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Natives in New Zealand



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Meet our new sponsored rider for 2014

Shilstone Rocks Stud's Dartmoor ponies travel to New Zealand

Tracey Elliot-Reep is an avid adventurer and horsewoman and has ridden horses from the top of Scotland to Land's End in England, around Southern Ireland, across Wales, the length of New Zealand, and from Mexico to Canada. Tracey is currently in the process of developing a ranch in New Zealand for underprivileged children and has recently imported two Dartmoor mares from the Shilstone Rocks Dartmoor Pony Stud. These ponies will have an integral role at the ranch, allowing children to learn and interact with them in a peaceful and calming environment.

Tracey's mother, Elizabeth Newbolt-Young founded the Shilstone Rocks Dartmoor Pony Stud in the early 1960's. Tracey spent the majority of her childhood living on the edge of Dartmoor near Throwleigh, beneath Shilstone Rocks. At the age of 12 years old, her mother bought her a Fell x Dartmoor filly, who she backed and rode over the moor getting to know the different Dartmoor pony herds. As they had no grazing, her pony which her mother brought for her called Orphan Lass, lived out on the moor, near Shilstone Rocks and would come to her whistle.



Just foaled

Tracey first travelled to New Zealand with a friend when she was 25 and had a dream to ride the length of both Islands on horseback. They worked fruit picking for nine months to save up the money to buy their horses and then had a six month adventure riding from Cape Reinga in the far North to Bluff at the bottom of the South Island. It was the first of four epic treks that Tracey published in a series of photographic adventure books called *Riding by Faith*.

Tracey's sister currently resides on the North Island of New Zealand and it has always been her dream to have Dartmoor ponies at their farm in Hawkes Bay. It has long been Tracey's ambition to open a ranch for orphans and



Mares in the snow in Widdicombe Valley



Making new friends



Shilstone Rocks Mountain Dog and her canine friend keep a watchful eye over the new foal

underprivileged children to find peace and to be able to interact and enjoy being around the calming influence of the ponies. Tracey thought about the ideal location of the ranch for many years, until the realization came that it should be on the coast of New Zealand. "I have first-hand experience with Dartmoors as I grew up riding them, and they have exceptionally kind temperaments, and seem to enjoy doing almost anything you ask them. They make excellent children's ponies and are perfect for this venture" said Tracey.

Exporting the two mares to New Zealand was a complicated process

as there were extensive veterinary tests that had to be performed and both mares were recently in foal by the time they left the UK. Tracey recalled "We were in fact transporting four Dartmoor ponies for the price of two but it was very expensive. The vet had to take swabs from both the maiden mares and stallions for three weeks before and after covering. Everything had to be very precise with the timing of covering the mares in addition to an extensive series of veterinary checks and lab tests.

"The added difficulty was the fact that we were hoping to get both mares in foal in the middle of winter

and they were maiden mares. They ran with the stallion, Shilstone Rocks North Countryman all through November, December and January and we were thankful everything went to plan and they were both in foal by the second month."

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Whilst it was snowing on Dartmoor, the mares were clipped

in preparation for their trip and the rugs were piled on. "They left Dartmoor in mid-winter and arrived in mid-summer, when New Zealand was experiencing it's worst drought for years" said Tracey.

The mares were in quarantine for three weeks in England and a further three weeks after they had arrived in New Zealand.

"My sister's family drove the ponies seven hours from Auckland to Waitohu Farm near Waipukurau in Hawkes Bay. The ponies seemed to take everything in their stride and were very glad to have a canter in their new home, even if the ground



Mares and foals settling into their new home

was scorched and baked hard" added Tracey.

The mares foaled within two weeks of each other; Shilstone Rocks Mountain Bay had a colt foal named Shilstone Rocks Mountain Man in early October 2013 which is spring time in New Zealand. Shilstone Rocks Sugar Snap foaled two weeks later with a filly foal named Shilstone Rocks Snow Berry. Tracey has recently sourced a Dartmoor stallion that they are using to develop their breeding programme. DingMac Eagle Rock was recently brought from the South Island to the North Island and is owned by Steve and Becky of the Dingmac Stud. They emigrated from the UK with several Dartmoor ponies a few years ago. "We are currently using him on both Shilstone Rocks Mountain Bay and Shilstone Rocks Sugar Snap. Mountain Bay's colt will be able to be used with the Dingmac ponies in the future too, so it will work well," said Tracey.

"For the time being my sister is keeping all of the Dartmoors on the farm, where they are used for 'Keeping In Touch' (KIT) days.

"These are specially run for deaf children and children who have hearing impairment problems in the Hawkes Bay region. The ponies all have such lovely temperaments and are easy to handle, making them perfect for this type of work.

"In a few years when the number of ponies has increased, my sister will keep some and I will take some to the ranch on the coast.

"The mares are now five years old and we are currently backing them, and with their good temperament it won't be a long process. This will then enable us to use them as riding ponies too.

"We are all taking it step by step at the moment, seeing how the vision unfolds. Bringing the two Dartmoor mares to New Zealand was the first step in the project and it is such an exciting journey to be on. Not only are they beautiful to look at, but they will be an asset to the project and will have such an impact on the people who will visit the ranch in the future" added Tracey.



Leading the mares back to Arahoro Farm

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