



The Moorland Mousie Trust

To promote and conserve the Exmoor pony

Registered charity no. 1080504

Exmoor Pony Centre, Ashwick, Dulverton,

Somerset. TA22 9QE.

Tel: 01398 323185

Moorland.mousie.trust@ntlworld.com

Winter Newsletter 2005/6

Important Update on the Exmoor Pony Centre!



Photograph above of Moorland Mousie Trust Stallion Lance herding the mares last spring captured by Mike Sherwin.

Exmoor Pony Centre - A Step Closer by Val Sherwin (Chairman of the Trustee's)

Works have started on the buildings at Ashwick Farm, Dulverton to transform them into a Centre which can welcome visitors and our loyal supporters. This is a great achievement after 5 years of hard work and ups and downs.

Through perseverance and a lot of paperwork we have obtained grant funding of over £80,000 towards the Exmoor Pony Centre. The Rural Enterprise Scheme administered by Defra and the Sustainable Development Fund administered by Exmoor National Park Authority have recognised the importance of the breed and are showing their support for the charity and its intentions by offering this funding. This is really encouraging and also quite scary!

The plan is that the Centre will give visitors the opportunity to meet ponies and learn about the breed as well as experience the thrill of seeing the Exmoor countryside whilst riding an Exmoor pony. Demonstrations and other events are also planned. It is hoped that the Centre will open for business by Easter.

Though this is all progress there is still so much to do and still a huge need for our supporters to get involved. We are always keen to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer to help. More details on the type of people we are looking for later in this newsletter. We also still need funding as the grants have to be match funded and do not fund some of the things we want to do. There is a list of items which we would be grateful for funding towards on page 9.

For information on activities/ events available and an update on progress with the Centre call 01398 323185 or email moorland.mousie.trust@ntlworld.com

Photo below-Two MMT foals grooming at Winsford Hill



(Photo-Mike Sherwin)

**Exmoor News from
Carmarthenshire! By Judith
Weatherburn**

MMT supporter Sophie Easterbrook has been fostering two three year old geldings, Tamarisk (Risky) and Hunka Munka (renamed Calluna - Luna for short), for the past 10 months at home in Carmarthenshire. They arrived as unhandled ponies and Sophie, who had no previous experience with Exmoors, has since become a complete convert! In fact to spread the word further, in an area dominated by Welsh ponies and cobs, a BBC Wales reporter has just been to interview her. The interview covered the origins and history of the Exmoor pony, their versatility and the work of The Moorland Mousie Trust. The interview was originally meant to be about handling Exmoor's, and other equines, using IH (Intelligent Horsemanship) methods but the Exmoor bit became so extensive and the reporter, Rhian Higgins, was so interested that the Exmoor pony part has become a separate programme! The programme will be on BBC Radio Wales 'The View from Here' sometime in February 2006. For those of you online 'across the border' visit www.bbc.co.uk/wales/radiowales/show/theviewfromhere.shtml

and click on and listen to the interview later in February.

Picture below-Fosterer Sophie Easterbrook and 3 year old Tamarisk (Risky).



(Photo Judith Weatherburn)

**Exmoor Pony Adoptions- Growing
in Popularity by Judith
Weatherburn**

MMT now has nearly 70 pony adopters. They range from new born babies to people in their eighties, and everyone in between! Many are bought as birthday; christening, Christmas or anniversary presents while some people just buy one for themselves. There are currently 7 ponies available for adoption; ranging from riding ponies to youngsters on conservation schemes even a working stallion, truly something for everyone. Adopters receive a welcome pack, badge, certificate and regular quarterly updates and photos. Ponies are based on Exmoor, in County Durham and Northumberland and many adopters are able to visit their

ponies. When the new centre opens on Exmoor in 2006 it may be possible for some adopters to come and ride their chosen pony - subject to availability, riding ability and weight restrictions of course! So come on lets make it 100 adopters by 2007 - what else can you get for £15 - £20 that does so much good and give so much pleasure too?

Pictured below- Lance an adoption pony in 2005 and registered stallion.



(Photo-Mike Sherwin)

News about the 2005 Sponsored Foals by Judith Weatherburn

The Foal Sponsorship Scheme is now in its third year. We have 9 sponsored foals from last autumn's gatherings. All the colt foals come from the Anchor and number 23 herds' this time. Sponsorship costs from £75 to £250 per foal and the sponsor is allocated their own foal, is able to name that foal and will receive exclusive photographs and updates for the foal's first year with the Trust. This year sponsors have chosen to name the foals: Kestrel (Katherine Stokes), Barle (Christine Ellis),

Murphy (Lesley Evans), Bobby (Sophie Wilkins), Billy Boy (Pat Arnold), Snipe (Learning for Life group), Monty, Pori, and Toby. Sponsors' enjoy following the foal through the trials and tribulations of the early handling and can be sometimes surprised by the outcome. A past foal became a prize winning yearling, while another was plucked from virtual obscurity on a grazing scheme, on the strength of his breeding, to become a potential stud stallion - you just never know what will happen to your foal! Anyone interested in sponsoring a foal in autumn 2006 please get in touch with the office, it is so worthwhile.

Pictured below-Trustee Juliet Rogers with Corelli a sponsored foal at 2005 Exford Show



(Photo-Val Sherwin)

Exmoor Ponies to Roam Northumberland- Thanks to New Postcode Lottery

Goodfund has awarded Northumberland Wildlife Trust £3,290 to fund conservation

grazing projects at Kielder village and Bellingham. Originally using Exmoor ponies from The Moorland Mousie Trust for grazing at two of the trust's sites, this will increase the diversity of the vegetation, and help to educate local children on feeding and watering ponies.

The funding awarded to Northumberland Wildlife Trust will contribute towards the costs of stock-proof fencing, a holding area, access points, a shelter and drinking troughs.

Juliet Rogers has worked extremely hard to secure a number of grazing sites 'up north' for the ponies. Many thanks Juliet for all your hard work.

Photo below-MMT Pony Rama receives the cheque from the North East Post Code Lottery



A Good Forecast for Exmoor Ponies by Sarah Weston

In the winter of 2003, I took on my first two foster ponies for the Moorland Mousie Trust. They were second hand in the sense that they

had already been to one foster home. Merrion just needed a little more handling before he went on to his new life at West Hollowcombe Farm on Exmoor, but little Liony was still struggling to be around people.

All the time I had Liony, I wondered whether things might have been easier for him, if he had been handled in his early days at the Moorland Mousie Trust and in particular, if someone had been able to use the technique I had learned from Kelly Marks and Intelligent Horsemanship. When this years colts came in off the moor I asked Val whether I could try the technique on some of them.

In November 2005 I came down to Ashwick to work with seven untouched foals and one four year old gelding. The foals were very frightened of people having only been handled at the gatherings. Two quiet ponies, Tom and Abby, were brought down from the field so that they would eat in pens next to the youngsters. It was hoped that they would be a calming influence over the foals.

My work begins by touching the foal for the first time and trying to show him that I am not a predator. The idea is to touch the

foal and then move away. Sometimes this has to be done with a false hand so that I can reach! Each touch is then extended. If the foal moves away I try to continue the touch and when he stops again, I take my hand away. In this way the foal learns that he can stop the touching by standing still. After a while the touching becomes a lovely rub as I try to set up base camp usually on their bottoms! I then work towards setting up a second base camp at the base of the neck where their mothers would have rubbed them when they were foals. From here I move to other areas, returning to this favourite place if the foal is becoming anxious. In this way, I was able to start touching the foals along their necks and around their faces.

Each foal was given frequent rests, being re-united with their friends and given a constant supply of food and water. During the breaks they were left in total peace. At the end of the second session with each foal, I was able to slip a headcollar around their necks.

As the weekend progresses we had numerous visitors coming to look at what we were doing. Val was soon able to start off her own foals and

willing participants were asked to go and rub foals that were the furthest on with their training.

By the end of the weekend we felt that we had really achieved something. We hoped that we had given the foals a positive experience and left them much less terrified of people. During the weekend, some of the new fosterers had been down to choose their ponies and it was wonderful to be able to tell them something about the personality of their pony. I found it very hard not to put one or two in the back of the van to come home.

Photo Below- a MMT Colt foal Sarah worked with in November 2006



(Photo- Sarah Weston)

I spoke to Val last week and she told me that one fosterer had asked what we had done with the foals this year because they were

so quiet. I can't wait to go back to Exmoor to work with the next little band of foals. Once the new facilities are installed at Ashwick, Val and I hope to set up handling the Wild Pony Courses for potential fosterers and anyone who has an interest in working with untouched ponies.

Picture Below-Sarah Weston and a Herd 23 Exmoor pony foal



(Photo-Sarah Weston)

Afternoon Tea Event at Wootton Courtenay by Amy Lowther-Harris

In November I attended The Moorland Mousie Trust's, afternoon tea which was held at Wootton Courtenay village hall. The event was held to encourage breeders, pony fosterers, potential pony fosterers, Exmoor National Park Authority staff, The Exmoor Pony Society, Equine tourism and other interested parties to learn more about the work of the Moorland Mousie Trust and what it is trying to

achieve. Chairman of the Trustee's Mrs Sherwin gave an excellent speech, to try and inform people of the trusts work, involve more willing participants in volunteering for the trust and gave an update on developments at Ashwick. The afternoon was very successful with some attendee's travelling from Wiltshire and Cornwall, and a bonus of £380 was raised from sales of cards, notelets, the raffle and generous donations. The ponies also gave an added surprise of hand picking or 'hoof' picking a bouquet of flowers for Mrs Sherwin. I have a slight suspicion though that someone may have helped them with this! The tea and coffee were generously supplied by Miles, in aid of sponsorship for the afternoon. There was also an array of delicious cakes-so thank you to everyone who brought something along. I would also like to say a big thank you on behalf of The Moorland Mousie Trust, to everyone who attended the event, donated money and helped organise the afternoon, especially Harry and Sue Crawford.

Picture Below-Chairman Mrs Sherwin receiving her bouquet of flowers from the 'ponies'



(Photo-Michael Sreen)

Local Volunteers Needed-for Exmoor Pony Centre

The trust are looking for local volunteers to help with a range of activities, if you think that you would be able to help with one of the activities listed below then please contact Val Sherwin on 01398 323185.

- Experienced/regular riders needed to exercise Exmoor ponies;
- Experienced pony person required to make regular pony checks on grazing sites in Simonsbath, Exford and East Anstey;

- Anyone with administration skills, accountancy skills, website design and graphic design skills needed,
- Experienced pony person needed to handle and/or foster young Exmoor ponies.

Local Volunteers Needed-

Northumberland Grazing Projects

Volunteers are required to donate their time in helping with a range of different activities in Northumberland. If anyone is interested in the list of activities below please contact Juliet Rogers on 01434 673109 or e-mail julietrogersdial.pipex.com

- Experienced pony person needed to make regular checks on pony grazing sites
- Experienced pony person needed to handle and/or foster ponies

Please Help get the Exmoor Pony Centre up and Running

We still need your generous support and would appreciate donations towards the Exmoor Pony Centre. You may like to choose a specific item from the list below. Everyone who chooses to donate will be acknowledged at The Exmoor Pony Centre or in the forthcoming MMT newsletter.

- Concrete block-£5
- Feed Bucket-£5

- Numnah-£10
- Chair-£20
- Bridle-£30
- Riding hat-£50
- Gate-£100
- Internal stable-£150
- Saddle-£300

If you do wish to make a donation please fill out the gift aid form below and attach your cheque or postal order.

Moorland Mousie Trust Sponsored Ride and The Golden Horseshoe Pleasure Ride-14th May 2006

The annual event of the Golden Horse shoe ride, which is up to 100 mile endurance ride that is held on Exmoor every year, looms once more. However this year MMT members and supporters have the added opportunity of taking part in a 15 mile sponsored ride over Exmoor that raises funds for both MMT and the Golden Horse Shoe. Willing participants are being asked to raise a minimum of £25, which will also entitle them to a reduced entry fee. The ride will commence and finish at The Auction field in Exford starting at 9.30 am on Sunday 14th May 2006. If you wish to find out further information about the ride or for a sponsorship form please visit-

www.goldenhorseshoeride.co.uk or phone Liz Hinings on 01985 840155.

Photo below-MMT Ponies attended the Golden Horse Shoe Event in 2005 ridden by Helen Cudlipp and Maddy Morris Jones



(Photo-Val Sherwin)

Golden Horse Shoe Quiz Night-13th May 2006

There will also be a quiz night held in Exford at the The Golden Horse Shoe marquee starting at 7.30pm. Let's see how many teams we can get together and test our knowledge. Moorland Mousie's mates were third last year so let's see if we can beat that!!