



EXMOOR
NATIONAL PARK

May 2013

Historic Environment Review



Enhancing
the qualities that make
Exmoor
special

Articles in the Historic Environment Review reflect a wide range of projects and work programmes that have been carried out during 2012. These partnerships include The Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership Scheme which has four projects focused on the historic environment - Treeless Forest, Conserving the Moorland Past, Discover Prehistory, Views of the Moor. The Exmoor Mires Project also has a dedicated strand of work delivering one of the project's key objectives, which is 'to better understand and protect the historic environment'. At the heart of all of this is the new Partnership Plan for Exmoor National Park (2012-17) which has an ambitious programme to protect and understand Exmoor's historic environment under the oversight of a newly established Historic Environment Advisory Panel.

Historic Environment Team Staff Changes

In October 2011 Faye Glover left us to take up a post at Wiltshire County Council and in May 2012 we were also sorry to say goodbye to Jessica Turner who left to take up the post of Historic Environment Officer at the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Sue Parkman, an honorary member of the HE team, also left ENPA in 2012. Following organisational changes we have been able to recruit two new historic environment posts: Shirley Blaylock joins us from the National Trust, and Catherine Dove has moved down from Leicestershire County Council.

Air Photography

The annual Exmoor Air Photography Programme was completed in spring 2012. English Heritage's Damian Grady carried out sorties on a number of scheduled monuments at risk as well as other sites where management has recently taken place.



Nutscale- the deserted farmstead and ridge and furrow under light snow
(©English Heritage 27412 016)



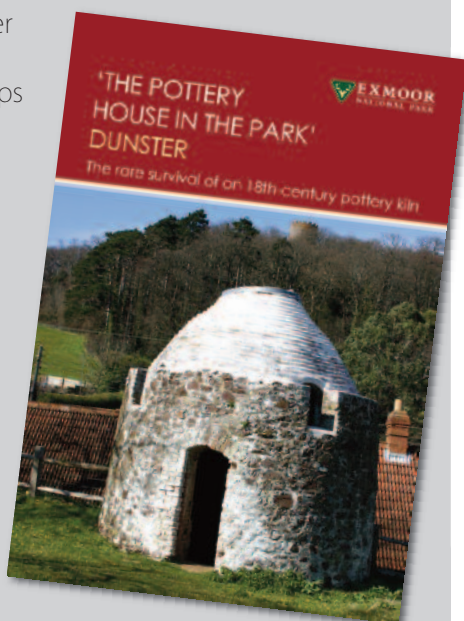
December 2012 Flood

On December 23rd, Exmoor experienced its worst flooding in recent years. A number of bridges have been badly affected. Tarr Steps was severely damaged, many of the clapper stones were displaced and one, weighing as much as 2 tonnes, was carried 20 metres downstream. The packhorse Bridge adjacent to Vicarage Bridge in Winsford,

was undermined by the river and was in danger of imminent collapse. Works to stabilise and repair these structures were completed in February 2013, but it seems likely that further problems will emerge with bridges and other historic structures as a result of this flood event.

'The Pottery House In The Park'

Tucked behind the Exmoor National Park Centre and the Luttrell Arms, off Dunster's High Street, stands an enigmatic conical building which was once little noticed, being used as a garden shed for over 150 years. It is in fact a former pottery kiln dating from about 1759, and is one of the earliest such kilns to survive. The Kiln's fascinating story and design is explored in a new leaflet written by David Dawson and Oliver Kent (published by Exmoor National Park 2012). Although clearly producing a range of functional earthenware vessels, the kiln may not have been solely functional in intent. It was commissioned by Henry Fowles Luttrell of Dunster Castle as 'the pottery house in the park' perhaps as a living and dramatic point of interest in the fashionable parkland setting he was creating for the castle. Recent structural cracks in the kiln are giving concern and consolidation work, with grant aid from English Heritage, is planned for May and June 2013, with the aim of extending the life of one of Dunster's hidden treasures.



Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record Website

We're now all set to launch the website in summer 2013. Look out for news on the main website www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk, where it will be housed under 'Exmoor's Past'. Here you will be able to search the records held for archaeological and historic sites and buildings across Exmoor as well as access articles on subjects ranging from the Romans on Exmoor to fishweirs and other resources. We are always working to improve our records; if you have any information to give please contact the HER.

Exmoor Archaeology Forum

Over 150 people attended the 11th Exmoor Archaeology Forum which took place in May 2012 and focused on Exmoor's Coastal Landscapes. Subjects included the formation of the Bristol Channel, Hunter-Gatherer landscapes, Archaeological Recording on Porlock Beach, Designed Landscapes along Exmoor's coastline, The Hidden Edge of Exmoor and the Italianate Landscape at Ashley Combe.

Favourite Walks:

Simonsbath, Barle Valley and Cow Castle

This walk takes you through part of the beautiful Barle valley and 19th century industrial remains to the dramatically positioned Cow Castle, one of a number of presumed Iron Age defended sites on the river Barle, returning on higher ground.

From the Ashcombe Car Park at Simonsbath, turn right down the road and cross at the right hand bend taking the route of the Two Moors Way through Birch Cleeve Wood to the curiously named hillock of Flexbarrow. Look out for the remains of Wheal Eliza a mid 19th century copper and iron mine, you can still see the earthworks of the shafts and leat system as well as the low remains of several buildings. Horrifiably, the body of a young girl murdered by her father was hidden in an abandoned shaft in 1858; her grave is now commemorated in Simonsbath churchyard. Follow the path along the river and gradually the Iron Age rampart of Cow Castle will be visible before you on a prominent knoll. After exploring the hillfort, cross the small footbridge over White Water (don't cross the bridge at Horsen Ford) before passing through the conifer plantation. Stay on the Two Moors Way and pass through two more gates. Back in the open moorland the path forks, take the left fork following the former boundary of the Royal Forest and parish boundary on your left, straight uphill to meet another bridleway at a crossroads. Here turn left, back towards the west and Simonsbath, passing south of Pickedstones Farm. Crossing the valley stream at White Water Combe note the remains of Picked Stones Mine, an Iron Mine opened in 1857. Follow the bridleway past Winstitchen Farm back to Birch Cleeve Wood and Simonsbath.

This walk is the first to be produced in a series of archaeological walk cards developed by the Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership Scheme with the help of professional student placements.



Exmoor Mires Project

What is the Exmoor Mires Project?

The Exmoor Mires Project (EMP) aims to restore the peat bogs of Exmoor to a healthy condition. During the 19th century drains were cut to improve agricultural productivity. In Exmoor's surviving areas of peat moorland, these efforts were unsuccessful but the ditches continue to slowly dry out and degrade the peat; this process affects the water supply as well as the environment. Retaining water in Exmoor's peat bogs will help reduce the risks of flooding downriver during periods of high rainfall as well as reducing the costs of pumping water during dry periods. Peat mires are rare habitats and home to many scarce species of flora and fauna. Peat also contains large amounts of carbon which, as the peat degrades, is released into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide, contributing to global warming.



Mire restoration underway, March 2012. (Photo: Exmoor Mires Project).



Pinkery Pond dam, April 2012

Primum non nocere: 'first, do no harm'. Mire Restoration and the Historic Environment

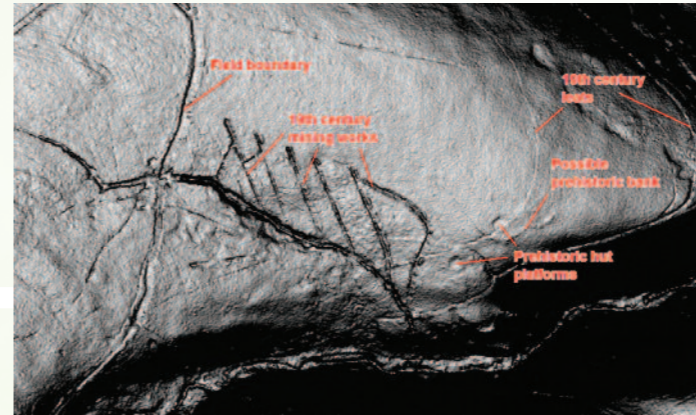
Mire restoration is also beneficial to the heritage of the moorlands: it maintains the preservative qualities of waterlogged peat, and this ensures that organic material within it can survive. This organic material may include fragments of plants and animals that lived in or around the bogs, but it can also include rare artefacts deposited or lost by people in the past. Together these remains give a unique insight into Exmoor's early inhabitants.

The work of restoration is a tricky business. Ditch blocking involves the use of heavy machinery which can easily damage fragile archaeological features, whilst increasing wetness in some areas has the potential to shift the pattern of livestock and human traffic to other areas resulting in erosion. The Exmoor Mires Project has much in common with the medical profession in its response to this issue as its guiding principle in approaching mire restoration, in common with medical ethics, is *primum non nocere* or 'first do no harm.' One of the project's objectives is the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and, as a result the project's team includes a Historic Environment Officer (HEO).

The Story So Far

Since October 2011 a whole range of archaeological techniques have been used to better understand and to protect Exmoor's historic environment on the peatlands. Perhaps the simplest of these is a walkover survey; an archaeologist walking over the restoration site with the objective of identifying and recording unknown archaeological features. Work of this sort has been undertaken over large areas of the former Royal Forest and has detected a range of previously unrecognized archaeology. On Deer Park and Spooners to the south and east of Simonsbath the activities of Victorian iron miners have been mapped, whilst more ancient remains of previously unknown prehistoric settlement and standing stones have also been identified on both Deer Park, the Chains and most recently on Lanacombe.

Detailed measured survey has also been used to record sensitive areas, most notably around Pinkery Pond on the western end of the Chains (bottom left). This enigmatic



LiDAR image showing an area on Deer Park to the south of Simonsbath showing some of the visible archaeological features.

Exmoor landmark was constructed in the early 19th century by damming the headwaters of the River Barle, though its purpose has been a matter of debate ever since! The Pond was built by John Knight who had purchased the Royal Forest with the intention of creating a profitable estate. The survey suggests that the Pond may be linked to an ambition to provide water power perhaps to run the latest agricultural machinery of the day.

Cutting edge technology has been applied in the form of LiDAR survey (**L**ight **D**etection **A**nd **R**anging) which has proved invaluable in identifying subtle features from the air. This technique involves firing laser pulses from an aircraft flying over the survey area and measuring the time taken for the reflected light to bounce off the ground surface and return to a sensor. The result is a high definition textured picture of the ground surface. A survey of all Exmoor's moorlands has been undertaken and its results now form an invaluable tool which is in daily use by the project team (above).

Geophysical survey uses sophisticated instruments to measure variation in the magnetism and electrical conductivity of the subsoil and enables the identification of archaeological features through the soil and vegetation cover. Five geophysical surveys have been undertaken so far, ranging in size from a few hundred square metres to over 10 hectares. The results have been stunning, having revealed a wealth of previously unknown archaeological detail. Although it is often difficult to date features revealed by geophysics, much of what has been detected is most likely to be prehistoric in date and includes burial features, hearths, hut circles, and field systems. More significantly, many of these features are likely to be broadly contemporaneous, forming fragments of prehistoric landscapes composed of domestic, agricultural and ritual elements. Such survivals are very rare on a national scale, so discovering new examples or expanding known ones is of exceptional archaeological importance.

It may seem strange to think of people living and farming on the high moors, but in the past the environment was very different, as investigation by the Exmoor Mires Project demonstrates. This type of research, known as palaeoecology, uses sophisticated techniques to sample and analyse peat cores. The layers of partially decayed plant material forming the peat, built up over time, contain the preserved remains of pollen, plants and animals, such as insects, that lived and died in the bog at the time the layer was deposited. Analysis tells us much about local climate change and yields valuable information on how the vegetation in and around the bog changed through time, sometimes influenced by human activity. So far, the focus has been on learning more about the archaeologically recent past, the last 1000 years, but future work will examine earlier periods, in conjunction with evidence from geophysical survey.



Sampling a peat sequence on Ricksy Ball, July 2012.

The Exmoor Mires Project is a multi-disciplinary endeavour with multiple objectives. Its ecological and archaeological aims in particular are well integrated and working towards a uniquely synergistic relationship which is very much conservation with a capital 'C'. From the perspective of the historic environment, the project's work is far from complete and the task of collating, assessing and interpreting its results has barely begun. Even so, it is no exaggeration to say that the Exmoor Mires Project will have a fundamental effect on our knowledge and understanding of Exmoor's past.

The Exmoor Mires Project (EMP) is funded by South West Water, in partnership with Exmoor National Park, the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage

Geophysical survey underway on Lanacombe, February 2013.



The following projects have been delivered with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund through Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership Scheme working with staff from Exmoor National Park and other partners.



Hawkcombe Head excavation and open day

In May, children from Dulverton Middle School joined archaeologists from the University of Bristol in an archaeological excavation, as part of the Hawkcombe Head landscape project which has taken place at this site above Porlock since 2002. Pupils examined flint tools found during this year's excavation and learned about the hunter-gatherer peoples who left these remains in the Mesolithic period, about 8,000 years ago. Students gained an understanding of the role of archaeologists, joining the university team in surveying, recording and excavation and adding to the hundreds of flint tools recovered from the site. An open day also allowed members of the public to look at finds and question the excavation team about their discoveries. Many thanks to Dr Paula Gardiner and the University of Bristol students for enabling this.

Mesolithic day

Children from Porlock and Exford schools have been learning about the hunter-gatherer communities of the Mesolithic (8000-4000 B.C) and the traces they left behind in this part of the South-West. They have participated in a practical day of shelter building, fire lighting and flint knapping led by Faye Balmond, Moorland Heritage Officer, with staff from Exmoor National Park, National Trust and Antony Whitlock, a flint knapper from Exeter University. Teachers from both schools said how valuable these experiences were for the children, allowing them to get closer to understanding the lives of people in the past in a way that is difficult to achieve in the classroom.



Big Adventure Days – Valley of Rocks and North Hill

A number of 'Big Adventure Days' have taken place throughout 2012. The Valley of Rocks and North Hill Big Adventure Days took place within the settings of archaeological landscapes, providing a perfect opportunity for people to learn more about these amazing places. Visitors to Valley of Rocks were able to find out about the Bronze Age farmers who have left their mark on the valley, while trying their hand at making clay pots using Bronze Age techniques. The focus of North Hill Big Adventure was undoubtedly World War II, with the radar station providing an ideal setting for visitors to stop for a cup of tea, sample WWII cake recipes and find out about the extensive tank training grounds still visible today.



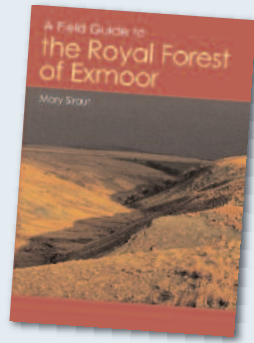
The Big Adventure Days are hosted by Exmoor National Park with Heritage Lottery funding through Heart of Exmoor, and other partners including The Crown Estate, South West Lakes Trust, Countryside Mobility and The National Trust. Big Adventure Days will be taking place during 2013.

Student placements

A number of successful student placements have been undertaken this year. During the spring Gwynne Pearce (University of Exeter) completed a condition survey of standing stones on Exmoor National Park land. Emma Slater (University of Bristol), undertook a similar condition survey of standing stones on land owned by Badgworthy Land Company during the summer. The results of these surveys will be used by the Historic Environment team to monitor the state of these monuments and suggest where consolidation work may be needed. Janette Henderson (University of Bristol) helped to produce two walk route cards enabling visitors to appreciate some of Exmoor's fascinating archaeological landscapes. These will be published in 2013 and will be available from National Park Information Centres. Peter Bonvoisin has completed a survey of the boundary of the Royal Forest of Exmoor, describing the form of the surviving boundary on the line established in 1818 at its sale to the Knight family.

Field Guide

Following on from the success of the The Field Guide to Exmoor's Early Iron Industry, a field guide to Exmoor's Royal Forest has been produced. Written by Mary Siraut, the short booklet brings together current knowledge and understanding of the Royal Forest of Exmoor, charting its history as a medieval hunting forest to its transformation during the 19th century by the creation of roads, settlements and farms to become the landscape we recognise today. The field guide is produced in an easily accessible format and highlights key sites for the visitor.



DIG Porlock 2013

From hunter-gatherer campsites to WWII training grounds, the moorlands around Porlock contain a wealth of archaeological evidence, left by the people who have used this landscape over the last 8,000 years. DIG Porlock is a community project which will investigate the origins of Porlock Parish by archaeological fieldwork, excavation and research. Members of the local community will be joined by archaeologists from Exmoor National Park

To find out more, to get involved and to follow what has been discovered, contact Porlock Visitor Centre, National Park information centres or Faye Balmond.

Loan Boxes

A fascinating educational resource now exists which will enable a very 'hands-on' approach to finding out about Exmoor's prehistoric past. These loan boxes are available to schools and community groups, free-of-charge. Each box holds replica objects; in the Mesolithic box are items such as flint tools and deer skins, while the Bronze Age box contains beads, Bronze Axe heads and pottery amongst other items. Each box comes with activity suggestions and guidance material for teachers and can be used alongside the newly developed 'Moorland Classroom online resources' www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/the-moorland-classroom.

To borrow a loan box or to find out more about how you could make use of one contact the Historic Environment Team.



Holworthy Pot

In 2003, archaeologists from the North Devon Archaeological Society uncovered the rim of a Bronze Age pot during excavation of a roundhouse near Holworthy Farm at Parracombe. The sherds of the pot were lifted and conserved at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon. The clay pot has a distinctive slashed decoration, which archaeologists call 'Trevisker' ware after the place in Cornwall where this style was first recognised. This particular vessel can be dated confidently to the middle of the Bronze Age, around 3,500 years ago. With funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, through the Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership scheme, 2012 provided an exciting opportunity for making a new one from materials available on Exmoor and by methods as close to the ones that Bronze Age potters would have used. Joss Hibbs, a potter who lives and works at Powdermills on Dartmoor, worked closely with Terry Green who excavated the site near Parracombe where the pot was found, and from drawings supplied by Henrietta Quinnell, to develop her ideas of how the pot would be made and how it would be decorated.



Photo © Chris Chapman

The completed pot has provided the opportunity to reflect on the challenges associated with it, and therefore the challenges that Bronze Age potters faced: sourcing reliable raw materials, mixing them, the skilful process of working the clay into the desired shape, the design and application of the decoration, and of course, most nerve-racking of all: the firing of the pot. Although often found in funerary contexts, it is thought that Trevisker pots like this one would have been used for the storage or cooking of food. By creating this replica, Joss has illustrated challenges that may not have been considered, but would have been faced in the manufacture of objects such as pots in the Bronze Age. The finished pot will form part of an exhibition, looking at 'Views of Exmoor' in Barnstaple and North Devon Museum 14th September - 12th October 2013.

Exmoor's Conservation Areas

A programme to update the appraisals for the Park's Conservation Areas is now underway. The work is being carried out by Historic Building Officer, Nigel Pratt, who is currently on secondment from Taunton Deane Borough Council. All of the 16 Conservation Areas in the National Park are to be visited and the features that give each one its special character and interest will be assessed. Changes, both positive and negative, since the last appraisal programme in the early 2000s will also be recorded and, where applicable, potential improvements noted.



In 2012 a total of 7 Conservation Areas were surveyed: Allerford, Bossington, Luccombe, Parracombe, Porlock, Porlock Weir and Selworthy. Initial results suggest that there has been no significant degradation in the special quality of these Areas but following the visits a number of boundary changes are proposed. Community input is an important part of the appraisal process and the potential boundary changes, along with the draft appraisal documents for all the Conservation Areas, are due to go out to public consultation during 2013.

The 16th Century doorway to Chantry Cottage, Porlock

Coming up:

The following list is a selection of events occurring throughout 2013. For more information on these events and to find out about events run by a variety of other organisations see:

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/visiting/events

May 9

Simonsbath Festival guided walk From Bronze Age Farmers to Victorian Iron Miners: The archaeology of Deer Park 2:00 - 4.30

May 11-12

Simonsbath Sawmill open for National Mills Weekend 10.00 - 4.00

May 23

Guided walk on the archaeology of the Hoar Oak Valley 11.00 - 3pm

June 6

Guided walk: Prehistoric Exmoor: Into Ilkerton, by way of Warcombe Water and finally Furzehill 11.00 - 3.30

June 8

Exmoor Mires - A Big Bog Adventure for all Ages 11.00 - 3.00

August 28

From Mesolithic to World War II: an archaeological walk around Larkbarrow 11.00 - 2.00

August 31

North Hill Big Adventure Day, family games and events with vintage vehicles and living history displays 10.00 - 4.00

September 21

Archaeology Forum on the Archaeology of Exmoor's Moorlands, Porlock Village Hall (Booking essential)

Front cover:

Selworthy by Nigel Pratt

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