

Clearing the way for archaeological dig

DULVERTON Weir and Leat Conservation Trust volunteers spent five hours in the rain clearing undergrowth in preparation for an archaeological dig.

They were working on "the island", next to the weir, where archaeologists are planning a dig in July. Volunteers worked in the rain for five hours.

Exmoor National Park Authority's volunteer and outreach officer Patrick Watts-Mabbott said: "We had a great day splashing across the leat to get to the back of the weir where we were working - definitely a day to remember!"

If anyone is interested in getting involved in this and wider projects on Exmoor can find information on the national park website and its 'get involved' link.

Trustee Philip Hull said: "Community involvement is a key part of the project and we are most grateful to ENPA and their 'get involved' initiative volunteers.

"There are further volunteering opportunities directly with the trust arising shortly and we welcome contact from anyone who wants to join in on this fantastic project to understand and preserve Dulverton's medieval history".

Philip is pictured far right and Patrick second right with



some of the volunteers.

The trust is working with Somerset West and Taunton Council, and Cllr Marcus Kravis, SWAT executive member for assets, said: "We are delighted to be working in partnership with the trust on this exciting project to restore the iconic weir and leat to its rightful place as part of Dulverton's heritage.

"It is wonderful to see that volunteers have started preparation work already.

"Their commitment makes all the difference and I would encourage anyone who recognises the importance of this waterway to get involved in the joint effort to restore and safeguard this medieval leat and weir system."

Otter spotted by dog walker

ON the same day as the clearance work was being carried out, Dulverton resident John Dunscombe was walking his dog in front of the Old Bakehouse in Chapel Street, close to the centre of town, when he saw an otter.

"I always look over the wall into the leat as one can often see a dipper but imagine my surprise and delight to see an otter pop its head above the vegetation. But as soon as it saw me, it quickly ducked out of sight," said John.

It was not the first time otters have been sighted on the Dulverton weir and leat system. Otters, which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, feed on fish and eels, and work by the



trust and its partners have led to more eels being sighted in this area of the leat.

Trustee Richard Partington

said: "We hope that the work of the trust and its partners will lead to more sightings like this."