any of the Umbrella Bodies which have been accepted as screening agencies. All Local Authorities have now been signed up, as have The British Horse Society for all organisers of equine events. It costs £25.00. (Help could be available with this; apply to our Treasurer)

Volunteers for Charities such as our own Donkey Breed Society are urged to apply for the basic certificated screening which is FREE, as long as you earn only out-of-pocket expenses. It is a simple process which can be conducted on-line. When you can show your certificate, the organiser knows that you can be trusted to work with children and without supervision. There is a free updating service. If Organisers use unscreened volunteers they MUST keep them in sight throughout the event.

I can hear the sighs at yet more red-tape. Please don’t dismiss this advice as irrelevant to Western Region DBS activities. While we don’t enjoy a large number of junior members at present, we do come into contact with agencies such as the churches and schools where parents are not always present with their children. You will probably be surprised to know that we have already faced a situation a about three years ago in our region when donkeys were invited to take part in a street pageant. A young girl dressed as a fairy was seen to be attracting unsuitable attention from a man also in costume. Unluckily for him he was spotted by two vigilant donkey handlers whose report to the organiser resulted in his being warned him off.

Hopefully one day we shall have lots of youngsters wanting to join our Region as Junior members. Teachers, Social workers, Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Brownie organisers. Pony Clubs, Organisers of residential camps, Choir conductors, Ministers of Religion, and Leaders of any activity organised for children without parental supervision, will already be familiar with the new legislation and will expect organisations to have its implementation in place. Please keep Safeguarding in mind if you are planning an event with children when parents are absent.

Finally, I have decided with many regrets that I cannot complete my second three year period of service as Regional Delegate for the Western Region. Life at home has become increasingly demanding while my energies have diminished making it extremely difficult at times to attend Council Meetings. Members will need to consider who they will feel should act as the essential link between the Donkey Breed Society Council and the Western Region. Nominations should reach the Secretary by the end of November. New faces, busy in some aspect of donkey activities and prepared to become further involved are always welcome.

Sue Farr

Regional Delegate

**News from Claire Harper – Area Representative**

**Worcestershire, Warwickshire and West Midlands**

We had a brilliant experience on the 18th March 2017 when ‘**Understanding Equine** **Cushing’s Disease and Laminitis in Donkeys’** was the subject for the day. We were very fortunate to have two wonderful speakers, Veterinary Surgeon Mr. Jack Waters BVM@S. MRCVS and Farrier Mr Tony Charley Dip.WCF/ATF who, although they hadn’t met before this day formed a perfect team, totally re-arranged our plan of events and ended up giving us a wonderful day of lectures, discussions, demonstrations and explanations, both showing endless patience in answering a multitude of questions.

Jack and Tony had a few special tips. They both agreed that any vet or farrier attending donkeys must be aware of the way donkeys have the need to be approached slowly – don’t rush in, but just stand back, talk normally to the owner and watch the donkey for a few minutes. Tony stressed that the farrier needs to see the donkey is standing in a balanced way or leaning or resting one foot excessively. Tony also recommended the farrier must be prepared to get down low when picking up donkeys’ feet and not to use a horse-size foot resting stool. Tony also stated that when a donkey is being kept in because of laminitis, the bedding in the stable needs to be right up to the door, without the customary area of hard-standing that is left adjacent to the door to stop the bedding getting out into the yard. This is just where the donkey will want to stand to see out of the stable and he will need the bedding to cover the whole of the floor.

Jack’s special suggestions were:

1. Horses and ponies can be starved before taking blood samples, but not donkeys because of the danger of hyperlipaemia. Instead, the blood should be taken first thing in the morning when the donkey has only had access to straw and no additional feed.

2. Be aware that frosted grass is high in sugar – do not put the donkey out into the paddock until later in the day when the frost has gone.

3. Donkeys do not always have the typical retained coat of an Equine Cushing’s Disease sufferer. Their coat can appear almost normal.

4. Speak to your vet about the possibility of routinely blood testing your donkeys for Cushing’s disease when they reach the age of approximately 20 years.

5. There is frequently the possibility that the donkey which has been diagnosed with Cushing’s also has Equine Metabolic Syndrome Disease (EMS) and may need concurrent treatment.

6. A Polo mint provides the perfect hole for a tablet.

7. If possible the donkey should come out of winter with a Body Condition Score of 3 to allow for the natural increase of weight during the Spring and Summer.

Extensive information notes from The Donkey Sanctuary, Redwings, The British Horse Society, the Laminitis Clinic and produce manufacturers were collated and I still have a few packs. If anyone would like a copy please contact me on 01386 833524 or email: cj\_harper@hotmail.com

Many thanks to Steve and Susie Hammett who provided the perfect venue and of course, thanks also to their two donkeys Lucy and Jemima and Anna Turner’s donkey Henry, all of whom proved perfect for the demonstrations.

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On the 13th April we again held a stand at the lovely **Countrytastic** show at Malvern Showgrounds in Worcestershire. This year the numbers were restricted but still resulted in 5000 people attending. The aim is to give visitors the opportunity to learn all about the countryside, food and farming in a friendly, hands-on environment. There were many exhibits of animals and produce, working dogs and farm machinery. We had four donkeys on our stand kindly brought by Sheila Bell and Sue Farr, plus a table with many different pictures of donkeys for children to colour or take away, and a range of Donkey Sanctuary gifts for sale. My thanks to Eileen Parker, Jane and Laura-Jane Ward, Judy Lane, and Kate and Angela Scales for helping with the donkeys and on the tables. I really couldn’t do this without your help and it is very much appreciated. Thanks again.

On Sunday 2nd July a group of 10 people and 3 donkeys set off around the village of North Littleton, Near Evesham on a ‘Walk for Webster’ organised by Peter and Angela Scales. It was a lovely day and village people were very generous filling our collecting box. Afterwards a picnic in the garden at the home of Claire and John Harper completed the happy day.

**Report from Gloucestershire and Somerset from Area Representative – Judy Lane**

As we pass mid-Summer, I hope you have been enjoying the donkey season so far, including (hopefully) some of the various Western Region Events advertised previously in the Newsletters. So far so good then, but time now to update diaries to include key occasions still to come – occasions at which organisers need your support, and which are always memorable and fun get-togethers.

On May 13th, our first Gloucestershire Webster’s Walk took place in Miserden Park. It was a perfect day, and an idyllic location. A dozen hikers, two dogs and (sadly just) one donkey, made the gentle picnic/trek. In the process (and aided by Sue Farr’s Garraway House Collection) we raised £140 towards the Webster’s Jubilee Fund. Bravo to those who came, and helped make it a delightfully memorable day. Around the publication of this Newsletter (on 16th July), a similar event will be the **MAY HILL** challenge. These walks, promoted by Angela and Peter Scales, invariably take us to superb locations, and combining as they do, light exercise, pleasant social contacts (some familiar, some new) and hearing the latest donkey news – make for highlights of the year. Escapes from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, they enable us to walk and talk together and raise a little useful cash by the way.

The B.D.S is keen to support the Donkey Driving world. In our area, donkeys and mules will be welcome at the **ASTON SOMERVILLE SHOW on SATURDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER**. Do diarise this date and come if you possibly can. Even if you don’t own a donkey (or he/she is indisposed), it is well worth attending. I should add too that small shows like this will only survive if they are supported, so do come (and let me know via email or telephone if you need directions, entry forms etc). It would be good to show an enthusiastic response to this offer from the D.B.S. Hazel Woodbridge (B.D.S Area Commissioner for Wiltshire) has organised this fun event to include donkeys and mules. Reminder : all participants must be members of the D.B.S).

And finally, as the Summer holidays approach in this Jubilee Year, may we call on Crafters, of all ages, to make **GOLDEN DONKEYS** of all styles. A template, (plus advice) is to be found in the **Summer ‘Bray Talk’.** This is perfect employment for children/grandchildren on those wet August holidays, and resulting golden creations will find their way onto the D.B.S Christmas Tree at our **B.D.S ; A.G.M. at Puckrup Hall, on November 25th**. (Remember to bring them, and confirm that important date in your diaries too – in indelible ink!)

Meantime of course, I wish you the happiest, healthiest Summer with your donkey(s).

Judy Lane

N.B Two cautionary notes :

* Look out for **RAGWORT** in your fields/yards. Remove as much as possible by pulling out the entire plant. (a ‘Ragfork’ is ideal) remembering to cover up, and wear a face mask to avoid inhalation of the toxic pollen.
* Guard against FLIES on your donkey. Prevention of sores is better than cure BUT an effective home-made fly repellent that was passed on to me can help keep those nasty pests at bay: (wipe around the eyes and face/ears with clean cloth. Use separate cloth for the body/legs).

½ pt. distilled white vinegar

½ pt. black tea

1 ½ caps Dettol

1 cap peppermint essence

(for extra effect add 20 drops oil of citronella

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**Future Events:**

You are very welcome to attend any of these events, and to bring along any friends or relatives who would like to come. Your support would be greatly appreciated.

**15 July, 2017** -Webster Walk up May Hill, Gloucestershire. Contact Peter Scales for information on pjscal@gmail.com

**6 August 2017**- Webster Walk and Picnic with Donkeys, at the home of Anna Turner Near Stratford on Avon. Contact Anna on 01789 730039 or email: gardenenia.soft.furnishings@btinternet.com

**Friday 11 August. 2017 – Tea Party and Fete in Aid of the Brick Kiln Donkeys - 2 – 5pm** at Hollowtree House, Folly Lane, Stovey, Pensford, Bristol, BS39 4 DW – Telephone : 01275 235419. Items for Raffle welcome. Contact : janetparsonsorchardstudios5@btinternet.com

**19/20 August** **2017** - DBS Supreme Championship Show, Moreton Morrell College, Warwickshire. Assistance always required. Please contact the Championship Show Committee Chairman, Carol Travell if you would like to help on 01279 655454 or email: caroltravell@btinternet.com

**3 September, 2017** – Wiltshire Donkey Show, Nr. Chippenham, Wiltshire. For information please contact Mrs M Thorne on email : maureen@thorneassociates.freeserve.co.uk

**10 September, 2017 – SPEAR Open Day, Norton Lindsay, Warwickshire**

**16 September, 2017** **– Webster Walk at the home of Sheila Bell Little Dewchurch**

Herefordshire. For information please contact Peter Scales on email : pjscal@gmail.com or phone 01367 860876

**17 September, 2017** - British Driving Society Show at Aston Somerville, Worcs. Classes for donkeys. For information please contact Judy Lane on 01285 821445 or email: jml.267@btinternet.com

**23/24 September, 2017 - Malvern Autumn Show.** We will again be holding a stand at this terrific Show – if you would like to bring donkeys or help on the stand (even if only for an hour or so) – please contact Claire Harper on 01386 833524 or email: cj\_harper@hotmail.com

**8 October, 2017 - International Day of the Donkey. – Donkey Agility** with LesleyRadcliffe, Demonstrations of working over obstacles at Liberty, Location : Orchard View, West Side, North Littleton, Near Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 8QP. Contact Claire Harper on email : cj\_harper@hotmail.com or 01386 833524

**11 November, 2017 –** **Lord Mayor’s Parade in London**. Contact Carole Travell on 01279 655454

**25 November, 2017 – Golden Jubilee AGM and Dinner at Puckrup Hall, Nr Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.** Further information will be in the next issue of Bray Talk.

**10 December, 2017 - Regional Meeting and Christmas Lunch** and Get-together at the home of Peter and Anna Turner, The Grove, King’s Lane, Snitterfield, Stratford on Avon, Warks., CV37 0QA. For details phone 01789 730039 or email: gardenia.soft.furnishings@btinternet.com

**ITEMS FOR SALE**

1: Exercise Vehicle, suitable for a donkey 10 – 12 hands. £180

2: Pair of Blue Jump Blocks £40

3: Set of dressage markers £35

4: Child’s Vintage Western Saddle £50

5: Old leather harness full collar, suitable for a donkey £20

6: Dog pack saddle, could be easily converted for small donkey. £10

For information on the above items please contact Claire Harper - 01386 833524 or email: cj\_harper@hotmail.com