



**The Exmoor Society**  
**Spring Newsletter**

**2018**  
**No. 65**

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### **The Exmoor Society / ENPA SPRING CONFERENCE 2018**

**Friday 20 April 2018  
Dulverton Town Hall ~ 10am-4pm**

***'Beef, Birds and Beauty'***  
***Exmoor's Ambition Post-Brexit and the  
Exmoor Register of Natural/Cultural Capital Assets***

£20 per person to include refreshments

**Booking essential:** Please complete form included with this  
Newsletter or book online at [www.exmoorsociety.com](http://www.exmoorsociety.com)

## The Exmoor Society at 60



*Dunkery Beacon, looking west*

*© Madeline Taylor*

On 28 October 2018, The Exmoor Society will be 60 years old. The founding meeting was held in Simonsbath House, now an hotel, the oldest house in the former Royal Forest. Local people recognised that after a successful campaign against afforestation of The Chains, the central moorland block of relatively wild land, there was likely to be a further loss of moorland and a charity was needed to protect the four-year-old national park. Since the inaugural meeting, the Society has at times played a key role in protecting Exmoor at a national level and, at others, influencing the Exmoor National Park Authority as well as being engaged in many other activities. Today, we concentrate on alerting bodies and the general public to the core statutory purposes of national parks and search for new approaches through collecting evidence and commissioning research in order to keep Exmoor special. We intend to bring out a book which charts our role through a 60-year-old history. We champion the National Park status and embrace an integrated approach balancing the aspirations of single-issue groups so that conservation can go hand-in-hand with socio-economic wellbeing, locally and nationally.

Trustees have decided that the best way to celebrate the anniversary is to focus on Exmoor's unique landscape character with a special programme through much of the year from April to November. Some activities are part of our annual programme of events but enhanced to showcase Exmoor's beauty and special qualities, others are new.

- There will be a celebratory walks programme of 28 walks for the public from April, with new walks as well as old favourites taking place in some of the most attractive scenery, rich in wildlife and heritage, that Exmoor offers;
- A travelling exhibition from April indicating how we help protect Exmoor;
- On Friday 20 April, the annual Spring Conference in partnership with the ENPA will explore new ways in which Exmoor Hill Farmers, in particular, can be paid for providing public goods and include the Exmoor Ambition and Exmoor Register for maintaining and improving natural/cultural capital;
- June is the closing date for the Pinnacle Award for young people, worth £3,000, and demonstrates how we encourage entrepreneurs to develop a local business;
- July is the closing date for the Schools Literary Competition;
- Friday 14 September, seminar on 'Exmoor as an English Outback', followed by
- Saturday 15 September, a special AGM in Porlock Village Hall looking in more detail at the Society's history and celebrating with a birthday cake;
- In November, we are aiming to hold a Pinkery celebration for local schools highlighting our work in education for over 50 years.

During the year, the Society hopes to attract even more people to the Exmoor Resource Centre in Dulverton. There is an increasing demand for knowledge about Exmoor and the Centre provides a unique facility, with work-space and free WiFi for the public to use. It contains a wealth of material in its recently fully-catalogued archive that includes documents, letters, slides, pamphlets, reports, maps and photographs and the best collection of Exmoor books found in one place, all providing evidence of why Exmoor is so special. The annual Exmoor Review, now in its 59th edition, can be purchased from the shop as well as a new series of Exmoor Studies with two recent publications – Exmoor Chroniclers and The Exmoor Pony – Contested Histories. The Society hopes

to inspire people to support its work in protecting Exmoor's special qualities for the benefit of all.



*The Exmoor Society Resource Centre*

*©The Exmoor Society*

These celebrations are important because, as we raise our profile, so we want to develop a membership drive. Members are very loyal to the Society, but as we age, so does our membership. To sustain us for the future and to keep the Society vibrant and lively, we must increase recruitment. We ask all of you to help in signing up new members as word of mouth is the best way of raising awareness of the Society's work and helps us to protect Exmoor and keep people close to it. On our website, we list the benefits of membership, which include receiving the prestigious annual Exmoor Review, and an opportunity to join online.

The Spring Newsletter includes further details of some of our activities which are dependent on volunteers, including our Trustees, who assist our small staff in the walks programme, archives, administration, welcoming the public to the

Resource Centre and representing the Society on many other committees and voluntary bodies.

**Please continue to support us. Thank you.**

*Rachel Thomas, Chairman*

## **25-Year Environment Plan**

The Exmoor Society welcomes the Government's 25-Year Environment Plan and particularly the ambition to enhance National Parks as well as conserve



*Dunkery Hill, looking east*

© Mike Green

them: measures to enhance landscapes more generally and to develop indicators of landscape quality and a commitment to the presumption against major developments within National Parks.

Significantly, there is to be a Review of National Parks and AONBs – ‘21st Century Hobhouse Review’. This will consider coverage of designations, how designated areas deliver their responsibilities, how they are financed and whether there is scope for expansion. It will look at the opportunity to enhance the environment and expand on the existing 8-point Plan for National Parks to connect more people with the natural environment.

Other measures include:

- Working with NPAs (National Park Authorities) to double the number of young people visiting National Parks;
- Identifying opportunities to enhance England's 159 National Character Areas;
- Undertaking a wide range of activities in 2019 to coincide with the 70th anniversary of national parks and the centenary of the Forestry Commission as part of a year of action, focusing on encouraging people to have more contact with the natural environment.



© Jennifer Rowlandson

The Plan also states that ‘the creation of designated landscapes has been among the most outstanding environmental achievements of the past 100 years’.

Of course, the Environment Plan covers many other areas and has laid the foundation for a real change. The Exmoor Society will be fully involved in responding to the Review on National Parks in relation to the context and circumstances of Exmoor.

## **Exmoor’s Ambition**

‘Exmoor’s Ambition’ is the name of a proposal to sustain and enhance Exmoor’s farmed landscapes and communities after Brexit. A consequence of Brexit is that government needs to formulate new policies for farming and the countryside when the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy no longer applies. Exmoor Hill Farming Network and the National Park Authority have been working together to influence that process at the highest level. At the time

of writing, the proposal is soon to be published. In the words of Robin Milton, Chairman of the National Park Authority, Exmoor farmers and the National Park Authority together “are seeking to improve the resilience and sustainability of the internationally famous landscapes, nature and culture in ways that enhance wealth and wellbeing for the nation.”



*Above the Exe Valley*

© Mike Green

The Exmoor Society actively supports this important initiative. The bold and innovative proposal recognises that Exmoor farming is about much more than cattle and sheep production. Exmoor’s farmers are fully aware that they also provide a wide range of environmental goods and services that benefit people. They are no strangers to the concepts of ‘public goods’, ‘ecosystem services’ and ‘natural capital’. ‘Exmoor’s Ambition’ aims to make Exmoor the place to explore new ways to incentivise farmers to rejuvenate hedgerows, enhance heather moorland and its bird population, and manage land for carbon capture as well as to assist flood reduction and water quality improvement. Protection of Exmoor’s archaeology and improvement of footpaths for public recreational access are other objectives, as well as the promotion of local farm products.

The Exmoor Society is making its own independent contribution to ‘Exmoor’s Ambition’, commissioning work to make a first register of Exmoor’s natural capital and cultural assets (see next article).



## Exmoor's Natural and Cultural Capital

Following the Society's very successful Spring Conference 2017 on Exmoor's Natural Capital, the Trustees commissioned a three-month study of Exmoor's natural and cultural capital assets. Under the overall guidance of a steering group of Trustees, the task is entrusted to Robert Deane, Rural Focus Ltd, with help from Anne Walker, former Moorland Mapping Assistant, ENPA.

Natural capital is a deceptively simple concept. It constitutes all resources nature provides for free that people use for their benefit. An example is land, a natural resource people transform to farm, plant trees, and locate houses, factories and other infrastructure. It is also the basis of landscape, literally the view people see around them. Exmoor's heather moorland, wooded valleys and seascape are valued for their beauty and tranquillity. But unlike for cattle and sheep, there are no monetary prices attached to landscape's various qualities, such as beech hedges or moorland vegetation that give value to a place, and further value as a home for wildlife such as red deer and the Exmoor ponies people enjoy seeing there.



*Burgundy Chapel*

© Jennifer Rowlandson

Importantly, what people value and how they shape the land depends on culture, including ideas handed down from generation to generation about what constitutes good Exmoor farming, and stories told, true or not, about a given place. For instance, visitors may be attracted to Exmoor by Lorna Doone, fired by thoughts about fictional people and imagined places. Giving monetary values to such characteristics is difficult, but often possible and certainly necessary, if there are to be financial incentives for farmers and others to protect and enhance Exmoor's special qualities. Before valuation can be attempted at all, a register must be made of natural and cultural assets.

The Society project uses the National Park's Landscape Character Assessment 2017 to identify three pilot areas for study; open moorland, high coastal heaths, and enclosed farmed hills with commons. The research outcomes will be presented at the Society's 2018 April Conference.

*Dr Keith Howe, Trustee*

## Planning

During last year 355 planning applications have been monitored on behalf of the Society. This is just three more than last year. Generally, we only comment on those applications which have the potential to damage the Park's landscape character. By doing so we are monitoring the delivery of the Park's first purpose: 'to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage'. This is one of the Society's stated objectives. To do this effectively we rely on information in the "Exmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment 2007", and on its updated version, in draft at the present. The Society has been heavily involved in the production of both of these documents. All Planning Application sites causing concern are visited before they are brought to the Executive Committee, as it is believed that it is impossible to assess any impact using only maps and facilities such as satellite imagery and Street View, though these have their uses.

Last year's report drew attention to the erection of Airband masts which have provided broadband for many remoter parts of the Park. One of the last of



*Winsford*

*© Jennifer Rowlandson*

these was to provide a badly needed signal for most of the properties in Simonsbath. The Society visited the area and showed how, by reducing the height of the mast to three metres and locating it in front of a small tree, it would not break the skyline, and thus have minimal impact on the landscape.

No sooner had this potential problem been addressed satisfactorily when a new issue with masts arises. The Home Office has decided to enhance the

existing Emergency Services Network, which provides a mobile phone signal for the fire brigade, police and ambulance services nationally, with a 4G rather than 2G signal. This will require a four- or five-fold increase in the number of masts. They have also granted themselves a Permitted Development Order which limits the grounds on which objections might be raised and reduces the time for each decision to 56 days. Whilst understanding the need for such an improved facility, there is a potential for significant landscape damage, especially in National Parks with their unique landscapes. It is hoped that by negotiation much of the potential impact may be reduced, for example by replacing a 15m lattice mast with a telegraph pole type mast. The planning officers and the Society are going to be very busy dealing with these applications as it is hoped that the whole system will be completed within 2 years. The Society will be monitoring developments closely.

From time to time unusual applications appear and we have seen two such towards the end of the year. The first was for the construction of a burial mound, for the interment of ashes, at Emmetts Grange House, near Simonsbath. The Society was pleased to be invited to attend the members' site visit prior to the Authority meeting. Not surprisingly, there are no directly relevant policies in the Local Plan for so unusual an application. Recognising that there is a demand for such a facility, there being a small number of similar burial mounds elsewhere in the country, the Society took the view that with an improved design and very strict conditions controlling the management of the facility a modified application might be acceptable. However, Authority members refused this application in its present form in November.

At the very end of the year we looked into a retrospective application at Foxtwitchen House, near Withypool for the removal of a 180m long earth bank along the north side of the drive from the road to the house. The removal of this bank and the one on the opposite side of the drive at an earlier date, which marked an historic boundary, has had a significant impact on the landscape character creating an unusually large open and exposed field. The landscape character description for the area indicates that "Historic field patterns and boundary features are identified as a significant component of the landscape character of the area". The Society pressed for refusal which has happened. It will be interesting to see whether enforcement action can ensure the replacement of the bank.

*Dr Duncan Jeffray, Vice Chairman*

## Archive News

This year we have been concentrating on the stories we can tell using our archive material. This has enabled the Society to start up its own series of publications, the Exmoor Studies. Caroline Tonson-Rye goes into more detail on p18.

We have continued to build contacts with local archive groups. There are several organisations across Exmoor run by people who are passionate about the area's heritage. To help preserve this history, the Society's archivist has been running a series of archive training days, with funding from the Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland. There will be four more of these in 2018 so if you are interested in learning about how to preserve archive material, whether that be family papers or the records of an organisation, then keep an eye out for dates on our website or contact the archivist.

Our postal paths project really took off and it was heartening to see press coverage in Devon Life, Exmoor Magazine and Western Morning News as well as hear an interview Dr Helen Blackman gave with BBC Radio Somerset. We even made it to the Royal Mail's chat room! With a volunteer and two ridden ponies from the Exmoor Pony Centre, Helen re-enacted a part of the Withypool postal round, said to be one of the last horseback rounds on Exmoor. This experience helped Helen to see just how much the topography of Exmoor determined the pace of communication. Since very little of the land was flat, and much of it was muddy, it was not possible to go fast, particularly bearing in mind the fact that any horse or pony used on the routes was likely to be travelling 15 miles a day, several days a week. In addition, Exmoor's narrow lanes mean frequent encounters with other traffic, and much opportunity to exchange news by less official routes.

During the summer, the Society took on a student intern. Lawrence Baines is studying ecology at Exeter University and he helped map out and walk several of the old postal routes. As an ecology student his map reading skills were invaluable and he was happy to walk some of the longer and tougher routes around central Exmoor. We will be producing a short report on the postal routes which will be available electronically. One of our volunteers is then working to expand this into an Exmoor Study, which will be on sale later in 2018. If you have any stories to contribute to this, particularly if you know what routes the posties used to take, then please contact us.

Our book-length study of Exmoor, concentrating on Exmoor as a national park and the Exmoor Society's role in its protection and promotion, is taking shape. It is aimed at Society members and will draw on geography, natural and social history, environmental and agricultural studies and landscape character to explore Exmoor's importance as a national park. It will consist of seven chapters, covering the attractions of Exmoor, common land and management agreements, Porchester and ploughing and the early controversies when the Society was founded, as well as the more recent activities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Then & Now photographic project is going well with many volunteers out and about retaking old images of Exmoor. These are already providing us with valuable snapshots suggesting change on Exmoor – particularly scrubbing over on some moorland areas. For the sixtieth anniversary we have chosen sixty images which we feel give a particularly good overview of the moor and its varied landscape types. We will be venturing out with cameras to ensure that we recapture these particular images in time for our anniversary celebrations. All these projects, and the general day-to-day running of the archives, depend on the input of volunteers who lend their time and their expertise to the Society. We are very grateful for this. The Resource Centre has been the culmination of many years' work and it is very appropriate that we are seeing such rich and interesting research emerging from the archives in our sixtieth anniversary year.

*Dr Helen Blackman, Archivist*



## New Trustees

The Exmoor Society is delighted to welcome two new trustees, voted in at the AGM last year. These are:

### Susan May

Susan comes from a large farming family that has farmed on Exmoor for four generations, and she continues to do so. She has also worked in Education, being Head of Boarding at a Somerset public school for ten years. She has been a school governor at her local primary school for eighteen years and is now a Trustee on the Executive Management Board at Calvert Trust Exmoor - an outdoor activity centre for disabled folk, their families and carers. She is currently a founder Trustee of the Exmoor Trust and has been their Chairman for the last six years.

### Nigel Hester



Graduating from Nottingham University with a degree in Agricultural Science, Nigel has 38 years of land management and conservation experience within the National Trust. After seven years as Head Warden at Hatfield Forest, he moved to the 5042ha Holnicote Estate in West Somerset as Countryside Manager in 1987. Nigel was responsible for the declaration of

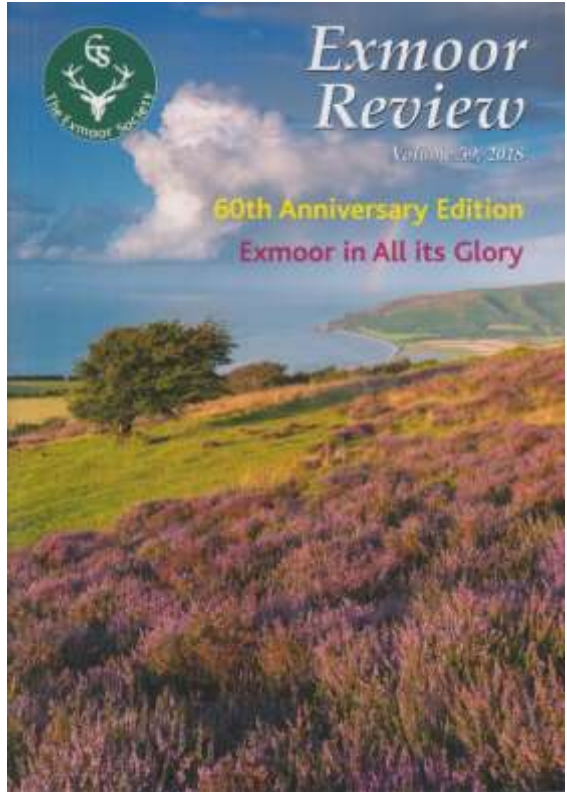
Exmoor's first National Nature Reserve in 1995, the 1626ha Dunkery and Horner Wood NNR. Since 2010, Nigel changed role to become Projects and Grants Manager for Somerset Countryside and has led on coastal and marine issues, agri-environment schemes and climate change issues, and represents the NT on many regional groups.

Nigel is the Project Manager for the £1.2 million Defra Multi-Objective Flood Demonstration Project (the Holnicote Source to Sea Project), one of three national projects set up in 2009 to explore the impact, opportunities and potential benefits of Natural Flood Management. He is currently working on developing this natural resource management project as part of the national Riverlands programme.

## ***Exmoor Review*** **Vol. 59, 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue**

Last October we were delighted to take delivery of our sixtieth anniversary edition of the Exmoor Review. For the first time ever this is full colour throughout, featuring many images and photographs across the moor showing it “in all its glory”. We have had very positive feedback, and offer our congratulations to the editor, Mrs Frances Nicholson.

There is a comprehensive section on the Society’s 2017 Spring Conference, discussing natural capital and, for something lighter yet still intriguing, a photo-montage to test your knowledge of Exmoor. Indeed, our very first edition featured a quiz, although without the technology available for such lovely photography. The Review again explores the Society’s history with articles about the 1965 Land Use Map, which was to prove a key part of our campaigning work in the 1960s and 1970s. Two volunteers recount their experience with Then & Now – retaking old photographs from around the moor which show changes in the landscape since the National Park designation.



The sixtieth edition of the Review (2019) will consider in more detail this history of the Society’s contribution to protecting the National Park status, particularly important in the year of the seventieth anniversary of the National Parks Act. *(Note: we have produced the Review every year since 1959. Volume 6 covered 1964/5 which is why our 60th anniversary edition is vol. 59)*

# The Exmoor National Park Management (Partnership) Plan 2018-22

The Exmoor Society charitable purpose is to protect and conserve Exmoor National Park for the benefit of the public and is the only voluntary body that has the same purposes as the Exmoor National Park Authority, the public body responsible for the Park. The Society regards the statutory five-year Management (Partnership) Plan, prepared by the Authority, as the key element



*Horner Woods*

©Jennifer Rowlandson

in delivering core national park purposes and, as such, spends a great deal of time on what is included and what it can contribute. Recognising the need for the Authority to consult widely, the Society commends it for doing this so comprehensively.

However, there is pressure to include in the Plan many single issues, some of which are not fully integrated with the whole or are not in the powers of the Authority to deliver. It is pertinent that in the recently adopted Local Plan the Inspector commented: 'It is important to note that

the statutory duty to seek, to foster, the economic and social wellbeing of local communities within the National Park is to be met in pursuing the national park purposes, not independently of them.' The Society has contributed detailed comments that have been absorbed into the Plan.



We welcome in particular the overall structure of the slimmed-down version of the new Plan, compared with previous ones, with a greater emphasis on flexibility in order to adjust quickly in these fast-changing times. The Plan focuses on setting out ambitions of what can be achieved across the National Park under the headings of People (Enjoyment), Place (Conservation) and Prosperity (Thriving Communities and Local Economy) – a ‘big picture’ approach. Of particular interest to the Society is a new heading called Where People, Place and Prosperity Come Together. The focus will be on each of the individual parts and the distinct elements of moorland, farmland, woodland, rivers and valleys, coast and settlements and how they come together to create the whole. We have high hopes for this section as a way of integrating the ‘big picture’ elements and leading to multi-purpose advisory groups. For example, when the Moorland Board was first set up it was balanced in its membership to cover all the values that moorland provides: landscape and inspiration, wildlife and habitats, archaeology and culture, access and recreation, farming practices and resource use. Its more recent membership and activity has concentrated on wildlife, vegetation and land management issues. Important though these are at the present time, they are not the whole picture and do not add up to the total value that moorlands provide to the national park status and people’s wellbeing.



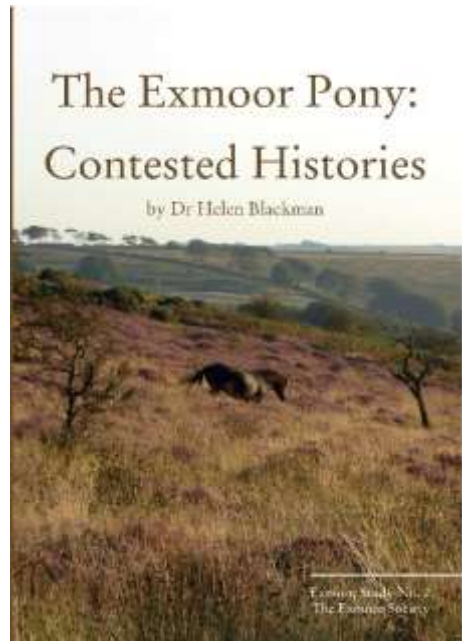
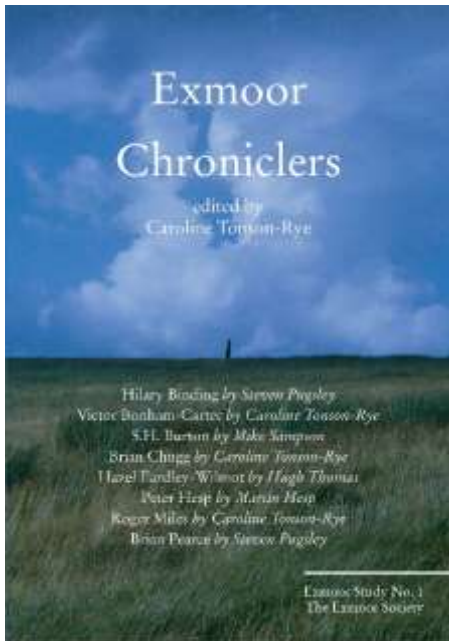
*Dunster Buttercross*

*© Jennifer Rowlandson*

Integration and balance between different issues should be the key areas for this Management Plan with movement towards multi-functional Authority teams so that progress in partnership working can be made.

## Launch of the Exmoor Studies Series

The new series of short books on Exmoor themes, Exmoor Studies, was successfully launched in November 2017 with the publication of the first two books: *Exmoor Chroniclers* ed. Caroline Tonson-Rye and *Exmoor Ponies: Contested Histories* by Dr Helen Blackman. Nicely illustrated and most attractively designed by Naomi Cudmore, these have been hailed as well-written, informed and authoritative. Sales are going well, indicating that they fill a gap in the market.



Three more books in the series are in the pipeline: *The Minehead Road: Between Exmoor and the Quantocks* by John Greed, ed. by Helen Blackman, an exploration of the routes around and into Exmoor; *Hope L. Bourne: Reflections in Words* by Lisa Eden, a review of published books, pamphlets and unpublished texts by Hope Bourne to commemorate the 100th anniversary of her birth in August this year; and *Postal Routes on Exmoor* by Lawrence Baines and Helen Blackman, a study of these routes from the early 20th century onwards, crucially where they were, what they were like, and how the posties negotiated them, whether on foot, horseback or by bike. A book on Exmoor's veteran trees is also planned.

Caroline Tonson-Rye, Trustee

## Two Awards for The Exmoor Society

The Exmoor Society received two awards from the Exmoor National Park Authority for its contributions in achieving the vision set out in the statutory Exmoor National Park Partnership (Management) Plan 2012-2017. The Society regards the awards as a welcome recognition of its expanded work.

The first award was for deepening the knowledge and understanding of Exmoor's culture and landscape through research and dissemination of information. For example, the Society commissioned the report 'Exmoor's Moorland – Where Next?' and more recently a register of Exmoor's Natural and Cultural Capital. The Society uses a variety of methods to increase people's awareness of the importance of the national park status, such as the annual Spring Conference, regular press releases, a lively website and its well-respected annual journal of record, the *Exmoor Review*.



*Helen Blackman receiving The Exmoor Society's Archive award from Nick Holliday, ENPA Committee Member (ENPA Images)*

The second award was for the Archive Project and the role it has played in engaging people in understanding Exmoor's cultural heritage and historical environment. Through the employment in 2014 of the Society's archivist, Helen Blackman, the change has been significant in the establishment of the Resource Centre that offers a valuable service for all interested in Exmoor. Our archivist and volunteers have shown how the archive can be brought alive through projects such as Then & Now and Postal Paths Across Exmoor.

## 2017 Pinnacle Award

Young Exmoor entrepreneur, Nick Hosegood, an arborist from Luxborough, was the winner of the 2017 Pinnacle Award. Exmoor Society Trustee and Pinnacle Award head judge, Jackie Smith, said: 'His greatest wish was to work and live here on Exmoor,

recognising the need for a trade to do so, and discovered a love of trees and wood. He trained as an arborist and set up his own company this year called Three Atop Woodland

Services. Horrified by the waste of wood on Exmoor, of which he estimates as much as 80 per cent is wasted or burned, his plans for a mobile milling machine will allow him to turn felled timber into furniture, fencing and building



materials on site for use by the landowner, with the milling remains only used for fuel. Alternatively, he will remove the wood for use locally elsewhere. The £3,000 award will allow him to extend his efforts in woodland management thus helping to improve and expand the woodland coverage on Exmoor.

*More information on the woodland services Nick offers can be found on his website: <http://threeatop.co.uk>*

## Alfred Vowles Photographic Competition



*A Wheatear in Ember Combe*

*Keith Hann*

Amateur photographers have once again demonstrated their skill in their entries for the latest Alfred Vowles' Photographic Competition, organised every two years by The Exmoor Society. Keith Hann, worthy overall winner of the 2015–16 competition, must be congratulated for repeating his success this year with his photograph of 'A Wheatear in Ember Combe', which is both the winner of the Wildlife category and Overall Winner of the competition, for which he will receive the trophy. The judges were impressed by this wonderfully observed shot of a regular visitor to Exmoor – not an easy bird to capture. There is nice shallow depth of field, and the heather makes it a perfect Exmoor image.



*Tarr Steps*

© *Madeline Taylor*

Congratulations also go to Madeline Taylor for repeating her 2015–16 success by winning the Landscape category with a very original view of Tarr Steps. The bold composition and good lighting were particularly appreciated by the judges.

Highly commended in the Landscape category are: Sharon Bailey's 'Tarr Steps, November 2016, after the floods', a good record of the effect of storm damage on Tarr steps, well composed with subtle colours that demonstrate careful observation; and Keith Hann's atmospheric 'Freezing fog in the Quarme Valley', a well-lit composition with an ethereal feel to it. In the Wildlife category, those Highly Commended are: Keith Hann's 'Young stags in Thurley Combe', an excellent shot of stags on the move, with good colouring and light; and Madeline Taylor's 'Exmoor pony mare and foal crossing the road near Webber's Post', a sharp and well observed photograph of the perennial problem of ponies in danger from cars when crossing roads.

The judges were disappointed by the low number of entries in the Heritage category. Sadly, none of these was up to the standard they were hoping for, and they were unable to reach a decision on a winner.

While the total number of entries was lower than in 2015, the standard was higher, and the judges were impressed by the care and thought that the photographers had clearly put into their work. The presentation to the winners will be held on 9 February at the Exmoor Society where the photographs will be on display. *(All winning photographs can be viewed on our website [www.exmoorsociety.com](http://www.exmoorsociety.com))*

## Walks Programme 2018

2017 was a bumper year, with a total of 33 walks available ranging from challenging hikes across wild terrain to gentle strolls around an Exmoor town or village, from art and history trails to wildlife-spotting. In all, almost 400 people joined our knowledgeable walk leaders to extend their understanding and enjoyment of Exmoor National Park and expressed their appreciation with donations in excess of £370 to the Society.

This special 60th anniversary year, we have a programme of 28 walks which, although slightly fewer in number, offer comprehensive coverage of Exmoor's diverse landscapes including the moorland commons, coast, woodlands, and waters. There are nature walks investigating the special lower plant flora (the lichens, mosses, liverworts and ferns) of Exmoor's Atlantic



© ENPA Images

woodlands, the bluebells in Burridge Woods and the visiting cuckoos on Molland Moor. One may accompany the experts to learn how the ecology and management of woodlands are helping the heath fritillary butterfly and the rare pied flycatcher and how to detect and identify bats as they hunt insects in Horner Woods. And for history lovers, there is the opportunity to discover John Knight's uncompleted garden landscape at Simonsbath, hear the knights' tales through the ages, explore ancient barrows and other prehistoric sites, learn about mining projects, the tragic murder of little Anna Maria Burgess and Hope Bourne's extraordinary life and love of Exmoor. You can even join a walk to find

out about Exmoor's water improvement project, and how the community came together on the Longstone Landscape Project.



© ENPA Images

This wonderfully diverse programme is only possible through the generosity of walk leaders in sharing their time, expert knowledge and passion for their subject and for Exmoor. The Exmoor Society pays tribute to all those who have led walks in all weathers: to the extraordinary individuals and the

organisations who have supported the programme throughout the many years – thank you!

## News from the Groups

### Bristol Group

The Bristol Group continues to thrive, with over 60 members and a full and varied program. In 2017 this included walks on Brent Knoll, Snowdrop Valley and North Hill, visits to Halsway Manor and Muller Diaries, a fungus foray around Webbers Post, a talk about weather forecasting and a selection of wildlife videos, plus our regular and very popular winter supper. Our visits and field trips are usually accompanied by a short walk beforehand or afterwards.

In May Chris Norrish ended his second tenure as Chairman after a total of 17 years, though he remains closely involved with the group. He is an impossible act to follow, but David Sinden is at least keeping the group afloat, aided by an enthusiastic and competent committee. David's main goal is to attract more members aged under 60.

We have a similarly rich program for 2018 and we always welcome visitors. If you would like further information, please contact David Sinden on 0117 939 3486 or [dj.sinden@gmail.com](mailto:dj.sinden@gmail.com).



## **Coastal Group**

In December 2016 we held a most successful carol concert presented by The Exmoor Carollers. This was a sell-out, so we were able to donate £500 to The Exmoor Society to support this year's 60th anniversary celebrations. Eight fascinating talks were given throughout the year, including a very well attended event, a talk on "The Aclands of Holnicote" followed by a delicious lunch, at Holnicote House.

At our October AGM in 2017, sadly our Chairman, Duncan Jeffray, resigned after completing eight excellent years. His knowledge, passion and enthusiasm for Exmoor will be sadly missed.

This January the newly formed committee, attempting to attract new members from a wider area, proposed changing the Group name from Porlock to Coastal. This met with approval from the membership and is now our new Group name. We would love to see you at any of our events, please refer to the website ([www.exmoorsociety.com](http://www.exmoorsociety.com)) to see our 2018 Programme, or contact Ros Rogers on 01643 863356 or email [ros.rogers@live.co.uk](mailto:ros.rogers@live.co.uk)

## **Dulverton Group**

The group membership is stable at 62 members. Despite lacking a Secretary, in 2017 there were four talks and three visits. All the talks were well attended, but one of the visits had to be cancelled due to lack of support.

The season opener, after the AGM, was Ian Cowling describing the ambitious plans for the Lynton-Barnstaple Railway. There is now a very real prospect of the railway opening all the way from the Lynton area to Barnstaple. This was followed by Stephen Powles describing the fascinating life of hornets, with remarkable photography.

We heard about the Exmoor Mires Project, especially the archaeological aspects, in September and the season finished with a member of the management team describing the Porlock Oysters operation and the progress made so far.

Visits were made to Agatha Christie's home, Greenway, arriving scenically by boat from Dartmouth and to Chambercombe Manor, near Ilfracombe. The Chairman / Secretary thanks the other Committee members for their help throughout the year.

## South Molton

We are a rather elderly group but passionate about Exmoor. We have at present sixteen members and would love some younger people to come and join us.

Last year we had our annual dinner in February and a very interesting talk in April entitled 'Surviving the Lynton Flood'. In June, on the hottest day of the year, the Group visited Porlock for lunch and Porlock Weir for tea and in July we arranged a visit to Exmoor Zoo. Our AGM in October included a talk about the Wright brothers – not the flying ones! - but two members of a local farming family who emigrated to Perth Australia and how they fared in their new life.

### Exmoor Festival Dates

<b>FESTIVAL OF NATURE</b> Fyne Court 5/6 May 2018 & ongoing events to be confirmed. Watch media for further details.	<b>SIMONSBATH FESTIVAL</b> 7 May – 21 June 2018 <a href="http://www.simonsbathfestival.org.uk">www.simonsbathfestival.org.uk</a>
<b>DUNSTER MUSIC FESTIVAL</b> 25-27 May 2018 <a href="http://www.dunsterfestival.co.uk">www.dunsterfestival.co.uk</a>	<b>MINEHEAD &amp; EXMOOR FESTIVAL</b> 22-28 July 2018 <a href="http://www.mineheadmusicfestival.org">www.mineheadmusicfestival.org</a>
<b>TWO MOORS FESTIVAL</b> 12-21 October 2018 <a href="http://www.thetwomoorsfestival.co.uk">www.thetwomoorsfestival.co.uk</a>	<b>DARK SKIES FESTIVAL - EXMOOR</b> 20 October – 4 November 2018 <a href="http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enjoying/stargazing/dark-skies-festival">www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enjoying/stargazing/dark-skies-festival</a>

### **Dr Duncan Jeffray B.Sc., Ph.D., Dip. Ed 1938-2018**

The Exmoor Society is deeply saddened to hear of the sudden death of Dr Duncan Jeffray on 1 February 2018. He joined The Exmoor Society in 2007, soon after his move to Minehead following his retirement from Warwick University. He was co-opted on to the Executive in 2010 and became Vice Chairman in 2015. Duncan has played a leading role in the Society, particularly in relation to planning where he meticulously researched all the sites prior to his detailed recommendations to Trustees. A full obituary of his extensive and impressive life will appear in the 2019 *Exmoor Review*.

**The Exmoor Society**  
Registered Charity No 1160912

**2017 - 2018**

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Sir Antony Acland KG

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Spring lamb on Exmoor

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