



EXMOOR
NATIONAL PARK

March 2016

Historic Environment Review



Aerial Photography of the foreshore
As part of our long term collaboration of aerial survey with Historic England and our current Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Survey, a series of outstanding images were taken along the foreshore during low summer tides recording many of our coastal sites.

Welcome to our review of archaeological and other historic environment work undertaken in Exmoor National Park in 2015. This year has seen a number of changes in our own team but as you will see from the contributions in the following pages much has been achieved especially by groups and other individuals working across the National Park.

Historic Environment Staff changes

In May we said farewell to Dr Lee Bray who has taken up the position of archaeologist for Dartmoor National Park. Lee was Exmoor Mires Project Historic Environment Officer from 2011. He was not new to Exmoor then, having completed his doctoral thesis on the early iron industry of Exmoor in 2008 as well as previously working for the National Park and locally in commercial archaeology.

Sophie Thorogood was with us for 2 years on short term contracts which finished in November. Sophie as Assistant Historic Environment Record Officer worked on the Exmoor Mires Project archive and our coastal survey and audit work amongst other projects as well as recently providing maternity cover.

December 2015 saw the conclusion of the Exmoor

Moorland Landscapes Partnership Scheme project Heart of Exmoor. At the same time therefore we also had to say goodbye to Faye Balmond who has been the Moorland Heritage Officer for the project since its inception in 2010.

We will miss our colleagues hugely who all gave so much to furthering and recording Exmoor's archaeology but intend to retain strong links with all of them in the new directions their careers take.

Good news is the appointment of Dr Rose Ferraby in November to the post of Historic Environment Officer for the next three year phase of the Exmoor Mires Partnership.

We were also delighted to have the happy arrivals of a baby girl to Catherine Dove and baby boy to Faye Balmond both in April 2015.

Scheduled Monuments Condition Survey

Every five years a survey to assess the condition of all the Scheduled Monuments within the National Park is undertaken to identify emerging problems and allocate resources effectively. Our thanks go



to the overwhelming support of landowners in allowing our survey, by archaeological contractors *Archaeodia*, to take place on their land in 2015 and for now working to address issues. Problems can affect any sites whether owned by the National Park or private landowners. Where needed the National Park aims to work with owners and other partners such as Historic England and Natural England to help maintain and protect them.

The sites range from a single site such as a hillfort or pillbox to groups of barrows on the high moorland. The survey showed that of the 200 Scheduled Monuments in Exmoor National Park around three quarters have no serious problems with about 18% of sites requiring more active management to bring them into good condition.

Our 4000 year old standing stones and stone settings are often very small, sometimes in remote locations and extremely vulnerable to vehicle damage, stock rubbing and erosion and five such sites were found to have suffered damage in the survey. Prehistoric barrows and cairns form the distinctive skyline of Exmoor's moorland ridges and are

vulnerable to visitor activities from footpath erosion to stone rearrangement, although only six percent of sites were found to be significantly affected with the honeypot sites on the Dunkery ridge amongst them. About 6 % of sites have suffered significant damage from livestock.

Vegetation encroachment constitutes by far the most prevalent threat and many sites require regular vegetation management with bracken, gorse and scrub prone to regenerate once cleared especially where grazing cannot be established. The sites affected include Iron Age hillforts and enclosures, medieval settlements and earthwork castles. Bracken is a huge problem as it is very difficult to eradicate with the rhizomes causing below ground damage as well as obscuring the sites and 17% of monuments were found to be affected despite a number of these having had previous phases of treatment. Finding a sustainable solution is a challenge.

Scheduled sites include many built structures including medieval crosses and bridges and unusual buildings such as the Dunster pottery kiln. The survey found that while most of these are not currently "at risk" many are deteriorating slowly, although flooding has caused significant damage to bridges in recent years.



Dulverton Weir and Leat Conservation Group

Partnered and supported by ENPA the Dulverton Weir & Leat Conservation Group, in its inaugural year, has added significantly to knowledge and understanding of Dulverton's Medieval Urban Watermill Landscape.

Work carried out by DWLCG includes dendrochronological dating of oak stakes found in the weir structure, discovery in the loft of Dulverton Laundry of the original wheel patterns used to make moulds for the cast iron gearwheels attached to the waterwheel of the building when it functioned as a watermill and identification with old maps and photographs of parts of the weir now lost under vegetation build up.



Dulverton Laundry staff pictured with the wooden casting patterns found in the loft.

Research at the Somerset County Archive has identified other mill buildings previously unrecognised and given leads for further research in 2016. ENPA commissioned an archaeological assessment of the weir structure in 2015 by Hazel Riley and a survey of the leat structure to follow on from this will be carried out by The Post Medieval Archaeological Society in

February 2016. Both of these are essential pre-requisites for the formal recognition of the value of the Dulverton Urban Watermill Landscape and subsequent fundraising for repair and conservation.

Working in partnership with West Somerset Council DWLCG has been able to gain understanding of how the watermill system worked and was controlled, and the technical expertise involved in constructing a leat with a 30 foot head of water capable of driving eight watermills.

This research is making it increasingly clear the extent to which modern Dulverton has been shaped by the foresight and ingenuity shown in what the historian Jean Gimpel identified as the first Industrial Revolution (based on waterpower) which took place in the 11th and 12th centuries. It is also leading to Dulverton's medieval watermill system becoming recognised as a well preserved example of its type.



Hazel Riley recording wooden stakes surviving in the fabric of the weir.

Philip Hull, DWLCG

Exmoor's Ancient Routeways

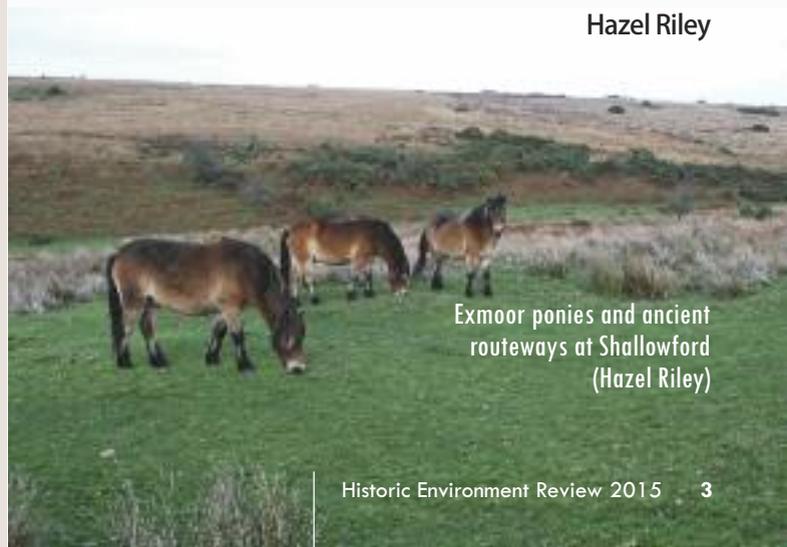
During 2014 and 2015 a major study of the evidence for the origins and development of the routeways which criss-cross the former Royal Forest was undertaken with funding from the Exmoor Mires Project. The routeways were used in the later medieval and post-medieval periods by travellers on horseback and packhorse carriers and they developed into a network of tracks and hollow ways which are now preserved as striking features in Exmoor's landscape.



One of the most important findings to emerge from this study is the existence of a set of packhorse gear – wooden packsaddles, dung pots and long and short crooks for carrying loads of wood, corn, hay and straw - from an Exmoor farm. Dr Paul Quick Karkeek, President of the Torquay Natural History Society in the 1890s, presented the society with this exceptionally rare group of packhorse equipment. We don't know where the gear was found, but it seems to come from a farm and was used for day to day agricultural tasks, rather than from a long distance carrier.

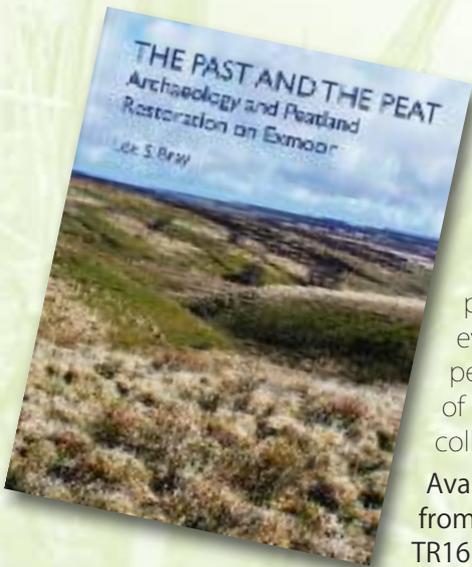
Documentary research and the analysis of the context of the routeways within Exmoor's historic landscape were important strands within this project. Exmoor Forest has been used for summer pasture for hundreds of years, with a law suit from 1617 stating that the forest was a large ground, many thousands of acres in area, and used for the pasture of great numbers of sheep, cattle and horses since 'time out of mind.' The distribution of routeways around Exmoor echoes this movement of animals and people up onto particular places on Exmoor for many hundreds of years. The routes up onto the Royal Forest and then into the heart of the grazing areas must have been made by generations of North Devon and West Somerset stockmen and their beasts.

Hazel Riley



Exmoor ponies and ancient routeways at Shallowford (Hazel Riley)

Exmoor Mires Partnership



The Past and the Peat

A new book has been launched that celebrates work on the historic environment associated with the restoration of Exmoor's upland peat landscapes. The Past and the Peat was written by Dr Lee Bray to describe the methods and results of his work as Historic Environment Officer for the Exmoor Mires Project between 2010 and 2015. The book explores the development of methodologies for working on the restoration of peatlands, as well as examining a number of case study sites in detail. These include the prehistoric landscapes of Lanacombe and Wintershead, the palae- and geoarchaeological evidence for changing environments, and the effects of processes such as mining and peat cutting. But perhaps what is most exciting, is that this publication reflects the wealth of potential new knowledge and understandings that can be gained by working in close collaboration with mire restoration projects, ecologists and peatland conservation.

Available for £10 from Exmoor National Park Centres and by post, email and telephone from: Tor Mark book distributors, United Downs Industrial Estate, St. Day, Redruth, Cornwall. TR16 5HY. Tel: 01209 822101. Email: office@tormark.co.uk

New Phase 2015-2020

The Exmoor Mires Project is continuing in a new phase which runs up until 2020. This has been renamed the Exmoor Mires Partnership.



Exmoor ponies on Codsend

The Mires 2015-2020 plan is to restore approximately 650 hectares of peatland around Exmoor, continuing to use the technique of ditch-blocking. In previous years, the project has targeted large areas of peatland, resulting in the rich collection of data at sites such as Lanacombe, Spooners and Larkbarrow/Kittuck Meads. The next phase of the project will begin to concentrate on smaller sites. One of the real strengths of this work is that sites are chosen with reference to restoring the peatland, and as a result, the archaeology is studied on areas that are often overlooked. The project is therefore bringing to light many unexpected aspects of Exmoor's archaeology, and revealing some of the varied narratives of its past. In terms of the historic environment, the new phase of the project will continue to mitigate

possible damage to archaeology, as well as developing research strands and case studies to enhance knowledge.

The palaeoenvironmental work continues on investigating the pre-peat soils and peat formation processes, as the results of analysis of samples taken at Lanacombe, Wintershead and Spooners begin to come back. This strand of research will continue with investigations in collaboration with Historic England at Codsend, where a complex archaeological record suggests fertile ground for research of Exmoor's landscape from the 3rd millennium BC to the present. The palaeoecological evidence will be used to build on the narratives presented by its archaeological features: prehistoric relict field systems and enclosures, Bronze Age cairns and standing stones.



A prehistoric field system and enclosure revealed in the snow crossed by 19th century hedgebanks and drainage ditches. © Historic England 27418_012

Building Recording in West Somerset and Exmoor

Launched by the "Dig Porlock Village" project in 2014, work with the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society Building Research Group (West Somerset and Exmoor) has been studying the pattern of vernacular buildings in the area. Most activity has been in Porlock where surveys have been carried out and reports prepared on 6 buildings with another 6 in the pipeline. It is hoped to extend this base as far as possible in order to publish a summary of the historical buildings of the area.

Among those so far recorded are the Chantry and Doverhay Court both with fabric evidence of the late 1400s and the remains of medieval roof structures with jointed cruck frames in both of them. The other building of similar age so far identified is "Ye Olde Cottage".



The water-colour picture of the chantry window is by Clare Maryan Green.

Although very small, this also has remains of a jointed cruck truss and ridge purlin with heavy smoke blackening in the roof space. This building, according to the historian Chadwyck-Healey (*A History of the part of West Somerset comprising Luccombe, Selworthy, Stoke Pero, Porlock,*

Culbone and Oare, 1901, London) is understood to stand on the former Chantry lands together with Dover Court and the associated fields when this was farmed. The family name at "Ye Olde Cottage" for the early 19th century has been verified by the tithe apportionments of 1841 and further information on occupations and farming in the Doverhay area has been identified from census records.

Doverhay Manor itself is a complex building and accounts have previously been presented through Chadwyck-Healey as above and more recently through an archaeological watching brief. The major restoration in the late 19th century was undertaken by Chadwyck-Healey himself and with the help of the renowned Edmund Buckle, ancient features found in the dilapidated building were drawn up and described. However at that time, the main block was



thought to be earlier and the "snooker Room" to be a later wing. This theory has been discounted by the recent archaeological work which proved the southern wing to be of an earlier date.

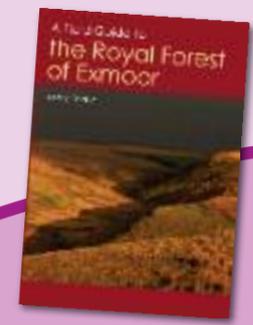
Apart from Porlock and recording work in Milverton in conjunction with the History Group there, we have also looked at two buildings in Dunster, one in West Street being of particular interest. From earlier recordings of the 1970s and 1980s, it is known that there are extensive medieval remains of buildings behind the frontages in Dunster. Some like the West Street house have true cruck frames which from dendro-dating of other samples across Somerset have been found to cover dates between 1278 and 1386 while jointed crucks lie within a date range of late 14th century to early 16th century. This particular house has one true cruck with a number of jointed cruck trusses with smoke blackened wattle and daub infill. Comparison with 2 other buildings in this particular row suggest that further investigation would be fruitful with the possibility of a planned row of medieval housing and/ or workshops.

Work so far in both Porlock and Dunster has been very rewarding and it is hoped to extend our understanding of development through the support of local people coming forward with buildings for us to look at. Our thanks to all who have already assisted in this way as well as the many local people who have undertaken training and have helped with surveys.

Mary Ewing, SANHS

Holworthy Pot ▶

A replica was made of the middle Bronze Age pot excavated at Holworthy Farm near Parracombe by the North Devon Archaeological Society. The replica was made by Joss Hibbs of Powdermills on Dartmoor with advice from Henrietta Quinnell. (Photo by Chris Chapman.)



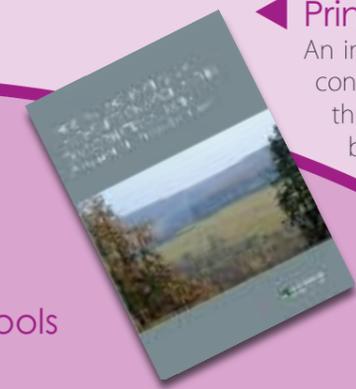
A Field Guide to the Royal Forest of Exmoor ▲

A Field Guide to the Royal Forest of Exmoor was written by Mary Siraut providing a summary history of the Forest with places to visit that illustrate its history.



Loan Boxes for schools ▲

A series of loan boxes was produced for schools and educational groups. These provide exciting resources which bring the prehistoric past to life: from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age. They can be borrowed from the Exmoor Historic Environment Record.



Principal Archaeological Landscapes

An innovative major project to describe and assess the condition of all 37 Principal Archaeological Landscapes on the moorlands was completed. For the first time, the best of Exmoor's moorland archaeology is described in one report.



Views of Exmoor ▲

A series of striking reconstructions were made of life on Exmoor in the past, from 8000 years ago until the 1940s, by Peter Lorimer along with contemporary views of Exmoor's moorland landscape as depicted by local artist Leo Davey.

Views of Exmoor Exhibition ▼

A major exhibition on moorland heritage was staged in the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon.



Making the most of Moorland Heritage



Over the last 5 years The Heart of Exmoor Scheme has delivered, through substantial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a remarkable series of projects to understand, conserve and interpret aspects of Exmoor's moorland heritage. This work came to an end in December 2015 with the departure of Faye Balmond, Moorland Heritage Officer. As the Heart of Exmoor Scheme draws to a close, we thought that this was a good time to look back over some of what has been achieved.

Hawkcombe Head ▶

During the undergrounding of electricity cables at Hawkcombe Head, excavations were carried out on the Mesolithic hunter gatherer site there. Archaeologists identified a Mesolithic occupation area whilst the earliest flint so far recovered from Hawkcombe Head was found by one of the local school children who helped on the site.



Hoarook Cottage

Hoarook Cottage was conserved and the archaeology of the Hoarook Valley was surveyed and analysed, also supported by the Heathcote & Amory Trusts.



Archaeology Walk Cards ▶

A series of Archaeology Walk Cards were written which illustrate the historic landscape on the moorlands. They include Larkbarrow, Badgworthy, Hoarook Valley, Simonsbath. They are available at National Park Centres.



The moorlands during WWII ▼

Pioneering research was carried out into the use of Exmoor by the armed forces during World War Two.



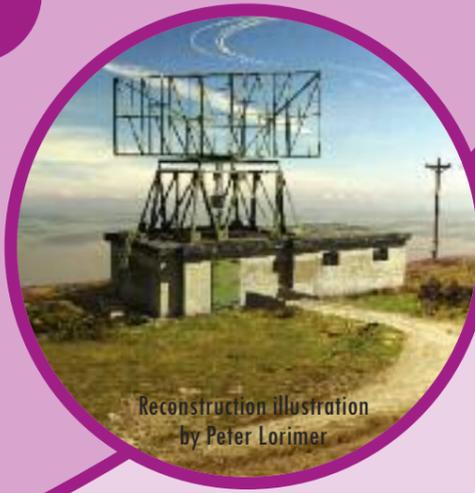
DIG Porlock ▼

A community archaeology project on Porlock Common and Allotment undertook measured survey, geophysical survey, excavation and field walking on sites covering over 7000 years of archaeology. This involved 4 schools (70 children), 5 universities (19 students) and 40 other volunteers.



North Hill Radar Station ▶

This rare survival from WWII – one of Winston Churchill's 'Castles in the Sky' – was researched and conserved.



Reconstruction illustration by Peter Lorimer



Royal Forest Boundary Survey ▲

For the first time the boundary of the Royal Forest of Exmoor was recorded and its condition assessed.

A Research Framework for the Royal Forest of Exmoor

Researchers were brought together to identify the priorities for research into the Royal Forest of Exmoor.



Longstone Landscape Project

The Longstone Landscape Project is named after the Longstone which is the tallest prehistoric standing stone on Exmoor. The two year project began in 2013, combining the interests of Parracombe Archaeology and History Society, North Devon Archaeology Society and local communities in researching an area of moorland on Challacombe.

This landscape contains extensive remains dating from the Neolithic up to the present day. Early monuments include the Chapman Barrows, a linear barrow cemetery; a group of standing stones known as the quincunx and a long enclosure, possibly dating to the Neolithic period. These suggest the importance of this area even before the first Bronze Age barrow builders. More recent earthworks include a deserted farmstead at Radworthy, on the Challacombe side of the Chapman Barrows and a rectangular enclosure at the western side of the research area.

A steering group of representatives was established to agree research themes and to co-ordinate work for a two year period. Field work was supported by documentary research and oral history. Expert advice and funding was provided by the Heart of Exmoor project, ENPA and the Moorland Initiative and more than 40 volunteers have assisted with the work.

Radworthy

The remote deserted settlement and field-system at Radworthy (Challacombe) has been systematically examined in tandem with the documentary record in work led by Terry Green. Probably the earliest record is the Domesday Book of 1086 where, listed among the land of William of Poilley, is the Challacombe Radworthy (there are at least two others in Devon). The area of Radworthy was taxed as one virgate (about 30 acres) including half a virgate in lordship. The mainly naturally enclosed apron of level land at Radworthy, internally divided and amounting to about 35 acres, is a good match for the Domesday virgate, presenting a persuasive argument for its identity.

Results of the boundary survey, undertaken by volunteers, indicate that, apart from a 19th century extension to the west, the Radworthy field system remains as it was recorded on the Tithe Map in 1840 and suggest that it preserves features from a much earlier period. Apart from the very well-built corn ditch on the north side of the enclosure and the major internal division, most of the field boundaries are low earthen balks reminiscent of the landsheds of Branton Great Field. They seem never to have been built up into typical Devon hedge-banks.

The remains of the dwelling house, perched on the edge of the enclosure and abandoned about 1860, have been planned in detail by Hazel Riley supported by volunteers from the project team.

Information on the life of Radworthy's last inhabitants has been provided by Christopher Harris, a descendant now living in the Midlands.

The site is worthy of further investigation and plans to carry out a geophysical survey of selected areas are under consideration for 2016.

Rectangular enclosures.

Two rectangular enclosures have been surveyed. One close to the Longstone is suggested to be a Neolithic Long Enclosure possibly used as part of processes associated with mortuary practice. A highly detailed survey of this enclosure was completed, including the measurement of peat depths and a geophysical survey, (the latter carried out by Doug Mitcham of Leicester University). The enclosure is highly complex and may have several phases.

The second enclosure, at the western end of the Common was also subject to geophysical survey by GSB and analysis of the results suggest that it may have been a telling house: used for counting animals on and off the common to enable charging per head for grazing.



An aerial view of Radworthy © Historic England 2014 (27984_004)

The Barrows

Volunteers have completed detailed plans and condition surveys of six of the Chapman Barrows and the intention is to survey of all the barrows once the wet winter weather has



passed. One of the Chapman Barrows, nick-named Chanter's Barrow, an adjacent mound and a second barrow at the west end of the Common have been the subject of extensive geophysical survey by GSB with impressive results. Chanter's original drawings were confirmed with the existence of a stone kerb and indications that there are at least two phases to the build.

The Reverend J R Chanter who, in 1905, had excavated and published a section through "Chanter's Barrow" is the subject of documentary research and the team have contacted one of his descendants who is searching his family archives for more information.

Quincunx

A geophysical survey of the quincunx on Challacombe Common was carried out in March 2014 by Doug Mitcham, assisted by project members. This arrangement of five standing stones is so named because of its similarity in pattern to a five on a dice. The resistivity survey data was particularly striking, revealing a high resistance v-shaped anomaly to the east of the stone setting, suggestive of a dense concentration of stone.

Stream Head Survey

Fieldwalking was carried out over the entire Longstone Landscape Project area wherever there was exposed peat paying particular attention to spring heads where, elsewhere on Exmoor, there have been prolific finds of flints. However in this study area exposed peat is rare and finds limited to six flints, one of which was a flake, possibly Mesolithic and another a broken scraper, retouched.

Longstone Landscape Group

The Volunteers' Perspective

"We've been fortunate to be able to explore the wonderful moors, often in areas little visited by walkers or even the local community - and when the weather's been kind, the views and the scenery have been well worth the agony of hauling the equipment miles across country, down combe and up barrow!! Finally, when the project comes to an end and the results and information are publicised, I can proudly say "I helped to do that!" - a very satisfying experience indeed."

".....On every survey the atmosphere of the wild moor was enchanting and the wildlife and some of the domesticated life provided company....."

".....I find that a completed survey and drawing gives a sense of satisfaction and enhanced engagement with the landscape."

'We trudged across the moor in swirling cloud, then spent the day working together to survey the barrow - accompanied by the distant call of rutting deer. The company was good, the results were good, the weather was not good. We went home satisfied and feeling much closer to our early ancestors.'

'Wot! No flints!'

"I am so pleased to have been involved in The Longstone Project. This gave me the chance to hear the views of experts about these antiquities and also how to survey them. My own contribution was to bring in such local knowledge as I had....."



Historic Signposts

Our cherished traditional roadside signposts are a distinctive part of the character of our villages, roads and lanes. They survive in Somerset in particular as the County Council didn't replace them with modern standardised signage as recommended by the Worboys Committee in the 1960's. Local parishes are concerned that lack of maintenance now means that many are broken, look shabby or simply can't be read. Following a training day in September, volunteers from 12 parishes assessed the condition and repair needs of over 100 signposts as part of the Historic Signposts Project which aims to secure funding for their refurbishment and repair. The volunteers completed survey forms and submitted photographs for each signpost. Six parishes used an app downloaded onto a tablet or smart phone to submit their surveys directly onto the project database, saving manual processing time, and the National Park has acquired two tablets to loan out for this and similar projects. The survey has provided a good body of data to demonstrate the general condition of signposts, the issues involved and derive a general estimate of costs. Initial results indicate that the vast majority of



signposts need attention in terms of cleaning and repainting but are otherwise sound. A small number are missing parts such as finger arms or requiring replacement. This information will feed directly into funding bids and would not have been gathered without the volunteer led survey. The project group are currently reviewing the results and the likely costs involved for a wider area and will be seeking funding to add to £10,000 already committed by the Exmoor National Park Partnership Fund.

Exmoor Society Archives

The Exmoor Society has been collecting photographs; letters; reports; pamphlets and maps relating to the moor and its history since its founding in 1958. These all accumulated in the Society's offices in Parish Rooms without much cataloguing until eventually no-one was quite sure what the archives contained. In March 2014, with funding from other charities and the ENPA, the Society took on a full-time archivist who set about cataloguing and conserving this important collection.

The most significant find was probably Hope Bourne's manuscript on Withypool. The book is now published and gives a vital social history of life in an Exmoor village in the late 1960s. Smaller items can be just as intriguing. The archives include a letter written in 1966 by a tourist who had visited Doone valley and removed a stone. Riddled with guilt he wrote to the Society offering to donate some money, for the good of Exmoor and to salve his conscience. And it's not always the archives themselves - some of Bourne's artwork was wrapped in a 1940 newspaper that included an advert for a well-known brand of chocolates that dieticians apparently said were "nourishing" and contained more "energy" than "beefsteak, bread or potatoes". This gives an intriguing view of the war diet and the sheer effort required to get enough calories, showing us just how much our lives have changed over the past 70 years.

The task of re-ordering the archives would be impossible without volunteers, who have spent hundreds of hours cleaning Hope Bourne's artwork; shifting boxes; carrying a giant map through Dulverton; helping out with events such as the Exmoor Language Garden; researching book prices and digitally restoring some deteriorating items. As a result, the Society's archives now reside in an environmentally-controlled store and the majority are catalogued to item level. Where there was jumbled but picturesque chaos there are now neat rows of labelled boxes, which seems less romantic but it does make it a lot easier to find that vital piece of information! The archives are open to the public 10-4 Monday to Friday and the catalogue is available online. Anyone can visit but we prefer people to make an appointment in advance.



The Exmoor Society's archivist and volunteers cleaning Hope Bourne's archive

Helen Blackman
Exmoor Society Archivist

Simonsbath

Since Exmoor National Park acquired the former Simonsbath School in 2013, work has focused on understanding more about the buildings themselves and their place in Simonsbath, as well as trying to find a future use for them. Last year we reported on progress, but since then our understanding of the building complex has radically changed mainly due to the fact that conservation work has uncovered internal and external wall surfaces, conclusively revealing the structural phases of the building. It is now clear that the first building on site was built by John Knight, probably in the 1820s, to provide accommodation for staff. We think these early cottages formed a backdrop to the pleasure grounds in Ashcombe. In form the building is single storey and in the 'Scottish style'. Later on, a series of extensions were added to it, including the school room built in 1857.



During 2015 the project team attended a number of public events including Bogtastic, an open afternoon for local people, Simonsbath Festival and Heritage Open Day to gather suggestions from the public about the future use of the buildings. We also held a school reunion in June for ex-pupils, which was attended by over 50 people who brought memories and photographs of the old school. The year culminated in a Public Consultation by the Steering Group to gauge support for its preferred options for the school site. This advocates the use of the buildings as a village hall, interpretation centre, public toilets and pop-up shop, and was presented by Benjamin & Beauchamp architects. The Group also consulted on a proposed Masterplan for Simonsbath and produced a Conservation Statement through the services of Nicholas Pearson Associates. In 2016 these options will be explored further.

Fields, Farms And Megaliths

Unravelling the Unique Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age landscapes of Exmoor.

Fields, farms and megaliths is a collaborative doctoral award PhD being undertaken by Douglas Mitcham, jointly supervised by the University of Leicester and Exmoor National Park Authority. The project is funded by the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) and the ENPA.

The past year has seen a major transition for the project, which began with completing the writing up of the September 2014 fieldwork at Lanacombe. The results of the excavation were tantalising yet inconclusive, with the project team (enthusiastic volunteers from the Longstone Landscapes Project and the University of Leicester) uncovering a number of small stake holes which formed a partial arc. Whilst no artefactual or dating evidence was found to suggest when this activity took place, or for what purpose, their stratigraphic position underneath the peat and cut into the relict soils beneath, within a known, possibly Bronze Age field system, strongly suggest a prehistoric date.

During 2015 the focus of the work shifted towards the analysis and writing up of the data that has been collected over the previous two years and trying to make sense of what it might mean for understanding the prehistoric landscapes on Exmoor during the Late Neolithic-Early

Bronze Age. A brief visit was made to a very wet Dulverton in February to participate in the revision of the National Park's historic environment research framework, ensuring that the ongoing results of the research help to inform the future research priorities for Exmoor's prehistory.

Dissemination activities in 2015 have involved presenting a lecture at the University of Leicester School of Archaeology and Ancient History summer seminar series, as well as presenting a paper at the 2nd annual Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Student Symposium (NEBARSS) in November at the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne. Both provided excellent opportunities to raise awareness of the unusual character of Exmoor's little known Neolithic and Bronze Age landscapes and drew considerable interest from the audiences.

At the end of 2015, the research focused on writing up the results of examining the lithic find collections from Exmoor and what their study can add to our understanding of landscape use during the Neolithic and Bronze Age. The project will be completed with the submission of a doctoral thesis planned for 2016.

Doug Mitcham

Exmoor Archaeology Forum

Thank you to our excellent speakers who treated us to a wonderful series of presentations at Lynton Town Hall on the theme of Archaeology and Communities at our 15th Forum in November. The value of local contribution was highlighted from archive conservation work with the Exmoor Society to the geophysical and measured surveys the Longstone Landscapes project has undertaken. The significance of our Bronze Age barrows was put in context and the settlement and landscape of Simonsbath explored.

Our 16th Archaeology Forum will be held on 15 October 2016 at Brushford Village Hall and will be on the theme of historic buildings. Bookings can be made online at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/forum-2016, by booking form or by contacting Carol Carder on 01398 322229.



Coming up:

The Historic Environment Team are involved in a number of events occurring through 2016. For more information on the events and to find details of further events run by a variety of organisations see

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

April 14

Talk on the archaeology and historic landscape around Dulverton.

April 16

Connecting Exmoor, exploring communications routes in the past, Lynmouth Pavilion.

May 14-15

Simonsbath Sawmill open for National Mills Weekend.

June 4

Talk on the Longstone Landscape Project, Lynmouth Pavilion

June 9

Walk around the archaeology at Larkbarrow and Kittuck Meads

June 18

Exmoor perambulation around the boundary of the Royal Forest

July 26

Bogtastic, Simonsbath

August 10

A stroll around historic Winsford

August 11

Walk around archaeology including Chains Barrow

August 27

The Big Bank Holiday Adventure on North Hill. Family Day of activities focussed on the WWII Radar Station and tank training grounds on North Hill including a parade of military vehicles.

October 15

16th Exmoor Archaeology Forum, Brushford

Contact us:

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Front cover: Part of Porlock Marsh Principal Archaeological Landscape, featuring the shingle ridge breach and sites from which Saxon timber fragments and Early Bronze Age aurochs skeletal remains were recovered.
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