

The Exmoor Society

The Exmoor Society, Parish Rooms, Dulverton, Somerset TA22 9DP

Spring 2014 Newsletter

No. 61



Packhorse Bridge at Allerford © Jenny Gibson

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The Exmoor Society
SPRING CONFERENCE 2014

Friday, 11th April 2014

Dulverton Town Hall ~ 10am

'Discovering Exmoor : People & Place'

£15 per person to include refreshments

Booking Essential: Please complete form included with this Newsletter, and return to Parish Rooms with your cheque payable to "The Exmoor Society".

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS 2014

A Step Change

2014 heralds a momentous year for the Society. At last, after two years in the planning, our Archive Project called 'Unlocking Exmoor's Heritage' can now begin. Funding is finally secured, and a full-time outreach archivist will be employed for two years to drive forward an ambitious programme to make the archive accessible. Among other things, it will provide a useful record of policy decisions over half a century that have affected Exmoor's assets, and that can inform future proposals in contentious areas, such as moorland management.

At the same time, the Society is now fortunate in that a benefactor, the Cave Foundation, wishes to purchase a property for the Society's use in the centre of Dulverton. It will have sufficient room to provide offices, storage for the archive and library, and a shop frontage. It is a more than generous offer and an affirmation of the way the Society has pursued its aims over the last ten years. This has only been possible with the help of very many people who have freely given up their time to develop different aspects of the Society's work. With the new premises and the largest project in value ever undertaken by the Society, we will be even more dependent on volunteers. Below I have mentioned some of the areas where particular skills and knowledge are required (see p.8) and hope that many of you will contact the office to offer your services.

Additionally, 2014 is also the sixtieth anniversary of Exmoor's designation as a national park. Not only does this provide an opportunity to reflect on the reasons for this designation but also to consider the challenges Exmoor faces ahead. In conjunction with Exeter University, the Spring Conference this year will be a forum for debate of some of the key issues to be tackled, see what is known



about them and suggest possible sustainable solutions. Right from its beginning as a national park, as our archive shows, Exmoor is extremely fragile and vulnerable to change both from natural and human processes, ranging from climate change to controversial planning proposals. Continual vigilance is therefore required and is one of the Society's key roles.

As a way of celebrating this anniversary, the Society would very much like to hear what you think makes Exmoor special. What attracts you to come here: views, the wildlife, the archaeology, the activities? What are your favourite places, walks, villages, churches, farms or shops and eating places? Your suggestions (by email, letter or telephone) will contribute to the celebration of the national park at our Annual General Meeting in September.



Rachel Thomas

DID YOU KNOW THAT EXMOOR CONTAINS ~

- The **highest** and **longest** stretch of uninterrupted coastal woodlands in the country.
- The **rarest** trees in the country, four species of endemic white beam found nowhere else in the world.
- The **tallest** tree in England at Dunster (a 62 metre Douglas Fir).
- The **highest** beech plantation in England at Birch Cleave, Simonsbath.
- The **oldest** – one of the greatest concentrations of veteran trees.

NEWS ROUNDUP

New Report on Exmoor Ponies: A Brief Summary

Free-living Exmoor ponies are clearly a valuable asset to the Exmoor National Park, but better management of the herds is needed, as shown in Peter Green's November 2013 report for the Exmoor Moorland Partnership Scheme, *The free-living ponies within the Exmoor National Park: their status, welfare and future* (accessible on the ENPA website at <http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/environment/wildlife-and-ponies/?a=399284>). The brief was to consider a range of questions, among them:

- The importance of maintaining the genetic diversity in Exmoor ponies;
- The difficulties and limitations of DNA testing (required by the Exmoor Pony Society) for registration in the stud book;
- The need (or otherwise) for a breeding plan and how it could be implemented;
- What to do with the numbers of free-living ponies that cannot be registered;
- Whether the market for Exmoor ponies could be improved.

The report demonstrates that, given the limited genetic diversity of the Exmoor pony, a new breeding programme could promote new genetic input. The current system of DNA testing for registration in the stud book excludes many Exmoor type ponies. Green's conclusion is that there should be a limited moratorium on DNA testing, with registration of true Exmoor type ponies regardless of parentage, thus reducing the number of unregistered free-living ponies.

Green suggests two possible breeding policies: (1) the creation of "no-breeding-in-free-living-herds", with breeding between selected mares and stallions restricted to enclosed pastures. This would simplify registration, facilitate a widening of the genetic base, and control the number of foals. But no free-living stallions could roam the moor. (2) To allow only one stallion in a fenced area of moorland. This would avoid some of the DNA problems but would reduce the number of breeding ponies on the moor.

Unregistered ponies have almost no value, even as meat. As it is an offence to own, sell, or transport a pony (or horse) without an approved passport, a relaxation of the registration criteria would reduce the number of ponies without passports. However, the market is limited even for registered Exmoor ponies as riding ponies and this is an area which requires attention.

Green concludes with two telling facts: “The present systems of management, husbandry and registration of the free-living Exmoor ponies are unhelpful to the future security of the breed on the moor. No single party in the complicated relationship that controls the free-living Exmoor ponies has the authority, ability or mandate to improve the outlook for the ponies alone.”

Woodland Report

The comprehensive study, *Unlocking Exmoor’s Woodland Potential*, prepared by Laura Jones Associates and the Silvanus Trust and commissioned by the Exmoor Society, Exmoor National Park Authority, and the Forestry Commission and others, provides an authoritative analysis of the many issues relating to Exmoor’s rich and diverse woodlands (http://www.exmoorsociety.com/documents/UnlockingExmoorsWoodlandPotential_000.pdf). The report sets out a new understanding of the ways in which woodland on Exmoor can contribute to ecological, economic and community sustainability and how these might be developed and strengthened in future. The final eighteen recommendations on further opportunities to develop the full potential of woodlands show how the National Park’s Statutory Purposes and special qualities can be used as “anchors through change” to guide future decisions and to enhance the benefits that visitors and communities derive from them. When the bigger picture is looked at, Rachel Thomas in her Foreword identifies three key messages.

First, a major challenge the report highlights is that of understanding how climate change will affect Exmoor’s woodlands. Helping woodlands develop resistance to pests and diseases and extreme weather events is particularly important, as is promoting resilience and ability for species and habitats to adapt to these inevitable changes. Indeed, the first recommendation of the

Report is that the principles and priorities of adaptation should be applied to Exmoor's woodlands, which will require considerable attention and resources.

Second, and perhaps the most significant finding of the Report, is how the special qualities of Exmoor can be used as "anchors through change" and guide future decisions. The National Park's rich cultural and historical associations with woodlands and the story they tell over the millennia, is largely unrecognised and uninterpreted. Part of the legacy of these associations is the landscape character today and the benefits that visitors and communities draw from them. The wider cultural services (including education, recreation and access) found in such an unusual concentration on Exmoor should form the basis of a major theme and a much wider project that could seek special funding. This would be at the heart of developing the woodland culture of Exmoor.

The third observation is that a great robustness can be achieved for what the authors' call a "synergy of ambition" that crosses the three themes of good for people, good for nature, and good for economy. The Report recognises that much is being delivered already, such as the exciting programme in relation to protecting Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (ASNW) and restoring Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), or the large provision of rights of way and way-marked woodland walks, or the Exmoor Woodfuel Project. However, as the Report points out, there remain considerable gaps where further action is required, and it gives a range of suggestions including some innovative ones where there is woodland potential for dealing with public health, fuel poverty, social enterprises, corporate local responsibility and the development of a grant programme that combines the three themes. The partners hope that the report highlights that Exmoor's woodlands deserve to be seen at the same level as the big Exmoor themes, such as its moorlands.

Unlocking Exmoor's Heritage: Archive Project

Over the 56 years of its existence, Exmoor Society has amassed an extremely varied and interesting collection of material, some of which charts the history of the contested landscape designation since 1954. The archive

consists of not only the papers of Victor Bonham-Carter and Malcolm MacEwen, and the correspondence of S H Burton, articles and photographs by Brian Chugg, a mass of sketches by Hope Bourne, but also books, letters, historic manuscripts, drawings, paintings and photographs by many others with an interest in Exmoor. The concern of the Society was that this material was not catalogued or properly housed, and so was not easily accessible to the general public. It therefore made an application for funding of £60,000 to the National Park Partnership Fund, which, happily, has been successful. Altogether, with contributions from charities, individuals and the Society's own resources, plus 'in kind' volunteer time, the total value of the project comes to £251,307. This means that it will be possible to employ an outreach archivist for two years from early in 2014 to order and catalogue the collection, advise on conservation, digitisation and on the training of volunteers to keep the archive going, and to help with an outreach programme. The Society's aim is to use the collection for educational and research purposes. It plans to create a centre where this unique material is accessible to both the general public with an interest in Exmoor and academic researchers.

The Society has played an important role in the conservation movement and the material provides an insight into the fight undertaken to conserve Exmoor over many decades. The project will provide a lasting legacy of this work and will underline the fragility of Exmoor's national park status and the need for greater resilience in its special qualities in order to face the challenges of the future.

Call for Volunteers

As a small charity, the Exmoor Society has always depended on volunteers to carry out its aims and, over the decades, many people have been generous with their time in helping the Society to thrive. Part-time staff will, of course, play an essential role in the administration of the Society and in servicing the membership, but there has never been full-time cover. For several years, we have appealed for volunteers to come forward and help in several ways: serving on the Executive, becoming a walk leader, helping in the office, putting on different events, giving talks, attending agricultural shows, and representing the Society on committees. Because of the changes the Society

faces in 2014, with the start of the Archive Project, and a likely move to new premises with a shop front, more volunteers are needed for all these activities.

A few years ago, in a drive to modernise the Society, a strategic development plan was undertaken which divided the Society's work into two sections, namely pursuing the aims and objectives, and running the Society. Several work streams were identified, some of which have come to fruition and stopped, and others that continue. One work stream on governance decided on the general requirements for Executive membership. Enthusiasm for and knowledge of Exmoor, particularly in relation to landscape and farming, wildlife, historic environment, recreation, access and tourism are desirable. Specific skills needed include a knowledge of finance, legal matters, planning, fund-raising and marketing, IT and publications. Of the current Executive, members of which serve a three-year term after election at the AGM, we lack at present a working farmer, expertise in marketing and sponsorship, website management and publications, including a new Editor for the 2016 *Exmoor Review*.

The Archive Project will require volunteers to give time over the next two years to be trained in managing the archive (preserving, cataloguing, arranging, dealing with queries and the general public), and others who can be trained to spearhead particular events such as giving talks and developing educational materials. If the new premises have been secured then the Society would like volunteers to offer to help with the shop and general public by this summer.

Please get in touch, if you are interested in any of the above areas.

Planning

The Society continues to monitor all planning applications coming to the Planning Committee. Applications have fluctuated from 18 in October to 39 in November. Between August and the end of December there have been 147 applications. The most potentially damaging applications are arising when large farms are sold off in relatively small lots. The new owners then seek to erect an agricultural building on their new holding. Frequently these applications are in exposed, isolated locations, near roads. Even when the building itself is not particularly visible it has an impact on the landscape

character changing it from one of large farms with buildings concentrated around the farmhouse to one of scattered isolated barns. One such application may in itself not be too damaging but the accumulated effect will be highly significant.

Two applications that have caused the Society most concern, and where we strongly objected, have seen decisions to refuse overturned by Planning Inspectors, on appeal. The first of these was for an exposed agricultural building at Quarne Combe, near Wheddon Cross and the second for a dwelling, in open countryside, at Smallcombe Farm, Timberscombe. Such cases prompt the Society to wonder whether inspectors fully understand and appreciate the nature of the Exmoor National Park's unique landscape.

The most time-consuming activity of the year has been reading and responding to the 300 page Draft Local Plan for 2011-2030. This plan has had to reflect guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework which includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, unless there are clear grounds set out in the policies, restricting development.

We are pleased to see extensive use of the Exmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment in drawing up policies and believe this will allow a higher level of refinement than has previously been possible. We have supported the inclusion of small Rural Communities in the Settlement Hierarchy and believe that limited small-scale, affordable housing, with no cross subsidy, in such communities is important for the long-term economic future of the Park. However, the society expressed reservations about the breadth of vision and objectives set out in the document as we believe that there must be some facilities that cannot be made available within the Park, with its small population and dearth of larger towns and service centres.

The Society's response welcomed the plan, recognising that it was detailed, comprehensive and cleverly formulated. It had clearly involved a huge amount of work. The society will continue to monitor progress of the Plan.

WOODLAND FIELD VISIT 2014 - Friday, 3rd October

10.30am meet at Marsh Bridge (GR 907290) and pick up 4WD to visit woods through Danesbrook, Castle Bridge, River Barle. Led by Graeme McVittie, ENPA Woodlands Officer. For more details please contact Graeme on 01398 322276. Followed by picnic and Woodland Advisory Group meeting in Parish Rooms.

Farming Update

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Last year saw discussions by EU governments on the reform of CAP and how funds can be used by individual countries from 2015 to 2020 under two pillars.

- Pillar 1 – Direct payments to farmers. The previous support system split England into three areas: Lowland, Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs) and Moorland, with Lowland receiving the highest payments and Moorland the lowest. Most of Exmoor is classified as SDA and Moorland. The Society with others has for several years argued that this was an unfair distribution as it did not recognise the benefits that upland farmers provided and managed (landscape, rare habitats, plants, and wildlife, historic features, water storage, carbon sequestration, recreation and open access) plus working in some of the toughest conditions. Exmoor hill farmers in the SDA category will now receive the same direct payment rate as their Lowland counterparts. An increased Moorland payment will be announced in 2014.
- Pillar 2 – Rural Development Programme. The largest proportion of this budget will be allocated to agri-environmental schemes, a new scheme called New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS) is being developed that aims to incorporate elements of Environmental Stewardship, Catchment Sensitive Farming and the England Woodland Grant Scheme. It remains to be seen that NELMS will be flexible enough to reflect the local conditions on Exmoor where there still remains concerns over land management restrictions and practices.

Moorland Management

Contentious issues over moorland management continue to dominate discussions both in the Exmoor Moorland Board and other south-west upland forums. These include swaling, stocking rates, out-wintering of cattle, encroachment of scrub such as gorse and bracken. Of particular concern is the impact of the heather beetle and in 2013 the pattern continued of its spreading from south to north with the coastal moors remaining largely free. It is believed that the beetle spreads in a three-year cycle and that some of

the previous areas affected are showing fresh heather growth. However, even though this is vigorous, the heather is close to the ground and is quickly swamped by grasses, especially molinia.

Exmoor Mires Project

South-West Water (SWW) as the principal funder is on target to restore 2,000 hectares of damaged peat land on Exmoor in the period 2010 to 2015. This will leave around 644 hectares of peat cutting drainage networks and eroding gullies in need of restoration. SWW has proposed a new project from 2015 to 2020 to restore the hydrology of these remaining areas and to continue the other outcomes of the present project. In addition, the project will deliver a full programme of monitoring these eco-system services and include a reward scheme (Paid Eco-system Services – PES) for participating peat land owners. The Society continues to argue for the details of the reward scheme, and supports the research, monitoring and educational work of the project.

Brendon Common Leads the Way

Brendon Common, which has been managed between the Landowner and Commoners according to custom and the prevailing law for the last five hundred years is about to be managed by a Statutory Commons Council (SCC) from 1st April 2014. Will the public at large notice any visible change? The answer is probably no. So what was the reason for making the change?

Councils are likely to be most useful where they make a difference in improving current management. Under the previous arrangements all parties had to be in agreement for anything to happen whereas now there is a mechanism for the majority view to prevail. Because each SCC is set up by separate Act of Parliament the SCC has the power to set rules between commoners and can enforce those rules with penalties. The result should be that issues of overgrazing or undergrazing along with scrub control or the dumping of stock/ ponies can be effectively dealt with. The powers conferred allow the SCC to pursue wrong doers under the criminal law rather than civil law. This means the police prosecuting rather than suing people for damages.

Brendon Common is the first single common SCC and the first SCC under the Commons Act 2006. Two other pilot projects for umbrella SCCs are underway in Cumbria and on Bodmin Moor.

Rights of Way

The long process of establishing and diverting ROWs is to be sped up under proposals in the Deregulation Bill to amend the rules. This could allow for more compromises between farmers, rambles, and the public and avoid long costly disputes on all sides. Exmoor is well served by rights of way, most of which are in good condition but do face challenges from extreme weather events and misuse by wheeled vehicles churning up the surface.

STORYWALK WITH EXMOOR KIDS



The Society is delighted to be involved with and sponsor the Exmoor Community Youth Club and "Storywalk with Exmoor Kids".

Working in conjunction with the Exmoor Youth and Community Club, based in Exford, the Exmoor Society has arranged for up to 20 Exmoor children to enjoy a day with Christopher Jelley on Saturday, 17th May.

Christopher Jelley of the Coleridge Trail and story walk fame has agreed to come to the Youth Club on 17th May to work with a group of the children. He will get them to map out an Exford walk with interesting features, using a computer, then with the aid of his most interesting 'story cards' and their research and imaginations, develop a story and then walk it. By using smart phones and high technology, the children will 'discover' Exmoor to create actual stories. (www.storywalks.info)

Christopher Jelley's Storywalks are walks with a twist, an interactive twist. They are journeys that will engage the whole family and draw out your hidden artistic side. Grab your wellies, and get your mobile phones at the ready, and as each Storywalk progresses, you are encouraged to interact, respond or create 'wishes' from sticks, leaves, feathers or stones, whichever is close to hand or inspires you. Take it in turn to read the story aloud as it is revealed on your device and follow the prompts which will guide you along the secret path. Hidden at the end of each adventure is a Geocache** journal for you to sign and make your mark. Each story is unique and site specific, so which one will become your favourite?



Please contact Cathy Nicholls on 01643 851430 for more information.

*[**Geocaching is an outdoor recreational activity, in which the participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or mobile device and other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called "geocaches" or "caches", anywhere in the world.]*

IN BRIEF

From the Parish Rooms

Fund-Raising for the Society – The Society has registered with “shop2fundraise” which is a website whereby we can raise extra funds for the Society. We are now using shop2fundraise.co.uk to raise extra funds, which means that if you shop online you could help us raise funds and **it won't cost you a penny more,** in fact it can help you save money. You won't even need to register and with over 1000 online shops to deal with there is plenty of choice (including major brands like Amazon, M&S, Sainsbury's and Boots) for more information and to help with fundraising simply click on <http://www.shop2fundraise.co.uk/charity/The+Exmoor+Society-455260>.

Hope Bourne Exhibition – The Heritage Centre in Dulverton has asked if the Society could extend the exhibition for a further year. They are delighted to report that attendance of visitors doubled last year. So by popular demand and with a revamp, the Hope Bourne Exhibition will re-open at the Heritage Centre in time for Easter.

Membership – Thank you to all members who have increased their subscriptions and in some cases also given donations. We very much appreciate your loyalty and support.

Emailing Members - Due to the high postage costs, we will be moving more towards emailing information to members, and we are asking members to provide their email addresses to info@exmoorsociety.com giving their name and post code, and membership number if known with the subject heading “Email Address”.

Society AGM – The Society AGM is always held on the third Saturday of September and this year the date falls on 20th September and the venue as usual at Dulverton Middle School. Further details will be sent to members in the autumn mailing.

Competitions - Judging for the Alfred Vowles Photographic Competition with just under 50 entries received, and the Lucy Perry Children's Literary Competition with over 130 entries from seven schools is too late for this Newsletter to include the winners. Winners will be advised by post at the end of February, and will be included in the Exmoor Review which will be published in October. Unfortunately, because of the very small number of entries received for the Hope Bourne Poetry Competition, it has been decided not to give an award this year.

Farm Visit 2014 – Several members were disappointed that we did not visit an Exmoor farm in 2013. To make up for this we are delighted to report that Guy Thomas-Everard has invited us to visit his family's farm at Broford on Friday, 27th June 2014. Broford Farm is a large beef and sheep farm located near Dulverton all within the Exmoor National Park. The farm includes a substantial area of SSSI moorland and approximately 160 hectares of woodland. Guy was also the lucky recipient of the new Chris Binnie Award for Sustainable Water Management for his hydropower turbine system which he installed in 2012 to reduce his energy costs and environmental impact.

New Premises - If the move to new premises comes off, please understand that the Society will be re-locating its HQ and therefore we ask members to be patient, and if they are proposing to visit the offices, it would be best to telephone first to make sure we are open.

Merchandise - We are pleased to report that the Christmas cards depicting a winter scene by Hope Bourne were sold out. We have copies available of the DVD "Hope Bourne: A celebration of Exmoor" retailing at £6.99 plus £2 p&p as well as the new book published in October "Hope Bourne's Exmoor: Eloquence in Art" by our two newest Trustees, John Burgess and Caroline Tonson-Rye which is the first book to focus on the art of Hope Bourne. The book can be purchased at £24.99 inclusive of p&p. Both these items can be obtained from the Exmoor Society.

Dulverton Middle School – The strong ties and excellent relationship continue between the Exmoor Society and Dulverton Middle & Community School and The Exmoor Society has again awarded the Dulverton Federation

of Schools a cheque for £2,000 to help continue its pioneering work on the Exmoor Curriculum. Now in its 12th year the special curriculum was designed to give opportunities to all pupils to learn about their environment, experience outdoor activities such as map reading and hill walking and develop skills such as team working and leadership. The children, over a four-year course, learn about the landscape, wildlife and the historic environment of Exmoor National Park.

Lynmouth Pavilion - We can recommend a visit to the new pavilion at Lynmouth which was opened in October last year. The ENPA secured funding from Devon County Council to replace the old 1930s Pavilion which was beyond repair. On the ground floor of the National Park Centre is a learning and experience hub which will help local people and visitors to understand more about the Exmoor National Park. A short film, which has been specially commissioned for the Centre, offers new, aerial views of the park and runs in the audio theatre offering people a different view of Exmoor and encourages them to explore further. On the top floor is a new café run by a local Lynmouth business. The Pavilion and café are open all year round and have fantastic views overlooking the Bristol Channel and Wales.



Walks Programme – The Society has an extensive walks programme this year and many thanks to all our volunteer walk leaders who make this possible. Space prevents fuller details of the walks in the Calendar of Events, and if you require further information please contact the office.

BEN HALLIDAY

Ben died peacefully on 9th December, aged 91, formerly of Ashton Farm at Countisbury. An academic and reformer, he taught in the state system after the war. On his father's death he inherited Glenthorne and, with his wife, devoted himself to restoring it and managing the estate. He became a magistrate and a member of the National Park Committee, and was there at a time when ploughing the moorland was a contentious issue. It was Ben who pioneered the first management agreement.

Vice-President & Trustee Update

Michael Ryle – It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Michael just before Christmas. Michael was a Trustee of the Society since 1990 and was invited to become a Vice-Chairman, and subsequently became a Vice-President. He had a long career as Clerk to the House of Commons.

Ann Mallalieu – We welcome Baroness Mallalieu as a new Vice-President of the Society. Ann is a Queen’s Counsel at the Criminal Bar and was raised to the peerage as Baroness Mallalieu in 1991. She is President of the Countryside Alliance, a Trustee of various organisations as well as a member of the ENPA Consultative Forum. Members will recall that in 2008 Ann arranged for a reception in the House of Lords to raise the concerns over the plight of hill farming. It was attended by Ministers and led to changes at the time in an agri-environmental scheme affecting the moorlands.

At the Society’s AGM in 2011 Ann was the guest speaker and spoke with great passion for her love of Exmoor. Ann in her speech said that “Exmoor is of course still a place of low incomes and a considerable degree of social deprivation, but despite the economic difficulties which our whole country faces, Exmoor is one of those places which is alive, growing and thriving with innovation”. Ann is very much involved in hill farming and as a quote shows from her AGM speech: “It is the farming community which fights a daily battle to keep Exmoor as it is in what is still one of the last truly rural communities left in Britain. The 45 minute journey from Taunton is the cordon sanitaire which, for the moment, keeps agriculture, together with tourism, at the heart of this community”. Ann divides her time between Buckinghamshire and her hill farm on Exmoor.

Caroline Tonson-Rye – Until Caroline retired to live on Exmoor to be near her family, she worked in publishing. She has a wide experience of using a variety of libraries and archives, as well as appreciating the problems of access and using collections, particularly those that consist of a mixture of materials such as manuscripts, drawings and paintings, photographs and secondary materials. With these credentials, the Society was delighted for Caroline to join the Trustees in 2012, and she has been of immense help in collating and archiving all the material the Society received from Hope Bourne’s Estate. She also was part of the team who set up the Hope Bourne

Exhibition at the Heritage Centre in Dulverton. Caroline says that “it is essential that a resource centre should present sufficient information in a user friendly form so that any member of the public can easily access and assess the material it holds”.

John Burgess – John joined the Executive Committee as a Trustee in 2013. John comes from a farming family and has lived on or near Exmoor all his life. He worked for the Exmoor National Park Authority for many years, and made a career move into broadcasting as a freelance radio journalist for the BBC, and became a producer for them on Radio Devon and Radio Somerset. Programmes included a six part series about Exmoor “Notes from an Exmoor Diary”. Since his retirement he is now regional representative of the Oral History Society and has produced several audio CD’s of well-known Exmoor characters. John also gives talks about his career with the BBC and other subjects throughout Devon, Somerset and Dorset. John was also part of the team who set up the Hope Bourne Exhibition.

At the launch of the Society’s book ‘Hope Bourne’s Exmoor: Eloquence in Art’ - Sir Antony Acland and Rachel Thomas with Caroline Tonson-Rye, John Burgess, and Steven Pugsley



NEWS from around the GROUPS

Porlock Group:

In 2013 the Porlock Group enjoyed the usual mixture of talks and outings, most of them well attended. The talks ranged from an account of trekking in the Himalayas to a talk from our local GP. Our field trip with Rob Wilson-North took a close look at the remains of American occupation of North Hill at Minehead during World War II. Our chairman also led a walk in the North Hill Area. Roy Cowdrill our treasurer has not enjoyed the best of health recently, and so took the decision to relinquish his post at the AGM. We would like to thank Roy for his dedication to the job, and the efficient way in which he carried it out. Roy will remain on the committee and David Hancock has taken on the job of Treasurer for the Group. Twenty-five members enjoyed the Group's annual dinner at Cross Lanes Restaurant, Allerford.

Peter Leather, Secretary

Barnstaple Group:

The Barnstaple Group continues to arrange six talks through the winter months and these seem to attract a growing number of interested people. The talks are very varied and not always specifically about Exmoor. Some cover North Devon, the coast or the whole of Devon. Subjects as far reaching as Medieval Carved Pew Ends, Photography, Indigenous Domestic Livestock, and other more Exmoor based talks, will be on the programme for this coming year.

Sally Jack, Acting Chairman

Bristol Group:

The Bristol Group continues with about 70 members, new members replacing those who through old age, etc. or who do not or cannot renew. We have established an acceptable timetable of events which are well supported. For example, during last year, 41 members came on a visit to Snowdrop Valley, 44 to a meeting about the Exmoor coastline, 55 to our annual New Year Supper, and even 32 came to our AGM when Peter Radford gave a very interesting talk about some of Exmoor Bridges. In return we presented him with a photograph of the tiny bridge at Clicket, likely to be the smallest on his patch as Bridges Officer for Somerset County Council. Our programme for 2014 is detailed in the Society's Events Calendar with this Newsletter, and

any members are welcome to join this Group for our events, but please contact the Group Chairman, Chris Norrish, just in case of any last minute changes. Members of the Bristol Group look forward to 2015 when we will be celebrating our first 20 years, and hope to do something of benefit to Exmoor.

Chris Norrish, Chairman

_____ Email: chris.norrish@care4free.net or Tel: 01275 876242

EXFORD SHOW – Wednesday, 13th August



The Bristol Group at Clicket

EXMOOR COMMUNITY YOUTH CLUB

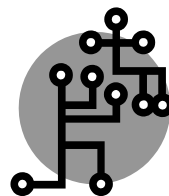
By The Reverend David Weir, Rector of Exford & Youth Club Volunteer

Recently, driving from Exford to Porlock Weir, I passed a number of places familiar to me and enhanced in my appreciation by Exmoor Community Youth Club trips: the garden café at Horner, the conclusion of walks to the scenic heights of Dunkery Beacon on one occasion, and through the time depths of Horner Wood's rich archaeological heritage on another; both ending with tea and ice-cream; then on past Bossington: the beach and the view point at Hurlstone Point above. Other trips have included Pinkery, Hopcott Woods, Exehead, Bradymoor, Dulverton often involving some work such as clearing bracken, erecting wood-mouse boxes, creating clearings for particular plants or environments for invertebrates, digging out bog-pools to keep the moorland wet. Trips have also taken us further-afield to Exeter Cathedral for the gargoyle experience, to Escot in Devon to experience life in pre-modern conditions (except for the marsh-mallows) and Windsor Castle to witness the Garter procession.

The core activity of the club is its Friday evening sessions at the Pavilion behind Exford Church, which offer a safe, nurturing space to promote the personal and social development of all our young people. It is very popular and another great reason to celebrate being six, I am told at school: "Now I can go to the Youth Club!". In addition to the weekly sessions the trips and the annual summer camp provide further opportunities to broaden and deepen appreciation of our special heritage here on Exmoor, offer a wider perspective beyond the moor and strengthen the social networks for young people, spread across the vast and sparsely populated expanse of Exmoor. Everyone involved in the club is grateful for the vital behind the scenes work of the Trustees who make the club possible and many of whom are well known to the Society. We are all also full of admiration for Laura Tasker, our committed and able Youth Worker, who runs the day-to-day operation of sessions and trips with great care and skill. Laura with co-worker Angie and mainstay Bernard has gathered a willing and committed group of volunteers for whom involvement is also an enjoyable and rewarding experience, and she has been recognised by the County for her success.



If you are interesting in finding out more about the Exmoor Community Youth Club, and supporting its work, details are available from the Trustees. Robin Ashburner – 01643 831199 can be contacted for details of activities for young people on Exmoor, and parents can telephone Laura Tasker on 01643 831125.



The Pinnacle Youth Award worth £3,000 was launched by the Society in 2012 to encourage young people to set up or develop a rural business based on Exmoor. Trustee Jackie Smith said: “We wanted to grab the attention of 16 to 25 year olds but where to find them, how best to capture their imagination and more importantly, persuade them to make an application to the Society, was a challenge.” Previous winners, twin brothers, Adam & Oliver Hill, who live on Exmoor used their award, given by the Exmoor Society, to help them develop their agricultural contracting business.

The 2014 Pinnacle Youth Award is open until 30th June and applications are not too onerous or dependent on academic achievement, but more on good, well-represented ideas that help to make money. Budding entrepreneurs based on Exmoor should contact the Society at info@exmoorsociety.com for an application form.



Emma Cox & Sally Taylor, Winners of the 2013 Pinnacle Award

The Pinnacle Youth Award

The winners of the annual Pinnacle Youth Award presented by the Exmoor Society to encourage young people to develop a business on Exmoor were presented to the winners at the Society's AGM last September.

Emma Cox and Sally Taylor from Exmoor farming families want to start up a country clothing business called "Truly Exmoor". Following extensive research, they girls have found that the country clothing end of the market does not take into account the broader person and their aim is to design a range of clothing that caters for all sizes of men and women. In presenting their proposals to Exmoor Society Trustees Sally and Emma said that they hoped to start with both ladies and men's polo shirts and gilets that have looser fitting arms and are longer in length. Working with their own new fresh designs, their strategy is to provide an affordable country clothing range that at the same time is in keeping with good quality.

On hearing of their success Sally Taylor said: "We are over the moon in winning our first award, and the grant will help us towards covering our initial start-up costs and enable us to keep borrowing expenses to a minimum".

Trustees were impressed by the girls' comprehensive presentation which included a detailed business plan, portfolio of designs and samples of the kind of clothes they want to create. Both had undertaken an enormous amount of research and had already found a manufacturer, and with an extensive network of support from family and friends, they were provided with a springboard for a business proposal which has the potential to be a real success.

In announcing the winners of the award, Rachel Thomas, Chairman of the Society, said: "We are concerned about local livelihoods and as a conservation body want to show that beautiful landscapes and livelihoods can go together. Sally and Emma are passionate about Exmoor and have all the desire and drive to become successful entrepreneurs. We wish them all the best with developing their country clothing business "Truly Exmoor"".

Porlock Arts Festival – 25th to 28th September 2014
Simonsbath Festival – 5th May to 20th June 2014



The Exmoor Society

Registered Charity No 245761

2014



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Office:

Parish Rooms, Dulverton, Somerset TA22 9DP Tel: 01398 323335

E-mail: info@exmoorsociety.com Website: www.exmoorsociety.com

Office hours: Weekdays 10am to 4pm - Answerphone at all other times