

Exmoor PARK Life

Keeping you informed
Listening to your views



Exmoor National Park Authority owned land at Haddon Hill showing early signs of heather beetle. Inset: The National Park Authority is very grateful to the Commando Helicopter Force for their help in photographing the most severely affected areas of moorland
Photo: L.A. Phot Vicki Bennell

Concern for Exmoor's moorlands

Exmoor National Park Authority has been particularly concerned at the number and scale of outbreaks of heather beetle this summer, coupled with the increase in scrub and lack of swaling (controlled burning) in recent years.

Natural Environment Manager Sarah Bryan explains why we should be concerned:

Exmoor is internationally valued for its beautiful swathes of open heather moorland, but without management through grazing and swaling, moorland will gradually revert to scrub and eventually trees.

Farmers lose healthy upland grazing and the public loses the openness, the ability to walk and ride easily across the moor, the sweeping views, and the unique character and diversity of landscape.

With the predicted hotter drier summers, we could also see an increase in damaging wild fires as the volume of vegetation builds up.

Challenges to moorlands

Exmoor's moorlands are currently facing a number of challenges.

This summer, when we were expecting to enjoy the brilliant stretches of purple and pink flowers, we saw patches of heather turning a foxy red brown colour, the first sign of a heather beetle attack. Into the autumn the plants gradually turn grey before dying altogether.

Large scale outbreaks have the potential to damage heather moorland, particularly when the plants are old and have not been burned for many years. Young heather is less susceptible to attack.

Outbreaks were seen at East Anstey, Withypool, Haddon, West Anstey, Molland and Kitor Heath. On East Anstey virtually the whole site is affected; on Withypool around 150 acres have turned grey.

In addition to the beetle problem, we are also concerned that in recent years there has been a significant increase in bracken, gorse, scrub and trees on the open moorland, caused by lack of grazing and swaling.

To further our understanding of this problem, over the summer we talked to a number of farmers who have expertise in moorland management.

They confirmed that there is less livestock on the hill than there used to be for several reasons, including restrictions to winter grazing, changes from headage to area payments, bovine TB, ticks and the use of less hardy breeds.

More flexible approach needed

Less swaling is happening because of increased regulation on the size and frequency of the burns.

Whereas in the past large areas would have been burnt every five to ten years using natural tracks and combs as breaks, landowners are now required to burn small patches (2-5 hectares) and to mechanically cut the firebreaks. The costs associated with mechanised cutting and burning small areas are very high.

The National Park Authority has responded to Natural England's consultation on a Best Practice Guide for burning in the uplands of South West England by

reiterating these concerns.

A report went to the Authority meeting in June this year when members expressed their concern at the lack of traditional swaling and encouraged Defra to take a more flexible and pragmatic approach on Exmoor, particularly in allowing larger areas to be burnt.

The Authority's response is available by visiting www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/looking_after.htm

To view Defra's Regulations visit www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/burning/default.aspx

The Authority has also been trying to assess the extent of heather beetle and has been putting together a map of the most severely affected sites.

We are extremely grateful to the Commando Helicopter Force based at RNAS Yeovilton who, as part of a training exercise, were able to fly over southern Exmoor and photograph the most severely affected areas for us.

Earlier this year, Simon Thorp, Director of the Heather Trust, was invited to Exmoor to look at some of the sites most

affected by heather beetle.

He confirmed that Exmoor was not alone in this problem as he was seeing large outbreaks of heather beetle across the country. His advice was to burn affected sites within the burning season this winter and monitor the regrowth.

The Heather Trust is carrying out research into the best methods of dealing with heather beetle and information is available on their website, www.heathertrust.co.uk

Moorland Event in November

The National Park Authority is planning to run an event on November 23 to explore whether the current system of management is working and to look at ways of ensuring that traditional moorland management can continue. It is hoped representatives of Natural England, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Heather Trust will be there.

If you would like to attend, please contact Sarah Bryan or Heather Harley on 01398 323665 or email sbryan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or hjarley@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

Enhancing the qualities that make Exmoor special



The new livestock market building which includes rainwater harvesting, air source heat pumps for the office area and solar panels for water heating funded by the Exmoor Sustainable Development Fund



New housing going up on the market development

Cutcombe development making good progress

Hill farming has received a boost with the keenly awaited new Cutcombe livestock market now officially open following eight months of building work and around four years of negotiations over a scheme which includes housing and business premises.

The market was made possible as a result of a partnership between Exmoor Farmers Livestock Auctions, Summerfield Homes, Somerset Council Council, Magna West

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Authority. Cutcombe Parish Council has also been a key player and supportive of the scheme.

The new facilities include a sale ring and café under one roof with an adjoining dual purpose penning area for cattle and sheep.

Recognising the importance of the market to the future of the moor, funding of £100,000 was provided by the Exmoor National Park Sustainable Development Fund, provided by Defra, towards the construction of the new market, which incorporates many sustainable construction features including rain water harvesting, air source heat pumps, solar panels and local sustainably sourced timber.

A ceremony was held on 17th September by Magna Housing South West to celebrate the start of the building of the affordable local needs housing on the site.

The ten houses and flats to rent for local people are two one-bedroom flats, two two-bedroom flats, four two-bedroom houses, one three-bedroom house and one four-bedroom house, and there will be two plots available for self-build.

Magna expect to have the flats available to move into by February

2011, a further four houses ready by April and the final two houses ready in the summer. This may change slightly if, for example, bad weather affects the building over the winter.

There are also 13 open market houses being constructed on the site.

Environmental features have been incorporated into all of the houses which will include air source heat pumps and solar collectors together with high levels of insulation.

Two blocks of business units for rent on the site have also been granted planning approval.

Commenting on the project, Marlene Allinson from Cutcombe Parish Council said: "The Parish Council is delighted with progress so far and the way in which all the partners concerned are working together to ensure that the scheme runs smoothly.

"It is hoped that local people will now have the opportunity to purchase or rent the new homes and, with the building of the open market homes, perhaps newcomers can be welcomed to Cutcombe as well as business owners and this will help to ensure that the parish remains vibrant and thriving, thus ensuring its future and that of its amenities which include a village school, shop, petrol garage and pub."

Communities on Exmoor set to benefit from new service

Help is at hand for communities and land managers on Exmoor wishing to develop projects aimed at saving energy and tackling climate change with the appointment of Ben Eardley, the new Low Carbon Communities Officer at Exmoor National Park Authority.

Ben will be playing a lead role in relation to the Carbon Neutral Exmoor project and has previously worked for Global Action Plan and Renewable Energy 4 Devon as a renewable energy and energy efficiency consultant.

The three-year post is being funded by the National Park Authority together with funding from the Rural Development Programme for England Local Action (1) funding stream, which is funded by Defra and the European Union.

Ben will work closely with enthusiastic communities within the National Park and with land managers to help them to turn aspirations into reality.

Commenting on his new role, Ben said: "I'm looking forward to getting to know people and to providing support and advice to communities and land managers on ways in which they can help to tackle climate change.

"For example, a community may want to give their village hall or village shop a renewable energy 'makeover', with solar photovoltaic panels being installed together with a new, low carbon heating system and additional insulation.

"Or they may wish to set up a community composting initiative, a



Ben Eardley (left) with Tim Stokes at the Wood Event held at Cutcombe market recently

community vegetable garden or an ambitious community-owned renewable energy scheme to help generate electricity and an income for their community.

"If anyone would like help or advice please don't hesitate to contact me."

In relation to low carbon land management, farmers can seek advice regarding the development of a renewable energy scheme on their land or regarding good grassland or nutrient management - Ben can help through providing advice or by signposting them on to other relevant sources of help.

Tim Stokes, Exmoor National Park Authority's Sustainability and Economy Manager, said: "We are delighted to welcome Ben on board.

"His technical knowledge and experience of helping communities and businesses to get renewable energy schemes off the ground will be invaluable to the Carbon Neutral Exmoor project."

Communities or land managers wishing to take advantage of Ben's services through the National Park Authority can contact him on 01398 323665.

Photos by Steve Guscott

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Lynmouth Pavilion update

The initial phase of the proposed redevelopment of the Pavilion at Lynmouth is now underway following the recent transfer of ownership of the site and buildings, including the Lime Kilns to the west of the main Pavilion, from North Devon Council to Exmoor National Park Authority.

The Project Board leading the scheme on behalf of the National Park Authority includes members Andrea Davis and Dr Stephen Head supported by National Park Authority staff.

An open tendering exercise resulted in 16 submissions expressing an interesting in undertaking the project management aspect of the scheme and Gates Construction Consultants, based in Barnstaple, have been appointed.

Tim Braund, Head of Information and

Access Services at the National Park Authority, said: "Now that the legalities of the transfer have been completed we are very excited about getting on with the next phase of the project.

"This redevelopment is only able to go ahead because of the generous support from Devon County Council through the Invest in Devon Fund and we are very grateful to them."

Andrea Davis said: "I'm delighted to have been able to secure such a large investment from Devon County Council into the community of Lynton and Lynmouth.

"This represents a significant investment from Exmoor National Park Authority and Devon County Council into the local economy and we would welcome the views of residents and visitors about what they would like to see happen in this important space."

Mr Braund continued: "At the moment it has yet to be decided whether the building

will be rebuilt, retaining the façade, or whether it may need complete demolition, site clearance and rebuild.

"Over the coming months when we have more detailed information about likely costs, we will be asking for people's views on this and other matters to do with the redevelopment.

An informal drop-in session was held in October to give local people a chance to help shape the future of this exciting project.

If anyone would like more information, please email any questions to us at pavilion@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or telephone 01398 323665.

The National Park Authority hopes to have a facility available during 2012, at least by the end of the calendar year, and hopefully a fully operational National Park Centre would be completed by Easter 2013 in time for the main season.

Preparing for cuts in National Park funding

By the time you are reading this it is likely that we will know the level of government funding for the National Park Authority over the next four years.

Around 80 per cent of the Authority's funding comes from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) through the National Park Grant.

The remainder comes from a variety of sources including project income, fees and charges, interest payments etc. The National Park Authority does not receive any funding from local Council Tax.

At the start of the current year, the expected grant was £3,977,000 plus £200,000 for the Sustainable Development Fund.

However, soon after the General Election in May, the new Government started to make significant changes including giving a priority to reducing the public funding deficit over the next four years.

Within a short time of the election, the Chancellor announced £6.2 billion of in-year savings. The Secretary of State committed Defra to making a £162m contribution

towards the overall savings, amounting to 5.5 per cent of Defra's budget for this financial year.

National Park Authorities were given a 5 per cent reduction in the National Park Grant – amounting to just under £200,000 for Exmoor.

At the same time as reducing budgets for the year, the Authority agreed to put major projects on hold (excepting Lynmouth Pavilion) and to put in place a presumption against filling staff vacancies.

The cuts in May were followed by the budget announcements in June where the Chancellor set an overall reduction across all 'unprotected' government departments of 25 per cent over the next four years.

Defra expenditure is not protected and National Park Authorities were advised to plan on further substantial reductions in National Park Grant over the next four years.

To help plan for the reduction, the Authority established a Spending Review Advisory Panel to consider a range of possible future funding scenarios and how the Authority might respond.

The Panel has sought external views on funding priorities, beginning with an informal discussion at the Parish and Consultative Forum and followed by separate sessions with Exmoor Society, Exmoor Trust, Exmoor Uprising, and representatives of tourism businesses and of the farming community.

Public responses have been encouraged via articles in local newspapers and a feedback form on the website. Staff were also asked for their ideas for making savings and increasing income and the process came together at a workshop for Authority members early in October.

We are now awaiting details of the future grant allocations we can expect following the government spending review announcement on 20 October.

Defra has indicated that we need to plan for reductions of up to 30 per cent over four years, which would mean a real terms decrease in National Park Grant of £1.3 million in 2014/15 compared to the start of this year.

This is a particularly difficult time for staff employed by the Authority given uncertainty over

their jobs and will mean wholesale changes in our work.

As Defra has said, we will need to 'do less with less' in the future.

As far as possible, our intention will be to focus our efforts on activities that make the most impact on keeping Exmoor special, supporting local communities and promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the National Park.

*Dr Nigel Stone
Chief Executive,
Exmoor National Park Authority*

Government announces review of National Park Authority governance

The new coalition government has brought about wholesale changes in government policy, priorities and approach since coming together after the election in May.

Every government department has been required to produce a 'Structural Reform Plan' and Defra published their plan in mid-July.

Two actions within the plan have particular relevance to National Park Authorities with a Defra commitment to:

- Review the governance arrangements of National Parks by December 2010 and
- Publish proposals to increase the accountability of National Parks early in 2011.

Defra has asked National Park Authorities to provide their own thoughts on the ways to improve governance and local accountability and to seek views of their local communities.

Details of the consultation are available on the National Park Authority website www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

Your Future Exmoor – latest results available

Nearly 1,000 people came along to express their views on how they wanted to see their community in Exmoor evolve over the next 15-20 years.

The first three months of 2010 saw 21 events in towns and villages across Exmoor National Park. There were also workshops with 13 schools and colleges. Following these, an event was also held for organisations with an interest in the National Park.

Together these events provided a real opportunity to influence the new planning document for Exmoor called 'Your Future Exmoor'.

The results of these events have now been collated and show that Exmoor's communities are supportive of measures to tackle climate change – particularly of renewable technologies that operate on a micro scale.

Those who came along were also keen on treating all identified villages equally to allow for new development appropriate to the size, character and need of each village and its parish.

There was support for the current approach on affordable housing, supporting the local economy. There were a number of suggestions on enhancing settlements and services and facilities. This included a high level of support for more allotments.

'Your Future Exmoor' Feedback reports have been produced for each event along with a report summarising the findings from all 21 events. Feedback reports were also sent to all of the schools that participated.

Copies of all reports can be viewed online at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/your_future_exmoor. They are also available through your Town and Parish Council.

Alternatively you can request a copy of the reports by contacting the Policy and Community Team on 01398 323665 or ldf@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

Visitors have also had an opportunity to participate through a visitor survey on the future of Exmoor. A prize draw was given for all participants and Jayne Ford from

Bideford was the lucky winner.

There will be further opportunities to get involved this autumn through meetings and discussions on a number of topics.

2011 will see the development of preferred policy options to be consulted on later next year and this will provide further opportunities to make your views known.



At the time of writing there are still some Exmoor 2011 calendars left for sale in the National Park Centres in Dulverton (open every day), Dunster and Lynmouth (open at weekends), but be quick if you want them for Christmas. They are also available on our on-line shop at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk. This year's Christmas cards are also available featuring lovely images of red deer (pictured) and Exmoor ponies taken by Mike Sherwin.

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The time is right to switch to wood fuel

With energy prices on the rise, the anticipated introduction of the Renewable Heat Incentive imminent and a plentiful supply of wood available for fuel in Exmoor, there has probably never been a better time to consider using wood fuel as your main source of heating.

At the time of writing (and we are in uncertain times) the Government is planning to introduce the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) from April 2011.

This initiative was put in place by the previous Government and there has been a degree of speculation that it may be scrapped or changed significantly.

However, assuming it goes ahead broadly as planned, there should be a strong incentive for people to switch to renewable heating systems.

For example, in its consultation document, the Department of Energy and Climate Change proposed a RHI of 9 pence per kWh for wood for heating systems up to 45kW. An average household in the UK uses 15,000 kWh per annum for heat so the RHI in this case would be 15,000 x £0.09 = £1,350 per annum.

Only efficient wood fuel heating systems are likely to qualify for the RHI – it won't be available for burning logs on open fires or in a standard wood burner.

In fact only log, wood chip and wood pellet boilers that are Micro-generation Certification Scheme (MCS) approved (www.microgenerationcertification.org), and installed by an MCS approved installer are likely to qualify for the RHI.

But the good news is that these systems tend to be very efficient and increasingly have a high



degree of automation.

The RHI is being introduced for a reason – one of the reasons is that the up front cost of installing a wood heating system is relatively high by comparison with that of an oil or gas heating system.

The bigger picture is that as part of its commitment to tackling climate change and energy security issues, the Government is legally bound to a target of achieving 15 per cent of energy used in the UK

from renewable energy sources by 2020.

Other technologies likely to be eligible for the Renewable Heat Incentive include ground source and air source heat pumps, biogas and solar water heating.

Exmoor National Park Authority is keen to encourage householders, businesses and communities to utilise Exmoor's wood fuel resource because the sustainable management of woodland contributes towards mitigating climate change and improved biodiversity.

For more information please ask to speak to the Sustainability and Economy Unit on 01398 323665.

● Exmoor National Park Authority's new Low Carbon Communities Officer, Ben Eardley, can provide support to farmers and land managers, and to communities to enable them to exploit Exmoor's wood fuel resource. Ben can be contacted on 01398 323665.

Householders seeking free and impartial advice regarding wood fuel heating should contact their local Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre on 0800 512012.

Ramorum blight is spreading



Phytophthora ramorum, also known as ramorum blight, continues its deadly progress across the south west's woodlands despite the considerable efforts of the Forestry Commission (FC) and the Food and Environmental Research Agency (FERA) who, for some years, have been trying to contain the disease.

Hundreds of hectares on Exmoor are now under felling orders.

Ramorum blight has been using rhododendron as a primary foliar host from which they can infect and kill a range of tree species with considerable potential economic, ecological and landscape impacts.

It is the same pathogen which causes Sudden Oak Death in the US, although the oak in that case is a tan-oak not related to native Quercus spp.

In the summer of 2009 symptoms consistent with ramorum blight were identified on Japanese larch on a number of sites throughout the south west of England including Exmoor and environs.

This was subsequently confirmed with the result that a number of forest owners and managers, including the National Park Authority, were ordered under plant health legislation to destroy infected stands of larch.

Subsequent research has revealed that the pathogen actively sporulates from the needles of Japanese larch and that the levels of sporulation were unprecedented when compared to other host species such as rhododendron.

The disease has been found to infect and kill a range of species including beech, birch, chestnut, oak, ash, Douglas and grand fir and western hemlock as well as native Vaccinium and a range of ornamental species.

The Forestry Commission has undertaken a series of aerial surveys which have identified over 150 suspected infections in five clusters in the south west, one of which is on the Brendon Hills straddling the National Park boundary.

Infection is now confirmed in over 3000 hectares of woodland in

The aerial photograph above, courtesy of the Forestry Commission, shows the extent of *Phytophthora ramorum* in a stand of trees; and below, resin bleed on an infected tree



the south west which are now subject to statutory notices, with over 800 hectares in West Somerset and North Devon.

Extensive infections have been found in South Wales. Surveys are underway in north west England and south west Scotland and Ireland.

This is a serious problem directly affecting many thousands of hectares of forest. The Forestry Commission and other agencies are working hard to understand this new development but it is clear that infected Japanese larch poses a significant threat to woodlands and the wider environment.

Where an infection is confirmed, owners are required to fell stands under plant health legislation. There is no compensation and movement of timber is strictly controlled. Currently infected sites cannot be re-planted.

The Forestry Commission is likely to be issuing many Statutory Felling Orders over the next few weeks and months which will include significant areas within the National Park in order to prevent the disease affecting other plantation and native woodlands.

More information can be found on the Forestry Commission's website www.forestry.gov.uk

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The Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study

What do you value about Exmoor's landscape?

Exmoor National Park Authority is carrying out a survey to try and understand what people value about the landscape and how it affects them.

To explore this in some detail we are comparing people's different responses to the landscape in wild, open moorland, enclosed woodland, farmland and the coast.

We are also trying to find out whether people have noticed changes in the landscape – for better or worse over recent years.

The study is being carried out by volunteers and will take place over the next 12 months, the results of the study will be available in 2011.

Early responses indicate that people particularly appreciate the peace and tranquillity and picturesque qualities of the Exmoor landscape.

Results of the study will inform national research into the value of landscapes and help with decisions about the future of Exmoor's landscape.

If you would like to participate in this study or would like to learn more about this project, please contact Emma Dennis on 01398 322275 or edennis@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

Young Mosaic visitors enjoy Exmoor

Twenty-five young leaders from Devon and Somerset and the Bristol West Indian cricket team were brought together for a learning weekend on Exmoor thanks to Mosaic, a partnership led by the Campaign for National Parks with the Youth Hostels Association and nine National Park Authorities in England.

The young leaders, whose job it will be to promote National Parks back in their communities, took part in activities that included horse riding, night navigation, conservation work and rock climbing.

The Bristol West Indian cricket team played the local Exford team and on Sunday morning the whole group were brought together for a kennel tour with the Devon and Somerset Staghounds.

The cricket match showed how much fun can be had with contrasting skills and ages in the perfect setting of Exford's ground.

Many of the visitors had brought their families and some young team members enjoyed an introduction to 'testing' cricket on Exmoor.

Commenting on the weekend, Kaylie Cole, 19, one of the young leaders from Bideford, said: "The horse riding was a real challenge for me, but also a highlight."

"It has been a real pleasure to meet and get involved with other young people. Now we just need to get more young people to Exmoor, I'd love to come back."

David Rolls, Mosaic Youth Officer, who had facilitated the weekend along with his colleague Clare Taylor, summed up the weekend, by saying: "It was great to see the confidence and



Bristol West Indian cricket team and Exford village cricket team

Photo: Steve Guscott

leadership skills of the young people develop over the weekend.

"I was especially pleased that, thanks to the wonderful hospitality of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds and Exford Cricket Club, these young people learnt and played hard alongside young people from Exford and the surrounding community."

Mosaic supports young people to promote National Parks to their peers.

The weekend was hosted by Exmoor National Park Authority with young people being drawn from Devon Youth Service, Young Devon, Bristol West Indian Cricket Club, Somerset Youth Volunteering Network as well as Exford

and the surrounding community.

Following their return home, the Bristol West Indian cricket team sent a message to say: "We would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Bristol West Indian Cricket Club to thank you and Mosaic for your support."

"We would all like to express the wonderful time we had in Exmoor and would appreciate it if you could pass on our special thank you to David Rolls (Campaign for National Parks) and the Exford youth hostel staff for being so welcoming."

"We had a great time and one of our young people cited it as 'the best time of her life'."

Mosaic is a national partnership project between the Campaign for National Parks, the YHA and the ten National Parks in England - Dartmoor, Exmoor, Lake District, New Forest, North York Moors, Northumberland, Peak District, South Downs and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority.

The project is supported by Natural England through Access to Nature as part of The Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme.

It runs until March 2012 and we have several ideas to improve the stall for next year. For more information see www.mosaicnationalparks.org.

Award-winning festival garden reinstated

The Two Moors Festival Garden, supported by the Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks' Sustainable Development Funds and which scooped a double at this year's Chelsea Flower Show, has been reinstated at the Calvert Trust near Kentisbury in North Devon.

The garden not only received a Gold Medal, but was also awarded the Best Courtyard Garden in the show.

Designed to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Two Moors Festival, the garden highlights the links between music, flowers, gardens and the open countryside.

By drawing the elements together and involving the local community, Christina Williams, the garden's designer, hoped to increase the awareness of the cultural qualities of the south west and inform people of the unique environment of the two moors.

The garden's success produced valuable publicity for the Two Moors Festival and the area in general.



Many of the team whose efforts created the garden were on hand at the official opening of the installation at the Calvert Trust. From left to right - Lord Lieutenant Mr Eric Dancer, John Adie of the Two Moors Festival, Liz Pile, project manager, Christina Williams garden designer, Penny Adie, artistic director of the 2MF, Lady Acland, and Dr Stephen Head, Chairman of the project

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Unearthing Iron Age and Roman Exmoor

Prehistoric communities, some 3500 to 2000 years ago, made a rich and sometimes indelible mark on the landscape of western Britain.

Their enclosed settlements, known in Cornwall as 'rounds' and in Ireland, 'raths', are found on Exmoor too.

The ages of these sites are often not known and the Exmoor examples are especially poorly studied. However, 2010 has seen some great advances in our knowledge.

The excavations on the Bronze Age enclosure at Holworthy near Parracombe – dug by the North

Devon Archaeology Society between 2002 and 2005 – have been fully published by Terry Green in the Devon Archaeological Society Proceedings.

Also during 2010, there has been an effort to learn more about the enclosure near Timberscombe.

In May around 118 children from local schools experienced Iron Age life at first hand by taking part in a series of events on the enclosure.

Focused around archaeological excavation of the site, the children also learnt about conditions in the Iron Age, domestic life and war-

fare. In July the excavations continued with archaeologists from Exmoor National Park Authority – which owns the site – working alongside local volunteers.

The excavations culminated in two open days when visitors were treated to re-enactments of Iron Age life, including warriors, the Roman army (or part of it), a blacksmith, a woodturner and domestic life.

The excavations proved highly successful establishing the massive scale of the Iron Age settlement at Timberscombe.

Rare Iron Age pottery was discovered in one of the ditches, which will be subject to specialist study in the coming months.

Some insight into the origins of the site came from a scatter of flint tools across the area which appears to suggest that the site was occupied at least 500 years before the beginning of the Iron Age.

The 10th annual Exmoor Archaeology Forum, held in July, also focused on the Iron Age and Roman periods and explored our understanding of Iron Age sites on Exmoor, the Quantock Hills, Lundy, Cullompton and beyond.



Imagining the Boudiccan revolt against the Romans



An 'Iron Age' blacksmith at the Open Day on Timberscombe hillfort

A date for your diary

Saturday 12th March 2011, 10am (coffee) for 10.30am at Dulverton Town Hall
Admission for the day £10.00.

Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society and Exmoor National Park Authority are hosting a Joint Annual Symposium and Archaeological Forum.

Keynote speaker: Dr Mark Gillings (School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester) on his recent fieldwork and excavations on the prehistoric stone settings at Lancombe.

Panel of speakers on recent fieldwork in Somerset.

Prior booking is essential - look out for further details nearer the time.

Busy year for field services team

The National Park Authority's field services team has had a busy year so far and since April more than 260 kms of paths have been cut back and cleared - an essential service which is often overlooked, enabling local people and visitors to enjoy Exmoor more easily.

In this period more than 3,700 sq metres of paths have also been re-graded with hundreds of drains maintained and new ones built.

The team has installed gates and stiles and erected more than 500 metres of fencing.

The woodland team has dealt with windblown trees, undertaken hazardous tree survey work and felled and extracted more than 130 cubic metres of timber from woodland sites, including the priority felling of larch due to the disease ramorum blight.

In the team's workshop in Exford, the rights of way 'furniture' is produced including gates, signs, posts, bridge section, stiles and milled timber.

Since April the team has produced more than 500 of the distinctive routed signs, more than 60 gates and made 17 bridge sections.



Rick Farmer (left), Tom Bird and Simon Lazarus (in the digger) from the field services team re-grading the path at Gallox Bridge in Dunster



The Chains Wall permitted bridleway, before and after, where more than 100 tons of locally imported stone was used to improve the surface



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Tourism round-up

Congratulations On the buses

The Old Rectory Hotel at Martinhoe has recently received the Travellers' Choice 2010 Hotel award in the UK by the well respected traveller review site TripAdvisor.

This is a great achievement for proprietors Huw Rees and Sam Prosser, especially as they only entered the hotel industry in 2008 when they bought the property as a career and lifestyle change, and a boost for Exmoor tourism.

Huw said: "We have totally refurbished the hotel to create a boutique country house hotel and we are now coming to the end of our third season here.

"Our guests are becoming increasingly global, thanks in the main to the internet and this year have had guests from Australia, New Zealand, USA, Singapore, Argentina, and from all over Europe. Interestingly, our largest number of European visitors are from Switzerland."

Dunster

More tourism success with Dunster having recently been awarded 'Walkers are Welcome' status.

This innovative community-led scheme of 45 towns and villages across the country has set new standards.

The scheme ensures each participating village or town has gone that 'extra mile' to make walkers welcome. Dunster's reputation for visitors to enjoy the splendid walks around the village is well known.

What the local businesses have done is work together with the Crown Estate, Exmoor National Park Authority and West Somerset Council to provide a host of amenities for walkers.

Gaining accreditation was the brainchild of Antony Brunt, owner of the Yarn Market Hotel, and Cliff Nicholson of Spears Cross set the ball rolling as the initial project of the Dunster Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

Antony commented: "We have worked in conjunction with the local authorities and they have all been very supportive.

"We are lucky that both the Crown Estate and National Park Authority have excellent way-marking for their paths. The opening of the Tall Trees Trail, as an all accessible path is a splendid way forward.

"The opportunity for using public transport across Exmoor is good and the Moor Rover pick up scheme really is unique".

Last year AtWest took on the MoorRover demand responsive leisure transport service with support from the Exmoor National Park Sustainable Development Fund and the number of passengers has increased.

The service was extended into October this year and has therefore been able to assist with the popular autumn events including the Exmoor Food Festival, North Devon and Exmoor Walking Festival and the Dartmoor and Exmoor Low Carbon Festival.

Car free, care free

Exploremoor, the website and transport guide (www.exploremoor.co.uk) developed earlier this year, which makes getting around Exmoor without a car much easier, received more than 3,000 hits in the first couple of months of operation.

The website provides a one stop shop offering inspiration, ideas and information for a car free, care free Exmoor.

As well as an interactive transport map detailing all bus routes within the area, the site features a series of car-free walks with downloadable route guides and GPX files for GPS users, alongside a range of car free itineraries and links to local attractions, accommodation and food and drink establishments accessible by public transport.

The website was developed in-house by Exmoor National Park Authority with funding support from the West Somerset Strategic Partnership.

It complements the transport guide jointly produced by the National Park Authority and Devon and Somerset County Councils providing a comprehensive collection of timetables for all public transport services within the National Park, either side of the county boundary.

Exmoor 2011

The 2011 visitor guide is being managed by an experienced team from the Exmoor Tourism Partnership, which includes 'hands-on' industry professionals.



The garden of The Old Rectory Hotel, Martinhoe, winner of the Travellers' Choice Award 2010

With specially commissioned light, bright summery photos and refreshing editorial, Exmoor 2011 will build on the success of Exmoor 2010. Costs for advertising have been held at 2010 prices.

Caremoor

Funding worth over £25,000 has been raised through CareMoor for Exmoor, the Exmoor National Park conservation and access fund.

A further donation of £300 has come via West Holcombe farm cottages, where proprietors Peter and Irene Larcombe ask guests to donate to the scheme in lieu of a separate energy charge. In total they have raised nearly £3,000 for the scheme.

Since being launched four years ago, hundreds of individuals, businesses, event organisers and communities have contributed to the scheme, providing funding for a range of conservation and access related projects within the National Park which would otherwise not be possible.

The scheme has already supported volunteer archaeology work, accessibility information and a new

footbridge and has now been able to commit funds to a further suite of projects.

These include an intensive survey programme to eradicate invasive Japanese knotweed from the National Park, work to conserve habitats for the rare and threatened fritillary butterflies, providing equipment and training for conservation volunteers and a programme of events providing opportunities to explore the National Park for disadvantaged communities (with all-ability equipment provided for less able people).

Collection boxes made of Exmoor wood have been produced by the Local Woodshop in Minehead (formerly known as Truce). The boxes will also hold copies of the new Exmoor Pocket Guide which visitors will be able to pick up and make a donation to CareMoor.

Anyone interested in donating can find details online at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/caremoor.

New and existing supporters wanting to help shape the scheme in the future or who would like to host a collection box are encouraged to contact Dan James on 01398 322234 or caremoor@exmoor-national-park.gov.uk.



Expert bolver and National Park Ranger Richard Eales listens for a reply from a stag on his deer rut walk in October which was filmed by BBC Spotlight (presenter Philip Loat is carrying the tripod). Photo: Pete Rae/ENPA





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Busy show season for the Authority



Summer shows such as Exford, Dunster and Brendon are an important part of life on Exmoor, and the National Park Authority was there to talk to local people and visitors.

As well as sponsoring livestock classes for Exmoor ponies at Exford Show and Exmoor Horn Sheep at Dunster, we invited people to take part in the "Exmoor Gate Challenge" to see how quickly they could assemble a gate kit produced from local wood by our Field Services Team (pictured left).

The fastest time recorded was a lightning quick 1 minute 53 seconds!

Inside the marquee we had a picture quiz where people could test their knowledge of Exmoor by identifying photos of different places in the National Park.

For those locals who found this too easy we had a special "experts" version which could be brought out to test even the most knowledgeable.

Interpretation Manager Ben



Part of the National Park stand at the North Devon Show

Totterdell said: "Attending and supporting the shows is important for the National Park Authority because both local people and visitors can pop by

and talk to us. "Landowners and local residents can come in and discuss public rights of way, conservation or planning matters and we

can provide visitors with a range of information such as our new Pocket Guide or the Exmoor Visitor magazine."

Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership Scheme underway

THE Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership Scheme, which has secured £500,000 of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help people look after, enjoy and learn about the beautiful moorland of Exmoor, is set to start in January 2011.

The scheme has been developed by a partnership of twelve organisations: Active Exmoor, English Heritage, Environment Agency, Exmoor Society, Exmoor Trust, Field Studies Council, The National Trust, National Farmers Union Natural England, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and West Somerset Community College - with Exmoor National Park Authority acting as Lead Partner.

There will be three programmes in the scheme.

There are eight projects in the first programme which are all about helping more people to access, understand and enjoy Exmoor's moorlands.

The partnership hopes that this will also demonstrate how valued these areas are and so help justify increased support for those who manage these areas.

The projects cover such things as creating new links with surrounding communities, improving access particularly for people with disabilities, and providing more opportunities for schools, colleges and volunteers to be involved in visiting, studying and recording the history and wildlife of moorlands.

Through the second programme there is funding to employ three local people to act as part-time 'moorkeepers', to help moorland managers work together, provide moorland apprenticeships for three local young people and a training programme, and to run a programme of moorland management demonstration events.

The third programme provides funding to enable moorland managers to tackle eyesores and other problems, to fund conservation work at moorland archaeological sites, and to help Exmoor pony owners and support this iconic native breed.

The whole scheme will bring over £800,000 to Exmoor. Most of the money will come from the Heritage Lottery Fund which is contributing £500,000 (58%). £106,000 (12%) has been secured from the Leader 4 Torridge and North Devon Action Groups and the Western Somerset Local Action Group funded by Defra and the European Commission through the Rural Development Programme for England.

The National Park Authority is contributing £125,000 (15%), the Exmoor Sustainable Development Fund £55,000 (6%), the Exmoor Society £42,000 (5%) English Heritage £11,000, the Exmoor Trust and the Environment Agency £10,000 each and the Malcolm MacEwen Trust £3,000.

Nerys Watts, head of HLF South West, said: "Few people realise that every lottery ticket has the potential to save the UK's landscapes, countryside and creatures.

"HLF is pleased to recognise the importance of the moorlands and their impact and relevance to the local Exmoor communities."

The search is now on to appoint someone to manage the whole scheme and they will be supported by a Moorland Education Officer and a part-time Moorland Heritage Officer. There is also funding to employ some-

one part-time to promote Exmoor ponies.

Commenting on the scheme, Dr Graham Wills, Head of Conservation and Land Management at Exmoor National Park Authority, said: "Over the past few years the partners have put an enormous amount of work into developing ways to raise awareness of the importance of Exmoor's moorlands and to help tackle some of the challenges they face.

"Presenting these ideas in ways that will attract much-needed funding into the Exmoor economy in the current economic climate has been quite a challenge.

"We are very grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the other funding partners for their generous contributions and all the partners are really looking forward to getting the whole scheme underway."

PLEASE DO NOT FEED
the Exmoor Ponies grazing out on open moorland

People are feeding titbits to our ponies. This can make ponies bold and aggressive. It leads to kicking, bullying and biting within the herd and humans could get hurt.

PLEASE - if you see anyone feeding these ponies ask them not to and explain why.

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk