

# active

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## DARTMOOR



Learn new skills



Go on a family adventure under canvas



The nightriders

## SCHOOL'S OUT! Where to go and what to do with children on Dartmoor this summer

- It Takes a Foodie to Know a Foodie
- Running Deer CIC
- Walks for All
- Local Hero - Kevin Carr
- Gear Review

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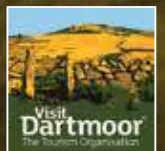


# Dartmoor so much more than you ever imagined!

Places to Stay, Places to Eat and Places to Visit

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# active

## DARTMOOR

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However the magazine and its publishers cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of participating in the activities depicted in this magazine. It is the responsibility of the participant to ensure they are correctly skilled, experienced and equipped to undertake any outdoor adventurous activities.

There is no substitute for instruction by a trained and qualified provider of outdoor activities - Active Dartmoor recommends that participants should seek the professional services from the providers listed in this magazine.

Main cover photograph © www.forestry.gov.uk



## Dartmoor – somewhere for all the family

Summer is one of my favourite times of year on Dartmoor. With longer days and hopefully better weather it suddenly feels as though there's time both to try out new things and revisit favourite places. On open moorland the ling is coming into bloom and in the more sheltered lanes the banks are rich with wild flowers. If you're lucky you may see buzzards and ravens circling overhead and catch the sound of a nightjar churring in the dusk.

In this issue we've tried to include something for all members of the family. Kirstie Smith from the Forestry Commission shares some great suggestions for a day out at Bellever Forest with walks to suit all abilities and Tamzin Grey provides an update on the improved Drake's Trail from Yelverton to Plymouth; now a true family route. For those wanting to stay out a little longer, Jen and Sim Benson offer top tips for first family adventures under canvas whatever the weather.

Challenges abound as well. Our Local Hero, Kevin Carr, has just completed perhaps the ultimate challenge of running around the world, while in our Big Tick, Rob Simmonds shares his experience of night riding in the Dartmoor Ghost cycle event. If you'd prefer a guided challenge, our featured business, Climb South West, offers opportunities for families and friends to get out and try something a little more adventurous on the rocks of Dartmoor and beyond.

All this exercise is bound to make you hungry, so why not turn to page 23 where Stella West-Harling provides insider knowledge on where to sample some of the best local produce, whether as a packed lunch, afternoon tea or leisurely evening meal.

Whatever you do, enjoy yourself and don't forget to follow the advice in our photographic feature to capture your favourite moments of the summer.

Anna

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# NEWS

News from around the Park

## Dartmoor dry weather warning

**N**ow that the summer is here more people are getting out to enjoy the Dartmoor sunshine. But with warm, dry weather comes increased risk of wild fires. Uncontrolled fires kill animals and birds and destroy natural habitats and plants which may take years to recover.

- take extra care with cigarettes, matches and other flammable objects.
- keep portable barbecues and camping stoves off the ground on a flat boulder or stones so that they do not burn the vegetation and create deep, eroded pits which are both expensive and time-consuming to repair.
- do not light open fires.

## Chagford Challenge 2015 Sunday 20th September 2015



This year's Chagford Challenge is dedicated to Peter Cooper, who devised and organised the first Chagford Challenge in April 1990. Peter, sadly, passed away on Thursday 5th March 2015. The 2015 Chagford Challenge will be held in the autumn - so avoiding the bird nesting season on Dartmoor. There are 3 distances: 30 Miles, 21 Miles and 17 Miles. Runners' entry forms are available online at: [www.ldwa.org.uk](http://www.ldwa.org.uk) until 200 entries are reached.

## Safety on Dartmoor 2015 Saturday 1 August

The fabulous Safety on Dartmoor Day is due to be held in Lydford once again, this year at the Lydford Sports field alongside Lydford Village Fair. Safety on Dartmoor is an event held to highlight the work of the safety organisations who support local communities and those that visit Dartmoor. Some of these organisations include Dartmoor Rescue Group, Police, Fire Brigade and Paramedics. It's a chance to meet these specialists, have a look at some of the equipment they use, maybe have a go with a siren - just generally have a bit of fun! There is plenty of parking. Refreshments and toilets are available.

Look out for updates in the local press or on Twitter (@dartmoornpa) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/enjoydartmoor](http://www.facebook.com/enjoydartmoor)).

## New at Adventure Okehampton this Summer



### Bracken Tor Lodge

There is a new development of 4 ensuite bedrooms at the old Filter House. This will double the capacity of this venue, with

new high-standard bunk rooms, some of which have double bed bunks at the base. In recognition, this building has been rebranded as Bracken Tor Lodge. It will now sleep up to 34 people. Bracken Tor Lodge lies adjacent to Bracken Tor House, sharing a car park and reception office at the bottom of the drive. The Lodge lies within 4 acres of gardens on the edge of Dartmoor making it ideal for family gatherings or birthday celebrations.

Adventure Okehampton has also introduced an on-line booking system for rooms powered by "Free to Book", with a channel manager to Booking.com. In future people will be able to book direct from the website.

### New on-line booking system for activities

The redeveloped website aims to be more mobile-friendly with the added option of an on-line booking facility for some of the most popular activities.



### Granite Way Cycle Hire

A new mobile-friendly website ([Graniteway.co.uk](http://Graniteway.co.uk)) accompanies the revised branding for the Granite Way Cycle Hire. Will, the new cycle hire manager,

is happy to provide weekly cycle hire and a free drop-off service to holiday cottages within a 15 mile radius. In addition, there will be a "Hire a Cycle" option for the standard hire periods on the website.

### Further Information

[www.adventureokehampton.com](http://www.adventureokehampton.com)



## Cycling code

Dartmoor National Park has launched a new Granite and Gears cycling code, packed with useful information for those who love to cycle in the National Park. The code has been developed following discussions with cycling groups and local communities and reflects the increased popularity of both on-road cycling and off-road routes. The code explains where you can and cannot ride within the National Park and includes advice on riding safety and helping keep Dartmoor special, respecting the environment

and reducing the impact of erosion. Pick up a copy at a National Park Visitor Centre this summer.



## Organising Events

**D**artmoor National Park Authority recognises the positive benefits that organised recreational events can bring by enriching people's experience of Dartmoor and contributing to the local economy.

If you are thinking of organising an event on Dartmoor, be it a charity walk, cycle ride or horse ride, it is important to liaise with the National Park Authority at an early stage. This will help you plan your event to take into account important conservation issues and the impact on local communities. Dartmoor National Park Authority has produced guidance which will help you plan your event and this can be found online at: [www.dartmoor.gov.uk](http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk). This guidance is aimed at events such as hill races, sponsored walks and challenge events, orienteering events, mountain bike events, long-distance riding and endurance events.

The National Park Authority has also launched **£ for the Park**, a voluntary donation scheme for those participating in organised events, enabling them to put something back into Dartmoor. Money raised will be used towards access and wildlife conservation projects.

### Hop on the Hoppa

This circular bus service visits the eastern side of Dartmoor - starting and finishing in Newton Abbot and heading onto the moor via Bovey Tracey. The Hoppa is one of the South

West's truly spectacular bus journeys. Stops en route include Haytor Information Centre - with easy access to Haytor Rocks, the beautiful village of Widecombe-in-the-Moor, Houndtor Rocks, Manaton village, Becky Falls visitor attraction and Yarner Wood - before returning to Bovey Tracey. Daily fare from Newton Abbot (or Bovey Tracey) for hop on/off all day: adult - £5 (£3.00); senior - £4.00 (£2.00); child (5-15 years) - £2 (£1); family - £10 (£6) family (up to 2 adults and 3 children). This represents fantastic value for a car-free day out on Dartmoor. Remember your dog is welcome aboard as well and only 25p for a standard journey.

PHOTOGRAPH © DNPA



### Dartmoor jewel becomes new nature reserve

Seventy hectares of wildlife-rich land close to one of Dartmoor's most popular recreation sites is set to become a brand new nature reserve thanks to a partnership between Devon Wildlife Trust and the Forestry Commission.

The nature reserve, which is to be called Bellever Moor and Meadow, is owned by the Forestry Commission and is close to the moorland village of Postbridge and the well-known Bellever Forest picnic site. The land, which is made up of a patchwork of traditional haymeadows, wet grassland and moorland, is set to become the latest of nearly fifty nature reserves cared for by local charity, the Devon Wildlife Trust.

Devon Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserves Manager, Matt Boydell, was part of the team that worked with the Forestry Commission to agree the lease. He said: "Bellever Moor and Meadow is a stunning site and provides a wonderful opportunity for Devon Wildlife Trust to become more actively involved in the very heart of Dartmoor. The nature reserve also gives us a chance to put the skills we've gained over the last 20 years in restoring and re-creating grassland to use on Dartmoor in the restoration of nationally rare upland haymeadows."

For more information see our Classic Walks at Bellever Forest on pages 32 - 34.



## Fun for children in new Dartmoor play park

The installation of a fantastic new moorland play park in the Dartmoor village of Holne has added to the fun which can be had by families enjoying Dartmoor National Park. Previous equipment had become very dilapidated and when this small rural parish needed to find a large sum to fund a new park - they asked Dartmoor National Park Authority if it would be able to help. The group used a small grant from the National Park Authority to secure a substantial amount from the Biffa Award. With additional support from local Councillors, local fundraising, including a quiz night at the Church House Inn and a donation from Mike and Gill Cunnam of Holne Books, funding fell into place.

The new play equipment was constructed by Earth Wrights, a specialist local company that designs free flow equipment made from sustainable timber. This was just right for the sensitive site, set deep in the wonderful landscape of Dartmoor National Park. The Holne Play Park Charity very much hopes that the park will not only provide a great new facility for residents but will be a welcome attraction for visitors for years to come. The Play Park's location, close to Holne Community Shop and Tearoom, will no doubt tempt those who have worked up an appetite by trying their luck at the basketball hoop, to drop in for a delicious cream tea!

## Active Dartmoor Talks 2015/2016

**National Park Visitor Centre - Princetown**  
**From 19:00. Book via 01822 890 414**  
**Tickets are £5 (no concessions)**

### Tuesday 15 September - Kevin Carr - Hard Way Round

Come and listen to Kevin recount his record-breaking solo navigation run around the world.

### Tuesday 20 October - Jack Russell - Kayaking

Jack will leave you breathless as he presents images from his expeditions kayaking some of the world's top rivers and from his multi-discipline trip called 'Journey to inspire our Nation'.

### Tuesday 17 November - Gavin Kelly - Scaling New Heights!

Gavin Kelly of Ibex Outdoor will talk about the unique experiences that Dartmoor has to offer climbers and the inspiration that has taken him all over the UK and beyond; a journey of learning and sharing amazing places and experiences, and why he always finds himself returning to the moor.

### Tuesday 19 January - Rich Pencott - Just Get Out There - #microadventures!

Rich will enthuse us about how adventures don't have to cost a lot of money, require a lot of equipment, need a guide or involve travel across huge distances. MicroAdventure opens the door of adventure to all and just wants to get you out there, enjoying the outdoors and getting others involved.



# THE DARTMOOR GHOST

Rob Simmonds reports on an increasingly popular nocturnal 'Big Tick'



**I**nspired by Sir Bradley, Lizzie Armistead and the Tour of Britain, Dartmoor has become a magnet for cyclists wanting to test themselves on iconic hills like Haytor and Widecombe. Few things can beat the satisfaction of getting to the top of Dartmeet without having to stop to admire the view half way up and there can't be many better ways to earn a cream tea than conquering the epic climb of Haytor. For some people, enjoying Dartmoor by day wasn't enough of a challenge, so they created the Dartmoor Ghost – a 145km ride that takes in some of the most haunted spots on the moor - by night.

Under the light of a silvery moon Dartmoor's beauty transforms into something eerie and ethereal. Tree-lined lanes become tunnels through the night, rocky tors block out the stars, silent villages seem deserted and familiar roads become strange and unsettling.

The Dartmoor Ghost ride starts in Bovey Tracey and heads south to Bickington before starting the long climb up to Haytor. When you get to the top, look to the left and you'll see the distant glow of Plymouth on the horizon, more

than 30km away. Pushing on past the abandoned medieval village near Hound Tor, the route takes you down a quiet road with just the soft swish of tyres and sheep grumbling in their sleep to break the silence.

As you ride towards the woods, look for a small green mound in a gateway on the left and spare a thought for poor Kitty Jay, because this is her grave. Even by bike light, you'll see the ever-present flowers placed there by persons unknown. The legend of Kitty Jay is a sad tale of a suicidal maid who was refused burial by the surrounding parishes and ended up buried at a crossroads far from home. No one knows who puts the flowers there, or indeed the truth behind the story, but motorists have reported seeing a hooded figure kneeling in this melancholy spot.

Pedal on, crossing the B3212, and head through the lanes to Chagford. After crossing the moor, the streetlights of this old stannary town seem like the big city, but it's a good opportunity to regroup before riding on to the services at Whiddon Down for a well-deserved coffee.

From here the route skirts the moor on a fast descent to





Okehampton. Passing through the town and turning left off the main road, the route suddenly enters a dark cleft. By day, the ruins of Okehampton Castle are picturesque, even pretty. By night they loom ominously between the trees. The ghost of Lady Howard haunts the stones, accompanied by a dog with flaming red eyes. Assuming she doesn't delay you, the next port of call is Lydford on the western edge of the moor.

By this point in the ride the night is at its thickest and blackest with the nearly full moon only making the shadows darker and more mysterious. This would not be a good place to get a puncture. Lydford itself has a rich history and is reputed to be the most haunted village on Dartmoor. Ghostly monks and funeral processions have been seen making their way to the burial ground and Judge 'Bloody Assizes' Jeffreys haunts the extremely sinister-looking castle.

The road through the village certainly has a chilly feel and it's a relief to emerge onto the open road to Tavistock. A village-hall stop for soup and tea in Yelverton is more than welcome before starting the long haul over the moor to Princetown. By now, the sky is turning a dusky pink and the sun is starting to rise, so thoughts of hauntings take second place to aching legs and tired eyes. It's on this stretch that the route passes the site of Dartmoor's most notorious legend. Along the B3312 near Postbridge, motorists used to say that a pair of disembodied hairy hands had tried to grab the wheel and steer them off the road. No one has ever reported the Hands trying this with handlebars, at least not so far...

A final climb out of Moretonhampstead is followed by a swift descent and a blast along the Teign Valley before finishing with a well deserved fry up in Bovey Tracey and the chance to swap stories with other riders.

### Night riding on the moor

If you fancy crossing the moor by night, here are a few tips:

- Make sure you have good lights and don't forget to charge them!
- Be quiet and respectful when passing through villages.
- Watch out for ponies and sheep.
- Some Dartmoor roads can be very rough, so take care on descents.
- Even in summer, it can get chilly on the high moor, so pack a spare layer.
- Make sure you have enough food and water for the ride.

Has the Ghost grabbed you by the ghoulies? You've just missed the 2015 edition but the Ghost will be running again next year. It's organised by Devon CTC, along with a host of other rides. Check out [www.ctcdevon.co.uk](http://www.ctcdevon.co.uk) for more information. ■



# DRAKE'S TRAIL – YELVERTON TO PLYMOUTH



## FOOT FILE

**LENGTH:** Yelverton to Plymouth 13 miles (21km); Yelverton to Plymbridge 9 miles (14.5km)

**TIME:** Depends on ages of family members and route chosen, but allow at least 4 hours and longer if walking

**START/FINISH:** Drake's Trail Pay & Display car park SX518679

**TERRAIN:** Surfaced cycle route with some short road sections

**MAPS:** OS Explorer OL28 Dartmoor

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** There are regular bus services from Plymouth and Tavistock. Please note that these do not carry bikes

**PARKING:** Drake's Trail Car Park, Yelverton. Pay and display – up to 4 hours £1.50; 4 hours + £2.50

**REFRESHMENTS:** There are a number of shops, cafes/restaurants and pubs in Yelverton, a seasonal refreshment van at Plymbridge and a café at Saltram House.

**T**he Trail takes its name from numerous connections with the famous Elizabethan seafarer Sir Francis Drake and forms part of (NCN) Route 27, the 'Devon Coast to Coast'. This is a 102 mile route between Ilfracombe in North Devon and Plymouth. Much of this route is off-road on former railway lines including the Tarka Trail and Granite Way and Devon County Council is working to increase the amount of off-road sections.

The Yelverton to Plymouth section of the Drake's Trail is now a great family route thanks to improvements near Clearbrook. As part of the Granite and Gears Project the steep, rough descent

from Roborough Down to the railway path has been replaced by a gentle tarmaced ramp that is safe and easily cycled by most members of the family. If you're towing a trailer or a tag-along, rest assured that you can now cycle the whole of this route. There are great views, several viaducts and even the chance to see nesting peregrine falcons between mid-March and mid-July. From the Drake's Trail Car Park in Yelverton follow Route 27 south towards Plymouth, taking care at the main road crossing close to the roundabout. Continue to follow the surfaced route across Roborough Down. Some parts of this

section are also access roads to houses so keep a look out for vehicles. Look out also for the old granite sleepers of the original railway. The last part of this section follows part of the 18 mile (29km) Drake's Leat until you reach the minor road to Clearbrook. Turn left down the road and cycle past the terraced houses. Near the last buildings you'll see a Route 27 sign. Turn right and follow the surfaced access road for a short distance before turning right again onto the new improved section of the route. From here a smooth surfaced route takes you gradually down to join the old railway route south of Clearbrook. Anyone who remembers the old rough stony route with the steep zig-zag descent will be in for a surprise. This whole section is now accessible for everyone whether you're towing a trailer or tag-along. Even younger children cycling on their own bikes will be able to tackle the gentle gradients. Continue south along the railway route passing through Shaugh Tunnel. The tunnel does have lighting but keep to the left as it can be difficult to see other walkers and cyclists. If you have your own lights, switch them on. Continue south along the route towards Plymouth passing over two viaducts to reach Plymbridge Woods. On the second viaduct you may get the chance to view nesting peregrine falcons through the telescopes at the National Trust's Plym Peregrine Project. At Plymbridge there is a car park, picnic meadow and sometimes a refreshment van. Plymbridge is also the furthest point from Plymouth of the Plym Valley Railway. Plymbridge makes a good mid





point if you wish to do a slightly shorter route – an approximately 18 miles (29km) round trip. If so, turn round here and retrace the route back to Yelverton. For those wishing to continue, follow Route 27 south passing alongside and then over the railway to reach the edge of Plymouth. For Saltram House, turn left and follow the signs carefully along this road section to reach the cycleway under the A38 at Marsh Mills. From here a surfaced cycleway leads you to the National Trust property.

To return to Yelverton retrace the route following the Route 27 waymarkers.



## Please remember ...

Drake's Trail is a shared-use path which can be enjoyed by cyclists as well as walkers; those in wheelchairs, youngsters in pushchairs and prams, and those walking dogs. Please respect all users by following a few simple guidelines:

- Be polite and considerate to other users.
- Travel at a speed that is appropriate to the conditions, e.g. when the path is busy.
- Bikes are quiet so let people know you are coming - ring your bell, or a friendly "Hello!" often works wonders.
- Be prepared to slow or stop - there may be people who don't know you are there or dogs may be off their leads.
- Take care when passing others, especially children and older or disabled people, and allow them plenty of room.
- If you are cycling with children, take up a position behind them. If there are two adults in your group, it is a good idea to have one at the back and one in front of the children.

**Further Information**  
[www.drakestrail.co.uk](http://www.drakestrail.co.uk)

## Plym Peregrine Project

The National Trust Plym Peregrine Project has been running since 2001 and is staffed by a team of volunteers who have a passion for the natural world and the wildlife in the Plym Valley. It is thought that peregrines have nested at Cann Quarry for over fifty years. The Project was set up following an attempted poisoning of the nesting peregrines in 1999. Every year over 15,000 people visit the viaduct.

**Further Information**  
[www.plymperegrines.org.uk](http://www.plymperegrines.org.uk)

## Plym Valley Railway

The Plym Valley Railway was founded in 1980 with an aim of restoring part of the ex-Great Western branch line from Plymouth to Tavistock that was closed in 1962. On December 30th 2012 Plym Bridge Platform was opened to the public. This marked 50 years and a day since the line was closed, and also the completion of the laying of 1.5 miles of track. Marsh Mills is a heritage railway centre where steam and diesel locomotives, carriages, wagons and other historic railway artefacts are preserved to recreate the atmosphere of a bygone age. Trains run on Sundays during the summer months.

**Further Information**  
[www.plymrail.co.uk](http://www.plymrail.co.uk)

## Saltram House

A magnificent Georgian mansion and tranquil garden lie at the heart of this historic parkland overlooking the River Plym. Saltram was home to the Parker family from 1743, when an earlier mansion was remodelled to reflect the family's increasingly prominent position. It's magnificently decorated, with original contents including Chinese wallpapers and an exceptional collection of paintings (several by Sir Joshua Reynolds). It also has a superb country house library and Robert Adam's Neo-classical Saloon.

The garden is mostly 19th century, with a working 18th-century orangery and follies, beautiful shrubberies and imposing specimen trees providing year-round interest.

There are toilets, a café and a gift shop.

**Further Information**  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/saltram](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/saltram)



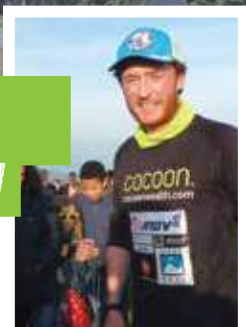
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90 MILE STRA  
AUSTRALIA'S LONGEST ST  
145.6 km

## KEVIN CARR THE AD INTERVIEW

Officially the fastest man to run around the world. On 9th April 2015 Kevin Carr from Woolacombe arrived back at Haytor. The start and finish of an expedition of unimaginable scale that saw him running from coast to coast across five continents and completing a total distance of over 26,232km, the equivalent of 622 marathons in just 621 days! He did all this solo pushing his food, water and camping kit in a cart. His one simple goal: "To Inspire." He also secured another world record as the first runner to circumnavigate the world self supported/solo.



physiology at the EIS (the same doctor who advised Kelly Holmes and Paula Radcliffe!) I also trained under The UK's most successful ultra marathon runner, William Sichel."

inspirational keynotes etc) sponsorship and organising training camps for runners."

### What was your longest run before you ran round the world?

"I was the first person to ever run Lands End – John O'Groats, as an off-road/trail run, a distance of some 1,254 miles, the longest unsupported solo run in UK history."

### How do you deal with the wear and tear on your body from running such long distances?

"You just have to listen to your body and be patient. The resilience comes through tens of thousands of hours of training."

### What inspired you to start running such long distances?

"To answer the question: How far can we go? It's about exploration – heading into the unknown, not just in terms of places I haven't visited, but distances and barriers, often mental, that very few have ever visited."

### How do you support your running?

"Through professional speaking (after-dinner engagements,

### How did you get into running?

"Having the coast and hills of Devon as my playground I was spoilt as a child. We never 'exercised' we played – mainly outdoors. In my teenage years I developed a passion for endurance sports in particular cycling and mountain biking – throughout I always ran and/or walked everywhere! At some point my love for running overtook the desire to be a professional cyclist and the rest is history."

### Did you have any mentors?

"I was lucky enough to be invited to the English Institute of Sport (EIS) by Dr Pedlar, the head of







PHOTOGRAPHS © KEVIN CARR



### THE FASTEST MAN AROUND THE WORLD

- An expedition of unimaginable scale
- Ran coast-to-coast across five continents
- Over 26,232KM! SOLO - Pushing food, water, camping kit in a cart
- Chased by bears!
- 622 marathons in just 621 days

To find out more about Kevin Carr visit:  
[hardwayround.com](http://hardwayround.com)



#### Do you have any diet tips?

"Avoid sugar as much as possible. Increase fish oils and other animal fats. Improve your sleep quality – you'll avoid the mid-morning cravings for junk!"

#### What was the most challenging aspect of running round the world?

"Overall it'd be the logistics – you never know when, what or even if you'll find something to eat or somewhere to sleep each day! Trying not to be run over by careless drivers was the most consistent threat during the expedition."

#### How often do you run when you're at home and how committed are you to training?

"I may only run three to four times a week but these are very intense sessions. I train with heavy weights on the days I'm not running, there's sessions spent performing what most would consider 'physiotherapy exercises' the same exercises that heal injuries can prevent them in the first place. I train every day."

#### How do you relax?

"I try to spend time with loved ones and friends when I can. Other than that a good film on occasion."



#### What does the future hold?

"I'm looking forward to getting my 'hill-legs' back. My next big adventures will be on the Fells of the UK."

#### What is your favourite place on the moor?

"It's a tough call – I'd probably say the hills between Postbridge and High Willhays or Leighon Valley."

#### What are your top tips for someone starting to run long distances?

"Slow down only a fraction and you can go much further and recover faster." ■





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# RUNNING DEER IN DARTMOOR WOODLAND

**Last winter, Matt Parkins visited Butterdon Wood near Moretonhampstead to find out how a thriving community enterprise was preparing to help one rare woodland animal this summer. Here he shares his experience and provides an update on the success of the project so far.**



**A**mong the hills above Moretonhampstead lies a strip of woodland. Looking across from Mardon Down it's an unremarkable group of trees, nestling in the landscape beneath Butterdon Hill. The bands of larch and broadleaves change colour and character quietly with the seasons and could easily go unnoticed; just a small patch on the Dartmoor landscape. But taking a closer look you will see a lot more going on... Butterdon Woods is alive with activity. Running Deer CIC owns this woodland and runs a number of outdoor activities and training opportunities. As a community enterprise, the heart of the organisation beats for those who need to take a step on the road to employment or to learn countryside skills.

Walking around the site, you might see a range of things going on from green woodworking and bushcraft skills to woodland horticulture. You might also notice that the people on site are from a variety of backgrounds too. Running Deer helps children from Devon's schools; those who struggle in the classroom environment. It provides work-experience training for unemployed people and, most recently, supports veterans from our armed forces to rebuild their lives after traumatic experiences on the battlefield. The Courses for Forces project has been running for a year now and already has its success stories from placing former soldiers into work to providing opportunities within Running Deer itself.

Today's activity is a training session; the students are learning how to manage woodland to suit one of our most loved, and most endangered woodland animals, the dormouse. Although the dormice are hibernating on this

PHOTOGRAPHS © MATT PARKINS





icy January morning we know they live in this wood; the nibbled hazelnuts in the frosty leaf litter are the clue. With a visit from the resident pair of robins we sit in a pool of sunshine to discuss the habitats we want to conserve to help our furry friends. A walk along the track soon reveals there are food sources and nesting materials available in the scrubby woodland edge but we agree there needs to be a little work to ensure this rich mix of flora can be sustained. It's time for a bit of coppicing. Using hand tools, woody poles are cut to encourage fresh regrowth to start in spring. This will provide the small mammals of the woods with spring flowers and autumn seeds for a seasonal range of food. The good stems will be used for green woodturning activities and the brash is stacked up to protect fresh buds from the browsing deer.

At lunch time we return to the camp fire for a cup of tea and a chat with some of the other people working on different activities around the woods. While some have a packed lunch, others take a warmer option and do a bit of camp fire cooking.

The plan for the afternoon is to put dormouse nest boxes up in the trees around the site. We're starting a survey here which will be a part of the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme. A set of fifty small nest boxes is required to gather the information on the resident dormice. The boxes are all ready and we meet up in the woodland garden to discuss the day. We use wire to attach the boxes to reduce damage to the trees. We now wait until spring for the post-hibernation activity to start.

This is just one of a number of things going on in the woods of Dartmoor. If you are interested in what's on offer at Butterdon Wood contact Running Deer CIC through the website: [www.runningdeer.org.uk](http://www.runningdeer.org.uk).

## Running Wild Bushcraft and Survival

If you want to try some new Dartmoor woodland activities, check out Running Deer's new bushcraft and survival skills courses. Run by former forces survival experts and experienced bushcraft instructors you can enjoy a fantastic experience to suit you. Whether you are in a family group or with friends; dads and sons, mums and daughters and people of all ages are welcome to book in for an exciting woodland adventure to remember.

## Summer dormouse update

As a chilly spring turns to stuttering summer the dormouse nest boxes have been inspected. Some blue tits have been lodging in the boxes and rearing chicks but the slow start to this summer has delayed dormouse activity. The good news is that there are a few hints of nest building. Only dormice use strips of honeysuckle bark to make their nests and a small bundle of this bark has been left in one box, an indication of things to come. ■





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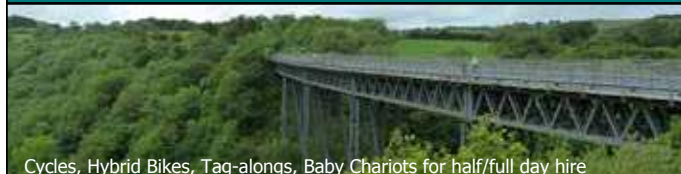
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**Accommodation: Youth Hostel & Campsite**

# Family Adventures Under Canvas

Runners, adventurers and authors of the guidebook *Wild Running*, Jen and Sim Benson, are currently spending a year under canvas, exploring Britain with their two young children. You can read all about their adventures on their blog: [awildyear.co.uk](http://awildyear.co.uk). Here they share their hard-won knowledge and advice on camping and adventuring together as a family.

PHOTOGRAPHS © SIM BENSON







**W**aking up in a tent as the sun's rays warm the canvas; unzipping the door onto a spectacular view; birdsong at

breakfast and days spent adventuring and exploring... family camping can be blissful, exciting and an incredibly special shared experience. We've been taking our kids camping since they were just weeks old; in fact it's become an important part of our lifestyle. But it's been a steep learning curve, with many challenges that we've had to overcome along the way. In this article we're going to share our top tips to help you get the most out of your trips and have the most fun together!

## WHICH TENT?

The most important decision is – of course – which tent you're going to take camping. Your tent will be your home, shelter, bedroom, playroom and potentially your kitchen and dining room too. It's worth having a really good look around and also speaking to any family and friends who already go camping – you could even borrow one for a week before you commit. Many shops have space to pitch tents or hold tent shows where you can walk around potential tents and try out what they're like inside. The main considerations are:

**SIZE & LAYOUT:** Tents are categorised according to the number of people they sleep. Depending on how many of you there are and your children's ages, your needs will vary, so think about the layout that will suit you best. Younger children may be happiest sleeping all in one space with you, whereas older ones might like their own bedrooms. Separate living and sleeping areas can be useful and a porch or awning is a great way of adding a bit of extra space for cooking and keeping outdoor footwear, especially if it rains. We love our SoulPad bell tent as it's easy to put up, gives us lots of space and is hard-wearing – great for regular campers. Read our review on page 40.

**FABRICS:** The tent's fabric will affect how weatherproof it is, how long it lasts, its weight and pack-size and what it will be like to live in. Family tents are made of either nylon or a cotton-based canvas. Nylon is cheaper, lighter and packs smaller but a canvas tent will last longer, suffer less from UV damage and is more breathable – great for warm weather camping.

**PRICE:** In general, the more you pay for a tent the better it will stand up to use and the longer it will last. Family tents are often fairly large structures that catch the wind, so you may pay for a cheap tent with broken poles and/or torn fabric. It's worth looking around at the end of the season for great bargains to take camping the following summer.

**Top Tip!** A tent carpet will bring a touch of warmth and comfort and is a very worthwhile addition to your camping setup.

## PITCHING IT RIGHT

- The first time you pitch the tent you may find it takes longer than subsequent pitches. Try out a test pitch in the garden or the park and it will all feel much easier when you pitch it for real.
- Find as flat a spot as possible. Sleeping on a slope is uncomfortable and small children seem to manage to roll down even the gentlest of inclines.
- Use all of the guy lines and pegging points to ensure a good, strong pitch.
- Think about where the prevailing wind is coming from and how this will affect the tent. If you have a longer tunnel-type tent, pitch it pointing away from the direction of the wind so that your entrance and porch are as sheltered as possible.
- Get the kids involved! They'll love to help build their new holiday home. From handing you pegs to putting the poles together it's a great way to introduce them to the world of camping.

## SLEEPING

An inner tent creates a warmer space for sleeping, particularly in a large tent. Most family tents come with these as standard but they're available for single-space tents (such as bell tents) too.

**SLEEPING BAGS:** Sleeping bags vary mainly in their filling and shape. A down-filled bag will give you the best warmth for its weight and pack size, but will cost you more, whereas a synthetic bag will be bulkier and heavier but also cheaper. Some bags taper towards the feet, adding warmth and reducing weight and pack size, whereas others are a roomier cut for comfort. Make your choice depending on what's most important for your trip. Kids love having their own sleeping bags – with smaller children it will be warmer for them to have a shorter, child-specific bag. If space isn't an issue a normal duvet works perfectly well!

**SLEEPING MATS:** Air beds are a popular choice for family camping and are comfortable, but can be cold and take up a lot of room. Foam roll mats are small and light-weight but don't give you much in terms of comfort. Self-inflating mats combine the two and are our top choice – read our review on page 40.

## WHAT IF IT RAINS?

A rainy week camping might not sound like the most fun way to spend a holiday, but there's still plenty you can do that's fun and family-friendly. Younger kids will happily spend hours splashing in puddles, so pack wellies for everyone. Wrap up warm, add a waterproof layer and head out to the woods if it's not too wet. Electric hook-up is available at many campsites and is fantastic for rainy camping, enabling you to dry out your family and your kit quickly and easily. We use a low-powered convection heater when we have hook-up. It's small so that we can fit it into the truck. Most campsites won't allow over 10 amps so you have to make sure you don't plug too much in at once, but we can usually have the heater and a couple of chargers plugged in. Being in a tent you also need to be careful to keep the heater well away from the sides and make sure it doesn't get covered up at all as it could easily be a fire risk. Many campsites, especially the more remote ones, don't have hook up, and it also comes at a cost so we don't have it that often, but it's well worth it when it's cold and wet!

## CAMP COOKERY

Cooking while camping is often a fun and sociable affair. With small children around it's important to choose a stove that's stable and can be positioned well out of the reach of little hands. We use a Campingaz double burner for most of our cooking. Get the kids involved washing veg and even doing some foraging. Wild garlic is abundant in spring in many parts of Britain and makes a fantastic, healthy and free addition to many dishes. It's also fun to get inventive: take a Kelly Kettle with you, build a fire in its base from sticks the kids have collected and boil water that way. Read our Kelly kettle review on page 40.

**Safety:** It's extremely important to always cook in a well-ventilated area, well clear of the tent fabric.

## EXPLORING AND ADVENTURING

Camping is a great way to introduce children to the joys of the natural environment. Many campsites have on-site playgrounds, which are great for allowing the kids plenty of outdoor play, freedom and socialising, often within sight of the tent.

Choose a campsite that's in an area you'd like to explore: the beach, woodland, mountains or rivers all make perfect natural playgrounds for children of any age. Get older children involved in planning your adventures, but make sure you limit their choices to two or three options or it can feel a bit overwhelming otherwise! Pack a picnic and show them where you'll be stopping for lunch on a map, or find a café to walk to; kids don't really understand the concept of just walking for fun, so it's good to give them a goal that doubles as a reward for their efforts. Once you're out it's also important not to rush them too much if possible, allowing them to learn through playing, from skimming stones and climbing trees to simply watching a bee buzzing between flowers.

It's a good idea to have a means of carrying younger children comfortably and safely over rougher terrain. There are many different child carriers on the market that are designed exactly for this job. Our preference is for the soft carriers such as the Ergobaby slings as they're small and light-weight and can be carried in a rucksack when not in use. They keep your child's weight as near as possible to your centre of mass, which feels stable and comfortable. Most also have a range of positions, including front facing inwards and outwards, back and hip carries. Read our review of the Ergobaby carrier on page 40.

Finally, take plenty of snacks and spare clothing with you so you're prepared for hungry children, muddy socks, wet trousers or a change in the weather.







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See page 42 for more details





# Photography on Dartmoor

David Guiterman joined Marion Frances Eastland on one of her Devon Photography Workshops and finds out how to take better photographs.



**H**ave you ever wondered what it might be like to drive a fully automatic car? You tell it where to go and everything else just happens; an interesting thought but ultimately lacking the satisfaction that comes with planning the route and getting the best out of the vehicle. Many of us have that kind of experience with our camera. We switch on, point it in the right direction, click the button and everything is done for us. Most automatic cameras make a reasonable job of capturing a view or portrait but they will never be able to produce those glorious photographs which can be found sprinkling the pages of high quality magazines.

To achieve really good photographs you need a camera over which you have total command. Like a car, these cameras have a set of simple controls but it takes a lot

of practice to use them to their best effect.

First, buy a good quality camera or borrow one, take it on a photography course then practise with the controls until using them becomes second nature.

I had the good fortune to join a course run by Marion Frances Eastland where I was introduced to the three basic camera controls; they are **aperture, shutter speed** and **sensitivity**. Each can be altered independently of the others. They are, however, all interrelated. Marion showed us how to make best use of all of them. Once the basics had been mastered we were led out into the field to put our new found theory into practice. Would it be possible to look at a scene, imagine the perfect photo, press the button and magically it would appear? It was, alas, not as easy as that. It would have been rather like trying to win a Formula 1 race after a first driving lesson. ■

## Aperture

The diameter of the iris, which controls how much light is allowed in. By controlling aperture, the fern in photo 1 was made to stand out from a blurred background.



PHOTOGRAPHS © MARION FRANCES

## Shutter Speed

The shutter controls how long the light is allowed to fall on the camera's light sensor.

This photo shows the effect of a neutral density filter and slow shutter speed when capturing the River Dart.



3



## Sensor sensitivity

The sensor reacts to light by forming an electronic image. The sensitivity can be changed to alter how much light is needed to form a correctly exposed image.

Marion taught us how to use:

- A **polarising filter** to help capture stunning cloud effects,
- A **neutral density filter** to cut down excessive light (as used in photo 2).

- A graduated neutral filter (see photo 3) to help balance the exposure of bright sky and less bright landscape. This filter was used in shooting photo 4.



4



## Composition

Is more of an art than a science. Shooting a well-composed picture is fundamental to good photography. A couple of examples illustrate aspects of composition

The sky fills about one third of photo 4 and the iconic Bowerman's Nose sits in the right hand third, 'looking' into the scene. The aircraft contrails and the hilltop draw the eye to the tree in photo 5 taken near Sharp Tor.

5



All photographs by Marion Frances Eastland. I hope these photos have given you an idea of what is possible once the techniques have been mastered. There is a lot to learn.

After a day with Marion it's out onto the Moor and good luck with shooting great photos; shots that give personal satisfaction and may even be accepted by magazines. *Active Dartmoor* is always on the lookout for exceptional Dartmoor photos.

Marion runs excellent courses for both the complete novice and those with experience who would like to improve their technique.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

[www.devonphotographyworkshops.co.uk](http://www.devonphotographyworkshops.co.uk)  
Email: [info@marionfrances.co.uk](mailto:info@marionfrances.co.uk)  
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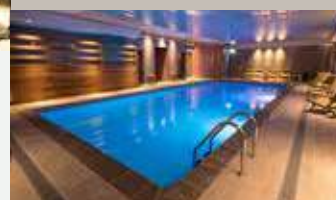
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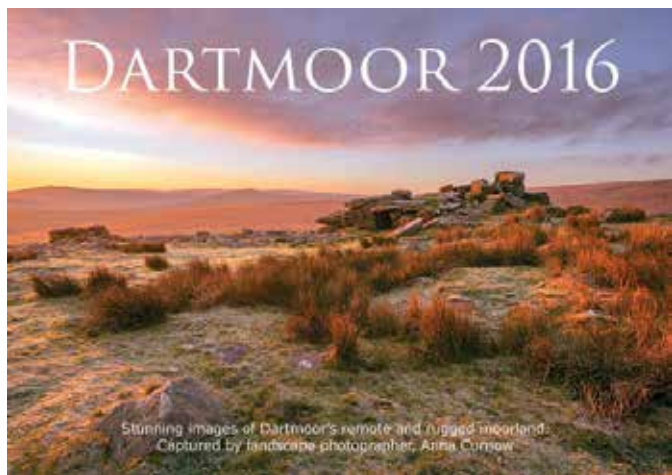


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# Fox Tor Cafe

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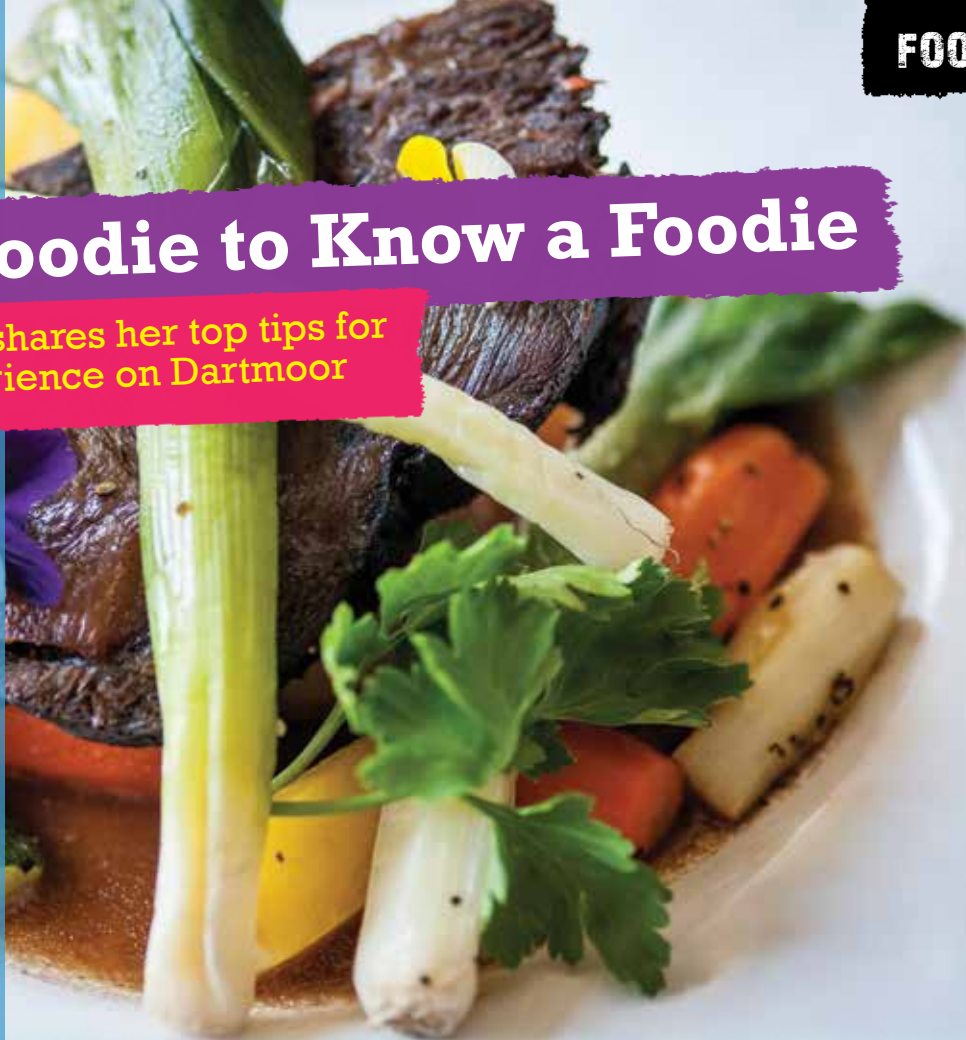
# It Takes a Foodie to Know a Foodie

Stella West-Harling shares her top tips for a great eating experience on Dartmoor

**A**fter nearly forty years in catering, I know thing or two about food, good value, 'proper' cooking, new trends, local produce in season and a host of other things such as passion for delivering great food, a warm welcome and a desire to make your eating experience the very best it can be. Someone's special event, romantic tryst or quick snack can be ruined by so many things. Just imagine all the elements that need to be right and you will rapidly think that anyone who has made catering their career must be either very thick-skinned or a glutton for punishment.

On Dartmoor we are blessed with some of the best animals in the UK grazing freely on the moor and a myriad of small artisan food and drink producers who keep our pubs, hotels and cafe's supplied with amazing fresh produce with so few 'food miles' that it really is the home of sustainability.

Here is my 'hot' list of some of the places to eat. Why not take a pub walk or a enjoy a whole day out exploring part of Dartmoor?



## Royal Oak – Meavy

Stephen Earp, the hugely popular and convivial landlord at the Royal Oak, has a reputation for interesting real ale and cider and serves delicious hearty food. The pub is open all day for drinks, with meals served 12 - 2.30 and 6 - 9. There is always a welcome in the bar for muddy boots and muddy paws!



## Arundell Arms Hotel - Lifton

The Arundell Arms Hotel is a lovely period property which has been in the care of the same family for over fifty years. Chef Steve Pidgeon deservedly won Gold in the Taste of the West awards last year. I love his dishes, they are creative and incredibly well cooked and he has his 2 AA Rosettes to prove it. You can even book a horse-riding package and stay overnight. If you are just passing through and want something light, try the Courthouse Bar within the hotel.

## The Horn of Plenty – Gulworthy

For a celebratory lunch or dinner, with stunning views across the Tamar Valley, I suggest you venture up to The Horn of Plenty Hotel and Restaurant which holds many awards for fine dining. I held my wedding breakfast there some years ago and it was wonderful. When I want to treat

my daughter or my friends to a surprisingly inexpensive beautiful lunch, I choose the restaurant as it consistently delivers. In twenty-five years I have never had anything but superb service and sublime food.

## Moorland Garden Hotel - Yelverton

This medium-sized hotel has the ability to run small and large events with seamless skill. Sonia Meadon's influence is everywhere from the cool decor through to the inexpensive dine and stay offers which are extremely tempting. A friend of mine swears that she will never accommodate guests in her own home again having put up her relatives in the hotel. The joy of not having the cleaning and laundry nor the breakfasts and being able to join them for a delicious evening meal was worth every penny. Having stayed and dined myself, I agree!



PHOTOGRAPHS © HOME FARM CAFE





### **The Moorland Hotel – Shaugh Prior**

The Moorland Hotel is deep in Devon farming territory but the hotel has surprisingly contemporary bedrooms and a stunning view of Plymouth Sound. There is a Steakhouse bar which specialises in local produce and dogs are very welcome in the hotel bar. A great place for a lazy Sunday drink and a jolly good lunch afterwards.

### **Fox Tor Café - Princetown**

Step across the road from the National Park Visitor Centre in Princetown to one of the best kept secrets locally. If there was a competition for the Best Breakfast in Britain I am sure the Fox Tor Cafe would be a contender for the prize. On any day, rain or shine, you will find many locals in the cafe with steaming mugs of coffee and tea and enormous plates of food. Lots of laughter and Devon dialects here. The mood is infectious and the camaraderie wonderful. They make much of the food from scratch on the premises and it is honest cooking, perfectly delicious and excellent value.

### **Prince Hall – near Two Bridges**

Whether you're looking for a venue for a romantic dinner, a leisurely lunch or a fabulous cream tea, Prince Hall is the place to go. Owned by Fi and Chris Daly it offers an eclectic mix of traditional Dartmoor and contemporary food and accommodation. It sits nestling in its own extensive land with a river if you fancy a bit of fishing before lunch. The views are wonderful -

Dartmoor at its best. Many writers and famous people have visited to enjoy the quiet ambiance, and many still do, so do not be surprised to find yourself rubbing shoulders with politicians or someone you recognize from TV.

### **Brimpts Farm – Dartmeet**

Andy Bradshaw and his family run this immensely interesting farm which has a camping barn, self-catering accommodation and event rooms for hire, all kept toasty warm in winter by a biomass boiler. They also have a great tearoom in a traditional farm parlour. It isn't fancy but the delicious country food is how it should be. I love it. The whole family are involved in the business of looking after their guests and it shows Dartmoor farming at its best.

### **Home Farm Café – Bovey Tracey**

Parke, a National Trust estate near Bovey Tracey, houses Home Farm Cafe, the Dartmoor National Park Authority offices and the Dartmoor Heritage Pony Centre. There are fabulous woodland and riverside walks and the Templer Way from Haytor to Teignmouth passes close by.

I am a bit partisan writing about Home Farm Cafe, you will know why if you visit it! Set in a child- and dog-friendly courtyard almost everything is made on the premises (the exception being some of the bread and ice creams). In the summer there are jazz and music events as well as innovative barbeques. At weekends the cafe becomes an evening venue with a field kitchen menu offering local, seasonal produce, local beers

and ciders (wines and soft drinks too) at very reasonable prices. Hugely popular, large parties need to book even for brunch on a Saturday.

### **Ullacombe Farm – near Bovey Tracey**

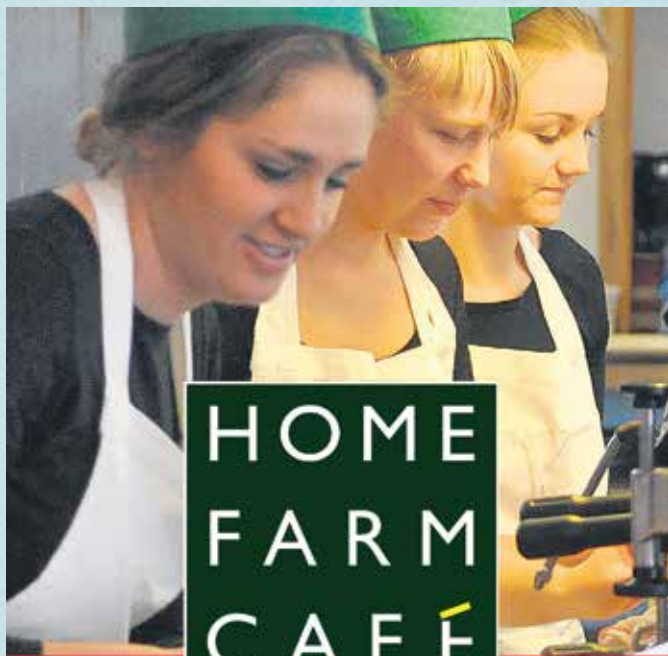
Originally a fully working farm, Ullacombe Farm still has a tranquil farmyard setting. The small farm shop in a converted barn has plenty of home-made pies, pastries and take-away meals all made in their kitchen. Jams, chutneys and puddings are also for sale. The cafe is child-friendly and has long been a favourite of mine, mainly because I can do some shopping and have an excuse for a cup of tea and some delicious cake. The meals are very good value and the menu changes daily.

### **Ilington Hotel - Ilington**

Owned by brothers Tim and Richard Hassell, this lovely elegant property has recently undergone extensive refurbishment. There are a number of function rooms which cater for weddings, business meetings or family events and a terrace overlooking the gardens. I held a significant birthday party there and when the staff discovered my grandson sitting under the table with the dog consuming my chocolate birthday cake, they calmly and gently dealt with the mess and magicked up a new cake with candles amidst laughter and plenty of smiles.

The food is excellent and the staff are probably the best team I have seen in many a year. ■





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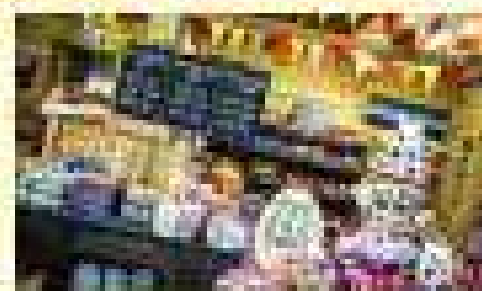


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award winning jams and marmalades along with ready meals, pies, quiches and cakes.

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[www.ullacombefarm.co.uk](http://www.ullacombefarm.co.uk)



# Signed Walking Routes

## THE TWO MOORS WAY COAST TO COAST – 117 MILES (187KM)

The Devon Coast to Coast walk runs between Wembury on the South Devon coast and Lynmouth on the North Devon coast, passing through Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks with some good or bad weather alternatives. The terrain is varied with stretches of open moor, deep wooded river valleys, green lanes and minor roads. It is waymarked except where it crosses open moorland.

## THE TEMPLER WAY – 18 MILES (29KM)

The route links Haytor on Dartmoor with the seaport of Teignmouth on the south coast; the Templer Way traces the route by which granite was exported from Dartmoor via the unique Haytor Granite Tramway and the Stover Canal and is comprehensively waymarked except on the open moor. It touches on the edge of Bovey Tracey on the way to Newton Abbot and Teignmouth and passes through a wide range of scenery including open moorland, woodland, meadow, historical tracks, urban land and estuary foreshore.

Fascinating examples of the old tramway and canal can be found along the way. Walking is quite easy from Haytor to Teignmouth (downhill), quite strenuous in the opposite direction.

## TWO CASTLES TRAIL – 24 MILES (38.6KM)

The Two Castles Trail takes you through beautiful and peaceful countryside - from the edge of Dartmoor, past historic battlefields to the ancient capital of Cornwall - linking the Castles of Okehampton in the east and Launceston in the west. The route is waymarked except where it crosses open moorland. It coincides with the West Devon Way at the eastern end and links with the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail at Launceston.

## WEST DEVON WAY – 36 MILES (58KM)

The West Devon Way runs along the western edge of the National Park between Okehampton and Plymouth and is waymarked except where it crosses open moorland.

The route passes through Okehampton, Tavistock and

Plymouth as well as some smaller settlements and covers landscapes of moorland, river valleys and pastoral scenery with good long-range views.

The route coincides with the Two Castles Trail at the northern end and links with the South West Coast Path and Erme-Plym Trail at Plymouth; also with the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail at Plymouth, via the Plymouth Cross-City Link walk.

## DRAKE'S TRAIL

The Yelverton to Plymouth section of the Drake's Trail is now a great family route thanks to improvements near Clearbrook. As part of the Granite and Gears Project the steep, rough descent from Roborough Down to the railway path has been replaced by a gentle tarmaced ramp that is safe and easily cycled by most members of the family.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

There are downloadable leaflets available on all these routes at: [www.dartmoor.gov.uk](http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk)

### Key to Map Symbols

Visitor information centre	Horn of Plenty <b>B6</b> p24
Local information point	Home Farm Cafe <b>H5</b> p25
Parking	Arundel Arms <b>A4</b> p25
Public toilets for disabled	Moorland Garden Hotel <b>C8</b> p25
Public toilets	Moorland Hotel <b>D8</b> p26
Train station	Prince Hall Hotel <b>E6</b> p26
National Trust	Royal Oak <b>C7</b> p26
Historic site	Ullacombe <b>H5</b> p27
Swimming pool	Dart Rock <b>G8</b> p32
Fishing	Langstone Manor <b>C5</b> p41
Finch Foundry <b>E2</b> p12	Harford Bridge <b>C5</b> p41
Castle Drogo <b>G3</b> p12	Green Hill Arts <b>G4</b> p44
Lydford Gorge <b>C4</b> p12	Devon Cycle Hire <b>D3</b> p44
Brimpts <b>E6</b> p15	Woodland Springs <b>F3</b> p44
Treesurfers <b>B6</b> p15	Woodovis <b>B6</b> p44
Adventure Okehampton <b>D2</b> p15	Walks and Rides <b>G7</b> p44
Ilstington <b>H6</b> p22	Cholwell <b>C4</b> p44
Fox Tor <b>D6</b> p22	Adventure Clydesdale <b>E6</b> p44

### Which Roads?

#### Green Routes

Suitable for all vehicles and are national through routes.

#### Black Routes

A or B Class roads – suitable for most types of traffic.

#### Blue Routes

Suitable for medium-sized vehicles.

#### Brown Routes

Only suitable for cars and other small vehicles.

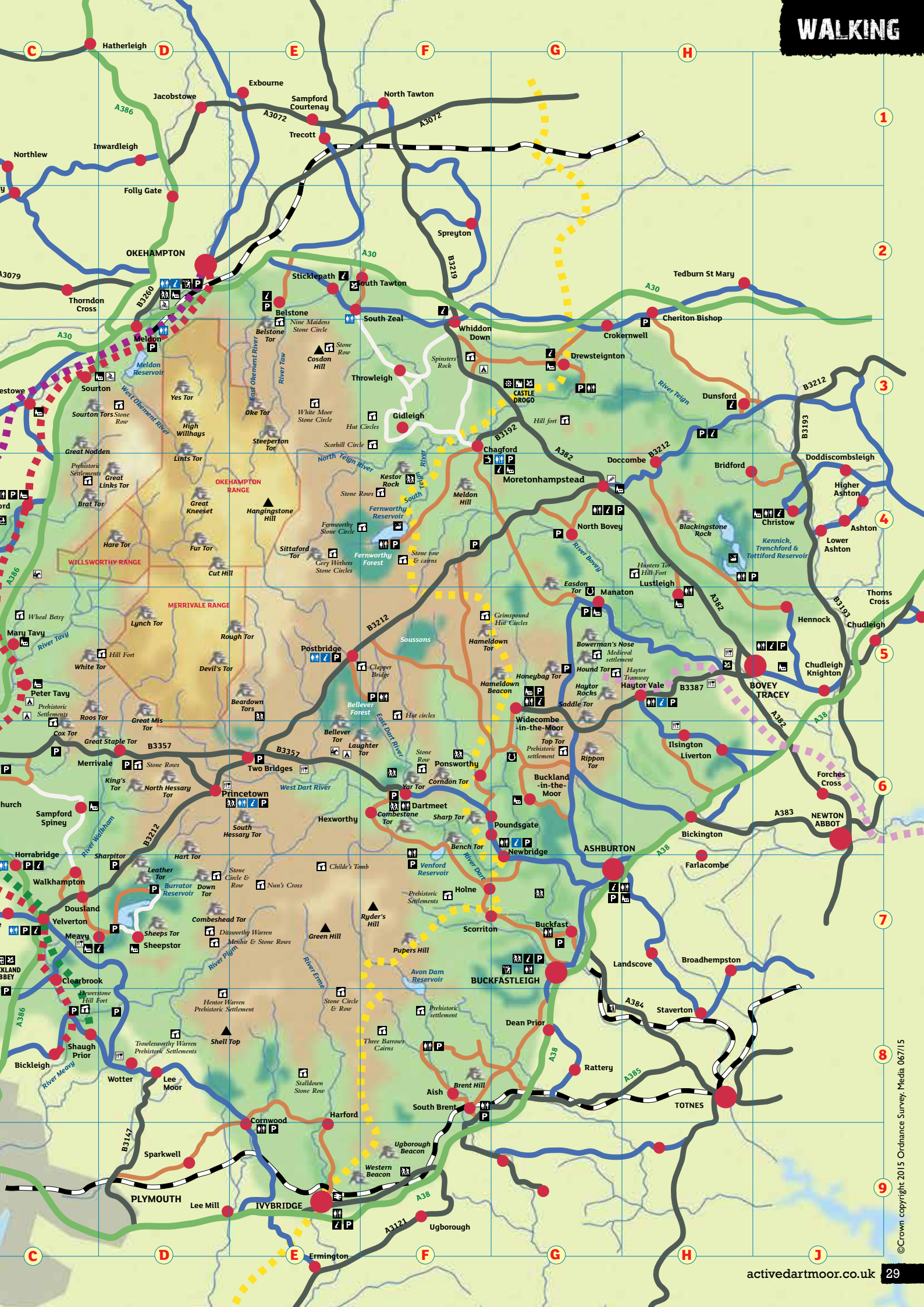
#### Finger Posts

Finger posts show roads which should only be used to local destinations.

Not all minor roads are shown  
Unsigned roads are unsuitable for through traffic. Please drive with Moor Care!









# CLIMB SOUTH WEST

Anna Baness finds out about a new provider of climbing courses, Mountain Training Awards and guided climbs on the moor

PHOTOGRAPHS © JUSTIN NICHOLAS

**It really felt like the start of summer when I met Justin Nicholas, the founder and owner of Climb South West recently. The sun was shining and the air was finally warming up, weather that seemed to match Justin's enthusiasm for his new venture. Although, as he was keen to point out, the name Climb South West may only have appeared on the scene this spring, Justin's freelance career in mountain training spans the last decade and has most recently been juggled alongside a full-time position as Programme Manager on the Instructor Training Course at Bicton College.**

"I was getting too many offers for freelance work to act on while I was working full time," Justin says. "It was becoming frustrating, so I decided that the time was right to leave and work for myself."

Justin, who is a Mountain Instructor Award holder and a full member of the Association of Mountaineering Instructors, lives in Devon with his wife and two young children. He has always been passionate about the outdoors since his own childhood in southern Snowdonia. He enjoyed the freedom to explore and from there developed his passion for walking, running, climbing and kayaking. Regular readers may remember that Justin's south north run featured as our Big Tick last summer.

Climb South West is obviously a natural progression for Justin allowing him to channel

all his energy into doing the work that he's "super passionate" about. He was out with clients on the very first day of trading under his new name. Whilst he is keen to stay on the delivery side, Justin works collaboratively with other instructors to ensure that he can meet the demand and tailor all courses to suit his clients' needs.

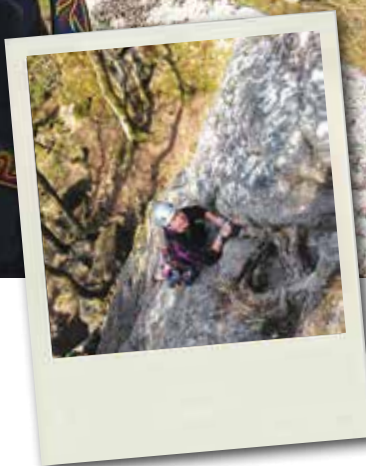
He sees Dartmoor as the hub of the business but Climb South West, as the name implies, offers courses over a geographical area that stretches from west Cornwall to Portland on the south coast and as far north as the Wye Valley.

"Everything we offer is climbing and walking related," Justin says. "We work with people at all different stages of their careers, from new climbers, stepping outside for the first time and wishing to develop their personal skills,

to experienced climbers wanting to hone their rescue techniques."

Climb South West also offers Mountain Training Courses and assessment for Hill and Moorland Leader, Mountain Leader and Single Pitch Awards and technical advice to outdoor centres to ensure that they have up-to-date safety systems in place. Justin and his colleagues are also available to help with event planning and run charity abseils. They have an impressive track record in this area having lead events for charities such as Diabetes UK all over the British Isles from the west of Scotland to the Welsh mountains.

At the moment, their main clients are individuals







## JUSTIN'S TOP 5 PLACES TO CLIMB ON DARTMOOR

### 1. The Dewerstone

There's something here for everyone from groups touching rock for the first time through to multi-pitch adventures rising high above the tree canopy. Set in a beautiful wooded valley, this place is deservedly popular.

### 2. Hound Tor and Greater Rocks

A great place for a family day out whether it's "weaseling" through the jumble of giant blocks, a first roped climb or sampling the delights of some of the best bouldering on the moor. There is even a medieval village to explore.

### 3. Haytor and Low Man

A real tourist hotspot on Dartmoor with its visitor centre and coach park. There is however, some fantastic climbing to be had on the towering west face of Low Man with some of the region's finest climbs situated here.

### 4. Lucky Tor

Located on the bank of the River Dart, you'll need a map to find this place. Those that make the journey will be rewarded with a handful of good climbs in a stunning location and a fantastic picnic spot. There are also some great swimming spots nearby to cool off on a hot day.

### 5. Chudleigh Rocks

Not technically on Dartmoor, sitting just outside the boundary of the National Park. It provides some welcome shelter in poor weather and the rock is so steep in places that it even stays dry when it's raining. This limestone crag provides a bit of variety to the mainly granite area and its sunny south face has something for everyone.



and small groups of up to six looking to brush up on their skills and Justin obviously prides himself on being able to offer bespoke days to suit his clients' needs.

"Climbing is about going to wild places and getting away from crowds," he says. "Knowing the South West really well, we're able to take people to good locations to get that wilderness experience without being too remote. We know the best places to go whatever the weather."

As a family man, Justin is also keen to help other families looking to do something different. He knows the importance of successful early family adventures with young children, which can then develop as all members of the family grow older. He wants to encourage families to think more broadly and to enthuse children about the outdoors.

Justin obviously has clear values for a perfect day out with Climb South West, which all his instructors share.

"Our aim is to make it fun, to see smiling faces,"

he says. "But we always strive to help people develop their knowledge and understanding as well. It's more than just about the activity and wow factor on the day. We want to kindle people's interest to do more and to give them skills that they can take away and use on their own afterwards." So what does the future hold for Climb South West? Long term Justin wants to see the business grow, although he is always keen to stay on the delivery side himself rather than passing all the work out to his instructors. "I'd like to go bigger in the South West," he says. "But I'd also like to offer courses overseas; in Spain for instance. I'm keen to offer progression courses and to link out to guides in the Alps if people want to take their climbing and mountaineering to another level."

Justin is also a qualified teacher and has worked in education for many years developing people. His forte is obviously in identifying his client's needs and tailoring his instruction to suit the individual. It's a quality that leads to consistently good success rates on his course at Bicton and is now being channelled into ensuring that anyone who joins a Climb South West course has not only a truly memorable day but goes away with the sense of achievement that comes with mastering new skills. ■

## WHAT'S IN JUSTIN'S BAG?

Apart from ropes, harnesses, helmets and a load of other climbing gear, when on Dartmoor, I usually take the following:

### 1. Dartmoor OS Explorer map (OL28)

An essential item to find your way around this outdoor playground. Brush up on your navigation skills and go exploring.

### 2. Warm /waterproof jacket

The weather can be very changeable here and noticeably cooler than the areas surrounding the moor. A good quality breathable waterproof will keep you comfortable.

### 3. Suncream

Too many times in the past I've been out in sunny but windy weather on Dartmoor without realising how intense the sun was.

### 4. Camera

The beauty of this place is incredible, so bring a camera to capture your memories.

### 5. A packed lunch

There are some great pubs and cafés on Dartmoor to refuel after a tough day but I recommend bringing a decent packed lunch. I'll usually have a flask of tea and an award-winning Tom's Pie.

## MORE INFO

Climb South West

Tel: 07966 654867

[www.climbsouthwest.com](http://www.climbsouthwest.com)

Email: [info@climbsouthwest.com](mailto:info@climbsouthwest.com)





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# SCHOOL'S OUT!

Where to go  
and what  
to do with  
children on  
Dartmoor  
this summer





# AFTER SCHOOL/HOLIDAY CLUBS

## Family Adventures at Adventure Okehampton

### Day Activities during the school holidays

Family Activities running throughout the School Holidays (20th July to 5th September, 24th October to 1st November), where the whole family can book onto daily sessions starting at 9.00, 12.00 or 14.00 each day. There are at least 10 different activities running over the week, usually with a choice of activity in each session. There are taster sessions suitable for younger participants, such as Archery, Bushcraft, Climbing Wall, Kayaking and Weaselling whereas some activities you need to be 8 and upwards (the oldest we have had was in their eighties), for example High Ropes, Rock Climbing, Mountain Boarding. If you'd like a longer adventure, on Wednesday's we run a Family Rock Day, where we go out onto the crags of Dartmoor, and you'll get the chance to feel granite in more depth, as you tackle some of the famous tors. Further afield we offer a Paddle Day option, where we take you to one of Devon's great kayaking rivers, where you can spend the day either canoeing or kayaking down the rivers or on the stiller waters of the canals. Prices start from £20 per person up to £49 per person.

[www.adventureokehampton.com/activity-days](http://www.adventureokehampton.com/activity-days)

### Stay the Day for 8-16 years

Looking for something for the children to do during the summer holidays? Then look no further, as unaccompanied children can book a place on our Stay the Day programme. The activities run throughout the school holidays (20th July to 5th September, 24th October to 1st November). Each participant will get 3 activity sessions a day starting at 9.00 and finishing between 16.30 and 17.00 each day. Activities include options for Archery, Bushcraft, Climbing Wall, High Ropes, Rock Climbing, Kayaking and Weaselling. The age groups are 8-11 and 12-16 years, and these programmes are priced at £30 per day including lunch. A parent or guardian will need to complete a participant consent form prior to arrival.

[www.adventureokehampton.com/familyholidays/203-staytheday](http://www.adventureokehampton.com/familyholidays/203-staytheday)

### Overnight Adventures

Looking for an overnight adventure with the children? Our Wild Camp expedition onto Dartmoor is an overnight expedition lead by our instructors. This is a chance to experience a night looking at the stars, paddling in a river and learning some basic survival skills. This takes place on Saturday each week.

### Use your Tesco Clubcard points

If you book onto one of our 2,3,4 or 7 night programmes for families, you can use your Tesco Club Card vouchers against the accommodation costs for your stay at YHA Okehampton. Adventure Okehampton has holidays which offers accommodation, catering and activities with a wide range of activities including Pony Trekking, Big Oke Abseil as well as evening activities. Prices start from £113 per adult and £96.00 for under 14's.

[www.adventureokehampton.com/summer-breaks-families](http://www.adventureokehampton.com/summer-breaks-families)

## Woodland Adventure Club – Haldon Forest

Looking for an adventurous Holiday Club for your 6-14 year old this summer holiday? Then why not try Woodland Adventure Club at Haldon Forest Park? Packed with fun and excitement in the woods, they'll get up to all sorts, building dens, learning woodland skills, cooking round the campfire and making new friends. Run by qualified staff; you can book for just one, or more days; £32 per child, £30 sibling rate. Monday 10th - Thursday 13th; Monday 17th - Thursday 20th; Monday 24th - Thursday 27th August and Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd Sept. 9.00 to 15.30 (plus optional extended care until 16.30 £5)

[www.atouchofthewild.co.uk](http://www.atouchofthewild.co.uk)  
Email: [info@atouchofthewild.co.uk](mailto:info@atouchofthewild.co.uk)

## Wild Woods 'n Willow

Would you like your children to learn how to survive and thrive in nature this summer whilst having great fun and making new friends? Then why not sign them up for a day or longer with Wild Woods 'n Willow?

### Essential Bushcraft Summer Camp @ Yeo Farm near Chagford

Wed 29th 10.00 to 16.00 (day only) followed by ... Overnight Camp - Thurs 30th July (10.00) to Fri 31st July (noon). Whole camp from Wed 29th to Fri 31st July - £120 Wed 29th July only - £40 (£5 discount for siblings) Overnight camp only - £80 Bursaries may be available - please enquire.



## Teenage Wilderness Camp @ Yeo Farm near Chagford

Sun 26th (14.00) to Tues 28th July (noon). A nature immersion camp practising bushcraft skills and wild craft. Cost - £135. Bursaries may be available - please enquire.

### Essential Bushcraft – Autumn - craft & archery day

Mon 26th October 10.00 – 16.00  
Cost - £35 (£5 discount for siblings)

[www.wildwoodswillow.org.uk](http://www.wildwoodswillow.org.uk)  
Email: [nature@wildwoodswillow.org.uk](mailto:nature@wildwoodswillow.org.uk)

## Chagford After-School Basketry Club

This club for 7-11 year olds, runs autumn and spring terms at Chagford Primary School. For the Wednesday dates contact Linda (of Wild Woods 'n Willow and Wood & Rush).

Email: [info@woodandrush.net](mailto:info@woodandrush.net)

## Dart Rock Climbing Centre Summer Kids Clubs

From 17th July – 30th August Mondays and Wednesdays 14.30 to 16.30 indoor climbing £12pp. Fridays 14.00 to 17.00 Outdoor climbing £15pp. Booking essential. Also Saturdays 5-12 year olds and Sundays 12-17 year olds 10.00-12.00. The only drop-in climbing club for children in Devon!

**COME CLIMB WITH US!!**

[www.dartrock.co.uk](http://www.dartrock.co.uk)  
Tel: 01364 644 499

## Summer Adventure Days - The Adventure Centre, Tavistock

27th July to 21st August.

Adventure Days are the perfect way to explore the great outdoors this summer holidays. Choose from the action-packed day programmes which include great activities such as Raft Building, Gorge Walking, Rock Climbing and Abseiling. Or join us for the overnight Bushcraft or Expedition Camps. We are also offering a 5 Day Paddlesports Course which focuses on canoeing and kayaking for the beginner or improver.

We have a team of highly-qualified and experienced instructors that will guide you on your outdoor adventure, helping you develop new skills and take on new challenges while, of course, having loads of fun!

[www.theadventurecentre.co.uk](http://www.theadventurecentre.co.uk)





# The Dartmoor centres

The Dartmoor Centres offer group accommodation and adventurous activities for schools, youth groups, community groups and clubs at our two residential centres on Dartmoor.

## Dartmoor Training Centre

Self catered or fully catered - Sleeps 50



**CLIMBING  
CAVING**

**MOUNTAIN BIKING  
WALKING  
EXPEDITIONS  
BUSHCRAFT  
ORIENTEERING**

## Pixie's Holt

Fully Catered - Sleeps 42



The Dartmoor Centres also offer professional training for outdoor leaders

- MTE Hill & Moorland Leader
- South West Mountain & Moorland Leader Awards
- First Aid for the outdoors courses

[www.dartmoorcentres.co.uk](http://www.dartmoorcentres.co.uk)



# CLASSIC SUMMER WALKS

# BELLEVER



Kirstie Smith from the Forestry Commission shares some great ideas for a walk in one of Dartmoor's larger forests.

Bellever Forest near Postbridge is a beautiful place for a walk. Whether it's a gentle stroll by the East Dart River or an exhilarating walk up to Bellever Tor it's a beautiful and tranquil setting and a great place to visit with the whole family. It's also a wonderful place to bring dogs for a walk, with plenty of space for them to burn energy and the beautiful river for a swim or a quick drink of water. It's advisable to keep dogs on lead around the picnic area.

Bellever is a working forest and the Forestry Commission have been growing Timber there since 1931. Bellever produces some of the best softwood available in the South West and it is widely used from the construction industry through to chipboard manufacturing, fence posts and firewood. Bellever is also focused on recreation with waymarked trails to explore. The forest is bursting with archaeology from its clapper bridge and the Lich Way to the more subtle but abundant stone cists, burial cairns and field boundaries. There are over thirty hut circles within the forest, just a hint that there were many more people living on the high moor during the Bronze Age (4000-2600 years ago) than there are today. Excavations in the 1890s found flint knives, scrapers and shards of pottery, some of it highly decorated.



## Bellever Moor and Meadow

Bellever Moor and Meadow is one of Devon Wildlife Trust's most recently acquired nature reserves and also one of its most exciting. The 70 hectare reserve is made up of a beautiful patchwork of traditional haymeadows, wet grassland and moorland and is divided into two compartments.

Bellever Moor and Meadow has been leased to Devon Wildlife Trust by the Forestry Commission under a 25 year management agreement.

The Forestry Commission identified the opportunity for the land to be managed more effectively for wildlife and approached Devon Wildlife Trust to propose the partnership agreement. It will be open to the public to explore and enjoy for free, 365 days a year. Like all of Devon Wildlife Trust's nature reserves, it will be managed as a haven for local wildlife.

**Further information**  
[www.devonwildlifetrust.org](http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org)



# POSTBRIDGE TRAIL



## POSTBRIDGE TRAIL

A circular route along forestry tracks with stunning views out across open moorland and the opportunity to make a detour up Bellever Tor.

**LENGTH:** 3 miles (4.5km)

**TIME:** 1.5 hours

**START/FINISH:** Forestry Commission car park, Postbridge SX646787

**TERRAIN:** Mostly surfaced forestry tracks with some steep rocky sections.

**MAPS:** OS Explorer OL28 Dartmoor

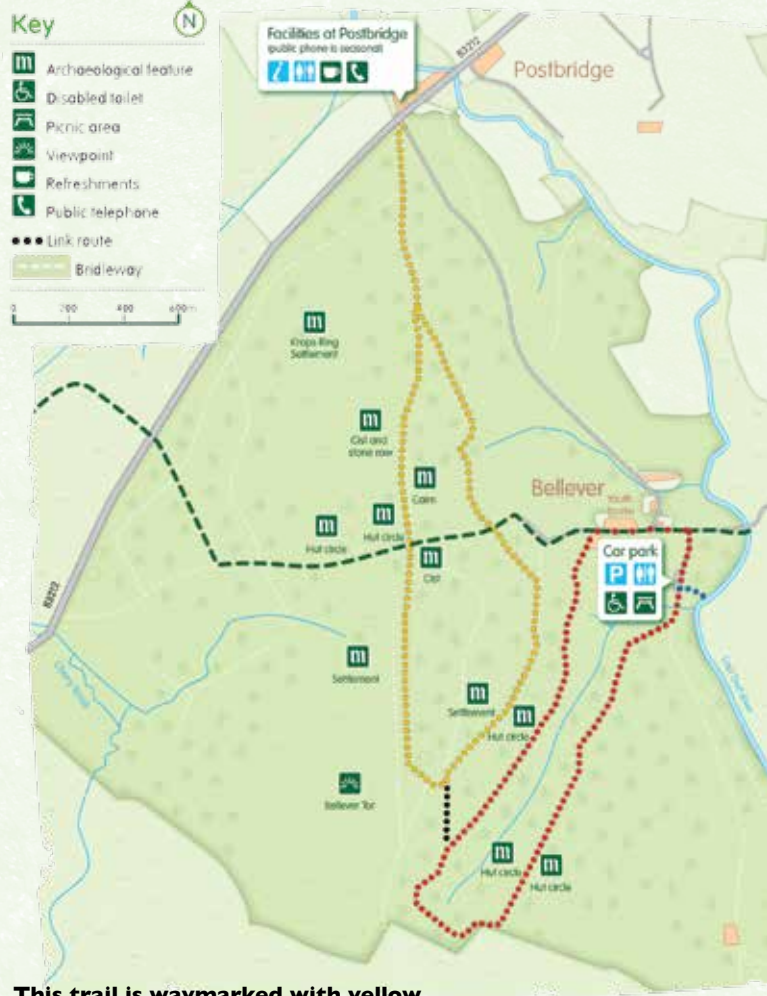
**Leaflet:** Explore Bellever Forest

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** The 98 Tavistock to Yelverton bus service runs via Postbridge and Bellever daily Monday – Saturday.

**PARKING:** Free forest car park.

**NEARBY ATTRACTIONS:** Postbridge Visitor Centre  
Postbridge clapper bridge.

**Refreshments:** There is a village shop, pub and hotel in Postbridge all within walking distance of the start of the route.



**This trail is waymarked with yellow**

- ① Leave the car park through the gate and take the public footpath uphill along the main forestry track. Ignore first right turn and continue straight on uphill.
- ② Where the track divides take the right fork and look out to the right above the young trees for wonderful views to Higher White Tor and Longaford Tor. Keep to the main track over the brow and gently downhill until the junction. Bellever Tor should now be in view on your right.
- ③ Take the right fork of the main surfaced track following the yellow waymarkers. When you come to the broken down stone wall you can either continue along the grassy path beside the trees on your left or take a detour up Bellever Tor.  
  
If you stay close to the trees, continue to follow the rocky path downhill beneath the Tor until you come to a drystone wall. Bear left following the yellow arrow and continue downhill past a bench to meet the main track.
- ④ Turn left then immediately right along the lower waymarked track. When you come out of the trees you will have great views out to your right towards Soussons Forest, Hameldown and Haytor in the distance.
- ⑤ Continue to follow the main track uphill ignoring all side turnings and enjoying the stunning views out to the right.
- ⑥ At the T-junction turn right and retrace your steps downhill to the car park.

PHOTOGRAPHS & ILLUSTRATIONS © WWW.FORESTRY.GOV.UK



# BELLEVER TRAIL



**This trail is waymarked with red**

- ① From the main car park leave the toilet block on your right and follow the main track and red waymarkers. After a short distance you will see a picnic area on your right. Follow the path between the picnic benches and go out through the gate on the far side. Take the track uphill straight ahead.
- ② When you reach the boundary wall keep following the main track round to the right.
- ③ Where the track divides keep right gently downhill following the red waymarkers. Continue to follow the track out of the forest and between the fields.
- ④ Go through the gate and turn right along the tarmac road passing the entrance to Bellever YHA on your left. Where the road divides keep right and turn right along the road. After a short distance turn right along the forest track to return to the main car park.

Cyclists are also welcome but asked to stay on the stoned forest roads and, with the exception of bridleways, horse riding is by permit only.



## BELLEVER TRAIL

A peaceful walk through the forest where you may stumble across silent hut circles, grazing ponies and even deer.

**LENGTH:** 2.5 miles (4km)

**TIME:** 1.25 hours

**START/FINISH:** Main Forestry Commission car park, Bellever SX656773

**TERRAIN:** Mostly surfaced forestry tracks with some gentle slopes.

**MAPS:** OS Explorer OL28 Dartmoor

**Leaflet:** Explore Bellever Forest

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** The 98 Tavistock to Yelverton bus service runs via Postbridge and Bellever daily Monday – Saturday.

**PARKING:** Forestry Commission car park. Pay & Display - £1 for 2 hours. Accessible toilets and baby changing facilities are available.

**NEARBY ATTRACTIONS:** Bellever YHA

**Refreshments:** There is a village shop, pub and hotel in Postbridge.

## Guided Walks

There are guided walks available run by the Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust. Tel: 01 626 833234.

## Other forests to visit ...

A short distance away from Bellever, on the edge of Dartmoor, another wonderful place for a walk is Haldon Forest Park. Haldon has over 40km of walking and cycling trails to suit all abilities as well as a range of other activities on offer. It is home to Go Ape, the high wire ropes course and Segway Southwest. There are also other activities available such as Nordic Walking and archery and A Touch of the Wild runs a range of children's activity sessions including bushcraft as well as other events such as birthday parties. The Ridge Café is open every day on site too.

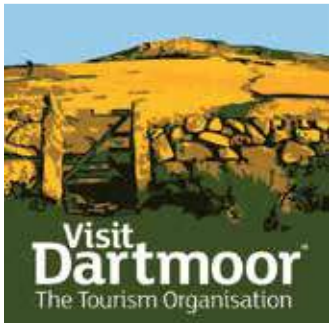
**Further information**  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/bellever](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/bellever)





## VISIT DARTMOOR FREE COMPETITION

*A short break for 2 people, for 2 nights at The Mill End Hotel, on a bed and breakfast basis plus 3 course dinner in the hotel restaurant on one night. Accommodation in a standard room twin or double room.*



# WIN

a Dartmoor short break  
at the Mill End Hotel with  
optional activities!

*Plus as part of your superb prize package, there will be two fantastic optional activities for you to enjoy, should you so wish. Dartmoor Hawking or Dartmoor Proper Tours.*



### Mill End Hotel

Situated on the banks of Devon's majestic River Teign, Mill End Hotel and Restaurant is a perfect Dartmoor Country House hideaway. You can immerse yourself in the wild glory of Devon's own Dartmoor National Park, whilst soaking up the hospitality, comfort and warmth on which we pride ourselves.

We have 15 individually styled bedrooms, comfy lounges, log fires and beautiful riverside gardens for that special Devon Cream Tea. Our restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

With Dartmoor all around, you can experience some of the most spectacular walking, cycling, fishing and all manner of outdoor pursuits. Or just find a perfect spot to sit and soak up the Dartmoor view.

### Dartmoor Hawking

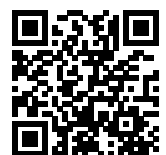
The sight of a Falcon diving down to earth at 100 miles an hour is a truly exhilarating experience!



Martin will deliver an awe inspiring hands-on Hawking Experience lasting for around three/four hours. Working with Hawks and Falcons, and even Eagle flying!

### Dartmoor Proper Tours

You can sit back in a 6 seater Land Rover to enjoy a fascinating and unique tour across Dartmoor, with a highly experienced Dartmoor guide and local farmer Tich Scott.



**For more details and to enter this FREE competition go to  
[www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/competition](http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/competition) or scan the QR CODE above**



# Family Camping Equipment

Having the right kit is an essential part of enjoyable family camping trips. Here Jen & Sim Benson review their favourite tried-and-tested items that will help make your adventures a success.



## Bell Tent – SoulPad 4000 Hybrid £480

Family tents are usually made from either nylon or cotton-based canvas. Nylon tents will generally be smaller and lighter to pack, whereas canvas is harder-wearing and cooler in hot weather, when nylon can become unbearable. For our family camping adventure we opted for a 4-metre cotton canvas bell tent. It's designed to comfortably accommodate 4 adults so it's perfect for a small family and will take 2 double sleeping mats or 4 single ones and leave enough room for plenty of kit as well. We put the beds away during the day and it turns into a lovely space for us to eat in and for the kids to play in. The heavy-duty zippered-in bathtub style groundsheet is fully waterproof, and it also stops smaller children from escaping under the sides. When it's hot the zip can be undone and the sides rolled up to create a beautiful open-sided sun shade.

Once you are familiar with the tent it is very easy to pitch and can be done by one adult in less than 20 minutes. The tent bag is also big enough so that it's easy to pack it away again. They are also available in 3- and 5-metre sizes.

## Therm-a-Rest Trail Pro Self-inflating mat £84.95

Sleeping on a good mat can make all the difference when you're camping. They're available as closed-cell foam roll mats, air beds and self-inflating mats that combine air and foam to give you the best of both worlds. Therm-a-Rest pioneered the idea and still make some of the best self-inflating mats. They range from super-comfortable luxury mats to the smallest, lightest versions for minimalist backpackers. Our favourites for family camping are the Trail Pro series. These are light enough to be carried backpacking or by children to a sleepover or school trip and they pack reasonably small which will make packing the car easier. They are full length and thick enough to offer a warm and comfortable night's sleep. They are not the cheapest self-inflating mats available but they are very durable and should last for many years of use.



## Ergobaby 360 Carrier £129.90

There are many different styles of child carrier available, from framed rucksack-style packs to fabric wrap slings. Carrying your baby or child against you makes it easier for them to be engaged in where you are and what you are doing. It allows you to get out onto rougher ground more easily as the child's weight is held as close to your centre of balance as possible. It also means you share your body warmth so they are less likely to get cold.

The Ergobaby 360 allows you to carry a child from 0 (with infant insert) to 36 months in 4 different positions: front facing inwards, front facing out, on the hip and on your back. It's small and light enough that it can be stowed in a rucksack when not in use. Accessories available include waterproof covers and clip-on bags giving you a bit of extra storage.

We've found that this carrier has made a huge difference to our ability to get out and about with our younger kids.



## Kelly Kettle 1.6 Litre Stainless Steel £49.95

Kelly Kettles – or Storm Kettles – heat water in a stainless steel or aluminium cylindrical container that sits on top of a solid-fuel fire. Our Kelly Kettle comes everywhere with us: it's brilliant for a fun brew on the beach, in the campsite or garden and even by the car after a hard day's adventuring. The 1.6-litre size means that you can boil enough for several mugs at the same time. Everyone can get involved collecting wood for the fire and then you can take the kettle off the fire pit and sit around a little camp fire with your hot drinks.





# AlpKit Trinity Camping Torch £21

Night-time in a tent can be very dark, and this can be unnerving to those used to having the landing light on! It's a good idea to have a cheap source of lighting, and fun for the kids to have their own torches. Alpkit's motto is: "Go nice places do good things" and they stock a fantastic range of reasonably-priced kit for outdoor adventuring. These little camping lanterns are great for several reasons: they can be used as a lantern or as a torch so are perfect for finding things or trips to the loo as well as providing tent lighting in the evening. They are small enough to be used by children or to be carried in your bag on an evening walk but still bright enough to provide plenty of useful light. They're also well designed and cleverly made, with an attachment to allow them to hang from a string and little extendable legs for table-top standing. They have a tripod mounting point in the base. They run on 4x AA batteries (included) and have a battery life of over 100 hours if used on the dimmest setting (which we often use as a night light). They come in a couple of fun colours.



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# And now..... a word from our advertisers

## Professional photo shoot of your ride across dartmoor with Malcolm Snelgrove



There are few superlatives that can really do Dartmoor's stunning and spine-tingling scenery justice, with its 365 square miles of land (that's one for every day of the year), but you are sure to come up with many of your own.

From precipitous outcrops of granite that make up the numerous tors, expanses of mire criss-crossed by pony and sheep paths, with streams running into rivers to liberal tracts of forestry to explore, it is an incredible location to have as your backdrop, whether you are looking for formal portraits or great images of you riding across the Dartmoor landscape.

Amidst the breathtaking surroundings you will be free to enjoy a riding adventure with your friends whilst I quietly observe and document those special moments as you ride out over the moors. Drink in the stunning scenery that formed the backdrop of Steve Spielberg's War Horse movie as I capture images documenting your fun, laughter and thrills.

Before your ride we will discuss the types of photographs that will best achieve this and agree on the best moorland locations. I know of a number of stunning sites on Dartmoor that will make for a fabulous backdrop to the photographs I will take of you, and you may have your own favourite locations too. We also have access to experienced guides should Dartmoor be a new experience for you and can recommend local riding stables should you require horses.

At the end of the day, you will be left with memories, stories to share with your friends and a superb set of photographs to accompany the stories.

I appreciate the importance of helping you document these cherished memories and will personally take the time to edit your photographs so that they truly document your day. You will receive a link to your personal online gallery to view and share the images from your day with your friends and family, where you will also be able to select the professional prints, canvases and books that you may like to purchase.



Should you need accommodation we can put you in contact with some great B&Bs and hotels on Dartmoor.

You could be astride Clydesdales from [www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/things-to-do/cholwell-farm-and-riding-stables-p855163](http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/things-to-do/cholwell-farm-and-riding-stables-p855163) or ride English with [www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/things-to-do/cholwell-farm-and-riding-stables-p855163](http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk/things-to-do/cholwell-farm-and-riding-stables-p855163)

Superb accommodation all across Dartmoor can be found at [www.visitdartmoor.co.uk](http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk)

Once these details are decided upon we can agree the date with you. You and your friends are sure to have an enjoyable and memorable day and I will ensure you have all the images to go with it.

Your Equestrian Dartmoor Ride Photo Shoot Shared with your friends typically lasts 2-3hrs but if you have booked a half or full day ride with one of the riding stables we can discuss meeting at various locations across the moor.

Further information:

Email: [malcolm@malcolmsnelgrove.com](mailto:malcolm@malcolmsnelgrove.com)

or Tel: 07973 118237





## Ride The Wild Woods this summer with Tree Surfers



At Tree Surfers everyone gets to have fun, achieve things you never thought possible, surprise yourself and leap, glide and soar through the trees. It's a chance for the whole family to escape, to let your hair down and the kids run free.

Up in the trees we've created rope bridges, zip lines, walkways and obstacles to challenge and excite you. This is no ordinary family day out. There are four specially designed high ropes courses from junior to the "black run", plus the exhilarating "leap of faith" and the awesome "big zip". There's so much to explore. It's easy to spend the whole day with us.

PLUS we have our NEW junior high ropes course too! Suitable for 4-12 year olds (over 1m) this course is just AWESOME! The kids will love it and we know you will too.

Tree Surfers is based in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and our courses are designed in harmony with the natural environment. It's a magical place and we've worked hard to keep it that way. Our staff are trained to support you every step of the way. It's a family business and it feels that way.

Open everyday during the holidays 10am – 5pm. Parking, woodland café, woodland walks, bikes trails and picnic facilities are available on site to enjoy the stunning views across the Tamar Valley.

Prices form just £14 high ropes and £8 for the big zip and leap of faith. Booking is recommended.

Further information: Tel: 01822 833 409 [www.treesurfers.co.uk](http://www.treesurfers.co.uk)

## The Horn of Plenty



This multi award winning hotel and restaurant is located only 5 minutes from the beautiful market town of Tavistock and 10 minutes from Dartmoor National Park.

With 2 AA Rosettes, a passion for local produce and a team of genuinely smiley, helpful staff, The Horn of Plenty has been thrilling guests with some of the region's very best food, views and accommodation for nearly 50 years.

We believe passionately that Devon and Cornwall are home to some of the finest ingredients in the land, so we source what we can locally and theme our dishes based on the seasons. Currently over 70 per cent of our produce is sourced within Devon, and 90 per cent from the South West.

Our talented team of six chefs thrive at creating exciting dishes using high-quality, seasonal ingredients. Creativity, flavour and visual appeal are all harnessed to stunning effect.

Ideal for a special occasion, a lovely meal or a wonderful afternoon tea after enjoying a day exploring Dartmoor and the surrounding towns. The hotel has a stunning location with views over the Tamar Valley. Those seeking an active break will find themselves spoilt for choice, with a host of pursuits on offer including walking, cycling, mountain biking, and canoeing.

Whether you are planning a birthday meal, an afternoon tea or a romantic getaway, this luxury Hotel offers the ideal place to escape.

Further information: 01822 832528

[www.thehornofplenty.co.uk](http://www.thehornofplenty.co.uk)

## Quay Climbing Centre Deep Water Soloing



**Spectacular Climbing Event Returns to Exeter this August Bank Holiday - Deep Water Soloing by the Quay Climbing Centre, 28th – 31st August 2015**

Exeter's historic Quayside will once again become home to the UK's only climbing wall on water as the Deep Water Solo (DWS) Exeter climbing competition returns for the August bank holiday weekend (28th - 31st August).

Launched in 2014 by the team behind Exeter's Quay Climbing Centre, DWS Exeter is a unique event in the outdoor adventure calendar bringing hundreds of climbers from across the country to the South West to compete on the only climbing wall to be erected on an inland waterway. Exeter is only the 4th city worldwide to host such an event. The stunning wall measures 12 metres wide and 7 meters tall and will return this year with an impressive 3 to 4 metre overhang. Climbers navigate routes on the wall, climbing upwards and across the features without the use of ropes and using the water beneath them as their drop point when they can no longer climb. The wall is designed for three competitors to climb simultaneously, increasing the spectacle and the tension as the crowds wait to see who drops into the water first!

The event is expected to attract the elite of the climbing community, including members of the GB climbing team and well known US climber, Sierra Blair Coyle. Ed Hamer, GB team climber and 2014 finalist, said: "I'm super excited about DWS 2015. DWS 2014 was one of the best competitions I have ever participated in – perfect setting, great ambience, superb organisation and great fun for everyone!" Over 200 climbers will compete against elite athletes like Ed. Many will also visit the sea cliffs of South Devon, home to some of the best DWS spots in the country, including Berry Head, Long Quarry Point and further afield Lulworth Cove – the home of deep water soloing in the UK. Neil Gresham, one of the UK's leading climbers, said: "Deep Water Solo climbing is one of the most visual and free forms of climbing you can experience. This will not only be fantastic for the sport of climbing in general but will do wonders to promote it locally in a region that has a lot to offer those looking for a Deep Water Solo adventure."

Further information contact: **Alison Smith (07795 652 788) or**

**Paul Russell (07795 022 733)**

[www.deepwatersolo.co.uk](http://www.deepwatersolo.co.uk) e. [info@deepwatersolo.co.uk](mailto:info@deepwatersolo.co.uk)



We love hearing about how races were run and won, presentations and awards that have been given and received, adventures that have been completed. Anything in the *Active Dartmoor* world that is of interest to our readers in fact. If you have an item that you would like us to include, just let us know! [jenny@activedartmoor.com](mailto:jenny@activedartmoor.com)

## Dartmoor Discovery Ultra Marathon

Michael Robinson shares his experiences of running this challenging race



PHOTOGRAPH ROGER HAYES

The run started on a peaceful morning with perfect race conditions, a cool sub-10 degrees and the possibility of rain. Dartmoor seems to have its own weather system so there is little point in trying to predict it!

Only 32.4 miles of Dartmoor's beautiful hills separated me from completing my first ultra marathon. For many a marathon is the ultimate challenge, the idea of running beyond that just doesn't compute. For me, ever since I started running up and down the beach near my home in Penzance, I've always want to see how far I can go.

I ran the Dartmoor Discovery (DD) in 2012 after becoming bored of the normal range of road races available. Many people advise not to tackle marathons until you're a bit older, but at 26 I felt I had waited long enough. I was going to run the DD no matter how long it took!

So off I went, in my usual kit: vest, shorts, hat and compression socks and figured this would be sufficient. It was enough while I was keeping a fairly normal pace: 6 minute miles downhill and 9 minute miles uphill, though something happened at mile 27 and I started to fade. It could have been psychological, passing the marathon point was always going to be an experience, but my problem was nutrition. I hadn't been able to eat much since about mile 17 and eating is important with longer distances. I was just getting hungrier and weaker and at mile 29 I was walking, stopping, starting and stopping again. Then I got overtaken by one and then another. After stopping at the "2 miles to go" sign, I took a deep breath and said to myself, "I'm running to the finish without stopping now". So I did, but by this point I was cold from all of the walking. I finished in a respectable 4 hours 8 minutes, but considering the last 10k had taken me 58 minutes, I knew I could have done better.

### 2014

Two years on and why am I here, again? This time, with a goal of 4 hours which seemed like a sensible step up in training for a 32 mile ultra marathon on a Cornish coastal path, which could easily take 5 hours to complete.

During the first few miles I tried to settle into an easy pace,

I watched 3 runners run off into the distance in the first mile and I knew I wasn't going to stay with them. One of them was the winner from 2012 who had made it known he was going for 3 hours 29 minutes.

It is almost all downhill from Princetown to Ashburton and I ran mostly alone, running through 13.1 miles in 1 hour 26 minutes with no sign of the top 3! With long distance running, you are either going to catch them or you are not; there is little point at this stage trying to chase anyone, even though it is tempting! Ashburton had a few locals clapping, most with no idea how far we were going or why we were doing it.

There is a huge hill coming out of Ashburton, gaining 500ft in a mile. I walked some of it and at the top caught the early leader! 17 miles to go, and I'm in third, but too early to think about that.

My next memory is the marathon mark. When it came I felt an overwhelming sense of achievement as I saw 3 hours 2 minutes, my second quickest marathon ever and 8 minutes ahead of my 2012 time. I felt good. I was about to improve on my time and even a 58 minute 10k would give me a 4 hour finish. As I came around the corner after 26.2 miles I spotted the man in second. The idea of coming second caused me to well up, I quickly shook myself out of it. On these ultra marathons you need your friends to support you and around the corner were two of my team mates with drinks.

I was down to the last few miles and was on for sub 3 hours 50 minutes, maybe even 3 hours 45 minutes. All sorts of emotions run through your head at this point. After over 3 hours of focusing on the task, I had lost all concentration and was just getting one foot in front of the other and thinking about the last mile.

I was amazed I was still able to run at an 8 minute mile pace and was so happy to be near the finish. I saw the crowds on the mini roundabout at the Plume of Feathers. I only had 100 yards to go but all of a sudden my left hamstring cramped up! I found myself limp-running towards the finish.

I finished in a time of 3:45:55 so sub 3 hours 45 minutes might be a target for next time. For now, I can look forward to less tarmac and more coastal path where I feel a lot more at home.

Teignbridge Trotters and the race director in particular, Roger Hayes, do a fantastic job before, during and after the race. I thoroughly recommend it to anyone considering running an ultra-marathon. ■

### Top 5 places to run in South West

- Coastal path between Land's End and Pendeen Lighthouse
- Jurassic Coast between Exmouth and Lyme Regis
- Haytor, Dartmoor
- Exmoor around Minehead and Dunkery Beacon
- Great Western Canal, Tiverton



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[www.woodovis.com](http://www.woodovis.com)



# WHAT'S ON

Follow Active  
Dartmoor on:

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In our new-look guide we pick some the best things to do and places to visit whether you want to walk, run, cycle, ride or swim.

If you're looking for a challenge there's a range of events on and around Dartmoor over the coming months to test your fitness. Alternatively, there are some great open-air swimming pools to visit for a more relaxing time.

## WALK/RUN

**Saturday 15 August**  
**Sticklepath Horseshoe Fell Race**

[www.tamartrotters.co.uk](http://www.tamartrotters.co.uk)

**Saturday 5 September**  
**Dartmoor Ultra Trail 50 - The Perambulation**

[www.raceeasy.co.uk](http://www.raceeasy.co.uk)

**Saturday 12 September**  
**Okehampton Rotary Autumn Challenge**  
[autumnchallengeok.info](http://autumnchallengeok.info)

**Saturday 19 September**  
**Commando Shuffle**  
[www.fssaa.com](http://www.fssaa.com)

**Sunday 4 October**  
**Abbots Way Walk**  
[www.moorlandguides.co.uk](http://www.moorlandguides.co.uk)



## CYCLE

**Saturday 5 September**  
**Moor 2 Sea Sportive**  
[www.justevents.org](http://www.justevents.org)

**Sunday 27 September**  
**Dartmoor Sportive**  
[www.evanscycles.com](http://www.evanscycles.com)

**Sunday 11 October**  
**St Lukes Tour de Moor**  
[www.stlukes-hospice.org.uk](http://www.stlukes-hospice.org.uk)

## RIDE

**Sunday 23 August**  
**Brentor Endurance Ride**  
[www.endurancegbsouthwest.com](http://www.endurancegbsouthwest.com)



## SWIM

Dartmoor has a number of open-air swimming pools which can be great places to swim and relax during the warmer months.

**Ashburton Outdoor Heated Pool**  
**Open 23 May - 6 September**  
A 21 metre pool with a pleasant lawned area for spectators, a swimming pool café and swings.  
Tel: 01364 652828  
Email: [Leisure@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:Leisure@teignbridge.gov.uk)  
[www.teignbridge.gov.uk/leisure](http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/leisure)

**Bovey Tracey Swimming Pool**  
**Open 18 April - 13 September**  
A charity-run, 25 metre, outdoor heated facility with toddler pool and family facilities available. There are also full facilities for people with disabilities, including a chair hoist to assist entry and exit from the pool.  
Tel: 01626 832828  
Email: [info@boveyswimmingpool.co.uk](mailto:info@boveyswimmingpool.co.uk)  
[www.boveyswimmingpool.org.uk](http://www.boveyswimmingpool.org.uk)

## Buckfastleigh Open Air Swimming Pool

**Open 23 May - 31 August**

Whether you want a quiet relaxing early-morning swim, or a fun splash around with the family, the heated Buckfastleigh Open Air Swimming Pool is a place where everyone can enjoy the benefits of open-air swimming.

Tel: 01364 642222

[www.buckfastleighpool.co.uk](http://www.buckfastleighpool.co.uk)



## Chagford Swimming Pool

**Open 23 May until early September**

An open-air, river-fed public pool with a toddler pool and tea shed. The temperature of the water is maintained with solar pool covers. The water is filtered and a minimal amount of chlorine is added for safety. Assuming the weather is reasonable, the pool heats each morning through the covers raising the temperature from the chilly 16C of the river to 25C if the weather is consistently good.  
Tel: 01647 432929 (May - Sept only)  
[www.chagfordpool.co.uk](http://www.chagfordpool.co.uk)



## Moretonhampstead Swimming Pool


**Normally open end of May to beginning of September depending on the weather**

A community run, open-air, 25 metre solar-heated swimming pool on the edge of Dartmoor. Located behind the Court Street Car Park in Moretonhampstead.  
[www.moretonpool.co.uk](http://www.moretonpool.co.uk)

If you have an event that you would like to publicise in *Active Dartmoor* please email [jenny@activedartmoor.com](mailto:jenny@activedartmoor.com)

Thinking of organising an event on Dartmoor? Please contact the Dartmoor National Park Access and Recreation team on 01626 832093





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# Quay climbing centre

Climbing for everyone...



## Located in the heart of Exeter

The largest dedicated indoor wall in the South West offers something for all abilities, from beginners to experienced climbers, with two great boulder caves for bouldering fanatics. Whatever the weather you can experience some of the thrill of the outdoors indoors at the Quay, or just enjoy the view of the action from our Workshop Cafe!

## Climbing wall meets theme park

The UK's first Clip 'n Climb is now open at the Quay. Anyone can clip in and start climbing on our circuit of themed climbs with inflatable walls, speed races, moving parts and the ultimate test - the Leap of Faith!

**clip'n  
climb**  
AT THE QUAY



The Quay Climbing Centre  
Haven Road, Exeter, EX2 8AX t. 01392 426 850  
[www.quayclimbingcentre.co.uk](http://www.quayclimbingcentre.co.uk) [www.clipnclimbexeter.co.uk](http://www.clipnclimbexeter.co.uk)