

EQUINE NEWS

THE EXMOOR PONY CENTRE CELEBRATES TURNING TEN

by Sharon Goble



Two equestrian celebrities have helped the Exmoor Pony Centre celebrate its milestone tenth birthday. Author and Exmoor pony lover, Victoria Eveleigh, and Devon horse trainer, freerider and TV presenter, Emma Massingale, attended a special birthday party in honour of Exmoor pony Barney, who also turned ten.

Barney was one of the first foals to be taken in when the Centre opened in the summer of 2006 to promote and protect the endangered rare breed. His party was held at Dunster Country Fair in July – with birthday cake for ponies and people!

Another supporter, pensioner Michael Woodcock, had hoped to jump an inexperienced young Exmoor pony to raise money at the Fair. He unfortunately had to withdraw from the challenge.

The Centre's Linzi Green says, "We are as much in need of funds now as when we first opened. Then, we were thrilled just

to have a few visitors. Now we welcome thousands each year to meet this wonderful iconic breed. In the last decade, we have helped over 300 ponies and had over 6,000 people in the saddle."

Extensive improvements have been made to the Centre over the years, including enhanced paddocking, pony handling and visitor facilities. In 2011 the 'Green Room' was renovated to provide a dedicated space for exhibitions, education and fundraising.

The Centre is run by the registered charity, the Moorland Mousie Trust. Moorland Mousie was the central character in a 1920s children's story about an Exmoor pony – a favourite childhood book of the Duchess of Cornwall who was, for a period, the charity's patron.

The anniversary celebrations include more events during August as part of the Exmoor Pony Festival.

www.exmoorponycentre.org.uk or
www.moorlandmousietrust.org.uk

EXMOOR CALVERT HORSESHOE

Calvert Trust Exmoor ran its first ever open country horse riding event, the Exmoor Calvert Horseshoe, on Bank Holiday Monday, 30 May 2016.

The Exmoor Calvert Horseshoe offered two alternative rides through beautiful Exmoor countryside: a 15-kilometre leisure ride and a 25-kilometre endurance ride. Both started and ended at Comer's Gate, near Withypool, taking

in beautiful Exmoor scenery including the Barle River valley, Dunkery Gate, Dunkery Hill, Cloutsham Ball and Horner Wood.

Local rider Julie Lyons described her experience: "I had a fantastic day, made some new friends, and enjoyed some beautiful scenery and lovely weather at this well-organised event!"

Calvert Trust Exmoor is a charity that works with people with all types of disability, providing opportunities to access many adventurous sports and activities, including horse riding and carriage driving. Robin Nicoll, Head of Fundraising at Calvert Trust Exmoor, says, "We've had brilliant support for our first ever open country riding event, with over 100 riders raising approximately £2,000 for Calvert Trust Exmoor, and more sponsorship and donations are still coming in."

The event was also kindly supported by Rosettes Direct, the UK's largest rosette manufacturer, who provided rosettes for all riders.

www.calvert-trust.org.uk/exmoor
www.facebook.com/CalvertTrustExmoor



Photo by Tim Larmerton

***Dunster's Calling*,
Tracey Gemmell,
2016, 320pp, pb, ISBN:
978 0 9976137 0-4.**

"I never really left Exmoor," says Tracey Gemmell. "Or maybe Exmoor never really left me. Either way, despite currently

residing in the United States, Exmoor's where my heart lives. So I had to search for a remedy for homesickness – and that's how *Dunster's Calling* was born."

This novel follows British expat, Samantha, from childhood exploits with her Exmoor pony, Dunster, to an adulthood that

finds her, surprisingly, married to a US citizen and living in the States. This humorous tale carries the reader from disastrous gymkhanas to ancient castles, French goats to intuitive dogs, and from thatched-cottage villages to a New York cruise that ferries Sam away from her livery-stable-with-attached-cream-tea-shop destiny. She discovers that, contrary to popular belief, not everyone is trying to get into America. She's trying to get out. But must she choose between her homeland and her husband?

Dunster's Calling explores what makes 'home' home and will touch anyone who's ever pined for a special place – or loved a pony. "I left Porlock years ago only to find I've spent years trying to

get back, so Sam and I definitely have something in common," Tracey laughs. "I just wish I'd had an Exmoor pony like Dunster!"

Tracey's trans-Atlantic lives have included roles in speech-language pathology and professional horse training. She currently divides her time between Wisconsin and Exmoor.

Visit her at traceygemmell.com or bit.ly/traceygemmell.

Available in paperback and e-book from Amazon.com, CreateSpace, Smashwords, and other outlets. A percentage of proceeds will be donated to the Moorland Mousie Trust.