

**News from Around the National Parks**  
Summer 2015



Pic: The Green Bridge of Wales – Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

The News from around the Parks is compiled by the Campaign for National Parks based on updates and information supplied by the National Park Authorities and Societies. We would encourage Parks and Societies to always supply news updates if possible so that we have the best possible summary of what's happening. If information is not supplied, the Editor has filled in the gaps himself.

## **Brecon Beacons National Park**

### **Brecon Beacons Park Society**

**Drawing Woollen Lines** - The Campaign for National Park's past Park Protector Award winner Pip Woolf presented an illustrated talk on her "Drawing Woollen Lines" project at the beginning of June.

Pip had a vision of white woollen lines drawn on Pen Trumau to restore the green grass across the black scars of erosion. Speaking at a meeting in Crickhowell, Pip also showed a film which has just been completed to display this extraordinary project. A number of Park Society members have helped Pip with her project and many others will have seen the woollen lines on Pen Trumau.

**Circuit of Wales Decision expected in the autumn** - A decision on the controversial multi-million pound Circuit of Wales project in Blaenau Gwent is expected by early October. It follows a ten-day public inquiry that took place in March in Ebbw Vale. Planning Inspector Emyr Jones will write up his report and submit recommendations to the Welsh Government.

The Public Inquiry, which examined whether 650-acres of common land needed to build the circuit should be deregistered, was the final stage in a protracted debate over the planned development.

The Society has been active in objecting to activities which are detrimental to the Special Qualities of the National Park, while accepting that such a development will bring significant advantages to people living in the Ebbw Vale area in the form of long-term employment.

### **Brecon Beacons National Park Authority**

#### **Minister welcomes National Park Black and Minority Ethnic pilot**

Last month, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority welcomed four black and minority ethnic representatives from Newport, Cardiff and Brecon. The four representatives are taking part in a new pilot project, which is being supported by the Welsh Government, which will see them being mentored by Authority Members to help improve the representation and inclusivity of black and minority ethnic representatives in town and community councils and local authorities.

Jasmin Chowdhury and Bhunesh Napal from Cardiff, Zobia Zaman from Newport and Guptaman Gurung from Brecon representing the Nepalese community who live in the National Park, were inducted into the pilot scheme which will enable them to get an insider's view of the democratic processes and work of the National Park Authority and its Members.

Six National Park Authority Members - including Mrs Melanie Doel (Deputy Chairman), Cllr Glynog Davies (Carmarthenshire County Council), Cllr David Meredith (Powys County Council), Cllr Paul Ashton (Powys County Council), Cllr Ann Webb (Monmouthshire County Council) and Mr Ian Rowat (Welsh Government

appointed member) – have volunteered to mentor the representatives and will offer them support and guidance through the process.

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted**

In the last few months, Members of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority have approved seven Supplementary Planning Guidance notes relating to a wide range of planning issues relevant to the National Park including:

- Enabling Appropriate Development in the open countryside
- Obtrusive Lighting
- Low Impact Tourism Accommodation
- Biodiversity in the Towns of the National Park
- Minerals Safeguarding
- Farm Diversification
- Sustainable Development in the National Parks of Wales

Supplementary Guidance Notes provides supporting information and advice on the policies contained within the adopted Local Development Plan (December 2013). Essentially, they are designed to help anyone thinking about applying for a development in the National Park to know exactly what they would have to do to get approval for their application. The final element of the Supplementary Planning Guidance for the 'Conversion of farm and other buildings to dwellings' was approved in late May.

This particular element of the Supplementary Planning Guidance has proved controversial with particular focus on the payment of a sum towards affordable housing which the owners of the property will be expected to make if they can meet the criteria allowing a converted property to be sold on the open market.

Following consultation on the Supplementary Planning Guidance the National Park Authority revisited the guidance note and commissioned a Park-wide study to give an indication of whether the amount it set as a contribution to affordable housing would be likely to discourage development. The study offered encouraging results showing that for just under half the case studies it tested, developments would remain viable and for the remainder the study suggests it would be possible to introduce some level of contribution. These findings have been taken into account under the amended guidance: the Authority will use a recognised tool to test development costs against land value with the option to use a district valuer to settle disagreements.

Another fear was that farming families would be discouraged from providing homes on the farms for their children as part of the succession planning for the business. The Authority has responded by changing the guidance so that if it becomes possible to consider converting a barn to a home, then no affordable housing sum would be payable as long as the farmer's children are living on the property. A contribution would only need to be made if the building were being sold on the open market or if ownership is transferred outside of the immediate farming family.

## **Agincourt 600**

2015 marks the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt, an event that has special significance in South-east Wales.

The area is rich in associations with the battle. A large contingent of local men, including the famous Welsh longbowmen, fought alongside Henry V. The king himself was born at Monmouth Castle, and his statue looks out over the town's Agincourt Square.

To celebrate this anniversary a full programme of events has been planned during the coming months, building up to the anniversary on 25 October. These include a free touring exhibition, pageants and parades, an official tapestry, medieval fayre, battle re-enactments and archery competitions.

Highlights include:

- Family events each weekend in June: Abergavenny (6), Raglan Castle (13–14), Brecon (20) and Tretower Court (27–28). The month is significant since the contingent of troops including men at arms and a large group of archers responded to a call to arms and met at the 'muster point', Tretower Castle, before their departure for France.
- The Medieval Fayre commemorating Agincourt at Abergavenny Castle on 6 June is a family event with medieval games and demonstrations. Close by is St Mary's Priory Church where visitors will find the tombs of Raglan Castle's William ap Thomas, who survived the battle, and his wife Gwladys.
- Touring exhibition – venues include Brecon, Abergavenny, Tretower, Trecastle, Monmouth, Raglan and Newport.
- Children's 'Medieval Merriment' activities at Brecon Cathedral Tithe Barn, 20 June. This will be followed by The Great Brecknock Pageant in the town centre, which includes a colourful parade through the town with hundreds of men at arms, archers and ladies of the manor.
- Jousting Tournament at Caldicot Castle, 1 August, followed by an Agincourt event 24–25 October.
- Commemorative services at Brecon Cathedral and St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny on 25 October, St Crispin's Day, the date the battle was won by Henry V. Brecon Cathedral is closely associated with Agincourt. Visitors can see an indenture listing some of the troops who went into battle, also a stained glass window depicting local nobleman Sir Roger Vaughan who fought alongside his father-in-law Dafydd 'Davy' Gam, both men dying on the battlefield.

Samantha Sinclair – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Communications Adviser

## **The Broads National Park**

### **The Broads Society**

**As others see us** – The Society and other groups in the Broads have long been campaigning for greater use of the Southern Broads, both by those boats that come from the North of the Broads as well as those coming in from the sea, particularly

Holland. It is good, therefore, to report that in early May we saw two visits by visitors from the sea. A flotilla of 22 Dutch yachts sailed over to Lowestoft and then made their way up the River Yare to Coldham Hall. Their trip included a visit to Norwich, although this had to be by train as their masts were too tall to negotiate Postwick flyover! The Society chairman met them at Coldham Hall and welcomed them to the Broads on behalf of the Society – the reply from one of them was ‘This is the most beautiful part of England’. The following weekend saw a large flotilla of motor yachts also making their way up the Yare. These vessels had twin engines, not the most suitable drive systems for the Broads, but somehow have to get the balance right between welcoming visitors and managing the problems that they may cause to our rivers.

**Love the Broads** – Our visitor giving scheme continues to grow and develop and we are looking forward to a further increase in income through the 2015 season. £7000 was allocated to grants last year and the Trust is now inviting applications for this year’s tranche of funding. A new initiative this season has been the republication of a booklet of cycle rides around the Broads – the Broads by Bike – and, thanks to the sponsorship from Richardsons, one of the major boat hire companies, and the publishing group Archant, the profits from the sale of the books are being received by the Trust.

**Hoveton Great Broad** – Concerns from the Society and other organisations about the implications of the Natural England project on Hoveton Great Broad will come to a head in June when the Heritage Lottery Fund is due to consider Natural England’s bid for funding for the project. The Society has supported the approach by the Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association to the Heritage Lottery that such a large sum of public money should not be allocated to this project unless there is a significant improvement in the public benefit as well as changes to the design of the project.

**Cut the Cuts** - The Society has supported the Cut the Cuts campaign and the Chairman has written to all the re-elected MP’s that cover the Broads to urge them to lobby their colleagues who will make the final decision about further cuts to the National Park Grant. The nett benefit that National Parks generate for the economy must not be overlooked.

**NPS Annual Conference – 21 to 23 October 2016 will be held at Belsey Bridge Conference Centre, Ditchingham, Bungay, Suffolk.** Further details will follow in due course.

Peter Howe,  
The Broads Society

## **The Broads Authority**

### **New dredging equipment for the Broads**

The Broads Authority has taken charge of a second new mud wherry as part of a ten year strategy to replace old equipment. Named Gleaner, after an old timber sailing wherry that carried cargo into Norwich, the new wherry has been built to a bespoke design by local naval architect Andrew Wolstenholme to transport sediment dredged from the rivers to other locations for re-use.

She was constructed in Ireland by John Kearney, the build of her sister wherry Iona, and has joined her in dredging the River Ant in the past Winter. The new design of wherry is smaller at 15.5m long and can carry up to 40 tonnes of sediment in the hold. It is stable, manoeuvrable and is small enough to navigate the narrower rivers like the Chet and Ant.

A third wherry of the same design as Iona and Gleaner is being commissioned with delivery expected at the end of 2015.

### **£715,000 boost for Broads cycling**

A £715,000 boost for a Broads cycling and walking route has been greeted with delight by the Authority, Norfolk County Council and local campaigners.

The award from the Government's Cycling Ambition in National Parks initiative was announced by the Department for Transport.

The allocation, supported with further funding from the County Council and Broads Authority, will go towards a £1m cycle and walking route between the key villages of Hoveton and Horning. This will be the first phase of the Three Rivers Way, a long-planned project that will ultimately connect Wroxham Hoveton, Horning, Ludham and Potter Heigham.

### **Most successful ever Broads Outdoors Festival**

The fifth Broads Outdoors Festival has been the most successful so far, attracting many new participants to a record number of events over more than two weeks.

The annual festival which ran from 2 May to 17 May celebrates all that the Broads National Park has to offer for everyone who loves to get and about on land or water.

The programme had nearly 200 opportunities to explore the great outdoors with canoe trails, guided walks, sailing on a traditional Norfolk wherry, narrow gauge train rides and visits to historic buildings such as the marsh drainage mills and St Benet's Abbey.

Lorna Marsh, Broads

## **Dartmoor National Park**

### **Dartmoor Preservation Association**

**Sittaford Stone Row** - The recently-discovered stone circle at Sittaford has been in the national news and social media this week. The first radio-carbon testing ever carried out on a stone circle on Dartmoor's open moorland show that the stones at the ring near Sittaford Tor fell over some 4,000 years ago, meaning they could have been built considerably before this. Dating showed that the ring, 34 metres in diameter, could be "of a similar age to Stonehenge", which was built between 2,000 and 3,000 BC.

The Sittaford Tor circle is also a similar age to the Ring of Brogdar on Orkney, and 500 years older than Flag Fen near Peterborough. Dartmoor is one of the most significant sites of Neolithic ruins in Western Europe, home to about 5,000 prehistoric houses and many dozens of stone circles.

The circle, on the northern part of the moor, is the first on Dartmoor to have been investigated in 100 years, and at an altitude of 525 metres is the highest in southern England. It is the second largest ring in the national park, the biggest being Mardon Down near Moretonhampstead, at 38.2 metres in diameter. Thirty of the stones in the ring are now lying flat, but researchers believe they once stood upright because of packing material found around their bases.

The Sittaford Tor circle was originally uncovered in 2007 by Alan Endacott, an independent academic researcher, when the stones were unearthed in a controlled burn. Volunteers from the Dartmoor Preservation Association, helped to clear the vegetation and reveal the circle

But next to nothing was known about the circle until geophysicists carried out the recent carbon dating, because a lack of funding meant no research could take place. The ring is believed to form part of eight separate megalithic constructions forming a "sacred arc" across north-western Dartmoor.

Dartmoor has about 15 stone circles, which are typically 20-40 metres in diameter and mostly similar in design, excluding characteristics such as central pillars, which are found in formations in other parts of the West Country. One example is Scorhill, near the village of Gidleigh, which is an English Heritage scheduled monument and has been described as one of Dartmoor's finest rings.

The full report from the geophysical testing is expected in a few weeks' time, when researchers expect to further their knowledge of the Sittaford Tor site. During the research, a trench was discovered running up to one side of the circle, but its purpose remains unknown at present.

**Is Dartmoor too popular for its own good?** - This was the title of an article in the latest edition of "Dartmoor Matters", the DPA's in-house magazine, which contained articles on the problems caused by littering, vandalism, fly-tipping and other forms of anti-social behaviour. Journalists on two of the local papers picked up on the articles in their complimentary copies of the magazine and "topped and tailed" them to create their own articles. These were, in turn, noticed by local television and radio stations, which featured them in their own programmes. The National Park Authority were delighted with the publicity, although there was a slight concern that one of the newspaper articles focused too much on damage caused by visitors, whereas, in fact, far more of it seems to be carried out by local people.

**DPA projects** - The Association has embarked upon three new projects recently:

The first is the Moor Boots project, jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the DPA, which this year provided footwear for 39 under-privileged children, who would otherwise have been unable to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award

scheme. The DOA's trustees and the HLF have committed to fund the project for the next four years.

We have also started the creation of a Dartmoor Conservation Garden. Co-funded by the DPA and the now defunct "Your Dartmoor" fund, the garden will contain many of the plants found on Dartmoor, as well as examples of its archaeology.

Finally, the DPA will shortly be announcing that it will be co-hosting a conference on Devon's bird populations in November this year. We are currently firming up details of some well-known speakers, who will talk about the county's bird populations and why Dartmoor is a stronghold for species which are threatened and declining elsewhere. Examples will be given of good habitat management and how this can be replicated in other locations. The day-long event will be held at Exeter racecourse on 6th November.

**Dog attacks on livestock** - Farmers and vets on Dartmoor are to take swabs from livestock attacked by dogs and send them to the world's leading canine DNA laboratory in the United States as the first step in a bid to crackdown on sheep worrying.

The move was agreed at a meeting in April which was attended by the chief executive and leading scientists from Tennessee-based Bio Pet Vet Lab. CEO Tom Boyd said his company, which has pioneered DNA testing of animals, would provide their services free of charge for the Dartmoor farmers. Swabs taken from savaged ewes will be dried and securely sealed before being posted to the laboratory in the US where they will be tested for dog DNA.

It could take up to 20 years to build up a compulsory register of dog DNA across the UK that would enable the project to act as a real deterrent to dog owners who let their pets roam, chase and kill sheep and lambs, the meeting was told.

But those attending, including representatives from the DPA, the Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society, (DLPS) the Dartmoor Commoners Association, the National Park, CLA and Duchy of Cornwall agreed to continue to develop the idea to tackle the growing problem of livestock lost to dog attacks – officially calculated at £1.2 million a year.

Phil Hutt, Dartmoor Preservation Association Director

## **Dartmoor National Park Authority**

### **Swincombe Bridge**

Walkers will now be able to keep their feet dry again once more whilst crossing the River Swincombe, following the installation of a replacement footbridge over a popular river crossing on Dartmoor.

The work to install a new purpose built footbridge above Hexworthy, has recently been completed by Devon County Council and the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

An inspection of the old bridge (known locally as Fairy Bridge) after the winter storms in February 2014 revealed that the structure was no longer safe for public use and was subsequently removed. Since then, walkers have had to choose between negotiating a “challenging” set of stepping stones, or finding an alternative route when river levels were too high.

The work to provide a new river crossing has also included strengthening of the original granite bridge abutments to take the new bridge. Locally sourced Dartmoor Oak has also been incorporated into the design.

The cost of the project has been met from additional funding secured from the Department of the Environment & Rural Affairs in the wake of the winter storms in 2013/14 and from the Authority’s voluntary donation scheme *£ for the Park*.

### **Cycle with Moor Care on Dartmoor**

A new code of conduct for cycling in Dartmoor National Park has been launched after consultation with cycling groups and local communities. The Granite and Gears cycling leaflet has been produced as a response to the increase in the use of Dartmoor by cyclists and fills an important gap in the National Parks suite of activity codes.

The leaflet promotes responsible access to Dartmoor by bike, whether cycling on road, or off-road, along the many miles of bridleways and byways that criss-cross the National Park. It also explains where you can and cannot ride.

The Code contains two key messages:

- Be considerate
- Be safe

The leaflet also includes advice to help keep Dartmoor special by reducing the impact of erosion, respecting the environment and taking litter home.

Copies of the new code are available from National Park Visitor Centres or from the Dartmoor National park website at [www.dartmoor.gov.uk/cycling](http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/cycling)

Michael Nendick, Communications Officer, DNPA

## **Exmoor National Park**

### **Exmoor Society**

**Annual Award for Young People** - The Exmoor Society annual £3000 Pinnacle Award was set up to encourage young people, aged between 16-25, to develop a business related to Exmoor and give them the means of staying in the area and contributing to the land based economy. Last year’s winner was 20 year old Jack Croft who has set up a small farming contracting business. The money he won allowed him to buy more equipment and he can now find sufficient work on Exmoor all year round. The award is open this year till 31<sup>st</sup> June.

**Spring Conference – ‘Visit Exmoor’** - The Society’s Spring Conference, hosted in partnership with the ENPA, took place in April this year and focussed on the

importance of tourism on Exmoor. It considered some of the big issues of the day including how we balance tourism with conserving the natural environment. Rachel Thomas, chairman of the ES said that there was close synergy between promotion of enjoyment and the tourism industry but the Society, as a conservation charity, would always emphasise the NP status. Nigel Stone, ENPA CEO, concluded that protection and prosperity can go hand-in-hand.

**The Archive Project** - The Society's move to new premises is now finalised and the official opening took place in March of this year. The archives are now in an environmentally-controlled store and there is a separate library and resource centre. A digitising programme has also been started. Around 1400 slides which record the changing landscape of the moor since the 1950s have been scanned, providing an invaluable visual record. Outreach is an important part of the archivist's work, so that people are able to find out about the history of issues facing Exmoor today.  
Arabella Amory

### **Exmoor National Park Authority**

**New organisation hits the ground running - *Exmoor Tourism*** is the new trading name of the Exmoor Tourist Association which voted unanimously at its AGM to incorporate the work previously led by the Exmoor Tourism Partnership. The transition creates a single strategic body to develop tourism within Greater Exmoor, led by the industry with strong support from public sector organisations such as West Somerset Council and Exmoor National Park Authority.

The two bodies have increasingly worked together on a number of joint initiatives with the National Park Authority and West Somerset Council in recent years such as the launch of the acclaimed new [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk) website at the end of last year. This spring the new site has seen a 40% increase in unique visitors to the site compared to the same time period last year with people spending longer on it than the old site.

"There are some really positive foundations laid by the work of all those involved over recent years and we are now committed to making the most of the potential for tourism in the area." Said Evelyn Stacey, Chairman of Exmoor Tourism.

"We have a product we can be proud of and some great opportunities lie ahead of us. We are aware this is a challenging time for many in the industry and it is our intention to do all we can to help tourism thrive on Exmoor. To bring the two organisations together is a very positive move and will help ensure the area's largest industry is well catered for into the future."

**New website for Coleridge Way** - A new website promoting the Coleridge Way has been launched at [www.coleridge-way.co.uk](http://www.coleridge-way.co.uk). The redeveloped site is based on the very successful new Visit Exmoor website launched at the end of last year and is managed by Exmoor Tourism.

The new website is designed to make it easy for those wishing to plan a holiday using all or part of the route and carries information ranging from accommodation to some of the sites of interest featured along the route. Full route guides, with

mapping, are available free to download on the site alongside videos, images, practical information and even an opportunity for those that have completed the route to share their story with others. Extensive use of interactive mapping is made to present information clearly and the site is fully responsive for use on a range of devices, from a smartphone to a desktop computer, with ease.

"Since we extended the route last year we've seen a significant rise in interest in the route and walkers undertaking the route" said Dan James, Sustainable Economy Manager at Exmoor National Park. "Our hope is that this new website, alongside the videos and new leaflet produced last year, will further increase interest in people visiting some of the quieter parts of the area

The site was jointly commissioned by West Somerset Council and Exmoor National Park Authority in partnership with Exmoor Tourism as part of the EU Interreg funded COOL tourism project. It is now managed by Exmoor Tourism alongside the main Visit Exmoor site promoting the Greater Exmoor area and all it has to offer to the world.

Clare O'Connor – External Relations Manager, ENPA

## **Lake District National Park**

### **Friends of the Lake District**

#### **Proposed extensions of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks:**

This appears to be a regular item in this update. We are now two years on from the Public Inquiry and we still await its decision. With Secretary of State Liz Truss now safely back at her desk in Defra, we will renew our calls and exert all our influence for an early announcement.

**LDNPA property sales:** The announcement that LDNPA was making disposals from its property portfolio generated a large amount of concern in many quarters. Friends of the Lake District registered an Expression of Interest in Stickle Tarn, and we have been exercising due diligence before deciding our next step. Part of the public outcry generated by the sale announcement was the concern future owners should understand National Park purposes and be committed to long term stewardship. In our meetings with LDNPA we have been reassured that this will be taken into consideration in any future proposed sales.

**Landscape Character Assessments:** We have arranged a meeting with LDNPA to update LCAs.

**Thirlmere Fence:** The Friends of the Lake District campaign against United Utilities' proposed fence on the fells to the South West of Thirlmere has led to the Planning Inspectorate calling in the application for a Public Inquiry, expected in November. We have another meeting with UU in July to discuss alternatives.

**National Grid's North West Coast Connection:** Our campaign for the offshore route continues, but we are also engaging with National Grid and others, including LDNPA, regarding mitigation measures if the onshore route is chosen.

Douglas Chalmers, Director, Friends of the Lake District

## **Lake District National Park Authority**

### **Lake District launches World Heritage Plan**

The Lake District's quest for World Heritage status was launched last month when 25 of the area's leading organisations formally endorsed the Lake District's nomination. Partners including the National Trust, Cumbria Tourism and Natural England agreed the documents that make the case for being globally important.

The bid demonstrates how the landscapes of the Lake District has been shaped by farming and local industry for thousands of years, which in turn inspired the Romantic poets and subsequent global conservation movement, including the start of the National Trust.

The bid is in two parts – the nomination document defines why the Lake District deserves the international status of World Heritage inscription and the Partnership's Plan outlines the future management, development and conservation of the Lake District.

### **Top Tourist Award for Brockhole**

VisitEngland has endorsed the Lake District's Brockhole Visitor Centre as part of its Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme. Brockhole, which attracts around 230,000 people annually, has an extensive events programme this year.

National Park Commercial Manager Victoria Gordon-Ingham said the centre was going from strength to strength: "Our visitors tells us they love what we're doing here, but to have VisitEngland recognising and endorsing the quality of our product and service is testimony to the whole team's commitment and enthusiasm."

### **Volunteers saluted**

Award-winning Lake District volunteers are involved in 5,500 days of work in the National Park, according to the latest Park Authority analysis. The research shows that there are 420 volunteers aged between 15 and 86.

Coordinator Tim Duckmanton said no thanks were enough for the dedicated volunteers: "Whether it is leading guided walks, doing upland path maintenance or conservation activities, caring for our archaeology, undertaking surveys, gardening or helping visitors at Brockhole, we could not work the way we do without them."

## **New Forest National Park**

### **New Forest Association**

**Annual General Meeting** - Chaired by President, Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, the 148-year-old New Forest Association (NFA) held its AGM, which was attended by members from across the Forest, with the largest contingents coming from Ringwood, Lyminster and Brockenhurst. Attendees also included New Forest

National Park Authority CEO Alison Barnes, who has shown consistent support for the work of the NFA.

The report from the NFA Council to the Association membership highlighted some of the issues dealt with during the past year, including commercial fungi gathering, finding tranquillity on the Forest, surplus road signs, low flying aircraft, and the undergrounding of the power cables in the north of the Forest. Mention was also made of the national planning policy changes for affordable housing and wider permitted development rights, which have required NFA monitoring, supporting or opposing of the never-ending flow of planning applications made for development throughout the New Forest.

Reading University graduate, Catherine Pascoe, (see photo) reported to the NFA membership on the distribution of the declining Autumn Ladies' Tresses and Field Gentian Violets in an area heavily used by walkers on the New Forest. The need for education for both visitors and residents alike, as to the special and fragile qualities of the New Forest, was acknowledged. The NFA's Education Group is working with the New Forest National Park Authority on plans for a Secondary Schools New Forest Conference to be held in Brockenhurst later this year to deliver key conservation messages to the next generation of Forest users.

Alison Barnes advised the NFA that a close relationship with the other National Parks was important. Officers replied that the NFA had been directly involved with the work of the Campaign for National Parks since before the New Forest was designated in 2005 and this relationship would continue.

### **New Forest Show – 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

The New Forest Association will be attending the New Forest Show this year to promote its program of events and campaigns, meet current NFA members and recruit new members who are interested in supporting its work to protect, conserve and enhance the flora, fauna and heritage of the New Forest, and all that makes it unique. An estimated 95,000 visitors will be attending the show, which makes it the most popular event on the Forest. If you are going to be attending the show do come and see us in the 'Heart of the Forest' area of the show ground.

Gale Gould, New Forest Association

### **New Forest National Park Authority**

#### **Three new bus services for the New Forest**

Three new bus services have started in the New Forest thanks to support from the New Forest National Park Authority. The Authority is using Department for Transport (DfT) funding to support the three seasonal services, and encourage more car-free travel in and around the National Park.

If successful, these services will be paid for by passengers through ticket sales in future years rather than being dependent on public money for support. By appealing to visitors, better services can be provided for local people.

- Forest Bus is a new improved service between Southampton and Lymington

- Forest Bus Baby is a brand new weekend service, which will run across the Forest
- The Summer Service X24 to Paultons Family Theme Park will run from Southampton

The open-top New Forest Tour and its three scenic routes will also return from 27 June to 13 September, and the Beach Bus will run from Hythe to Lymington via Lepe Country Park from 25 July to 31 August.

Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, Chairman of the Authority, said: 'These three new bus services, along with the existing New Forest Tour and Beach Bus, mean that there are now plenty of options for residents and visitors to leave their cars behind. This not only supports the local economy by encouraging visitor spending in towns and villages, but will help take cars off the road and reduce the pressure on the National Park's fragile landscapes.'

'It's also very important that these services become self-funding. We've recently seen how buses which are too reliant on public subsidies can be vulnerable to cuts. Whilst some support is needed to establish these services, the aim is to make them more financially viable through ticket sales rather than rely on ever decreasing pots of public funding.'

More details here:

[http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/article/702/three\\_new\\_bus\\_services\\_for\\_the\\_new\\_forest](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/article/702/three_new_bus_services_for_the_new_forest)

### **Rural advice service on a high after five years**

The New Forest's commoners, landowners and farmers are celebrating the fifth anniversary of a service that helps them and wildlife thrive in the National Park.

The New Forest Land Advice Service supports rural businesses with advice on land management and nature conservation, access to rural skills training courses, and help when applying for grants.

This work includes supporting commoners to ensure they can continue to make use of the ancient rights attached to their property to turn out livestock onto the open areas of the New Forest – a vital tradition as the grazing animals shape the area's unique landscape.

The service's notable achievements over the last five years include:

- Reintroducing ponies and cattle to sites in Milford on Sea and New Milton for the first time in over 50 years, to encourage wildlife and support local farmers and commoners
- Running the Better Boundaries project, which created more than 600m of laid hedges, 1,000m of hedgerows and 1,600m of wildflower field margins to act as wildlife corridors
- Leading volunteers in a national pilot study of water quality on the River Blackwater in the north of the New Forest, and removing more than 2,000m of the invasive Himalayan balsam plant from its river banks.
-

The Land Advice was established by the New Forest National Park Authority, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Natural England in 2010, and is now also funded by the Verderers.

Since then, it has helped more than 100 businesses each year and has widened the scope of its work significantly. This includes launching the Community Wildlife Plans Project, which is helping eight communities to care for their local environment.

Details: [http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/article/687/rural\\_advice\\_service\\_on\\_a\\_high\\_after\\_five\\_years](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/article/687/rural_advice_service_on_a_high_after_five_years)

### **New Forest and health organisations discuss how nature could help local people**

New Forest and local health organisations working within the inspiring landscapes of the National Park are looking at how closer collaboration could help improve people's health and wellbeing.

A workshop, hosted by the New Forest National Park Authority on 28 April 2015, brought together representatives from NHS groups, Forest organisations and local charities to focus on how to work together to enhance people's physical and mental wellbeing and prevent chronic illness, whilst helping to maintain the special qualities of the National Park.

The delegates heard from a number of inspiring speakers, leading successful work on the 'Natural Health Service' at a national and international level. For example a more joined-up approach could see more GPs 'prescribe' patients to join a guided healthy walk or take part in conservation work to help them alleviate stress, recover from illness, improve physical fitness or overcome mental health problems.

The workshop included senior leaders from NHS West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council, the Forestry Commission, as well as local charities and community groups.

Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, Chairman of the National Park Authority, said: 'This event has provided a valuable opportunity for local NHS groups, Forest organisations and local charities to get together and focus on how to improve people's health and wellbeing through access to nature and green spaces, and explore ideas of how this might be achieved whilst still protecting and enhancing the special qualities of the National Park.'

Dr Tim Thurston, Clinical Executive Director for Innovations and Research Governance at West Hampshire CCG, who is also a Senior Partner at New Milton Health Centre in the New Forest, said: 'Everybody seems excited by the opportunities for joint working across organisations following this event. If you look at the Five-Year Forward View for the NHS, prevention is one of the key pillars to support the sustainability of our healthcare system. It is absolutely essential that we all support the New Forest to become a "natural health service", not only in health economic terms, but above all to try and improve the quality of people's lives by helping them not become physically or emotionally unwell in the first place.'

Dave Yates, chief executive of New Forest District Council, said: 'Many people were clearly inspired by the day's speakers and it was wonderful to see so many people there. A number of local organisations are already working together as part of our local Health and Wellbeing partnership and today's workshop builds on this work by placing emphasis on nature and greenspace as a natural health provider.'

More details:

[http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/article/700/new\\_forest\\_and\\_health\\_organisations\\_discuss\\_how\\_nature\\_could\\_help\\_local\\_people](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/article/700/new_forest_and_health_organisations_discuss_how_nature_could_help_local_people)

Hilary Makin, Communications Manager, NFNPA

## **North York Moore National Park**

### **North Yorkshire Moors Association**

**York Potash Ltd. Polyhalite Mine Planning Application** - The date has been set for the National Park planning meeting to determine the application for the mine head and mineral transport system and this will be the 30<sup>th</sup> June with the following day July 1<sup>st</sup> also reserved as a second day should this be needed. The National Park Planning Authority has announced that it is likely that the planning officer's report to the committee will include an open recommendation which means neither a recommendation for approval or refusal. This unusual move is not without precedent but has been interpreted by some of the press and media as an abdication of responsibility.

**Significant Consultants Report** - The report on the York Potash Ltd Environmental Statement and Supplementary Information by the National Park consultants AMEC has still to be made public and is expected at the beginning of June. This will be a key report and will inform the planning officer's report to the committee. A recently published Agronomy Report commissioned by the National Park is highly critical of some of the claims made by York Potash Ltd for crop trials with polyhalite. The report which is a review of the ADAS Report "The Agronomic Case for Polyhalite" is by senior trust fellow A E Johnson at Rothamsted Research. ADAS have replied by letter to this refuting point by point the criticism. This highlights the need for a proper examination of these technical reports by expert cross examination at a public inquiry. There is no further news on the five requests for a call-in for a public inquiry.

**South Moor Farm** - Earlier this year we objected to an application to develop an airfield at South Moor Farm in a very quiet area of the Park. The application included a request for permission for 20 aircraft movements per day and a storage hangar for up to 9 fixed wing aircraft. We have received information from the National Park that the applicant is appealing against the refusal by the planning committee. The inspectorate has advised that the appeal is to be decided on the basis of an exchange of written statements and a site visit by an inspector. The National Park's request for a local hearing has been rejected by the inspectorate.

**Fracking** - A planning application for gas production within the National Park by the company Third Energy, includes the re-injection of waste water taken from the production well on Ebberston Moor into another borehole. The application which was

scheduled to be determined at a planning meeting held in May has been deferred. There are issues regarding the hydrogeology and new information from the consultants acting for the National Park has meant that the application was withdrawn from the agenda of the planning meeting in May. The company Third Energy have also submitted an application to North Yorkshire County Council for a proposal for a hydraulic fracturing operation at Kirby Misperton, four miles from Pickering which is just outside the National Park boundary.

**Moorsbus** - The Moorsbus is organised by Moorsbus Community Interest Company and Friends of Moorsbus The service is set to expand its operation this year with an additional route running from Saltburn on the coast through to Helmsley. Other routes which were established last year have been extended to run for a longer period. The Moors Rambler which is sponsored by NYMA will continue to offer guided walks each Sunday from July to September at various locations on the route through the National Park.

**Conservation** - Two conservation awards which NYMA supports, will be made at the AGM in June. A retrospective "President's Award" will be made for work on a Harvest Mouse survey in the National Park based on Owl Pellet Analysis. The joint National Park and NYMA "Conservation Award" will be made for a heritage trail leaflet based on the work of Great Broughton and Ingleby Greenhow Local History Group for restoration of the Kirby Bank Trod an ancient stone pathway dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

Finally our involvement with the prestigious Cornfield Flowers Project has ended as employers of the two Project Officers. The five-year funding ended in April and brought to a close a most successful conservation and regeneration programme of rare plants of arable fields. Enough has been done to ensure that what has been achieved will continue in some form and NYMA will continue to have a position on the management committee as the project moves into another phase.

Tom Chadwick

## **North York Moors National Park Authority**

### **Missing Links project comes to an end**

The opening of a new bridge over the Murk Esk restores an historic bridleway and brings to an end a three year project to re-establish missing routes in the Esk Valley. The Missing Links Project has created and improved six bridleways that all connect with public transport.

A ford used to provide passage across the Murk Esk but a severe flood in the 1930s completely changed the course of the river leaving the ford effectively marooned in the middle of a field. The only way across the new course of the river involved a steep climb up from the riverbank. Thanks to cooperation from landowners, the bridleway has been diverted and the new bridge installed at the site of a former tramway bridge, providing a safe river crossing once again.

The new bridge sits on the historic abutments of the former tramway bridge which was built in the 1830s to transport whinstone from the mines near Green End to the

Whitby and Pickering Railway. The mine closed in the 1930s and the bridge was lost following the severe floods that diverted the course of the Murk Esk.

Part of the old route that crossed the North Yorkshire Moors Railway at a level crossing has also been diverted under the railway viaduct providing not only a safer crossing but also a spectacular vantage point of a structure that is otherwise hidden from view.

The Missing Links Project has been run in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council with funding from the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund. It is part of the wider scheme to boost sustainable tourism in Whitby and the Esk Valley which includes the park and ride site in Whitby and associated bus services into the town and to villages in the Esk Valley.

### **Funding for work on the river Esk**

The NYMNP has been successful with a BIFFA partnership bid for Freshwater Pearl Mussel (FWPM) work on the river Esk. This is a large scale (£1.5 million) FWPM project with multiple partners. The Freshwater Biological Association is the lead organisation, and river restoration will be carried out in a number of additional FWPM catchments in Cumbria and Devon.

We have been awarded £300,000 for the river Esk (three year project); the project commenced on 1 March.

In the first year we will be rolling out river restoration work, sponsoring an MRes at Durham University, carrying out water quality monitoring, providing volunteer equipment and undertaking FWPM research work (redox surveys, encystment support and seed mussel re-introduction). This work will build on the WREN funded FWPM project which has now been successfully completed.

In related news, the Esk and Coastal Streams Catchment Partnership (jointly hosted by the Yorkshire Esk Rivers Trust and the NYMNP) has been successful in a bid to the People's Postcode Lottery. It has been awarded £10,000 which is fantastic news as this round of funding was very competitive. It will fund a project, *Discovering the Esk*, which will help deliver citizen science and community engagement projects such as Salmon in the Classroom, the Young Angler Initiative, Adopt a Stream and Riverfly Monitoring.

Postcode Community Trust is a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of People's Postcode Lottery. Players have raised over £66m for good causes across Great Britain.

### **Update on York Potash application** (see above for North Yorkshire Moors Association perspective)

Officers' assessment of the York Potash planning application is nearly complete and we anticipate being able to hold a Special Planning Committee meeting at which Members will consider the application on Tuesday 30 June 2015. This date will enable new Members appointed to the Authority following recent local council elections to participate fully in the meeting. The Director of Planning's report to the

Planning Committee will be available at least five working days before the meeting and will be posted on the Authority's website.

The applicant asked for an early indication of the likely officer recommendation on the Potash Mine application and we have indicated that there is likely to be an open recommendation. This is provisional at this stage as the final officer report is still being prepared and is not due to be published until mid-June.

An open recommendation in effect means that the report itself sets out the impacts of the development and provides Members with an assessment of the policy issues and other material considerations which they will need to balance to reach a planning judgment, but does not specifically recommend either an approval or refusal.

Rachel McIntosh, Communications Officer, NYMNPA

## **Northumberland National Park**

### **Northumberland National Park Authority**

***The Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre*** achieved a significant boost with the award of a £7.75 million grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund in January 2015. To date, more than £12 million has been pledged towards the project's capital and revenue costs.

A major driver behind the Sill is the desire to stimulate people's interest in their environment, to inspire new audiences to visit, and to nurture the next generation of landscape enthusiasts. Beyond that, the Sill also offers a unique opportunity to turn a national spotlight onto the vital importance of landscape to our nation's health, wealth and well-being.

The Sill will offer a range of new and exciting ways for people to get involved whilst also providing a facility that inspires feelings of confidence in visiting the countryside. The Sill's comprehensive *activity programme* is for learners of all ages and interests and includes *formal education, vocational training, and events and informal learning opportunities*. Activities will take place both at the Sill and at sites across and beyond the National Park.

The Sill's *exhibits and interpretation* will examine the interaction between landscapes and the peoples and histories of Northumberland and the wider North of England, inspiring visitors to explore and appreciate these spaces in a new way. The Sill will also deliver substantial **economic benefits** to the area too, including an estimated *annual boost to the local economy* of £2.7m to £5.3m and the creation of between 117 and 240 new jobs per year in the local rural economy.

The large scale and encompassing scope of the project mean that partnership working is absolutely essential. Northumberland National Park Authority is working in partnership with the Youth Hostel Association (England and Wales) to develop The Sill, alongside a wide range of other partners from across the private, voluntary and public sectors.

Construction starts this autumn and The Sill will open to the public in summer 2017. Partial operation - including activities - will start (off-site) during 2015. The Sill will be built on the site of the existing NNPA visitor centre and YHA hostel at Once Brewed, adjacent to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall.

### **Northumberland National Park Youth Cabinet**

From significantly enhancing children and young people's physical and mental health and well-being to – quite literally in some cases – changing young lives forever, we know that the power of engaging with the natural world can be remarkable. Northumberland National Park has a long history of working with young people, including through projects such as Youth Mosaic, Career Pathways, New Young Naturalists and uplands farming apprenticeships. However, we recognised that we needed to develop a mechanism to ensure that young people are involved as an integral part of the National Park's decision-making process.

Our brand new **Youth Cabinet** (*working title\**) initiative draws on all of our work with young people to find appropriate ways to ensure that diverse young voices are heard at the heart of the National Park through its governance. It will put young people into the spotlight in decision-making for the Authority and help us all to make sure that everything we do is leading to the ultimate aim of engaging people with the Park. As well as involving the young people themselves, Authority Member Jean Davidson has been nominated to be the lead from the Authority in the Youth Cabinet.

We have just started working with a group of young people from right across the Park and surrounding urban areas and anticipate that Youth Cabinet members will be involved in a wide range of work including policy conference, review panel and influencing the executive via the Leadership Team. To borrow the words of Jerome Bass, Mosaic Champion and winner of National Parks Young Volunteer Award 2014, we aim to *“stop listening to what you want to hear and listen to what you need to hear!”*.

*\* One of the Youth Cabinet's first tasks is to choose a name for the group!*

### **Habitat mapping: Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership**

Working together on habitat connectivity with like-minded partners is vital so that we are all more effective. Members of the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership (LNP) are working together on mapping ecological networks. The LNP is made up of 5 protected landscapes (2 National Parks and 3 AONBs).

The first step is to map 8 key habitats, using our own local data where it exists, and other national datasets in the gaps. Having mapped key habitats and their 'zone of influences' (functional networks), the next stage is to see where networks overlap. This shows us mosaic areas that are important for the connectivity of, say, grasslands AND native woodland. These areas will need to be still managed as a mosaic if possible.

We also hope to use the process to see where the top 10 ecological networks are, to focus conservation work. Each protected landscape will have its own "top 10" as well as one for the overall LNP. Using 'condatis' software (developed by and written

for conservation organisations and Liverpool University), we'd like to see where the 'bottlenecks' in habitat connectivity are. These are the places where creating new habitat could help species movement across the landscape.

Take ponds, for instance. Having mapped all the ponds across the LNP, we'd like to see how connected they are. Where would encouraging a land manager to create a new pond or scrape make a massive difference to invertebrates and amphibians? Perhaps it would take 200 generations for a newt to move from one part of the LNP to another, but with a new wetland habitat in a certain place, it might become 150 generations. The same idea works for thinking about black grouse habitat (mires, heathland, woodland edge) and connecting populations that are becoming genetically cut off from each other.

What about your Park - would the same approach work for you?

*Main contact:* **Abi Mansley, Border Uplands Project Coordinator**

Katy Jackson

## **Peak District National Park**

### **Friends of the Peak District**

**New President** - After six years sterling service by Julia Bradbury, we are soon to appoint our next President and are delighted to announce that Dame Fiona Reynolds, former DG of the National Trust and now Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, has accepted our invitation to stand. Fiona has been a long standing friend of the organisation since working with Gerald Haythornthwaite when she was Director of CPRE. She was also for many years a Director of CNP. She also has strong family links to Sheffield. Last year she gave our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary lecture, entitled 'The Case for Beauty' and we are very much looking forward to working more closely with her in the coming years.

**Northern Powerhouse** - We are in agreement that the north of England is wholly deserving of a greater share of national infrastructure investment but this must not be at the expense of its wonderful countryside and national parks. We are therefore gearing up for an advocacy campaign to ensure that the value of green places adjacent to the northern conurbations is recognised and is not made subservient to economic re-vitalisation. We are already working with adjacent CPRE branches to tease out issues of concern and are scheduling a series of meetings with regional leaders and MPs.

**Hydropower returning** - Five years after the publication of FPD's seminal Peak Power report encouraging the adoption of more micro hydro power at old mill sites across the national park, we are delighted that the Chatsworth Estate are proposing two Archimedes screws on the River Derwent within sight of the House. We did the original feasibility studies on one of the weirs that has now been proposed for a 90kW installation. Combined with a pro-active river management plan, it should be a win-win for green power generation (Chatsworth already has one hydro turbine and a large biomass burner) and improving river ecology, including increased fish passage.

Andy Tickle

## **Peak District National Park Authority**

### **Pennine Way anniversary celebrations at Edale**

A weekend of events in Edale marked the 50th anniversary of the Pennine Way. Britain's first National Trail. Lots of celebrations and media coverage.

### **Royal seal of approval for making a difference**

Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, visited the Stanage-North Lees estate and handed out awards to five people who have made an outstanding contribution to Britain's first national park.

Accompanied by HM Lord-Lieutenant William Tucker, the Earl of Wessex recognised the efforts of Henry Folkard, British Mountaineering Council (BMC) volunteer and Stanage Forum secretary; Bill Gordon, Stanage-North Lees warden; Mike Harding and Keith Singleton, Stanage-North Lees volunteer rangers, and Geoff Nickolds, retiring deputy-chair of the Peak District National Park Authority.

### **Funding Bids**

Peak District National Park have secured an initial £25k from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council public health programme. The project is likely to run for two years subject to funding availability and performance and we will develop a range of activities in deprived and isolated rural communities in North Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The project will be delivered by the learning and discovery and ranger teams and will also form part of the wider South West Peak Landscape Partnership. A bid has been submitted to The Prince's Countryside Fund Rural Livelihood strand for just under £50,000 over two years. The project is to expand the On Farm Energy Efficiency & Renewables pilot. Successful projects will be announced during National Countryside Week, 20-26th July 2015.

### **Moors for the Future Update**

Moors for the Future Partnership held a well-attended closing conference in Halifax in March, highlighting the five-year MoorLIFE project's impressive results.

Moorland restoration works on 886 hectares across the Peak District and South Pennines were successfully completed and included stabilisation of bare peat with heather brash, planting nurse grasses, introducing blanket bog species, blocking erosion gullies and applying one billion Sphagnum fragments. Preliminary results of a carbon audit show a decrease in CO2 emissions from treated areas that soon outweigh the CO2 emissions caused in carrying out the works.

### **Counting Bumble Bees**

Now that spring is in full swing, Moors for the Future has reactivated the Community Science Bumblebee survey. The project requires people to submit their sightings of three bumblebee species on and around the moorlands of the Peak District. By collecting information about bilberry, red-tailed and tree bumblebees, we aim to monitor the effects of climate change on wildlife in the national park.

Maureen Eastgate , Head of Marketing and Communications

## **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park**

### **Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast**

**Wind turbines** - For some time we have been concerned about the cumulative impact of wind turbines on the Park. A recent appeal decision has given us hope. In dismissing the appeal for a single turbine [24 m to the hub], close to two others, just outside the Park the Inspector stated:

*“PCNP Authority, Friends of PCNP and local residents raised concerns regarding the cumulative visual impact of the three turbines in views from the Pencaer peninsula to the north..... I was also directed to views from Garn Fawr and from the nationally important Pembrokeshire Coastal Path. These views are quite extensive and from them the turbines would appear in a line at a distance of around 5 km. The existing turbines are particularly noticeable given their white colour. The addition of a third turbine would extend the line and could not be argued to have a balancing effect as was stated in the appeal decision for the second turbine. I agree with the Authority that the proposal would lead to an unacceptable cumulative impact on the PCNP. This impact would be alien to the landscape and harmful to the special qualities of the National Park”.*

We feel that this is a very useful decision that sets a low threshold for cumulative impact on the Park.

**Schools Literary Competition** - To mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the setting up of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in 2013 the membership of the Friends of the National Park decided to launch a schools literary competition which invited youngsters to express in words why they so appreciated the countryside that made up the Park.

The competition has gone from strength to strength and now three years later entries ...in excess of 200...pour in, not only from Pembrokeshire schools but from literally all over the United Kingdom.

The competition is growing in popularity with youngsters who spend family holidays in Pembrokeshire and enjoy exploring not only the 186 miles of coastline but the windswept Preseli hills. The winners of this year's competition were announced at the April annual meeting of the Pembrokeshire Friends, when among the winners were entries from as far afield as Hertfordshire and London.

At the recent AGM the Chair of the Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Peter Heard remarked *“The competition has really caught the imagination and each year the number of entries increases and the quality of the prose continues to attain a truly amazing standard. Pembrokeshire schools have been very enthusiastic but what gives everyone an additional lift is the number of entries from youngsters who have enjoyed a family holiday in the county. Testament to this support is the fact that two sets of proud parents made a round trip of well over 400 miles to attend the presentation ceremony. What set out as an anniversary celebration event is now a well-supported, eagerly awaited event that is definitely here to stay”* he concluded.

The schools literary competition has received enthusiastic encouragement from both Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Pembrokeshire County Council's Education Service.

The winning entries can be viewed on the Friends website [www.fpcnp.org.uk](http://www.fpcnp.org.uk)

Edward Holdaway

## **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority**

### **Beach access back up to scratch thanks to volunteer power**

The access path down to one of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park's most popular beaches has been repaired following a mammoth effort by around 70 volunteers.

The cliff above the access path to Caerfai beach suffered erosion during the storms of early 2014. The access to the beach was temporarily closed as the path had been undercut and become unstable following a landslide.

The access was reopened once specialist contractors had undertaken the repair work in time for the summer season; however the surface on a 50m stretch of the path was still in need of attention. That's when an army of volunteers stepped in.

National Park Authority North West Area Ranger Ian Meopham said: "This would have been a costly job, but thanks to the hard work and determination of the volunteers involved the path has been finished, many wheelbarrows of concrete later.

"Ten tons of concrete have been poured on this path to bring it up to scratch, which highlights the size of the job that was at hand, especially given the path's steep incline. The completion of this project will ensure more people can enjoy a safer route to this beautiful beach."

Among those involved were National Park Volunteer Wardens, the Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Pembrokeshire College Students and students completing their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The path to Caerfai beach has now also become a registered public right of way following a legal agreement made between the landowner and the National Park Authority.

### **Marine litter is focus of *Môr Plastig* exhibition at Oriol y Parc**

Marine litter from around the Pembrokeshire Coast has been photographed in forensic detail to challenge traditional ideas of what is 'natural' for a recent exhibition at Oriol y Parc Gallery and Visitor Centre in St Davids.

In his role as *Coastal Currents* Artist in Residence at Oriol y Parc, North Pembrokeshire photographic artist Mike Perry used plastic collected from local beaches to develop his series *Môr Plastig* (Welsh for 'plastic sea').

Mike said: “My work is part reflection on global consumption and the way we treat the planet but also a story of the strange new forms emerging from nature’s reshaping of the manmade.”

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Arts Development Officer Kate Wood, said: “We are thrilled to have been able to work with an artist of Mike Perry’s stature and I’d like to acknowledge the support of the Arts Council of Wales, without which this project would not have been possible.”

The plastic was collected at the end of January during a series of beach cleans with the help of Keep Wales Tidy and members of the public.

Mike selected plastic objects ranging from old flip flops to buckets covered in barnacles and photographed them with an extremely high powered camera, allowing him to capture the fine detail and decay caused by years in the sea.

Bryony Dawkes, Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales Partnership Projects Curator, added: “We were delighted to have Mike as artist in residence at Oriel y Parc. His forensic and compelling take on the coastal landscape of today makes a fascinating contrast with the historic depictions of Pembrokeshire currently on show in *Natural Images*.

“I hope visitors will enjoy the differing and thought-provoking interpretations of ‘landscape’ on display throughout Oriel y Parc during Mike’s residency.”

Mike has already exhibited work from his *Môr Plastig* series at the National Eisteddfod and the Royal Academy of Arts and new work created during his residency has already been selected for display at the Venice Biennale 2015.

A short film of the residency, directed by Eilir Pierce, was launched at Oriel y Parc in March.

Mike Perry’s *Coastal Currents* residency was supported by the Arts Council of Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

### **New guidance for organisers of active outdoor events**

Organisers of active outdoor events in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park are being given a helping hand with new step-by-step guidance to ensure events are well organised and benefit as many people as possible.

The online guidance and interactive PDF have been designed to make sure events are enjoyable, safe and memorable for participants, spectators and Pembrokeshire people – with minimum impact on wildlife and the world-class National Park landscape.

The guidelines will be useful for anyone wishing to hold an organised event such as running, walking, cycling, surfing, coastering, climbing and horse riding in the National Park.

Hannah Buck, the National Park Authority's Health and Tourism Policy Officer said: "Active outdoor events can make a positive contribution to the economy of the area, the health and wellbeing of participants, and encourage people to visit and enjoy the National Park.

"The guidance is designed to inform people of the factors they should consider before going ahead with an event and encourage them to share their plans with the National Park Authority and its partners.

"Most importantly, the guidance is designed to help people make informed decisions before arrangements are put in place to ensure organisers, participants, landowners and local businesses are all aware and prepared."

The guidance, which is available from the National Park Authority's website, also includes a checklist that details the factors that need to be taken into consideration to organise a successful event in the National Park.

The new guidance has been produced by the National Park Authority with the support of and contribution from a wide range of individuals and organisations including Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, Pembrokeshire County Council, Pembrokeshire Tourism, Planned and Natural Resources Wales.

This guidance was produced using funding from the Visit Wales Partnership for Growth Fund, match funded by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

To view the guidance visit [www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/eventguidance](http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/eventguidance).

Janet O'Toole, PCNPA Communications Adviser

## **Snowdonia National Park**

### **Snowdonia Society/Cymdeithas Eryi**

**Practical conservation work** - Thanks to new 3-year funding from Natural Resources Wales we have increased our practical workdays programme to around 80 days per year. This includes an increase in work on footpaths, invasive species, and litter.

Our work in partnership with Snowdonia National Park Authority continues to grow on Snowdon, on lowland walking routes and elsewhere. We have recently started work on litter at Ogwen in partnership with the National Trust, and we will be doing more work on NRW sites.

Our work on litter goes beyond 'picking up the pieces'. Considerable interest has been generated by our use of GPS dataloggers to produce heatmaps of litter density on Snowdon and elsewhere. This work came out of a collaboration with Bangor University and we have since trained a local college in this technique for mapping the problem hotspots.

In partnership with the University's Centre for Behaviour Change, Snowdonia National Park Authority, and Keep Wales Tidy, we have also put together a bid for a PhD studentship to look at litter and littering behaviour on Snowdon.

The new and evolving Snowdon Partnership is the umbrella under which Snowdonia Society contributes to the vision, planning, and implementation of management on Snowdon.

We are delighted to announce a new staff appointment, taking us to 6 in total (all part time). Our flagship property at Tŷ Hyll (the Ugly House) now has Bethan in post to develop our work to educate and inspire people about Snowdonia. We are grateful to NRW for funding to make this post possible.

**Planning and campaigns** - Gwynedd Council have been in the news recently for their failure to show respect to National Park purposes. They recently replaced an old slate clapper bridge in the National Park with an over-sized concrete and steel monstrosity. Snowdonia Society has highlighted the waste of resources as well as the failure to respect National Park Authority requests to consult over design of the new bridge.

Snowdonia Society pressure and publicity has forced a developer to start work on undergrounding a hydroelectric scheme pipeline in Cwm Glas, Snowdon. The plastic pipe had been littering this wild landscape for 7 months.

A major hydro scheme is in the planning pipeline at Conwy Falls, a well-known beauty spot and designated SSSI for its lower plant interest. Attracting much interest locally, Snowdonia Society is actively involved in scrutiny of the landscape and ecological implications of this proposed development.

Hydro schemes continue to cause concern in a wider sense. The lack of any long-term monitoring evidence on the impacts of water abstraction on sensitive ravine plant communities (particularly mosses, liverworts, and filmy ferns) suggests that a more precautionary approach should be applied than has previously been the case.

There have been over a hundred new hydro schemes in Snowdonia in the last 3 years, and more every month. With many schemes depleting a kilometre or more of pristine river corridor, there is potential for significant long-term impact, and we would like to see a strategic evaluation of the resource which protects known high-value sites and areas. At present Snowdonia is reasonably well protected from landscape impacts of windfarms, but for reasons of topography is absorbing most of the hydro developments.

Snowdonia Society is actively involved in responding to the Planning (Wales) Bill and the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales. With a ministerial focus on 'green growth' and powers in place to enable the transfer of development control in Welsh National Parks to Joint Planning Boards, our voice has never been needed more.

John Harold

## **Snowdonia National Park Authority**

### **Planting a Tree in every school in Snowdonia – in a Day!**

In the International Year of Soils and during the year that Snowdonia National Park celebrated its 64th birthday, on March 11<sup>th</sup>, between 9 and 3 o'clock, one tree was planted in each of the 64 schools in the National Park and the surrounding area.

Under the guidance of National Park Wardens and Conservation Officers and with the help of the British Society of Soil Science, Gwynedd Council and some of Snowdonia's school pupils, one tree was planted in every school in the National Park. Either a rowan, cherry or a holm oak were planted in the school's garden, the school field, or in a pot.

The event was a great opportunity to remind children and young people of Snowdonia the importance of soil as a resource, and that we cannot do without it. Planting native deciduous trees was an opportunity for SNPA to demonstrate to pupils how they could protect the landscape and wildlife of Snowdonia. It reminded them of the importance of recycling in nature, motivating them to protect their local habitats and encouraging them to respect those who are dependent on soil to live. The event was very well received on social media and by the Welsh press.

### **Yr Ysgwrn – What next?**

Following support from the Welsh Government in 2012, Snowdonia National Park Authority was able to secure Yr Ysgwrn for the nation, and after receiving financial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, detailed plans for developing the site were drawn. The aim of the project is to ensure that this historic home and its atmosphere is protected, accessibility on the site will be improved, and Yr Ysgwrn's timeless messages, which include culture, society and the Great War will be presented to the public.

After a period of consultation with organizations, groups and communities, the final plans have now been agreed. Some of the main changes will be:

- Opening the farmhouse to the public, including the buttery, the pantry and the bedrooms with interpretation in these rooms focusing on the life and work of Hedd Wyn.
- Converting Beudy Llwyd (an old cow house) to a welcome building which will include a reception, cafe, education room, study room and an exhibition room.
- Restoring Beudy Tŷ (an old barn) to include a film about the Great War, interpretation of rural life and culture of the period, and adapting the building to enable events to be held there.
- Turn the Pigsty to a Bat House.
- Demolish the existing agricultural shed and build a new environmentally friendly shed (with grass roof), in its place.
- In addition, there will be a specific car park for visitors and a biomass boiler will be built next to the pigsty.

The major work of developing Yr Ysgwrn will begin this summer and continue until the spring of 2017. In the meantime, from next winter, Yr Ysgwrn will not be open to the public, but Open Days during the development phase will be held which will focus on particular aspects of the work. In the meantime, a temporary exhibition of Yr Ysgwrn will be located at Plas Tan y Bwlch (about 7 miles away) and will include a replica of Y Gadair Ddu (the Black Chair).

### **Objections to comments made by the Wales Tourism Alliance**

In a discussion about place names on Radio Wales on May 12, the chairman of the Wales Tourism Alliance said that Welsh language place names can “get in the way”.

The following day, at a meeting in Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Snowdonia National Park Authority members decided to announce that the Authority totally disagrees with the opinion of Wales Tourism Alliance’s Chairman regarding the use of the Welsh language when welcoming visitors to Wales.

On behalf of the Authority, its Heritage Champion, Councillor Elwyn Edwards said,

“As an Authority, we support *Mynyddoedd Pawb*’s (Everyone’s Mountains) campaign and we call on the Welsh Government to ensure that Welsh names are protected and promoted.

Welsh names are part of our cultural heritage – they reflect aspects of our history, our landscape, our biodiversity, our language and our way of life. These are the qualities that make us special, different and attractive to visitors. It is interesting therefore to note the Welsh Government’s announcement yesterday that 2014 was a record year for Wales in terms of tourism, as the number of British visitors to Wales reached 10 million. We have not heard any of these visitors complain that the Welsh language was ‘*in the way*’.

As an Authority, we are here to protect our heritage and place names underpin our heritage. Once we lose our names, we lose our history and our heritage.

In the past, the Wales Tourism Alliance has recognized the importance of National Parks’ statutory purposes in protecting and enhancing the beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas. We are therefore disappointed by the destructive comments made by the Alliance’s Chairman which contradicts this.”

Llinos Angharad, Communications Officer

### **South Downs National Park**

#### **South Downs Society**

**Local plan** - The South Downs NPA has been responsible for planning in the park since 2011, inheriting statutory plans and policies from a dozen local planning authorities as a framework for development management. Work has been under way as a priority on the first park-wide local plan, the completion and adoption of which should provide the basis for consistent decision making.

The SDNPA has ensured that this has been an inclusive process and SDS has participated enthusiastically. We have been afforded our own meetings with key staff and have submitted detailed comments at each stage of plan preparation. A full version of the plan is programmed to be considered by the NPA in June/July as a basis for a public consultation which will commence in September.

**Major regeneration, Lewes** - The inclusion within the national park of the East Sussex county town of Lewes has introduced the NPA to issues surrounding urban regeneration. The North Street (or Phoenix) quarter of Lewes comprises a range of ageing industrial, commercial, service and community premises, predominantly occupied by small businesses, arts groups and services. This extensive site lies close to the town centre on the banks of the River Ouse and is subject to riverine flood risk.

A number of regeneration schemes have been brought forward in recent years but aborted. A planning application has now been submitted by a development company following several rounds of consultation. Although the NPA delegates the great majority of planning applications to the local authorities for determination, this will be decided by the NPA itself. While there is general support for the principles behind the submitted scheme, there is considerable debate over issues like the mix of uses proposed, housing numbers (especially affordable), layout, design, the approach to landscaping and the possible retention of historical features. SDS has submitted extensive comments, sought to promote its views through local media and will no doubt seek to address the park's planning committee when the application is determined.

**Equestrian developments** - One of our biggest "postbags" from SDS members, and from the public, concerns planning applications – or the absence of them – for horse-related developments. While riding is a very popular and appropriate activity in the national park and elsewhere, we have seen a number of cases where buildings and other infrastructure have materialised without planning permission or in contravention of planning conditions and regulations. The Society has drawn up its own set of planning guidelines to structure our response to proposals or unauthorised developments, and we have pressed the park authority to give priority to the formulation of clear policies in this area.

Steve Ankers

## **South Downs National Park Authority**

### **High-tech treasure hunt is England's first Geocaching GeoTour**

England's first GeoTour, a high-tech treasure hunt through interesting places, launched in the South Downs National Park in March 2015. Designed to reveal its hidden gems, people can have an adventure by following the tour over hills, across commons and through woodland, collecting passport stamps and points along the way.

Geocaching is a game that combines being outdoors, exercise and technology. The South Downs GeoTour highlights great locations, which link up to the thousands of

other geocaches waiting to be discovered in the National Park. Using the Geocaching smartphone app, an Ordnance Survey map or GPS, people can seek out secret caches disguised in fake bird boxes, hollow logs, false stones and other cunning containers.

We've designed our GeoTour to take in some great places in the South Downs that you might never otherwise have found. Visitors also earn points for eating locally, staying in sustainable accommodation and travelling by bus, train and bike. When they have enough they can claim your special silver and gold souvenir geocoins.

The tour is made up of 30 sites in the National Park across Hampshire, East and West Sussex. As well as the usual log book and small trinkets to trade each cache will also include ideas for things to do and see whilst they're in the area.

### **Work to begin on Rampion wind farm**

E.ON have announced that funding is in place for the Rampion Offshore Windfarm. Work to bury 14km of cable through the South Downs National Park will now begin in June 2015.

E.ON have been granted permission to construct up to 175 wind turbines off the Sussex Coast with a connection to the National Grid running 14km through the South Downs National Park to Bolney Substation. The application was classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and was therefore assessed by the Planning Inspectorate with a final decision taken by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

The Secretary of State required E.ON to support further mitigation and monitoring through more than £358,500 payment (£242,500 for mitigation and £116,000 for monitoring) to the South Downs NPA. This is in addition to built in mitigation which will be delivered by E.ON.

Recognising the benefits of renewable energy we worked closely with Natural England and E.ON to get the protected landscapes of the National Park, including the UK's first heritage coast, taken into account in their proposals. The Secretary of State recognised our work and the importance of our landscapes by agreeing to a package of mitigation measures to reduce the impact on both land and people. The additional reduction in number, height and changed configuration of the turbines will help to reduce their impact on the heritage coast.

We were disappointed that E.ON did not fully mitigate the impact of the Rampion Windfarm on the South Downs but we will be working closely with them to get the best possible result for the National Park. This includes monitoring the burial of 14km of cabling through the National Park and restoration of this area once work has finished. We'll also have our own projects to enhance the landscape, biodiversity and access in the area.

### **Web portal to boost South Downs food and drink**

Food and drink businesses in the South Downs National Park are getting a free publicity boost through a new online directory and networking service to help promote their produce to local people and visitors. Any food business within a ten-

mile radius of the National Park – from country pubs and farm shops to farmers markets and wine tasting – can register their business at [southdownsfood.org](http://southdownsfood.org).

The site launches this June and will give visitors, residents and businesses quick access to accurate information about food and drink available in the South Downs.

[Southdownsfood.org](http://Southdownsfood.org) is being created by Natural Partnerships Community Interest Company (CIC) with the support of the South Downs National Park Authority and the Southern Co-operative.

From artisan cheese, ‘super-food’ watercress, wild venison, micro-breweries and some of the best sparkling wines in the world, the South Downs should be recognized for high-quality, sustainable food almost as much as its spectacular beauty and tranquil spaces. These are working landscapes which have been shaped by farmers and food production for thousands of years. Helping people find and appreciate this wonderful produce will make sure these businesses benefit from being part of the South Downs National Park.

“We have a close working relationship with the local food producers who supply our popular Local Flavours range, available in an increasing number of our stores. Supporting [Southdownsfood.org](http://Southdownsfood.org) is a natural extension of The Southern Co-operative’s commitment to championing local food and drink and the people who produce this.”

Businesses from any part of the National Park and a 10 mile ‘buffer’ area around it can apply to join including: farms; farm shops; farmer’s markets; wholesalers; local food retailers (independents and small local chains); hotels and any accommodation providing a food service; cafes/country pubs/restaurants; local catering companies; wineries, wine producers, micro-breweries; local food festivals; secondary producers (dairy produce/baked goods/deli produce).

Joanna Glyde, Senior Media Officer, SDNPA

## **Yorkshire Dales National Park**

### **Yorkshire Dales Society**

**Wind turbines** - It was good news that Harrogate Borough Council followed their officer’s recommendations and refused the Tapar applications for 4 large turbines. The reasons given were significant harm to landscape and scenic beauty, both individually and cumulatively (there are already 7 turbines nearby), in particular to the Nidderdale AONB. Some other applications have been withdrawn, but there are still proposals for 6 turbines nearby and a further 4 turbines right on top of a prominent ridge close to Almscliffe Crag, an important landscape feature which is widely visible. The Yorkshire Dales Society (YDS) is supporting a local group which is mobilising opposition.

**Planning consultations** - The Yorkshire Dales NPA has recently agreed to put YDS on the list of direct consultees for a wide range of categories of planning applications, including barn conversions, quarry and forestry works and housing

developments. This gives the Society a few extra days to consider, discuss with a planning officer, possibly make a site visit, and then respond to these applications through its volunteer members of the Policy Committee. (The Policy Committee of YDS comprises a number of active Trustees and Members plus representatives of some local CPRE groups).

**YDS Events** - Following a revamp of our programme of events for members, the first of the new “Vibrant Communities” events, held in Sedbergh, was a great success. This type of event is designed to shine a spotlight on a settlement and give local organisations the chance to showcase their village or town as well as debate local issues.

Local YDS member Ian McPherson (who is also a member of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA), organised a programme with input from many local organisations. More than 25 people attended, with ten arriving by train into Dent Station and thence on the community service run by the Western Dales Bus. Topics included not just the history of the town and its buildings but also the challenges faced today from lack of rural transport, employment and even banking facilities. The mood of the day was summed up as: “We did not just see the town, but learnt about its soul.”

Malcolm Petyt

## **Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority**

### **Flood-hit footpath in tip top shape**

Walkers in Wensleydale will find it easier to keep their footing on a popular riverside path thanks to work by Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Rangers and Dales Volunteers.

The route along the River Ure between Askrigg and Aysgarth had been badly damaged by flooding and was in need of urgent repair, according to Paul Sheehan, the Authority’s Access Ranger for Lower Wensleydale.

“The footpath near Lady Hill had become increasingly impassable over recent years due to flooding and erosion,” he said. “It was in a right state and we had to create a new walking surface above the flood-line.”

In all, 110m of green Willow poles, or spiling, have been put into the ground and woven together in an effort to stabilise the eroded banks and limit sedimentation of the river.

And, to encourage the Willow to take root and grow, stock fencing with gated access at either end has been installed.

“We would particularly like to thank the Dales Volunteers and the landowners and tenants, Rob and Martin Fawcett, Antony Abraham and Robert Ewbank, for their help and co-operation,” Paul said.

Nick Cotton, the YDNPA's Member Champion for Recreation Management, said: "The Authority has a responsibility to maintain the 2,000 kms of public footpaths and bridleways within the National Park and we couldn't do it without the help of our Dales Volunteers and the goodwill of the landowners, farmers and tenants."

### **New arrivals at Malham Cove**

Excitement is building at the spectacular Malham Cove in the Yorkshire Dales National Park as news spreads of some new arrivals there.

Two Peregrine falcons nesting on the cliff face are busy hunting for food for their new chicks – but only they know how many mouths there are to feed.

Staff and volunteers from the RSPB and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) are running a special, free peregrine viewpoint at the foot of the cove from where visitors can watch the spectacular birds through high-powered telescopes.

National Park Authority Wildlife Conservation Officer Ian Court said: "Because the nest is hidden, we don't yet know how many chicks are in it. Last year the pair raised four – which was great news – so we are hoping for that kind of number this year.

"Once the chicks start growing and moving around, we will know how many there are and we should be seeing them in the air in the next few weeks. In the meantime, we are all waiting expectantly for the first sighting."

This year is likely to see more people at the cove and in the village because the 268-mile-long Pennine Way trail – which runs up the side of the cove – celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

As in previous years, people are being asked to stay away from the nest site, and the British Mountaineering Council has once again agreed to impose temporary, voluntary rock climbing restrictions around it.

Since it started in 2003, more than 200,000 people have visited the viewpoint. As well as the Peregrines, Green Woodpeckers and Great Spotted Woodpeckers are frequent visitors and the first House Martins and Redstarts are expected any time now, along with Swallows and Little Owls.

### **Birthday celebration for Pennine Way**

April 24 was a special date in the calendar of thousands of walkers countrywide as it marked the day the Pennine Way was officially opened in the Yorkshire Dales National Park 50 years ago.

The 268-mile national trail, which stretches from Edale in Derbyshire to Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders, was opened at Malham Cove in the presence of the then Minister of Land and Natural Resources, F.T. Willey, and Tom Stephenson, the author and writer whose dream of a path running along the Pennines inspired its creation.

The anniversary this year coincides with the setting up of a partnership to coordinate the management of the entire length of both the Pennine Way and the 205-mile-long Pennine Bridleway.

The new partnership is led by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority with support from all the local access authorities and other key partners. A new Pennine National Trails Partnership Manager has been appointed to oversee budgets, route maintenance and improvement work.

Ilkley-born TV presenter Alan Titchmarsh said: “The word iconic is over used, but it most certainly applies to the Pennine Way and to the terrain it traverses.

“I've always been proud that it passes through some of my favourite native haunts, and my copy of Alfred Wainwright's astonishing guide is well thumbed.

“I hope that hardy walkers continue to be uplifted by walking even a part of it, and to feel a sense of achievement and wonder as they marvel at the beauty of the countryside around them.”

To celebrate the occasion, The National Park Authority's Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes staged a highly successful exhibition of work by a group of Dales artists called Pennine Ways, which is inspired by the popular walking route using art, photography and sculpture.

Richard Payne, YDNPA Communications Manager

June 2015

Ends