

**EXMOOR PONY STAR**

**2011 NOMINATIONS**

## **ANCHOR ARCHIE**

It was fate how I started riding this adorable pony, a good friend knew Irene (Archie's Owner) needed a rider for him because otherwise she would probably have had to sell him so he put my name forward and gave her my number. I'm a quiet girl so the first time I met Irene I was nervous and let my mum do all the talking. The first time I saw Archie my heart melted, he was stood in the yard quiet and as good as gold. I quietly walked over to him to say hello, he was a bit hesitant at first but soon got used to me.

The first time I sat on him in the school we couldn't quite get trot, we just seemed to canter around the arena until I got used to him being so sensitive to the leg and could just let my leg hang around him without squeezing. After that I knew I wanted to keep riding him and build a bond together.

When I first started to ride for Irene Archie would have his head collar left on when in the field so it was easier to catch him, but I still found it hard at times, every so often Irene would have to come out and catch him for me. He got better every time though the more I spent time with him and the more I rode, we gained trust in each other and now I can catch him in the field with no head collar on.

After riding him for about 5 months we started doing a few shows and we were both new to it and we spent a lot of time practicing the show in the school and getting the right leg in canter. Because I was so worried about getting the wrong leg in the show ring I made him unbalanced because I would always be looking down as we went into canter and make him go on the wrong leg. As the shows went by I got more confident on him and had better posture and he would get the right leg nearly every time. By the end of the showing season we both became better and definitely improved lots.

Pony Club has done the world of good to both of us. Archie has learnt a lot and has got used to other ponies being quite close. We also went to Pony Camp this year and came 2nd in our group and only one mark away from drawing with the winner. We did everything at Pony Camp; Dressage, Show Jumping, Cross Country, Grids and also Skinnys. He would have a go at anything, we were jumping hedges, ditches, tyres and all sorts. And also because we had the trust between each other we did grids with no reins and he was perfect. He has progressed so much and it is amazing to watch him mature. Archie is my Exmoor Pony Star and he should win.

## **DEAGOL**

Well where do I start, I've owned Deagol for 18 months now and they've been the best 18 months ever! We travelled up and down the country, from places like Oxford to Southampton looking for the perfect pony and then we found Deagol, a 10 minute drive away. The first time we went to try him, was the day I fell in love with him and within a week he was in our stable at home. He is now our special deagi-bear and is loved by all family members for his cuteness and cuddliness. Last year we started off doing working hunter and he took me round lots of courses at some very big shows which I had never done before but this year we concentrated on doing the HOYS flat classes. We have had a great season this year travelling round the country doing loads of different shows and we have met lots of lovely Exmoor pony people. One of his greatest achievements was at Ponies UK where he won the open Exmoor ridden, Senior series horse or pony and took Champion and the Kingsford novice ridden taking champion and first reserve in the leesmith championship. He also got me into the evening performance on three of the four nights which he loved being pampered up for and being all sparkly and glittery. He also has taken me from riding at small shows to riding at county level in the HOYS classes. He has done really well in the HOYS classes this year just missing out on the golden ticket a few times. We hope to carry on doing the HOYS classes next year and we can't wait to get back to the showing season as we had so much fun last year. Next year I would also like to do some WH classes with him as he has given me so much confidence and enjoyment when I have been practising at home and would like to jump him again at shows next year. This is why I think Deagol should be an Exmoor pony star as he is amazing in every single way!

## **DUNKERY TAWNY OWL (“Owly”)**

‘Owly’ is the love of my life and he’s quite simply my pony of a lifetime. Owly arrived with us early 2008 and from that moment has been nothing short of a pure gentleman and a sheer delight to have on the yard.

Since his arrival with us, he’s won NPS Silver Medals in-hand and under saddle, given me my first ridden county show win (Three Counties 2009), qualified for numerous NPS finals, finished 6th in the small breed Picton Final, been placed in all his HOYS and Olympia qualifiers and has accumulated many Cornish championships in mixed M&M company and on the workers circuit. In 2010 Owly and I rode our first dressage tests with the local riding club and remains unbeaten, he also competed in showjumping, working hunter pony and attended riding club rallies. He really does turn his hoof to anything with a wonderfully calm and ‘can do’ attitude! At a native pony display, his jockey wasn’t able to ride him and I was more than confident for a young girl from the riding school display team to ride him. I was proved right as the new combination gave a foot perfect performance and the little girl came out beaming with pride!

Owly always has the winters off competition with hacking at home and some hunting where he showed that even the small ponies can keep up! Only 5 months after being backed, he escorted an 8 year old jockey on the child’s meet and took a 9 year old on a sponsored ride, looking after his little riders beautifully! Owly very rapidly proved himself after our son, Harry was given a child's basket saddle by his Grandparents for Christmas and he had the honour of wearing it. Harry adored riding him and beamed from ear to ear as he bumped along in his saddle. Harry is now 3 years old and he has developed a very special relationship with Owly and loves to brush and cuddle him – he even cuddles him when Owly is lying down in the stable!

In June 2011, Dunkery Tawny Owl made one of my dreams come true. We’ve had reserve champion at county level in no less than four different native breed sections, but we’d never, until this year, taken the top spot. At Royal Cornwall Show, Owly stood Exmoor Champion which left me crying with delight! It was very poignant that my favourite pony should provide us with our first county show championship on home turf - a moment I will never forget.

I see Owly always being very much part of our family and future and I hope that Lowenna grows to enjoy the ponies like her brother, Harry, does. I know that the children will never be able to compete with Owly as he is a stallion, but that doesn’t matter to me. I trust Owly implicitly and couldn’t ask for a better steed. Owly is a true Exmoor Pony Star; one in a million.

## **FRITHESDEN FLINT 9/139**

Flint is my first pony. When I bought him in July 2008 I was a nervous novice rider. He was a timid pony and lots of things worried him. Whenever he was scared he would run away as fast as he could - usually I managed to stay on board but sometimes I didn't! We probably weren't the ideal combination in those early days, but over time we learned to trust each other and now we have a fantastic partnership. I have done all the "firsts" with Flint – first in-hand show, first dressage, first show ridden, first time driving a pony in a horsebox, etc. Flint has patiently put up with my mistakes and he has grown in confidence too. 2011 has been an incredible year for Flint. He has shown a real aptitude for dressage, with consistent success at Prelim and Novice levels. We certainly stand out in the warm-up areas amongst the more typical dressage horses and our competitors have learned not to underestimate an Exmoor pony. We represented our riding club in the area dressage qualifier and Flint had a special pony-sized team saddlecloth made just for him!

Flint also did well in ridden and in-hand showing and found a new little partner for lead-rein classes. 5-year-old Alice Nugent started riding him in April and they amazed us with their success throughout the summer. Alice and Flint qualified for lead-rein finals at all of the summer championship shows and judges often commented how lovely it was to see an Exmoor in lead-rein classes. They finished the year on a high, standing reserve ridden champions at the Midlands Exmoor Pony Show. Alice loves "Flinty Boy" and they have lots of fun together. Flint's other major achievement in 2011 was helping me to overcome my longstanding fear of jumping. In May we attempted our first cross-pole competition, tentatively trotting over tiny jumps. Flint seemed to understand his job was to give me confidence and would only go as fast as I felt comfortable. Knowing I could trust Flint gave me the confidence to tackle bigger courses. I discovered he is great fun to jump and speedy in jump-offs. On our last outing we jumped clear around a 2ft WHP course, which was no problem for Flint but seemed enormous to me!

Flint was Overall Champion, Performance Champion and In-Hand Champion in the 2011 Exmoor Pony Southern Awards, with points gained in a variety of disciplines and activities. He is a great example of the versatility of Exmoor ponies and a fantastic ambassador for the breed.

Flint is a wonderful friend with whom I share a special bond. We have grown in confidence together and achieved things I never dreamed would be possible when I bought him three years ago. He is my pony of a lifetime and I am looking forward to many more adventures with Flint, my Exmoor pony star.

## HEATHPOOL YEW

We thought Yew deserved another chance at Exmoor Pony Star. He had a terrible start to the year having developed two huge hoof abscesses, one in each front foot. Because of his fabulous attitude he didn't let on until he was literally hopping lame. It took us all by surprise and he was bandaged up and sent off for box rest with two huge holes in his feet, although this didn't stop him jumping out of the stable! We were given a pretty poor prognosis and told we were looking at a minimum of 9 months off work, if not more. Our fantastic farrier visited after 3 weeks box rest and was amazed by the amount of hoof he'd grown, the vet couldn't believe his progress and gave him the all clear to come back into work after just 8 weeks off.

He was beyond ecstatic at being let out again, and his first time out was a joy to see, his feet barely touched the ground and he has no excuses now – we know EXACTLY how nicely he can move!!! So then started the hard work to get the boy fit again, he had lost so much muscle. Catrin and him got fitter again together, hacking, flatwork and of course jumping. He came back to work in his own special way, no fuss, just quietly getting on with it 🐾

I was lucky enough to get some transport this year so he's been out and about a bit this summer. He always tries his best but still needs to gain more confidence in the ring. We just have to work on recreating what he does at home while out and about. He's had some of his best times in non-pressured situations, galloping Catrin round a cross country course after her final exams and accompanying Amelie and I on some farm rides. And we mustn't forget his championship sash gained at a local riding club show – proud mummy moment! He's been a bit of an ambassador for the breed this year, appearing several times in Native pony Magazine just looking gorgeous, and in PONY magazine - under the heading 'Exmoor Ponies CAN jump!' Well this one certainly can, and a lot more besides. He's my Exmoor pony star and Catrin's too!

## **LLAMA A/156-A (“Alice”)**

I would like to nominate my pony Alice for the 2011 award. Alice and her half-sister, April, were given to me in 2010 at the age of 15. I have known them most of their lives and was delighted to have the chance of them moving to our home. I broke them both in when they were 5, and apart from a couple of local shows, they were hardly used for the next 10 years.

They both took to being back in work with a great gusto and we were often complimented on forest rides because of them looking identical. Unfortunately we lost April in the August 2010 and I was very worried about how Alice would cope without her but she just followed my Icelandic round and bonded with her. She was just happy to have another friend. We got Beau this year who is 2 and Alice seems to love having a youngster to look after.

Now I would love at this point to say that we have done amazing things and won all sorts but alas we haven't!! Although we always get great compliments at the shows, we always seem to get pipped at the post by a section A! But Alice has a great following of children and adults who always marvel at her good nature. She tries anything we ask her to do, from long reining to jumping; horse agility to just playing with the children, and puts her whole heart into doing her best. The highlight of last year was winning the NPS Best of Breed rosette where she was got the loudest round of applause of all the ponies there. That day our box was used to keep the children in when it rained as it was 'only Alice' in there and so the mothers knew the kids were safe and I knew Alice had company!

Her personality has won the confidence from people who would claim to be scared of ponies. It has also nearly driven me mad too, the way she can open gates and doors- our place looks like fort knox! It has been a stressful year for me this year and the best thing has been coming home to a big kiss and cuddle from Alice. She always manages to make me smile.

I hope this next year to promote the breed a lot more here in Northern Ireland and I know that letting people meet Alice will do more to encourage them to look up the breed than anything I say or do.

I could go on for ages about how great she is!! I know this award is probably for ponies that have achieved great things through the year but I wanted to nominate her because of the impact she has on everyone she meets.

## **OSWALD (“Ozzie”)**

I would like to nominate our boy 'Oswald'. Ozzie rather unexpectedly came into our lives when we were looking at a friend's Fell ponies. We had never thought about owning a Exmoor before, neither did we need another pony at the time but he chose us that day and luckily we were told we could have him. Ozzie is entire but has the most amazing temperament, he looks after my little boy who is three and has started teaching him rising trot and small jumps, he is so steady with him and looks after him as if he knows he needs it. A close friend of mine who lost her confidence in riding after a fall has also been given that confidence back by him and now happily rides off on jollies with him on a regular basis. As well as that I can continue my love of showing, we were champion at ponies UK and north of England this year at the only shows we attended and next year we will be out under saddle. En route to Ponies UK we broke down on the A1 M, we had to unload on a busy motorway as the police were expected 3 hours to get to us, and load up alongside a mare in a trailer with no dividing partition. He loaded up as quite as a lamb with traffic whooshing past him and continued his journey without a ounce of fuss. I owe a lot to that pony in such a short time, he's certainly my pony of the year.



## **TEAGLE EXCALIBUR (“Joey”)**

In 1995 we started to look for a new Exmoor pony to our daughter Alexandra, because her old Rainbow has to be retired.

We wanted a mare so we also would have the ability to breed. Yvonne Campbell should help us to find the right one and one evening she called. She had the perfect pony for Alexandra, one she had bred herself and who she had shown successfully as a foal. However, there was one problem. It was a 7 y.o. gelding! When we heard that he had been a child’s pony for some years and had an excellent temperament, we quickly changed our minds. And Teagle Excalibur, nick name Joey, entered our lives.

For many years he was a marvellous companion for Alexandra. Even though they mostly went trekking, they also participated in riding camps, entered a show jumping competition and took dressage lessons.

At 14 Alexandra had grown quite a bit and suddenly felt too tall for her best friend. Joey then started a new career. First he helped adult riders to get over their fear of riding. Always being very calm and a strong character, yet forward going, he took care of everything and didn’t bother if the rider was shaking at the beginning of the ride.

Then he did his turn as a therapy pony, letting mentally disabled children from the school where I work, enjoy a ride.

At the same time his old mum (that’s me) got interested in doing long reining, the way they do it at the Spanish riding school in Vienna. I choose Joey to join me in my efforts and it turned out to be one of the best decisions I have made. We very soon became a team and he is today my dearest friend.

This spring the unbelievable happened. Our beautiful mare Vildrosen’s Witch Hazel died, only 14.y.o. Left behind was her 5 weeks old colt Vildrosen’s Peter Pan. We had to feed him milk from a bucket, but he also needed a foster mother. With no mares available Joey had to take on the mission. This turned out to be a successful choice, as Joey seemed to be born to be a nanny.

At this year’s annual show little Peter Pan was entered for the foal class. He didn’t have to go into the ring alone - uncle Joey was with him all the time.

After that Joey himself won the veteran class for the second time.

Joey is giving so much to everyone and has touched so many people’s heart. If any pony deserves to win the Exmoor pony star reward, it is Joey!