



## PRESS RELEASE

FOUW is happy to announce that as part of the FOUW 'Understanding Ullswater Evening Talk' series, our next talk will be given by two stars of the Fell Pony world, Sue Millard of the Fell Pony Society, and Libby Robinson of the Fell Pony Heritage Trust. It will be the first time they have shared a platform together.

The talks will take place at 7.30 pm on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at Watermillock Village Hall and on ZOOM.

Sue will talk first, setting the context and the history of the Fell pony breed. Libby will follow, presenting her work with Fell ponies in the Ullswater Valley and her Trust.

**Sue Millard** has been a fan of Fell ponies since 1968. She has worked with them as pony trekkers and carriage ponies, and joined the Fell Pony Society in 1983 when she and her husband bought a smallholding at Greenholme and finally had space to keep a mare.

She also got involved with the Fell Pony Museum at Dalemain in 1983; so when she did her Computing MSc in 2000-2002 her final project was to set up and analyse the effect of an online version of the Fell Pony and Countryside Museums, [www.fellponymuseum.org.uk](http://www.fellponymuseum.org.uk).

She was a FPS Panel Judge 1995-2015 and was elected onto FPS Council in 2006. She has edited the FPS Magazine since 2008, and the website since 2012.

All her Fells have been enthusiastic driving ponies and performed cheerfully in the show ring, driven dressage, cross country and obstacles, as well as pleasure drives, bits of farm work, a bit of log-clearing, carriage instruction and everyday leisure driving.

In 2005 she wrote "Hoofprints in Eden" from a series of interviews with Cumbrian Fell pony breeders, mostly hill breeders.

Much of her writing in fiction and on social media features Fells and has brought the breed to the notice of BBC and ITV audiences as well as to her readers. She helped to set up the FPS Display Team in 2015 and provides its commentaries and soundtracks, and she was also part of the Centenary sub-committee in 2022, writing "A Century of Fells" to follow on from "Hoofprints".

**Libby Robinson** is the chair and founder of the Fell Pony Heritage Trust ( [www.fpht.co.uk](http://www.fpht.co.uk) ) and has a lifelong ambition to protect the Fell Ponies heritage and is striving to raise awareness of the ponies' value to the local environment. Libby's love of the breed began at a young age learning to ride on a Fell pony at the age of eight in Kentmere. She has a passion for driving and working the ponies from owning her first Fell in 1979 and breeding Fell ponies for the last 25 years with now 7 breeding mares hefted on the fell near Tebay.

She believes that the hill bred Fell Pony, unlike Herdwick sheep, has long passed its heyday, when Fell ponies played a key role in transport, industry and agriculture. However, for her, and other devoted breeders, it is their faith and belief which motivates them to work to preserve Fell ponies' long term future as a part of the Cumbrian landscape. This involves understanding their unique survival skills and instincts on the fells, and their abilities as working animals. After 70 years Fell ponies are now back at Gowbarrow Hall Farm as part of a regenerative farming system with cattle and pigs that she is intimately involved in.

**Gordon Lightburn, Chair of the FOUW** said: 'We feel very privileged to be joined by these two dedicated leaders from the field of Fell Pony preservation. We can look forward to an evening full of insight into what it takes to ensure this vital part of our rural heritage endures and thrives.'

**Background:** FOUW was created in April 2016 to promote awareness of the culture and natural heritage around the Ullswater Way. It was granted charitable status in August 2019.

Please contact Tim Clarke at [info@ullswaterheritage.org](mailto:info@ullswaterheritage.org) to register for the talk, indicating whether you wish to follow it at Watermillock Village Hall or by ZOOM. The talk is free. 50% of donations received will go to FOUW, and 50% to Sue and Libby's charities of choice.