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February
2023

EXMOOR NEWS



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The image shows the interior of the Tongdam Thai Restaurant. It features wooden tables and chairs, with some tables set with glassware. There are decorative elements like a large potted plant and a framed picture on the wall. The lighting is warm and inviting.



EXMOOR NEWS

COVERING SOUTHERN EXMOOR

Hello

Here we are with a new issue at the beginning of a new year. We thought we would put in an article about how the *Exmoor News* has developed since we took it over back in 2016. The time has flown so fast! Read our article on page 2 and 3. Dulverton Players Panto Dick Whittington is now on, see page 5. The successful Dulverton Literary Festival on page 21. We also pleased to get regular contributions from Citizens Advice read their article on page 48 about scammers.

If you use a business or go to an event that you've seen in our magazine, please let them know where you saw it. It's good for them to know the advertising is working and good for us to know as well. Don't forget if you run or help with a group that has regular events, you can ask to go on our Contributor list, and you'll get a reminder before the next deadline. It's usually one email every couple of months - let us know you would like to join by emailing exmoornews@gmail.com. Please check our website for top tips when sending in copy.

Best wishes, Ceri Keene and Claire Savill

E: exmoornews@gmail.com T: 07497 914441 W: www.exmoornews.co.uk

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We take our responsibility to maintain high editorial standards seriously.

Should an error occur please do not hesitate to contact us.



The deadline for the March/April 23 issue of the Exmoor News is
Thursday 2nd February 2023

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The magazine team's tale

When *Exmoor News* launched this column in autumn 2020, who could have predicted all that would unfold from then until now? As a country, we were just emerging from the first of a series of national lockdowns, aimed at limiting the spread of Covid 19. Our aim, at the time, was to feature people living and working on Exmoor and to what extent Covid and Covid restrictions had affected them.

We were becoming accustomed to a raft of hitherto unimaginable restrictions and a whole new vocabulary: grappling with social distancing and two-metre rules, tiers ("Are you 2 or 3...?"), where and when to don a mask (not to mention juggling glasses and/or hearing aids), whether or not a pork pie constituted a meal, deciding who you wanted to be in your bubble, how far you could walk in an hour, to furlough or not to furlough, inviting friends round—to sit in the garden, seeing supermarket shelves cleared of loo rolls and pasta, and much, much more. Eye-testing triggered umpteen memes and jokes on social media; vaccine passports became (temporarily) a vexed issue, and who could ever forget those memorable words, "Next slide please"? For many, there were heartbreaking rules that prevented them from being with loved ones in their final hours or from attending funerals.

Meanwhile, prime ministers came and went, and trundling along in the background was Brexit and its impending impact...

Restrictions were gradually lifted between the second half of 2021 and March 2022 but, before we knew it, Russia had invaded Ukraine, the price of petrol and diesel went through the roof, as did energy prices. The cost of living rocketed and fuel and food poverty became a reality. According to the Trussell Trust: "Compared to this time five years ago, need for food banks in our network has increased by 81 per cent." (2022). In a 12-month period between 2021 and 2022, the trust distributed almost 175,000 emergency food parcels in the South West alone, and over 2.1 million across the country. Who could have imagined that, in 2022, Exmoor towns and villages would be setting up community fridges and freezers for people who were struggling or vulnerable?

And then there was avian flu, which continues to affect poultry farms and shoots, and anyone who simply keeps a few happy hens to provide eggs for breakfast. Above all, it became impossible to ignore the reality of climate change, as Donna

Lyndsay, who leads a specialist team at Ordnance Survey, made clear when we interviewed her for the September/October 2022 issue.

Despite everything that was happening close to home and in the wider world, Exmoor communities continued to do their utmost to meet all the challenges and obstacles they were facing, reaching out to help friends and neighbours.

Exmoor News has always aimed to reflect a broad picture of life across southern Exmoor and the wide range of activities and events that take place here, year in, year out. We were particularly heartened that throughout all the Covid restrictions and lockdowns, our advertisers, contributors and volunteer distributors stayed with us. This meant that we never missed an issue and were able to get copies out to every single community on our list and all the distribution outlets that remained open.

We introduced some changes too; by late 2021 it was clear that the 54-page A5 format that had served us so well since *Exmoor News* was launched in 1985 simply wasn't large enough to accommodate all the features, news items, listings and advertising that we needed to include. After much discussion—and various mock-ups—we eventually settled on a larger 58-page square format, with a bigger type size, which made its first appearance in January 2022. Any doubts that this was the right decision were soon dispelled by the enthusiastic response of our readers. Most important, perhaps, *Exmoor News* is still free of charge. If you want to know more about our story, you can find it here: <https://exmoornews.co.uk/our-story/>

Another new development involved putting the magazine online so, if you're kicking yourself for recycling that issue you now wish you had held onto, you can find every edition dating back to March-April 2016 here:

<https://exmoornews.co.uk/exmoor-news-copies/>

You can browse online and print any pages that you want to save.

We've been looking back ourselves because, inevitably, there have been changes for people whom we have featured in this column. Nick Payne (November-December 2021 issue), for example, took a brave plunge during the pandemic and

achieved his dream of becoming a wine merchant when he opened Corks and Cru in Bampton. We're pleased to report that not only has Corks and Cru gone from strength to strength but Nick has recently opened Bampton Delicatessen, conveniently located just a couple of doors along.

On a sadder note, Exmoor paid its farewells last October to the remarkable Robin Ashburner, whom we interviewed for our March-April 2022 issue—vexillologist extraordinaire and a life dedicated to public service.

We have also strengthened our social media presence; our Facebook page is regularly updated with news items, events information, and some great examples of Exmoor photography. You can find it here: <https://www.facebook.com/Exmoornews>

Look out for us on Instagram too @exmoornews

And we're not standing still; not everyone who wants to read *Exmoor News* manages to get hold of a copy, so plans

are afoot to increase our print run (currently 3,000 per issue; readership estimate: 9,000). So, if you live in a southern Exmoor community that does not currently receive copies, please get in touch with us at exmoornews@gmail.com and let us know. Alternatively, we can send you copies by post (£18 for six issues including postage and packing.) This is ideal if you live away from Exmoor but want to keep in touch with what is happening in this unique part of the country. Just email us at the address above and we'll set things in motion.

Like most magazines, we have to plan ahead and we are always keen to hear from anyone involved in unusual or interesting work on southern Exmoor, with a view to featuring them in a future issue. If that applies to you or someone you know, do get in touch and tell us more.

You'll find everything you need to know about here: <https://exmoornews.co.uk/>

Diane Trembath



Ceri Keene



Claire Savill



Jan Ross



Diane Trembath



Fran Bridger



Matt & Mary Ford

Exmoor News is very much a team effort. Here are some of the names and faces behind the pages!

Ceri Keene, co-editor/designer, Claire Savill, co-editor/designer, Jan Ross, founding editor, Diane Trembath, feature writer/copy editor, Fran Bridger Poetess and Matt and Mary Ford, Contributors - thank you to all. We have accounts, other contributor, delivery and printer people who we would like to also thank.

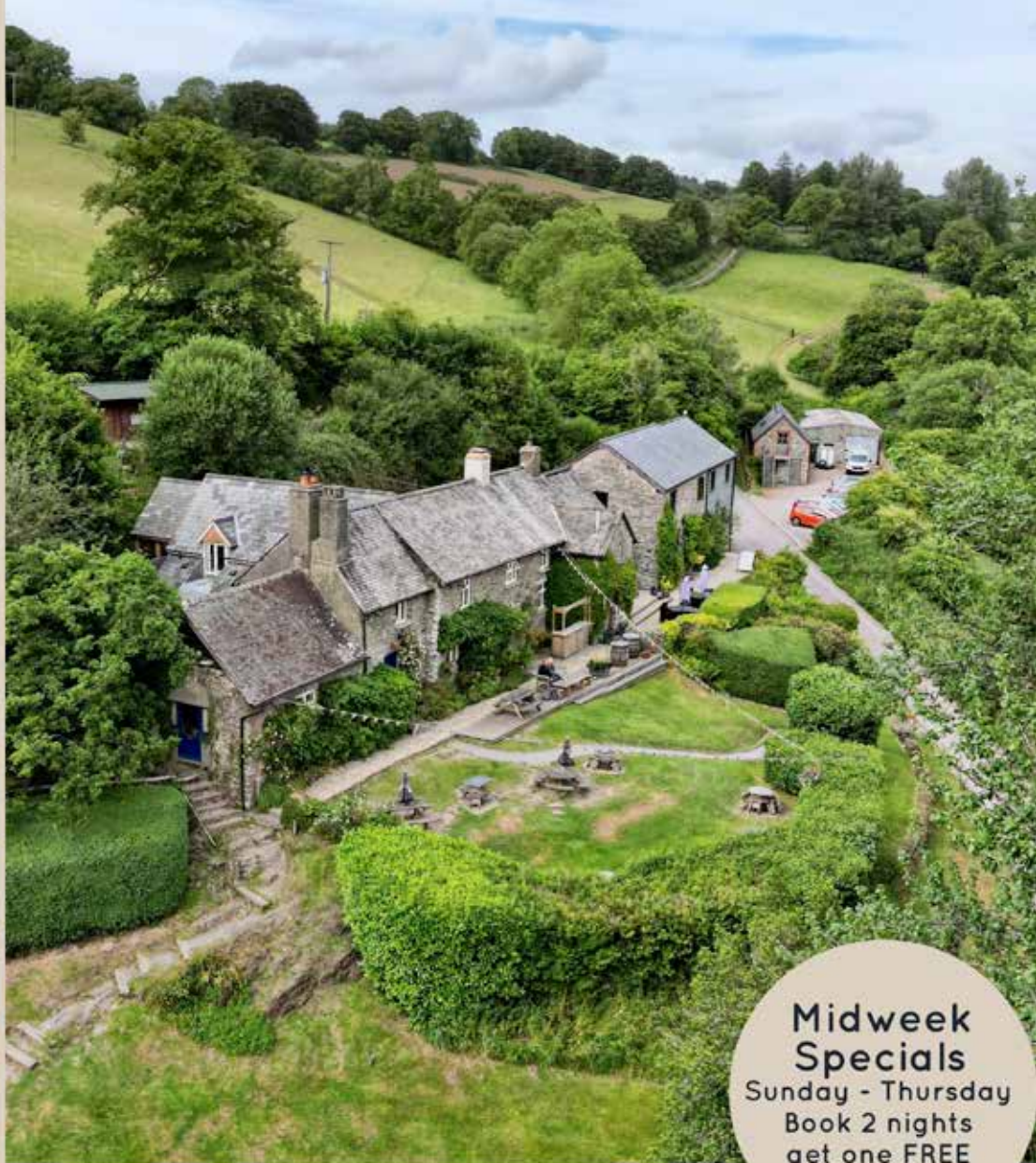
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Dick Whittington -

It's Panto Time

Bow Bells are ringing out again for the Dulverton Players' long-postponed production of *Dick Whittington*. The Exmoor theatre company was just a month away from putting it on the Dulverton Town Hall stage when Covid struck in March 2019.

This dazzling pantomime is now rescheduled for Wednesday, February 1st 2023, to Saturday, February 4th 2023. There will be a matinee on the Saturday afternoon. Olga Owen directs a traditional version of the famous story in which poor boy *Dick Whittington* comes to London to make his fortune.

Ben Crocker's hilarious script features all your favourite characters, including Idle Jack, the beautiful Alice Fitzwarren, Sarah the Cook, and, of course, Tommy, *Dick's* famous cat. Queen Rat and her verminous pack provide the villains of the piece.

Expect lots of laughter and colourful costumes. April Golding directs the music.



Dulverton Players
Present

Dick Whittington



Author Ben Crocker

Wednesday
February 1st to
Saturday 4th 2023

Two performances on
the Saturday

Starts 7.30pm
Dulverton Town Hall

Tickets from
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Winsford Moor Movies 2023 Season

Tuesday 10 January 2023

Fisherman's Friends: One and All (2022) comedy 12A

Stars James Purefoy and Imelda May.

Following the unexpected success of the group's debut album, No Hoppers, Jokers and Rogues, we rejoin them almost a year later, struggling with the pressures, pitfalls and temptations of their newfound fame and performing on the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury.

Tuesday 7 February 2023

Where The Crowdads Sing (2022) mystery drama 15

Stars Daisy Edgar-Jones.

Abandoned by her family, Kya Clark, otherwise known to the townspeople of Barkley Cove as the Marsh Girl, is mysterious and wild. The film is the coming-of-age story of a young girl raised by the marshlands of the Deep South in the 1950s. When the town hotshot is found dead, and inexplicably linked to Kya, the Marsh Girl is the prime suspect in his murder.

Winsford Village Hall, Exford Road, TA24 7JE

All films start at 7.30pm. £3 members and £5 non-members.

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Dulverton Films



Dulverton Town Hall

Friday 6 January

TOP GUN: MAVERICK (Cert 12A)

Director: Joseph Kosinski

130 mins

After more than thirty years of service as one of the Navy's top aviators, Pete "Maverick" Mitchell (Tom Cruise) is where he belongs, pushing the envelope as a courageous test pilot and dodging the advancement in rank that would ground him. When he finds himself training a detachment of Top Gun graduates for a specialized mission the likes of which no living pilot has ever seen, Maverick encounters Lt. Bradley Bradshaw (Miles Teller), call sign: "Rooster," the son of Maverick's late friend and Radar Intercept Officer Lt. Nick Bradshaw, aka "Goose". Facing an uncertain future and confronting the ghosts of his past, Maverick is drawn into a confrontation with his own deepest fears, culminating in a mission that demands the ultimate sacrifice from those who will be chosen to fly it.

Friday 20 January

TICKET TO PARADISE (Cert 12A)

Director: Ol Parker

111 mins

George Clooney and Julia Roberts reunite as exes who find themselves on a shared mission to stop their lovestruck daughter from making the same mistake they once made. They race to Bali to stop their daughter from marrying a seaweed farmer. As they desperately try to sabotage the wedding, the bickering duo soon find themselves rekindling old feelings that once made them happy together.

Friday 10 February

THE LOST KING (Cert 12A)

Director: Stephen Frears

108 mins

The true story of how the remains of the infamous King Richard III were found under a Leicester car park. The comedy drama follows an ambitious writer and amateur historian (Sally Hawkins) who, guided by instinct and spectral visions, defies the academic establishment to unearth Richard's long-missing remains in a Leicester car park.

Friday 24 February

MRS HARRIS GOES TO PARIS (Cert PG)

Director: Anthony Fabian

115 mins

In partnership with the House of Dior, Mrs. Harris Goes To Paris tells the story of a widowed cleaning lady in 1950s London who falls madly in love with a couture Dior dress and decides that she must have one of her own. After she works, starves and gambles to raise the funds to pursue her dream, she embarks on an adventure to Paris which will change not only her own outlook but the very future of the House of Dior.

Tickets-Dulverton Films members £3, non-members £4.50, students, accompanied by an adult, £2.50. Book in advance at Dulverton Post Office (Tel: 01398 323474) or email janaross2003@yahoo.co.uk. Bar open from 7pm.



The Moorhens do not meet in January but our AGM is to be held at Exford Memorial Hall on Monday 13th February, 2023.

We look forward to meeting up with you all again and welcoming some new members.



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19th January -Talk, Gill Hazel 16th February-Talk, Jeremy Wilson
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7.00pm for 7.30pm

At Dulverton Town Hall



Mike Buckland - *Operations over Iraq 1992 -96 – RAF Missions*

Mike is known to many in Dulverton and the surrounding area. His talk promises to be a fascinating presentation that gets us off to a flying start for 2023. He will talk about his extensive experience as a jet fighter pilot, having flown some 60 sorties over Iraq. On display will be equipment to illustrate how pilots live and survive post-ejection over enemy territory.

Wednesday 22nd February, 10.00 for 10.30am–Dulverton Town Hall.

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Bishop Michael becomes a Somerset Day Patron

Bishop Michael, newly installed as the 80th Bishop of Bath and Wells, is to become a Patron of Somerset Day.

Bishop Michael is already familiar with the county—his wife, Lizzie, is from a Somerset farming family. The couple, who have two young children, have joined in many aspects of county life, including regular long distance walks around the Somerset countryside. Prior to Bishop Michael being interviewed for the role of Bishop of Bath and Wells, they both undertook a 60-mile walk around the county. On the morning of his installation, he travelled from Bath Abbey back to Wells, using various forms of transport, meeting people from all walks of Somerset life along the way.

Brought up in rural Staffordshire, Bishop Michael attended a small Church of England primary school and a rural church. He was ordained in 1999 and, until his appointment as Director of Mission in the Diocese of Oxford in 2010, he combined scientific work as an epidemiologist at London's Imperial College with work in Christian ministry as a missionary and theological educator.

In his spare time, Bishop Michael enjoys tending his garden and his bees.

On becoming a Somerset Day Patron, Bishop Michael said, "I'm thrilled to be here in Somerset and to be able to see and celebrate so many different aspects of our life together. Somerset Day is a brilliant way for us to give thanks for so much that's good in our county. I'm very much looking forward to supporting its work."

Bishop Michael joins existing Somerset Day Patrons Mrs Anne Maw CVO, His Grace The Duke of Somerset DL, the Bishop of Taunton The Rt Revd Ruth Worsley, Michael Eavis CBE, Clinton Rogers DL, and Edward Bayntun-Coward DL.

Somerset Day founder, Nigel Muers-Raby said, "We're absolutely delighted to welcome Bishop Michael as a Patron. He shares our passion in his desire to support Somerset's communities, organisations and independent businesses. We are confident his passion for his wife's home county will inspire others to celebrate all we have to offer in Somerset".



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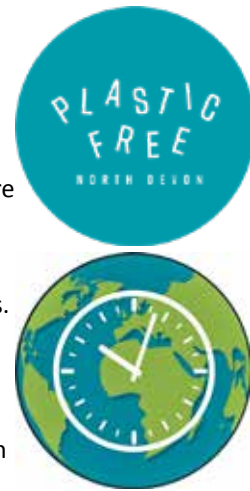


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Ilfracombe's New Community Repair Cafe



Ilfracombe Repair Cafe provides a welcoming space for people to bring various items for mending; an opportunity to come together as a community, learn new skills, save money, and help save the planet—one punctured bike tyre or broken zipper at a time!

It is a partnership project, part of local environmental charity Plastic Free North Devon's (PFND) expanding Repair Cafe Network, hosted jointly by Ilfracombe's Earth Repair Shop and hand:plant cafe, supported by local volunteers. The cafes aim to reduce waste by helping people to repair items that they might otherwise have thrown away, to support people during the cost of living crisis—donations are welcome, but there is no pressure or expectation—and to create a welcoming community hub.

The first Ilfracombe Repair Cafe took place in November 2022, with bike and sewing machine repairs carried out in the Earth Repair Shop on Church Street, and sewing, general, and some basic jewellery repairs at hand:plant cafe in the High Street. The plan is to host the cafe on the last Sunday of every other month.

The team are currently on the lookout for a few more volunteers, either to share their mending skills at the bi-monthly cafes, or to help out behind the scenes and welcome people on the day. You don't need to be a professional seamstress or upholsterer or mechanic to volunteer—just someone with some basic skills who is happy to share what they know. There is no pressure to undertake any repairs that you are not confident with. If you would like to get involved, please get in touch with the Earth Repair Shop at info@earthrepairshop.org.

Tia Psihogios, Campaigns and Premises Manager at the Earth Repair Shop, said:

“We're really excited to have launched a repair cafe. Here at the Earth Repair Shop, we're always looking for new ways to support nature and biodiversity within our community and local area. Reducing our waste, and providing an alternative for consumerism, is a really simple way to do this. Having the support of Plastic Free North Devon has been invaluable in terms of tapping into existing experience and resources and adapting an existing format to reflect and serve our own unique community. The repairs that we offer reflect our volunteer base, so if anyone has any other skills to offer, please do get in touch!

We are also very grateful to our neighbours, hand:plant, for offering their beautiful space to host the event, and to our volunteers for giving their time and expertise to make this happen—it feels like a real community effort. It is important to us to run these cafes as community events, giving people the opportunity to learn new skills that they can pass on to family and friends, instead of just fixing things for them.”

Claire Moodie, CEO for Plastic Free North Devon, explains a little more about the community aspect of the events: “Running these cafes is driven by two fundamental things. First, providing communities with the tools and skills to avoid the need to consume more things, ultimately reducing our collective impact on the planet and, second, a cross-generational welcoming community space that allows people to share, learn, and enjoy tea and cake together. Running our Braunton cafe over the last year has been one of the most rewarding things we have done as a charity and we are really proud and excited to be expanding this concept, which we hope will continue to build resilient communities and action.”

Plastic Free North Devon is building on the success of its original Braunton and Landkey Repair Cafes, thanks to funding from the National Lottery Together For Our Planet fund, and supporting North Devon towns and villages to get their own repair cafes up and running. A new Barnstaple Repair Cafe is due to be launched in 2023 and the charity is keen to work with diverse community groups to create a truly inclusive and representative space. They are also members of the national Repair Cafe Network.

If you are an individual or community group interested in setting up or becoming involved with a repair cafe in your own town or village, please contact PFND's Repair Cafe Coordinator, Cathy Karniewicz, on cathy@plasticfreenorthdevon.org.

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Exmoor National Park faces painful cuts

Exmoor National Park Authority is considering urgent money-saving measures due to a funding gap. Tough proposals will have to be considered, potentially impacting the rights of way network, visitor and outdoor activity centres and staff, who are a vital part of maintaining and protecting park resources and projects.

The National Park receives £1 million less in grant funding than it did in 2010 and will have to make a further £500,000 worth of cuts by 2025, to deal with the spending gap.

Sarah Bryan, Exmoor National Park's chief executive says: "These are really difficult times for us. We manage a beautiful landscape working with farmers and the local community, but the Authority now risks having to close up to two of our three visitor centres, make redundancies 'right through the organisation', and no longer being able to manage 1,000km (620 miles) of paths.

"I've worked in National Parks for nearly 30 years, and I've never seen it anywhere near as bad as this. The Authority could also be forced to sell land that belongs to the nation such as woodland and moorland and to increase charges in certain areas. This would be a huge disadvantage to people on low incomes, who have found landscapes like this invaluable, particularly in the last few years during Covid. The average cost to visitors per year is relatively very little, but the benefits to physical and mental wellbeing are priceless."

Celebrating Exmoor makers past and present

Can we mount an exhibition to celebrate Exmoor's past and present costumes and textiles?

I have recently been given a beautiful tablecloth made in Dulverton in 1902. With exquisite embroidery and crocheting, Sarah Mary Dobbs asked her friends in Dulverton to sign it and then embroidered over their names in gold silk. Names such as Moody, Slade, Wood and Scott are included. I feel that the tablecloth should be donated to Somerset Heritage Museum but, before that, it would be lovely to exhibit it for all to see.

Do you have any costumes or textiles relating to Exmoor that you could lend for the proposed exhibition—embroidery, quilting, needlework, knitting, crocheting, tapestry, etc? We also know that there were several tailors in Dulverton in the late 19th and early 20th century. Do you have any examples of their work—hunting jackets, suits?

An exhibition could also include examples of current work, such as the Dulverton Quilting group and Dulverton Town Hall Knitters, with an invitation to individuals to exhibit their own work.

Please let me know if you can help with any items so that we can begin to organise an appropriate exhibition in Dulverton Heritage Centre's gallery during 2023.

Jan Ross tel: 01398 323818, 07855 928541 or email: janaross2003@yahoo.co.uk



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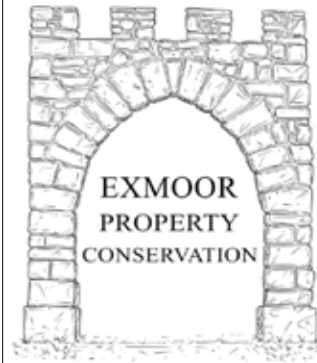
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Wivey Folk Dancing

The Wivey Folk Dancing is back after two and a half years. The friendly and informal club meets twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. Live music and a caller mean that it is suitable for people of all experience levels including first timers. Dances are walked through several times, before being danced under instruction from the caller. The emphasis is on enjoyment rather than dance perfection, but when things go right it is a great sight.

8.00- 10.30pm at Wiveliscombe Community Centre, TA4 2JP

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January 24th 2023 Simon Maplesden with Gibby Swain

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Wear & Leat Colouring Book for Local Children

Dulverton Weir & Leat Conservation Trust and Young Somerset have come together to design pages for a colouring book for Dulverton children. Each page is an illustration of Olli, the Dulverton Leat Otter, pictured somewhere in Dulverton (in some cases, including an illustration of a local person), that the children will be familiar with.

The first two pages were designed by Owen Baker and Maddison Boutcha, who are young artists participating in the Young Somerset Bold & Brave Programme (www.youngsomerset.org.uk). These were printed by Brightsea Print Group in Exeter (www.brightsea.co.uk) and given to 90 children from Dulverton School, who took them home to colour. More copies are available from Dulverton Library.

Nik Harwood CEO, Young Somerset, says: "We are delighted to have worked in partnership to support this initiative with the DWLCT to create greater awareness of this historic asset in children. Creativity is a great tool for engagement and we are keen to develop further work of this type."

Brightsea Print says, "Having worked with the DWLCT in the past, we were pleased to be associated with this project and produce the pages."

Rob Jones, Trustee and Community Engagement Lead at Dulverton Weir & Leat Conservation Trust says: "A key part of the project is the preservation of the weir and leat for future generations and this initiative with Young Somerset will encourage Dulverton's young people to appreciate, value and develop a sense of ownership of this valuable historical asset."



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Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

SAD is also known as “winter depression”, because the symptoms are usually more apparent and more severe during the winter. The exact cause of SAD is not fully understood, but it is thought to be a biochemical imbalance in part of the brain, linked to reduced exposure to sunlight during the shorter autumn and winter days. The main theory is that a lack of sunlight might stop a part of the brain called the hypothalamus from working properly. This may affect the production of melatonin, a hormone that makes you feel sleepy, and serotonin, the mood hormone, and your body’s internal clock. In some cases, it does also appear to be a genetic condition.

Symptoms of SAD can include:

- a persistent low mood
- a loss of pleasure or interest in normal everyday activities
- irritability
- feelings of despair, guilt and worthlessness
- feeling lethargic and sleepy during the day
- sleeping for longer than normal and finding it hard to get up in the morning
- craving carbohydrates and gaining weight
- difficulty concentrating
- decreased sex drive

For some people, these symptoms can be severe and have a significant impact on their lives.

The main treatments suggested are:

- Lifestyle measures - getting as much natural sunlight as possible, exercising regularly, eating well, and managing your stress levels.
- Light therapy – a special lamp is used to simulate exposure to sunlight.
- Advice on antidepressant medicine from your doctor.

Helena Trump - Counsellor & Psychotherapist

If you experience SAD symptoms/depression and these feelings start affecting many parts of your life, this is a sign you may need professional support. Speaking to a counsellor can help you understand what you need. This can range from self-help ideas to breathing exercises to more in-depth psychotherapy

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Lis Jorgensen – Medical Herbalist

As a medical herbalist, I consider any mental health condition in the context of the person’s wider lifestyle and experience. Winter changes our routines in this country. You may have experienced similar feelings to SAD’s mild depression in the Covid lockdowns. Support your circadian rhythms by ensuring you make time to look at the sky in the mornings. Even on a dull day, the sky is much brighter than our indoor lights. Spending time outside or even just standing on your doorstep will boost you. A walk with a friend or local group can be helpful.

Hypericum, or St John’s Wort, is one of many traditional remedies for melancholic conditions like SAD. It’s a midsummer herb and energetically it shines light into dark. It’s very helpful for people with mild depression and lifts spirits. Hypericum must not be used with antidepressants and some other important medications. Medical herbalists will help you find the herbs to suit you.

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Dulverton Exmoor Literary Festival—“a triumph”



DULVERTON
GATEWAY TO EXMOOR

According to MasterChef judge, restaurant critic and author, William Sitwell, November’s inaugural Dulverton Exmoor Literary Festival was “a triumph”. (As one of the festival’s main sponsors, *Exmoor News* was delighted to hear that!)

A packed programme of fascinating author talks in Dulverton Town Hall culminated in a sell-out event with Norman Scott, who shared his extraordinary life story, and how he survived a murder attempt on Exmoor, allegedly instigated by 1970s Liberal politician, Jeremy Thorpe.

Local children’s author, Annabel Collis, hosted creative writing workshops in Dulverton Library for adults and children. Much fun was had and storyboards created by all ages!

Back at the town hall, a family audience enjoyed the discussion between Claire Barker and Victoria Eveleigh, two of Exmoor’s most loved children’s authors. This was followed by the presentation of the winner’s prize in the festival’s children’s writing competition to Orla Scandrett, aged eight, for her story, *The Hungry Deer*. Local author, Kate Lord Brown, had the tricky task of judging 22 entries from across Exmoor and beyond. The runners up were seven-year-old, Thomas Hill, and Kirsty Tyrrell, 10.

Celebrated yogi Colin Dunsmuir led a free lunchtime yoga session, followed by a talk from William Sitwell about Lord Woolton’s task of feeding the nation during WWII. In contrast, the next event featured three bestselling fiction authors, Veronica Henry, Katherine Webb and Kate Lord Brown, in conversation. Veronica congratulated the festival organisers on the warm and inviting atmosphere and, together with the other writers, was delighted to have signed and sold so many books via the festival’s pop up bookshop, hosted by Waterstones, Barnstaple.

Author and columnist at *The Times*, Alice Thomson, talked about her recent book, *What I Wish I’d Known Then*, (co-written with Rachel Sylvester), outlining her interviews with famous and successful people who had faced adversity in their early lives. *Guardian* sports correspondent and author, Rob Kitson, and South West rugby legend, Chris Bentley, discussed all things rugby and the rise of the Exeter Chiefs. Gossip and laughter was enjoyed by the rugby-loving audience!

Festival Director, Ali Pegrum, was delighted by the festival’s success: “After a long year in the planning, it was wonderful to meet this extraordinary group of writers in Dulverton and bring this new event to Exmoor. The speakers made many complimentary comments, while audiences were thrilled to have been a part of this inaugural event—and are hoping it will be repeated. I’m sure it will!”

The entire two-day festival was supported by Dulverton Town Council and generously sponsored by local businesses Exmoor Character Cottages, Stockham Farm Exmoor, *Exmoor News*, Hedley Price Funeral Directors, Jeff Pegrum Landscaping, PFG Fabrication, Town Mills B&B, Tozers Solicitors, Ware Construction, Rothwell & Dunworth Books, First Design Print Web, Stags Estate Agents, Osteo & Physio Tiverton, Maitland Walker Solicitors, The Exmoor Feasting Company and The Exclusive Cake Company.



Introducing Behavioural Optometry

Bampton author, Andrea Corrie, finds out more...

Have you ever considered that vision is learned from our experiences, from the moment that we are born? Visual hardware is present at birth, but visual software in the brain has to learn to process, interpret, analyse, decide if action is needed, and also store information for later recall.

The British Association of Behavioural Optometrists (BABO) state that, "... for approximately 20% of the population, although there is nothing wrong with their eyes, they have not developed the necessary control and skills to use their visual system effectively. These people may struggle in everyday tasks that others take for granted such as reading, writing, using a computer, playing sport or driving." www.babo.co.uk

I recently met Mid Devon-based, Philippa Bodien, who was Head of Inclusion at a large co-educational primary school in Dubai, responsible for the success in learning of all students who failed to learn in normal classroom and small group settings. As well as being a published specialist in teaching students fitting the criteria for dyslexia, Philippa is keen to raise awareness of the existence, diagnosis, and treatment of behavioural optometric-based barriers to learning.

We had a fascinating conversation about behavioural optometry. What is it? Fully qualified optometrists

with additional specialist training assess the way the brain interprets what is being seen. According to BABO, it is possible to pass a standard optometry eyesight test but still have visual difficulties. Behavioural optometry, "is a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates the physical, neurological, and developmental aspects of vision and can therefore treat difficulties that standard optometry cannot."

Philippa notes that behavioural optometric difficulty might be the only barrier to learning that a child experiences. It can also co-occur with other learning barriers, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, motor development delay and so on. It is important to be aware of possible signs of behavioural optometric difficulty. There is a comprehensive list of signs of vision difficulties on the BABO website, which includes indicators such as headaches, blurred vision, tired and/or watery eyes, as well as less obviously connected indicators such as poor coordination and spatial awareness. "Although behavioural optometry will not treat conditions such as dyslexia or ASD, people with these difficulties are significantly more likely to have co-existing deficits with their visual system. These co-occurring visual difficulties can easily be identified by a behavioural optometrist who will work to improve visual skills and make

many conditions more manageable."

I asked Philippa how behavioural optometry was introduced to the UK. "The late Keith Holland was an optometrist in Cheltenham who introduced behavioural optometry to the UK more than 30 years ago," she explained. "In 1991, he founded the British Association of Behavioural Optometrists. He went on to speak internationally in this field. Keith also spoke about behavioural optometry at TEDx Cheltenham Cleverly Connected and this talk is available to view on YouTube." <https://youtu.be/q1oTmGMdek8>

Philippa collaborated with Keith Holland to identify, diagnose and offer treatment to children in Dubai experiencing behavioural optometric issues. She cited a case where a motivated and hard-working Year 5 student was struggling to acquire knowledge of sounds and sound blending, saying, "Behavioural optometric assessment revealed him to have difficulty with all three main areas: focus, focus and convergence, and eye movements. He received vision therapy and developmental lenses and, within a short time, his rate of learning was vastly improved, once his visual skills were brought into functional levels. This student fitted the criteria for both dyslexia and behavioural optometry difficulty. His visual difficulties had significantly

blocked his capacity to learn from the school's dyslexia programme. His visual difficulties did not cause his dyslexia, nor did their improvement 'cure' his dyslexia. Rather, with now efficient vision, he was able to access the programme highly effectively."

Philippa went on to give a further example: "Another student, referred for in school screening, whipped through the dyslexia tests extremely fast and fully accurately. He was clearly not dyslexic, so I asked, 'Do you enjoy reading?' 'No,' was his response. So I asked him to tell me more about that and he said, 'It's when the print gets small.' Suspected to have a focusing issue too small for pick up in standard eye tests, he was referred for a behavioural optometry assessment. This was his only barrier to learning in the classroom."

There are many other similar cases illustrating that behavioural optometric issues, either by themselves or co-occurring with another learning need, can block access to learning if they remain unaddressed. Possible treatments, following assessment, are detailed on the BABO website.

As a lay person who had previously not heard of behavioural optometry, I have gleaned that there are three key points that are assessed; namely, what you see (image acquisition), how you process it (visual processing), and how this influences what you do (resulting action). It is easy to understand how, if there is any abnormality in the way we process things visually, we will then be

unable to respond in a "normal" way, and this can also lead to frustration at not being able to process visual information as easily as our peers. This in turn can manifest itself in learning and, possibly, behavioural difficulties also.

Philippa describes the existence of behavioural optometry as being part of "an oasis of provision in a desert of need" and, having spent some time in discussion with her, I can see that there is much to commend consideration of assessment. In particular, it is hoped that this article may strike a chord with the teaching and caring professions, and parents of children who may be struggling at home and school. If optometrists receive sufficient requests to offer behavioural optometry as part of their

practice, they may be encouraged to seek the extra continuous professional development training—to enable them to provide the service more locally than at present.

Currently there is no NHS provision for behavioural optometry. It may be covered on private health insurance. Please see www.babo.co.uk for further information and a list of practitioners.

Should you wish to approach Philippa directly to discuss arranging a talk to groups of parents and teachers, please email her at bodien@gmail.com

Andrea Corrie and Philippa Bodien

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So you've written that book...

As last November's literary festival proved, Exmoor has plenty of aspiring and new writers. Could that be you? Have you written a book and are you wondering what to do next? Are you looking for a publisher?

Even if your words just flew off the page, the next step—seeing your book through to publication—can be daunting. And that's where *Exmoor News* can help. Our guide can take you through the different routes to publishing, including in-house or online solutions for all types of books, including text-only and illustrated books.

So what's involved and what can you expect? One of the burning questions writers have is, "How much will it cost?" Each book is different, so we'll talk you through what to expect in terms of production; for example, is your book handwritten or in audio form? Does it need to be word processed or is it already in digital form? Then we look at size, and whether your book will be printed in mono (black type only) or involves colour and images of some kind.

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North Devon theatre funding boost

We are very pleased to share that we are to be part of Arts Council England's National Investment Programme for 2023–2026, having received a conditional funding offer (November 2022). The Arts Council's investment over the next three years will ensure that Landmark Theatres can deliver an ambitious artistic mission, driving quality work, inspiring and developing new talent for and with the audiences we serve, currently across North Devon and Peterborough.

We are aware that this is good news for our organisation and the places we serve; however, we are also mindful that other organisations were unable to receive funding. We are committed to supporting projects, developing artists and partnering with organisations who don't receive

funding by providing resources and opportunities to continue to bring work to places of low cultural engagement.

The idea for Landmark Theatre Ltd was born before the pandemic, which has served to make it more urgent. The theatres, some of which have previously been closed or in difficulty under previous administrations, have been through a transformation over the past two years. Previously named Selladoor Venues, Landmark Theatres is now moving forward with an ambitious new model for operating. We are building a new producing theatre organisation outside London—for the first time in a generation.

This community-embedded new national organisation is designed to deliver the highest quality theatre by,

for, and with the widest demographic in the least engaged places in England. Arts Council funding is a great vote of confidence in our potential to deliver to areas previously underinvested in culturally.

We are based at the Queen's Theatre, 100 Boutport Street Barnstaple and currently we work in North Devon and Peterborough. We look forward to working with our national, regional, and local partners and, most of all, with the artists and communities in our places—to deliver measurable economic benefit, improve health and well-being and, first and foremost, to empower talent and create and curate exceptional work.

Paul Jepson, CEO, and David Hutchinson, Chair, Landmark Theatres



ROCK OF AGES UK TOUR

KEVIN KENNEDY INTERVIEW

No stranger to the small screen, television's Kevin Kennedy has left the cobblestones of Coronation Street far behind him as he takes to the stage and embraces his inner rock'n'roll star in the UK Tour of **ROCK OF AGES** which comes to the Queen's Theatre from Tuesday the 21st – Saturday the 25th of March 2023.

Not just an actor, you've also been part of many bands over the years. Have you been enjoying indulging your musical side in Rock of Ages?

Oh yes, it's incredible to be able to put your two passions together – one being of course acting and the spoken word and the other being music, which is something I've loved throughout my life. To put those together is a perfect marriage, and in a vehicle such as Rock of Ages it is a whole lot of fun as well!

For those who don't know, could you tell us a bit about the story of Rock of Ages?

Rock of Ages is set in Los Angeles, California in the mid 1980s. It's about a rock club called The Bourbon Room, which is absolutely legendary, every single band you could think of has played there. It's an icon of rock'n'roll and absolutely the place to be, but the local council are attempting to close it down so we are fighting them. Alongside all of that there's a beautiful love story, lots and lots of jokes and of course some of the most incredible music from the 80s like "Here I Go Again", "The Final Countdown" and "I Want to Know What Love Is".

And how does your character, 'Dennis' fit into this?

So, Dennis is the owner of The Bourbon Room and he's an absolute rock guru. He's given all these now legendary bands their stars and he's been in bands himself. He's also embraced the drug culture and intense sexuality of the 1980s with much enthusiasm and regularity! He's a very interesting man to play – he's got a good heart at his core but he's a child of his culture and loves his sex, drugs and rock'n'roll! He's a lot of fun to play!

Audiences may know you best from your time on television, particularly as 'Curly Watts' in 'Coronation Street'. What are the biggest differences between working TV and theatre?

TV is a totally different skill and technique to theatre. Not least because you may put something in the can after filming and not get the payback of that for months or even years. You can almost film it, and then forget about it. With theatre however, it's obviously live and live theatre is one of the last true shared experiences you can have

– along with football! In the theatre you are all together and sharing one experience which is happening live, right in front of you and there's not a lot of that left. That in itself generates its own energy and excitement as no two shows are the same. The show that you come and see will never be exactly the same as that ever again which is quite an exciting thought.

"ROCK OF AGES" boasts some of the biggest hits of the 1980s as its soundtrack. Were you a fan of 80s rock music?

I was a young-ish man in the 1980s and not a huge fan of some dance music, so the last refuge of guitar music to a certain extent was that brilliant American glam-rock that we showcase in Rock of Ages. They play their own instruments and perform live on stage so I had a huge respect for that.

Are there any challenges to performing this style of music on stage? Have you drawn from your experience as a musician?

It requires a lot of energy! However, once the show gets going it's so much fun and no longer feels like work. Once you've done the hard work of learning the lines and where to stand we've been allowed to just have so much fun with it. Audiences are absolutely loving it because it's just bonkers.

Do you have a favourite moment or number in the show?

Numerous moments! Although what I really enjoy is watching the other members of the cast doing their big solo numbers because they're all so incredibly talented and it's great to watch and learn from them. It's been so lovely to see them grow into their characters from the first rehearsal through to our performances on tour now, where it all comes to fruition.

What about a favourite song?

Oh the entire finale is my favourite as it is just one big fat rock'n'roll number.

Do you have any 'must-have' items whilst on tour?

A cafetière, some coffee (obviously), my Manchester City mug, and of course the most important thing – a PlayStation!

Finally, what can audiences expect when they come and see Rock of Ages?

They can just expect to have a great time. If you're a seasoned theatre-goer or you've never been to a show before you will have a lot of fun. If you want to come dressed in your leather trousers and embrace your inner 80s rock star then do that! Even bring along an inflatable guitar if you want – everything is just a whole lot of fun.



What's on at the Regal Theatre

The Regal Theatre, Minehead, promises a year of live theatre, music and dance, along with ballet and opera screenings direct from the Royal Opera House, international art from Exhibition on Screen, and a varied film society programme too

The year starts with the final performance on 1 January of the Regal's ever-popular panto, *Robinson Crusoe and the Pirates*, followed by a matinee screening of *André Rieu In Dublin*, on Saturday 7 January at 2:00pm, and at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 10 January, the film society is showing *The Banshees of Inisherin* (Cert 15).

Two very different art forms follow, with live screening of the Royal Ballet's *Like Water For Chocolate* on Thursday 19 January. Inspired by Laura Esquivel's novel of the same name, this is a captivating family saga in which the central character's emotions spill out through cooking to influence everyone around her, in startling and dramatic ways. On Tuesday 24 January Exhibition on Screen brings back *Cézanne* – one of its most successful films, dedicated to the life, work and genius of Paul Cézanne.

Tempos alternate in February, with *Wish We Were Pink Floyd* on 3 February at 7.30pm – quite a contrast to Rossini's opera *The Barber Of Seville*, live from the Royal Opera House on Wednesday 15 February. February concludes with West Somerset College students presenting the West End smash hit, *We Will Rock You*—a jukebox musical based on the songs of Queen, with script by Ben Elton.

But to find out what the later months of 2023 have in store across the genres, visit: <https://regaltheatre.co.uk/whatson>
We offer a regularly updated programme with something for everyone!

Firstly, the team here at Webbers and I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



It's so hard to believe that we are already at the end of 2022 and that 2023 is just around the proverbial corner. As 2022 draws to a close it provides us with the opportunity to reflect on

what a busy year it has been for the property market as well as other major events which have occurred during the year. Storm Eunice, The Platinum Jubilee, war in Ukraine, two 'new' Prime Ministers, the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth II, and the ascent of King Charles III to the throne. There has also been an increase in interest rates, inflation and the cost of living.

Throughout the year we have seen a high percentage of clients buying in the West Country; not just from away but also those living more locally. There are many factors influencing why people move which include; work, to be closer to family or because of a wish to change their lifestyle.

However, the main reason we have found this year is people moving as they can work from home. This had meant that one of the most asked questions has been *'Does the property have good broadband?'* With the continual improvement and upgrading of broadband across Exmoor and the surrounding area we have been successful in finding buyers their dream home which has subsequently enabled them to achieve a better work/life balance.

The autumn saw a sudden increase in interest rates causing fear and concern for many plus generating the feeling that a 'storm' is imminent. Preparing for life's big financial decisions requires pertinent research and spending time to consider all available monetary options as we adjust to a 'new normal'. This is advisable whether choosing the right property, the right

mortgage or the right investment.

Peter Whitley Director of Together Financial Solutions commented:

'Many consider the current uncertainty with mortgage interest rates to be a bump in the road. It is too early to know where the top of the bump is, and whether there will be a plateau for a while before the hoped decline the other side...'

Regarding mortgage interest rates, we have seen steady reductions to the most popular fixed rates for the last month, so there are some encouraging signs here amid the negativity that seems to consume the media.

Albeit these are at higher levels than we have become accustomed to over recent years, it seems the new norm after the dust has settled may be somewhere between where rates are now and where they have been.

At the time of writing this article, the best 2 and 5 year fixed rates now start with a 4, compared to nigh on 6 - less than 2 months ago!'

So what are the top tips as we enter into 2023?

1. Don't make knee-jerk decisions

Following political announcements, you may feel compelled to act immediately in order to take advantage of the change. However, proposed changes following an announcement are rarely immediate. Changes to tax rates or allowances, for example, will typically start at the beginning of a new tax year. This gives the government and organisations time to update their respective processes. This means you can take some time to carefully look at the changes, and understand and calculate how they could affect your financial planning.

2. Understand what each announcement means for you (what do your numbers look like?)

If you're reading about changes in the news, remember the examples they will often use to highlight the change will be extremes – showing the people that benefit or lose the most.

For example, calculations showing the effects of tax changes usually focus on sectors that would have had the biggest tax



break, or those that would see their tax liability increase. Most people however, will be somewhere between these two extremes. So, the outcomes may not be as dramatic as

you first think. In some cases, the changes may not affect you at all.

Before you act on changes, it's important to understand what they mean in the context of your own financial planning and goals.

3. Maintain a long-term outlook

While political uncertainty can be a cause for concern, it is still important focus on your personal long-term plans. Whether these are property related, investments, or perhaps employment or retirement plans, there will always be ups and downs along the way. Having a plan will help you navigate through life's unexpected detours.

It can be tempting to respond to market movements and try to guess how markets will respond ahead of announcements. However, markets are unpredictable and it could mean you miss out on returns if you guess incorrectly. Having a long-term investment plan that's tailored to you makes sense for most investors. So, instead of changing your investment portfolio regularly, have a strategy that aims to deliver growth over a number of years. Look at the overall and long term

performance, rather than how the value has changed each day or even week.

4. Schedule a financial review

If you do decide to make changes to your financial plan or simply want to ensure you're still on track, schedule a financial review with Webbers.

A complete review can highlight opportunities that you may be unaware of and give you confidence that the financial steps you are taking are appropriate for your goals. As financial planners, we're here to make sure your financial plan continues to work for you, even amid political uncertainty.

Please note: This is for general information only and does not constitute advice. The information is aimed at retail clients only.

The value of your investment can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance.

If you are looking to either buy or sell a property and are not sure where to start then please do not hesitate to contact the office on 01398 323271. For financial advice contact Peter and his team on 01271 346123.

We are here to help make your move as simple as possible.

Wishing you all the best for 2023.

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What's on at Wimbleball Lake

Environment and recreation charity, South West Lakes, subsidised over 2,200 activity sessions at Wimbleball Lake on Exmoor in 2022, enabling more people to benefit from being active outdoors.

Local schools, uniformed groups including scouts and guides, youth organisations and other charities, such as Help for Heroes, took part in activities including sailing, kayaking, paddleboarding, camping, high ropes, raft building, archery and orienteering.

Wimbleball Lake also hosts visits from home education groups. The groups took part in the charity's Buccaneers club, enabling them to enjoy kayaking, paddleboarding, high ropes, archery, climbing and bush craft. As well as being fun, the sessions are great for team building and communication skills.

This is in addition to the thousands of people who have enjoyed instructor-led sessions, bespoke tuition, camped and hired equipment or launched their own at Wimbleball Lake Activity Centre.

Wimbleball's visitor manager, Luke Hoather, said: "The past year has not been without its challenges—low water levels and deep mud as a result of the unprecedented and prolonged period of hot and dry weather over the summer have made accessing the water difficult at times.

"But thanks to the dedication and determination of the team, we've been able to continue our subsidised activities and it's great that so many people have been able to benefit from them—even more than the previous year. We believe that enabling access to green and blue spaces is good for everyone's health and wellbeing."

South West Lakes offers subsidised activities as part of its charitable objectives, which include encouraging more young people and a more diverse range of people to get involved with what the charity has to offer.

For full details about Wimbleball Activity Centre, including opening dates and times, visit: www.swlakestrust.org.uk/pages/site/activities/category/wimbleball-lake

To find out more about subsidised activities for schools, uniformed groups, youth organisations and other charities contact South West Lakes on 01566 771930 or info@swlakestrust.org.uk





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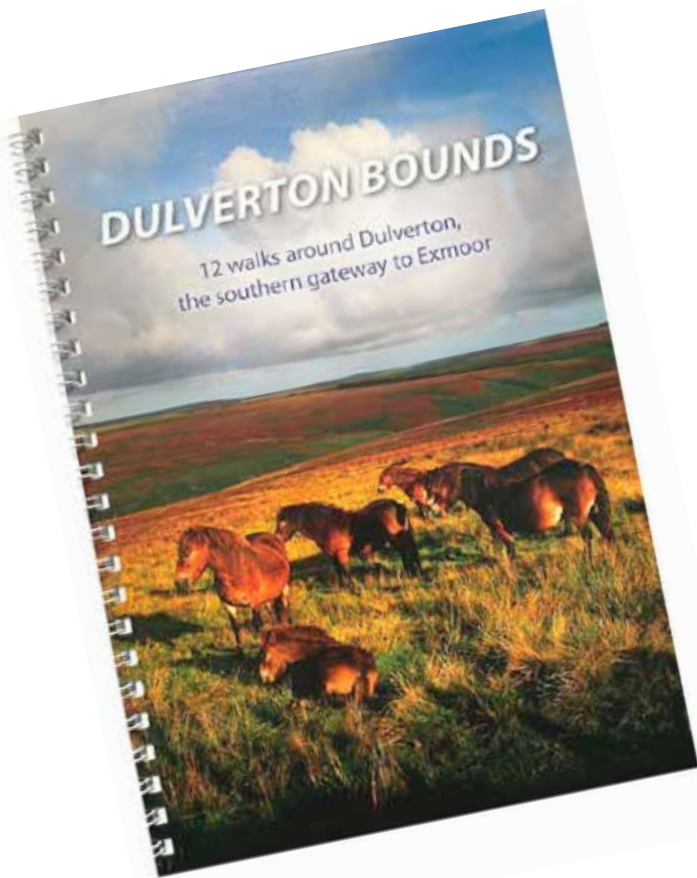
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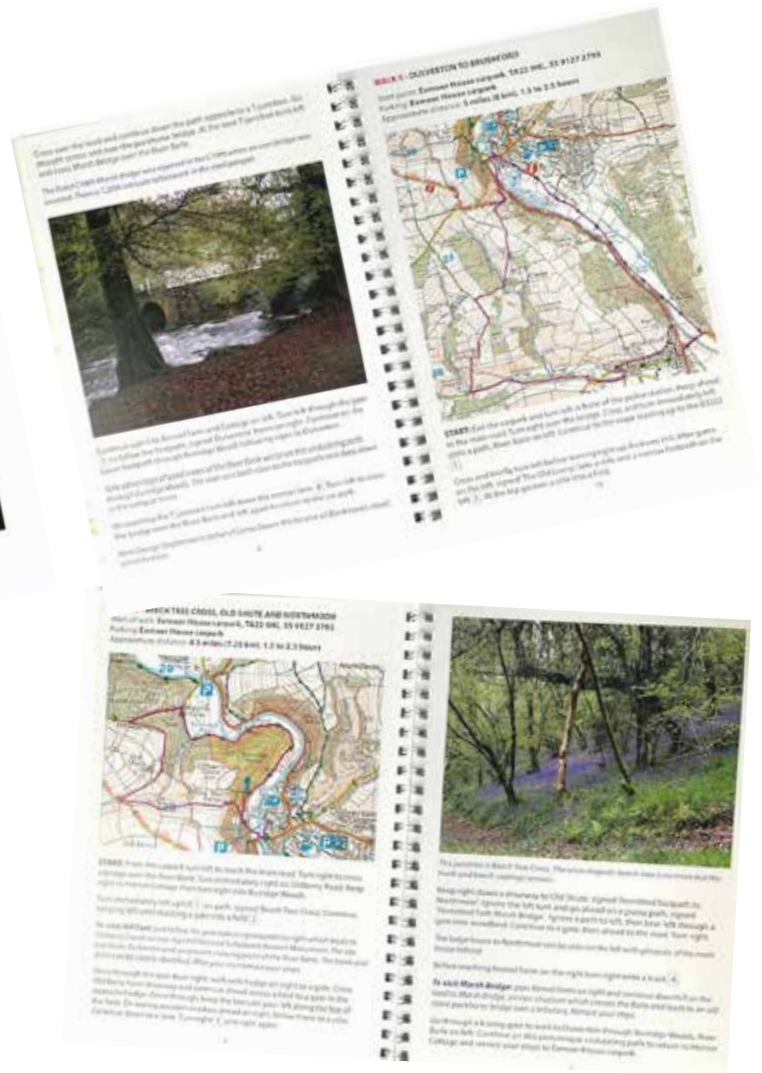


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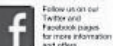
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- ❖ If you're buying from a website you haven't used before, do a bit of research. Look at the terms and conditions and check that the address is a proper address, not just a PO box number. This information can usually be found in the 'contact us' section. Registered UK companies lodge their details on the Companies House website.
- ❖ Check what people have said about the company—don't just rely on the reviews on the website itself, have a look at other review sites.
- ❖ Scammers often ask you to pay in an unusual way or pay very quickly eg send money via a money transfer service such as MoneyGram or Western Union or pay via vouchers.
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Demand for our services is increasing all the time not just at this time of year. If you would like to join us as a volunteer contact: recruitment@ruraldevoncab.org.uk to find out more. We are a friendly bunch and you will receive ongoing training and support to enable you to help people in our community resolve their problems.





News from the Exmoor Pony Centre and Moorland Mousie Trust

Happy New Year! We hope that everybody had a fun and fabulous festive season! Luckily for us at the Exmoor Pony Centre we have been busy with lots of haynets to fill and tons of muck to clear, all making for great excuses to eat extra helpings of turkey and Christmas pudding!

Our winter 2022 foal intake are all doing really well with some of our training liveryes progressing and heading out to winter grass before the end of December. For those that enjoy attending our Foal Handling Courses do not panic we have dates set for January and plenty of foals who are yet to be trained. Foal handling is such an amazing experience and is aimed at anyone with an interest in the methods we use to train our foals, and for anyone who wants to get some hands on with our mealy nosed fluffy four-legged friends!

Course dates are: 13th, 14th, 15th & 16th January 2023

Morning, Afternoon or Full Day sessions available. £50pp half day/ £90 Full Day. Bring your own lunch, drinks and snacks will be provided. Participants aged 16 and over, for 12-15 years please call to discuss suitability and they must be accompanied by an adult on the course. Booking is essential as there are limited spaces available. Please call for more information or to book a place or buy a voucher as a gift.

January Sale: 2023 Calendars are now on sale at £3.50 each, you can grab a last-minute bargain from our online store at www.exmoorponycentre.org.uk or by calling the Exmoor Pony Centre.

The Exmoor Pony Centre and Moorland Mousie Trust are recruiting! There are administration and pony care positions to fill, if you are interested in these roles, please look on our website, Facebook or call the Centre for more information.

Our team of ridden ponies are enjoying their winter holidays. Favourites such as Tom and Pascoe have headed to lovely private grazing, whilst Almond, Periwinkle, Thistle and Bluebell are doing a great job of grazing for the National Trust at a site in North Devon. All of the ponies are in fine fettle and setting a great example of how hardy, and well adapted Exmoor ponies are to the winter weather. In fact, sometimes it seems as if winter is the favourite time of year for our ridden ponies; they get a holiday, change of scenery, and can mostly have unrestricted grazing as the vegetation is less rich in the winter months!

We have a new website! Why not take a look? Investigate becoming a volunteer, have a look at our 2023 Events Diary, find out about our wellbeing courses. It's all there at www.exmoorponycentre.org.uk.

Thank to everyone for their support in 2022, here's to a great 2023!

Website: www.exmoorponycentre.org.uk

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"Where does the sun go?" On holiday to the other side of the world, Honey.

"You are clever Buddy." I've heard from some of my city mates that there's been a bit of bother where they are—keeping electric lights on and turning up the central heating for 24 hours a day. It's spoiling their body clocks they said. They're tired and can't get to sleep.

"That's a shame it shouldn't be allowed." Did you know we've been sharing our lives from the beginning of time with mankind? We all lived in caves and they made a fire by rubbing two stones together. We've come a long way since then, Honey—she



strikes a stick on a box to light ours. Have you noticed she keeps putting the light on in the middle of the night and slips downstairs to make a pot of tea? Isn't that a sign of a messed up body clock?

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"I've noticed that too. Do you think she knows she brings the same Sunday newspaper upstairs to read every night. Doesn't she know what day it is either—poor thing?"

It's called home economics, Honey. She reads it all week then screws it up into little balls when she's bought the new one and uses the old one to make the fire. She told me the other day while I was helping scrunch it up that her ancestors used to tear the newspaper into little squares and thread them onto a piece of string to hang in the outside loo. The water companies have banned that practice now. And here's another thing, Honey, did you know that the editor of this very magazine once had to teach the ink type setters in Wapping to use computers instead to print our newspaper. It completely transformed the industry. Good thing too. Let's face it we really have all come a very long way since early cave dog. Where are you off to?

"I'm going back under her duvet: I can feel a hibernation coming on."

Buddy Brown (pure Jack Russell), a roving reporter.

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Travels from Dulverton: chapter 3

Happy 2023 to one and all, may it be filled with good fortune and happy vibes! Perhaps you are thinking of taking to the road this New Year. Well, prepare for life without a kitchen or bathroom as such, no plumbed in mains fresh water, gas, or electricity. No washing machine, tumble dryer, oven, fresh food storage, shower, bath, toilet. Although many modern van conversions are kitted out with these nowadays, older vans may not be, but then it is not always convenience that makes for a meaningful adventure.

You'd be surprised just what services are available when in transit. Did you know for instance you can get a shower in a leisure centre anywhere in the Country for roughly the price of a coffee shop cappuccino? You simply walk in and ask for a shower, hand over a couple of pounds and that entitles you to a hot (limitless) shower and full use of all changing room facilities that often includes a hair dryer. Simply supply your own towel, toiletries, and a fresh set of clothes. There is no better feeling than freshening up like this after a few days on the road. Entering as a bedraggled sticky vagabond,

bouncing out fresh and clean ready for the next adventure.

Water is an essential that we can't live without, make sure you have an ample (large as possible) storage container and some spare hose and funnel for syphoning, also a filtration system to give you more options. Public sinks, petrol stations and even some church grounds often have an outside water tap for a weary traveller. Also natural fresh water sources are



an option, a filter for purifying and pot for boiling essential. Alternatively, many catering establishments offer water replenishment. The deal being you buy something in return for their generosity. Good marketing for them and you are supporting an often

small local business keen to increase their footfall. What better excuse for a full English breakfast and saves you the wash up and tidy, a welcome occasional treat.

Many pubs offer a parking space for the night and for a small fee you can hook up to an outside electric supply, fill water tanks, use their WiFi, and maybe treat oneself again to a drink or light bite (occasionally of course!)

One of our most unique finds was the Piebald Inn in Yorkshire that has a menu of 52 different pies all available, homemade, massive, and delicious.

Limitless SIM cards, and roaming mini routers are also available from many network providers for a monthly fee. Allowing you to stay connected with family and friends, and live stream your favourite box set when life calls for a quiet evening in.

There are also some amazing APPs available now, and many of them are free. They map recommended park ups, water sources, and even the driveway of kind people (often fellow wandetlusters) who will offer you use of their domestic facilities by way of a friendly gesture.



Many vans have refrigeration and some sort of cooking set up. Ours has a portable removable fridge that runs off a large portable, pluggable electric battery recharged via its own solar panel or mains supply. You can run any small electrical appliance off these including fridge, hairdryer, TV, computer. Gas bottles for the cooker seem to last a lifetime, so economical, and easily changed, depositing the old canisters for a newly refilled one. Please note; many delicious breakfasts and evening meals were enjoyed in-between the occasional pub and cafe visits!

Comfort breaks are also an important one. Porto loos often take up lots of space and not necessarily an ideal

long-term ablution solution. Carp Fisherman use a simple collapsible bucket style contraption you line with compostible bags. These are a great alternative for van life. Simply dispose of any waste in any dog waste bin.

Laundry is not such a mystery. Most towns have a launderette, interestingly the further North we went the more it became service washes only. Prices varied, as did the quality of the wash. The best one we found included a cafe and a designer sock shop. Incredible staff dressed in vintage 50s full hair and make up, waitressing and service washing, or offering support if we wanted to do it ourselves. What better than a fresh coffee and a bacon roll while

watching ones sheets, towels, and clothes tumble themselves dry.

So all in all you see, all bases are covered, the wayward traveller wants for nothing in this modern age.

Recent winter travels have included the glorious Ham Hill home to Somersets famous ham stone quarry, wonderful for a day trip with plenty of views across Somerset, interesting walks for the dog and great pub lunch. We also enjoyed a Christmas visit to friends in Buckinghamshire and a nose around Jeremy Clarksons Diddly Squat farm a bit further North. We are so lucky in this Country to have a good climate that supports all the hard work of our farmers who graft 365 days a year to supply us with all the staples of life. Here in Exmoor we are spoilt with the incredible views and landscape dotted with tractors, cattle, sheep, and bundles of hay, preserving the symbiotic relationship between human being, animal and land that is the circle of life. Thank you farmers everywhere.

Mary Ford

Photos: Matthew Ford

THE LOCAL DIRECTORY

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Dulverton T.C.: Sec: Miss A. Rose	clerk@dulvertontowncouncil.co.uk	01398 324561
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Dulverton Benefice/All Saints/Community choirs: Gary Cooper		07419 212354
All Saints Church, Dulverton, Bell Tower: Anne Markwick		01398 323823
Brushford: Revd Dowell Conning	revdconning@gmail.com	01398 322867
Exmoor Benefice: The Rev. David Weir, The Rectory, Exford, TA24 7LX		01643 831330
Catholic Church: Priest: Father Michael		01643 702201
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Dulverton Camera Club: Sec: Peter Main, 4 Valley View, Morebath, Tiverton, EX16		01398 331556
Dulverton Players: Chair: Les Silverlock		01398 341850
Oakford Players, Chair: Chair Mr Tony Holmes	tholmes556@btinternet.com	01398 351665

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Brushford Short Mat Bowling: Sec: Sam Takle		01398 324147
Cutcombe Cricket: Sec: Mrs Maria Adams, 1 The Beeches, Wheddon Cross		01643 841036
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Dulverton Cricket Club, Colts: Mrs Christine Dubery		01398 323474
Dulverton & District Tennis Club: Hazel Richardson	hazelr@btinternet.com	07889793571
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Dulverton Sports and Social: Chair: Carl Hooper	01398 324494
Dulverton Sportsfield Management: Adrian Smith	01398 323834
Dulverton Senior Table Tennis: Richard Archer	01398 324160
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Anstey Parent and Toddlers Group: Anstey Village Hall	07823770168
Little Owls Nursery at All Saints C of E School, Dulverton	01398 324360
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Dulverton Children's Centre: All Saints School, Fishers Mead TA22 9EN	01398 324360
Dulverton Family and Toddlers Group:	01398 324329
Dunkery PreSchool: Supervisor: Mrs. S. Matravers, Shute Close, Cutcombe, Minehead	01643 841008
East Anstey Primary School: East Anstey, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 9JP	01398 341369
Exford CofE VC First School:	01643 831365
Little Berries Pre School at Exford First School	01643 831365
Little Owls Nursery: All Saints School, Fishers Mead TA22 9EN	01398 324360
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Bampton Ladies Group. Mrs. Diane Holland	01398 332755
Bampton Patchwork and Quilting Group. Mrs. Diane Holland	01398 332755
Cutcombe & District M.U.: President, Pam Anson	01643 851616
Cutcombe & District W.I.: Mrs. Pam Anson	01643 851616
Dulverton & Brushford M.U.: Mrs A. Gregory, 22 Jury Road, Dulverton, TA22 9DU	01398 323587
Exford Moorhens: Chairman: Mrs. I. Collett	01643 831016
Oakford Moorland Ladies Club: Chair: Mrs Jennie Chappell	smilerjenniec@hotmail.com 01398 351666
YOUTH ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITIES		
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Dulverton & District Young People's Project: Chair: John Preston	01398 323862
Dulverton Ballet: Mrs Wightmore, Flat 3, Easter House, St. Andrews St. Tiverton	01884 253999
Exmoor Community Youth Club: Organiser Laura Tasker, Fridays 6 – 8 pm	1643 831125
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Bampton Library and Resource Centre, Station Road	01398 332466
Brushford Parish Hall: Bookings enquiries@brushfordparishhall.org.uk	07941 139846

If you see something that needs changing in the directory – please do let us know.

Email exmoornews@gmail.com



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Care Direct for help and advice: www.somerset.gov.uk	0300 1232224
Cutcombe Flower & Produce Show: Tracy Beviss	01643 841257
Dulverton Action Group: Magdalena Harding	01398 323 785
Dulverton & District Civic Soc: Kathy Currie.....	07493 518350
Dulverton & Southern Exmoor Twinning: Chair: Steve Ford, Dulverton	01398 323016
Dulverton Bridge Club: Sec. Brian Hughes	www.Bridgewebs.com/dulverton
Dulverton Dance:	01398 341850
Dulverton Ballroom Dance: Sec: Mrs Christine Dubery	01398 323474
Dulverton Development Forum: Sec: Mrs J. Ross	01398 323818
Dulverton Films: Jan Ross	01398 323818
Dulverton Fellowship for Mental Health: Marion Silverlock	01398 341850
Dulverton Gardening Club: Roger Hammond	01398 323954
Dulverton Group Exmoor Society: Sec: Dr Ken Mills	01398 331482
Dulverton Vets	01398 323285
Dulverton Vintage Films: Magdalena Harding	01398 323785
Dulverton Voluntary Drivers: Mike Beale	07743 885115
Exe Valley Market Bus: Jennie Chappell	smilerjenniec@hotmail.com
Exmoor Patient Group: Chair: Sandra Wilson, W Nightcott, Dulverton TA22 9RT	01398 324687
Exmoor BeeKeepers Association: Sec: Caroline Ralph	exmoorhoneyshow@gmail.com
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Exmoor U3A: David Newth	01398 324615
Good Neighbours:	07395 171409
Oakford Village Hall: Bookings: Mrs Dawn Williams	dawnwilliams1@gmail.com
Royal British Legion Dulverton: Peter Donnelly	01398 323030
TA22 Voluntary Lift Scheme (formerly Brushford Voluntary Lifts): Chair: T. Wilson	07528 326880
Tiverton Model Aero Club: Sec: Mr. P Veale, 9 Higre flih St., Dulverton TA22 9HB	01398 323409
Village Agent Jane Lillis	janel@somersetcc.org.uk
Voices of Exmoor Amanda Taylor	01598 428005
West Somerset Advice Bureau:	01643 704624



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