

EXMOOR PONY STAR

2015 NOMINATIONS

ANCHOR CHIANTI A/448

Annie was our dream pony. We had already got an Anchor mare who was in foal to our own colt and we wanted another one so that they could all run together. So we bought Annie from Emma in November 2012.

Annie had already done quite well in the show ring and was in foal to Roebuck at the time. We were dreaming of great things!

We didn't know when the foal was due, but by January 2013 she was getting very fat and we thought the great event wouldn't be too long!

She was quite happy to come into her cosy stable at night and stay in the paddock by day with the ridden horses. But then one Monday in February the local hunt came past and all the horses got very excited, Annie included.

Two days later she appeared to be foaling but it soon became apparent that she was in trouble.

Our vets had to be called and after several awful hours they managed to pull a dead filly from her. Annie was so weak and we were so upset but glad she was still alive. The dead foal was very near full term and the vets think it probably died following an adrenaline rush when Annie got so excited.

The placenta was expelled soon after the foal but an hour later she strained again and unfortunately pushed her uterus out. This is extremely rare in equines. The vets came back and luckily it was not too badly damaged and they were able to replace it.

Given medication Annie seemed to settle but was still very ill. She then seemed to be improving but 2 days later she developed a fever and infection in the uterus and we thought that she would die. Thankfully she responded well to treatment and was soon back to her old bright self.

In March 2013 Annie was given the Market Vets Braveheart award which is where they honour one of their patients for extreme bravery. We were so proud of her.

Annie spent the summer out with the ridden horses but we let her run back out with the other Exmoors in the autumn.

We all thought it very unlikely that she would conceive another foal, let alone carry it so she did run with the colt, Anchor Flycatcher.

Earlier this year we could see that she was in foal again and on 3rd May she had a lovely filly 'Maired' born on a Sunday afternoon in the middle of the field with us there next to her.

Annie is our bright star and Maired is our true miracle, a lovely foal who has now passed her inspection. Annie is not in foal again, we are happy with what we have and we are planning to break her in to ride in the Spring.

Annie is such a brave star pony.

ARMEDDAN 21/115

Introducing Armeddon 21/115 and why I am nominating his as the 2015 Exmoor Pony Star....

Armeddon, or Archie to his friends, belongs to my friend, Kim Miller. Archie was bred in Scorraig on the West Coast of Scotland by Debbie Davy, Archie came as a 2 year old to live with Kim and her wee herd of 5 ponies, 4 years ago to hopefully sire a foal with Exmoor pony Molly, but unfortunately, no foal happened.

Kim broke Archie in for riding when he was four and despite being a stallion, he was very easy. However, it wasn't until this summer that Archie showed what a true star he really is. Living in the remote West Coast of the Scottish Highlands, riding lessons are few and far between. Local children were keen to learn more about ponies and riding and Archie turned out to be just as keen! He has taught children at the local primary school to ride. He was very good with one particular child who had never been on a pony let alone near any large animal! She was able to ride him by herself and he never put a foot wrong – for a six year old stallion this was very impressive! He has also taken many riders out on hacks with his mare Molly, who keeps him in check. Archie also made one OAP very happy as she had not ridden for years and was wanting just a wee ride – she was very nervous and her balance was poor, he took his time, was slow and steady, even very good at waiting for her to get off as she got stuck! He has also helped Kim around her croft, pulling strainers up hills to mend fencing.

Archie also became a proud daddy this year! Like her Daddy, the filly is a beautiful pony, full of charm and character. He is an amazing stallion and has done everything that has been asked and given so many people of all ages a great memory and shown how this breed are so versatile and a joy to have. Lots of children in the village now know what an Exmoor pony is and how wonderful they are. Archie has introduced me to the fabulous Exmoor breed – I had never heard of them before becoming Kim's friend and I would certainly never even have dreamt about riding a young stallion! The day I rode him, we rode past his new foal and mare, passed (on this usually quiet road) a motorbike, campervan and a bin lorry – he didn't even blink an eye! We hacked up narrow and steep paths into the hills, showing me places I had never been before. He looked after me like a true gentleman (except for when we got my stirrup stuck in a tree, but I can forgive him!) Archie has shown many people, including me, the wonders of the Exmoor breed – companionship, versatility, strength and fun!

BLACKTHORN POEM 114/58

My Exmoor pony star is my mare Blackthorn Poem. Mum and Dad like to say they treat me and my sister equally so this meant she had her colt and later I had my filly. They have different dads but the same mum Thameside Whisper who comes from a rare bloodline.

Poem is my project pony, the first pony broken by me for me to ride and I guess just that makes her special in my heart. I couldn't believe my luck when I first saw her as a six month old foal and all I wanted to do aged 11 was cuddle her but she had other ideas. For a week I practically lived in her stable and at the end of it we were friends! She was born on April 1st and I take it in my stride that she consistently makes a fool out of me while making me very proud.

We've had the lows along the way; chased by another Exmoor she came to me for protection and ran me over in the process. I choose to see myself as her Protector but I think she saw me flattened in the mud as a useful distraction to the other pony. She got kicked so badly that we thought her useless front leg was broken but it was a nerve that quickly recovered. She is accident prone during the show season and this year was no exception.

After a lovely day at the Dunster Country Fair, I thought we could really get this showing thing going. Two days later while staying with a friend I checked in and was told that Poem had hurt herself and the vet was coming and not to worry. I cried and wanted to come home imagining that she had a sprain and needed me there to tell her it was all ok. They didn't tell me that she'd crashed into an old holly hedge, dislodged an ancient metal stake, proceeded to jump the wooden fence and impaled herself on it by a good six inches. Our vet thought he would be putting her down on arrival.

Our vet showed me how to put my hand inside her wound to keep it clean and prevent it from closing too quickly. I took a video where you can see the rib, a centimetre to the left and there would have been no hope but being my special Exmoor that horrendous wound took only 5 weeks to heal before I could ride her again (Poem doesn't do boring rest in a field). Seven weeks to that day she was Ridden Exmoor of the Year. It was like a dream and none of us could hold back the tears. Her faith in me and desire not to leave me and my anguish at the thought of losing her were the strongest emotions we have shared together. That winner's rosette was so much more than winning the class.

BRINDLE MOGS 180/1

This is tricky to put into words just how special this pony is.

When I was 7 I asked if I could have a pony, the reply from my parents was a kitten. When that didn't work and I still persisted they finally gave in and my mother said if I was to have a pony it would have to be an Exmoor. So along came 4 year old Brindle Mogs.

We were complete novices and my gosh were we in for a challenge. Mogs was certainly not an easy ride and extremely strong for a 7 year old girl but with a lot of hard work and an amazing showing career behind us he is without a doubt my best friend. We've been through some tough times and some incredible times together, he's safely carried me through two pregnancies and now safely carries my 7 year old and two year old whenever they wish. He also endures a lot of craziness two young children bring to him every day.

It took me 13 years to learn to ride Mogs but it's been worth everyone of them and at the age of 30 and after 26 years of owning this special boy he still surprises me.

Please vote for us as this truly would be the icing on an already amazing cake.
Thank you.

COSMIC HELIX 271/12

In 1999 we were lucky enough to move to an old farmhouse with 20 acres of rough upland grazing suitable for ponies and so I decided I would return to my first love and get an Exmoor. I wanted a mare as I had plans to breed a foal, and a chance meeting with Fiona Macnee at the Northern Exmoor Show in 2001 led me to attend the inspection of her two filly foals. I have to admit that I fell in love with my first Exmoor – Cosmic Helix – at first sight. She was in a stable waiting to be inspected and looked backwards at me, one hind foot on tip-toe, as I looked over the door. She had such an air of ‘who do you think you are’ that I fell for her there and then and I vowed to buy her if she passed her inspection. She did pass, and the following month I brought her home.

I learned very quickly the physical and mental strength of Exmoors and spent many hours walking Helix in hand. I decided to take her to local shows to further her education and she was never out of the ribbons. A friend suggested I should take her to Cheshire Show and as a two year old at her first ‘big’ show she was second in a class of 8 M&M youngstock. In the same year she was Supreme Champion at the Northern Exmoor Show. I’d never been into showing but I must admit I got a lot of enjoyment over the years as Helix was very successful – amongst her best results were being breed champion twice at Cheshire Show reserve M&M champion at Great Yorkshire .

As my plan was always to breed from her she was first sent to a stallion at age 4. Helix is a very dominant and territorial mare and her behaviour with other visiting mares was so bad that she was sent home after 2 days in disgrace. The following year she visited the same stallion on her own, and after 2 months returned home but again there was no foal. I gave up on the idea and over the years she has been a lovely riding pony (although not in the show ring !) . We have enjoyed pleasure and hunt rides along with Sarah Burnley’s ‘Intrepid Ride ‘. Having space for a pony in 2015 I decided to have a last chance of breeding from her. She visited Coedywern Nimrod in May and prior to returning home was scanned in foal. I now have 5 Exmoors and have bred 5 over the years. After all this time I will hopefully at long last have a foal from Helix.

Her name is from the Helix Nebula – an interstellar cloud of gas and dust where new stars are born.

She is a star.

DARSHILL SCOTT SUMMERS 458/9

I would like to nominate our wonderful exmoor pony, Darshill Scott Summers, aka Charlie.

He came to us in October last year, when my 66 year old mother was really struggling to cope with the loss of her Welsh cob. She had started to be reluctant to go outside, and was spiralling into quite a dark bubble. Almost immediately on meeting Charlie, she was smiling and laughing more, and eager to go to the stables to play and work with him. She has always wanted an exmoor pony, since being a little girl.

A year later, we were prompted by Rachael Bush to take him to the Midlands area breed show, where both mum and myself showed him in hand, a huge achievement in itself and something we were both very nervous about, not being from a showing background. He behaved impeccably, and walked away with young stock reserve champion.

A month after going to this show and having an amazing day, tragedy struck and my big horse, Jake, got very poorly. Jake is 19hh, shire x Clydesdale, and 20 years old. He went off his food completely, along with lymphangitis and cellulitis. No matter what we did we could not get him eating, and it was even discussed that maybe it was the end for Jake. Then one day, my mum suggested that we put Charlie in with him, just to see if Charlie's playful mindset and optimism might help Jake, as it did with mum.

My oh my, what a difference. That same day, Jake started grazing, eating hard feed, and picking at hay. And by the end of the day I found them both grooming each other in the field. A sight that made me cry my eyes out. Tears of joy!! Our little Charlie really appears to have healing powers, he is certainly a very special pony and one who over the past year has helped 2 very special souls recover.

It would mean the absolute world if 2 year old Darshill Scott Summers, our little cheeky Charlie, could be considered as an exmoor pony star of 2015!

Thankyou for taking the time to read this, it's made me well up just going over it all again in my head!

FRITHESDEN CHICKADEE 9/122

This pony has a lot to answer for...

Chickadee came to us as a 2 year old from Suffolk, she was a skinny, frightened, little pony. Upon seeing her we decided immediately that she needed to come home. The following week she was ushered in to the lorry, on the journey home she broke loose and was peering out at us when we opened the door. She stumbled down the ramp and we never looked back.

When we took her showing we were regularly champion Exmoor... not because she was a particularly good Exmoor but because she was the only Exmoor in the area. We were encouraged to join the Exmoor Pony Society which we are now active members of.

At the age of 5 she had fully matured and was finally looking like a healthy pony, she was still nervous of people, particularly men. We decided to put her in foal; she went to visit Knightoncombe Goldcrest of the Threshires Stud. A few months later and Truffle was born, Chickadee still wasn't confident being handled, so she gave birth in the field and dropped him on the electric fence! At this time my parents were trying to sell their house; showing people the garden with Chickadee's after birth on the lawn so that the vet could check it, possibly wasn't the best sales technique!

Chickadee was handled more, we decided that perhaps it was time for a ridden career; she had other plans. After being broken to ride I rode her a few times, but she threw mum into a fence and broke her shoulder blade, we didn't persist, it was clear that riding was not something Chickadee wanted to do. She has always been a creature of habit, being well aware that kicking the metal gate with her front feet irritates us and means she gets put out sooner. When she comes into the yard, she routinely goes to where the head collars hang, grabs them in her mouth and pull them through her teeth!

As the years went on other Exmoor ponies have come and gone from our herd, many of them related to Chickadee. But it is Chickadee who has always been at the heart of what we have done, and taught us most of what we know. Thanks to Chickadee we have met people who share our interest in the ponies, many of whom we now call friends.

Chickadee has always been 'mum's pony', in the past few years I am sure it has been having Chickadee to greet her each morning that has kept her going through a diagnosis of, and successful treatment of cancer.

In early December 2015 Chickadee was diagnosed with peritonitis, tears filled our eyes as the vet went through our options, but being true to the breed she fought through and still insisted on going out in the field everyday through her treatment, aged 20... she is still going strong.

This pony has brought tears of frustration, pain but mostly joy and pleasure.

Mum doesn't know I have written this; the fact that I have nominated Chickadee will make her cry.

HUNTSCOTT JAN RIDD 266/1

My pony Tawny lives and works at Barrow Farm Riding for the Disabled in Essex. He has been here for over 10 years now and during that time has been ridden by lots of children with a variety of disabilities. He does about 12 RDA rides a week. Over the years he has matured into a very safe, sensible pony and now carries some of our most vulnerable riders. He will stand patiently at the mounting ramp while a nervous child plucks up courage to get on. He walks slowly until they gain confidence. He is very responsive to voice commands and so riders with weak or no leg movement can still feel they are in control of him. They can watch his ears move to show he is listening.

Tawny likes people and so is happy to have a riders sidewalkers close to him. He has learnt to cope with unbalanced riders, with riders who may fidget or be noisy and over excited. For all of them he is their own little pony friend and star. For the last three years Tawny has competed at the RDA east Region competition and every time qualified for the national Championship. Last year 2015 he was placed 1st and 2nd in the Countryside Challenge (a handy pony type class) class and 1st in Dressage. Both his riders won a trophy for the most points of the day, one in dressage and the other in country side challenge. We were so proud of them and of Tawny.

At the National Championships he was 2nd in his class and =1st in tack and Turnout with his two riders. What made his success even more special was that one of his rides is completely blind. Instead of looking for her obstacles we devised a method of tapping the obstacle so she could use her very good hearing to judge when to stop. It was important for her to have an obedient pony as there was really no room for error. Tawny was a super star for her and I was so proud.

An RDA pony's job is not always easy; they have to cope with lots of different volunteers leading them, lots of different riders with varying moods. It takes a special pony, and Tawny is that pony. He has repaid the time I spent training him many times over. So many children have benefited, nearly every day of his life he makes a riders day special.

Tawny enjoys lots of other work with able bodied riders, hacking in the woods being his favourite.

WARREN CEASAR H52/8

When Monster AKA Warren Ceaser first came into my life in 1990 I had no idea how much of an influence he would have on my future. I was living in Cornwall at the time and looking for a little project, so my introduction to the Exmoor pony began, the little 'project' became a huge learning curve, an unbroken 5 year old was maybe not the best place to begin but with perseverance this larger than life character eventually overcame his fears of, well, almost everything to be honest. We eventually ventured onto the South west show scene with surprising results as he really seemed to enjoy showing off, this of course was if he could pluck up courage to go in the wagon fortunately he still hadn't overcome his fear of ropes so one glimpse of a lunge line and in he would hop (on one occasion with no rope to hand we loaded him with the aid of a loo roll !!)

A couple of years later we returned North. At the time, classes for Exmoors were few and far between so we just did whatever we could find: dressage, show jumping, hunter trials, hunting whatever we asked he would try his best.

Monster was a fabulous jumper and he successfully took on horses at a variety of disciplines once winning a hunter trial over really testing ground, showing that they really are the best 'off roader', he was EPS WHP and Adult performance champion in 1994,95 & 96.

As by now my herd was growing and young ponies to bring on, not to mention that my Monster by nature, had now also become a bit of a monster by size, he continued growing until he was 9 or 10 years old and as he reached almost 13.2 we eventually retired from the show ring and he went to my niece as a pc hunting pony and has since been loaned to various family and friends as a fantastic schoolmaster, lead pony, happy hacker and more recently nanny to the youngsters although never sure if that is a good idea as they now all want to stand with their feet in the water trough. At the age of 30 he still lives a proper 'Exmoor' life rugless and out grazing with the (ever increasing) herd. My pony of a lifetime.