



A GUIDE TO BUYING AND CARING FOR AN EXMOOR PONY

Exmoor ponies excel in almost every discipline, make great children's ponies and are also suitable for smaller adults. They are tough and hardy and characterful. Owning an Exmoor pony can give you enormous pleasure and help conserve a unique rare breed.

However, before you acquire your first Exmoor pony you may need to consider the following points:

- * you will need access to an adequately sized paddock with shelter (a field shelter or high hedges) and a fresh, clean water supply, safely fenced and free from poisonous plants such as ragwort.

- * Exmoor ponies are herd animals and should not be kept on their own. Arrange to share with another horse or pony owner if you only have one pony. This can also provide a change of grazing, necessary for the control of worms, as is picking up droppings on small paddocks.

- * ponies need to be checked regularly, even in summer, and to be fed every day when keep is short. Ensure that you or someone responsible can access your paddock even in snowy weather. You will also need someone knowledgeable to take over if you are ill or on holiday.

- * Exmoor ponies are hardy and long-lived, but you will need to register with an equine veterinarian for vaccinations, worming or injury, a registered farrier for foot trimming or shoeing, and a good saddler to fit tack.

- * Exmoor ponies have particularly good digestions. They are adapted to make use of the rough grazing on Exmoor, but in paddock grazing too much or too little grass is equally bad. Too much rich ryegrass grazing or high protein 'hard feeds' may lead to laminitis or colic, possibly fatal.

BUYING AN EXMOOR PONY

There is a list of ponies for sale on the Exmoor Pony Society's website and facebook page www.exmoorponysociety.org.uk and <https://www.facebook.com/TheExmoorPonySociety>. The Secretary is also able to provide a list of moorland breeders who will have ponies for sale in any given Autumn. These ponies are owned by Society members who are often the pony's breeder and are likely to be experienced owners or by owners who have found themselves in a position where they need to move a pony on. It is useful to visit breeders or owners in your area and if possible visit a moorland/free living herd of which there are a number all over the UK to see the ponies in their natural habitat. The Secretary can also put you in touch with your local EPS Area Representative.

The Exmoor Pony Society either directly, or through its members, provide many opportunities to learn more about the Exmoor Pony and, indeed, meet a pony throughout the UK.

The annual Christmas Foal Show in Somerset is an ideal place to come along and see handled Exmoor foals being shown by their breeders. Details are available from the Secretary.

BUYING YOUNGSTERS

Young Exmoor ponies may be bought from their breeder, from either a 'free living' or an 'in-ground' herd. Breeders usually have the current year's foals for sale from October onwards. To bring up a pony from this age is the most rewarding, but it requires time, patience, suitable facilities and experience. Some breeders will have handled the foal before sale, but whether or not this has happened, you may, depending on your level of knowledge, need help to take your pony through the various stages of its education up to breaking it in. Your vet, farrier, saddler or the local riding school may be able to guide you towards experienced help if needed. If you do feel you require help, it may be wise to take the youngster directly to where you have arranged initial handling – if you let a young pony out into your paddock without handling it is likely to be extremely difficult to catch it again. Even more so, if you have bought two! Exmoor ponies are herd animals and will group together and form an independence from human contact – so it always much better to work with each pony separately.

Young ponies are individuals and it is the experience of many owners that the temperament of the pony is more of a deciding factor in how easily it takes to handling than any previous experiences that pony may have had. For this reason, sometimes a wild foal direct from the moor may be easier to handle than one brought up 'in-ground'. Or it may not! Always buy from an experienced, reputable breeder and take advice from them as to the temperament of the foal's mother and relatives. Most breeders are more than happy to help ensure the most suitable pony goes to the right home and provide follow-up advice if needed.

The breeder may also be able to deliver the pony to you. If not, consider using a professional horse transporter for an inexperienced youngster.

BUYING OLDER PONIES

Older ponies are also advertised on the 'For Sale' list of the Society's website, many of them already ridden or driven, and often having been shown successfully. You may also find a pony advertised locally, but as with any breed or type, make sure the seller is an experienced, reputable person who will let you try out the pony adequately and is willing to have it vetted. Ensure the pony has its Equine Passport and ask the vet to check the drugs page of this and the pony's microchip number if any.

PASSPORTS, INSPECTIONS AND DNA TESTING

All adult ponies must be sold with an Equine Passport. All ponies born in 2009 or later must have a microchip, the number of which is listed in its passport.

The Exmoor Pony Society is responsible for issuing passports to Exmoor ponies which are to be registered in Section I or Section X of the Studbook. The owner is responsible for applying for a foal's passport before the end of the year in which they are born, or before they are 6 months old, or in the case of moorland ponies, when they are moved off the moor. This will have been done by the breeder when the pony is inspected by the Society's Inspectors. If you buy a foal at weaning, it will not have been issued with a passport yet, but it should have been inspected– it is unwise to buy a foal that has not been inspected.

Inspections are carried out to ensure that only foals which conform to the breed standards are registered in Section 1 and can be shown and bred from as registered Exmoor Ponies. A pony that fails its inspection will have a conformational or breed standard fault. It may be re-inspected the next year if the fault is likely to rectify itself, or it may be registered in Section X, in which case it cannot be shown in Registered Pony classes, or used to breed Registered Exmoor Ponies. These ponies may still make excellent ridden or driving ponies for other disciplines. The Society DNA parentage test all moor bred foals to ensure that the information on the passport giving the registered sire and dam is correct. This is particularly important when purchasers are looking to buy for breeding and wish to purchase a certain bloodline. This also maintains the accuracy of the Studbook to ensure that bloodlines are listed and the genetic health of this rare breed can be monitored.

When you have bought your pony, you will need to send the passport to the Society's Secretary to transfer ownership, or in the case of a foal, if the breeder provides your details to the Secretary your details can be included straightaway and the passport can be sent to you. And enjoy your unique pony!

The Exmoor Pony Society has a UK wide network of Area Representatives available for support and advice to new owners. There will be shows, pleasure rides and other activities organised in your area to help members get the maximum enjoyment from their ponies.

For details of adult, junior or family membership, contact the Secretary or visit the Society's website.



The Exmoor Pony Society

Guardians of the Breed since 1921

Conserving and Preserving Exmoor's Heritage

by promoting and encouraging the Breeding of Registered Exmoor Ponies.

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Registered Charity No: 1043036

THE VERSATILE EXMOOR PONY



The lead rein pony



The brood mare



Side saddle



The working hunter pony



The fun pony



Young stock showing



The ridden pony



The driving pony



The agility pony



The cross country pony



The western riding pony



The jumping pony
(Sweden)



The conservation grazing
pony



The endurance pony



Along the beach pony