

FDHP DVD

Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony DVD "The year of the Dartmoor Hill Pony" is available on our online website Shop with free p&p. It's a beautiful insight into the ponies life on Dartmoor and wonderfully narrated by Brian Blessed.

Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony

Summer Newsletter 2019



Pony exhibition at Powdermills

Come to the centre of Dartmoor and discover the secrets of the Dartmoor Hill Pony – their ancestry, evolution and traditions. Enjoy an award winning cream tea and view the pottery made by Joss Hibbs. Open weekends and Bank Holidays. Powdermills Pottery B3212, 2 miles west of Postbridge, PL20 6SP.

Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony, getting support for all the ponies on Dartmoor

Recognition of the value of the pony herds on Dartmoor is long overdue. That DEFRA has considered this submission and are including a pony element in the Dartmoor Test of the new post-Brexit agri-environment scheme is a reason for celebration. This is a significant step in securing the future and welfare of Dartmoor's pony herds through the implementation of a Payment for Public Goods. This submission is backed-up by detailed third party evidence, scientific studies and external reports – and has included input from so many: Commoners Association, hill-farmers, tourism businesses, Dartmoor National Park, Natural England, Dartmoor Commoners Council, Dartmoor Hill Pony Association, breeders of registered Dartmoor Ponies and keepers of semi-wild herds alike and us at Friends, a real reason to celebrate the ponies, living in semi wild herds, alongside cattle and sheep to keep Dartmoor as we know and love it, their future secured. A real Dartmoor team effort. In order to keep DEFRA, on its toes recognising that the ponies on Dartmoor are valued by everyone. Please sign up to our Dartmoor Warrior campaign to get all the ponies the support they need. The ponies must not be overlooked again or they will no longer be found on the moors.

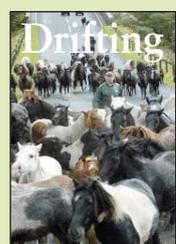


Finding ponies homes off the moor

If you are interested please visit our website www.wildtowonderful.org to contact us for more information. We take great care in matching temperament size and skills to your requirements. We help transport ponies to their new homes, arranging lift sharing to keep costs down where ever possible. We are very proud to say we have managed to home over 5,000 ponies since Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony charity started. Owners stories and successes about the Hill Ponies are shared on our facebook page.

Scientific study reveal exciting facts

Fascinating research and analysis of the hill Pony genetics has been funded by Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony. The result of this study have now been published and peer reviewed. The ground breaking discoveries support the bid to ensure these ponies are supported by DEFRA so they do not disappear from the moors. The study has found two previously unknown facts: - Firstly, even though they are varied heights, shapes and colours, Dartmoor Hill Ponies are one type of pony, unique to Dartmoor. To distinguish Dartmoor Hill Ponies at riding events, Friends launched a lime green and navy livery worn by riders and ponies to proudly show their connection to Dartmoor's semi-wild herds. Secondly, it revealed rare genetics found in more than 90% of Dartmoor Hill Ponies. These rare genetics are connected to cold tolerance and the ability to stay fat even in harsh Dartmoor winters when fodder is scarce. This has led to discussions with world-renowned scientists at the Natural History Museum and a worldwide research project using leading-edge genetic techniques to re-map the history of the domestication of the horse: Are the rare genetics an echo of Devon's ice-age pony?



The Pony drift takes place in October, when all the ponies are brought off the Moor onto the farms for a health check and to wean the foals. The Annual Pony Drift Sale held by Rendells Auctioneers is on 10th October 2019 at Chagford Market. If you are interested in coming to the sale to buy a pony, please get in touch with us and we will help in any way we can such as bidding for a particular colour or size of pony, transport etc.

Services to Pony-keepers and Others

Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony provides help and support to hill farmers who keep Hill Ponies on the Commons. We ensure that what we do is acceptable to, and beneficial for, Dartmoor's pony-keepers. For example, we provide a vehicle and trailer and collect wayward or injured ponies, organise veterinary services such as gelding young colts to give them a value (at least 70 a year) take unwanted foals and ponies for homing (some 400 a year). We are also asked to apply our animal-handling skills to difficult situations, for example providing support to government departments collecting ponies from low animal welfare situations. We have mobile equipment designed for handling wild ponies; to keep them safe while being treated...and vets! Friends have developed a Disease outbreak Management Plan with help of the Dartmoor Hill Pony Association for ponies on the Moor. We are involved in stallion inspections alongside Dartmoor Commoners Council and Dartmoor Livestock Protection (along with a show judge and a vet) ensuring set standards for breeding stallions are met before they are put on the moor. We provide back up and support to the dedicated wonderful Dartmoor Livestock Protection welfare officer, whose number is 07873 587561 please call if you have concerns about an animal on the moor.

Heroes of the Moor

The natural social structure for ponies is as a family band with several adult mares and one stallion. The social structure within a herd is very important and valuable to the survival and well-being of the ponies within the herd which many studies show. The interaction between the herds of the ponies created by the stallions is important for the benefit of Dartmoor as a natural tool of ecology, assisting in the skills of wild farming. A strong stallion has lots of mares and keeps to the best ground; a weaker stallion has less mares and keeps to less desirable areas, this ensures even grazing across the Moor keeping Dartmoor as we know and love it. In the Winter as food gets more scarce and once the stallion is happy that his mares are pregnant then he lets them roam over a larger area which helps reduce over-grazing in the winter season. We know that when mares are close to foaling in the Spring they graze close to water, is this of value to other flora and fauna? For arguments sake it may be the simple fact the mares are where the ground cover is starting to grow faster in the spring, because it is easier to stay where it is easy to get a drink, as these mares have got strong enough jaws to chomp their way through the new Spring growth to the waters edge, this therefore makes water accessible to other animals.



A stallion has to be of a good standard to run on the Moor. Once a stallion is accredited as good enough, he is hot branded with a circle with a cross in it, and is allowed to run on the Moor. If you spot a pony with this brand on its back leg it is one of Dartmoor's Heroes.



We have decided to start a new page called Stallion Watch, if you see a stallion take a photo of him, stay at least 15 yards away please do not disturb the ponies, they are wild and should be respected as such. Once you have taken a photo, post it on the Dartmoor Stallion watch Facebook page, saying where you took the photo and how many mares you could see with him. Thank you for your help.

Reducing the numbers of foals being born to die

The re-launched DEFRA inspected mare contraception scheme has now been running for 18 months, and we are excited to announce that at least 100 ponies have re-started the contraception course to date. Sadly, there was another delay whilst Friends waited for the Dartmoor National Park to formally agree a Licence to dart on Commons they own. This, even though they were kind enough to help fund the contraception project 5 years ago through the Dartmoor National Park sustainability fund, so yet again, we are faced with re-starts at further costs. We have also invested in a new piece of equipment, with thanks to Pet Plan Charitable Trust to enable us to locate spent darts quickly, even in areas of difficult vegetation.



Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony Display Team

We are delighted to have this opportunity to tell you a little about ourselves and our wonderful ponies who are battling against extinction. Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony has a Display Team started 20 years ago, which choreographs and performs a musical ride of a standard befitting the Household Cavalry! Local children of all ages and abilities ride their Dartmoor Hill Ponies in a complex routine of wheels, reels, cross-overs and tricks, showing what brilliant children's riding ponies our hill Ponies can become. Each year there is a theme with bright costumes, flags, bangs and puffs of smoke which the ponies take in their stride. There is always a theme - in the past, pirates have walked the plank, Dartmoor warriors yelping in war paint, cowboys shooting and driving wagons, this year they have chosen to create a circus. The team start practising in the depths of winter, in all weathers to bring you an entertaining show, which will help you understand why we are so passionate about our Hillies. Enjoy our show and please support us ensuring these wonderful ponies will be seen roaming free, grazing on Dartmoor for Generations to come.

To find out more about Ponies Friends and Pony Keepers

We love groups who are interested in the ponies and Dartmoor to come and see us and our work and how you can give practical support to the hill ponies. We can arrange a visiting speaker about the ponies on Dartmoor, explaining why they are so important to Dartmoor. Man and beast working out a survival strategy which benefits and enriches the flora and fauna of Dartmoor.

Foal Watch

This foal was born into the eye of the Mini beast from the east, the mother and foal have coped well in temperatures below freezing, snow and ice. These ponies have roamed Dartmoor for thousands of years and are well adapted to the Dartmoor weather. They know where to go to get out of the biting wind, find running water when all around is frozen, and even eat gorse which the ponies know is a valuable food source, grinding it with their feet first to make it palatable and remove the prickles. "THE DARTMOOR FOAL WATCH FACEBOOK PAGE" is running again. Last year many foals found homes even before they had come in from the moor on the annual pony drift in October. So take a picture of the mare and foal when you see them on the moor, no less than 15 yards away, as you do not want to disturb the ponies, once you have taken a photo, post it on the Dartmoor foal watch Facebook page. If you fall in love with one of the foals, please go to www.wildtowonderful.org and fill out the contact form.



Donations to the Friends

To make donations to the Friends and help us keep Dartmoor as we know and love it, by supporting the ponies at www.friendsofthedartmoorhillpony.co.uk and make your donation via the Charity Checkout button if you are a tax payer (to enable us to claim Gift Aid) or the Donate Button if not.

Registered Charity Number 1141045

Subscribe to our regular newsletter on our website www.wildtowonderful.org

Hillies at the 2019 British Indoor Driving Championships

We want to congratulate all the Hillies and of course their drivers who qualified for the British Indoor Driving Championships that took place at Keysoe, Bedford, on 5th to 7th April, flying the flag for our fabulous ponies.

Louise Kalhoun won the Tandem Class with Corndonford Indiana Jones and Corndonford Hedge Hunter. She is now National Indoor Tandem Champion. Jacquie Pilinger who came third in the tandem class with Sunny and Luke. Stephanie White competed in the Open Pony class with Runnage Lollipop.

Also competing were: Truelove Candy Mandy - with Sarah Gemie in the Novice Pony class - they were joint leaders after dressage and cones but dropped to 10 after the obstacles.

Footloose took Matthew Powell to 4th place in the Novice Junior class - a great achievement for a lad with additional needs.

Storm Faulkner competed with Pebble and Quite and did very well for their first National performance in the pony pairs. To find out more about how they fared go to Indoordriving.co.uk and check out the pictures and results.



Helpful Head Collars – Sponsorships

A big thank you to all our sponsors this year, what a difference they have made helping us help those foals which we were unable to home either because of underlying physical problems or that they didn't look as pretty or cute.

It is fantastic that the sponsorship money, whether monthly or annually, allows us to take in big groups of foals as the cost of the hay, hard food, worming, and bedding would otherwise be prohibitive plus it enables us to add value to the ponies by head collar training them, and getting the colts gelded which makes a huge difference to us finding good homes for them.



Sponsored Gelding Dougie - found a lovely home at Woodbury near Exeter as a companion to a 5 year old Cob boy. Even better he went with another Hill pony called Picasso, so he had a friend to help settle him in as well.

Friends go International!

Since last October we have found good homes for over 400 ponies, with over 100 ponies having gone to overseas owners and we are getting our new foreign owners posting pictures, videos and stories about their new ponies onto our Facebook page. We are getting amazing support from our new friends abroad and the story about the value of our Dartmoor Hill Ponies is spreading. We even have a brilliant sponsor for one of our ponies from as far away as Australia.

One of our new overseas owners Sandra Parlow to whom we are so grateful for all her time and effort on the ponies behalf, has recently sent in some lovely photographs showing Hill Pony Honey winning her first dressage competition.



Foster Mum's

A big thank you must be given to the Foster Mum's who take on our ponies, as not only does this enable us to take in more foals & ponies, but the handling and love they give them makes it easier for us to find good homes for them. This year we have to thank Ali and her sister Marina in Cornwall who fostered 20 ponies and even found the time to give us written updates on each pony giving us excellent insights into their temperaments and quirks. We also thank Liz at Tavistock who fostered two ponies and gave them excellent grazing and lots of love and both have new homes. Last but not least we have a big thank you to Jackie Tye and her team at newlifehorsecaresanctuary who is now on her second pair of ponies this year after doing so well in their training we easily managed to find good homes for her first two fostered little ones. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofthedhp>