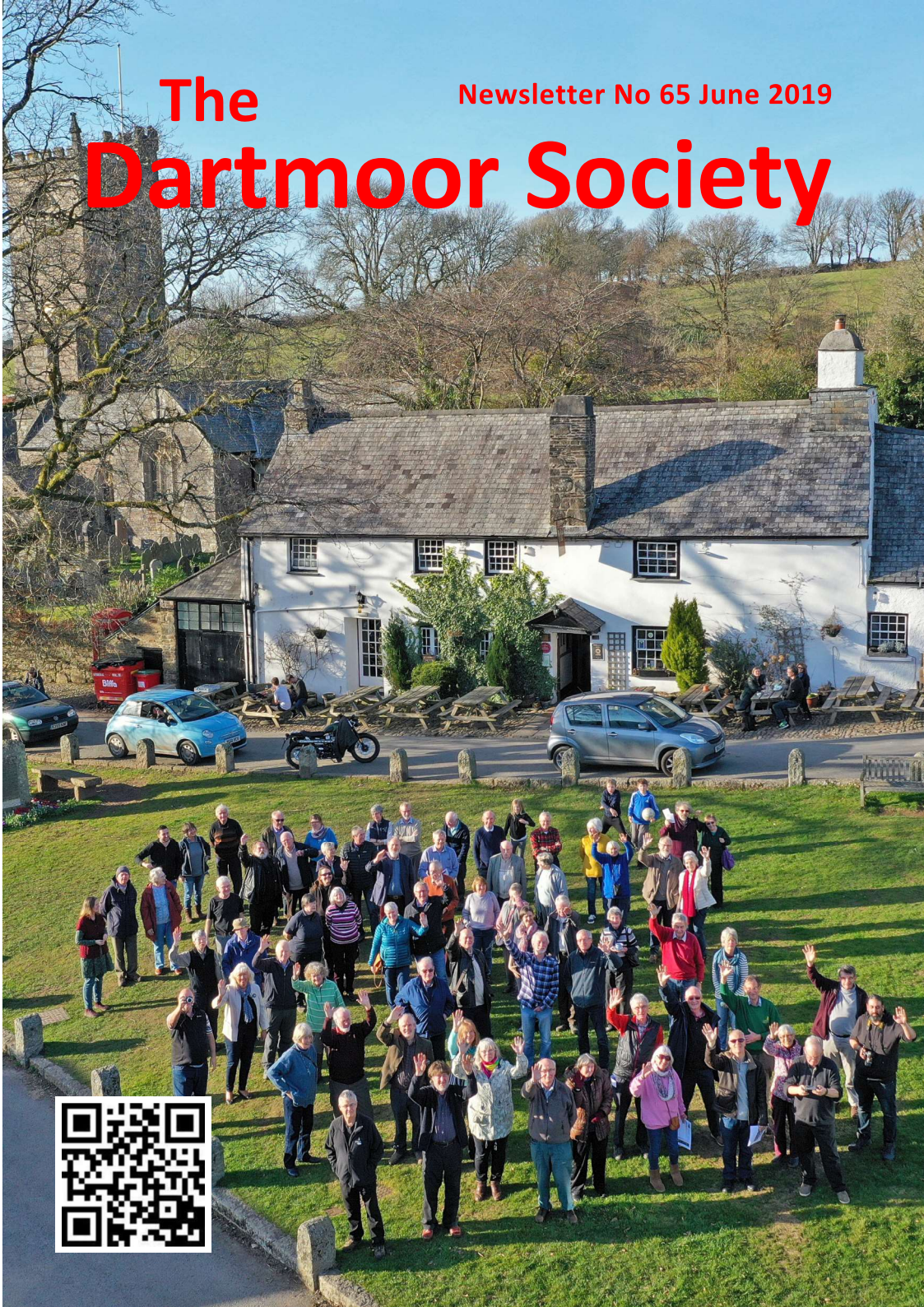
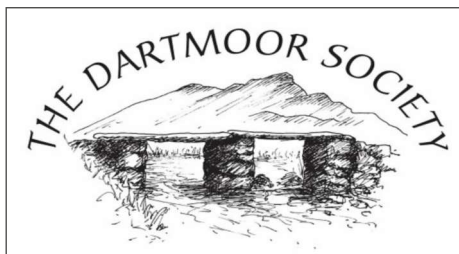


# The Dartmoor Society

Newsletter No 65 June 2019







Established 1998  
Registered Charity No 1111066

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

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**Front cover:** Attendees of the VR event on Meavy green (see p28) –  
*University of Birmingham HIT Team*

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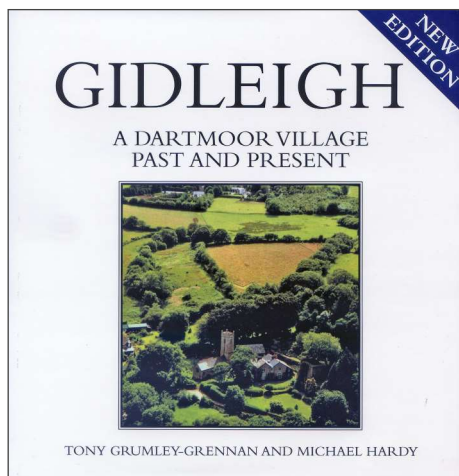
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# SOCIETY NEWS

## Gidleigh

### A Dartmoor Village Past and Present



A new edition of a book on Gidleigh by Tony Grumley-Grennan and Michael Hardy has been published recently. First published in 2000, this welcome edition has some revised and new content including (pp187-8) an account of the Dartmoor Society's Gidleigh Day (looking at vegetation on the common) in 2018, plus historic livestock figures which were supplied by The Dartmoor Society.

Co-author Michael Hardy and his wife Swana were recipients of The Dartmoor Society Award in 2012 for their

conservation of Gidleigh Castle. The hardback book costs £20 and was launched in Gidleigh Village Hall on Thursday 4 April. Anyone wishing to obtain a copy by post should email Michael Hardy at [Hardym42@gmail.com](mailto:Hardym42@gmail.com) or write to him at Castle House, Gidleigh, Newton Abbot, TQ13 8HR.

## 2019 Christmas Card Update

In our October Newsletter we requested members to submit digital photographs that would be suitable for our 2019 Christmas cards and we are delighted to announce the results. Out of a choice of 16 excellent images 'Emsworthy Farm' and 'Haytor Down', both taken by Nigel Machin, achieved the highest scores from our Executive Committee. They are available in packs of ten cards, five of each image, with envelopes and will be priced the same as the last two years at only £3.50p per pack (see the advert on p35 for details). Our sincere thanks to everyone who participated in this initiative.

## Mires Project Update

In May 2018 Defra awarded £2 million (out of a national sum of £10m) towards a peatland restoration project covering Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor. Of this some £1.5 million was allocated to Dartmoor (the disproportionate amount is mainly due to the cost of £600,000 for investigation into unexploded ordnance). The Defra money is only for capital costs and includes nothing for essential monitoring or research.

Four areas are being targeted – Flat Tor Pan (an extension of the previously worked area), Amicombe (the old Rattlebrook Peatworks), Hangingstone (western slopes) and Redlake (old clayworks). The three new areas (Amicombe, Hangingstone and Redlake) are not similar to the mires targeted 2010-2015 which were undisturbed and healthy plateau mires, up to 7m deep and up to 11,000 years old. The new areas are on hillslopes (Hangingstone and Amicombe) or where there has been human disturbance (Amicombe and Redlake) through peat digging.



Machine dug pond 0.75m deep Tom Greeves

Elisabeth and I visited Flat Tor Pan on 17 March. Extensive piles of wooden planks were seen (for blocking gullies) and numerous ponds newly dug by machine (there was one machine on site). These ponds are hazardous both to livestock and walkers being up to 0.75m deep, and hardly suitable for dunlin which frequent shallow pools.



Timber for blocking gullies

Tom Greeves

A visit to Amicombe on 26 March found two machines at work on a hillslope between Green Tor and Bleak House. This area has some very old and shallow drainage gullies, all revegetated naturally, with no sign of any bare peat, erosion, or water. The two pleasant young men from the Pennines who had brought their machines on a 7½ hour

journey down the motorway, were finding it quite a struggle, even with GPS, to identify the gullies which they were required to 'block'. They said the ground was 'hard' ie not soft. They will return in August for 16 more weeks of work, which is scheduled to include flying in granite boulders by helicopter!



Newly dug drainage channel

Tom Greeves

Nearer the site of the old Rattlebrook Peatworks complex machines had dug a substantial drain to remove water from a track – which, one might think, rather defeats the object of 'rewetting'!

We know that rates of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are higher now than they have been for some 800,000 years. We know that Dartmoor peat stores carbon. We know that by blocking 'gullies' superficially wet areas will be formed

upslope of them. But no evidence has been presented that the condition and behaviour of Dartmoor peat is a cause for concern compared to its condition and behaviour over centuries or millennia. All landscapes erode eventually, and water must travel downslope, but we have not observed the Dartmoor landscape long enough to be confident that there are issues relating to Dartmoor peat that are different in a significant way from the variations of behaviour adapting to different climatic conditions over the past eleven millennia or so. The relative lack of monitoring is worrying. Had rigorous monitoring started in 2007 we would have had 12 years of data by now. Disturbance of the peat and creation of ponds



Blocking of drains near Green Tor

Tom Greeves

increases the release of methane which is thirty times more damaging than carbon dioxide as a heat-trapping gas. And the intrusion of machines and alien materials into high moorland is offensive to many.

*Tom Greeves*

## Forum of The Devonshire Association

Wednesday 13 March 2019

On Wednesday 13 March the Devonshire Association held one of its half-yearly forums in the meeting room at Parke (headquarters of the National Park Authority). These forums are meetings where its officers and representatives of its fifteen branches and sections meet to discuss matters of policy and organisation. On this occasion the association invited three sister organisations, all with a particular interest in Dartmoor, to address the forum so as to explore possibilities for collaboration. The National Park Authority spoke first, represented by its Chief Executive Dr Kevin Bishop. Next Norman Cowling and Phil Hutt gave a presentation on behalf of the Dartmoor Preservation Association. Then came The Dartmoor Society, with Wilf Hodges speaking. All three organisations mentioned their history, their recent activities and their future plans.

Since all three organisations are devoted in different ways to supporting and protecting the moor, there were naturally some overlaps, and not just in generalities. The Dartmoor Society and the National Park Authority presented very similar photographs of Flat Tor Pan and the machinery brought there for the Mires Project – ironically, since the authority and the society have taken up diametrically opposed views on the likely benefits of the use of this machinery. The Dartmoor Society and the Dartmoor Preservation Association both mentioned their support for Professor Tim Harrod's splendid soil map of North-Eastern Dartmoor. All three organisations spoke more generally about the collection and archiving of information about Dartmoor.

What this will mean for future collaborations is still to be worked out. One immediate outcome was that The Dartmoor Society accepted a kind invitation from Sheila Phillips of the William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust to make a visit later this year to their centre at Buckfastleigh and learn about their recent archaeological work there (see p40). We also plan to include further links to other societies on our website.

There were several other Dartmoor Society members present besides Wilf. The warm-hearted Chairman of the meeting (and of the Devonshire Association) was Peter Beacham OBE, who has also been President of The Dartmoor Society since it was founded in 1998 by Tom and Elisabeth Greeves. Other Dartmoor Society



members present included Dr Sue Andrew, Jonathan Aylett and Dr Helen Wilson; Helen urged those present to sign up for The Dartmoor Society visit and talk in June on the wood-carving Pinwill sisters (see p37). Tom and Lis Greeves were absent but very much in people's minds. A common comment was that with Tom's retirement from Chairman of The Dartmoor Society, his leadership on Dartmoor matters will be hugely missed, although Dartmoor planners may have a quieter life!

Wilf Hodges

## Summer Shows

The Dartmoor Society is pleased to announce that it will be attending both Chagford Show on Thursday 15 August and Widecombe Fair on Tuesday 10 September. We will be delighted to see everyone attending these shows so please do look out for us and visit us on the stand to have a chat as well as enjoying all the other exhibits. See you there.

## Correction

Our apologies to Tony Hill for incorrectly reporting on p29 of *Newsletter 64* that he said the ballast was in Switzerland. It should have correctly read Meldon Quarry.

## The Dartmoor Society 21<sup>st</sup> AGM

Scorriton Village Hall, Saturday 13 April 2019

Before the formal business of the AGM, Emma Stockley, Community Heritage Officer for Dartmoor National Park Authority, gave an illustrated talk about community heritage in practice on Dartmoor with particular reference to the Parishscapes project. Afterwards, Chairman Dr Tom Greeves gave a very warm vote of thanks to Emma and stated that he considered the project to be one of the most important to have been initiated by Dartmoor National Park, equal in significance to the Moor Memories project. Emma kindly forwarded a summary of her talk which is reproduced below.

## Parishscapes and the Dartmoor Community

I work for Dartmoor National Park and my role is to deliver a number of community heritage projects, including Parishscapes, on behalf of a Landscape Partnership Scheme called *Moor than meets the eye* (MTMTE). The scheme has run for almost five years and has received funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Parishscapes is one of MTMTE's 28 heritage projects. Through Parishscapes, each of the fourteen parishes within the MTMTE area has access to a grant-pot of £10,000 and the support of the Community Heritage Officer (myself). Anyone in the parish can apply for a grant to support projects that focus on built, cultural or natural community heritage. Since 2015, Parishscapes has funded around 45 projects and participants have given over 17,000 hours of their time to conserving, researching and celebrating Dartmoor's heritage. Last year Parishscapes was shortlisted for a National Parks UK volunteering award, great recognition for all those involved.

## Archaeology

Parishscapes-funded archaeology projects are immensely popular. Community excavations have taken place in Lustleigh, where a post-medieval farmstead was excavated in 2017, and at Widecombe's Old Pig House in 2018. North Bovey Parish have undertaken a geo-physics project to locate the remains of the Old Court House, and this has been followed-up with a number of test-pitting events.

## Research

Many Parishscapes projects include a strong element of research and Moretonhampstead's Life in the Manor of Doccombe project is a good example of this. Members of Moretonhampstead History Society have researched the hamlet of Doccombe's past over the last 4000 years as well as its curious ties to the murder of Thomas Beckett in 1170.

The Guild of St Lawrence used a Parishscapes grant to undertake a four year project into medieval Ashburton. This involved an excavation at St Andrews Church and a play by MED Theatre, exploring the life of Water Stapledon, Bishop of Exeter.

A new history group has been established in Ilsington and members have undertaken research into Captain Quelch who, in the 1930s, was instrumental in transforming slum dwellings in the parish.

## Publications

Parishscapes has supported numerous publications including *Captain Quelch* and *Interwar Ilsington* published by Ilsington History Group, *A Devon Dialect Alphabet* published by Widecombe History Group and most recently, an updated version of the *Gidleigh* book. A publication is due shortly on Dartmoor's clam bridges, written by Peter F Mason.

## Creative arts

Two parishes where heritage has been explored in a creative way are Throwleigh

Performance of *Colonel Heath's Hut*

Emma Stockley

and Bovey Tracey. Led by a group of local artists, the Granite Elements project looked at how Bovey Tracey's granite quarrying past has shaped the heritage of the parish and how this connects local people to the landscape. The project involved poetry workshops, lino printing and flag-making.

Throwleigh held two community arts performances, each seen by over 300 people. The first, *Miss Varwells Throwleigh*, told the true story of two unmarried sisters, Emmie and Michael Varwell, who arrived in 1909 to set up home in Throwleigh. *Colonel Heath's Hut* told the story of the community's 'temporary' Nissen hut village hall which, seventy years later, is still the parish hall today!

### Conservation

Conserving heritage is a recurrent theme in Parishscapes projects. Lustleigh Archive have led the way by using a Parishscapes grant to conserve both their tithe and 1941 area map. In addition, the Bovey Tracey tithe map has been conserved and the granite tramway regularly 'spring cleaned' with the assistance of the DNPA Rangers, Yarner Woods' Albert Knott and teams of volunteers.

### Restoring built heritage

The restoration of the Ten Commandments Stones monument on Buckland Beacon was the focus of Buckland-in-the-moor's Parishscapes project. Commissioned in 1928 to celebrate the rejection by parliament of the proposed new common book of prayer, the monument was restored over three months in 2018 by Bath-based conservator and lettering expert Iain Cotton.

Other projects that have restored built heritage include the Dickford Bridge project in North Bovey and setting-up Dartmoor's first micro-heritage centre in a redundant phone box in Princetown. The phone box now houses research into those from the Dartmoor Forest parish that went to fight in the First World War, but who sadly never made it home.

The Old Pig House in Widecombe is another fantastic example of restored built heritage. The project, led by Widecombe History Group, saw the building

restored using traditional materials and techniques as well as the creation of a small memorial garden.

We're in a time of great political and global uncertainty; it is not yet clear how Brexit will affect Dartmoor and its communities; we're awaiting the results of the Glover Review of National Parks and AONBs; and we're considering the impact of climate change on the moor. In times such as these, I feel that it is especially important to pursue

community heritage, to explore local history and cultural heritage and celebrate sense of place. When we have little control over the global situation, we can certainly find meaning and connection at a local level – with both the landscape and as part of the Dartmoor community. The threads of all the stories that have emerged from Parishscapes have woven together to create a rich and vibrant narrative of Dartmoor's cultural heritage and this enables us to feel part of something much bigger than just our own lives.

It is hard to explain in words the togetherness that Parishscapes has fostered in many of the communities. A feeling that we're all working together to celebrate, restore, understand and conserve a much-loved landscape for future generations. This is the foremost legacy of the project – one of enthusiasm and ambition to continue many of the project activities. But overwhelmingly, Parishscapes is a celebration of people and place and what a community working together can achieve.

In the words of one participant: 'I enjoyed creating something special and watching people blossom in ways they never thought possible'. That same volunteer also suggests that Parishscapes serves as a reminder that 'history repeats itself in communities and that is one of the lovely aspects of human nature, providing a sense of continuity and peace and reinforcing your part in the life of a Dartmoor village'.

For more information please contact Emma Stockley [emma@moorthanmeetstheeye.org](mailto:emma@moorthanmeetstheeye.org) or visit [www.moorthanmeetstheeye.org](http://www.moorthanmeetstheeye.org)



Restoring the Ten Commandments Stones

Emma Stockley

## Minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> AGM

Tom Greeves welcomed everyone to the 21st Annual General Meeting of The Dartmoor Society and explained that as this was his last AGM as Chairman he would oversee items 1 to 5 on the Agenda and then he would step down and hand over to President Peter Beacham for item 6.

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jonathan, Moira and Ralph Aylett, Jenny Bennett and John Mather, Francis and Malcolm Billinge, Bob Bruce, Myra Dupuis, Jane Emberson and Robert Powell, Dawn Hatton, Tony Hill, Rosemary Howell, Jeanne Silvestri, John Walling, Jean and Martin Webb, Chris Wright, and Mo and Mike Wright.

### 2. Minutes of 20th AGM

The Minutes of the 20th (2018) AGM, which had been published in *Newsletter 62* and circulated at the Meeting, were approved unanimously as a correct record, and were duly signed and dated by the Chairman Dr Tom Greeves.

### 3. Chairman's Report

This was read by Dr Tom Greeves and is printed in full in *Newsletter 65*. There were no questions regarding his report.

### 4. Report of the Honorary Treasurer for the Year ended 31 December 2018

Tom Orchard introduced the Annual Accounts for the Year Ending 31 December 2018. These had previously been circulated with *Newsletter 64* and he gave thanks to everyone who had paid their subscriptions on time and also to everyone who had completed a Gift Aid Form.

Membership subscriptions totalled much the same as the previous year at £4,706 (£4,722), and Gift Aid was down at £894.56 (£1,002.53).

However, overall the income was greater than in 2017. The Debate made a contribution of £257.32 in 2018 and as it did not take place in 2017 this income contributed to the increase.

An event that contained advanced bookings was Making the Invisible Visible with an amount of £158.00 and this income has been left in 2018.

Costs overall were similar to the previous year except for the donation of £4,948.74 made to the DRMF in 2018. The new PO Box has been opened in Torquay, but as an overlap precaution the old PO Box in Tavistock has been extended for one final year to catch any correspondence and cheques that were originated by members who have not noticed the change.

Book sales have been very good in 2018 (£530.52), the previous year equivalent figure being £359.00.

Tom Orchard explained that the Accounts this year had an extra column created for the Dartmoor Resonance Music Festival (DRMF). The DRMF was a dominant feature of 2018. Separate accounts are available, but the overall contribution at the end by the Society was £5,948.74 (which was drawn from the General Bank Account (£4,948.74) and the Research Fund Account (£1,000). The special Event Account, opened to deal with the revenues and costs of the DRMF, now stands at zero, and will shortly be closed.

A look at the Society's funds as a whole shows a total of £33,821.26 at the end of 2018, the comparative figure at the end of 2017 being £31,442.46, so the Society is in good financial health.

Sue Andrew formally proposed the Accounts and Peter Fillingham seconded them and then they were unanimously approved by the Meeting.

Tom Greeves thanked Tom Orchard on behalf of the membership for all his hard work and for his excellent maintenance of the Dartmoor Society Accounts.

### 5. Election of a new Officer position of Vice Chairman

The following Motion on the Agenda (previously approved by the Executive Committee at their meeting on 22nd November 2018) was

*That a new Officer position of Vice-Chairman shall be created.*

Tom Greeves asked for any comments regarding this, and there were none. The Motion was proposed by Tom Greeves and seconded by Chris Chapman and was unanimously approved by the meeting.

In view of the fact that the new position of Vice Chairman had been approved Tom Greeves then introduced the second Motion on the Agenda:

*If the above Motion is approved: That Section 8 (Officers) of the Constitution of the Charity will now read: 'The Officers of the Charity shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor. All Officers shall be eligible for membership of such other sub-committees as shall be appointed.'*

Tom then asked for comments:

Sue Andrew said she wondered whether the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman should be more appropriately named Chair and Vice-Chair so that the role sounded more suited to both genders. A number of Members had views in support of the idea as well as against it, so Tom then asked if anyone

wished to formally propose a new motion to amend the titles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman to Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. Caya Edwards proposed and Jill Rogers seconded this. The motion was put to the vote and was lost with 24 against and 16 in favour. Tom thanked Sue for raising the topic and said that quite possibly the subject may come up again at some time in the future when there are proposals to amend the Constitution.

Tom returned to the second motion on the Agenda. This was proposed by Barrie Quilliam and seconded by Judy Ehlen and was unanimously approved.

Tom Greeves then stood down as Chairman and handed over to the President, Peter Beacham.

## 6. Election of Executive Committee Members

**Chairman:** TBA

Peter explained that in view of the fact that nobody had applied for the Chairman position this role will stay vacant for the duration.

Peter then moved on to the next position of:

**Vice-Chairman:** Alan Endacott had been proposed by Elisabeth Greeves and seconded by Tom Greeves. This motion was unanimously approved, and Peter was the first to offer Alan his congratulations.

Peter then handed over to Alan Endacott for the election of the following Officers:  
**Honorary Treasurer:** Tom Orchard proposed by Nigel Rendle and seconded by Tanya Welch.

**Membership Secretary:** Wilfrid Hodges proposed by Judy Ehlen and seconded by Marcia Babington.

**General Committee:** Liz Miall proposed by Tom Orchard and seconded by Alan Endacott.

All three positions were approved unanimously by the Meeting.

## 7. Election of Independent Examiner of Accounts

Tom Orchard proposed that Simon Murray should continue as our Independent Examiner of Accounts because he does such an excellent job and is very content to continue in this role. This was seconded by Peter Fillingham and unanimously approved by the Meeting.

## 8. A.O.B

No matters were raised.

Alan Endacott officially closed the Meeting at 4.03 pm.

## Chairman's Report

This has been a very special year as it has contained two unique elements – the Dartmoor Resonance Music Festival, celebrating 20 years of our Society, and what has become known as the Gidleigh Day, when we hosted an event, attended by a wide range of interested parties, which raised nationally important issues about designations on moorland and the management of the cultural and natural environment. I will return to both of these later in my report, but first I would like to look back on our more usual range of activities.

After the AGM, the year's activities began with a visit in May to the remarkable Hillyfield Woodland, hosted by Doug King-Smith. This was a revelation for many of our members in terms of woodland management and, for some, the consumption of bamboo! Hillyfield will feature later this afternoon.

The Society has consistently supported contemporary military training on Dartmoor, with all the conservation safeguards now in place, and in June we visited Okehampton Camp where Lt Col Crispin d'Apice was our host and Lt Col Tony Clark our guide. Paul Fletcher and Mark Bullock then took us onto the Range itself. Altogether it was a most instructive visit.

In July we experimented with a new venue for our barbecue – at Brentor. A perfect summer's evening enabled an enjoyable and fascinating walk around Brentor itself (in my opinion potentially one of the most important archaeological sites on Dartmoor, yet one of the most neglected by academics). This was followed by a barbecue at Brentor Village Hall which proved to be an ideal location.

In August we experienced one of the most informative and interesting farm visits we have had – at Corringdon Farm, South Brent, hosted by Philip and Charlotte French. The complexity and science of modern hillfarming, and the care and attention given to animals and the landscape, shone through.

Our September event was a memorable visit to Lew Trenchard and Coombe Trenchard so intimately linked with the Revd Sabine Baring-Gould of Dartmoor renown.

Our debate titled 'Are We using Dartmoor's Stone Resources Wisely?' was held in October at Meldon. It was fascinating to have speakers from both Glendinning's Linhay Quarry at Ashburton and from Yennadon Quarry at



Dousland which are so different in scale yet both very important to Dartmoor – we have had members' visits to both these quarries in previous years. From the start of the Society we had envisaged debates and events exploring the core resources of Dartmoor and the subject of Stone nicely completed a suite of topics we have already covered, including Water, Woodland, Vegetation, Soils, Orchards, China Clay, Renewable Energy and Railways.

In November in Bovey Tracey Adrian Colston gave us one of our most significant and thought-provoking Research Lectures with its intriguing title 'Why We Disagree about Moorland Management and Grazing Regimes – the Different Narratives of the Dartmoor Commons'.

In February a capacity audience attended 'Making the Invisible Visible' at Meavy, given by Professor Bob Stone and his team. Virtual Reality technology has enormous potential for interpretation and exploration of Dartmoor. This was a joint venture with the Yelverton & District Local History Society which proved very successful.

Our most recent event, in March, was a visit in fine weather to the newly refurbished medieval longhouse at Higher Uppacott – this proved so popular that two groups were accommodated.

The Society also now regularly attends the Chagford Show, Widecombe Fair and the twice-yearly Letterbox Meets, all of which are good platforms for the Society.

As a Society we keep an eye on planning applications and occasionally comment on them, sometimes after being alerted by a member (or non-member). I was able to appear on behalf of the Society at an appeal hearing in April in support of Hillyfield Woodland. We also do our best to comment on Dartmoor National Park Local Plans and Management Plans, and on national consultations such as on Designated Landscapes.

Our President, in his capacity as Chairman of the Devonshire Association, invited us to attend a Devonshire Association Forum meeting in March. Wilf Hodges gave a presentation about the Society and made contact with a wide range of people and specialist groups with whom we hope to explore joint ventures.

I have attended meetings of the Peatland Partnership during the year – strongly supported by at least one grazier member of the group, we are very much minority voices questioning aspects of the unnecessary, intrusive and expensive

'juggernaut' of the second phase of the Mires Project which has begun work at Flat Tor Pan, Amicombe and Hangingstone. Redlake will follow. Contractors include some from the Pennines and Scotland. Large quantities of wood have been taken out to Flat Tor Pan, where I fear the much vaunted dunlin would drown in the machine-dug ponds which are up to 0.75m deep. Granite boulders are destined to be flown by helicopter to Amicombe. Last month two machines (brought down the motorway on a 7½ hour journey) were working near Bleak House on a firm and stable hillside with no evidence of bare peat, erosion or running water.

All these activities and comments are written up in our splendid Newsletter which, since February 2018, has been edited by Steve Mason. I cannot emphasise too strongly how important the Newsletter is as a place of record of the Society's activities and ideas, and as a repository of high quality information. The possibility of digitising back copies is to be explored by your Committee.

The above-mentioned activity, all of which requires careful preparation, is of course only part of what the Society does – your Executive Committee has met regularly on a bi-monthly basis – I was privileged to attend my 124th such meeting only recently (actually it was the 126th I have chaired as there were two meetings before the formal creation of the Society!). A great debt is owed to the various officers and general members of the Committee, without whom the Society would not function and without whose support I, as Chairman, would not have been able to fulfil my role. Our Honorary Secretary, Tanya Welch, is a keystone in the structure of the Society as is our Honorary Treasurer Tom Orchard, Newsletter Editor Steve Mason, and Membership Secretary Wilf Hodges, and you and I are deeply grateful to them. But our general Committee members are also hugely important with their different interests and expertise, and the help they give in organising and setting up events. Caya Edwards maintains our publicity profile through Facebook, Twitter and more conventional media. Chris Wright works wonders with our website (the alliteration of 'w's is intended!). Barrie Quilliam, Fairfax Luxmoore and Alan Endacott are always on hand to assist in all sorts of matters (including manning bookstalls and provision of cakes!). Liz Miall has been co-opted this year and remarkably has managed to attend several events despite fitting in much travelling this year. I do encourage others to offer themselves for co-option – it is a good way of experiencing the work of the Committee without any responsibility!

I must single out two people. The first is Elisabeth, my wife, who is stepping down at this AGM. She has been pre-eminent in her 'Acting' roles – she was Acting Newsletter Editor from 2012-2017 and Acting Honorary Secretary 2010-2011, and has also had two stints as a General Committee member 2011-2012 and 2018-2019. In other words, she has given nine years of formal dedicated service to the Committee and the Society. But, as I am sure you can imagine, behind the scenes she has always been there with me over the past 21 years, as a wise and helpfully critical counsellor, and much more besides, managing merchandise, pricing books, manning stalls, organising Christmas cards, and especially using her editorial, design and photographic skills in creating posters and flyers, for example. Some of you will know that gadgets often get the better of me, but Elisabeth's patience with computers has helped me out of many frustrating situations. It was actually Elisabeth's idea that the Society should be formed. So she has actually completed 21 years of commitment to the Society. The Committee recognised her achievements with a gift last year, but I invite you to show your appreciation today as well.

The second person to single out is our President, Peter Beacham – we have known each other as colleague and friend since the 1970s and I was thrilled when he accepted the invitation to take on the role of President of this new Society (unbelievably, not without dire warnings from certain quarters of the negative effect it would have on his career prospects!). Besides his own considerable expertise Peter is very well connected, as they say, within the field of heritage and cultural management, and he has never wavered in supporting the ethos of this Society and promoting everything we do. We are proud to have had his constant presence – thank you, Peter, and I am delighted that you are continuing as President, at least for the time being.

While talking of people, I must mention a sad loss due to the death of Martin Stephens-Hodge earlier this year. Martin (an art teacher) was one of our most constant and supportive members. More than this, he was instrumental in organising two very successful artistic events – our Lydford Arts Day in September 2010 (reported in *Newsletter 39*) and the Exhibition of Paintings by William Snell Morrish at Chagford in June 2012 (reported in *Newsletter 45*) which he co-organised with Tony Hill. These events involved acquiring scores of paintings and arranging their safe transport and hanging. Martin was a great walker and explorer of the moor, and the work and ethos of the Society never needed explaining to him. My last conversation with him was at Scorhill Circle

in June when he told me how much that place (and Dartmoor as a whole) mattered to him. Our condolences have been passed to his widow Ann.

This brings me back to the two events I mentioned at the start, which encapsulate (very differently) so much of why this Society exists. First, the 9-day Dartmoor Resonance Music Festival in June. This was the most significant cultural event on Dartmoor during 2018, and broke new ground in that nobody had ever previously presented a festival entirely of Dartmoor music, ranging from prehistory to the present day. It complemented perfectly our Dartmoor Literary Festival of 2008. It was four years in the planning and had a budget of £30,000 to which the Society contributed £6000. This means that no less than £24,000 was raised in sponsorship, donations and box office takings. One of our key sponsors, the Leche Trust, was amazed that we had achieved so much with what they considered such a 'modest' budget. The achievement was largely due to the splendid partners we worked with – Simon Ible, Seventh Wave Music, Wren Music and Lucy Luxmoore – without whose encouragement, support and hard work it could not have happened. Martyn Warren, and Kate & Mike Westbrook also deserve special mention as enthusiastic collaborators. All these people were able to engage with numerous richly talented musicians, singers and instrumentalists. We were also very lucky to be able to use the services of Graphic Words for our design elements.

The Festival was a fine example of connection of the Society with those who find Dartmoor 'a source of inspiration'. Total audiences numbered about 800, plus some 300 musicians. We happily coincided with Buckfast Abbey's millennial celebrations and the 700th anniversary of St Eustachius, Tavistock.

The legacy of the Festival is still with us. The music itself will hopefully endure for generations. We commissioned some new music and several world premieres were given. The GRANITE band released a commercial CD (Westbrook Records) of their performance 'GRANITE a soliloquy'. Archive recordings of other performances also exist, as does a video of the Songways pilgrimage from Postbridge to Gidleigh. Our Festival booklet *Dartmoor Resonance & the Story of Dartmoor Music* is safely deposited with the British Library and other copyright libraries for current and future generations to consult – it is the first ever book written about Dartmoor music and contains much historical information, besides being a record of contemporary music and musicians. Anyone who missed this remarkable Festival should acquire our booklet and visit the Society website to read the Report on the Festival. Never to be forgotten was the sight of people



picnicking in Princetown churchyard on a superb June evening, rivalling Glyndebourne, I'm sure!

The second key event of 2018 was our Gidleigh Day held in July, which hopefully will also have an enduring legacy. This had its origins in observance of the changing character of Dartmoor's vegetation since the creation of the Society and our constant aim to support hillfarmers as custodians of the landscape. In 2016 we commissioned (through our Research Fund) Footprint Ecology to carry out a habitat survey of Gidleigh Common and part of Chagford Common. This revealed radical changes to the vegetation since the mid-1990s when English Nature (now Natural England) had prepared its own maps and prescriptions on grazing. In particular there had been a massive increase in the spread of gorse and *Molinia* (Purple moorgrass) which had obscured the nationally significant cultural landscape on the moorland, to the extent that little was visible and people were now confined to relatively narrow paths among knee-high almost impenetrable vegetation. The day, attended by 28 persons from a wide range of relevant bodies, spent the morning walking on Gidleigh Common (Scorhill to Shovel Down) to view its condition, and in the afternoon heard a presentation from myself, which was followed by a general discussion. All were shocked by what they had seen and heard. An attendee commented, 'Only the Society could have got the range of participants together in an open discussion, when people showed their hand, the constraints and possibilities'. The Report on the day is available on our website.

A core argument is that present designations of SSSI, Scheduled Monument and PAL (Premier Archaeological Landscape) have failed to benefit either the natural or cultural environment of Dartmoor's moorland over the past 25 years, and that a radical rethink is needed. We have suggested that these designations should be replaced with one that recognises all moorland as an Ecocultural Zone/Landscape with nature and culture in absolutely equal partnership. We believe this would transform thinking and management and I consider this to be one of the most important ideas that the Society has consistently promoted. I have argued this most recently in an article in *British Archaeology* (May/June 2019). It remains to be seen whether establishment conservation bodies such as Natural England and Historic England will be bold enough to follow this through.

The fact that we as a small, independent and entirely volunteer group (we have a minimum of about 420 members), can hold two events of this calibre and significance in a single year is much to our credit.

21 years is a significant length of time. I may have had the title of Chairman, but this is not my Society – it is yours. You as members are what makes this Society thrive – do encourage others to join us. The ethos of this Society is what makes it different from any other, and what gives it gravitas and respect. We try to see Dartmoor through the eyes of those who depend on it for a livelihood or who find it an inspiration, and we believe strongly in the notion of debate, in research, and constant striving for the highest quality information and presentation – all of which is in accord with our charitable aims which are broadly educational. Our reputation as a reliable source of data and ideas, promulgated without fear or favour, sometimes questioning orthodoxy, depends on this. I wish you and the Society all the very best in the challenging but exciting years to come. Thank you all for your support.

Tom Greeves

## The Dartmoor Society Award 2019

After the formal business of the AGM Alan Endacott announced that the recipients of the 22nd Dartmoor Society Award were Doug and Claire King-Smith and invited Tom Greeves to make the presentation as he had been closely involved with Hillyfield over the years. Tom then delivered the following address:

'We had a Society visit to Hillyfield in May 2018 – a quiet mix of ancient and coniferous woodland and pasture, comprising 46 acres straddling the Harbourne river between South Brent and Dean Prior. All were hugely impressed with the dedication and achievements of Doug, Claire and their helpers in revitalising the ecology and potential of this woodland. Yet, for six years Dartmoor National Park Authority resisted their efforts to obtain planning permission for activities and structures associated with traditional woodland



Claire, Doug and Tom with the award

© Chris Chapman Photography

management, claiming that they were potentially harmful to the 'character and appearance' of the National Park. Happily, in April 2018, at an appeal hearing at which The Dartmoor Society was represented, the National Park backed down and Doug and Claire's long-term plans are now in progress.

Hillyfield Woodland is an inspiration for all woodland owners, as it marries traditional, sustainable working practice, generating useful products and income, as carried on for centuries within Dartmoor woodland, with modern ideas about community and volunteer connection with the land, enhancing local economic and social well-being. It is an outstanding example of what could be replicated many times on Dartmoor and beyond.

This is why I am delighted to present them with this beautiful plate handcrafted by Penny Simpson and Michael Edwards, and inscribed 'for exemplary Hillyfield'.

Doug said it was a real honour and a privilege to accept the award and rather interestingly 13 April marks exactly a year since they were successful in obtaining their planning permission. Claire also spoke and said how much she appreciated all the assistance that Tom had given herself and Doug, and went on to say that she is looking forward to seeing The Dartmoor Society continue to develop its commitment to cultural heritage.

## Special tribute to Tom and Elisabeth Greeves

After the award ceremony Alan Endacott took to the stage to deliver a personal tribute to Tom reflecting back to the first occasion they had met some fifty years ago when Tom had visited Alan's schoolboy museum at Clannaborough. He added that Tom in particular had created an amazing legacy and he felt humbled to be in a position of being Vice-Chairman. He felt that these were very big boots to fill and that Tom would be a very hard act to follow. Alan then handed over to Peter Beacham who delivered the following address:

*What a momentous moment for The Dartmoor Society, for all of us here, and for Tom and Lis! I suspect many of us thought – or perhaps wished – this day would never come, but here we are, and we need to pay our tribute to you for your enduring inspiration and huge achievements and offer you our thanks for all you have done for us over the last 21 years – the first 21 years of our society.*

*I still clearly recall your phone call to me in early 1998 inviting me to consider becoming President of the planned, but as yet unlaunched, new society. I asked what would be different about it, and you immediately explained it would be about the life, work and culture of Dartmoor, always concerned as much about its people as its unique natural and historic environment. With the principled integrity which is your hallmark, you have sustained us in realising that vision, often leading us into taking stands on issues which have been controversial and which have taken a degree of personal courage on your part to pursue. You have never been afraid of speaking truth to power, as I first learned when we were colleagues in the Dartmoor National Park Authority and you were trying to persuade Ian Mercer, the authority's first and widely admired Chief Officer, that the industrial history of the moor was as important as its natural environment – he came round to that in the end, not least thanks to your unrivalled knowledge of Dartmoor's mining history. More recently, in your Presidential Address to the Devonshire Association in 2015, you did not shrink from setting out your life-long belief that the governance of the moor should be very differently conducted than it has been since the creation of the National Park.*

*I once had occasion to talk with Jeremy Hunt in 2010, when he was the newly appointed Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, during which he reminded me, courteously but firmly, that 'heritage' hardly registered on the political Geiger counter – 'even nature issues score higher!' he remarked. I came to see that as a statement of the reality of what we are up against, which make Tom's many achievements with our society all the more remarkable. One of these was the great success of last year's Dartmoor Resonance Music Festival, and Tom, you can be assured your distinguished contribution to the life, work and culture of Dartmoor will resonate down the years to come, as the society you founded comes of age today. We shall continue to pursue our founding objectives, however uncomfortable for us and sometimes for others that may occasionally be.*

*So it is with our heartfelt gratitude, our admiration, and our love, we offer you and Lis these small tokens of our appreciation for all you have done for us.*





Lis receives her bouquet from Peter

Steve Mason

Peter then presented a beautiful bouquet of flowers to Lis and a bespoke ceramic platter to Tom, along with a farewell card signed by members of the Executive Committee. The platter had been hand crafted by Joss Hibbs at Powdermills Pottery and had the following inscription on its reverse:

*Presented to Dr Tom Greeves by the Dartmoor Society at its 21st Annual General Meeting on Saturday 13th April 2019 at*

*Scoriton Village Hall in recognition of an outstanding contribution to Dartmoor's Cultural Heritage. Thrown by Joss Hibbs, Powdermills Pottery using two Dartmoor ball clays from the North and East sides of the Moor. Glaze made from Cherrybrook river gravel (growan). Fired in a wood fuelled kiln at Powdermills.*



Peter presenting the platter to Tom

Steve Mason

Tom said he was absolutely delighted with the plate and added that he has always been a great admirer of Joss' work and greatly valued how much she had connected with The Dartmoor Society.

Peter then presented Tom with a specially mounted tin ingot in the form of an old tin smelter's mark, inscribed 'Greeves' and 'Dartmoor' with The Dartmoor Society logo in

between. It is mounted on a piece of beautiful spalted beech. The inscription on the back reads:

*Presented to Dr Tom Greeves in recognition of an outstanding contribution to Dartmoor's Cultural Heritage. Ingot made from Devon & Cornwall sourced tin by Peter Trebilcock, Blowing House Farm, Par, in conjunction with Neil Mercer. Mounted on Spalted Beech from a Dartmoor grown tree prepared and finished with Linseed Oil by Harry Forbes, Beardown Farm, Princetown.*

Tom gave heartfelt thanks to everyone for the wonderful gifts and all the warm wishes.



Tom displaying his ingot

Steve Mason

Lucy Luxmoore then stood up and said that on behalf of The Dartmoor Society members she very much wanted to say a special 'Thank You' to Tom and to impress upon him how much he was appreciated and how he had been a magnificent source of inspiration to everyone.

Finally, Alan Endacott brought the day's proceedings to a close by thanking everyone involved with the organisation of the AGM and particularly for making it such an unforgettable and special event for Tom and Lis. He then thanked all members for attending and invited everyone to enjoy the fine tea provided by The Dartmoor Society Executive Committee.

*Tanya Welch*



Peter and Tom enjoying a joke

© Chris Chapman Photography

# MEMBER PROFILE

Wilf Hodges

Membership Secretary

Helen and I retired from London University a decade and a half ago. We were both professors; she worked in brain science and stem cells, and I was a mathematical logician – you may have seen my Penguin 'Logic' textbook. She persuaded me that we should retire to a place with an interesting house where the grandchildren would want to come and visit us, and we agreed that the garden should have a river. After a couple of years searching we struck lucky and bought an early nineteenth century granite house with a hectare of land and four rivers. It also contained what used to be the lower dressing floors of the Ramsley Copper Mine below Cosdon Beacon, but at that stage we knew nothing about mines. In fact we assumed there was nothing left of the mine until our grandson Alfie fell into a leat and had to be pulled out by two grown men!



Of the three wheelpits of the Ramsley mine, two were on our land and one of them is still in good condition, though with no wheel. Trying to find someone who could tell us about the mine was one of the things that led us to Tom Greeves and The Dartmoor Society. We did have another route to The Dartmoor Society: we joined the Devon Fungus Group in the days when the late and irreplaceable Gerald Quinn was membership secretary for both the Fungus Group and The Dartmoor Society. Just possibly he signed us up into The Dartmoor Society by mistake. It was partly to honour his memory that I agreed to be membership secretary of The Dartmoor Society after his immediate successor Judy Ehlen.

So the grandchildren (six of them now) come and visit us frequently, and walks across Dartmoor are a regular feature. Our elder daughter steers us to walks along waterways, ranging from the Rattlebrook to the Devonport Leat. A few years ago I walked by myself from our house to the Ted Hughes memorial stone and back; it's good to have done that, but I am now too old to do it again.

The first photograph shows me holding a rail from the inclined plane of the Ramsley mine. The metal ring in the stone in front of me seems to be part of the support of a pylon for a launder taking water to the surviving wheelpit; there are similar rings in stones in mining areas around Doe Tor.

I keep up the mathematics, though nowadays I concentrate on mathematical structures in medieval Arabic philosophy and linguistics. Two years ago I discovered what must be the earliest version of Venn diagrams, in a work written in 12th century Baghdad. Giving talks on



this and related material has taken me to Tehran, Kosovo, St Petersburg and Helsinki among other places, and a trip with Helen to a conference in Naples is lined up for later this year. Sadly travel interrupts correspondence, and I have had to apologise a few times to society members for being slow to reply. The second photograph shows a sensory maze in our garden, designed by our grandson George (now studying mathematics at Cambridge) and filled with hedges and fragrant flowers by Helen. When seen from above, it incorporates a large capital G for George, and also a mathematical trick that prevents the hand-on-wall method of solving it. The granite gentleman in the middle of the maze was a gift from kind neighbours; his name is Matt Lubb, which Arabic speakers may just about recognise as Arabic for 'thing sought'.

Fifteen years ago we hardly knew what Dartmoor was. Today we know what it is, but we are still constantly bowled over by its beauty and unpredictability. I reckon it a privilege to be in The Dartmoor Society among fellow Dartmoor enthusiasts and people who find their livelihood on the moor.



# DARTMOOR CALENDAR 2020

## DARTMOOR 2020

Photographs by Tracey Elliot-Reep



This is a stunning 13 month calendar of Dartmoor images taken by photographer Tracey Elliot-Reep. The 13 photographs are a beautiful evocation of Dartmoor in all seasons and will make the perfect Christmas gift. Included with the calendar are 4 free postcards and an envelope.

The calendars cost £6.99 at events, or £8.50 by post. To order a copy, simply complete the order form and send it with payment of £8.50 (includes p&p) to: The Dartmoor Society, PO Box 570, Torquay, TQ1 9JB. There is also an order form online.



I was born and grew up near Widecombe-in-the-Moor, on Dartmoor and I have enjoyed photographing its animals and ever changing beautiful and dramatic landscapes over many years.

I hope you enjoy the changing seasons of Dartmoor through these photographs, wherever you may be in the world!

*Tracey Elliot-Reep*

# PAST EVENTS

## Making the Invisible Visible

Thursday 21 February 2019

Over 90 people, including members of The Dartmoor Society and Yelverton and District Local History Society, enjoyed a very informative and truly unique experience at the Virtual Reality (VR) event held in Meavy Parish Hall by Professor Bob Stone and two of his team. Bob, originally from Plymouth, has many happy childhood memories of family holidays and playing on Wembury Beach as a youngster, and currently works at Birmingham University as Chairman of Interactive Multimedia Systems and Director of the Human Interface Technologies (HIT) Team.



A packed Meavy Parish Hall

Barry Welch

Over recent years Bob and his team have spent a lot of time in Devon primarily because he has been working closely with the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines at Devonport who are major customers. He has also been working alongside medical staff at Derriford Hospital with bed bound patients who, through the use of VR, are experiencing feelings of improved well being.

On Dartmoor Bob has concentrated on the area surrounding Burrator Reservoir and in particular what lies beneath its waters to capture the history of the mid Meavy valley prior to it being flooded. He has been able to do this by using two mini, submersible, remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) and comparing the data derived from them to an 1869 map of the area to pin point the features exactly. Some of the features so far discovered are walling associated with the 15th century Longstone Manor and evidence of fields, pathways and old buildings of its estate. He has also identified the remains of Essworthy Farm, Sheepstor Bridge and part of Drake's Leat but no church, despite many local stories claiming there was one!

More recently Bob has been using the ROVs at Burrator to find the location of two World War Two anti-torpedo nets. Documentary evidence showed they were still there, he just needed to find their exact location. Since rediscovering the nets Bob has found a photograph dating back to 1941 that the Germans took of the reservoir. Although the image itself is of rather poor quality and the nets can't be seen, Bob believes it contains sufficient information to have enabled the Luftwaffe to potentially launch a torpedo attack on the dam. He has now also found evidence of spherical floats which would have supported the chain like mesh of a T-class anti-torpedo net.

Bob has also been using drones to trace the route of the Devonport Leat as well as conducting aerial surveys of more inaccessible areas such as the iconic Fox Tor Mire and Aune Head Mire. By flying the drone in a grid pattern over the site and then overlaying the images using special software the team have been able to create a 3D model of the area. This work has extended to Foggintor Quarry where it is still possible to see the remains of numerous buildings that were part of this major Dartmoor granite quarry such as the manager's house, blacksmiths' shop, carpenters' shop and other auxiliary buildings etc. He has also carried out work with drones at Haytor Quarry where he has been recreating quarry scenes dating back to the 19th century including the route of the granite tramway.



One of the HIT Team demonstrating a drone

Steve Mason

He has also been studying the layout of the runways and various buildings at RAF Harrowbeer and has even managed to create a superimposed image of American President Harry Truman waving from the door of his private plane, a Douglas VC-54C Skymaster nicknamed the *Sacred Cow*, when he had an unscheduled visit in 1945. In addition, Bob also informed us that Glenn Miller and his Orchestra landed at RAF Harrowbeer on the 28 September 1944.

Bob told us that since he and the team had been doing extensive research in Plymouth, he had become saddened by the amount of sunken history within the vicinity of Plymouth Sound that had been totally disregarded, for example the



wrecks of various early submarines. One of the more shocking incidents involved HMS *Amethyst* which had taken part in the notorious Yangtze Incident in 1949. The ship was eventually towed into Sutton Harbour and sadly scrapped. In order to recreate the depth of history in Plymouth's harbour area, one of Bob's students is working on a model of what the Barbican looked like in the 1600s.

A number of these projects are still 'works in progress' and involve matching drone images with corresponding historic documents and photographs, as well as sonar surveys, to produce accurate computerised reconstructions of important locations and past events, such as the sailing of the *Mayflower* to America 400 years ago. Ultimately Bob and his team plan to produce a seamless walk-through experience enabling the viewer to be totally transported.



Bob with one of the attendees trying out a VR headset

Steve Mason

After Bob's presentation all the audience had an opportunity to use the headsets and experience amongst others 'virtually' walking from the quayside up the gang plank and onto the deck of the *Mayflower*. All the sights and sounds of the experience were portrayed using the headsets to create, what was for many of us a totally new experience.

The image on the front cover of this Newsletter shows the attendees of the event on Meavy Green taken by a drone on its inaugural flight fitted with a Hasselblad lens.

At the end of the afternoon Tom Greeves warmly thanked Bob and his team for travelling down from Birmingham and producing such an informative and interesting afternoon, after which everyone tucked into a wonderful tea which had been produced by The Dartmoor Society Executive Committee.

Professor Stone's investigations are ongoing and so if anyone finds any old photographs or snippets of information relating to any of the topics mentioned in this article he would be very interested in hearing from you. Please email him on [R.J.Stone@bham.ac.uk](mailto:R.J.Stone@bham.ac.uk)

## Higher Uppacott Visit

Wednesday 27 March 2019

It was a sunny spring day when we congregated at Bel Tor Corner car park and admired the view prior to going down to the Grade I listed medieval longhouse known as Higher Uppacott. Due to the large number of members wishing to attend this event it turned out to be a double visit, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

We were welcomed by our excellent guide Ralph Mackridge and in his introductory talk he informed us there are 120 longhouses on Dartmoor. However, only 20 of them still retained their original shippin, the remainder having been converted to increase their living accommodation. Higher Uppacott had been purchased by DNPA in 1979 and during its recent restoration had undergone extensive investigation in an effort to return the building to as near its original condition as possible. This included removing all modern plaster and electrical fittings.

Ralph told us the main part of the longhouse was built in the early 14th century making it nearly 700 years old and the adjacent Lower Uppacott longhouse was built about 100 years later. Both nearby, Higher Tor and Lower Tor also had longhouses, so many centuries ago there would have been a small settlement here. Records show that Higher Uppacott used to be part of Spitchwick Manor



The front yard with newly discovered drain

Steve Mason

Estate but, after the Black Death in 1348 when 40% of the local population died, John de Spitchwick of Uppacott sold off seven houses and the land surrounding them. The properties would almost certainly have had Commoners' rights attached to them giving their occupants access to the moor and enabling them to graze cattle, cut peat and collect firewood. An early tithe map showed that Higher Uppacott Farm comprised 38 acres.





The west aspect showing the stepped roof line

Steve Mason

Ralph then took us outside to the front yard where an old drain had been uncovered whilst re-cobbling the area during the renovations. The area was currently cordoned off pending further archaeological investigation. Proceeding around the outside of the longhouse, which is constructed of Dartmoor granite, we could see a hole in the lower wall of the shippon where the animal slurry would have drained out of the building. This dung would subsequently have been used to fertilise the fields. From the western exterior we were able to observe the beautiful newly thatched roof neatly displaying an organic form of thatch. The roof line to the north of the chimney was higher than to the south indicating that the roof in that section had been raised at some point – of course originally there would have been no chimney at all!



The original oak framed main entrance

Steve Mason

We returned to the yard and entered the longhouse by its main entrance, an impressive wooden doorway which led into a cross passage and the shippon. It was quite dark in the shippon due to its lack of windows and it would originally have been lit by candles made from rush tapers soaked in tallow. Ralph pointed out a number of holes in the granite flooring of the shippon into which would have been fitted ash or hazel tethering posts used for securing livestock. The inside of the roof was exposed enabling us to see the original curved oak trusses supporting the new thatch. Originally the roof space would have been boarded off creating a loft for storing hay and bracken to be used as animal feed and bedding, and possibly sleeping quarters for farm workers. High up in the gable end was a small window which most likely was an 'owl hole' encouraging owls into the shippon to help control vermin such as rats and mice etc.

From the shippon we passed through a beautiful granite wall built in the late 15th or early 16th century into the living accommodation of the longhouse which was dominated by a magnificent inglenook fireplace. This structure marked a new era for the longhouse which previously would have had a fire in an open hearth in the centre of the room for cooking and heating. The room would have been open to the roof allowing the smoke to permeate out through the thatch, evidence of which we later saw upstairs on the smoke blackened undersides of the roof structure.



The shippon with 'owl hole' and livestock tethering posts

Steve Mason

During the restoration the lime-ash floor in the main living room had been authentically finished off with a glaze of sour milk and people would have sat on simple benches, or at trestle tables with stools, and this would have been very much a working room.

There was evidence that a window had been blocked-up to give support to an oak beam that was put in place to support the upper floor when it was added to the building. There was also a blocked-up external door in the east wall which had only been discovered three years ago – interestingly it appeared to have been blocked-up from the outside because we could see marks on the stone work where the door had been.



The underside of the shippon roof

Steve Mason

Also in this room was a leaded glass window, the ornate granite mullions of which had been re-used from another building. Inserted in the wall in a corner of the room was a small storage space – its use was not known, however it could possibly have provided storage of the family bible or other valuables.



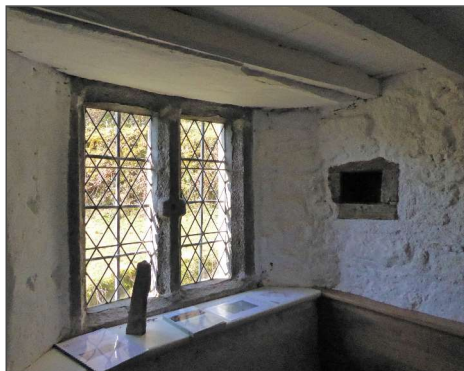


The inglenook fireplace

Steve Mason

During the renovations it was discovered that the ceiling supports in the second room on the lower floor didn't extend into the walls – they are now supported by two wooden frames on either side of the room. It is thought that this room contained a ladder giving access to the upper floor before the more modern staircase was built.

Upstairs the two rooms were divided by a very old plank and muntin partition which was the traditional way of separating rooms in the early 16th century. On the oak uprights of this partition Ralph showed us the original saw marks from where the beams had been first cut in a saw pit. He also pointed out some strange looking taper burn marks which may have had some special or magical significance and could possibly have been created to potentially ward off the risk of a house fire or maybe even witches. In the east wall of the first room there was another blocked-up door which would originally have given access to the upper part of the adjoining parlour wing. The second bedroom had a very uneven floor and an oblong Perspex viewing hole in the ceiling through which we could see the early 17th century thatch made of wheat and rye straw and the previously mentioned smoke blackening.



The granite mullioned window and 'storage space'

Steve Mason

Finally we returned to the outside yard and entered the parlour wing of the building. This was constructed in the 17th century around the time that the upper floors were added to the main building and consisted of a lower room and a divided upper room accessed by a steep right-angled staircase. Both rooms had fire places and access doors to the main longhouse, however, sadly there were signs of rainwater getting into these upper rooms. On returning to the ground floor we had an opportunity to

purchase a guide book and study a selection of historic photographs of the building before departing. It had been a truly atmospheric step back in time.

Tanya Welch

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

The Dartmoor Society has produced two new Christmas cards this year in packs of ten comprising five of each image plus envelopes.

The photographs show views of Haytor Down and Emsworthy Farm, and are both by Nigel Machin. The greeting message inside reads 'With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year'.



Packs will be available at the Society's indoor events priced £3.50 each. They are also available by post priced £4.50 for the first pack and £4.00 for each additional pack, to cover postage and packaging costs. Please send orders to: The Dartmoor Society, PO Box 570, Torquay, TQ1 9JB.

# FUNDRAISING

As many of you are aware, The Dartmoor Society is a charity that depends wholly on income from subscriptions, occasional fundraising events, donations and merchandise. It does not, therefore, yet have the funds for major undertakings enjoyed by some other Dartmoor charities.

One way in which people can help the society to build up its financial resources is to leave a legacy to it in their wills. This is always a rather delicate subject, but the reality is that money left to The Dartmoor Society will be put to excellent use in promoting the well-being of a unique part of Devon. Unlike some other Dartmoor and Devon organisations, we do not have a payroll where thousands of pounds of members' money and donations are used to pay salaries. Neither do we have an expensive office to run and maintain, so all our administration costs are very low. This ensures that all legacies and donations go towards the benefit of Dartmoor.

The Dartmoor Society is the only *genuinely* independent body which is not affiliated to, or actively involved with, other organisations such as the Council for National Parks. Thus it is better able to assess what issues are really worth pursuing.

By leaving The Dartmoor Society a legacy in your will, however small, you can be assured that it will be put to excellent use.



Another way of raising funds for the society is through **Easy Fundraising**. Once you have signed up to it online, a percentage of what you spend shopping goes to the society – at no cost to you. *Please do consider this.*

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/dartmoorsociety](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/dartmoorsociety)

# FUTURE EVENTS

## Themed Talk on the Pinwill Sisters at Sheepstor and Yelverton Churches

Friday 14 June 2019 – 2.00pm to 4.30pm

**OPEN TO DARTMOOR SOCIETY MEMBERS AND  
MEMBERS OF THE DEVONSHIRE ASSOCIATION ONLY**

For about ten years Dr Helen Wilson has studied and researched the exquisite church carvings created by the Pinwill sisters in the early 20th century and we are delighted that she has agreed to provide a visit to two beautiful Dartmoor churches, to give us an insight on the life and work of the Pinwill sisters and their amazing output. The programme for the afternoon is as follows:

2.00pm – Arrive at St Leonard's church, Sheepstor (SX 5602 6766). There is limited parking in the village, with more available on the approach road adjacent to Sheepstor dam. There is a public toilet by the main Burrator dam. Tea and biscuits will be provided on arrival and we will enjoy a short talk by the churchwarden on the history of the church itself.

2.30pm – Talk by Helen Wilson on the Pinwill woodcarving business and their specific work at Sheepstor.

3.30pm – Arrive at St Paul's church, Yelverton (SX 5210 6775). There is limited parking close to the church itself (some of it fee paying) and there are public toilets nearby. Alternatively, take the nearby turning off the A386 to Crapstone and Buckland Monachorum and park on the old airfield. We will then enjoy a talk by Helen on the church and the specific Pinwill carving there.

4.00pm – An opportunity to climb up the church tower with the churchwarden to see extensive views over Dartmoor.

This will be a fascinating afternoon giving us an insight into both of these wonderful Dartmoor churches as well as the life and work of the remarkable Pinwill sisters.

Prior booking is essential by Tuesday 11 June. Cost is £5.00 per head and includes a donation to both churches, and tea and biscuits at Sheepstor. Apologies but no dogs.



## The Dartmoor Society Summer Barbecue

Friday 19 July 2019 – Talk and walk 5.00pm – bbq 6.30pm

### OPEN TO NON-MEMBERS

As announced in *Newsletter 64* this year's summer BBQ will be held at Langafor Farm Charitable Trust near Lettaford, TQ13 8RH (SX 704 845).

The trust was established in 2002 to maintain and encourage the ecological enhancement of its 100 acres of farm land and for several years has enjoyed working with various outside professional bodies to achieve these aims. One such organisation is Butterfly Conservation with which they have encouraged many rare and unusual species of butterfly and moth. This work resulted in the trust winning an award in 2011 in recognition of their contribution to conserving the marsh fritillary butterfly. The farm can boast over 100 species of lichen, numerous mosses and liverworts and, by developing large pond areas, has promoted a wider diversity of wildlife.

Prior to the BBQ itself, Megan Lowe, one of the Trustees at Langafor and also the Community Engagement Officer at Butterfly Conservation, has kindly arranged for us to enjoy a short talk on butterfly conservation at Langafor which will include information on caterpillars and micromoths. Afterwards she will lead a fairly level walk with a major butterfly and moth theme through the lake area and gardens and past an ancient cornditch. Please wear either wellies or walking boots.

To reach the farm take the B3212 from Moretonhampstead towards Princetown. Continue past the Miniature Pony Centre, ascend the hill to Beetor Cross and then descend slightly for about 200 yards to Lettaford Cross. Turn right into the very narrow lane to Lettaford, being aware that the sign post might be hidden by vegetation. Further down this lane take the right-hand fork towards Chagford and pass a house called Holly Trees. Ignore the gate for Langafor Trust on the left and continue a short distance to the next gateway with car parking signs. Park at the top of the field and walk down to the barn which is clearly visible at the bottom.

The venue is known as Farm 2 and has a large barn/seating area with toilets. As usual please bring along your own favourite choice of drink, bottle of wine etc – paper cups will be provided. When booking please state any food allergies or preferences, vegan/vegetarian etc. Members £7.00, non-members £9.00. Please book by Monday 15 July.

## Moorlands Farm Visit

Monday 12 August 2019 – 2.00pm to 5.00pm

### MEMBERS ONLY AND STRICTLY NO DOGS

Layland and Gill Branfield have very kindly invited us to visit their farm at Moorlands, Princetown, Yelverton, PL20 6SA, for our annual farm visit. The farm is situated right in the heart of the moor and entirely within the Dartmoor National Park. The Branfields rear mainly Stabiliser suckler cows and Swaledale ewes, with some other breeds and crosses of sheep and cattle, for a variety of reasons. Historically, they both left the family farm which was based on Exmoor in 1987 to enable them to start farming on their own at Moorlands. They now have a grown-up family who have moved away to pursue other activities although they still maintain an interest in the farm.

In addition to their animals, they nurture a wealth of flora and fauna and archaeological history on their land which they are very keen to share with us. So as well as receiving a fascinating insight on the day to day running of the farm itself, there will be a walk of approximately 2 miles over rough moorland which will include seeing a 4000 year old hut circle, evidence of peat cutting and tin streaming, and much more.



Layland tending his cattle

Gill Branfield

After our walk, Layland and Gill are very kindly providing tea for us. There will be no charge for this visit, but donations are welcome at tea time.

Moorlands Farm is sited near the Prince Hall Hotel on the B3357 and directions to it are as follows: Take the turning for Prince Hall Hotel, turn left at the next junction, proceed over a second cattle grid and follow the tarmac road down to the Dartmoor Training Centre. Pass over the small bridge, ascend out of the valley, turn right signed 'Moorlands Farm' and follow the concrete road to the farm at SX 625 735. Please park where signposted. Pre-booking is essential for catering purposes and must be made either via the enclosed booking slip or online via the website prior to Thursday 8 August.

## William Pengelley Cave Studies Trust Visit

Wednesday 18 September 2019 – 5.00pm to 6.30pm

### OPEN TO MEMBERS AND GUESTS

The trust was set up in 1962 to study caves and promote conservation of the cave environment. Research projects include such subjects as water percolation, cave location techniques, palaeontology and bats. The museum displays examples of their conservation work and introduces visitors to many aspects of speleology.

Our visit starts with a walk to the ruined 13th century Church of the Holy Trinity enjoying magnificent views of Dartmoor en-route. Our host Sheila Philips will then take us to Higher Kiln Quarry which, as an area of hibernation for greater and lesser horseshoe bats, has been declared both a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation.

In addition, we will also visit the Joint Mitnor Bone Cave. The cave contains the richest deposit of mammalian remains of the last interglacial period ever found in a British cave, and most probably dates from about 100,000 years ago. Due to its historic significance, extensive excavations were carried out between 1939 and 1941 by the Torquay Natural History Society who found remains of over 4000 bones of prehistoric animals such as hippopotamus, cave lion, bear, wolf, giant deer, narrow-nosed rhinoceros, bison, hyena and straight tusked elephants. These fascinating limestone caves also contain evidence of a number of geological features including earthquakes and volcanic activity.

Our tour will also include a visit to the recently refurbished museum where there is a variety of exhibits and an opportunity to learn more about this unique site located on the edge of Dartmoor.

The full address details for this event are: The William Pengelley Cave Studies Trust, Russets Lane, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0DY (SX 743 664).

There is ample parking and toilets available on site and we are recommending that dogs do not attend due to them having to be strictly on a lead at all times and as they are not allowed at all into the bone cave itself.

Prior booking is essential by Saturday 14 September and it advisable to bring along a torch. Members and guests £5.00.

## The Dartmoor Society Debate 2019

Saturday 12 October – 9.30am to 5.00pm

### OPEN TO NON-MEMBERS

### THE SECRET LIFE OF DARTMOOR BIRDS: SURVIVAL THROUGH SCIENCE?

The Dartmoor Society's flagship event this year will focus on the birdlife of Dartmoor and is open to anyone who is interested to know what birds are found on the moor and to understand the measures that are taken to protect them.

It is an opportunity for those who work on bird projects to share their latest research. These are local enthusiasts and scientists who carry out surveys and monitoring on the ground, and those who take this raw data and use it to answer questions about how we can retain our bird species and even increase their numbers. Their work is an essential resource for organisations and individuals who develop land management policies aimed at improving habitats and maintaining healthy bird populations.

We will look at the factors that make this work necessary, such as pressure on habitats and food sources, farming, recreation and climate change. How do we balance the need to prevent disturbance to birds and their habitats, and to protect their food sources, with the requirement to make Dartmoor ever more accessible to people?

The day will take us across much of Dartmoor from the high moor and the wetlands through to wood and farmland species.

Our chair is Alison Kohler, Director of Conservation and Communities at Dartmoor National Park. Ally's job brings her into daily contact with people who are protecting Dartmoor's culture, heritage and wildlife. Our speakers all work on Dartmoor and are passionate about its ecology and birdlife.

### PROGRAMME

0930 **Arrival:** refreshments available

1000 **Formal welcome** by The Dartmoor Society.

1005 **Chair's introduction** to topic and speakers.

1010 **Fiona Freshney** – RSPB Ecologist and Advisor to the Dartmoor Upland Bird Project.

An overview of Dartmoor bird species and their habitats focusing on some of our wetland birds such as snipe, dunlin, lapwing and curlew, including case studies. The issues conservationists face and the opportunities offered by land management trials.

1040 **Mark Lawrence** – British Trust for Ornithology Bird Ringer and Nest Recorder.

*Days in a Gorse Bush. The highs and lows bird surveys.* Nest recording requires patience and skill and Mark has recorded and then monitored thousands of nests on Dartmoor for over 8 years, providing the vital raw data for scientific analysis. His own species of interest include curl buntings, peregrine falcons, ravens and crossbills.

1100 **Charles Tyler** – Professor in Environmental Biology and Deputy Head of Biosciences at the University of Exeter.

Charles has 30 years' experience in environmental research and he will explain how he works on field data provided by Mark to understand the ecology of ground nesting birds such as meadow pipit, stonechat and whinchat. A major component of his work focuses on the diet of cuckoos and meadow pipits, whose nests the cuckoos parasitise, in order to build a better understanding of this relationship and so provide conditions that will ensure their success on Dartmoor.

1130 **Tea/coffee break**

1200 **Malcolm Burgess** – Senior Conservation Scientist at the RSPB.

Malcolm is at the leading edge of bird tracking technology and will be talking about how he uses this technology to find out more about migration patterns and so try to establish causes for the decline of migratory woodland birds on Dartmoor such as the pied flycatcher, spotted flycatcher, wood warbler and whinchat.

1230 **Questions and discussion.**

1300 **Buffet lunch**

1400 **John Walters** – Field Naturalist, Wildlife Artist and Author.

*The Secret Life of Long-tailed Tits.* This new talk is the result of many hours observing and recording the behaviour of long-tailed tits on Dartmoor. John has worked on many television and radio programmes including the BBC's *Life in the Undergrowth*, *The Living World* and *The One Show*.

1430 **Naomi Oakley** – Dartmoor Farmer, Environmentalist and Natural England Advisor.

*A Dartmoor Farm Managed for Stock, Visitors and Wildlife.* Naomi will explain how stock and wildlife on her farm are mutually beneficial, how Agri-environment schemes work and what is meant by 'natural capital'.

1500 **Afternoon tea/coffee and cakes**

1530 **Sara Zonneveld** – Ecologist based at the University of Exeter.

Sara will talk about her work for SWEEP (South West Partners for Environment and Economic Prosperity) and her research and findings on how we can protect vulnerable species with an increasing local population and ever more visitors.

1600 **Speaker TBC**

1620 **Questions, discussion and summing up.**

1700 **Close**

The event will be held at Ashburton Arts Centre, 15 West Street, Ashburton, TQ13 7DT and will cost £17 for members and £20 for non-members.

Please book before 5.00pm on Monday 7 October either online via The Dartmoor Society website, or by completing the enclosed booking form, making sure you inform us of any special dietary requirements. There are no tickets supplied for this event, however, all online bookings will receive an email response.

Ashburton has a public car park that is just a few minutes' walk from the arts centre. This car park can get busy at weekends so early parking and car sharing is advised. There is a dropping off area in front of the arts centre for those with limited mobility.

The confirmed programme will be given in our October Newsletter.



## The Dartmoor Society Research Lecture 2019

Friday 15 November – 7.00pm

**OPEN TO NON-MEMBERS**

### **CONSERVATION GRAZING WITH DARTMOOR PONIES – REDUCING *MOLINIA* DOMINANCE AND ENCOURAGING THE GERMINATION OF *CALLUNA VULGARIS* (HEATHER) ON AN UPLAND SITE ON DARTMOOR**

*Presented by Dr Paul Lunt and Dru Butterfield*

Dr Paul Lunt is Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer) in Environmental Science, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at Plymouth University. He and his students have been working closely with The Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust (DPHT), headed by Dru Butterfield, and with grassland conservation grazing specialist Malcolm Gibb. The DPHT is a charity created to help ensure a sustainable future for the Dartmoor pony on Dartmoor.



Ponies grazing beside a salt lick

DPHT

Their research has taken place at Bellever Forest, Postbridge, and involves intensive studies with the aim of meeting Natural England's requirement for scientific evidence of pony grazing impacts. The DPHT project measures the effectiveness of ponies combatting *Molinia* invasion. There will be a slide presentation and time for comments and questions afterwards.

The event will be held at the Dolphin Hotel, Station Road, Bovey Tracey, TQ13 9AL (SX 813 782). Members £10.00, non-members £12.00 (to include a light buffet after the lecture). Prior booking essential by Monday 11 November either online via The Dartmoor Society website, or by completing the enclosed booking form making sure you inform us of any special dietary requirements.

There are no tickets supplied for this event, however, all online bookings will receive an email response.

## SOCIETY NOTICES

### Membership

Subscriptions are **£14** per annum for Single and **£21** for Family membership. A Single Life Subscription is £280. Donations and Gift Aid declarations are always welcome.

If you are not a member, but would like to join a forward-thinking charity that works on behalf of Dartmoor's communities and culture, as well as its landscape and historic features, please write enclosing a cheque or postal order, or fill in the online details ([www.dartmoorsociety.com](http://www.dartmoorsociety.com)) for your subscription.

Payment by standing order is encouraged and a form can be sent on request. Write to The Dartmoor Society, PO Box 570, Torquay, TQ1 9JB, or email [info@dartmoorsociety.com](mailto:info@dartmoorsociety.com)

### New members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

Heather Chapman	Jodi Feist King
Sue Knott	Gemma Krajnyk
Michael Petrie-Ritchie	Sandy and Jackie Ralph
Patricia Read	John Reffell
Jayne Shields	Sally Watson
Douglas Young	

### Changes to online bookings

We have made some changes to our online events booking facility. Members can now book and pay online for their guests to attend events on the website.

### Newsletter copy date

Please note that the copy date for the October 2019 Newsletter is Monday 9 September. Event reports or items received after this date will be held over to the February 2020 Newsletter. Colour photographs of events or for the front cover will be gratefully received for consideration.

# DARTMOOR FRIDGE MAGNETS



Our fridge magnets are now available in five beautiful Dartmoor images at the reduced price of £1 each or £3 for a set of five. They can be purchased at some indoor events and also through the post – please add £1.00 p&p (for up to five magnets). To order, simply fill in the enclosed form, or download one from our website, and post it with a cheque to: The Dartmoor Society, PO Box 570, Torquay, Devon, TQ1 9JB.