

# The Exmoor Society Spring Newsletter 2019

No. 66



## CONTENTS

- 3 Chairman's Report
- 5 60 years Young – tribute to The Exmoor Society
- 7 Exmoor's Natural Capital
- 10 Commercial Game Shooting on Exmoor
- 12 Planning
- 14 Archive News
- 16 New Trustees
- 18 *Exmoor Review* – from the Editor's chair
- 19 2019 Pinnacle Award
- 21 Walks Programme 2019
- 23 News from the Groups
- 26 Obituary
- 26 Exmoor Festival Dates
- 27 The Exmoor Society – organisation details

*Cover photo: Back row (l-r): Kate O'Sullivan, Nigel Hester, Sir Antony Acland (President), Rod Cyne (Vice President), Roger Watts, Prof John Wibberley. Front Row: Keith Howe (Vice Chairman) Karen Trigger, Arabella Amory, Rachel Thomas (Chairman), Mary Chugg (Founding Member), Caroline Tonson-Rye, Anne May.*

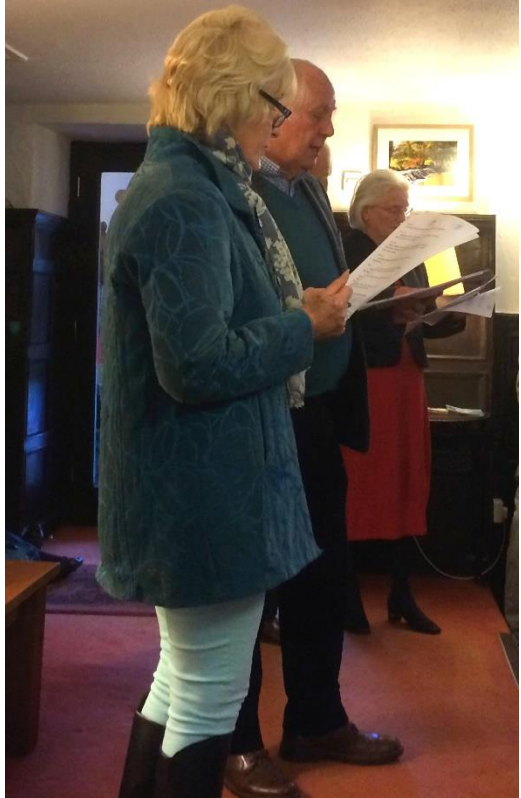
## Chairman's Report

The Society ended its 60th anniversary celebrations last year by holding a buffet lunch in late November at Simonsbath House Hotel. Formerly called Simonsbath Lodge, the oldest dwelling in the Royal Forest, it is a special place for the Society as it was founded here. The lunch gathering, full to capacity, was a jolly occasion and included a dramatic piece by two actors reminiscing on the momentous events of 1958 leading up to the registration of The Exmoor Society officially on 28 November. It was recognised locally and nationally that an independent body was needed, not constricted by being a public body, to act as a watchdog and encourage activities beneficial to Exmoor. After a fine speech by Society member Steven Pugsley, an Exmoor National Park Authority member and West Somerset District Councillor, the President, Sir Antony Acland, raised a toast to the next 60 years.

2019 heralds another year of celebrations, not only for Exmoor but the wider National Park movement. It is the 70th anniversary of the National

Parks and Access to the Countryside Act that led to the designation of national parks in England and Wales, mainly in the 1950s but a process continuing into the C21st with the special status awarded to the New Forest and South Downs.

For Exmoor, Lorna Doone will be the focus of activities as it is the 150th birthday of the book's publication. We have included 'Doone Country' walks in our Walks Programme and will display in our Resource Centre the many fine editions we



Playlet reading: Heather Hodgson, Roger Watts and Rachel Thomas © *The Exmoor Society*

own of R D Blackmore's famous romantic novel. There will be many other activities taking place around Exmoor organised by local groups.

By setting up last year the Glover Review into designated landscapes, the Government recognises their importance in both national and local life and aims to build on their achievements in protecting and increasing their natural capital



*President and Officers: From l to r – Dr Keith Howe, Vice Chairman, Karen Trigger, Hon. Treasurer, Sir Antony Acland, President, Rachel Thomas, Chairman*

assets. The Exmoor Society responded, before Christmas, to the call for evidence and our submission can be found on our website. The Glover Panel will now start to write its report this Spring and publish its final recommendations by the Autumn.

We are particularly pleased that Dame Fiona Reynolds will be the keynote speaker at the 2019 Spring Conference in April. A member of the Glover Review panel, she has a long and distinguished career in designated landscapes and the wider countryside and rural issues. Her book, 'The Fight for Beauty' was published in 2016. Speakers will also include Peter Beacham, OBE, former

Director, English Heritage and Adrian Colston, Exeter University researcher at the Centre for Rural Policy Research. With the theme for the Conference 'Inspirational Exmoor', exploring the relationship between natural beauty and people's wellbeing, we hope to show the remarkable assemblage of natural and cultural assets that Exmoor provides as a national park and why so many people are passionate about conserving its special qualities. The legacy of the founders of our National Parks is rich indeed, demonstrating a British approach to the concept of designated landscapes that can adapt to new circumstances and yet retain the vision of the early pioneers.

*Rachel Thomas, Chairman*



## 60 years Young - The Exmoor Society



© The Exmoor Society

**The following is the speech by Steven Pugsley at The Exmoor Society's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Lunch, Simonsbath House Hotel, Saturday 24 November 2018:**

'Sir Anthony, Madam Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been able to observe the progress of the Society over the last 25 years with a friendly objectivity, born of the Society's partnership with the National Park Authority during my time as a Park member, and my occasional and very limited forays into authorship and speechifying on the Society's behalf.

I think it would be fair to say that there was a time in the Society's earlier years when it was perceived as not always entirely in sympathy with local opinion. There was just a hint of a very proper nanny telling its irresponsible charges how to behave: Mary Poppins but without the spoonful of sugar. There was a local view that in promoting the vital need to protect the landscape, the Society was perhaps not giving sufficient weight to acknowledging the land managers who had created the landscape in the first place. Nor the wider community that supported the infrastructure that enabled Exmoor to flourish and was at the heart of its character. I am glad to say that perception has wholly changed. Now the Society is seen as working with the grain of the farming community, fully recognising that the only way the landscape will remain as, generally, we all wish to see it, is that it is maintained by people who understand it.

The fruit of the Society's awareness is shown especially clearly in two things, I feel. The first is in the Pinnacle Award to young entrepreneurs, to encourage new generations of Exmoor people to live and work here and to keep the Moor alive. The second is the wide range of studies which the Society has promoted, many of them ground-breaking, into moorland, landscape, upland farming and natural capital, which are thoroughly researched and provide the essential evidence base in arguing for positive change and active support. Without well-grounded evidence national bodies will not act and so often today it falls to the Society to provide it. This "professionalism" is seen at work in another of the Society's recent initiatives – the Resource Centre in the Society's splendid new headquarters in Dulverton. The opportunity to bring together an Exmoor Archive and Library, catalogue it appropriately, store it under proper conditions and make it available for study, has been the biggest advance for Exmoor scholarship in a generation and already in the Exmoor Studies series we are seeing the first published results.



© The Exmoor Society

Spreading the word about Exmoor is also important if people are to appreciate it fully, and preserve and protect it. This applies to the Society's own membership as well as further afield. But all of this has to be pleasurable as

well as informative if it is to have its maximum impact. The Society now has this down to a fine art through its events programme of walks, talks, seminars, Spring Conference and – above all in my opinion – through the Exmoor Review, now in full colour (all singing, all dancing), a true journal of record and a thoroughly good read (buy your copies now, reasonably priced and superbly published).

So to sum all of that up, what is The Exmoor Society in 2018? In my view it is: Supportive – Active – Professional – Visible - and Enjoyable . . . and perhaps one more thing: Persuasive

No successful organisation can survive solely on the qualities of its officers. Equally, none will survive without firm and inspiring leadership. The Exmoor Society has been hugely fortunate in its President, its Executive, its Secretariat, but especially, if I might be permitted to say so, in its Chairman. Some of you will be familiar with the TV advert of a few years ago “You know when you’ve been Tango’d”, when unsuspecting individuals were made to do something they hadn’t expected and then filled with delight as a consequence. Many of us experience a similar sensation when faced with a request from Rachel: “You know when you’ve been Thomas’d”.

The Exmoor Society is today widely respected and in vigorous health. I confidently expect that to continue, and I look forward to joining Sir Anthony and you all for the Centenary celebrations in 2058.’

*Founder members in 1958: (from right to left) Brian Chugg, Bridget Harper and Mary Chugg*



## Exmoor's Natural Capital

The concept of natural capital lies at the heart of the Government's recently published 25 Year Environment Plan. Defined as "the parts of the natural environment that produce value to people", natural capital is set to play an increasingly influential role in how public policy develops, especially in special areas such as National Parks.



© Anne Stamford

The Exmoor Society's recently published report investigates whether the natural capital approach can be used to include all the natural and cultural elements that make up Exmoor's unique landscape. *Towards a Register of Exmoor's Natural Capital* can be viewed and downloaded from The Exmoor Society's website (see the Publications section).

The report breaks new ground in four ways:

1. It proposes a classification describing all elements of natural capital in a Register.
2. It investigates and describes the relationship between natural capital and cultural considerations, a topic frequently neglected.



3. It uses landscape character to ensure descriptions of natural capital are place-based and captures the distinctiveness and special qualities of landscape.
4. It shows the importance of involving local knowledge and values to gain the commitment of the people who own, manage or use natural capital. This gives them a personal stake in the concept of natural capital.

The study took place at the same time as Exmoor National Park Authority and the Exmoor Hill Farming Network developed a proposal for post-Brexit farm and environmental support on Exmoor called 'Exmoor's Ambition'. The register can be used in a variety of ways, for example, as a basis for future agri-environmental schemes, to monitor change or inform and engage the public.

The origins of the study lie in the keynote address given to the Society's 2017 Spring Conference by Professor Dieter Helm, chair of the government's Natural Capital Committee. In response to a question about the use of natural capital in National Parks, he challenged Exmoor to investigate how the concept could be used in the context of the designation and its statutory purposes. The Trustees of the Exmoor Society responded to his challenge by commissioning this study. Upon receipt of the completed Register, Prof Dieter Helm said 'This is an important first step! It is very gratifying to make a remark intended as a challenge and actually get it taken seriously and acted upon.'



© Jennifer Rowlandson

## Commercial Game Shooting on Exmoor

Recently, Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) reported an increased discussion about the developing impact of game shoots, the size and number of which have grown significantly on Exmoor over the last 20 years. The Exmoor Society was informed that ENPA would be interested to know its views, if it wished to contribute.



© Heather Lowther (ENPA)

The trustees considered an investigation was appropriate based upon the Objects of The Exmoor Society which are

- a) To secure the qualities of Exmoor National Park for the benefit of the public, and
- b) To encourage co-operation between statutory authorities, voluntary societies, land owners, farmers and other interested persons and organisations, on behalf of the public.

The Vice Chairman, Dr Keith Howe, was asked to look into the facts. On that basis, six shoots in greater Exmoor were visited for discussions with their managers and game keepers. Written and oral opinions and evidence were taken from other interested parties, both solicited and volunteered, and the findings considered at length by the Executive. Dr Howe reported that, without

exception, his enquiries were received with courtesy, generous expenditure of others' time entirely for his benefit, and unqualified helpfulness.

Various issues of concern included the intensity of released birds, noise, smell, pests and contamination, litter, lead shot, use of pharmaceuticals, and the impact on landscape and public roads and rights of way. Observations on these were gathered during field visits and supplemented by published research from other bodies. These showed both favourable and unfavourable aspects of game shooting in Exmoor, ranging from relatively minor sources of irritation (except to people directly affected) to those having discernible impacts more generally. Conclusions also addressed wider implications of Exmoor game shooting that had been raised, or otherwise were considered to have been overlooked. 10 recommendations resulted but ultimately, as with everything, good communication as a foundation for decisions tempered by mutual respect is considered to be the best way forward.

*'Game Shooting in Exmoor – Exmoor Society Perspectives' can be viewed and downloaded from the website under 'What We Do' / Campaigning. Alternatively, a printed version may be obtained from the Society by sending a cheque for £5 to cover print and postage costs.*



Winsford Hill

© Jennifer Rowlandson



# Planning

During last year, there were 210 planning applications registered with the Exmoor National Park Planning Committee, a 15 per cent drop from the previous year. 30 applications were referred to the Committee for decision and 6 decisions were contrary to officer recommendations; others were decided by delegated procedures or withdrawn. The general policy followed by the Society is to comment on those applications which have the potential to damage Exmoor's landscape character and amenity assets. The Society uses the Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) Landscape Character Assessment 2018, now adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. After many years in the role of ENPA Chief Planning Officer, David Wyborn has retired and Dean Kinsella has been appointed Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.



View over Dulverton

© Madeline Taylor

As reported last year, attention was drawn to the erection of Airband masts, supplying broadband to the remoter parts of Exmoor. The Home Office also decided to enhance the existing Emergency Services network. We continue to hope that, by negotiation, much of the potential impact on the landscape can be reduced. A planning application to replace a mobile phone mast at Warren Farm was approved in August, even though the Society believed a better solution could have been found. Concern was over the height (35m) and its prominent visibility within the National Park and beyond its boundaries and the Society was disappointed the Committee did not follow the ENPA Landscape Officer's recommendation for refusal.

The Society strongly objected to a eucalyptus plantation at Barbrook, adjoining a moorland area, deciduous woodland and small pasture fields. The application was withdrawn. A retrospective planning application for a shepherd's hut near



Larkbarrow Corner was given permission but with the condition that it applied only to the present owner. Removal of two hedges and a bank at Foxtwitchen, reported in last year's Spring Newsletter, was refused by the Committee in November. The Society supported the Officers' recommendations for refusal in both the latter cases.

Proposals to convert the farmhouse and surrounding agricultural buildings at Duredon Farm were given permission in August. The Society had some concerns over the former Knight farm being turned into a lodge/hotel because of its important position and likely loss of original fabric. The Society wished to see the integrity of the farmhouse retained.

In December, a planning application for a 250kw hydro-electric scheme at Combe Park Lodge, Lynton on Hoar Oak Water was published for public consultation by 7 January 2019. The Society, although supporting renewable energy in the right place, raised concerns over the potentially large-scale development. It hopes that thorough scrutiny is given to the proposals, not only by ENPA Officers, but also Natural England and the Environment Agency.



Kayaking on the E Lyn river

© Jennifer Rowlandson

## Archive News

It was with regret that the Society said goodbye to Dr Helen Blackman, whose contract ended in September. Her work in setting up the archive and resource centre in an ordered and accessible form cannot be praised enough. The group of volunteers whom she trained continue to manage this important aspect of the Society's work through cataloguing papers and images, answering queries, giving talks and helping researchers. But more volunteers would be very welcome!

Two interesting accessions have been made to the archive. Alan Hughes

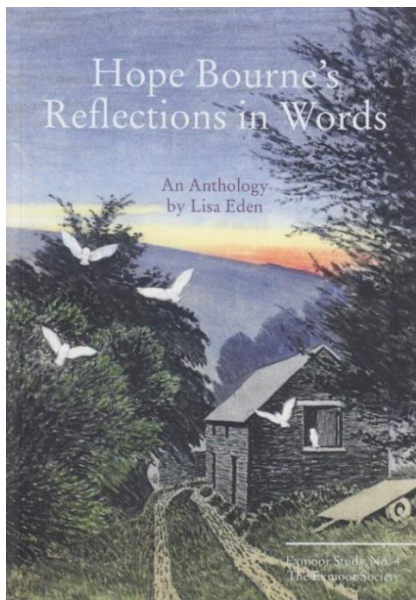
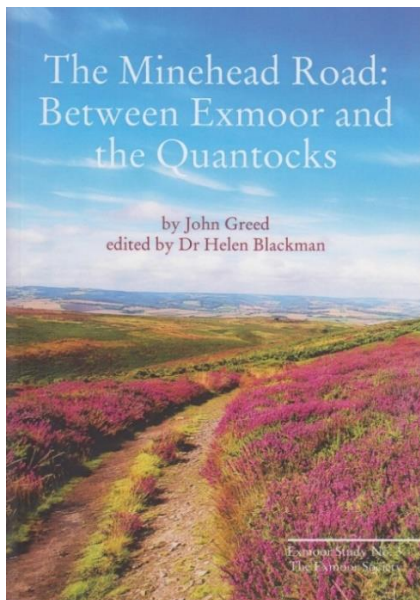


*Waiting for the Coach -*

donated a charming diary with sketches written by his great-grandmother, Mary Lily Mummery, in August 1881, which recounts the events of a holiday at Woolhanger with her husband and three small sons. The Society has also received a generous donation from Graeme Bonham-Carter of books collected by his father, Victor Bonham-Carter. They mainly relate to Exmoor, but some cover the wider Somerset and Devon areas. Many of the books contain interesting inscriptions and even letters.

*Reproduced by kind permission of A Hughes*

The Exmoor Studies series continues to sell well. Two new additions have been made: *The Minehead Road: Between Exmoor and the Quantocks* by John Greed, and *Hope Bourne's Reflections in Words: An Anthology* by Lisa Eden.



The latter has already been reprinted and reprints are about to be ordered for *The Exmoor Pony: Contested Histories* and *Exmoor Chroniclers*.

**The Exmoor Society / ENPA  
SPRING CONFERENCE 2019**

**Friday 12 April 2019  
Dunster Tithe Barn ~ 10am-3.30pm**

***Inspirational Exmoor:  
Natural Beauty & People's Wellbeing***

**Main Speakers:  
Dame Fiona Reynolds  
Peter Beacham OBE  
Adrian Colston**

£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)

## New Trustees

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

### Anne May

Anne gained a BSc Hons (1st Class) in Countryside Management from Harper Adams University, which included a 10-month voluntary placement with Natural England at Fenns, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR. Since then, she has worked for Exmoor National Park Authority where she developed the Moorland



Mapping Project methodology and ran the project to assess moorland vegetation change on Exmoor using aerial photography.

Anne now works for FWAG SW assisting and advising land managers on the Headwaters of the Exe Project and Countryside Stewardship, amongst other schemes. She has also been aiding Rural Focus Ltd with The Exmoor Society Register of Natural and Cultural Capital, a topic paper for Dartmoor National Park

Authority and a spatial data study for the University of Exeter. She lives on an upland Exmoor beef and sheep farm and has an extensive background in conservation.

### Kate O'Sullivan

Kate is passionate about Exmoor, where she has lived for the past ten years. Her background is in television where she worked for the science department at the BBC as a director on Tomorrow's World and then as a producer on the series Horizon. She also worked in management at the BBC, at BBC films and



as head of science for a couple of independent companies: RDF television and KEO films.

More recently, Kate has obtained an MSc. in the History and philosophy of Science at Imperial College and embarked upon a series of horticultural, garden design and garden history courses. She is currently working on a book exploring the key elements that inform gardens based on eight British gardens.



'I hope that I can bring an informed and really passionate interest in Exmoor to the work of the Society and specifically contribute to its written and visual output and outreach', said Kate.

**THE EXMOOR SOCIETY**  
**MACEWEN ESSAY COMPETITION 2019**  
**£500 prize**

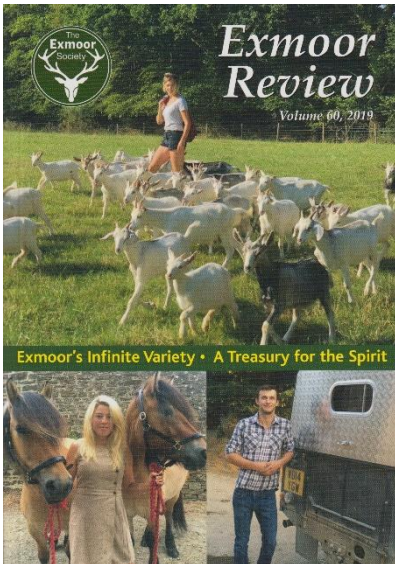
An essay competition has been launched by The Exmoor Society to mark its Diamond Jubilee in 2018 and the legacy of Malcolm & Annie MacEwen, whose Conservation and Research Trust is now managed within The Exmoor Society portfolio.

A maximum of 1200 words, the theme is *Creative Contribution to Conservation-Thinking and Practice for Exmoor National Park and Its Special Qualities*. For details, please see enclosed form, contact The Exmoor Society or visit [www.exmoorsociety.com](http://www.exmoorsociety.com).

## ***Exmoor Review* – from the Editor’s chair**

Starting to think about putting an *Exmoor Review* together was daunting. I’d never commissioned anything like it, I didn’t (and don’t) feel I knew enough about the moor, am terrified of choosing images, and couldn’t for the life of me get the words, the images and the pages available to balance, let alone make best use of where the colour fell. What I knew was that reflecting Exmoor’s variety was essential, that I wanted there to be history and landscape and wild life, and always there needed to be people: people who love Exmoor wherever they live, people who live here, who work here, who do so now, or did so long ago, or may do so in the future, and everything in between.

Well, three years on, I know I can get a completed *Review* off to the printer on time, and I’m learning the rest as I go. Instead of just two colour sections, the Society has decided there shall be colour throughout. Articles are easier to place, I can cajole and beg for far more images, and it’s such a pleasure to see the difference it makes. Sharon O’Inn, Halsgrove’s designer, has held my hand, and taught me. Without her the task would not have felt Herculean but simply impossible.



But what about the result? That is, of course, for the reader to judge. Rob Wilson North’s piece about the Knights and Edward Lear with its cartoons is, above all, fun, Cathy Nicholls’s interview with Richard Westcott sobering. The Conference report is an essential record of serious work – the sort of thing that must be done if Exmoor is to continue to live. Margaret Drabble wrote about what Exmoor means to her. There are articles about young people making their way here; about what Exmoor means to people who live here some of the time; about keeping the highways working through bad weather; what the effect of time spent here can be for young people who

face challenges most of us can only dread; and ...

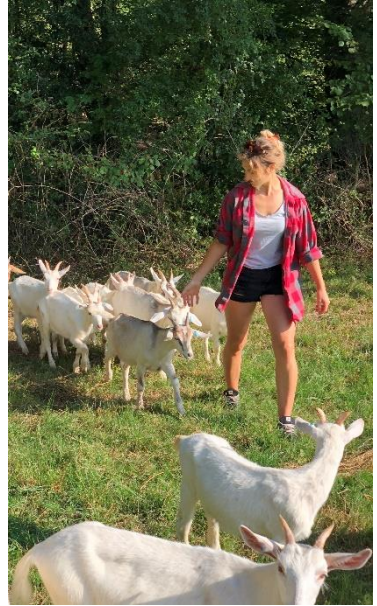
... read the Contents page, if you haven’t yet, and then if it looks interesting, read on.

*Frances Nicholson, Editor, Exmoor Review*

## 2019 Pinnacle Award

It was a good year for the Pinnacle Award, with three outstanding entries making a difficult choice for the judges. In the end – and in recognition of the Society's anniversary year, the Trustees agreed to extend the award to all three contenders, giving £3,000 to each.

Polly Goodman was working in London until she decided that she should follow her dream and return to Exmoor. She identified potential for a niche marketing opportunity to farm goats in order to introduce goat meat to this part of the country. The real strength of her plan was that goats thrive on the less-favoured upland pastures of Exmoor and the Pinnacle Award has provided support for her to develop, market and promote her products across Exmoor and further afield.



© Polly Goodman



© Philip Stephens

Philip Stephens was already making a name for himself as a welder. Having started working with used horseshoes to make decorative, hand crafted garden furniture, he identified scope for manufacturing truck canopies and other bespoke accessories for farm and truck vehicles. In particular, he was moving towards working with lightweight aluminium that required specialized equipment and tools, something the Pinnacle Award was able to help fund. His service is proving very popular with the local working community and demand is such that he will shortly be in a position to take on an apprentice.

Camilla Waterer is another who returned to Exmoor after university and travelling abroad. Her plan to offer horse-drawn transport during the winter on some of the big Exmoor shoots for the non-shooting wives and partners, as well as taking refreshments to the guns, is proving a great success. During the summer months, she offers carriage rides and picnics on the high moor. Last year, this kept her and her Highland ponies (stronger than Exmoor ponies) very busy, being popular with both visitors and locals alike as an original way to celebrate special occasions.



© Camilla Waterer

It was very exciting to help three such outstanding candidates. As a conservation body, The Exmoor Society wants to demonstrate that beautiful landscapes and livelihoods can go together by supporting the younger generation, the very essence of keeping Exmoor alive as a national park.

The Society hopes to attract many similar entries for the award in 2019 which has a closing date of 30th June 2019. If you know of any young Exmoor person between the ages of 18 and 27 years who is looking for financial help to start or develop a great business idea, please encourage them to apply. Application forms are available from The Exmoor Society's office in Dulverton and on its website.



## Walks Programme 2019

Our special 2018 anniversary year programme covered the range of Exmoor's diverse and beautiful landscapes and also included walks specifically focusing on the special flora and fauna to be found within the national park boundaries. The weather was mixed, with a cold Spring and a very hot spell in the summer but, despite this, there was a bumper turn-out for the Atlantic woodland plant walk and the Horner Woods bat hunt, and solid support for the other walks.



Near Watersmeet

© Jennifer Rowlandson

The 2019 will be offering a new variety as well as some of the old favourites. The history of Exmoor is covered in a tour of Lynton and Lynmouth, an insight into Knights of various descriptions, Ada Lovelace and her garden, the Saxon Harepath (or Herepath) and tales of Wheal Eliza and Lorna Doone. Natural history is also included, with walks discovering Exmoor's butterflies and bats, coastal wildlife, temperate rainforests and how the heather moorlands are managed as well as looking at water quality improvement schemes and landscape restoration. And if your preference is for a good hike taking in the glorious scenery in the national park, then you will not be disappointed.



R D Blackmore Centenary Plaque

© Jennifer Rowlandson

As always, our wonderfully diverse programme of walks 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 organisations who support the programme each year – thank you, once again!



Made it to the top!

© Jennifer Rowlandson



## News from the Groups

### ***Bristol Group***

Our program included the traditional January walk, an excellent meal provided by Zena's Catering, a charming talk about Somerset dialects and a tour of Chapel Cleeve Manor led by the person who had spent years refurbishing it. Rob Wilson-North told us about the Knights then later took us to Tarr Steps. We had a fascinating tour of the Met Office in Exeter, despite the Bank Holiday traffic, rode the steam train to Minehead, heard from Nigel Hester at Piles Mill about Holnicote House after the war, had a lovely autumn walk in Horner Wood, then rounded the year off with a talk about Exmoor smugglers, plus the usual excellent pre-Christmas buffet (home-made, of course). Our program remains interesting and events are well-attended, though the group is aging and most of the committee are about to step down. If you would like further information, please contact David Sinden on 0117 939 3486 or [dj.sinden@gmail.com](mailto:dj.sinden@gmail.com).



Lunch at Hoar Oak Cottage

© Jennifer Rowlandson

## *Coastal Group*

The first event in February 2018, in Doverhay Manor Museum, started with two minutes' silence in memory of Duncan, our previous Chairman, whose sudden death greatly saddened members. A talk on the museum's history followed.

In March we enjoyed an illustrated talk on 'The Exmoor Landscape'. Member volunteers, busy restoring Exmoor Signposts, enjoyed among others, the presentation in April by three officers involved in the project. A successful May day at Holnicote House, included a presentation on 'Restoring the Water Wheel at Dunster Mill', and a delicious lunch.



SW Coast Path nr Heddon's Mouth

© Jennifer Rowlandson

In September an inspirational presentation by Rob Wilson North, demonstrated 'The Influence of Coastal Estates on Exmoor'. Preceding the October AGM, Ann May, delighted us recalling the history of The 60th Anniversary of The Exmoor Society. The Lorna Doone Hotel did us proud with a well-attended annual dinner in November.



Christmas celebrations started with a full church enjoying traditional Exmoor Carols. The year concluded with an exhilarating performance by The Darktown Strutters Jazzband, plus a ploughman's supper served during the interval.

All events were well attended and I am delighted to report that our membership has increased to 74. 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 2019 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 held six well-attended talks in 2018. Firstly, Peter Romain described the history of the complex medieval Dulverton weir and leat system, and their ambitious plans for restoration. Our thanks to the Dulverton Sports Club for providing accommodation at the last minute. John Walters, a prominent photographer showed amazing pictures and film clips of Exmoor wildlife – including the world's largest slug! Dr Helen Blackman of The Exmoor Society, summarised her research into the old postal routes of Exmoor, some of which she personally travelled on horseback.

After the summer, Mike Hankin of the Exmoor Natural History Society charmed us with his selection of Exmoor flora and fauna. Rob Wilson-North, standing in for an unwell Sarah Bryan, updated us as to what's happening at the National Park Authority. Finally, Dr Graham Wills entertained a record audience with the many theories about Pinkery Pond and its canal – a continuing mystery after 150 years. Our 2019 programme can be found on the Society's website or contact Linda Hammond on 01398 323354, email [linda\\_hammond@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:linda_hammond@hotmail.co.uk)

### ***South Molton Group***

We are a small elderly group of sixteen members and run a limited number of activities. We have an annual dinner in February, two talks and two outings. Last year Rob Wilson -North spoke about John Knight, and the talk that shared our AGM was given by Joyce Jones who read letters sent home by her farther during WW1. This year Jonathon Edmunds will talk about The 2cd Lord Fortescue, and our two outings by popular request will be a trip on The Somerset Steam Railway and a visit to Chambercombe Manor. We would be delighted to have new members and details of our 2019 events can be found on the Society's website, or contact Jo Griffin on 01769 573368, email [jo@highergorton.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:jo@highergorton.eclipse.co.uk)

# Cynthia Bonham-Carter

1921 – 2018

Cynthia Bonham-Carter sadly passed away on 23 December 2018. She married Victor in 1978 and very quickly became involved with The Exmoor Society. Both were engaged in the writing and book trades generally – a world that would cement their work for the Society particularly as Cynthia had been brought up in the literary ambience of a highly and individual kind.

In 1983, Cynthia took on the role of Honorary Secretary and in 1986 was elected to the Executive on which she continued to serve until the end of the decade. Cynthia became the link between Victor and the Society during the latter decades for, by the turn of the century, he had become bedridden. She continued to bring his presidential messages to the AGMs, adding positive and delightful comments from both of them. After his death in 2007, she remained in constant touch by coming to Society events until, relatively recently, failing eyesight and health made this difficult.

Cynthia was right at the heart of the Society, demonstrating her work ethic, resilience and passion for Exmoor. She was committed to the cause of protecting Exmoor and understood the very British approach to the concept of national parks and, as such, Exmoor has lost a valuable champion, and the Society a faithful friend.

## Exmoor Festival Dates

<b>EXMOOR FOOD FESTIVAL</b> 1-29 February 2019 <a href="https://exmoorfoodfest.com/">https://exmoorfoodfest.com/</a>	<b>SIMONSBATH FESTIVAL</b> 6 May – 21 June 2019 <a href="http://www.simonsbathfestival.org.uk">www.simonsbathfestival.org.uk</a>
<b>DUNSTER MUSIC FESTIVAL</b> 24-27 May 2019 <a href="http://www.dunsterfestival.co.uk">www.dunsterfestival.co.uk</a>	<b>MINEHEAD &amp; EXMOOR FESTIVAL</b> End of July/beg of August 2019 <a href="http://www.mineheadmusicfestival.org">www.mineheadmusicfestival.org</a>
<b>TWO MOORS FESTIVAL</b> 11-20 October 2018 <a href="http://www.thetwomoorsfestival.co.uk">www.thetwomoorsfestival.co.uk</a>	<b>DARK SKIES FESTIVAL - EXMOOR</b> 14 October – 4 November 2019 <a href="http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enjoying/stargazing/dark-skies-festival">www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enjoying/stargazing/dark-skies-festival</a>
<b>For information on Exmoor events, please go to <a href="http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk">www.visit-exmoor.co.uk</a></b>	

**The Exmoor Society**  
Registered Charity No1160912  
**2018-19**

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Founder Member, President, Vice President and Trustees  
Simonsbath House Hotel, 60th Anniversary Celebration

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