



The Moorland Mousie Trust

To promote and conserve the Exmoor pony

Registered charity no. 1080504

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It's Autumn again, and we have just had a busy couple of weeks visiting several herds and acquiring youngsters, in particular young colts. We would like to say thank you to all of those herd owners who welcomed us to their annual gatherings, and took the time to ask about our work, and subsequently endorse what we are hoping to achieve. In particular, we were very fortunate to meet with the Brendon herd owners this year for the first time, and have purchased some lovely colts from them. October is by far the busiest month for me, but I thoroughly enjoy the whole experience. The good thing about it all this year was that several of you were able to join us for the first time, and in some cases even managed to help with the gatherings. We also welcomed Phil Beasley back again with his pony, Mouse – both helped out again at the gathering of the Anchor ponies on Winsford Hill.



Photograph taken by Mike Sherwin at the Withypool gathering 2003.

The colts are now at Ashwick with Sasha, or with their fosterers. This year we are giving everyone the opportunity to follow their progress. Several of you have expressed an interest in following through the progress of youngster, and with this in mind, we have launched a sponsorship scheme, details of which are outlined within the newsletter, along with our adoption scheme for some of the older ponies. Our thanks to Judith Weatherburn and Lisa Gardner for their work putting these schemes together. You will also find details of cards, photos, limited edition pin badges, and other bits and pieces as we slowly get our merchandising list compiled. Congratulations to those who will be taking delivery of ponies this Autumn/Winter, and very best wishes to everyone for Christmas and the coming Year.

THANKYOU TO PFIZER AND MERRIAL.

First of all, a big thank you to Pfizer and Merrial, who have once again supplied us with generous amounts of wormers in preparation for the Autumn intake.

FUNDRAISING NEWS.

RAFFLE RESULTS.

The raffle has been a tremendous success, raising some £1700 plus. Congratulations to the major prize winners: Chris Pollitt won the holiday on Exmoor, Philippa Hancock won the watercolour painting donated by Sue Wingate, and Sarah Cashman won the Barbour Jacket. The winners of the tickets for Kelly Marks tour have been notified.

OLIVIA SPARKS, one of Katie's regular riders, did a sponsored ride during her Summer holidays. She only decided a few days beforehand, but still managed to raise £80, which was a brilliant effort. Thank you Livvy from everyone at the Trust, and a special thank you from Katie!



Olivia & Katie (second from right) with the Thompson family on Winsford Hill.

Yet again, thanks are due to the **INTELLIGENT HORSEMANSHIP** supporters, and especially to **Adrian Cawdery**, who has been co-ordinating their fundraising campaign on our behalf. All sorts of envelopes have been dropping through my door. The funds have come from some very interesting sources, one in particular is **Veronica Flynn** who has been doing lots of psychic readings with donations to the Trust. Also thanks to **Holly and Mandy** who have been doing a similar thing with animal readings. The readings are obviously positive judging by the amount of donations coming in. Adrian is also running an auction on the site – this month's offering is a painting.

For anyone wanting more information about the IH fundraising campaign: ihdg.appeal.users.btopenworld.com or intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk and click onto discussion group.

The **HEXHAM FUN RIDE** produced a healthy £1200. It seems to be becoming something of an annual event. We were really pleased to see the Exmoors there.

A BUSY SUMMER.

Yet again, Raphael was out on in the show ring. His qualification for The Horse of the Year Show was greeted with lots of excitement, and his eventual 6th place was something to be proud of. We hope to have a write up in the near future. Once again, we are grateful to those who have enjoyed the showing of the ponies. This activity has been financed solely by the individuals concerned, and no money has been used out of the Trust funds.

One of the real pleasures for me this Summer has been the fact that we have been able to welcome visitors to Ashwick. When I began this project, I always envisaged not only a focal point for the ponies, but also a place for those of us with this shared passion. Until now there has'nt been a place where Exmoor pony enthusiasts visiting Exmoor could feel a sense of belonging. Although facilities are still in their infancy, we have been thrilled to have met so many of you, many of whom have rolled their sleeves up and willingly given us a helping hand with odd jobs. Sarah and Derek Burchett are becoming regulars, arriving with pony treats in one hand, and toolbox in the other. Clare Holland, one of our valued fosterers, not only turned up to collect ponies, but also volunteered her husband's electrical skills (not quite sure if he knows about it yet). The main week for ponies and people was in August, when both Exford and Dunster shows took place. Several of you contacted us and asked if we could meet up. It was a real fun week. Everyone mucked in and enjoyed themselves. There was no standing on ceremony – if it had four legs and a mealy muzzle, and you happened to be standing in the vicinity, the task was yours!

Lisa Gardner and fiancé Johnathan Bell travelled from Newcastle upon Tyne for something of a busman's holiday. Poor Johnathan left Lisa's Exmoors behind and exchanged them for another lot! Here's Lisa's diary, with photographic contributions from Sarah and Derek Burchett.....

DIARY OF A WEEK ON EXMOOR by

Lisa Gardner (with contributions from Jonathan Bell!)



Saturday 9th August. It's the hottest day of the year so far, and we have chosen to sit in the car and park it on the M5 for hours. The services are packed with hot, sweaty people and screaming children. Why did we choose to go to Exmoor for our hols? Six and a half hours after leaving Stafford, we pass a sign welcoming us to Exmoor National Park. A quick glance around at the scenery and the immediate sense of tranquillity assures us that we made the right decision. So I start the hunt for my first glimpse of a 'real' Exmoor pony. As soon as we crossed the cattle grid onto South Hill, there they were – the stallion, Cracker standing in the middle of the road, and a mare and foal in the shade just to the left of us. The memories of the nightmare journey faded away. This was it. I felt like I was home.

Sunday 10th August. After a good night's sleep at Knighton, we spend the morning investigating. The moorlands are stunning, but the best part has to be that just about everywhere we turn are mealy muzzles! In the afternoon we start to receive messages that 'The Crowd' are beginning to arrive. Val comes to Knighton to collect us, and 'forces' us to go to the PUB in Exford for tea, where we meet up with Sasha and Alan. Lots and lots of pony chatter, booze and giggles, and we

make plans to meet up to ride the next day.

Monday 11th August. In the morning we do 'The Tourist' thing driving up to the north of Exmoor and wandering along the beach. Much pony spotting was achieved en route. In the afternoon I went to Ashwick where I saw my beloved Tuppence again! She tried to make out that she remembered and missed me, but I think all she was really trying to say was 'You're the one with the polos. Where are they then?!' Val had recruited another two jockeys – Alex and Ginny- and the four of us set off on a route that we were told would take about an hour and a half. As we leave I think to myself 'I'm riding an Exmoor pony on Exmoor. Does life get any better?' Three hours later, I'm still riding an Exmoor on Exmoor, and the novelty is wearing thin. The sun has set, it's getting chilly, and none of us has a clue where we are. Thankfully we meet up with a lady walking her dog who directs us back to Ashwick, but we're still at least half an hour away! We make it back just as Sasha is coming to find us. We abandon pub plans for the evening, as it is now well past everyone's bedtime! Instead we plan to meet up tomorrow for pony bathing!

Tuesday 12th August.



Anyone who arrives at Ashwick today will be given a sponge and a bucket. These are the rules! Olivia had left strict instructions that she was bathing Kate. That left Alex and Ginny with Tuppence and Abbie to polish. Sarah and Derek Burchett were given Gherkin, a very sweet yearling to scrub and de-bot, and I was allocated Charlie, a gorgeous Herd 10 two-year

old. Judith Weatherburn and her sister Kay valiantly tackled the tack cleaning. Several hours later, ponies are suitably polished and put to bed in preparation for the big day ahead. Later that evening John and Jenny Allen join us for a meal at The Lion Inn in Dulverton. We all enjoy the food and company, and the exchange of some hilarious pony stories.

Wednesday 13th August, Exford Show.

Early start for all. Ponies are given a final polish and are all loaded onto various means of transport. The convoy leaves Ashwick – quite a sight to behold as we cross Winsford Hill.



Tuppence flew the flag for the Trust coming third in both her ridden and in-hand classes. Charlie tried his best, but it was all a bit too much and he needed a little doze half way through his in-hand class. However, he still gained a not-to-be-sneezed-at fifth. Olivia took Kate into the Young handlers and First ridden classes. Shaggy also rode Scooby Doo in the fancy dress! The duo did themselves proud!



In the afternoon the services of Tuppence and Liz, Dylan and Alex, and Abbie and myself were required in the Main Ring. The ponies showed themselves off as Sasha gave a brief commentary. I think they would all happily become accustomed to life in a main ring!



Lisa & Tuppence get final instructions from Sasha before their main ring display.

Veronica Lilley put in an appearance, very excited at the prospect of the new herd, which she was helping to form on behalf of Berkshire Council. Ponies on Greenham Common – certainly different from nuclear missiles – maybe not!!! That evening the whole crew gathered at The London Inn for a magnificent meal. The perfect end to a great day.

Thursday 14th August. A non-pony day! Well as non-pony as my days ever get. We spent the afternoon wandering around Winsford Hill. We did stumble upon several ponies basking in the shade. Later on we watched Sasha, Liz, Sarah and Derek working hard at Ashwick! After all that watching, we went back to Knighton for a well-deserved lie down!

Friday 15th August, Dunster Show.

Another early start. Charlie and Ghekin strutted their stuff in the Youngstock classes gaining a fourth and third respectively.



Tuppence & Liz do well at Dunster Show.

Then it was Tuppence's turn. She took first in her in-hand, third in her ridden and then was overall Exmoor Pony Champion. At last, one of the ponies is trying to earn her keep! Well-done Tuppence!

Saturday 16th August. It's all over.

The car is packed and we say our goodbyes to Exmoor. Another long sit

on the motorway, but lots of fun memories. Thanks to Creenagh and Bob Mitchell for their hospitality. Good times, good food, great company and excellent ponies! Let's do it again sometime.



CONGRATULATIONS TO LORRAINE AND ANTHONY.



Most of our regulars will be more used to seeing Lorraine in her jodhpurs, working in the roundpen with her foster ponies. So it was great to see her “scrubbed up” for her big day in September. Sue Wingate provided one of her beautiful limited edition prints as a wedding present on behalf of us all, and I'm sure that everyone would want me to wish them both every happiness for their future together.

MORE GRAZING PROJECTS GETTING UNDER WAY.

A call from Veronica Lilley and Phil Cottrell in July triggered off a series of events which have lead to a new grazing herd being established in Berkshire. At the moment they are resident on Snelsmore Common. If successful, Berkshire Council intend to extend the project to include Greenham Common of all places – quite a turn up from it's somewhat controversial past. From cruise

missiles to Exmoor ponies – some might say that there are similarities!!

Here Phil gives an account of their busy couple of months, preparing for the new arrivals. Veronica is no stranger to the breed, already owning two ridden Exmoor ponies, who are doing their bit for Riding for the Disabled.

It was during the Spring of 2002 whilst driving across Greenham Common that the idea was conceived. “Wouldn't it be great to let our Exmoors run free here?” The response was “Don't be stupid Veronica, you'd never see them again”. “But we could buy ponies from the Moor and have our own mini feral herd”. So the seeds were sown. I contacted the local authority and eventually was put onto Paul Hendry the head of Environment & Parks. He was very keen and promised to get back to us. Twelve months later, I rang him back, “Thank goodness you've rung, I'd lost your number. Can you prepare a proposal document for Snelsmore Common, and we'll arrange a site meeting”. We were greeted by lots of official people with notebooks and clipboards, and much to our delight they were 100% in favour of the scheme. We attended the breed show in August at Exford, and met Val and several other visiting “Moorland Mousie” supporters. We stayed with the Milton family at Partridge Arms Farm (superb breakfasts, to be recommended), and discussed buying stock.

The final piece of red tape was in place by October, and on Monday 20th we went back to Partridge Arms to see our new herd. The following day, our ponies were greeted at Snelsmore with TV cameras, press and onlookers. The ramp was lowered and the ponies strolled out in an orderly fashion. Two weeks later, and they have settled in extremely well. The Park Ranger Keith is delighted as they are eating the gorse and heather. 99% of the public are happy, despite the fact that most of them have yet to see a pony. The council are congratulating themselves on such a good move. Best of all, Veronica and I are feeling very smug as we admire our little herd

