



# Hunter Davies



The winner's prize of a portrait of Yoshi by Rebecca Mary

I am not a dog lover, oh God, just slipped out. You should never admit that in print or in company. All you will then get is abuse.

Not really much of animal lover either, though I do love red squirrels, so pretty, so entertaining, so shy, yet so perky. Oh, and tortoises, I adore them. We have had one in our garden for over 50 years, bought when our first born arrived. In all that time I have never had to feed her, water her, spend a penny on her health or education, or care for her in any way. Oh, if only children were like that.

So, when I was asked to judge a competition for the best photograph of an animal, I said 'sorry, pet, you are asking the wrong person. I know nowt about animals'.

They said it was for charity, so I said which one? Turned out to be the Calvert Trust. And I said you're on.

You must have heard of them, based near Keswick, who for 45 years have been organising residential holidays for people with disabilities – multi activity holidays, including swimming, climbing, canoeing, sailing, carriage driving, high ropes, riding, all that sort of physical and outdoor stuff. They have residential accommodation for 60 people. Amazing, really. Alas, because of Covid, they have had not been able to operate for over a year, so have had no income, yet their costs have continued, particularly the upkeep of their eight ponies in their stables.

I first came across the name Calvert when working on a biog of Wordsworth. While at Hawkshead School, William became a friend of Raisley Calvert who was a semi-invalid



1. Niamh Deery with Fudge, one of Calvert Trust's horses.
2. The winning picture of Yoshi by his owner Julie Rowlands.
3. Rusty taken by Lou Hogan.
4. Calvert Trust's Prince drawn by Maisy Noble

while still quite young. William helped look after him at one time and Raisley let him and Dorothy live in their family home, Old Windebrowe, Keswick.

When Raisley Calvert died, he left Wordsworth a legacy of £900, enough to keep him going while he tried to establish himself as a poet. His home was eventually bought by the Spedding family, of Mirehouse on Bass Lake, who in due course donated it to the Calvert Trust.

The stables are still on the site at Old Windebrowe – and next door they have the Wordsworth Rooms, where he stayed.

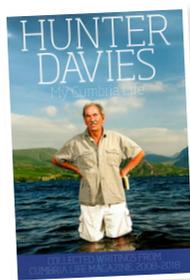
The Trust has lost \$1 million this last year so started a Bounce Back Appeal. One of their fundraising efforts has been a photograph competition, costing £1 to enter. The overall winner would get, not just a warm glow, but also a fab rosette and a pet portrait. The shortlist would get certificates.

I was sent the final shortlist of four – which you now see before you – to pick the winner. I consulted my girlfriend Claire. She is a mad keen dog lover, in fact a lover of all animals, goodness knows why she got shackled up with me.

Right, here are the four on the shortlist. See what you think.

- 1) Pic of a girl and her pony with matching straw hats. Yes, cute and pretty and charming – but a bit corny.
- 2) Sheepdog with some flowers in its mouth. Are they plastic I wonder? I mean the flowers, not the dog. Also cute, but technically a much better picture. I did used to be a magazine editor so although I might know nowt about dogs, I can, in theory, spot a well taken snap.
- 3) Dog with sun specs and a can of beer. Hmm, quite amusing, but is it fair in this day and age to humiliate an animal by anthropomorphising them? I know Beatrix Potter got away with it, but right on animal lovers today probably frown upon giving pets human attributes.
- 4) Drawing of er what is it? By the hooves it looks like a pony, but what do I know. But it is a haunting, Picasso-like image, done by a young child, I should think.

Which snap did we decide was the winner and which the runner up? Tarran tarran, drums roll, trumpets sounds. I am now going to ask Claire to open the envelope and declare the winner is...the sheep dog with flowers! And the runner up is the drawing of the pony. Thank you. And good luck to the Calvert Trust's appeal.



Hunter Davies is a prolific author, journalist and broadcaster. His 100th book, My Cumbria Life, is out now. Buy at [cumbrialife.co.uk](http://cumbrialife.co.uk) or call 01228 612760. £15.99 plus £2 p&p, or FREE p&p for subscribers. Hunter's latest book of memoirs, Happy Old Me, is published by Simon and Schuster, £16.99.

**THIS MONTH** Hunter is reading the 80 books entered for the Lake District Book of the Year Awards, winners to be announced on October 19. So many this year, and of such amazing quality. Is it because of Covid that Cumbrians have taken up writing?