

November
December 2024

EXMOOR NEWS



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EXMOOR NEWS

COVERING SOUTHERN EXMOOR



The deadline for the
Jan/Feb '25 issue of the Exmoor
News is
Thursday 28th November '24
Printed by Brightsea, Exeter



Cover image 2023: © Shaun Davey.
Sunrise on a winter day over Dunkery Hill and the Bristol Channel from the Whitstone Post on the A39 atop Porlock Hill, Exmoor National Park.
shaundavey.co.uk

If you'd like to see your photo on the cover, send us a low resolution image and if we can use it, we'll ask for a high resolution version.

Hello,

Here we are. Another year nearly gone - where does the time go?

This year we've helped promote all sorts of events from talks, films, concerts, festivals, secret gardens, organised walks and fun rides. We have seen the start and finish of the Great Bradley Bridge. Our profiles have given us brief but fascinating insights into the lives of locals and a dog. We have a new item - a short story, see page 40. Let us know if you'd like to see more or if you have any new ideas.

A big thank you to our distributors and advertisers, we are extremely grateful. As ever please let our advertisers know you found them in our magazine. It all helps to keep providing it free to you.


Wishing you a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Best wishes, Ceri Keene and Claire Savill

E: exmoornews@gmail.com T: 07497 914441 W: www.exmoornews.co.uk
Post: The Old Stores, Brushford, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9AH

We take our responsibility to maintain high editorial standards seriously.
Should an error occur please do not hesitate to contact us.

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<p>Size 1 60wide x 92high Mono £20 Colour £28</p>		<p>Size 3 60w mm X 188h Colour £55</p>	<p>Size 4 188w x 92h Colour £83</p>	<p>Size 5 124w x 188h mm Colour £122</p>	<p>Size 6 190mm x 190 mm (no bleed) 216 mm x 216 mm (includes bleed) Colour £165</p>
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DULVERTON VINTAGE FILMS

Wed 13th November

TRACKS

Mia Wasikowska & Adam Driver
(2013)

Wed 11th December

MIRACLE on 34th STREET

*Maureen O'Hara, John Payne &
Natalie Wood* (1947)

(Christmas lunch starts at 1pm)

Film starts at 2.30 pm
at Fishers Mead Community Centre
£3 includes tea and biscuits

DULVERTON VINTAGE FILMS



Wed 11th December



MIRACLE on 34th STREET

starring

Maureen O'Hara & John Payne
and introducing **Natalie Wood**

Join us at 1 pm for our

CHRISTMAS JOLLY

of nibbles, mince pies and bubbly
~ bring a plate of food to share ~

(please phone 323 785 by 8th Dec if you plan to
come so that we have some idea of numbers)

Tea, coffee & biscuits provided as usual

Film starts at 2.30 pm
at Fishers Mead Community Centre



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The Royal British Legion

Dulverton & District Branch

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Sunday 10th November at 10.45 am

All Saints Church Dulverton

ARMISTICE DAY

Monday 11th November at 10.45am

Dulverton War Memorial



Dulverton Gardening Club Presents:

Gardener's World Presenter—Chelsea Gold Medallist

Toby Buckland

How *Not* to Garden

Practical tips for a garden that looks after itself



Thursday 21st November

Doors open 7pm—Town Hall

Tickets £10 at Dulverton Post Office

Bampton Charter Fair

Thursday 31 October

Bampton Charter Fair is delighted to announce that the chicken auction is back! Come and bid for your backyard egg producers! We also have Raptor World introducing dinosaurs. Lots of music and plenty of stalls lining the streets. The church is full of crafts, as is the car park by the river. And for those with a love for the fast and furious, Rowlands funfair will be in attendance! We very much look forward to welcoming you.

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Dulverton Exmoor Literary Festival

Print programmes for the third annual Dulverton Exmoor Literary Festival on 16 and 17 November are now available across Exmoor, Devon and Somerset. The full programme is also available online at the Visit Dulverton website, where you can also buy tickets for all events. See below for details.

Don't miss author talks across the festival weekend at Dulverton Town Hall with:

- Deborah Meaden and money agony aunt, Claer Barrett, demystifying finance for young people.
- Jonathan Dimpleby and historical biographer, Andrew Lownie, discussing *Stalin and World War II*.
- Caroline Quentin and editor, Gaby Huddart, will be *Drawn to the Garden*.
- Fashion icon, Plum Sykes, with writer, Alice Thomson, discussing Plum's new novel, *Wives Like Us*.
- Former Children's Laureate, Lauren Child CBE, with her latest Clarice Bean story.
- Bestselling novelists, Jennie Godfrey, Vanessa de Haan, Jessica Moor and Kate Lord Brown.
- Stanley Johnson and his latest travel journal, with editor, Miranda Taylor.
- Exmoor farmers launching their new book, *Exmoor Farms: A Year on the Moor*.
- Professor Charles Foster immerses himself into the lives of wild animals, with writer, Rachel Campbell Johnston.

- Horse racing experts, Janet Vokes, Johnson White and Charles Blanning.

There is an Introduction to Crime Writing discussion with crime writers, Louise Douglas and Sarah Easter Collins, at Dulverton Library.

Events with free admission (no ticket needed) include book readings by novelist, Hazel Prior—with her Celtic harp—at the Bridge Inn; Meet the Author sessions with Jo Middleton, Zoe Gibson Quirk, Ian Parsons, Richard Collis and Powers Ian Mawby at the library, and Children's Story Corner with Emily Hamilton and Emma Bettridge—book readings for young children at the Bridge Inn.

Waterstones Barnstaple return for a third year to run the popup bookshop...the perfect opportunity to buy author-signed books as Christmas presents!

Entries for the annual Dulverton Exmoor Literary Festival Children's Writing Competition, for writers under 13, are already landing. This year's theme is Magical Exmoor and Lauren Child is presenting the prizes.

Festival Director, Ali Pegrum said: 'We are thrilled that so many talented writers are coming to our charming moorland town, bringing an often-requested slice of literary culture to Exmoor. Our huge thanks to the many local businesses and individuals who are sponsoring the event, enabling it to go ahead for a third consecutive year.'

For full details of this year's programme and children's writing competition, and to book tickets for festival events, go to the Visit Dulverton website:

visitdulverton.com/dulverton-exmoor-literary-festival-2024

Dulverton Players

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Noël Coward

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Tickets on sale from

1. The Dulverton Post Office
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Show time is 6th - 9th November 2024 7 for 7.30pm

Venue - Dulverton Town Hall, Fore St, TA22 9EX



The Arts Society Exmoor Lectures

4 November—Donatello: Renaissance Genius
Donatello is one of the artistic giants of the Renaissance and has been called the greatest sculptor of all time. This lecture explores his outstandingly original and inventive style and versatility.

Paula Nuttall—a specialist in both Italian and Northern European Arts, has published many books, notably *From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting, 1400-1500*, and has collaborated on major exhibitions including *Van Eyck: An Optical Revolution* in 2020.

2 December—Shepard's Christmas

E H Shepard loved Christmas and this lecture describes much of the magic and joy of this wonderful season, featuring iconic images of Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet. Many images have not been published for over sixty years. James Campbell has a BA in History and an MA in History of Art and a particular interest in the work of the artist, illustrator and cartoonist E H Shepard 1879-1976.

Lectures are held monthly at Brushford Parish Hall, start at 2.30pm and last one hour.

Find out more about the society at www.theartsocietyexmoor.org.uk or email Programme Secretary, Joanna Macfarlane, at Exmoor@theartsociety.org

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Every 2nd Saturday of the Month

Book Mart, Drop In Café and
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Every 1st Thursday of the Month

Watch this space for updates and
the latest News, Events & Clubs at

<https://brushfordparishhall.org.uk>

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Brushford Christmas Fair



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Meet Santa & Post Your
Xmas Letter.

Refreshments including
Mulled Wine, Mince Pies,
Bacon Rolls plus Open Bar

**Grand Opening by
Dulverton Town Band 11:00
Saturday 23rd November
Open 11:00 to 15:00**

Tiverton Film Club

Tiverton Film Club's autumn programme has started at Petroc! Remember there is one major change—a new 6.30pm start time, so that we are able to show longer films. However, what has not changed is our annual subscription: it is still £35 per person for our ten-film programme.

The autumn dates are all booked, and we have four excellent prizewinning films for you from France, Japan, the UK and USA.

15 October *Anatomy of a Fall* (France). A courtroom drama mystery with first class acting, the film received the Palm d'Or prize at the Cannes Film Festival and was judged to be the Best European film in 2023.

19 November *The Zone of Interest* (UK). Based on the novel by Martin Amis, this was a prizewinner at the 2024 BAFTAs and Oscars. It is a strong drama set in WWII, which addresses the contrast between domestic life outside and the horrors inside Auschwitz. The film does not enter the camp, but its presence is always evident from the award-winning background sound track.

10 December *The Holdovers* (USA). At last! Among the most popular films of 2024, it is a comedy drama set in a snowbound US college over the holiday period—ideal for our pre-Xmas choice. Another Oscar and BAFTA winner, described as, 'quick, funny, dripping with emotion and beautifully filmed.'

Bring your friends as guests; even if some have seen these films, remind them that films are always better on the big screen than on TV streaming services.

Merry Christmas

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PLEASE CALL FOR SEASON OPENING TIMES



Dulverton Town Hall

Friday 1 November

THE FALL GUY (Cert 12A)

Director: David Leith

126 mins

He's a stuntman and, like everyone in the stunt community, he gets blown up, shot, crashed, thrown through windows and dropped from the highest of heights, all for our entertainment. And now, fresh off an almost career-ending accident, this working-class hero must track down a missing movie star, solve a conspiracy and try to win back the love of his life while still doing his day job. What could possibly go right?

Friday 15 November

BALTIMORE (Cert 15)

Directors: Joe Lawlor, Christine Molloy

98 mins

Based on the life of Rose Dugdale, a former debutante who rebelled against her wealthy upbringing, becoming a volunteer in the militant Irish republican organisation, the Provisional Irish Republican Army. She masterminded an ambitious art raid on a stately home, intending to barter the stolen paintings for the release of IRA prisoners. A fascinating psychological study of fanaticism, showing the layers beneath Dugdale's fervent belief in her cause.

Friday 29 November

THELMA (Cert 12A)

Director: Josh Margolin

98 mins

Inspired by a real-life experience of the director's own grandmother, Thelma shines the spotlight on an elderly grandmother as an unlikely action hero. When 93-year-old Thelma Post gets duped by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson, she sets out on a treacherous quest across the city to reclaim what was taken from her. A marvellous, witty, smart and wholeheartedly charming affair. A sublime mixture of comedy and affection for our elders.

Friday 13 December

VINDICATION SWIM (Cert PG)

Director: Elliott Hasler

98 mins

Vindication Swim dives into the extraordinary life of Mercedes Gleitze, who in 1927 became the first British woman to swim the English Channel. The film depicts Mercedes' upstream struggle in overcoming both the cold waters of the English Channel and the oppressive society of 1920s England. However, after a rival comes forward claiming to have accomplished the same feat, Mercedes is forced into battle to retain her record and her legacy.

Tickets: Dulverton Films members £3, non-members £5, students, accompanied by an adult, £2.50. Book in advance at Dulverton Town Hall's Thrift Shop, open 10.30am to 2.30pm, Monday to Saturday, or email: janaross2003@yahoo.co.uk
Tickets may be available on the door. Bar open from 7pm. Films start at 7.30pm



A view of Westermill Farm

Deep in the heart of Exmoor, on a 500 acre beef and sheep farm just outside Exford, can be found some very special and much-loved camping facilities, along with six holiday cottages—Westermill. A holiday or even a short break at Westermill Farm has nothing to do with glamping or yurts but, as four generations of loyal guests have discovered, everything to do with freedom. It is a justifiable source of pride to Oliver Edwards, the third generation of his family to farm at Westermill, as much a source of pride as his splendid herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle.

It is an idyllic setting; Westermill Farm is unique to the UK in that it does not border a road, but keeping the farm going and ensuring its legacy for future generations is hard and challenging work, not least in today's economic climate. But, from childhood onwards, Oliver has been no stranger to the challenges of work and life; there have been great joys

but great sadnesses too.

Westermill has been in this farming family's ownership since 1938, when Oliver's grandparents and his father, John, moved here from Barrow Gurney, just south of Bristol. 'There was a dirt track to the house, which was really just a bothy in the middle of nowhere,' says Oliver, who was born at Westermill in 1955. While he loved growing up on a farm, surrounded by animals and wildlife, his school years were miserable.

'I was dyslexic,' he explains, 'but in those days, it wasn't picked up. I was called lazy and a dunce.' Sent away to boarding school aged seven, Oliver remembers being caned every single week during term time. Not surprisingly, he hated school...It was not until he was a teenager and studying at what was then Taunton Technical College that he discovered what would become another lifelong passion—engineering. 'I received a distinction for the practical coursework,' he adds.

Engineering skills stood him in good stead when he decided, aged 19, to emigrate and leave for Australia. A "ten-pound Pom", he worked his way around this vast country on farms, as a jackeroo, at a winery, helping with flood irrigation for potential rice paddies, gardening, fencing, trucking, prawn trawling and looking after polo ponies, sometimes in the most hostile of environments. He

even spent time as a telegram boy. 'Everything in Australia is trying to kill you: at sea, on land, and in rivers, especially the Riverina snakes,' he recalls. But those years in Australia built an inner strength in Oliver; he is one of the most resourceful people you are likely to encounter, able to turn his hand to almost anything.

Back in the UK, after working in Malawi and Kenya, he met his sister's friend, Jill, who was working at the Westermill campsite to save up for her own trip to Australia. By the time Jill headed to the southern hemisphere, she and Oliver were engaged. It would be nine months before the couple saw each other again, by which time Oliver was working in Texas, where he and Jill were reunited. Despite the offer of a Texas wedding, they returned to the UK, were married in 1981, and have been at Westermill ever since.

Family life revolved—and continues to revolve—around the farm, and Westermill is where their three children, James, Charlotte and David, grew up. James, who works for Shearwell Data, and his family live nearby, as does Oliver's mother, who is 95. David works alongside his parents; he and his family live at Westermill, as does Oliver's mother-in-law, who is now 90. Although Charlotte and her family now live in Perth, Australia, technology enables her to manage Westermill's

advertising and campsite bookings remotely.

Scroll back a few years and things were going well. 'We were a happy, loving family, all living here,' says Oliver. But life and fate had other plans. In the summer of 2019, a routine screening test revealed that Oliver had bowel cancer. He credits the skills of his surgeon at Musgrove Park Hospital and the dedicated team at the hospital's Beacon Centre with saving his life. But chemotherapy was gruelling... 'and not nice.'

And then... came Covid-19. 'A dreadful time,' says Oliver. But he made a point of opening up the farm to trusted regular guests whenever possible. When restrictions prevented them from staying, Oliver sent videos of the River Exe, which runs through Westermill.

There was an even greater blow to come. Oliver proudly talks of his five granddaughters and his grandson but, at the end of 2020, his granddaughter, Amelia, died at the farm. 'It is the deepest wound for any family,' he reflects. 'You learn to live with grief but it was a most tragic loss for us all.'

With all that had happened, Oliver and Jill needed a psychological breathing space, away from the farm. Apart from an extended trip to Australia, when Oliver was sixty, they had only taken short breaks so, just as he had always done on the farm, Oliver put his engineering skills to good use. He built a camping trailer and, in 2022,

he and Jill hitched it to the farm truck and headed off to Barcelona, via the Pyrénées, paying a return visit to the region the following year. This summer saw an epic journey down through France and Italy to Bari, on Italy's heel, followed by a ferry to Corfu. The return journey took them to Ancona on Italy's Adriatic coast and from there to Switzerland and France, before returning home. 'Six weeks, twenty-two campsites, 4,000 miles...' Next year, Oliver will be seventy and he and Jill are contemplating a return visit to Australia or, if not, then taking the camp trailer up through Sweden and Finland, and to the top of Norway. Meanwhile, succession planning is under way at Westermill, with David taking over its day to day running. It is hard, however, to imagine Oliver retiring completely. 'Work is my hobby,' he says. 'I love this farm!' As did Oliver's father, John, whose richly detailed memoir, *A Lucky Hill Farmer*, is worth seeking out.

Writer, Lawrence Durrell, often referred to "spirit of place"—something that goes beyond a physical location. It is about the people of a place too. In Westermill's case it is very much about Oliver and the five generations who, for almost ninety years, have called this unique part of Exmoor home.

Diane Trembath

To find out more about Westermill Farm holidays visit:

www.westermill.com

Follow Oliver on Instagram: @exmoor_hill_farmer and on Facebook: www.facebook.com/oliver.jc.edwards



Oliver in the Westermill kitchen, making a pork pie



Oliver and Jill on Niederhorn, Switzerland



Dulverton Health Walks

The group meets each Tuesday morning at 10am to walk at various places. The walks are not too long or strenuous and take between one to two hours. If you would like to join our very

friendly group, please contact either:
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Exmoor National Park (ENPA) is inviting children to channel their inner Exmoor, in this year's Dark Skies Festival Competition. The themed competition invites children to write an exciting story inspired by Exmoor's dark night skies.

There are two age group categories:
Children 11 and under—max 500 words
Children 12 to 16—max 1,000 words

ENPA Rural Enterprise Co-ordinator, Julie Colman, said: 'We have some great prizes for our top, budding authors. All those aged 16 and under can enter: Celestron has kindly donated a Starsense 102AZ telescope for the younger age category and Dryrobe has given one of its fantastic outdoor changing robes for the 12 to 16 category. The best 11 and under entry from Devon and Somerset schools will also win a free Astronomy and Space themed workshop for their school.

'We have three acclaimed judges lined up with a wealth of experience, including local authors. They will be looking for imagination, good use of language, and all things Exmoor!'

Exmoor Dark Skies Festival runs from Friday 18 October to Sunday 3 November, with more than 50 events taking place all around the National Park.

For competition details, go to:

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/exmoor-for-everyone/stargazing-and-dark-skies/exmoor-dark-skies-festival/exmoor-dark-skies-festival-competition

See the full list of Dark Skies Festival events at:

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/darkskiesfestival

or pick up a free Exmoor Dark Skies Guide from our National Park Centres.



DULVERTON ACTION GROUP

Litter-picking

(usually 3rd Sunday)

Sunday 17th November

Sunday 15th December

10.30 meet by the Heritage Centre

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EXMOOR FRIENDS



WIDENING HORIZONS

We meet in Dulverton Town Hall on the last Wednesday of the month at 10:00 for 10.30. Talks last about one hour. Our annual subscription is a modest £10. Admission is free to members and, if you are new to us, free for your first visit.

30 October: Powers Ian Mawby, *The History of Pulhams Mill*. Now retired, Ian and his wife, Pauline, were the owners of Pulhams Mill, Brompton Regis, for over forty years. Many will remember visiting the mill, whether for lunch or to sample the wonderful cakes, or to browse through the shop. Ian reflects on the history of the mill and has published a fictional book based on it.

27 November: Frazer Lawrence will share his personal reflections on his time in the British Army, a period spanning some 32 years of service and encompassing multiple operational deployments. He will describe his early years commanding Gurkhas, his middle years commanding King'smen in the 1st Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, and the twilight of his army career as a senior officer attached to the United States Army in Iraq. He will talk about the highs and lows of being a company and then a battalion commander in Afghanistan and then as a senior officer deployed to Iraq during the liberation of Mosul. He will share personal observations about leadership along the way, as he takes you on his journey from young

lieutenant in the Far East through to brigadier in the Middle East.

There is no meeting in December or January. We resume on Wednesday 26 February.



Exmoor Society Guided Walks November- December 2024

Friday 1 November 5.15pm
Larkbarrow Night Walk, Learn about the Night Sky

Join us for a short walk to the ruins of Larkbarrow Farm and Cottage. If the

sky is clear, learn about the night sky visible to the naked eye. If it isn't, you can enjoy the silence, darkness, and solitude of being in this remote and beautiful part of Exmoor.

Sunday 1 December 3pm
Stoke Pero Carol Service
Enjoy a seasonal candlelit carol service, along with a walk in two parts. A torch is advised for the short walk back and, maybe, to assist reading in the candlelit church!

We hope there's something of interest for everyone.

For more information and booking, visit us at 23 Fore Street, Dulverton, call the office on 01398 323335 or go to: www.exmoorsociety.com/walks-programme

Milverton Concert Society



Alim Beisembayev Piano

St Michael's Church, Milverton

Friday 1st November 2024 7.30pm
Leeds piano competition winner (2021) and BBC Proms star, Alim Beisembayev shot to fame in 2023

when he stepped in for Benjamin Grosvenor at a BBC Prom with only two days notice! He performed Rachmaninov's 2nd Piano concerto to great critical acclaim and has gone on to wow audiences around the world.

At Milverton he will be performing works by Haydn, Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms.

Details and booking

www.milvertonconcerts.org

Other dates for your diary;

Young Professionals Concert

9 February 2025 4pm

Aaron Azunda Akugbo (Trumpet) 8

March 2025 7.30pm

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Exmoor National Park—70th Anniversary Celebrations

Every year on Exmoor Day, 19 October, we take a moment to celebrate all that Exmoor National Park (ENPA) offers. This year it is particularly special as it marks the 70th anniversary of Exmoor's designation as a National Park. In the lead-up to the anniversary, ENPA is celebrating all that is great about Exmoor, with a range of events and activities and its 70th Anniversary Appeal for CareMoor for Exmoor.

We encourage everyone who loves Exmoor to celebrate this special place in their own way, in person or digitally. Join in the big #Exmoor70 countdown and use the hashtag when you post photos, videos or event details on social media.

Events for #Exmoor70

- **CareMoor 70 for 70 Walk**

We're asking supporters to join in with or donate to our CareMoor 70 for 70 Walk/Appeal to help keep Exmoor special for future generations. Every penny raised supports vital work to conserve landscapes, habitats, footpaths, and educational activities for young people and heritage.

- **Great Bradley Bridge**

A brand new bridge at Great Bradley opens on Exmoor Day, 19 October. The bridge, which crosses the River Barle, provides a secure, sustainable route along the Two Moors Way between Tarr Steps and Withypool. It's a recycled steel structure, with locally sourced, sustainable timber deck and handrails.

- **Exmoor Dark Skies Festival 18 October - 3 November**

A wide range of events giving enthusiastic stargazers, wildlife watchers and families the chance to enjoy Europe's first designated Dark Sky Reserve. Highlights include: Dark Skies Talks, Planetarium experiences, Dark Skies Yoga by Moonlight, a Family Astro Party,

Ranger-led Dark Skies Walks, a Gin and Stargazing evening, Space Detectives and a children's story writing competition.

For details of ENPA events, visit:

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/exmoor-for-everyone/events

For details of ENPA's 70 for 70 appeal, visit:

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/caremoor-for-exmoor/current-appeals/exmoor-70-for-70

- **Exmoor Farms: A Year on the Moor**

ENPA Partnership Fund is supporting this joint Exmoor Society and Exmoor Hill Farming Network initiative, which combines a book and exhibition. *Exmoor Farms: a Year on the Moor* is by Exmoor farmer and author, Victoria Eveleigh, with photographs by Eleanor Davies, and the exhibition, of the same name, offers a captivating exploration of contemporary farming life in one of the UK's most remarkable upland regions. The exhibition is at White Rock Cottage, Ashcombe Gardens nr. Simonsbath, Somerset TA24 7SH and runs on consecutive weekends 19-20 October, 26-27 October and 2-3 November 2024, from 11am to 4pm. For full details and to order a copy of *Exmoor Farms: A Year on the Moor*, go to:

www.ehfn.org.uk/exmoor-farms-a-year-on-the-moor



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Winsford Moor Movies

In September, over 60 people attended *Wilding*, our first film of the season; this was followed in October by *Wicked Little Letters*.

The season's remaining films will be shown in Winsford Village Hall at 7.30p.m:

12 November *Vindication Swim*
The inspirational story of Mercedes Gleitze, the first British woman to swim the English Channel, and her battle against both the cold waters of the channel and the oppressive society of 1920s England.

10 December *Swede Caroline*
A hilarious mockumentary that follows Caroline, a competitive giant vegetable grower, as she readies herself for the big annual National Veg Championship. Find out who steals her prized marrow!

Annual subscription £8.00 per person (£3.00 per film for members and £5.00 for non-members). Pay on the first night or in advance at Winsford Village Shop.

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Woolacombe—Country's Top Surf Lifesaving Club

Woolacombe Surf Lifesaving Club (WSLSC) has been awarded Super Lifesaving Club 2024 across all national lifesaving competitions, in the pool and on the beach. Surf lifesaving is a growing national sport, with over 10,000 Surf Lifesaving GB (SLSGB) members, a figure that grows every year. It's the sport that trains future beach lifeguards and teaches people how to stay safe in the ocean. Members train on our beaches throughout the summer, and in the pool during winter. WSLSC is very lucky to train at one of the world's best beaches, which is cared for by Parkins Estates Ltd. Clubs from around the country take part in regional championships, culminating in the Surf Lifesaving GB National Championships, in the swimming pool and on the beach. Woolacombe's competitive season started with the Nippers, Youth, Open and Masters—all winning the Devon regional pool and beach championships.

The National Pool Championships took place at Cardiff International Pool. Forty clubs from across Great Britain participated in non-stop racing, brilliantly organised by governing body, SLSGB. The mighty Woolacombe Nippers and Youth teams fought hard and both claimed coveted national titles.



The National Ocean Championships, which span a week, were held at Branksome Chine beach, hosted superbly by Branksome SLSC. It featured the nation's top surf lifesavers all vying for the title. The Masters finished an impressive ninth out of 22 teams, and the Nippers and Youth were both crowned national champions. The Open Beach Championships, the last event of the season, took place at the world-class Fistral Beach in Cornwall. Woolacombe came third behind two of their big Cornish and Welsh rivals. Once all nationals have taken place, every point for each age group is totalled; SLSGB crowned Woolacombe the SLS Super Club of 2024, by more than 200 points—an epic achievement. Special thanks to WSLSC main sponsor, Woolacombe Bay Holiday Parks, who generously sponsored the club this year, enabling the club to buy new equipment for the children.

For more information about our club, visit: www.woolacombesurflifesavingclub.org/

Countdown to Christmas in Bampton 2024

This is a new, festive initiative celebrating the very best of all that Bampton has to offer. With a packed programme of activities, the Countdown to Christmas festive arts trail launches at 3pm on Friday 6 December, with music, street stalls, and entertainment, and the town's Christmas lights switch-on and community carol singalong from 6pm.

Bampton's first Rest Fest, hosted by William Sitwell, kicks off at 7pm (tickets on sale from 1 November), with fantastic live music throughout the town, including the Kahunas at the Quarryman's Rest, from 8pm till late.

Friday 6th Dec
3pm - late

Launch Event &
#Celebration

Bampton Rest Fest
(Tickets 1 Nov)

www.thedevonbampton.com

Pass it on...re-use large items!

Somerset Council is urging everyone to recycle any large unwanted household items.

Why re-use rather than throw out?

Environmental impact: when you pass on furniture, appliances, or other sizable items, you reduce waste and minimise the strain on landfills.

Cost-effective: instead of buying new, consider giving your used sofa, dining table, or washing machine a second life. It's budget-friendly and eco-conscious!

Community connection: local charities often accept donations of large items. By donating, you're supporting your community and helping others in need.

For local furniture re-use charities, visit: www.somerset.gov.uk/pass-it-on/

or, if your item isn't in a good enough condition to be reused, you can book and pay for a bulky waste collection online: www.somerset.gov.uk/bulky-waste



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Voices of Exmoor

Following a successful 2023 Christmas concert, the choir eagerly anticipated a busy 2024. Their year was set to begin in April with an open rehearsal in Dulverton, followed by a performance at the beautiful Church of St John the Baptist as part of the Witheridge Concert season. Weeks of dedicated rehearsal culminated in the summer concert, titled, *...And now for something different*, in July.

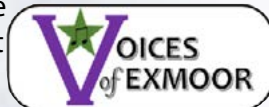
Two more concerts were on the schedule: a return invitation from the Chulmleigh Society on 27 September and the annual Christmas concert on 7 December. Or so they thought! On 11 August, choir members received an urgent email from their Musical Director, Amanda Taylor, asking them to spread the word that the Calvert Trust was in serious financial trouble. The trust, which provides activity holidays for young people with disabilities, needed to raise £500,000 by 31 August to avoid closure. Having performed at the Calvert Trust in

December 2023, the choir felt a strong connection to their cause.

A choir member suggested a 24-hour Singathon to raise awareness, and everyone—choir members, the Musical Director, accompanist, and committee—agreed. The event was set for 30-31 August. In the next two weeks, Dulverton Town Hall was booked, flyers distributed, local media contacted, and a 24-hour singing rota filled. Donations of tea, coffee, and food were secured.

The Singathon began at 6 pm on 30 August, captured live by ITV. The choir sang continuously until 6 pm the following day, raising £795.59. By the end of the event, the Calvert Trust had reached their target, and Voices of Exmoor were proud to have contributed.

Join us for the 2024 Christmas concert on 7 December at Dulverton Town Hall. Tickets are available from mid-November at the Tantivy.



Pink Dressage Raises £700 for Cancer Research

West Somerset Riding Club held its charity dressage event at Roborough Gate near Brompton Regis on 15 September and was delighted to raise such a fantastic sum for Cancer Research UK. Riders and their horses came from all over West Somerset and Exmoor and were creative with their pink costumes. There were pink fairies and even a flamingo!

Many thanks to those local businesses who donated raffle prizes and vouchers, including Woods of Dulverton and The Valiant Soldier, Roadwater, plus class sponsors Nikki Routledge, Animal McTimoney Chiropractor from Yeo Mill, Exmoor Tweed from Porlock, Minehead Kitchens and Bathrooms, and Hele Vale Hay and Haylage, Waterrow.

Membership enquiries to: secwsr23@gmail.com



Photo: Annabelle Gregory

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- *Saturday 16th Gloucester Christmas Market £22.00pp
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- *Tuesday 26th Stourhead National Trust £35.00pp Non-Member/ £19.00pp Members
- *Thursday 28th Carvery Lunch and Sidmouth £31.50pp includes Carvery Lunch
- *Saturday 30th Bath Christmas Market £22.00pp coach only

DECEMBER

- *Tuesday 10th Clarks Village £16.00pp coach only
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The Reporter

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Ian Marchant, Author

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The Reporter—a must read...

Set in the West Country, *The Reporter*, a second novel from author, Rachel Francis, is attracting shining reviews. According to writer and broadcaster, Ian Marchant, Rachel is, ‘...one of the best fiction writers talking about contemporary rural existence, about the farming life, about the countryside.’

The main character, Abel Richards, is Aboriginal Australian. He travels from the Australian bush to London to train as a news reporter, and then lands a job at a regional newspaper on the edge of Dartmoor. When Abel is asked to investigate a missing person, he gets to know the hill farming community and uncovers a story that is close to his own heart.

Rachel was born and grew up in the West Country, has lived and worked on a moorland farm and been a pony trek leader on Dartmoor.

‘I’m interested in rural and indigenous cultures, how they live, how their cultures overlap, how they have had to change in the face of global market forces. I’m also a big fan of their honesty, their understanding of the land, and their sense of humour,’ says Rachel.

Look out for copies of *The Reporter* at Seven Fables in Dulverton.

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DULVERTON BY STARLIGHT

Sunday 1st December

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Dulverton by Starlight

Sunday 1 December 2pm-7pm

Start your festive season off with a bang! Dulverton by Starlight is the crowning jewel in the winter events calendar, with plenty to keep you busy. The main street is closed to traffic and filled with stalls selling local crafts, food and drink while roaming entertainers juggle, bubble and amuse you throughout the afternoon. Father Christmas will be in his grotto to see the children with a chance to get their faces painted while they wait. Get the festive vibe by joining in with singing carols around the tree then watch the spectacular fireworks display over the town.

A big thank you to this year's sponsors of the event: Dulverton Town Council, Risdon's Solicitors, Moorland Mousie Trust, Exmoor Distillery, Exmoor Deli, Shearwell Data, Seddon's, The Bridge and Dulverton Pharmacy.

For full details on the event, park and ride, stalls and entertainment go to: www.visitdulverton.com/dulverton-by-starlight or Dulverton by Starlight's Facebook page.

It's hard to believe that we are already into October, leaving behind a summer that sadly hasn't presented us with the best of weather!

The West Country still proves and remains a popular choice for buyers to relocate to, as well as many local buyers buying within the area. Prices are holding strong and coupled with encouraging changes to mortgages for first time buyers. Nationwide is now allowing first time buyers to borrow six times their earnings!

As we approach the Labour government's first budget release on 30 October, speculation surrounds potential changes to key areas such as Inheritance Tax and Capital Gains Tax. While the specifics remain uncertain, these are some of the areas where adjustments could occur, along with both council and land taxes.



The Bank of England (BoE) has kept interest rates unchanged at 5 per cent, following last month's reduction from a 16-year high of 5.25 per cent. This decision was largely anticipated after core inflation surged to 3.6 per cent in August, despite headline inflation remaining steady at 2.2 per cent. The BoE's cautious approach highlights its concern over persistent inflation pressures, and signals that the central bank expects inflation to rise again toward the end of the year.

Malcolm Webber, Managing Director of Webbers Property Services, remarked: 'This decision is no real surprise. Many colleagues and industry commentators had expected rates to be held, given inflation remains at just over 2 per cent. With the recent launch of sub-4 per cent fixed-rate mortgage products, we foresee a gradual reduction in interest rates over the next 12 months, which will build

confidence and enable more robust long-term financial planning.'

He also expressed hopes for the upcoming autumn budget, stating: 'We do hope the government considers measures to help first-time buyers and recognises the importance of retaining investor confidence in the local rental markets.'

Propertymark's Perspective

Nathan Emerson, CEO of Propertymark, noted: 'Since the initial rate cut a few months ago, many have been closely watching for further reductions. However, it is crucial that the Bank of England proceeds with caution to avoid reversing economic progress.'

Emerson emphasised the need for consistency and a strategic approach to future rate cuts, saying: 'Propertymark is keen to see long-term stability, confidence, and affordability within the economy.'

This decision will continue to be closely watched as inflationary pressures persist and the market awaits further guidance from both the BoE and the government.

As mentioned, the West Country remains a popular choice for many buyers included local purchases too, below is a selection of homes recently sold within the local area.

SOLD TO BUYERS FROM DERBYSHIRE—

Guide Price £990,000

A rare opportunity to purchase an impressive 'One of a Kind' equestrian residence situated in the popular Exmoor town of Dulverton, offering flexible and spacious accommodation, close proximity to bridleways, open moorland riding, as well as a short walk to the town's facilities set in 3.6 acres of



gardens and grounds. Freehold, Council Tax G and EPC E.



SOLD TO LOCAL FIRST TIME BUYERS VIA DISCRETE MARKETING—
Guide Price £250,000

Located in the pretty village of Brushford this spacious home offers 3 bedroom accommodation, good-sized reception rooms as well as large gardens, parking and garage.

The property was subject to a local occupancy clause. Freehold, Council Tax C, EPC G.



SOLD TO BUYERS WITH LOCAL CONNECTIONS—Guide Price £425,000

Located towards the outskirts of Dulverton and with southerly views over the Barle Valley, a substantial detached 2 bedroom bungalow. Features include 24'5 x 22'6 living room, double aspect dining room, kitchen, master bedroom with en suite bathroom, 2nd bedroom, bathroom, large integral garage

(extensive parking), large raised patio area, formal lawned garden with stream along southern boundary and superb views. Freehold, Council Tax E, EPC D.



SOLD TO A LOCAL BUYER—
Guide Price £250,000

For sale for the first time in over 70 years, this exciting and rare opportunity to purchase a detached 3 bedroom character cottage located right in the heart of the pretty Exmoor village of Brompton Regis. Now requiring modernisation offers fantastic far-reaching countryside

views, large rear garden and stone outbuildings. You really have to view to fully appreciate what this wonderful unique home offers. Freehold, Council Tax C, EPC G.

For more information with regards to your move or the property market, please do not hesitate to contact Ginny Saunders on 01398 323271 or email: ginny.saunders@webbers.co.uk

With best wishes,

Ginny

Exmoor Property Director



Ginny Saunders
Exmoor Property
Director



Rebecca Whitehead
Property Advisor



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Exmoor Rotary

Our annual Senior Citizens Outing on 2 September went extremely well, with 25 people from the Bampton and Dulverton area being supported by five Rotarians. Two minibuses transported everyone to Bickleigh Mill for a scrumptious cream tea: 'The staff said the scones were just going into the oven at 2.30pm, so they could not have been any fresher! Cream and jam were served in ample quantities. The scones were huge and delicious!' Our guests really enjoyed the venue, the food, and the company, and sincerely thanked us for their trip out.

Looking ahead, our annual fundraising event, Shelterbox Supper, is scheduled for Friday 25 October at the Riverside Hall, Bampton at 7pm. A selection of food from around the world is on offer, reflecting the vital humanitarian work Shelterbox does internationally. Tickets are £15 and will be available from Bampton Fresh. There will, of course, be a bar and a raffle. If you would like to help with the food preparation (recipes provided!) please contact Jane Wilson (01398 332135).

For details check out our posters and our website www.exmoor-rotary.org.uk

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At any get-together (one-to-one or in a group), it is essential that no-one bring a smartphone or mobile, smartwatch, or any other device.

Please get in touch with questions or ideas, a few details about yourself, a landline number or street address. Replies to emails may take longer and calls to mobiles may not be possible. All contact will be responded to, so please try again after two weeks if you have not heard back.

If you own a cafe, pub, venue, or low-tech property* and would welcome new customers or visitors, it would be great to hear from you too.

*ie distanced from masts, pylons, high voltage electricity or similar disturbances, and without wifi, smart meters, strip lights, etc.

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A cup full of winter promise

Uncertainty grips us when winter crackles with icicles, skeletal trees bereft of berries stark naked upon the moors, hover ungrounded by garlands of frosted mists. Self-awareness petrifies our actions, while our world frets gasping for breath, for mindfulness, for a saviour, and yet

we see waves of striped moonlight nightly weaving its mysterious patterns, ticking off the number of these days, impatiently waiting the birth of a child once blessed by a heavenly flight of lonely clouds travelling eastwards – as if returning from their beginning - and though our hearts are

frozen, they carry new life to us, as if the womb of our world was somehow trembling between God's pledge and our broken contract. Yet they still offer into our open hands the cup of promise through a new existence, and we, in the emptying of our hearts discover a sense of belonging, or unbelonging, that creates an under-

standing between the feelings that the uncrushing of shards of frosted grass can inspire, and the rediscovery of nature, so long unknown by man, who have scrunched it underfoot like fallen leaves. Winter Time can be but a minute to the beginning of spring if we seek patiently for returning swallows to tell us we are alive.

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The Therapist Collection: reflections from our clinic

Lisa Filer–Counsellor, Snowdrop Counselling Services

Seasonal Affective Disorder

With the winter months in full swing, I have noticed a rise in Seasonal Affective Disorder known as SAD. It is a form of depression that commonly occurs during the winter months.

We all suffer from low moods but, with depression, you consistently feel low and it affects your everyday life. It can occur both temporarily (seasonal, bereavement) or long term.

The signs and symptoms of depression, such as SAD, are on a sliding scale; at first you may notice feeling 'off' and behaving differently—avoiding others, for example, even close friends; finding it hard to function normally; difficulty making decisions, and struggling to concentrate or remember things.

Other symptoms include:

- feeling sad
- tearful
- guilty
- restless
- numb
- not enjoying things/life
- feelings of helplessness/hopeless/worthlessness; a burden
- anxious or worried
- lack of energy
- suicidal thoughts
- changes in your appetite
- sleeping too much or too little

To help these symptoms, start by reaching out to close friends/family. If you notice your symptoms have continued for a long time, are more frequent and/or worsening, seek professional help from your GP or a counsellor.

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Claire Fisher–Reflexologist

Reflexology and Grief

Reflexology is a therapy rooted in the idea that specific points on the feet and hands correspond to different organs and systems in the body. By applying pressure to these points, reflexologists aim to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and enhance overall well-being. This can be particularly beneficial for individuals experiencing grief, a complex emotional response often accompanied by physical symptoms, such as tension, fatigue, and insomnia, alongside emotional symptoms including depression, brain fog, anxiety, and unreleased grief.

When someone is grieving, their body may exhibit signs of stress, leading to muscle tightness and discomfort. Reflexology can help alleviate these physical manifestations by promoting relaxation and restoring balance to the body. The soothing nature of reflexology can help with grief by releasing energy blockages and endorphins, restoring balance in the body. This helps with feelings of anxiety and hopelessness and improves sleep.

The focused touch can facilitate emotional processing, allowing individuals to connect with their feelings in a safe space. Reflexology can complement traditional grief support methods, helping individuals navigate their emotions and find some solace amid their pain. Ultimately, this holistic approach may encourage healing by fostering a sense of calm and connection within the grieving process.

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Dulverton Gardeners support local food bank

Keen amateur gardeners from Dulverton have written a generous cheque to the local food bank, thanks to the proceeds of Visit Dulverton's Secret Gardens event in June. A dozen private gardens around the town had welcomed visitors from across the area to the event, run entirely by local volunteers. With profits from the admission fee and refreshments in the Town Hall, Dulverton Town Council was able to donate £1,250 to the Moorland Food Bank.

Moorland Food Bank (formerly Dulverton Food Bank) was initially set up during the early days of Covid lockdowns to support Somerset communities across southern Exmoor, including Dulverton, Brushford, Bridgetown, Brompton Regis, Wheddon Cross, Winsford, Withypool, Exford and more. The Somerset Community Foundation provided early funding, and now it continues—thanks to donations from

generous private individuals, Exmoor Rotary, field sports enthusiasts, Exford Harvest Festival, Winsford PCC, the Co-op and others.

Founder, Jenny Barker, said: 'We are very grateful to all those who are able to donate towards the Food Bank. It is a much needed service and we need all the help we can get! We are also desperately looking for a new location for the Moorland Food Bank, as we can only stay in the portacabin at Dulverton Junior School until next spring, when it is to be handed back to Somerset Council. Any ideas warmly welcomed—no rent or council tax to pay please!'

If you need support from the Moorland Food Bank, simply contact West Somerset Village Agent, Nikki Bonner at nikkib@somersetcc.org.uk or call 07940 913698.



Left to right: Chris Nelder, Visit Dulverton Partnership Group; Christine Dubery, Chair of Dulverton Town Council and Visit Dulverton Partnership Group; gardener, Adele Bain; Jenny Barker, founder, Moorland Food Bank, and gardener and food bank volunteer, Allison Crisp.

We welcome your community information - events, groups etc, it all goes in free.

You can be added to our contributors' email list asking for copy (we send a reminder email prior to deadlines).



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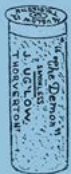
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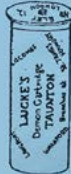
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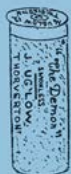
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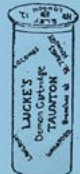
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Hawkridge Revel

The 78th Hawkridge Revel, held in late August, on a picturesque Exmoor hilltop, enjoyed a day of unexpected sunshine. Large crowds were drawn to the all-day show, which featured show jumping, dog shows, an antler display, and the Mountain and Moorland classes, alongside various sideshows and stalls. Ice cream sales surged in the pleasant weather.

One highlight was the children's mounted fancy dress competition, where creative outfits amazed the audience. The sight of ponies standing patiently in intricate costumes, like boats, or a two-year-old roaring like a dragon, was a crowd-pleaser.

Foot events followed, with a strong turnout for the children's races and an eventual, more hesitant participation from adults in the 400m run. The gymkhana delivered its usual excitement, showcasing impressive riding skills that left spectators thinking of future Olympians. Meanwhile, the dog show offered charming moments as toddlers took to handling and even training their pets during the judging.

Fortunately, the paramedic's services were not needed, and entry donations revealed impressive generosity. Proceeds from the event will benefit Hawkridge Church, the village hall, and local charities.

Despite the event's success, concerns about the future of such community events linger. With younger generations being pushed out of the area by outdated housing policies, the ability of small rural communities to sustain traditions is at risk. As local businesses close due to staffing shortages, there's a growing need for authorities to prioritise housing for local young people to preserve community cohesion and rural life.

Les Silverlock



The Old Library

Ruby unlocked the door and walked into the dark warmth of the Old Library. As always, she stood for a few moments breathing in the slightly musty smell of old books, mixed with the sharper, brighter aromas of new and shiny acquisitions and, as usual, she felt the familiar surge of gratitude for the bequest, in Grandfather's will, of this precious space.

She had loved the Old Library since she was a small child and had spent hours wandering between the shelves or sitting in dusty corners reading all and everything she could get her hands on. Now it was all hers, to carry on his legacy, this beautiful gift, loved by everyone in the little town.

She switched on the lights and there, again, on the floor, was the familiar, faded blue cover of *Miss Appleby and the Missing Canary*. 'It's lucky I'm not easily spooked,' she thought. 'Come along, Miss Appleby,' she whispered, 'back on the shelf, and stay there!'

Locking the door that evening, she looked back lovingly, 'Goodnight books, see you tomorrow.'

As the evening drew to a close and the night sky lengthened, the first slithers of moonlight crept through the windows; the floorboards stretched a little, creaking and snapping. There was a shifting of movement, and... 'Hmmm—our turn tonight, I believe,' and the History Section dawdled over to the Returns Trolley.

'Not many of you back tonight,' *Trojan Wars* called. 'Who's going first?'

'Me, I think, because I've been out the longest, over a month,' a fat volume, looking a little disheveled, limped out.

'Oh yes,' *Trojan Wars* agreed, 'you were a Book Club Choice, how did it go?'

'Well, mixed really: half loved me; some didn't understand me; one was bored and didn't finish me, and a couple said they hated the ending—I mean, I am a Booker Shortlisted, for goodness sake!' And she (for female she undoubtedly was) flopped down disconsolately.

'Oh never mind,' interrupted *Moon Over Monte Carlo*, a trifle impatiently, 'we all get bad reviews from time to time.'

But Booker Shortlisted replied, a trifle snootily, 'My dear, we can hardly compare; you are, after all, just a Romantic!'

Moon Over Monte Carlo tossed her front cover and turned away.

From the Children's Section came the strains of *A Spoonful of Sugar*...

'Oh no,' grumbled Samuel Pepys, 'the children have woken up. It's *Mary Poppins*; she came back in this morning—I'm afraid we are in for a noisy night!'

Travelling Light jumped out of the trolley, 'I had a terrible time—my reader kept turning my corners down and left me flat open on my insides for hours, jolly painful on the old spine I can tell you.'

'Not as bad as my reader,' whimpered *Night Train to Timbuktu*. 'He bent me over backwards and he's loosened my spine; Ruby's going to be really cross about that.'

'Well, I was written in—in green ink, would you believe?' came the aggrieved tones of *Teach Yourself Welsh*, 'and stuck with sticky yellow paper markers, which have left me very sore.' A rumbling ran through the shelves as all remembered past injuries.

'I had a lovely time,' *Short Stories for Little Folk* quietly whispered. 'My family read me every night, all curled up together, and then placed me gently on the nursery shelf with some very friendly storybooks.'

'Aaah.' A happy sigh travelled through the library as the Children's Section settled down to sleep.

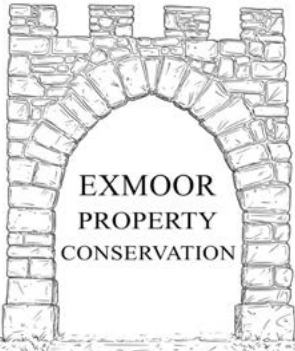
'Well, it's that time again,' *Aerodynamics for Beginners* announced. 'Let's fly!' Out they all came, whizzing out of the shelves, flying in and out of the various sections, the really ambitious volumes somersaulting, and the slimmer titles attempting some quite astounding acrobatics.

As the stars faded and dawn beckoned, the shelves became inhabited again, a little nudging and shifting as the books settled back—all except Miss Appleby, giddy

and giggling girlishly, circling round, trying to find her section, completely lost poor old thing, and then, as always, she crashed. Ouch!

Ruby unlocked the door and walked into the dark warmth of the library, switched on the lights, and there were poor *Miss Appleby and the Missing Canary* on the floor. 'Oh dear, this is becoming a habit, you really are a bit of a mystery, Miss Appleby,' she laughed as she placed the book back under Light Fiction.

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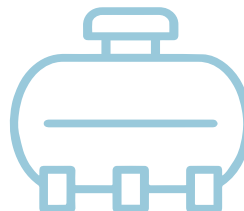


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New MPs visit West Somerset charity

Two local MPs recently visited Wiveliscombe Area Partnership, a charity serving the people of the 10 Parishes, including residents of both MPs' constituencies.

Rachel Gilmour, MP for Tiverton and Minehead, and Gideon Amos, MP for Taunton and Wellington, both newly elected Liberal Democrats, joined the West Somerset charity to discover more about its work, and to see its iconic community transport vehicles. The charity runs an essential community transport service door to door, connecting rurally isolated residents from across the area, for example, taking them to important medical appointments in Taunton and Wellington.

Founded in 2002, the charity started the Wivey Link service with just one vehicle but now has five vehicles, including four with wheelchair access. They are operated entirely by volunteers. Over 600 residents are registered to use the transport service, and many of them have no access to public transport; the service delivered over 12,000 journeys in the last 12 months.

Volunteer Driver, Phil Gadd, spoke passionately to the MPs about the impact his volunteering has on the passengers he has got to know

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over the years, calling it a lifeline for many. 'I have been volunteering since 2010, and I do it because I know I can be a real help for people who don't get out of the house from week to week.'

The charity's chairman, Pauline Homeshaw, said: 'We are thrilled to meet our new representatives, not only to show them the important work that we do in their constituencies but also to hear about their interests and plans. Charities like ours have been hit hard in recent times and it is heartening to hear that Rachel and Gideon are as passionate as we are about the issues that impact our rural community.'



Rachel Gilmour, MP for Tiverton and Minehead, Gideon Amos, MP for Taunton and Wellington, Volunteer Driver, Phil Gadd and Pauline Homeshaw, Chairman Wiv Link

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Okay, wait 'til she sees it. She'll pick it up in a piece of kitchen roll and chuck it out in the garden. There are a few of them out there it can play with.

'It's aiming for that little tree she's brought in.'

I'm glad we've got a tree in a pot. It makes it feel you know, sort of Christmassy.

'That's because it is, Buddy.'

When?

'Tomorrow.'

Good grief; how did that one escape me? I haven't seen her wrapping up any parcels.

'She said she wasn't going to be giving any this year as there's too much homelessness in the world. It's back,

Buddy; look it's moving round the back of the table leg. Let's leave it there; it might have lost its way—and it is the season of goodwill.'

You're going soft in your old age, Honey. I'm sorry I haven't found you a present.

'Not to worry; she said there will be a nice surprise for us soon.'

Yippee! Santa Claus is coming – let's go and wait for him. Leave him a sausage on a plate, Honey, by the tree and we'll go up the stairs.

'Buddy wake up! I can hear a noise downstairs. There's someone at the door!'

Quick then, Honey; run down and we'll answer it.

'Who are you?'

'I am your fairy godmother.'

No you're not, you're a dog.

'No, I know, but the kind lady who lives here said I could come and stay here too as they don't want me any more at the palace.'

Oh that's sad. You'd better come in then. Have you got any luggage?

'Just a collar round my neck and a passport.'

What's your name?

'Fergie.'

Pleased to meet you. I'm Buddy and this is Honey. Would you like a sausage?

'Yes, please. I am very hungry. I've come a long way.'

Pass the plate, Honey. Where's the sausage?

'It's gone Buddy – the thing ate it.'

To be continued/

Buddy Brown (pure Jack Russell, a roving reporter)

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Sporting Celebrations—40 Years and Thriving

What are you doing for fun and exercise this autumn and winter? The only 24/7 publicly available, indoor exercise facility on Exmoor, built by many of the local people you know (see photos), is right here in the heart of Dulverton.

It is a superb building, women's and men's changing rooms and showers, Jackie Kelly classes, squash and racquetball any time you want to play, beginner or expert. Pop down to Dulverton's award-winning sports field on a Monday evening, between 6 and 8pm, for an introduction. Or ring one of the people listed below so that a member can show you around and give you your first game, if you would like a try-out.

The complex building, with specialist walls, floors and roof, now with solar panels, was built by local, mostly volunteer, labour in 1984. Here are some of them celebrating the last anniversary, and people of different ages playing on one of the superb courts.

Come and celebrate 40 years at one of Dulverton's iconic indoor facilities, owned and managed by the local community. Take a look at the website if you'd like to know more: www.dulvertonsquash.co.uk/

or call Chris Winter 07710 046107; Jamie Milne 07779 573553; Darren Edwards 07918 677571; Steve Cotton 07525 129411; Les Silverlock 07831 711380



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Winter Fuel Allowance Withdrawal

In September, it was reported that over 40,000 people in receipt of their State Pension had recently applied for Pension Credit. This was in the wake of the announcements that Winter Fuel Allowance was being withdrawn from every pensioner not claiming Pension Credit, and that energy costs are set to rise by around 10 per cent this winter.

Pension Credit is available to single people whose weekly income is less than £218.15 or couples with a weekly income of £332.95. If you receive Pension Credit, you could also be eligible for other benefits to help you make your money go further.

If you are already claiming your State Pension, you can apply online for Pension Credit at the gov.uk website or there is a Pension Credit Claim Line — 0800 99 1234 — which is open Monday-Friday, 8.00am-6.00pm. You can also download or request a form to fill in and post. You will need details of your income, savings and investments, and your National Insurance number.

The Department of Work and Pensions has also launched a Pension Credit take-up campaign following the changes in the Winter Fuel Allowance payment. The qualifying week for deciding who is eligible for the Winter Fuel Allowance is 16–22 September 2024 and you must claim by 21

December 2024 at the latest. That is the last date on which a fully backdated Pension Credit claim could bring about eligibility for the Winter Fuel Allowance payment. That said, our advice is to ring the Pension Credit Claim Line, because the trained advisers can quickly establish which questions are not applicable to individuals and answer any questions as you go along. It is well worth looking into and, if it seems a bit daunting, the people taking calls are trained to help you.

We may also be able to give you some helpful advice regarding fuel economy and efficiencies and we do still have energy vouchers available. Just go to our website www.citizensadvicetnmwd.org.uk or call us on our free, local AdviceLine number, which is 0808 27 87 999. We are here to help and even if it turns out that you do not qualify for Pension Credit, it may be that we can identify other help that is available to you.

How would you like to volunteer with us and help people in our community with problems like this? As demand for our services continues to increase, we always welcome new volunteers. You get full training and ongoing support, so why not take the first step? We would love to hear from you—simply contact recruitment@citizensadvicetnmwd.org.uk

Remembering Dennis King

On 6 October, Morebath Cricket Club (MCC) held a naming ceremony for its pavilion, which is now dedicated to the memory of Dennis King. Dennis was the instigator and foreman responsible for the new pavilion being built, after the storms of 1987 destroyed the old one.

Earlier this year, an MCC fundraiser, organised by Robbie Venn and Ian Hyde, raised £6,390 for Hospicecare. (See *Exmoor News*, July-August 2024, page 16:

www.exmoornews.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/ENJulyAug-lowres-120624-1.pdf)

The naming ceremony was well attended by club members and friends. The club wishes to thank Wendy King and family, Angus Barnes and Loyton Shoot for their support, and Robbie Venn and Ian Hyde for the fundraiser. Thanks also to the people and organisations who donated prizes for the raffle.



Wendy King and family at the naming ceremony.

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Remedial Repairs to Leat Wall

Dulverton Weir & Leat Conservation Trust (DWLCT) is pleased to announce that it has recently completed restoring Dulverton Leat wall in Northmoor Road, Dulverton. The restoration, carried out by local skilled tradesmen, was funded by a grant from DEFRA's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme, administered by Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA). The scheme helps Protected Landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes) to be managed, enhanced and protected to support the communities who work within them, and supports the wider local economy in delivering bigger and better outcomes for the environment, for people and for the place.

Dulverton Leat is a key wildlife, historical heritage and tourism asset for the town and for the wider area, providing an important recreational resource and habitat for wildlife, flora & fauna.

DWLCT Community and Partnership Involvement Trustee, Rob Jones, says: 'The trust is delighted to have been enabled to carry out this important work on a key part of Dulverton Leat. The wall was unsightly and in danger of collapsing into the leat, severely impeding the passage of wildlife, as well as proving a hazard to pedestrians and cars negotiating a "pinch point" in a narrow part of Northmoor Road. Further restoration

of other parts of Dulverton Leat are planned for later in the year.'

ENPA's FiPL Officer, Vickie Sellick, says: 'We are delighted to have been able to support Dulverton Weir & Leat Conservation Trust to carry out this important repair in Dulverton. FiPL is designed to support farmers and land managers to deliver projects that target climate, nature, people and place outcomes. The modest funding award to the trust has helped it with a crucial repair.'



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Help the Heath Fritillaries!

Habitat management for the Heath Fritillary on Haddon Hill

Tuesday 12 November (10am - 3pm)

Call for help! You're invited to join Butterfly Conservation and Exmoor National Park to help manage an important Heath Fritillary site at Haddon Hill. The work involves clearing encroaching scrub and young saplings from the open heathland, improving conditions for the Heath Fritillary and helping to maintain this important habitat for all the wildlife it supports.

For more information go to:

www.butterfly-conservation.org/events/devon-work-party-haddon-hill-exmoor



Christmas Bird Walk at Porlock Marsh

A festive guided walk around Porlock Marsh to learn about birds that visit Exmoor's coast in winter. Join a local Exmoor bird enthusiast for a festive three-mile circular walk from Porlock Weir, along the shingle ridge to Porlock Marsh. Learn how to spot and identify the coastal birds that visit this fascinating coastal landscape in winter. Some of the likely species you might spot include stonechats, winter ducks—teal, pintail and wigeon—and waders such as redshank, oystercatcher, knot, dunlin, turnstone and curlew.

Tuesday 10 December 10am-12:30pm. Tickets £5; all proceeds to CareMoor for Exmoor. Meet at Porlock Weir TA24 8PB. Booking essential.

For details/tickets go to:

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/exmoor-for-everyone/events/events-folder/christmas-bird-walk-at-porlock-marsh



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Travels from Dulverton: Chapter 12

As summer matures into autumn, it bestows its harvest, which we—to varying degrees—gather in for the harsher months ahead. Sloes for sloe gin, handpicked blackberries for the freezer, apples, wood for the fire, mushrooms, and rosehips, packed with essential vitamins to ward away seasonal sickness and ills. On a grander scale, farmers have harvested their crops. Grains, root vegetables, and greens harvested and despatched to supermarkets and wholesalers.

The pagans call this time of year Mabon; it is a time of gratitude, when families gather and feast at tables adorned with the deep hues of autumn, rich reds, oranges, and gold. The same colours used in harvest festival displays, the important connection between humans and land still recognised. This marks the start of our preparations for winter, and perhaps gaining a few pounds to insulate the body from the cold and wet. It's funny how we feel a bit more peckish over the autumn and winter months, our bodies in tune with the ebb and flow of the seasons.

The autumn equinox, when the hours of daylight and darkness are equal, fell this year on 22 September. There is a reflective feel in the air. For some, the equinox marks a wind down, a time of reflection—for the spring and summer that has been and gone and in anticipation for the build-up of festivities that lead us towards the end of this year and the beginning of the new.

For some, it marks new beginnings. Children make the leap from the end of one academic year. The

summer holiday was traditionally a time when city families would travel to the countryside assisting the farmers with the harvest, such as tattie howking in Scotland and hop picking in Kent. Families spent a few weeks harvesting crops, combining it with downtime, when parents and children and the wider community could escape the regular routine and earn their board and lodging.

This is also the time of year when first-year university students fly the parental nest. Weighed down with their brand new pan sets, duvets, and washing baskets, they speed off, excitedly waving back to their part-relieved, part-heartbroken parents. The lightness and darkness of their hearts in tune with nature's own transition into autumn, as the family dynamic matures along with the summer.

We haven't been out and about so much these past few months but an autumn trip to Cornwall beckons. Until next time...

Mary Ford

THE LOCAL DIRECTORY

PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

Bampton T.C.: Clerk: Penny Clapham	clerk@bamptontowncouncil.gov.uk	.01647 253066
Brompton Regis P.C.: S Buchanan	brpcclerk@gmail.com	.01984 641706
Brushford P.C.: Clerk: Jan Aldridge	clerk@brushfordparishcouncil.org.uk	
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Dulverton T.C.: Sec: Miss A. Rose	clerk@dulvertontowncouncil.co.uk	.01398 324561
East Anstey P.C.: Clerk: Mrs Jill Larcombe	eastansteypc@yahoo.co.uk	.01884 252647
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Morebath P.C.: Clerk: Mrs Sue Squire	morebathparishcouncil@gmail.com	.01598 710526
Oakford Parish Council: Chair: Mr Geoff Baylis	cllr.GBaylis.OakfordPC@gmail.com	.01398 351266
Upton P.C.: Clerk: Mrs P Purvis	uptonparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk	.01398 371548
Winsford P.C.: Clerk: Jennifer Yates	winsfordparishcouncil@gmail.com	
Withypool & Hawkridge P.C.: Clerk: Rebecca Tomalin	withypoolhawkridgeparishclerk@gmail.com	.01643 831638
Wiveliscombe T.C.: Clerk: Sarah Towells	townclerk@wiveliscombe.com	.01984 631914

LOCAL CHURCHES AND CHAPEL CONTACT NUMBERS

All Saints Church, Dulverton: Revd Dowell Conning	revdconning@gmail.com	.01398 322867
All Saints Dulverton, Parish Office: 1 Church Walk, Dulverton, TA22 9ER	allsaintsdulverton@gmail.com	.01398 322867
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 David		.01643 702201
Dulverton Congregational Church: Chapel Street: Mr David Perry		.01398 324059
The Traditional Anglican Church: Loxbeare, Priest Reverend Aird		.01769 581042
Exmoor Benefice Choir: Mrs B. Staples		.01643 851396
St Peter's Church Oakford: Rev'd Stephanie Gordon-Jeffs	office@exevalleymissioncommunity.org	.01884 250417

ARTS

The Arts Society Exmoor: Peter Maggs (Chairman)	www.theartsocietyexmoor.org.uk	.07875 501471
Draw Life Live: Tony Keene	www.drawlifelive.com	
Dulverton Art Group: Sec: Mrs G Rose, 2 Stable Mews, The Square, Witheridge		.01884 860495
Dulverton Camera Club: Sec: Peter Main, 4 Valley View, Morebath, Tiverton, EX16		.01398 331556
Dulverton Players: Chair: Christopher Dubery		.07989 455590
Oakford Players, Chair: Mr Tony Holmes	tholmes556@btinternet.com	.01398 351665

SPORTS CLUBS

Anstey Short Mat Bowls: Chris Dale		.01398 341615
Bridgetown Cricket: Sec: Mr. D. Sherring, Mid-Wicket, Bridgetown, Dulverton TA22 9JN	administrator@bridgetowncc.co.uk	
Brushford Short Mat Bowling: Sec: Sam Takle		.01398 324147
Cutcombe Cricket: Sec: Peter Thompson	cutcombecricketclub@gmail.com	
Dulverton Angling Assn: c/o Pat Veale, 9 High St., Dulverton, TA22 9HB		.01398 323409
Dulverton Badminton Club: Sec Judy Smith		.01398 324353
Dulverton Cricket Club: Carl Hooper	dulvertoncricketclub1858@gmail.com	07866 256769/01398 324494
Dulverton Cricket Club, Colts: Mrs Christine Dubery		.01398 323474

Dulverton & District Tennis Club:	www.dulvertontennisclub.co.uk
Dulverton & Exmoor Squash Club: Membership Sec: Chris Winter	chriscwin@aol.com .07710 046107
Dulverton Jnr. F.C: Sec: Mrs Christine Dubery.	.01398 323474
Dulverton Netball Club: Sec: Mrs Kate Atkins	dulvertonnetballclub@gmail.com .07966 676305
Dulverton Snooker: Sec: Mr. D. Bodger, 39 Fishers Mead, Dulverton, TA22 9EN	.01398 323899
Dulverton Sports and Social: Chair: Carl Hooper.	.01398 324494
Dulverton Sportsfield Management: Adrian Smith	.01398 323834
Dulverton Senior Table Tennis: Richard Archer	.01398 324160
Dulverton Town F.C: Sec: Mr. J. Atkins, 1 Exebridge, Dulverton. TA22 9AY	.01398 323787
Exmoor Croquet Club: Chair: Connie Heywood	.01398 341566
Moorland Hall Sports:	info@wheddoncross.org.uk
Wimbleball Fly Fishers:	enquiries@fishingthewest.co.uk

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Little Owls Nursery at All Saints C of E School, Dulverton.	.01398 324360



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Bampton School Nursery: School Close, Bampton EX16 9NW	.01398 331121
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Dulverton Family and Toddlers Group:	.01398 324329
Dunkery Pre School at Cutcombe First School:	.01643 841462
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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Anstey W.I.: Karen	.01398 341106
Bampton Ladies Group. Mrs. Diane Holland	.01398 332755
Bampton Patchwork and Quilting Group. Mrs. Diane Holland	.01398 332755
Exford Moorhens: Chairman: Mrs. I. Collett	.01643 831016
Oakford Moorland Ladies Club: Chair: Mrs Louise Wilder	louie.c@tiscali.co.uk .01396 351277

YOUTH ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Bampton Scouts/Cubs/Beaver748s: Tony Weiss	.01398 331901
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

OTHERS

Abbeyfield House	.01398 324136
Bampton Heritage and Visitor Centre (inside St Michael and All Angels Church, Bampton)	www.bamptonheritage.org.uk or bamptonheritage@btinternet.com

Bampton Library and Resource Centre, Station Road	01398 332466
Bampton St. Michael's Community Hall, Station Rd. www.stmichaelshall.org.uk	01398 332158
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Brushford Luncheon Club: Treasurer: Margaret Albery	01398 324587
Care Direct for help and advice: www.somerset.gov.uk	0300 1232224
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Cutcombe Horse Show & Gymkhana: Angela Edwards	01643 831549
Dulverton Action Group: Magdalena Harding	01398 323 785
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Dulverton Bridge Club: Sec. Brian Hughes. www.Bridgewebs.com/dulverton	01398 331219
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 Gardening Club: Roger Hammond	01398 323954
Dulverton Heritage Centre: Kathy Currie	07493 518350
Dulverton Vets	01398 323285
Dulverton Vintage Films: Magdalena Harding	01398 323785
Exe Valley Market Bus: Jennie Chappell jennie@chappell.me.uk	01398 351666
Exmoor Patient Group: Chair: Sandra Wilson, W Nightcott, Dulverton TA22 9RT	01398 324687
Exmoor Bee Keepers Association: Sec: Caroline Ralph exmoorhoneyshow@gmail.com	01984 656240
Exmoor Community Bus: Ann Kelland, ann.kelland@yahoo.co.uk	07970 149123
Exmoor Community Bus Assn:	07925 044 262
Exmoor Friends (formerly Exmoor U3A): Andy Jeffries	01398 323462
Exmoor National Park Centre	01398 323841
Exmoor Pony Centre: Ashwick, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9QE	01398 323093
Exmoor Pony Society: Sec: Mrs Jay Gee, Little Ash Farm Cottage, Ash Lane, Withypool, TA24 7RR	01643 851777
Exmoor Rotary Club: Humphrey Berridge (PRO), Station Hse, Luke St, Bampton	01398 332324
Good Neighbours:	07395 171409
Oakford Village Hall: Bookings: Mrs Dawn Williams dawnannwilliams1@gmail.com	01398 324035
Royal British Legion, Dulverton Branch: Brig Peter Maggs (Chairman) www.britishlegion.org.uk	07875 501471
TA22 Voluntary Lift Scheme (formerly Brushford Voluntary Lifts): Chair: Bart Middleton	07528 326880
Tiverton Model Aero Club: Sec: Mr. P Veale, 9 Higre flih St., Dulverton TA22 9HB	01398 323409
Village Agent Nikki Bonner info@somersetccc.org.uk	07940 913698 or 01823 331222
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