

# EXMOOR PONY STAR 2015 WINNERS



## **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.



## **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.

## NORTHERN STAR WINNER



### **WARREN CEASAR H52/8**

When Monster AKA Warren Ceasar 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.