



The
Dartmoor
Society

Newsletter

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Introduction

Dear friends,
by Bill Murray | Chair

Firstly, I would like to thank my friend and predecessor in this role, Alan Endacott. For the last three years he has used the title 'Acting Chair' in the hope that someone would offer to take his place. I am delighted now to be able to relieve him of the work he has carried out so dutifully, thus providing him with the time to progress his decorative stained-glass work and to complete his archaeology PhD studies.

In his introduction to the March 2022 Newsletter, Alan wrote that he had tried to bring people with opposing views together for constructive dialogue. I can assure you that the Dartmoor Society will continue to work in that direction. Within our organisation, we have members with opposing views on many important issues. The extent of re-wilding on Dartmoor, the benefits of peat restoration and swaling are just three examples.

Since the AGM, we have held two committee meetings and I am pleased to let you know that we all get on well together – which is just as well, as there is much to discuss and decisions must be made. With the help of the internet, we all see the agenda, previous minutes and various reports well in advance of the meeting so that we have time to discuss other things, such as the new Dartmoor Society website, which we intend to have operational before the next AGM, scheduled for Saturday 29 April 2023. We have also discussed and responded to proposed changes to the Dartmoor National Park byelaws.

Of more significance is the government's Landscape Review and in recent months I have spent a great deal of time studying the Glover Report and the government's response to that document. These recommendations, if implemented, will fundamentally alter the way in which National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are managed. There is no doubt that local influence will be reduced and there will be more government interference in the administration of Dartmoor. I have abstracted from Julian Glover's report what I consider to be the most significant changes, which appear on pages 28–35 of this Newsletter.

I am looking forward to our 'Farmers' Forum' event, scheduled for the evening of Wednesday 29 March 2023. The details have still to be finalised but the intention is for Dr Adrian Colston, from the University of Exeter's Centre for Rural Policy Research, to ask a panel of four Dartmoor farmers about their work. He will pose questions about the stock they keep on the commons, how they make ends meet and their thoughts on the future. With the ending of hill farming subsidies, how many Dartmoor farmers will be able to continue their business? How will others adapt to deal with the reduction in income? Members will have the opportunity to put their own questions to the panel in what we intend to be a friendly, light-hearted and constructive meeting.

The Dartmoor Society has sponsored two of Chris Chapman's fine photographs of Dartmoor characters in his exhibition at Providence Chapel, Throwleigh. This year, Chris celebrates 50 years of Dartmoor photography and we all congratulate him and thank him for his work.

I hope I will have the opportunity to meet you at our forthcoming Songs of Dartmoor evening at the Two Bridges Hotel. Details of this event can be found on page 44.

Finally, if you would like to understand more about what is happening on Dartmoor then I can recommend the Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2021–2026, available here: <https://www.yourdartmoor.org/the-plan>. A great deal of thought has been put into the preparation of this document and it is certainly worth reading.

Bill Murray | Chair



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Oak, Wray Valley, Lustleigh, Dartmoor

Cover Story

by Annabel Crowley

Trees are a hot topic these days. We're told we need many more of them and numerous tree-planting schemes exist to encourage us to get involved. You could be forgiven for thinking that Devon was fairly well-endowed already. Yet this is not the case: at 11.8% of woodland coverage, it has an amount below the national average of 13% – and that national figure itself makes Britain one of the least wooded countries in Europe.

Dartmoor's famous upland oak woodlands are recognised as being internationally important examples of temperate rainforest. Their habitat is one of the most diverse in the UK and is globally rare, some say even rarer than tropical rainforest.

In the context of climate change mitigation, woodlands are valuable not just for their carbon-storing potential but

also for their ability to limit flooding events. But for them to do this, they need to be in good condition and, on Dartmoor as elsewhere, they are sometimes neglected, overgrazed, replanted with commercially grown conifers or invaded by aggressive non-native species.

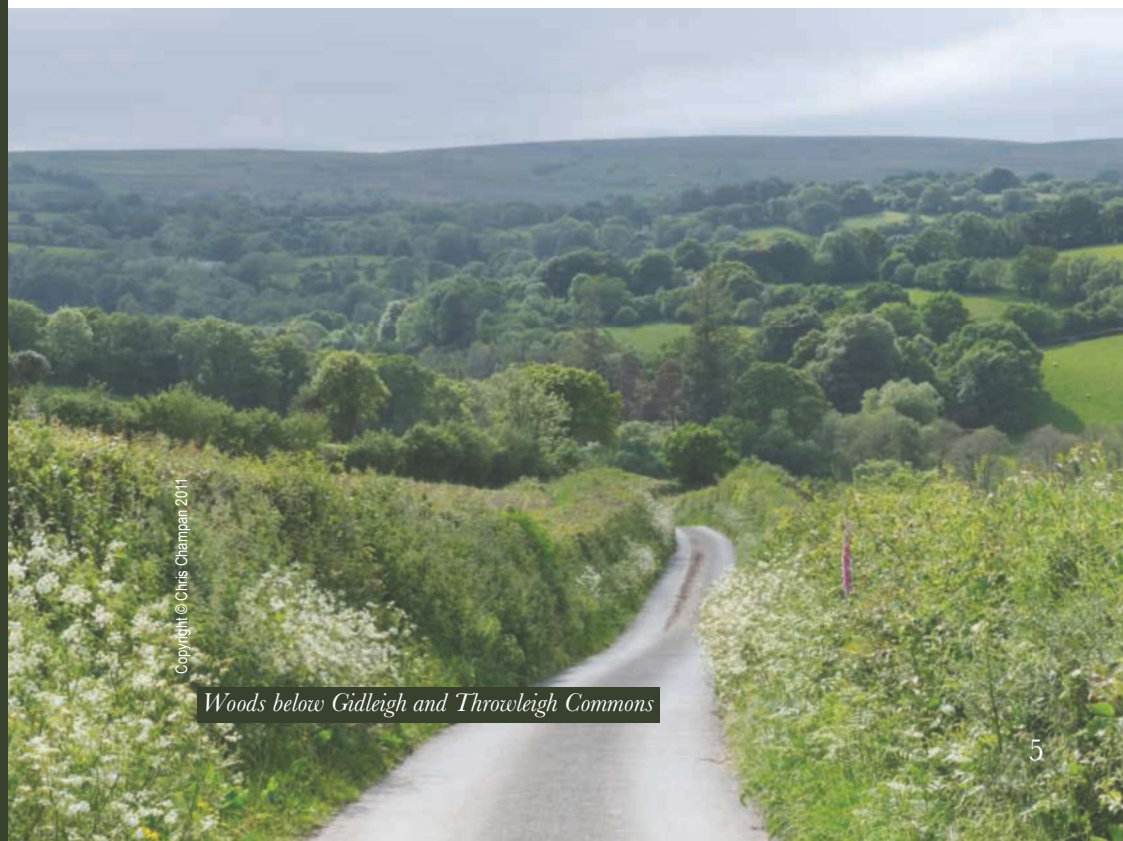
Bio-diverse woodland is also fragmented and needs corridors of hedges and trees to

improve resilience and provide opportunities for animal and plant species to spread out across the landscape.

Projects are under way in several areas of Dartmoor to restore woodland to peak condition: in Fingle Woods and Ausewell Woods, where the Woodland Trust and the National Trust work in partnership and in many smaller, privately owned woodlands such as Hillyfields, winners of the Dartmoor Society Award in 2019. There are agroforestry, coppicing and charcoal-burning enterprises operating in Dartmoor

woodlands in traditional ways; while the charity Moor Trees campaigns for increased woodland coverage of the moor.

In the light of contemporary interest in tree planting, and of the government's own Landscapes Review (described on page 28), Professor Ralph Fyfe writes compellingly in this issue of the importance of examining the historical record to inform the present. The Dartmoor Society is hoping to encourage discussion and information sharing by making trees the subject of a conference in the near future.



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Woods below Gidleigh and Throwleigh Commons



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Museum courtyard with the team of staff who run it

A Visit to The Museum of Dartmoor Life

by Bill Murray

On 23 February 2022, sixteen of our members enjoyed a visit to the Museum of Dartmoor Life in Okehampton. We spent the first half of the meeting looking round the wonderful collection of exhibits that has been built up since the museum was founded by our former acting chair, Alan Endacott, in 1981.

Everything seemed to have a local connection and several tools very similar to those on display are still in use in the day-to-day lives of farmers on

Dartmoor. There is more to see than can be closely examined in 90 minutes; however, clear labelling makes it easy to understand how the exhibits

were used and why they have been included in the museum.

Immediately inside the ground-floor entrance is a complete fireplace that came from the home of the Westaways at Higher Priestacott in Belstone and you can imagine yourself sitting in 'chimley corner' in days gone by.

There is a veteran car, a tractor and an old farm cart close by which do not seem out of place; even the wooden toilet on one of the upper floors seems as though it has been there since the building was constructed. The cabinets are full of interesting items: medals, goggles for

masons, prehistoric flints and tools, and items from World War I. I could have spent a full day happily wandering among the exhibits.

The ground-floor carpenter's workshop is absorbing, as are the adjacent areas which cover cider making, the work of the wheelwright and the blacksmith's trade. On the first floor you can learn about mining on Dartmoor and the importance of the wool industry. The second floor deals with life on Dartmoor in the early twentieth century including a kitchen, a laundry and a display that shows what our grandparents did for leisure and entertainment.



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Ancient tool recovered from railway ballast



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Masons eye protectors

For the second half of the meeting, we all gathered in the John Young Gallery to look at and comment on the various artefacts that members had brought with them. This was quite exciting: what was in that big cardboard box on the table? Who would have guessed that it was Alan Endacott's skull of a rhinoceros! Alan was given this when as a boy he set up his first museum at his parents' farm near Throwleigh. It was said to have been found in a hedge bank near Lydford; whether an Ice-Age remnant or something discarded from a colonial home, no one knows.

We were very lucky to have former Dartmoor National Park

archaeologist Jane Marchant with us and she showed us her collection of ancient flint tools, arrowheads, scrapes and the like.

There was another surprise when Bob Cooke showed everyone a stone hammer that he had found in a delivery of hardcore ballast which had been imported from Cornwall and deposited on the railway track at Bridestowe Station. We looked at pottery and glass that members had found in their houses and gardens; it was all very interesting. A silver penny from the Lydford mint appeared: it looked genuine but the owner admitted that it was in fact a replica, given to him by his grandfather in the 1960s.

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Glass from Meldon aplite works

At the end of the meeting Bill Murray thanked Kristy Turner, the manager/curator of the Museum of Dartmoor Life and her staff for their help in making

this meeting so enjoyable. There was just enough time left for us to repair to the Victoria Pantry Tea Rooms in the museum courtyard for tea and cakes.

Opening times at the museum until the end of October are Monday to Friday 10 am–4pm and Saturday 10am–1pm. In November and December, the museum is open Monday to Friday 11am–3pm. Admission prices are £5 for adults and £3 for children.



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Rhino skull



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Donna Baker

The Creation of Burracombe

by Caya Edwards

The following introduction to our evening in the company of Donna Baker (writing under the pen name of Lilian Harry) was read by Liz Miall and will demonstrate why Bill Murray was not there in person to address this gathering.

I be 'ome yer in baid on 'count o' this yer Covid trade, else I wud 'ave cum down tu Meavy thus aivnin' tu lissen tu my vurry gude vriend Donna tellin' 'bout the liddle ole village she made up. I 'ave raid the vust one of they Burracombe bukes (or novils as they calls 'em), twas called "The Bells of Burracombe".

'Now tu be vayre an 'onest I mus zay, that twas alright. Not too long and wi' vur sized print cos me eyesight baint so gude as 'twas wance. A praper zort o' story too, not all 'bout vellers an' maids jumpin' into baid all the time. An 'er's got it jus right when it cums tu the time, cus I can mind the early fifties wen 'twere jus as 'er says - wi th' Lord uv the Manner up tu the big 'ouse, the shcule vur the liddle chilern, the'ole blacksmith, an' the pub cross th' way. They wuz the gude ole days vor zartain.'

It was bell-ringing practice in Meavy on the evening of 24 March when we gathered in the village hall, and the sounds from the nearby church drifted into the hall as Donna talked to us about how she came to create

the village on Dartmoor called Burracombe, the setting for a series of 12 novels that recreate village life in a recent but bygone age. Sitting in the traditional village hall close to the Royal Oak pub and the green with its

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The ancient oak on Meavy's village green

ancient 'Meavy Oak', one could almost feel transported back to the 1950s, to have arrived back in the village where all the local characters and events in 'Burracombe' are played out.

Lilian Harry is known to readers worldwide and she began with a hearty appreciation of Bill's introduction. She explained that while she wants the dialogue in her novels to be authentic, she could not possibly write in the local dialect as it would be incomprehensible to her readers. But she does need to convey a sense of how the different characters speak and instead she has developed a way of expressing speech that is easily read but still feels authentic.

Brought up in Portsmouth and now living at Whitchurch Down on Dartmoor, Donna has always used real people, places and

events as the starting point for her thought process and as sources of inspiration, though no character or place is a straightforward copy. She feels comfortable setting her tales in the period just after World War II, a time during which she didn't live on Dartmoor but which feels close enough for her to be able to describe with confidence.

Being part of a local community, a bell ringer herself and fully involved in village life, all these experiences give authenticity to the novels. We heard excerpts from some of the books and the words simply rolled off the page. Closely observed with great humour, the situations that the characters find themselves in and their relationships and reactions reflect the hardship of the times and also the richness of local life where everything happened either in the post office, the

butcher's, the church, pub or village green.

I asked Lilian if she found writing hard, as the words seemed to flow with such ease. She admitted that the words did come easily once she had an idea for a situation. She was not someone who rewrote passages many times but used her own experiences, ranging from a chip-pan fire in her kitchen to relatives visiting from Australia. Sometimes these would be stored in her memory for many years until she found the right context to use them to

dramatic effect in her work.

However, being a full-time writer meant that your home was your place of work and you never really left it. The hard part was writing constantly six or more days a week; and when the book was finished the work on it was not. A long process involving proofreading, publishers' comments and revisions followed. These usually had to take place when you had moved on from that plot and were immersing yourself in the next book in the series.

Donna no longer writes novels full time but is currently working on a local pantomime and other smaller projects. She has written more than 80 books, including historical novels set in Portsmouth in World War II and works of non-fiction. On 20 March the Tavistock Times published an interview with Donna and this can be found on the website tavistock-today.co.uk.

The Dartmoor Society Annual General Meeting 2022

The Dartmoor Society's AGM was held on 7 May 2022 in South Brent. Members were able to thank Alan Endacott for his stewardship of the Society in the role of acting chair over the past three years, and to elect Bill Murray as the new chair.



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Peter Beacham presents the Dartmoor Society Award to Mike Gratton and Mike Watson of the StOC group

Committee members Wilf Hodges and Liz Miall retired and three new members were elected: Anthea Hoey, Bridget Cole and Rachel Van der Steen. Nick Fennemore, co-opted to the committee earlier in the year, became vice-chair and Andrew John, also recently co-opted, has taken on the role of membership

secretary. Chris Chapman was thanked for his continuing support of the Society despite having stepped down as a committee member.

(The Membership Matters pages at the end of this Newsletter contain a little more information about new committee members.)

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Mike Gratton and Mike Watson of the StOC group

Alan Endacott gave his report for the 2021–2022 year, recalling how liberating it was to resume activities last year after successive lockdowns, and how much we all enjoyed our visits to Challacombe Farm, Wildside Gardens and Elvan Farm. He thanked Caya Edwards

for organising our highly successful autumn conference, 'Hallowed Turf: Perspectives on the Conservation of Dartmoor's Blanket Peat', and Chris for providing technical expertise on the day. And he thanked all committee members for the various contributions they make.

Commenting on the Society's membership of the Peatland Partnership, he reported that we have asked for a carbon audit of the project itself and for proper account to be taken of the short- to medium-term release of methane, which is now known to be a significant contributor to climate change. He noted that a full-time archaeologist for the Dartmoor project areas is now in post, something the Society



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Tim Sandles with Bill Murray



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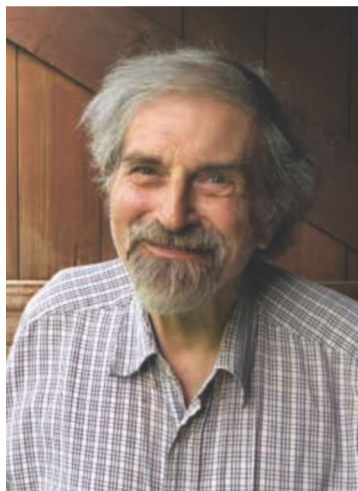
Alan Endacott with Peter Beacham

has pressed for in order to identify and safeguard the cultural heritage of the areas involved.

Alan reiterated his concern that the Dartmoor landscape is vulnerable to the whims of policy makers and the influence of the media. He emphasised the need to maintain a long-term view, and the importance of the Society's role as a scrutineer of any legislation and policies that might be detrimental to the moor or its communities. Characteristically, he advocated respect for opposing views and an interest in seeking compromise as the way forward.

Dartmoor Society president Peter Beacham presented Alan with a leaving gift of a brass theodolite and, together with newly-elected chair Bill Murray and secretary Caya Edwards, paid tribute to Alan's wide-ranging

knowledge, his communication and negotiating skills, his interest in rational debate and his focus on the positive. His legacy has been to forge closer ties with other Dartmoor organisations and foster a greater understanding of differing points of view.



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Wilf Hodges

Formal thanks went also to Liz Miall, who has been a member of the Dartmoor Society committee for more than 10 years and represented the DS on the Peatland Partnership; and to Wilf Hodges, who has been membership secretary for six years, during a period of great change and demands in relation to data protection and regulatory compliance. The Society also formally thanked Chris Chapman for his continued commitment and the generous access he gives us to his extensive catalogue of Dartmoor photographs.

Presentations were made to Tim Sandles, winner of the 2021

Dartmoor Society Award for his Legendary Dartmoor website, and to the Sticklepath and Okehampton Conservation Group (StOC), winners of the Award for 2022 for their dedication to the conservation of Dartmoor. Tim Sandles told members about the development of his website from a hobby in 1997 to a website with 40,000 visits per month. And Mike Watson and Mike Gratton spoke about the work of StOC, its collaboration with DNPA warden Ian Brooker and its origins as a community project in 1991.

Full details of the meeting are in the News section of the Dartmoor Society website, www.dartmoorsociety.com



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Liz Miall



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A beaver at Coombeshead

Visit to Rewilding Coombeshead

by Annabel Crowley

On the cool and breezy evening of Wednesday 25 May, a group of Dartmoor Society members visited Derek Gow's Rewilding Coombeshead project at Upcott Grange, near Broadwoodwidge in west Devon. Our main aim was to spot beavers but from the outset we were warned that this was unlikely. Beavers apparently prefer to stay tucked up in their lodges in inclement weather. Eventually we did catch sight of one – but in the decidedly un-wild setting of an enclosure within a barn, where it was waiting to be transferred to another site.

Derek Gow has been at the forefront of the drive to reintroduce the Eurasian beaver to the British countryside for many years. He documented the ups and downs of his long-running campaign in his 2020 book 'Bringing Back the Beaver' and remains an ardent advocate of this keystone species in the

process of nature recovery. The dams and channels beavers make along watercourses help to slow the rate at which water finds its way from high ground to low (whereas traditional drainage schemes tend to do the opposite), thus alleviating flooding and creating new environments for other wildlife.

At Upcott Grange, Derek Gow is winding down his 300-acre farming enterprise and turning the place over to a rewilding experiment. He has broken up drainage systems, dug ponds, removed fences and let boundaries grow out. He wants to change the habits of generations of farmers who have toiled here to make heavy clay land yield a commercial return. He wants Upcott to become a home to creatures that haven't lived in the wild in Devon for, in some cases, several centuries.

After many years of debate and delay, the tide may be turning. Beavers are living on the River

Otter in east Devon with government approval, as well as in other parts of the country; further enclosed trials are under way and more are under discussion. For Derek Gow, however, the speed of change is glacial. He's impatient and the talk he gave before we started our walk across the farm was littered with forthright opinions and grim warnings of the toll our post-war agricultural policies have taken on the land.

We set off with Coombeshead conservationists Peter Cooper and Taylor Davies, to see the landscape in which the re-wilding projects take place.



A beaver dam

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White storks at Coombeshead

Through a rough meadow where yellow rattle, salad burnet and cuckooflower, or lady's smock, grew in the long grass we walked to the first beaver dam. Even without a glimpse of beavers themselves, this was an impressive sight: a mass of wood, mud and stones that held back a large pond, surrounded by trees and the low growth that has been stimulated where tree trunks

have been felled by the creatures. Beavers live in small family groups and give birth in early summer to an average of 2 to 3 young. They live in lodges built either in the riverbank or on top, with underwater entrances for safety. We strained our eyes for a trace of movement; none was visible. I couldn't help feeling that the beavers were at an advantage: snug in their homes, they could

surely hear these well-meaning members of the human race, wrapped up in their anoraks and deracinated from their ancient understanding of the land and all the life they share it with, clumsily trying to reconnect.

During our visit we either encountered or heard about various other erstwhile British residents that now live at Coombeshead: Highland cattle and Iron-Age pigs, valued for the way in which they manipulate the landscape; storks, cranes, water voles and wildcats. We met Konik ponies from Poland – dun-coloured, stocky, primitive-type horses standing about 13 hands high that are often used for grazing nature reserves, including at

the famous Dutch re-wilding site Oostvaardersplassen. We stood on a viewing platform above another pond in the chilly wind, hoping that beavers would unaccountably decide to brave the conditions especially for our benefit. Some sika deer provided a modest distraction; the beavers remained elusive.

At the very end of the visit, Peter and Taylor took pity on us and, remembering the security code for the building housing quarantined beavers that were en route to a new home, led us in. We stood quietly and looked at a beaver wallowing disconsolately in a galvanised iron tank. We contemplated the wild life that awaited it on some British river, and wished it well.



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A beaver kit swimming



Copyright © Endymion Beer 2022

Society members by cotton grass

Belstone Botanical Walk

by Bill Murray

On Saturday 16 July, when the Met Office had just issued a red warning for severely hot temperatures, 15 members and friends set out from Belstone Village Hall car park to search for the wildflowers and grasses that were recorded in a botanical survey and published in The North Devon Journal on 13 July 1905.

The details of the original survey appeared on Tim Sandles' Legendary Dartmoor Facebook page in 2021. Our mission was to retrace the route of the 1905 walkers and to compare the results of their survey with what we could find. It was an opportunity not to be missed.

The 1905 group set out from Okehampton Station and walked to Belstone, then to Belstone Tor and down to Cullever Steps.

From here they progressed to the clapper bridge known as New Bridge – which has a double passage over the Black-a-ven Brook – and up to the heights of High Willhays. The return journey to Okehampton Station was made by way of Yes Tor, Red-a-ven Brook, Moor Brook and Fitz Well.

It would have been nice to follow the same path but our guide, Liz Miall, advised me at the

planning stage that the distance would be too far on what might be a very hot July day.

At about the same time, by good fortune I heard that Andrew Terry in Belstone had been recording the wildflowers on Belstone Common for several years. We met and decided to concentrate our efforts on Belstone Common and the Duchy lands around East Okement Farm.

Setting off at 9.30am, we walked out of the village to Watchet Hill where there is a boggy area on the edge of the moor. In addition to Andrew Terry, our party included several very knowledgeable botanists and we found here several species of wildflowers including lousewort, ivy-leaved bellflower and sundew. Andrew pointed out the leaves of pale butterwort, which was no longer in flower; later in the walk, some eagle-eyed members of our group also found flowering plants.

We continued along the Knack Mine track, spotting tiny flowers in the broken gravel while passing Cullever Steps and walking on to the river crossing at Henry's Ford, beyond East Okement Farm. Here there is another boggy area, known to local people as Skit Bottom, where we found several plants including marsh St John's wort,

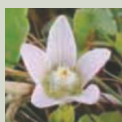
bog asphodel, bogbean and hare's tail cotton-grass.

We climbed the hill behind the farm to Hut 22 on the military ring road and then descended to Cullever Steps where we had our picnic lunches. Yes, it was very hot weather but there was a breeze and shade from the trees by the side of the stream and everyone felt comfortable.

Walking back to Belstone past Scarey Tor and along the Cullever track, one looks down on the East Okement River below. There are several boggy patches that feed the river and here we found some different wildflowers, including thyme, eyebright, self-heal, ivy-leaved crowfoot and common butterwort (not in flower), arriving back at the Belstone car park at 4pm.

In all we found 39 different flowers and seven grasses. I have compiled the following list to the best of my ability and with a lot of help from Andrew Terry. He has since told me that the forget-me-not we saw may have been the creeping variety (*Myosotis secunda*). My Devonshire reply was 'My! So 'tis'.

On parting company, I thanked Andrew Terry for sharing his expertise with us on what was a lovely eight-mile walk in a very special part of Dartmoor.



Species found

Species that were recorded on the 1905 survey are in **bold print**. Botanical names are correct and not necessarily the same as in 1905.

Wild Flowers

Asphodel	Bog	<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>
Bedstraw	Heath	<i>Galium saxatile</i>
Bedstraw	Common Marsh	<i>Galium palustre</i>
Bell Flower	Ivy-leaved	<i>Hesperocodon hederaceus</i>
Bell Heather		<i>Erica cinerea</i>
Bogbean		<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i> Butterwort
	Common	<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i> Butterwort
	Pale	<i>Pinguicula lusitanica</i>
Crowfoot	Round-leaved	<i>Ranunculus omiophyllus</i>
Eyebright		<i>Euphrasia officinalis</i>
Forget-me-not	Water	<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>
Foxglove		<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
Hawkbitt	Lesser	<i>Leontodon saxatilis</i>
Hawkweed	Mouse-ear	<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>
Heath	Cross-leaved	<i>Erica tetralix</i>
Herb Robert		<i>Geranium robertianum</i> Lousewort
		<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>
Milkwort	Heath	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>
Mint	Water	<i>Mentha aquatica</i>
Nightshade	Enchanters	<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>
Orchid	Heath spotted	<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i> Pearlwort
	Heath	<i>Sagina subulata</i>
Pennywort	Marsh	<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i> Pimpernel
	Bog	<i>Anagallis tenella</i>
Self-heal		<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
Sheepsbit		<i>Jasione montana</i>



Spearwort	Lesser	<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>
Spurrey	Red or Sand	<i>Spergularia rubra</i>
St Johns Wort	Marsh	<i>Hypericum elodes</i>
Sundew	Round-leaved	<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>
Thistle	Marsh	<i>Cirsium palustre</i>
Thyme	Wild	<i>Thymus polytrichus</i> Trefoil
	Birdsfoot	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Violet	Marsh	<i>Viola palustris</i>
Water Pepper		<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>
Willow-herb	Broadleaved	<i>Epilobium montanum</i>
Yarrow		<i>Achillea millefolium</i>

Introduced Species (very near to Belstone Village)

Monkey Flower	<i>Mimulus guttatus</i>
Himalayan Balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>

Species on 1905 Survey but not found on 2022 Survey

Groundsel	Mountain	<i>Senecio sylvaticus</i>
Speedwell	Marsh	<i>Veronica scutellata</i>
Birdsfoot	Small	<i>Ornithopus perpusillus</i>

Reeds and Grasses

Cotton-grass	Common	<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>
Cotton-grass	Hare's Tail	<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>
Horsetail	Marsh	<i>Equisetum palustre</i>
Rush	Bulbous	<i>Juncus bulbosus</i>
Rush	Hard	<i>Juncus inflexus</i>
Rush	Heath	<i>Juncus squarrosus</i>
Sedge	Green-ribbed	<i>Carex binervis</i>



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Chris Chapman Photography at Providence Chapel

by Annabel Crowley

The Dartmoor Photographs of Chris Chapman is a permanent exhibition installed this year at Providence Methodist Chapel in the parish of Throwleigh, north-east Dartmoor.

Chris Chapman moved to Dartmoor in the mid 1970s and settled in a studio in the village of Throwleigh. He has lived in the parish ever since and has been documenting Dartmoor life for 50 years. It seems fitting therefore that a permanent exhibition of his work has been established in the nearby Methodist chapel at Providence, which has itself featured in some of his photographs.

The Bible Christians came to Throwleigh in the 1830s when

Richard Gay built a house at Providence Place and is thought to have funded the construction of the chapel on the opposite side of the lane. It is a simple building, now Grade II listed, with a modest schoolroom to the rear and a small gallery above the entrance that faces south-east over the valley of the Blackaton Brook. While the buildings here are a little less than 200 years old, the area has a long documented history: a granite cross in the wall at the foot of Providence Hill commemorates

the battle that took place along War Cleave between Chagford and this point during the Civil War in which many local men are said to have died.

In the 1970s, north-east Dartmoor was a comparatively remote spot and Chris met many families with deep roots in the area, whose lives he chronicled in his sensitive black-and-white photographs. These pictures gain growing significance as the pressures of contemporary life increasingly make themselves felt on Dartmoor.

The members of Providence Methodist Chapel successfully applied for a grant of £9,647 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund in order to mount this exhibition, which has been open on a couple of Saturday afternoons each month during the summer. The last two open afternoons will be on Saturday

8 October and Saturday 29 October, from 12 noon till 6pm. There has been a series of talks and chapel members are also running a project to discover more about the families who have been connected with the chapel going back over eight generations. More information can be found on the Facebook page, facebook.com/Providence-Methodist-Church-2445445848819963/, on the dedicated website **thedartmoorphotographs.com** or by contacting Ian Crawford at providence1839@gmail.com. The exhibition has also been supported by the Methodist Church and Devon County Council.

The Dartmoor Society was pleased to sponsor two of the photographs and is supporting the creation of a bursary to enable a young photographer to work on Dartmoor in the future.

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Photographs on display at Providence Chapel



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The Landscapes Review

by Bill Murray and Annabel Crowley

The Landscapes Review, also known as the Glover Report, carried out a comprehensive review of England's protected landscapes and was completed in September 2019. The government's response to the Review was published in January of this year and Bill Murray has studied both documents to extract the essentials.

Julian Glover's Landscapes Review provided an in-depth study into existing National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and made proposals as to how these very special areas should be managed in the future. It can be viewed here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833726/landscapes-review-final-report.pdf

Julian Glover is by profession a reporter and not a politician and the document is well-presented and easy to read. He and the members of his panel who, as he wrote, 'have shown such passion and support in bringing their humanity and great experience to the task', were given a wide remit. The Landscapes Review extends to 168 pages and contains the following 27 proposals:

- Proposal 1:** National landscapes should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature, and be supported and held to account for delivery by a new National Landscapes Service
- Proposal 2:** The state of nature and natural capital in our national landscapes should be regularly and robustly assessed, informing the priorities for action
- Proposal 3:** Strengthened Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including, but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration). Their implementation must be backed up by stronger status in law
- Proposal 4:** National landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries
- Proposal 5:** A central place for national landscapes in new Environmental Land Management Schemes
- Proposal 6:** A strengthened place for national landscapes in the planning system with AONBs given statutory consultee status, encouragement to develop local plans and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework
- Proposal 7:** A stronger mission to connect all people with our national landscapes, supported and held to account by the new National Landscapes Service
- Proposal 8:** A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child
- Proposal 9:** New long term programmes to increase the ethnic diversity of visitors

- Proposal 10:** Landscapes that cater for and improve the nation's health and wellbeing
- Proposal 11:** Expanding volunteering in our national landscapes
- Proposal 12:** Better information and signs to guide visitors
- Proposal 13:** A ranger service in all our national landscapes, part of a national family
- Proposal 14:** National landscapes supported to become leaders in sustainable tourism
- Proposal 15:** Joining up with others to make the most of what we have, and bringing National Trails into the national landscapes family
- Proposal 16:** Consider expanding open access rights in national landscapes
- Proposal 17:** National landscapes working for vibrant communities
- Proposal 18:** A new National Landscapes Housing Association to build affordable homes
- Proposal 19:** A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes
- Proposal 20:** New designated landscapes and a new National Forest
- Proposal 21:** Welcoming new landscape approaches in cities and the coast, and a city park competition
- Proposal 22:** A better designations process
- Proposal 23:** Stronger purposes in law for our national landscapes
- Proposal 24:** AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes
- Proposal 25:** A new National Landscapes Service bringing our 44 national landscapes together to achieve more than the sum of their parts
- Proposal 26:** Reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society
- Proposal 27:** A new financial model – more money, more secure, more enterprising

The Dartmoor Society committee supported the aims of the Review, though we would have liked to see an additional chapter that considered the cultural importance of these national landscapes, the traditions and local diversification that make each one unique and special. Very little mention of the importance of maintaining cultural character and traditions is made by either Glover or the government.

The government's response to the report was published on 15 January this year and can be read here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response/>. It states its vision thus: 'A coherent national network of beautiful, nature- rich spaces that all parts of society can easily access and enjoy. Protected landscapes will support thriving local communities and economies, improve our public health and wellbeing, drive forward nature recovery, and build our resilience to climate change.'

The government's primary intention is for England's existing 10 National Parks and 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to be given the same status and renamed National Landscapes. The document also uses the term 'protected landscapes' to describe these areas. The total of 44 areas may increase with the creation of some new ones.

The government is seeking unification of the current system, 'providing more consistent national leadership, and setting a clear mission'. Protected landscapes must be integrated into the design and development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).

In the introduction to the government response by Lord Benyon, parliamentary under-secretary of state at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), one paragraph in particular will be important for future reference: 'Our protected landscapes must be managed more consistently, but never at the expense of local input. What works for Dartmoor won't necessarily work for the Lake District – but they do share national challenges like climate change. That is why we will establish a new national landscapes partnership to coordinate the work of existing organisations at a national level but maintaining current levels of local input.'

Unfortunately, and in contrast to Julian Glover's report, the government's response document is both confusing and difficult to read. There are numerous links to other documents, government policies, plans and legislation. To confuse matters further, it does not respond to the 27 Glover proposals individually and has created a completely different set of chapter headings. Here are some of the key points from those chapters.

Chapter 1 A more coherent national network

The Glover Review highlighted the opportunity to bring protected landscapes together to achieve ‘more than the sum of their parts’ and recommended the creation of a new public body, a national landscapes service. The government rejects this proposal and plans instead to ‘establish a new national landscapes partnership to build on the existing collaboration between National Parks England and the National Association for AONBs, complemented by roles for the National Trails and National Parks Partnerships’. Natural England’s role as the government’s statutory advisor on England’s landscapes ‘will be reinvigorated to support national landscapes to better recover nature and provide good quality access to it’.

Chapter 2 Nature and climate

The importance of combating climate change and the need for nature recovery are themes of this chapter. The government quotes Natural England figures showing that despite being less than one-quarter of land cover, protected landscapes are home to nearly half of all priority habitats in England, including 60% of deep peat, 34% of broadleaf woodland and nearly 88% of heather and acid grassland habitats.

In a paragraph of potentially great significance, it continues: ‘Climate change may mean that our protected landscapes look different in the future. This challenge requires us to consider the need to manage them differently, not just to conserve and enhance them, but to also play new roles in helping to both reduce our net emissions and enable nature and our communities to adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change. The government’s Net Zero strategy set out the importance of making the most of our natural resources to tackle climate change, including better use of our land to deliver nature-based solutions.’

In this context, it’s useful to note that the Dartmoor National Park Authority aims to reach net zero by 2025.

The government agrees with the Glover Review that national landscapes should have a ‘renewed mission to recover and enhance nature’. Looking beyond the first current statutory purpose of National Parks to ‘conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage’, the government wants ‘all protected landscapes to have clear visions for nature recovery

but these must also collectively make a major contribution to national nature recovery outcomes’.

It proposes to amend the current statutory purpose so that ‘a core function of protected landscapes should be to drive nature recovery; a revised purpose should be more specific with regards to nature outcomes and explicitly mention biodiversity; and the principle of natural capital should also be included to capture the societal value of nature in our protected landscapes and encompass a broader range of ecosystem services’.

With regard to the place of farming in the national landscapes of the future, the government says that the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (part of Defra’s Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024) ‘has already demonstrated the value of the knowledge and expertise our lead partners can offer when developing and delivering agri-environment schemes’. (‘Lead Partners’ is a term that refers to those responsible for day-to-day management of protected landscapes, such as National Park authorities.) It continues: ‘We are considering a number of options for how the special status of protected landscapes can be reflected in environmental land management schemes’ design and delivery’ – something the Glover Review recommended. Several options are listed and all share an emphasis on nature recovery.

Chapter 3 People and place

The government’s response supports the Glover Review’s point that protected landscapes offer the opportunity for health and wellbeing benefits that should be available to all. It wants to increase engagement in particular with younger and more diverse audiences; and it wants to see an expanded volunteering programme supported by more rangers. It will also consider supporting or rewarding landowners ‘for offering enhanced access to their farms in some circumstances’.

It also agrees with the Glover Review that the wording of the second statutory purpose of National Park Associations and AONBs should be strengthened and amended. Currently, National Parks are expected to ‘promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public’. The new statutory purpose will ‘highlight the need to improve opportunities and remove barriers to access for all parts of society; clearly reference public health and wellbeing

as an outcome; and take a more active role in supporting access than just promoting opportunities’.

The review looks at ways to support new sustainable forms of access to protected landscapes, commits to producing a Sustainable Tourist Plan and says the government will consider making a greater range of enforcement powers available to NPAs to deal with the sort of anti-social behaviour that has become more common over the past couple of years with increased visitor numbers.

In the area of housing, however, it rejects Glover’s call for a new publicly-funded housing association specifically for protected landscapes. The availability of affordable homes, it states, is not unique to these areas and a new body would be no more effective at finding suitable sites than existing rural housing associations.

There is mention of the need to manage visitor pressures through ‘visitor dispersal’ – but disappointingly no mention of how the pressure on local services and other organisations such as Dartmoor Rescue and the Devon Air Ambulance will be managed in turn.

Chapter 4 Supporting local delivery

The government’s response highlights Glover’s observation that National Park Authorities and AONB conservation boards do not always work as well as they might, ‘sometimes due to the restrictive legislation they operate within’. To support those boards ‘to deliver their full potential’, the government proposes to set clear performance standards, strengthen local input and aim for greater diversity on the boards through improvements to the secretary of state’s public appointments process. It supports Glover’s suggestion that the boards be reduced in size to simplify decision making and boost efficiency, and is already discussing this with some NPAs on a case-by-case basis. Glover recommended that chairs of boards be appointed by the secretary of state, rather than by selection from among their members, and the government appears to favour this proposal.

Glover also recommended strengthened management plans which the government says its proposed national landscapes strategy will achieve. It wants to see clearer alignment of local management plans with relevant national policies and targets, overseen by Natural England. The government aims to produce

guidance for public bodies on the application of strengthened duties towards protected landscapes.

The last part of the government’s response to the Glover Report agrees with Glover’s final proposal, that protected landscapes should be funded from a wider range of sources. It writes: ‘The government has recently set an ambitious new target to raise at least £500 million in private finance to support nature’s recovery every year by 2027 in England, rising to more than £1 billion by 2030. Much of this could be generated through the sale or trade via environmental markets of the various benefits nature provides – from carbon sequestration to improved water quality.’

Its stated aim is to accelerate the involvement of private finance in order ‘to unlock the economic value of the natural and cultural/heritage capital of our protected landscapes’ – a strange and somewhat ironic notion given that there is hardly a mention of culture and heritage anywhere else in either the Glover Review or the Government Response.

On finance it concludes:

‘We expect protected landscapes, individually and collectively, to develop and harness the commercial and sponsorship opportunities provided by their unique brand identity. Driving this agenda should be a key objective of the new national landscapes partnership, which should publish a commercial strategy within a year of being established and target a minimum of five new flagship partnerships across the network by 2025.’

Finally, the government response states that it wants its lead partners to ‘fully explore the commercial opportunities arising from green finance’ and that it will therefore broaden their legal competence to a more general power, similar to that of local authorities, so they can take a ‘more innovative and pro-active role’ in areas such as affordable housing, public health and sustainable transport.

The window for comments on the government’s response to the Glover Report closed on 9 April 2022. The government is still analysing feedback and has not yet published on its website any information about the outcome of the whole process.

The importance of delivering net zero, protection from flooding, storage of carbon, combating climate change, the loss of biodiversity and nature conservation, all take precedence in the government’s response, not surprisingly, over the need to protect the individuality of each area. The unique culture, history, customs and dialect of Dartmoor are precious; and we can’t yet know how they will fare under a new, more commercial system of landscape management.



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Excavating the Whitehorse Hill Cist

The Tree Planting Misconception

by Professor Ralph Fyfe, Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Science and Engineering, University of Plymouth

Ralph Fyfe is a researcher at the University of Plymouth who focusses on long-term environmental changes, the role of past communities in environmental change and how we can use insights from the past to better manage the present and future environment. He studies at both local and continental scales. He has worked at numerous locations across Dartmoor since the early 2000s and is currently working on how best to integrate historic information into the management of our peatlands.

Communities and governments around the world have recognised the scale of environmental damage caused to ecosystems by human actions. Calls for climate action have resulted in government

policies to try to mitigate the worst impacts and halt, or even reverse, the damage that has been caused.

Targets are set. The number of trees to be planted are specified,

as is the acreage of peat bogs to be restored. These are noble aims, and positive actions are being taken by local and regional groups to implement change to meet these targets, supported through grant schemes and funds to promote environmental benefit. Private sector finance has entered this arena, particularly in carbon trading

These interventions are well intentioned. After all, who would argue against restoration of environments back to their former condition in aid of restoring the environment globally?

However, there is a problem. Restoration implies recovering something to its past state. Furniture restorers can recreate the deep shine on a Chippendale sideboard. It's a static object.

Ecosystems, however, are not. They are dynamic, a complicated set of changing social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions that have come together to produce what we see today.

We are the first generation that has a clear understanding of both past environmental changes, and the current and future threats being posed to our ecosystems. As such, we are in a position to make informed choices.

The biggest mistake would be to view landscapes as a blank canvas waiting to be painted with good intentions. To ignore local understanding of conditions, challenges and the voices of the current and past custodians of the land risks unintended and unforeseen consequences in a complex system.



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Archaeological survey on Shovel Down

When two or more risks interact, the potential collective effect can be greater than the sum of its parts. Timing is also critical.

Across the world right now, some of the most effective initiatives being deployed to tackle environmental degradation are those where schemes have been co-designed with communities. Our own work in Tanzania is one such example, where lives and livelihoods devastated by soil erosion are being rebuilt through a combination of scientific evidence and cultural change.

Most ecological processes take place over long timescales. Just thinking about how long oak trees live gives a sense of the timescales we need to work to, and how long ecological processes can take to play out. However, we can learn from the deep past using evidence that spans centuries and millennia. Historical, archaeological and long-term ecological knowledge can allow us to understand how our landscapes today – which are a snapshot in time – came together. We can tease out social, cultural and economic processes from our data.

In some cases, these forces have combined to produce high-quality environments. In South West England, our western Atlantic woodlands are full of biodiversity, they store carbon and prevent flash flooding. But

they are the product of centuries of management. Simply planting trees isn't enough to reproduce these benefits, particularly in areas that haven't supported trees for millennia.

Our historical information also tells us about nature recovery in the past. Past populations were equally as dynamic as the ecosystems we see today. Take, for example, the Black Death in the mid-14th century. Up to half the population of Europe died, and this will have had a major impact on food production systems. Pressures on the land will have eased considerably.

Even earlier, in the Bronze Age around 3,500 years ago, settlement and field systems expanded into marginal uplands, but only for a few hundred years. Around 500 years later these fields were no longer in use, although low-intensity seasonal grazing likely continued.

By looking to these past events, we can explore the pathways that past nature recovery took and in some instances discover new environmental conditions that formed as nature recovered.

Trees did not re-establish naturally, as the conditions (such as soils and climate) had changed. After the Black Death, abandoned villages on the upland margins were not overtaken by woodland;

heathland developed. Some of this heathland is amongst the rarest habitats in Europe today, supporting biodiversity.

What we find is that much of our high-value nature is a product of land management. Our farming communities know this. An Exmoor farmer I spoke with recently passionately described the biodiversity in his stone walls; walls that his grandfather built and maintained.

Our fossil pollen and insect data show us that biodiversity in the UK was lower before the advent of farming. Disturbance of the forest by Stone Age farmers increased biodiversity, by fragmenting the woodland and creating spaces for diverse ecological communities to develop.

Our species-rich meadows did not exist until grazing management created the

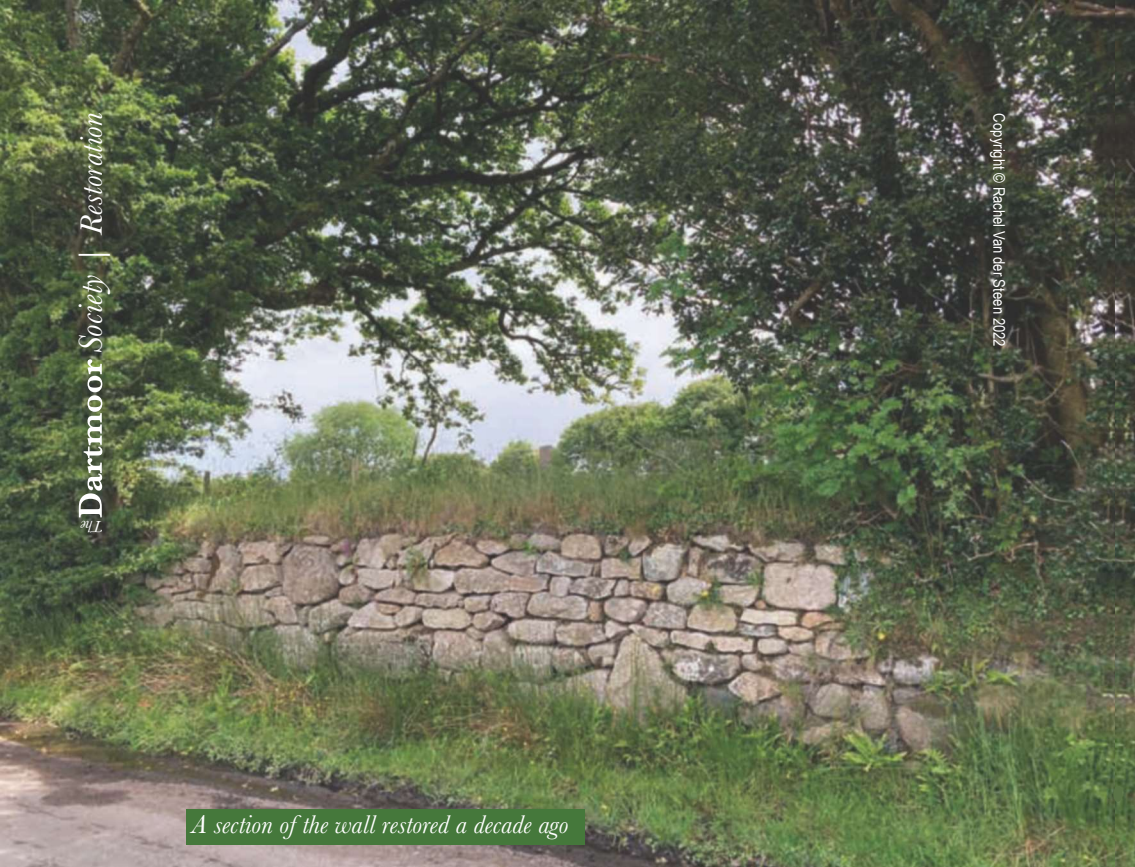
conditions necessary for their development.

Conservation and climate action should never be about returning the landscape back to a point in time. Society has moved on and our land use and socio-economic demands have moved too far. However, being able to recognise long-term processes is massively important – and given we have that evidence at our disposal, it would be foolish to ignore it.

This article was first published as part of the University of Plymouth's Plymouth Pioneers campaign. For more information visit <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/plymouth-pioneers>



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A section of the wall restored a decade ago

The Great Wall of Gidleigh

by Rachel Van der Steen

Great Ensworthy is enclosed on the edge of the moor by a corn ditch and the footprint surrounding the enclosed fields is understood to date from the Bronze Age. Over the centuries it has been protected as an island of 19ha of grazing and rhos pasture and woodland against the surrounding moorland of Gidleigh and Throwleigh Commons. At its centre is the settlement of Great Ensworthy, a small longhouse with 14th-15th-century origins and its historic group of 16th-17th-century barns.

Corn ditches were a traditional and effective means of stock control, to keep unwanted stock out and to allow easy exit

for those that had managed to get in. What has become known as the 'Great Wall of Gidleigh' had suffered over

many decades from erosion, stock damage and neglect, to the point that it was no longer functional or secure.

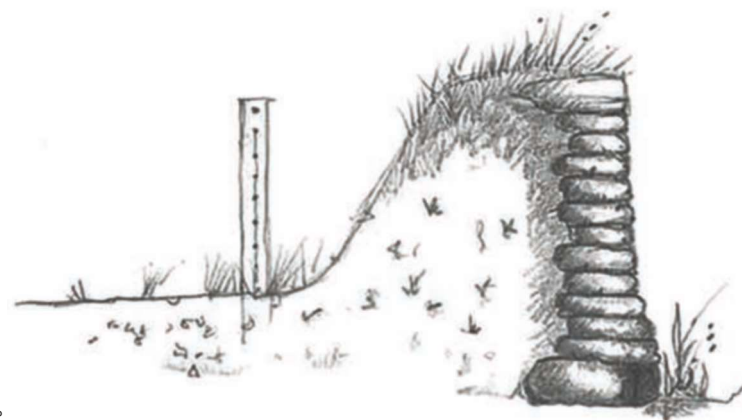
The section of wall between Little and Great Ensworthy is the last piece of wall to be repaired and the most challenging. Its completion, with the help of a Capital RPA/Natural England grant, concludes a major conservation exercise begun in 2011 when the farm at Great Ensworthy came under a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. This encouraged and enabled us to repair and reinstate the integrity of the corn ditch for the whole of the south and west boundaries.

The scope of the works involved extensive preparations:

- An ecology survey and report by Chris Turner of Lakeway Ecology
- BT and Western Power cables and poles diversion to allow for tree works
- A Forestry Commission felling licence for the removal of invasive overgrown sycamores
- An arboricultural survey and report by Adam Thompson of Chagford to assess the condition of the principal trees to be retained and to define the necessary tree surgery

The main walling works were carried out by M G Clark Contracting of Moretonhampstead and subsequent stock fencing on the internal boundary by Matt Johns of Okehampton.

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Corn ditch with stock fence on the field side



The last stretch of wall before restoration

In summary the grant requirements were as follows:

- Build the bank back to its original height and profile to reflect the other banks found locally, and work to minimise tree disturbance
- Carefully strip any loose stone back by hand, without disturbing the basal courses, until there are firm stones to build on and use the original facing stone if available
- Build the stone up on courses, using smaller stones nearer the top and to local tradition and back fill each course with earth and small stones
- Tamp each course down to form a solid core before continuing the next course
- Build the face of the bank so it has a slight 'batter' (slope) and finish off the top with a layer of turf or topsoil depending on local practice
- Remove any surplus earth-fill and stones on completion of the work and restore the ground around it

Towards the end of May this year, Kevin Clark and his son started to rebuild the remaining unrestored stretch of wall (they had been the contractors for the previous sections of work). The

work was complicated by the stream that runs immediately next to the wall on the moorland side but which was successfully piped temporarily where required. Fortunately, the weather was mostly dry and the stream ran low.

It took the Clarks three weeks to complete the wall, often working until early evening before returning home to care for their own farm.

Once the wall was complete, the field side was re-banked and then stock fenced. Over the

winter we will plant a selection of broadleaved tree species such as oak, definitely ash, beech and hawthorn. The sycamores will reseed themselves!

Our hope is that this work helps to ensure the continuation of traditional walling and hedging skills which in the past were an integral part of the management of the farm, though nowadays they often rely on government support. We want these boundary walls to make a long-term contribution to this beautiful and very public part of the moor.



Restoration complete

Calendar of Forthcoming Events 2022–2023



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Songs of Dartmoor with Jim Causley and Bill Murray • Two Bridges Hotel, Princetown PL20 6SW • Friday 7 October 2022 • 7.30pm

Our evening in the company of Jim Causley and Bill Murray, which had to be cancelled last year, has now been rescheduled. Please note the change of venue to the Two Bridges Hotel.

In this special performance, Jim explains the sources of the songs and the research that has brought them back from the past. Hosted

and accompanied by our own Bill Murray and with special guests Val and Graham Lobb from Whitchurch Down.

Songs, talk, tea and biscuits: members and non-members welcome. Tickets £10 each. Please book by Friday 30 September, at dartmoorsociety.com/events or ring Bill on 01647 231297.

What lies beneath? • The Sacred Uplands of Dartmoor – the premiere of a new film by Chris Chapman • Jubilee Hall, Chagford TQ13 8DP • Friday 18 November 2022 • RELUCTANTLY POSTPONED DUE TO UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

Visit to Ashburton town and museum • Wednesday 15 February 2023 • 2.00pm

A guided walk round the ancient stannary town of Ashburton followed by a visit to the Ashburton History

Museum. Details to follow in a Members' Update.

Farmers' Forum with Dr Adrian Colston • Venue to be confirmed • Wednesday 29 March 2023

A discussion of the work of Dartmoor hill farmers and of what impending land management policy changes might mean for their future. Details to follow in a Members' Update.

Dartmoor Society Annual General Meeting • Venue to be confirmed • Saturday 29 April 2023

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Pristine blanket bog on the slopes of Cut Hill

Membership Matters, September 2022

Subscriptions

At our AGM in May this year, a motion was carried to increase the subscription rates. The new rates are:

Single Membership Increased from £14 to £17
Family Membership Increased from £21 to £25
Life Membership Increased from £280 to £340

We proposed this modest increase to cover the production of the Newsletter. The majority of our income is spent on professional costs for its design, printing and posting. The articles are all sourced or written in-house at no cost. We find that all our expenses have increased over the years since the last increase and although our finances are healthy, we want to keep them so.

- If you pay by standing order, please ask your bank to change the amount you pay from 1 January. This is easy to do online if you use online banking.
- If you pay by bank transfer or by Paypal via the website, or by cheque, please pay the new amount on your renewal date as of 1 January – and do please consider setting up a standing order.

PO Box Closure

Please note that the Dartmoor Society no longer has a PO Box address. Please email any general

enquiries to info@dartmoorsociety.com and membership enquiries to membership@dartmoorsociety.com. Any written correspondence should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Andrew John, at Larkhill, Devon House Drive, Bovey Tracey, Devon TQ13 9HA.

Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid allows us to claim an additional 25p for every £1 you donate to the Dartmoor Society at no cost to yourself. Please contact Andrew John on membership@dartmoorsociety.com or 07472 662250 if you have not already completed a Gift Aid declaration or if you are unsure if you have already done so.

Obituaries

Mark Beeson (1954–2022)

Mark Beeson founded MED Theatre in 1989 and wrote and directed more than 40 plays that were performed by amateurs and toured across Devon. He was an inspiring writer, director and teacher who stoically bore decades of spinal pain from ankylosing spondylitis.

Born in Canada, he moved to a Dartmoor farm with his parents at the age of five and was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he switched from classics to human sciences. He later gained an MPhil in primate ecology from Exeter University.

It was while working with a primatologist in Malawi that he observed the interaction of a 'multi-generational assembly' of blue monkeys that was to inform his founding of MED, the Manaton and East Dartmoor Theatre. The casts of his plays could number as many as 40 people ranging from children to pensioners.

Some of his work was broadcast on BBC radio; he also founded and edited a free community magazine, *The Dart*, from 1981 to 2001. His plays were rooted in Dartmoor and performances of his most recent and topical work, 'Peat', which were in rehearsal at the time of his death in early March, went ahead as planned.

He is survived by his two children, four grandchildren and three siblings.

With thanks to Tom Greeves for permission to base the above on his obituary of Mark Beeson that appeared in The Guardian on 29 April 2022.

Bernard Raeke (1933–2022)

Bernard Raeke, who was honorary treasurer of the Dartmoor Society from 1998 to 2003, died on 27 April 2022, aged 89.

He was born in Hamburg in January 1933. His father, Dr Walter Raeke, was a prominent Nazi lawyer and member of the Reichstag from 1933–1938, whose legal career came to an end in 1937 when it was discovered that he had been a member of a masonic lodge. His mother Magda

was an actress. Bernard himself witnessed the bombing of Hamburg in July 1943 and the terrible firestorm it caused.

He joined the medical division of Philips in Hamburg in 1955 and remained with that firm for 40 years, working in senior positions in Iran, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Argentina, Egypt and Germany. He was a gifted linguist.

He and his wife Gisela holidayed in Devon and enjoyed playing golf at the Manor House Hotel (now Bovey Castle) at Moretonhampstead. He retired in 1996 and he and Gisela bought Seymour House in Yelverton. Two years later he volunteered to join the fledgling committee of the newly-created Dartmoor Society, being one of a group of like-minded west Dartmoor residents, the others being Keith Strelling and Graham Ledger, later joined by Bernard's neighbour David Keeling in 1999.

I have memories of him driving his sizeable and expensive car along narrow, wet and somewhat muddy lanes in order to attend committee meetings, and sometimes getting lost in the dark.

We owe him a special debt of gratitude for taking on the role of treasurer in the formative years of the Society. His wife Gisela predeceased him.

Tom Greeves, with thanks to David Keeling and Mike Hedges for providing biographical information.

Retiring Membership Secretary

Wilf Hodges has been our membership secretary for six years. This has been a period of technical change and increasing demands in relation to data protection and regulatory compliance. Wilf has undertaken much work to keep us up-to-date with current regulations and has introduced better ways of communicating with members and handling data. We are grateful to him for his dedication and the cheerful, professional way he has interacted with members, answering queries, ensuring that subscriptions are paid and keeping the committee informed about new and existing members.

New Committee Members

Anthea Hoey

After a career as a chartered planner (RTP1), Anthea is now semi-retired. She currently works part-time as a project co-ordinator for Glendinning, who were her clients when she worked in the Exeter office of a large engineering and environmental consultancy. Early in her career she spent four years working for the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

Her childhood family home was near Haytor and she spent one happy summer working for her uncle on his farm near Chagford. She enjoys walking and riding on the moors, both of which are great ways to see and appreciate Dartmoor and meet people.

Bridget Cole

Bridget grew up on a farm and married a Dartmoor farmer, with whom she ran a progressive hill farming business for 45 years. In 2016 she won the Devon 'Best Woman in Farming' award. The farms are now managed by sons Neil and Mathew.

Management of the commons is an important part of the business and Bridget has extensive knowledge of its practices. She has overseen the farm's involvement in successive government land management and farm tourism schemes.

She is keenly aware of the multiple demands made on Dartmoor by government and non-government organisations, visitors, those who move here and those who live and work here and the difficulties they face. She is interested in finding solutions which respect the area's environment and cultural traditions.

In 2020 she graduated from Arts University Plymouth with a degree in Fashion/Apparel Design, specialising in wool, with a view to setting up a manufacturing business on Dartmoor using raw wool from local farms.

Rachel Van der Steen

Rachel was born and brought up in Sticklepath, on the northern edge of Dartmoor and educated at Okehampton School. She worked in London for six years at a parliamentary consultancy and as a research assistant to a member of the House of Lords, before returning to Devon on marriage. She has lived on

Dartmoor for the past 26 years with her husband and three children.

At the age of 50 she undertook a Fine Art degree at Plymouth University, graduating with a First. Her subject matter was threatened or rare species on the moor, such as Vigur's eyebright, the southern damselfly and various lichens. She has continued to interpret these subjects in various media.

New chair

Bill Murray

Our new chair, Bill Murray, has been a member of the Dartmoor Society since its inception in 1998 and is well-known as a musician and performer of traditional unaccompanied Dartmoor songs. He has been seeking out such music for more than 50 years and has been actively involved in the Dartmoor Folk Festival for 36 years. In 2011 his work was recognised when he received the Dartmoor Society award for 'for nurturing the craft of Dartmoor song'.

Bill moved to Dartmoor as a boy from London and attended Okehampton Grammar School in the 1960s, where he became interested in folk singing and playing the concertina. Through the famous Dartmoor musician and singer Bob Cann he met the older generation of singers, musicians, step dancers and storytellers at a time when many of the ancient traditions and the culture associated with the northern slopes of Dartmoor were fast disappearing.

In the late 1970s he helped Westward Television produce two films of Dartmoor dialect entertainment that continue to be enjoyed by modern audiences. He also has close family ties with the farming community, giving him a deep understanding of current land management issues which, combined with his interest in staging public events, makes him an excellent ambassador for the Dartmoor Society.

Since the appearance of the last Newsletter, we have welcomed the following new members to the Dartmoor Society:

Endymion Beer
Dr P J French
James Fulton
Anne Jones
Sharon McQuillin
Chris Shirley
Robert Smyth

Dave Snow
Louise Snow
Arnaud Soirat
Andrew Strong
Andrew Terry
Gill Thornton

The Dartmoor Society

*An independent voice for those who find
Dartmoor a source of livelihood or inspiration*

President: Peter Beacham OBE | 01392 435074

Executive Committee

Chair: Bill Murray | 01647 231297 | dartmoorbill@yahoo.com

Vice Chair: Nick Fennemore | 01647 433749 |
canonfennemore@btinternet.com

Honorary Secretary: Caya Edwards | 07971 916662 |
secretary@dartmoorsociety.com

Honorary Treasurer: Tom Orchard | 01822 853826 | tlorchard7@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Annabel Crowley | 01647 433454 |
annabeljwc@gmail.com

Membership Secretary: Andrew John | 07472 662250 |
membership@dartmoorsociety.com

Events: Bill Murray | 01647 231297 | dartmoorbill@yahoo.com

Publicity: Anthea Hoey | 01626 362003 | anthea_hoey@fastmail.fm

Committee Member: Layland Branfield | laylandbranfield@gmail.com

Committee Member: Steve Alford | dartmooralfie@outlook.com

Committee Member: Rachel Van der Steen | ensworthy@gmail.com

Committee Member: Bridget Cole | bridgetcole200@gmail.com

**www.dartmoorsociety.com
info@dartmoorsociety.com**

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