THE EXMOOR PONY CHRONICLES

Sue Baker

'Finding out about Exmoor ponies and the people involved in their world at various times in the past has been like panning for gold – I've had to examine a lot of material, sometimes without result, but when a small nugget of the ponies' story first sparkles, that is so exciting.'

Sue Baker has spent many years searching through long-forgotten documents and photographs and listening to the stories passed down through Exmoor families. Her 'prospecting' has resulted in this intimate portrayal of the ponies and the community of people who over the years have ensured their well-being.

This book is a miscellany of all things Exmoor pony: turning its pages may bring the reader to ponies harnessed for warfare; to meetings with a literary legend and a famous cowboy; to paintings by Britain's greatest equestrian artists; to stories of Exmoors travelling to the Antipodes; to pony sales from central London to deepest Exmoor; to the Exmoor Pony Society secretary who became a horse trainer for Her Majesty the Queen; to lyrical poems; to how one Exmoor pony lived with bison; to threats from pony-rustling; to pony sculpting; to tales of ponies being a shepherd's pillow or transport for the rabbit-catcher.

Within *The Exmoor Pony Chronicles* are answers to questions such as: Did the Aclands truly conserve Exmoor's indigenous pony? Where were Exmoor foals hidden upstairs in a pub? Who crossed an Exmoor pony with a wild ass? Can Exmoor ponies see pixies? And, once and for all, did soldiers really use Exmoor's ponies for target practice in WWII?

All this and more can be found in this fascinating and generously illustrated compendium.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sue Baker (née Gates) was born in London in 1953 and moved with her family to Somerset at the age of nine. Educated at Ilminster Girls' Grammar School, she then went to Leeds University where she gained a First Class Honours degree in Botany and Zoology. This was followed by a three-year research study of the ecology of free-living Exmoor Ponies for which she was awarded a Doctorate in Biological Sciences

in 1980. With a complete change of career, she spent the next ten years as a marketing manager, continuing her studies of the history and origins of Exmoor ponies and writing in her spare time. Her first book *Survival of the Fittest* was published in 1993 with a revised second edition *Exmoor Ponies – Survival of the Fittest* in 2008.

In 1994 Sue and husband Ian moved from the New Forest to Exmoor, near East Anstey. In 2014 they moved to Dulverton and, at the time of writing, they have four Exmoor Ponies living free on Exmoor and a local nature reserve. Sue joined the Exmoor Pony Society in 1974 and has been a Committee member many times. She was Chairman for several years and has also served as President. She wrote the script for the Society's DVD Discovering Exmoor Ponies and edited the newsletter for a long period. Sue was a joint founder of 'Friends of Exmoor Ponies' in 1980 from which she retired in 2014. In 2001, she was awarded the Helen Dashwood Rose Bowl for outstanding service to the Exmoor Pony Society and 2016 made an Honorary Vic- President for life.

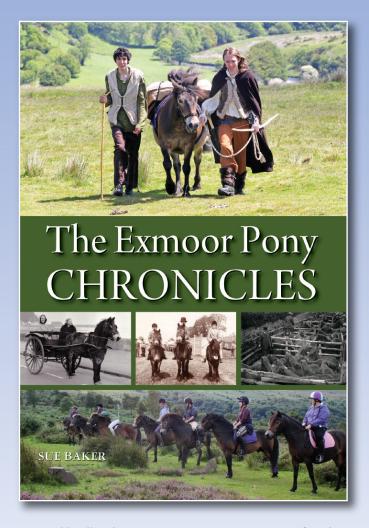
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Registered in England & Wales Nos. 4136732, 6029724 & 6472636 at Halsgrove House, Wellington TA21 9PZ.

Imprints: Halsgrove, Ryelands, Halstar, PiXZ Books & Halswood Journals. Halsgrove® is a registered trademark. Copyright® 2017

HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



Format: Hardback, 297x210mm, 160 pages, profuseley

illustrated in colour and black & white

Price: £24.99

ISBN: 978 0 85704 315 3

Imprint: *Halsgrove*Published: *October 2017*



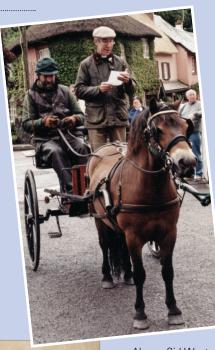
Halsgrove Publishing, Halsgrove House, Ryelands Business Park, Bagley Road, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PZ Tel: 01823 653777 Fax: 01823 216796 www.halsgrove.com e-mail: sales@halsgrove.com

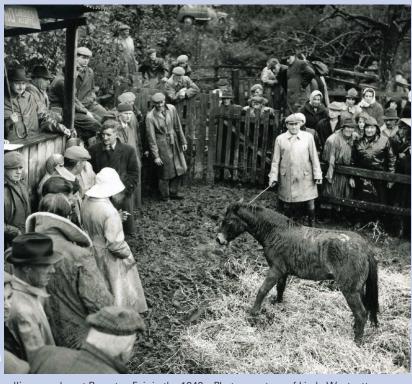
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Left: Sir Alfred Munnings riding on Exmoor during the 1940s. Photo: Richard Kingsley Tayler.

Right: The Reverend Robin Ray, reading the prayer and blessing that he wrote especially for the departure of the Native Pony Pilgrimage in 1998. His 'mobile pulpit' was pulled by Merlin and driven by Peter Farmer.





Example of a double page spread

Bampton Fair - the Annual Outing

Some years ago, Peter Hayward from Tamworth, Warwickshire visited the Exmoor Pony Society exhibition unit at a show in the Midlands and told of his Exmoor Pony during the 1940s. In 2016, I finally spoke directly with him, now aged ninety, and heard the stories in full.

In the early 1920s, Heard's garage in Torrington India of a charakane early Cutober to take people in the seats around it hanging out Tommy Beddaway's garand-diappler Christine regulars, who would go every year including. Peter's uncle, Tommy Reddaway, Each year he would have an unhandled Exmore fold for about of five shilling and then had to menhandle the foot of the profit of a fellow passenger by the time they up into the charakane, to skie it home to



Tommy the Pony

Originally, I kept a few chickens and sold the eggs for 10 old pence a dexen. I served all the money and eventually I bought a pure-bred Exmoor pony called Tommy, together with a tray, curt and harness for £8. Tommy had originally been bought as a for from Bampton Eur. I bought him from a man in Northam who had a small-baddies but we former search if the production of the conventual to the production of t

tim from a man in Northurs when had a stand-adding hut no longer model him.
When I was 16, in 1942, I would drive the proxy and cut this Dorrington from our village SI Gales, to do the shapping for my mother. There was only on the saveds in those also and very feet people had cars in Torrington and petrol was nationed. I would see all the village ladies unviglent down with lots of shapping, waiting for

the bus. "I'll take shopping," I said. Because I didn't have a carrier's licence, I couldn't charge but could accept a tip and so the ladies would

∞ EXMOOR PONY TALES ∞

Good Companions

Many years ago, I took an elderly friend to visit the family she had once worked for when in service. They had moved to Sussex and were running a Thoroughbred Stud. Whilst there, I met their partner Miss Bunting and she told me the following fascinating story.

In the 1950s, Miss Bunting and her partner were
Ligoring to sell a very good Thoroughbred filly.

Eventually, the two arimads walked out of the transher hers was to be auctioned at a top London
hotel, organised by The Sportsman's Club. The
arraw was quite highly strung but they had
discovered that she was a much caimer animal
discovered that she was a much caimer animal
structure of the struc



Above: Sid Westcott selling a sucker at Bampton Fair in the 1940s. Photo: courtesy of Linda Westcott.

Below: Exmoor ponies on Langeland in 2008. Photo: John Theilgaard.

