

**PRESS RELEASE:** The Exmoor Society launches *Exmoor Studies*, a new series of publications.

The Exmoor Society is pleased to announce the launch of its new series *Exmoor Studies*. The idea for the publications sprang from the Society's annual *Exmoor Review*, as the editors sometimes have to cut longer articles. Rather than turn away such information, it was decided instead to publish them as more in-depth studies of around 15-20,000 words.

The first two booklets are out now. No. 1, *Exmoor Chroniclers*, explores the writings, paintings and photographs of eight people who shared their knowledge of Exmoor in these different ways. They include the historian Hilary Binding, journalist Peter Hesp and writer and editor Victor Bonham-Carter. The essays were written by Caroline Tonson-Rye, Steven Pugsley, Mike Sampson, Hugh Thomas and Martin Hesp. *Exmoor Chroniclers* draws on archive material in the Exmoor Society's resource centre to give a fresh perspective on these key Exmoor figures.

No. 2, *The Exmoor Pony: Contested Histories*, examines the debates around just how ancient the ponies are. Some say they are Ice Age survivors and a repository of ancient, wild-type DNA whilst others argue that they are a modern breed, albeit a very special one. Drawing on her academic research into the history of animal breeding, and on her personal knowledge of horses and ponies, the Society's archivist Dr Helen Blackman aimed to put some of the highly specific debates about the Exmoor ponies into a wider context of animal breeding and the history of Exmoor.

There are four more *Studies* in the pipeline. The next publication is based on a manuscript in the Society's archives and is used by permission of Clara Greed, widow of the manuscript's author John Greed. *The Minehead Road: Between Exmoor and the Quantocks* concerns the history of turnpike roads into Minehead, historically one of the entry points to Exmoor. *Hope Bourne: Reflections in Words* will follow in the summer of 2018, in time for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hope's birth. The volume will explore Bourne's published and unpublished writing. Known for her work on Exmoor, the author and illustrator nonetheless covered much wider themes, tackling subjects as divergent as poll tax, religion and the history of the horse. The series will continue with *Exmoor's Postal Routes* and *Historic and Veteran Trees of Exmoor*.

The first two volumes are available now at the Society's headquarters on Dulverton High Street, or online at <https://www.exmoorsociety.com/shop>, priced £6 each. The Exmoor

Society is celebrating the launch of the series on Wednesday 15 November, 12 noon until 3pm at 34 High Street, Dulverton.

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Note to Editors:

The Exmoor Society exists to promote and organise action for the conservation and enjoyment of the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage of Exmoor national park. It was established in 1958 and successfully fought proposals to afforest The Chains, the central moorland area of Exmoor. It has continued to campaign against adverse changes and encourage people's understanding of the park's special qualities. It acts as an independent watchdog and champion for Exmoor's status as a national park.

