

EXMOOR PONY STAR

2014 WINNERS



WINNER

SANGO 21/117

I'm Megan. I am 14 years old and started off as a pretty normal kid who loved to ride. In the year 2010 I got very sick and was very close to not being here. Sounds scary but here I am, recovering quickly and still smiling because of an amazing Star called Sango.

I was forced to stop riding, I was wheelchair bound and very sore. And to top it all I had to see a psychologist for the mental damage. But earlier this year a real

miracle happened. He is my 4 year old Exmoor Pony called Sango, my shining star.

It sounds a bit like a Disney movie but its very real; my physiotherapy has stopped, my wheelchair is in the spare room and I have just sacked my psychologist. The proof that my Star cure really works? Me!Sangos is unlike most youngsters. He accepts my condition and never pushes me. He smiles at me when I feel down and there's a real glint there. A real genuine understanding. When I bring out the bridle he puts his head straight in, bit and all. When dad tries, it's a 'catch me' game. Funny to me but probably not so much for him! When I try to walk a bit further he holds me up, when I'm tired he rests with me. And, when we feel pretty good we gallop so fast through the fields and it feels awesome! I never want to stop. I think it's trust. The proper kind of trust and a feeling a being completely looked after that makes everything so wonderful with Sango.

He fell when we were going over a jump. Not his fault, he's still learning and hit his head on the ground as we landed. He held his position, dropped me gently on the ground near mum and then landed with a thud. Thankfully he was OK; My instructor said he did that so he wouldn't hurt me.

Last month we were all down at the burn. Dad was digging, I was on Sango and mum was playing with the dog, Jazz. Jazz fell head first down a deep drain. I screamed hysterically (of course!) and dad ran to save my dog. He managed to pull her out by the collar and she was fine. The whole time I was throwing a real panicky fit (in the words of mum!) and Sango never flinched. Statue pose: That's my boy!

I have many stories and I know it all sounds far fetched but here I am with my walking stick in one hand and a beautiful pony in the other. My best friend. People told me he's only 4 and we were daft to buy such a young inexperienced pony when I obviously don't have the strength to train him. People don't know the bond we have. He makes my life worth living again. Sango is my star and I'm his.



RUNNER UP

LITTLE BINSEY 14/85

AKA BORIS Born 1989

I would like to nominate my pony Boris for the Exmoor Star award. Not for Boris the glamour & rosettes of the show ring, but for his amazing service in improving the lives of children with special needs.

He has been the mainstay of Eden RDA Group for 21 years, the only longer serving member being me & I don't have a fan club!

It is hard to describe what this special pony means & has meant to so many children

Both within & out of the group. He is patient (yes he is pure Exmoor!) gentle, extremely comfortable & loves having his photo taken.

As well as the weekly group sessions I use him for several riders at home & on picnic rides. For example, what other way can a child with cerebral palsy ride across the fell or round the beautiful countryside.

Like all the group ponies he is happy with all manner of exercises and games that enable the children to develop skills and have fun. The most nervous or disabled child soon falls in love with Boris. He loves attention and always returns their affection.

For his long and unfailing service to our group and other children I wish to nominate him for a star.

BORIS by Ben Currie.

Hi, my name is Ben Currie, I am 12 years old and have cerebral palsy.

So far I have been riding with Eve for about 6 great years & have always ridden the same pony. His name is Boris and he is an Exmoor.

Over time I have learned many things about the pony and the equipment.

I ride on a very fleecy saddle as it helps my muscles and gives me a good stretch. We ride round the countryside & in the Summer do long picnic rides.

Boris is a lovely pony to ride I have really enjoyed horse riding and hope I can keep doing it for a long time.