

active

LIVE YOUR LIFE TO THE FULL OUTDOORS

DARTMOOR



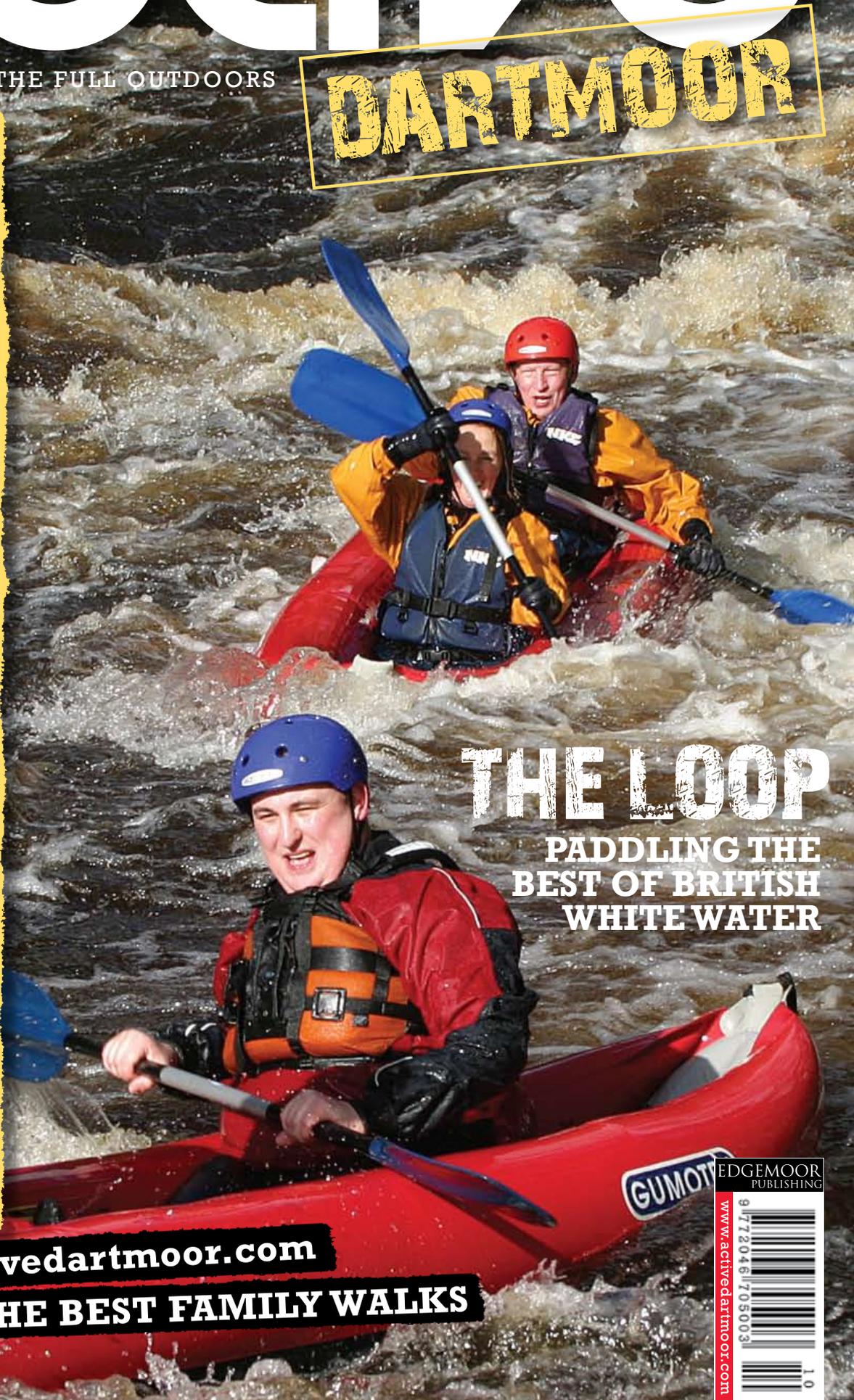
OWL PROWL! IT'S A HOOT!



ESSENTIAL SKILL - FIRST AID



WINTER CLIMBS - DEVON STYLE



THE LOOP

PADDLING THE BEST OF BRITISH WHITE WATER

www.actedartmoor.com

THE BEST FAMILY WALKS

K2

EDGEMOOR PUBLISHING





The Specialist Outdoor Equipment Shop



This year we celebrate our 25th year of tried tested methods in professional footwear fitting. Come and see the experts with your outdoor footwear needs and the biggest range in the South West.

From trail running, walking the dog or taking on the most rugged terrain home and abroad we can help you with the right kit and advice.

Also in store to help us celebrate this year is the most exciting range of clothing and equipment we have ever had.

Innovation and Performance from Arc'teryx using the best materials to make sure you get the most out of your chosen activity. You can trust Arc'teryx and Kountry Kit that you will stay warm and dry.

Mountain Equipment's 50th Birthday with a pro store.

Mammut's 150th year with their much anticipated Eiger Extreme range.

A dedicated Icebreaker area for all your premium wool base layers and mid layers.

**23 West Street - Tavistock - 01822 613089
info@kountrykit.com - www.kountrykit.com**

active

DARTMOOR

Active Dartmoor Magazine is published by Edgemoor Publishing Ltd, Wykeham House, Station Road, Okehampton, Devon EX20 1DY 01837 659224

PUBLISHER Simon Lloyd
simon@activedartmoor.com
EDITOR John Baker
john@activedartmoor.com
ART EDITOR Simon Lloyd

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Susie Walker 01392 201227
info@zamedia.co.uk
Zara Media & Design
14 Kingfisher Court, Venny Bridge, Exeter EX4 8JN

Active Dartmoor Magazine is published twice a year. Copy date for each issue is approximately six weeks before publication.

Active Dartmoor Magazine is printed by Four Way Print Ltd Launceston PL15 7ED Tel 01566 771950

The editor is always pleased to consider material for publication. Any transparencies, prints and copy sent by post must be accompanied by an SAE for their return. Material that is on offer elsewhere cannot be accepted. It must be original and not infringe the copyright of others. Authors and contributors must have obtained the copyright holder or archive's permission to use any photographs, drawings or maps etc submitted. We are unable to accept poetry or fiction. The views expressed by contributors to Active Dartmoor Magazine are not necessarily those of the editor.

DISCLAIMER Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that adverts and articles appear correctly, Edgemoor Publishing cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused directly or indirectly by the contents of this publication. The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of its publisher or editor.

IMPORTANT NOTICE No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system (including CDs) or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

Active Dartmoor recognises the hazardous nature of Dartmoor and the inherent risks of outdoor activities.

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 by Mark Rainsley courtesy of River Dart Country Park



I have just lit the first of many fires for this winter. It's not cold, but dank outside and it was with some reverence I picked up the top logs from my neatly stacked wood pile - the result of good honest work in the woods and probably a little bit of obsessive behaviour too.

What now as the winter evenings draw in and a trip to the tors for some bouldering becomes a rare delight? When the clocks go back I will no doubt be taking the softer option and making the most of the indoor facilities for climbing that exist around the moor, including established favourite Dartrock and the new Quay climbing wall in Exeter - a regional facility that will transform the climbing scene in Devon and the region.

But the essence of this issue is to illustrate that Activity on Dartmoor needn't become dormant for the colder months. Indeed, opportunities for adventure lie in winter's adversity and the calendar of events lists a varied and busy range of activities on offer from local providers.

Good brisk walks abound and on a great day of weather, Mark Stratton gets out on the high tors of the eastern moor following in the footsteps of outdoor publisher Ken Wilson on one of his challenging Classic Walks. Julia Wherrell finds sanctuary from the elements underground exploring Pridhamsleigh cavern on the limestone fringe of Southern Dartmoor and Tamsin Grey sneaks along the sheltered Avon valley to put her head above the parapet at the Avon Dam to momentarily experience the harsh beauty of the wild south moor. Ben Bradford continues his weather watch with tips and advice in forecasting whilst out on the hoof.

At a faster pace we find out that Dartmoor, without a doubt, has some of the best open country for trail running. We set the scene for this fast growing sport before following Nick Arding on the awesome Royal Marine 30 miler route 'march' and listening to Phillipa Arding's equivalent experience as a civilian.

Active Dartmoor's investigation into the big ticks for Dartmoor adventures continues on a winter theme with Jack Russell's personal and enthusiastic rendition of paddling The loop, the most iconic of white water descents in the UK. In contrast, with his feet firmly on dryish ground, Mark Lane describes his journey into bushcraft and the links it provides between a modern thirst for adventure and a touchstone with our ancestry and time proven outdoor skills.

With all adventures, big and small, time set aside for contemplation and reflection welds in and adds to a richer experience. Our moor poets describe their inspiration and share their thoughts with us whilst Bracken Vernon-Jellier illustrates the top tips of some of Dartmoor's local photographers for capturing that rare moment when light, place and people combine for a very distinctive moment in time - winter or summer.

So I hope you enjoy this winter issue of *Active Dartmoor*. Put your feet up for a good and inspiring read with outdoor articles from some really enthusiastic local writers. I'm going to put another log on the fire...

John



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas

- 05** **In the News**
News from around the Park
- 07** **Dartmoor Trail Running**
Nick Arding canters through his experience of the 30 miler
- 10** **Dartmoor Photography**
- 13** **Dartmoor First Aid**
Essential outdoor skills
- 16** **Dartmoor Caving**
- 19** **A Classic Dartmoor Walk**
- 22** **BIG TICK - The Loop**
Jack Russell describes the song of the paddle with his descent of the Dart
- 26** **Bushcraft**
Mark Lane heads for the woods
- 30** **Adventure Okehampton**
Proves that running a business is an adventure in itself
- 33** **Winter Climbing**
No excuses! There are indoor walls on our doorstep
- 36** **Pub Walk**
Great for a Sunday stroll
- 37** **Subscribe**
Silly not to
- 38** **Weather Watch**
It's not always wet in winter...
- 40** **Active Pen**
Reflections on a day out
- 42** **Bunkhouses**
The Fox Tor Cafe
- 44** **Avon Calling**
A good afternoon stroll for the family
- 46** **Gear Focus**
Trailventure in Ashburton and a review of headtorches
- 48** **Book Reviews**
Good Christmas Presents these
- 49** **Night Watch**
Owl Prowl
- 50** **Technology**
Apps
- 53** **Events**
Even the winter time has a jam packed calendar on Dartmoor
- 54** **Directory**
News from around the Park



Active Dartmoor and the Dartmoor Magazine visit the shows

Edgemoor Publishing made full use of its information trailer this year. Simon Lloyd Edgemoor's publisher said: "It's been fun and worthwhile visiting the local village shows and meeting some of the magazine's readers and getting some really useful feedback."



Dartmoor guides stride out with a new website



With a National Park as large as Dartmoor there is so much to learn about and enjoy that many visitors prefer walking the moors in the company of a knowledgeable guide who can explain about the moorland and conduct various themed walks to places where visitors might never stroll.

It is not just the visitor who gets pleasure out of walking across the moors; local walkers also take to the hills and come back time and time again on guided walks. Moorland Guides is a recently established co-operative of qualified guides who have led walks for the National Park Authority for many years – both public walks as well as educational walks for students of all ages.

Central to the company is their website www.moorlandguides.co.uk which will eventually list all public guided walks on Dartmoor as well as beyond.



Tour of Britain visits Dartmoor September 2011

Photograph Mike Kinsey of snapstar.co.uk

ACTIVE AUDIO

Enjoy a great walk on Dartmoor in the company of your own personal guide. Dartmoor National Park Authority has produced a series of downloadable audio walks for Bellever, Haytor, Postbridge and Princetown. Download onto your mp3/iPod and enjoy a walk with a difference, when it suits you!

As an added bonus, the accompanying music on the soundtrack - "Poor Man's Heaven" - is courtesy of local Dartmoor folk musician, Seth Lakeman (reproduced by kind permission of Seth Lakeman and EMI).

All downloads are in mp3 format and can be played using any audio player such as iTunes, Windows Media Player or Real Player.

Visit www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk and click on Visiting.



New look visiting pages on National Park web site

The 'Visiting' section of the Dartmoor National Park Authority's website has recently been refreshed and restructured to make information on a range of outdoor activities and events easier to find. The Visiting section now includes:

Active Dartmoor - information and ideas on a range of recreational activities such as walking, cycling, canoeing and climbing, with new sections added for geocaching and staying safe on the moors. If you are thinking about organising a large recreational event, then take a look at the revised guidance available in this section.

Accessible Dartmoor – here you can find details of 'Easy Going' routes, aimed at people with limited mobility, or families with very young children.

Caring for Dartmoor – includes the Countryside Code and advice on taking your dog into the National Park.

Take a look at www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk and start planning your next trip!

The Dartmoor Access Forum is looking for volunteers to help provide advice to Dartmoor National Park Authority and other organisations on ways to improve access and recreation for all in Dartmoor National Park.

This is an independent advisory body of volunteers who have the passion, skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to help make a difference for Dartmoor.

The Forum aims to make Dartmoor more accessible and enjoyable for open air recreation, in ways which address environmental, social and economic interests.

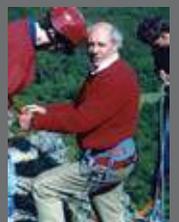
Members of the Forum are appointed for a period of three years. One third of places on the Forum come up for renewal each year. The Forum is keen to hear from people with experience in a range of areas including leisure, tourism and recreational activities, farming, land management or traditional countryside pursuits, nature conservation, archaeology, education or local business.

The Forum would also welcome applications from minority groups, young people and people with disabilities who are happy to add their voice and experience.

Forum members act in a voluntary capacity, but the Authority can pay reasonable expenses. Further information and application forms can be downloaded from Dartmoor National Park Authority's website, or call 01626 832093.

The closing date for this round of applications is 10 October but please register your interest for future vacancies.

As we go to press John Earle reports the passing of Dave Bassett one of the pioneers of climbs on the Dartmoor tors and the Dewerstone in the 1960s including Aviation on Low Man still graded as E1 and regarded as one of Britain's great rock climbs. A full obituary will appear in the next issue.



ACTIVE DARTMOOR FOR ALL

The countryside is not always easy to get around on foot, particularly if you have limited mobility or a child in a buggy! To help those who are less mobile, or who have very young children, make the most of what Dartmoor National Park has to offer, Dartmoor National Park Authority and Dartmoor for All have produced *Easy-Going Dartmoor*.

This updated online guide will help the less mobile make the right choice for a day out and includes suggested 'easy going' and more adventurous walks, with route maps illustrating what you can expect in terms of gradient, surface, camber and obstacles. All the walks described in *Easy-Going Dartmoor* are situated close to car parking facilities.

To download your copy of *Easy-Going Dartmoor* visit www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk and click on Visiting. For further information please contact the National Park Authority's Access & Recreation Team on (01626) 832093 or email recreation@dartmoor.npa.gov.uk

SOUTH WEST TOURISM AWARD FOR CASTLE DROGO

The last castle to be built in England has been presented with a Silver award in the prestigious South West Tourism Excellence Awards.

Castle Drogo faced tough competition to make it through to be one of the 42 finalists from more than 300 entries.



Judges praised the team at Castle Drogo for running an excellent visitor centre and café and for having excellent customer service.

Castle Drogo has become a year round visitor attraction and last year saw 128,000 visitors, an increase of 25,000 on the previous year.

Catherine Maddern, Castle Drogo Visitor Services Manager said: "We are absolutely thrilled to receive the Silver award. I was honoured to receive this award. On behalf of all the team at Castle Drogo in recognition of the amount of hard work staff and volunteers put in to make it one of the best visitor attractions in the South West."

Dartmoor National Park needs you

Volunteering on Dartmoor is great fun and in addition to learning new skills volunteers can be involved in a huge range of projects including bridge construction, stile and gateway installation and walling and hedging projects.

Work to benefit Dartmoor wildlife is also undertaken, with boxes for birds, bats and dormice being made and installed as well as improvements to habitats for butterflies and dragonflies and tree planting schemes carried out.

There are projects and volunteer days throughout the year all undertaking vital work to help conserve and enhance the wildlife, natural beauty and cultural heritage of the National Park.

To find out how you can volunteer for Dartmoor visit the Dartmoor National Park Authority website or telephone Rob Steemson, Head Ranger on 01626 831006 email rsteemson@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

BMC ACCESS AND CONSERVATION TRUST ENTERS A NEW ERA



The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) has restructured, revitalised and relaunched its charity – the BMC Access and Conservation Trust (ACT) – which funds projects to protect our cliffs and mountains.

The BMC is now raising the profile of the charity in order to help identify new projects to fund, and to generally boost support. This new era was celebrated at The Castle Climbing Centre's garden party on Sunday 14 August 2011 where people were able to find out more about the charity's work.

BMC CEO Dave Turnbull said, "ACT funds some fantastic projects to protect our mountains that we as climbers and walkers all benefit from. Projects range from footpath improvement and erosion control in the UK to litter picks on Everest. There is still a clear need for the financial support offered by ACT so we are committed to raising its profile and increasing the number of initiatives we support each year."

ACT supports the BMC's work by funding a wide range of practical projects including:

- Practical crag and footpath restoration
- Mountain recreation and conservation research
- Sustainable transport initiatives
- Campaigns for your countryside rights
- Crag and mountain information and guidance

These projects complement and add to the BMC's own access & conservation work.

New for 2011, ACT is also funding a BMC research grant initiative for postgraduate students working on projects that benefit climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.

The BMC is encouraging people to support ACT in a variety of ways:

- Give a donation or leave a legacy. You can donate online at thebmc.co.uk
- Suggest a project for ACT to support
- Join ACT on Facebook

International Year of the Forest



It's the UN's International Year of the Forest to raise awareness about our forests and their sustainable management. Whilst Dartmoor is distinctive for its high open moors there are also plenty of opportunities for woodland walks too providing a good option to find some shelter on a winter's day!

Bellever Forest, managed by the Forestry Commission is a beautiful place to visit. People can enjoy the tranquility of a picnic by the East Dart River or an exhilarating walk up to Bellever Tor to take in the stunning views. The forest, which has a range of waymarked trails, also boasts a wealth of wildlife, archaeology and grazing Dartmoor ponies.

The site is bursting with archaeology from the clapper bridge and the Lych Way, to the many stone cists, burial cairns and field boundaries. There are also over 30 hut circles within the forest, a hint that there were many more people living on the high moor during the Bronze Age than there are today.

Bellever is a great place for a family walk or picnic. It is also a great place to hold events, and anyone wanting to use the forest for events or activities can contact the Forestry Commission on 01392 832262.

Trail running is one of the fastest growing sports with a world wide following. You only have to look at the leading big outdoor brands such as The North Face to see that it's business for them.

THE 30 MILLER

By Nick and Philippa Arding

Nick and Philippa live on the edge of Dartmoor. They both work in leadership development and are keen climbers and mountain runners.

On Dartmoor there is a rich heritage of activity from orienteering, to hash running to club events and more recently the hugely successful Original Mountain Marathon and the Dartmoor Mountain Marathon. The open nature of Dartmoor country provides an exhilarating backdrop to this addictive and compelling activity.

When I think of trail running on Dartmoor my mind can't help but wander to that ultimate challenge that regularly takes place - the final effort in the Royal Marines Commando test, known as the 30 miler. Instead of thinking North Face, shaving grams with the latest lightweight kit and being fresh into an endurance event, think full battle kit, carrying a weapon and running 30 miles in boots at the end of a gruelling and arduous training programme.

Nick Arding is a regular climber, runner and paddler. He is also a retired Lieutenant Colonel from the Royal Marines. Here he describes the 30 miler and unpicks the mystery of this legendary event...



Finishing 30 miles at the Dartmoor Training Centre

MOOR TRAILS - a civilian's experience of the 30 miler by Phillipa Arding

I stood at the start of the legendary '30 miler', a little anxious, early on a calm clear morning, with the promise of a perfect spring day ahead. As I jogged over the springy turf, with the tors stretching ahead, I delighted in the fact I wasn't carrying the load that the Royal Marines have. The only pressure I had was that it was one of my first 'dates' with my future husband! The route crosses the wilderness of the north moor, and skirts the farms of the south, plunging into valleys and grinding up to the granite summits.

It was my first big run on Dartmoor, and I have since used the moor as a perfect training ground for a few competitions; the Haytor Hella, The OMM (held on Dartmoor in 2010), the 'Dartmoor Long O' and other orienteering races, the gruelling Chagford Challenge or the Dartmoor Discovery Ultra Marathon. The moor offers a vast choice of terrain, the experience of running in all weathers, steep ascents, rolling moorland tops, short cropped grass or ankle-snapping clumps of purple moor grass known as 'babies heads'. When the loudest noise is the soaring lark's song and the air smells of coconut ice from the gorse, it is impossible not to get a thrill from striding across the hillsides, marvelling at the view. It makes you want to run and run.



Halfway near Postbridge

With breakfast barely settled in our stomachs we limped painfully along the tarmac road to the start, blisters smarting from the previous month's 'speed marches' and other 'Commando Tests'. This was it, we'd got to the final hurdle and now all we had to do was to keep going for 30 miles; not make a single navigation error for seven hours and stay jogging and fast walking across the punishing Dartmoor terrain with 40 lbs of equipment – right now it felt like a big hurdle. We stopped by the gate above the camp at Okehampton, the harsh orange streetlight making the darkness of the moor around us feel absolute. "One minute to go," said the Sergeant quietly. We tightened each other's straps, made a final check of our weapons. I remember the voice of Captain Rob Fry as we stood poised. "Gentlemen, savour this moment, you'll only feel like this again if you come under enemy fire or if you go to the altar". We took a deep breath. "Let's go," said the sergeant.

The '30 miler' is the culmination of the Commando Course, the most demanding part of training for recruits and young officers becoming Royal Marines. The Service is unique in the world for having the officers and men undergo the same training, side by side and it has the effect of instilling a fierce loyalty across the ranks and a set of core values for the organization that are second to none. The '30 miler' has been run in its

current form (with a few minor route changes) for the past 35 years. For recruits it takes place during week 30 of their 32 week training course at the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone near Exmouth. By the time these young men get to the 'start line' their bodies are seriously run down. In the previous days they have completed three of the four gruelling 'Commando Tests' – the 'Endurance Course' (two miles across 'Woodbury Common' including tunnels, pools and a 'water tunnel' followed by the 4 mile run back to camp and then a test of marksmanship on the range), the '9 Mile Speed March',

the 'Tarzan Course' and the 'Assault Course' – each one of these a serious test of speed, agility and endurance in its own right. By the '30 miler' most are carrying injuries and they are both physically and mentally exhausted.

The training teams at Lympstone have recently lead the way for the UK military in adopting modern coaching techniques as a means of providing a more 'humane' training, itself far more effective than 'traditional' methods. There is however nothing 'humane' about this final test; 30 miles, 7 hours, you pass or you fail, simple.

The route starts gently enough (if you forget the unpleasantly early start!). The range road leads across the side of Harter Hill and down to the ford across the East Okement River. Then it's a rude awakening with the 100 metre climb up the flanks of Higher Tor following the aptly named 'Irishman's Wall'. By now the blisters are a dull ache, as are the sores on our backs from the rubbing equipment. The human body has a wonderful way of prioritizing and just now such minor ailments are 'low on the list'. The first third of the route heads roughly SSE to Fernworthy Forest and then on to 'Bennett's Cross'. During the numerous '30





milers' I have run since my own training course, 'Little Hound Tor' has become my favourite spot with the sun just peeping up over Gidleigh Common; purple clouds often menacing the sky over the 'south moor'. It's interesting to imagine what our Bronze Age ancestors would have made of the young aspirant marines, jogging past Scorhill Circle every other week, year in year out. On the North edge of Fernworthy Forest there is a simple stone dedicated to 'Yorkie' Perry who was the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Commando Training Centre and who had a heart attack whilst accompanying his recruits on their test on a wintery February morning in 1992.

I remember getting to the first checkpoint at Bennett's Cross car park. One of our training sergeants was waiting by the entrance beside a large box. "Pasty Sir," he said as I approached. I mistook his greeting for a question and answered, "No thank you Sergeant Haddon." He took a pace forward, blocked my way and, showing the parcel in my face, growled, "Eat the f***g pasty... Sir." – so I did!

The middle section of the route now heads down through 'Soussons', across Cator Common towards Corndon Down and down the stony track of Dr Blackall's Drive to cross the Dart at Newbridge. It's a relatively easy 'leg', but as the teams try to make up time by moving fast it turns out not to be so easy after all! In order to complete the route in the allocated time (7 hours for officers, 8 hours for recruits) you need to go at a steady 'jog' along the level and down

hill, a fast walk uphill and over difficult terrain – not dissimilar to running the 'OMM' or any other of the mountain marathons. The recruits and young officers run in teams of 6 or 7 men with at least two members of the training staff. It's a team effort, if one man fails they all fail and the only time a man is left is if the training staff decide to 'retire' him at one of the checkpoints.

From the bridge it's an arduous climb up past Holne to the cattle grid at the old quarry. This is the final checkpoint, the last point to 'retire' from the course although no one getting this far would contemplate such a decision. So determined are the recruits and young officers that the training teams have to be very watchful here, especially in the heat of the summer. From here it's around 10km to the finish at Princetown but it's murderous ground and the numerous re-entrants on the flanks of Skir Hill and Naker's mean far more distance is invariably covered. In 'my day' the course finished at Cross Furzes, having traversed the top of 'Ryder's' to Snowdon and 'Puper's'. I can remember the five of us belting down the final track past Hayford Hall, right 'on the limit' for our completion time.

Is it a hard test for the recruits and young officers – yes, especially on the back of the four week Commando Course. But it provides an invaluable 'yardstick' by which these young men can gauge themselves in the future and when times are particularly difficult they can say, "Well, we got through the '30 miler' ok..." ■

INSPIRED? TRY TRAIL RUNNING ON DARTMOOR

Informal groups run their own series but the following are well known, well organised and marshalled events that are worth considering. To run on the moor or its fringes is a serious undertaking and should only be considered by those fit, able and competent enough to do so. Runners should be well equipped, able to navigate with map and compass and leave details of their route and a back-up plan with a trustworthy person. A local club is by far the best way to try this activity out. Watch out for further information advice and expertise in future issues of *Active Dartmoor*.

HAYTOR HELLER

A well organised event run by the Teignbridge Trotters. This popular, established moorland race starts below Haytor Rock and follows a hilly, circular route before a fast downhill finale to the finish opposite the middle car park at Haytor. The course is completely off road with several steep ascents and descents over its six miles. The route passes through the land of two landowners who have kindly given permission for the race to take place.

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION'S CHALLENGE WALKS

The regional branch of the LDWA organises two events on Dartmoor. The aim is to walk a route via defined checkpoints within a specific time. These walks represent extremely good value for money as the entry fee includes refreshments (often homemade cake etc), a certificate and usually an unforgettable experience.

April: Chagford Challenge: 30/21/16 miles routes around Dartmoor.

July: Reservoir Kanter: 25/19/14 miles navigational challenge centred on a Dartmoor reservoir.

DROGO 10

A 10 mile race that is very popular with its course along the beautiful Teign Valley below Castle Drogo. There are some tough hills and a demanding finish - enough to make a grown man weep. Set in November so expect sublime autumnal crisp days with frost and sunshine or battle against the heinous Dartmoor weather blowing in off the high moor.

BEACON CHALLENGE

This scenic, but challenging, multi-terrain race starts and finishes in Victoria Park, Ivybridge. The course is organised by the Erme Valley Harriers and covers around 7.5 miles of woodland and moorland paths and includes the ascent of Western Beacon.

THE NIGEL JENKNS ROUND

A modern day version of the Dartmoor 1240 AD perambulation, but instead of doing it on horseback Nigel Zippy Jenkins ran round the moor before new year celebrations in 1999. The straight line course is 86km with 3690m of ascent. Only three people are known to have done it.

WEBSITES

www.orienteeringindevon.org.uk

www.ultramarathonrunning.com

www.ldwa.org.uk/devonandcornwall

www.thedrogo.co.uk/

www.teignbridgetrotters.co.uk/haytor_heller/

Dartmoor has been an inspiration to artists for centuries from the paintings of Widgey, to the words of Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle and the photography of the late James Ravilious. But in these modern times it is not just the experts that can capture its spirit. Bracken Vernon-Jelier meets five photographers all willing to share their secrets to making moorland moments last through the art of photography.



"Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs"

Seeing the Light: Exploring the elements of
Dartmoor photography



Below left, Trails at Gawton near Tavistock by Jacob Gibbins
 Right, Windy at Post Cross by Lee Pengelly
 Below, Staple tor sunset by Adrian Oakes



When is the best time to take the photographs of a landscape that rolls with clouds and is swept by ever-changing weathers? “Be prepared to get up very early and go to bed late,” says Andrew. “The perfect time is sunrise and the hour afterwards and then sunset and the hour afterwards – when the shadows are long. I always tell anyone that comes on my courses that there is only one golden rule – the Golden Hour. Never shoot a landscape when your shadow is shorter than you are!”

Landscape photographer Lee Pengelly agrees. “It’s all about the golden glow, the light that accentuates all of those shapes in front of you. Be prepared to stay late!” He cannot fail to be moved by a well-lit landscape. “It’s a moment when I am completely absorbed in the atmosphere where everything slows down. Something special happens in those moments.” Lee also recommends using a tripod in these conditions. “You need a tripod to help soak up the atmosphere, because if you are shooting on higher speeds you need it to be steady and uninterrupted.”

Photographer and author Adrian Oakes says it’s one of the most essential considerations. “People research and then buy an expensive camera but buy a cheap tripod. The first thing I tell anyone is that you have to invest in a very good quality tripod. Buying a cheap one is like buying a Porche and then putting re-mould tyres on it. It defeats the object entirely.”

The physical challenge of shooting landscapes in Devon’s great wilderness cannot be overlooked though, as Andrew Coulter knows only too well. “I have been known to be so absorbed in the sky above me that I have fallen thigh deep in a bog and had to return home in my underwear.”

Amongst a list of photography equipment there is one thing you can’t overlook agrees Lee Pengelly. “Waterproofs and warm clothing. Be prepared for anything because it can change at any minute and what appeared to be a bright spring morning could turn into something that resembles the depths of winter.”

Photographer Jacob Gibbins, however, takes the already

The wonderful thing about Dartmoor is its ability to provide new lens-inspiring moments at every turn; a vast array of landscapes, environment and light, all of which are beautiful in their own right. Sometimes just being a witness to those moments is enough. As my grandfather, Don Brown, (a well known Devon artist) said, “It’s not just the seeing, but the feeling of timelessness and loneliness and an awareness of ‘almost eternity’, like being an intruder with permission.”

There are times that I would like to capture its essence, to preserve it as an inspiration to me in darker times; what could be more inspiring than the stunning heather moorland during August with its purple vibrancy all lit up in the evening light?

However, I have found that it’s not always that simple; one click of a button doesn’t equal the magnificence of the moors and neither does it do it justice. I wonder if it is really an unobtainable elixir that is

God given to others and not me – or am I in need of some professional help?

With all these landscapes and landmarks it’s no wonder Dartmoor has its own group of professional photographers. I selected a few of our favourites from the region and hoped that their experience and tips would give us all a little inspiration.

Andrew Coulter’s photographs make everyone and everything look timeless and spiritual; I’ve got a secret longing to have my portrait taken by him because I know and trust that he’ll make me look beautiful – and they say the camera never lies! But for someone who is famous for his portrait and wedding work, it is reassuring to know that he feeds his inspiration for all photography in the open wilderness of the moors.

He said, “There are not many blue skies in the pictures I take, for me crazy light and stormy skies work best. I like a bright landscape and a heavy sky and I’ll often sit and wait for that to happen in front of me.”

challenging terrain of the moors just that little bit further. The mountain biker turned photographer has carved a name for himself in the world of sport for his high-octane pictures of mud and mayhem right across the world. For him a trip on the moors means more than just a camera and tripod. "I carry my kit in a specialised rucksack designed for carrying camera equipment, used by skiers and mountain boarders. I like to push myself right into the heart of Dartmoor, maybe a two hour ride to get the very best topography from which to take photographs. Sometimes, if I take a model, they might fall off the bike or I might get a puncture and we end up having to turn back. It has to be well planned and we have to be ready for anything. It's about respecting the awesomeness of your surroundings and knowing what you have to do to work in harmony with it."

Photographer and author of books such as *Perfect Dartmoor*, *Dartmoor*, *A Winter's Tale* and *Panoramic Dartmoor*, Adrian Oakes has an impressive connection to the moors and I feel strongly that his experience will help guide anyone that is looking for inspiration. "Anyone can take a good photograph with the right amount of tuition," he says. "I often see natural ability in people that come on my workshops and courses, but it's an ability and an understanding of aperture, focus and seeing light and judging it that really makes a picture work."

"I have often worked hard at getting just the right picture – just the right light. I once took a student up on to Great Staple Tor and she kept managing to get just the right picture – the light just perfectly (natural ability), then suddenly the light changed again and I captured it. Right there – wonderful."

It seems to me that all the photographers that I have spoken to take deep pleasure



in their art and it is as much from the heart as it is to make a living – despite them all being professionals. So when it comes to sharing those images with the outside world, what do you show and what do you discard?

Andrew Coulter's first tip could save some time. "Delete what you are not keen on and won't use. I can shoot up to 40,000 photos a year and sometimes I will come back from a day out and end up keeping just three of my best. Storage of all of those pictures will always be a problem."

Lee Pengelly looks on it in another way. "It is so wonderful to be able to use my photography as a way to document the moors. Sometime I can look through my pictures of one of my favourite spots, for example of a stunted hawthorn tree that grows above Sheepstor village, and see how the landscape has changed over the years. The loss of a tree, the effect of a season; it's a fascinating way to document some of its overlooked history. It is so easy to take your surroundings for granted, but sometimes you look back at the images and think – wow – that's amazing!" ■



DON'T SHOOT FROM THE HIP

BUY A GOOD QUALITY LIGHTWEIGHT TRIPOD
Essential for being able to document the ever changing light. Adrian Oakes recommends Manfrotto 190X PRO B.

SELECT THE APPROPRIATE EDITING SOFTWARE
Many people use Photoshop, but Adobe Lightroom or Bibble are also recommended.

DON'T SPEND TOO MUCH MONEY on lenses and kit or being tempted by the gadgetry that the shop offers – you don't even need to have an expensive camera. Focus on the light and the pictures will come. Many photography competitions will even take the incredible quality of a smartphone into consideration!

BE INSPIRED! Have a look at some of the wonderful landscape photography of others such as Joe Cornish, David Norton, Charlie Waite, David Ward, Colin Prior and the Landscape Photography of the Year Books.

Don't forget Dartmoor photography heroes such as Chris Chapman and James Ravilious!

DON'T BE FRIGHTENED. Many people are alarmed at the thought of switching to manual from automatic; don't be. Many of the world's best photographers are self-taught having experimented with light and settings to get what they want. It really is the best way to learn.

GET A HELPING HAND. There are many photography courses available right across Dartmoor, from landscape to action, from portrait to botanical. All of the photographers I have spoken to today offer some form of tuition and courses.

JOIN THE CLUB. Camera clubs are also a social way to improve your skills. You can share in other people's experiences, join others to find some new and inspiring places and attend related workshops and seminars.

FEELING BRAVE? If you have some photographs that you are particularly proud of, then to celebrate their 60th Anniversary, Dartmoor National Park is running a Capturing Dartmoor Photography Competition. The first prize is a landscape workshop with one of the judges, Adrian Oakes. For more info see www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk.

For information on courses available, commissions and to buy prints from the photographers featured:

Adrian Oakes: 07970 558491 www.adrianoakes.com

Lee Pengelly: 07944 145 992 www.silver scenephoto.co.uk

Jacob Gibbins: 07895 023 068 www.jacobgibbins.co.uk

Andrew Coulter: 07972 707 337

www.devon-cornwall-wedding-photography.co.uk

Top left - Wheal Betsy by Andrew Coulter

Top right - Wistmans Wood by Adrian Oakes



OUTDOOR FIRST AID

The Basic Essentials
by Julia Wherrell

Many of us will have taken a first aid qualification while at school or work but haven't bothered to keep it up to date; I certainly hadn't. When my partner booked up for an outdoor first aid course as part of his rock climbing qualifications it occurred to me that I ought to go along as well. Otherwise if he, who usually leads, suffered a fall, what use would I be? ❏

My first surprise was that, rather than getting stuck into resuscitation techniques or a master class in bandaging, we learned that first aid in the great outdoors is all about managing the situation.



“When you are on the moor with an injured person and there’s no mobile signal, it could be hours before help gets to you,” says Stella Iskander of First Aid 4 Life. “The elements and the landscape are what’s critical – it’s all about managing the situation and making the right choices.”

As we worked our way through the two-day training course, this became very clear. You can make the best improvised splint this side of Cornwall, but if you don’t remember to summon help quickly, keep the casualty warm and their airway open, you may as well not bother.

“The most common general injuries suffered are to the lower leg and, not surprisingly, most often to walkers,” says Sam Iskander, Director of First Aid 4 Life. “What can seem a trivial accident can soon escalate into a disaster if people aren’t dressed for the conditions, the weather closes in and hypothermia and shock follow.”

“Lying on the ground, a casualty gets cold and starts to deteriorate quickly. So what do you do? Do you call for help, hoping for walkers nearby, even though it’s bad for your street cred? Stay with the injured person and hold their hand and say everything will be OK? And what do you do if they lapse into unconsciousness?”

Through repeated hands-on practice throughout the 16-hour course and taking part in some realistic scenarios out on the moor (during my course it was -8°C outside!), I found I learned

an awful lot and understood why appropriate and swift decision making was key.

Like many people, I started off too engrossed in the detail and not the overall view. While I was fussing around checking for broken limbs or bleeding, my ‘casualty’ was already dead from either hypothermia (I didn’t move them onto a mat) or lack of oxygen (failing to check the airway).

But in no time, Sam and Stella had me working methodically through the essentials and understanding what I was doing.

The ITC course offered by First Aid 4 Life is excellent in that, quite frankly, it is never boring. Say ‘first aid training’ to most people and their eyes glaze over. First Aid 4 Life manages to maintain the right balance of seriousness and fun and while they keep up the pace – there’s lots of information to cover – they don’t overload you. There’s far too much hands-on experience from shouting for help, rolling people over into a safe airway position and working through real and relevant scenarios, to even think about nodding off. And just when your brain is saying “I can’t remember all this!” the Iskanders calmly reassure you; through repetition, chat and review, the information begins to sink in.

“I remembered the last non-ITC first aid training course I attended being full of irrelevant anecdotes,” says Stella. “But once I saw how the ITC courses work, I realised how good they were and decided I wanted to get involved with the business too.” Before joining Sam in First Aid 4 Life, Stella was an occupational therapist and had been a qualified first aider since she was a Brownie! Stella also recalls non-ITC courses putting too much stress on examinations which detracted from people’s learning. “The courses we run involve lots of repetition which we feel is a much more useful and practical way of working.”

Participants on first aid courses for work are often there because they have to be, not because they want to be. Sam laughs. “We sometimes get some very

reluctant students who really don’t want to know but I’m pleased to say that, when they see the relevance and the practical nature of the course, they always get involved.”

“If you are a very ‘outdoorsy’ person, first aid training is vital really, especially if you are on Dartmoor, or anywhere that’s not easily accessible,” says Sam. “Extreme sports are growing in popularity and along with easier access to remote areas, accidents are becoming more commonplace.”

Sam knows what he’s talking about. As well as his day job as a trainer and Outdoor Instructor, he is also an ambulance ‘first responder’ for South Western Ambulance Service and a member of the Devon Cave Rescue Organisation.

Sam says: “When you can phone for help, dial 999 and give as much information as clearly and accurately as possible about the casualty and the setting. This can make the difference between a rescue team or air ambulance being deployed, a potential time-saving of hours. The emergency call handler will then alert the appropriate rescue service.”

I found the course immensely useful. It’s given me confidence to be more adventurous, but also more aware of where the potential dangers are and how to avoid them. Dartmoor is a great place for so many adventure sports - horse riding, climbing, cycling, trekking, kayaking and more – it makes sense to be prepared. Getting a first aid qualification, even through a basic one-day course, is very worthwhile. ■



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

KNOWING THE ABSOLUTE BASICS

Many of us will remember the ‘ABC’ priorities (Airway, Breathing and Circulation) – today this has been expanded to ABCDE and stands for:

A Assess for danger.

A Alert? Shout for help.

A irway check.

B reathing check.

C irculation check.

D ysfunction/damage check.

E nsure.

This list is no substitute for proper training, merely an aide memoire.

BASIC OUTDOOR FIRST AID COURSE

To fully understand what you should do in an emergency situation – take a one-day 8-hour course that will teach you the basic life support skills and all about ABCDE.

FIRST AID KIT

Sam Iskander recommends you start with a basic kit and tailor it to your specific activity.

For an off the shelf kit, look at 'Really Good Supplies', the only UK distributor for 'Adventure First Aid Kits'. Each kit is packaged in an Exped waterproof dry bag to protect its contents.

www.reallygoodsupplies.co.uk/adventure-first-aid-kit-large.html

To be very well kitted out, get yourself a Large Adventure First Aid Kit containing the following, then supplement it if required:

- * Dry bag
- * Nitrile powder-free gloves
- * Medi wipes
- * Fabric plaster wallet
- * Blister kit
- * Universal shears
- * Blunt splinter forceps
- * No 2 ambulance sterile dressing
- * Conforming bandage 7.5cm x 4m
- * Calico triangular bandage 90 x 127cm
- * Mouth to mouth shield with filter valve
- * Zinc oxide tape 2.5cm x 10m
- * Burns gel sachet 3.
- * Burns dressing 20cm X 20cm
- * Non adherent dressing pads 7.5cm x 7.5cm
- * 7.5cm x 7.5cm sterile dressings
- * Wound closure strips
- * Nato field dressing 20 cm x 19 cm
- * Pen torch
- * Thermometer
- * Duck tape



Duck tape...? Very useful! It's very strong, sticks to itself and everything else. It makes a robust emergency plaster, binds broken limbs to bodies, makes slings and has countless other practical uses in first aid situations.

COMMON SENSE

People often forget to take this with them. Try not to.

Mobile phones – remember to have credit on your phone! Also remember to charge your mobile phone then, if there is a signal, it will work. It's an urban myth that dialing 999 on a dead mobile will work, it won't.

Plan ahead – tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back.

Footwear – flip-flops and Dartmoor don't go together. Sturdy footwear is essential.

Clothing – warm and waterproof, lots of layers are better than one thick coat.

Medication – if you are diabetic, asthmatic, epileptic or have any other chronic condition, always take your medication with you as you may end up being away longer than you anticipated.

Water – take it with you. Dehydration in winter as well as a summer causes huge problems.

Map and compass – if you have to go for help, you'll know the shortest route and, unlike a GPS, there are no batteries to go flat.

Don't be put off – Dartmoor is a wild and beautiful place that is great fun to explore, but it's only sensible to be prepared. By having good first aid skills the whole experience can be a lot safer and more enjoyable.

LOCAL PROVIDERS OF FIRST AID TRAINING

Sam and Stella Iskander
First Aid 4 Life Limited
Powder Mills
Princetown
Devon
PL20 6SP
Telephone: 0560 252 5331
info@firstaid4life.com

Pixie's Holt
Outdoor Learning Centre
Dartmeet
Yelverton
PL20 6SG
01364 631500
dartmoor.centres@devon.gov.uk
www.devonldp.org/outdoor

Gavin Smart
Encompass Training UK Ltd
Great Potheridge House
Merton
Okehampton
Devon
EX20 3DN
Telephone: 01805 603368
gavin@encompassstraining.co.uk
www.encompassstraining.co.uk

THE NEXT STEPS

Take the more advanced two-day 16-hour course in outdoor first aid, this is the course I took:

OUTDOOR FIRST AID – SCOTTISH QUALIFICATION AUTHORITY ACCREDITATION

As an ITC Provider, First Aid 4 Life delivers the only mountain and outdoor first aid qualification that is externally regulated by national qualification regulators and meets the standards to appear on a national qualifications register.

Designed for all those working in remote, wilderness and mountain and outdoor situations who need comprehensive life-saving first aid for their environment, (as well as being of interest to forestry workers, environmentalists and those undertaking field

studies, to mention but a few), it is recognised by most outdoor national governing bodies instructor awards including canoeing and kayaking (BCU) and mountaineering and rock climbing (MLTUK).

FIRST AID AT WORK

Three-day course. This course is designed for all those who require an HSE recognised qualification covering comprehensive lifesaving techniques.

This course leads to a First Aid at Work qualification fully accredited by the HSE.

EMERGENCY FIRST AID AT WORK

One-day course. This course is designed for all those who require an HSE recognised qualification covering essential lifesaving techniques.

This course leads to an ITC Level 2 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (QCF) fully accredited by the HSE.

You will need to renew your first aid qualifications every three years.

National governing body requirements. Check out online what first aid qualifications national governing bodies require you to have. Most of the main bodies' websites, such as the British Mountaineering Council, have lots of useful advice. Try: www.thebmc.co.uk

CAVING ... IT'S ANOTHER WORLD

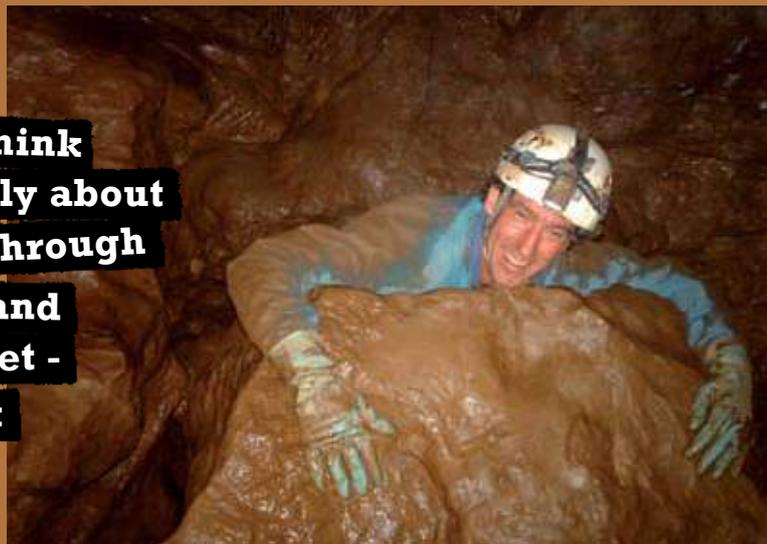


Julia Wherrell is a freelance writer, keen climber, walker and reluctant runner. She has lived on Dartmoor for 16 years and hopes to see out her days there.

What would you say to an opportunity to spend six or seven hours, completely undisturbed with a group of friends? No TV, no mobile, no internet – nothing. Does that appeal? To make it even more interesting, throw in the fact that you would all be working towards a common goal with plenty of physical and mental challenges, and your adventure can't even be spoiled by the changeable English weather, and you could go any time of the night or day...



People think caving is only about crawling through tiny holes and getting wet - it's not



Caving is a lot of fun and you do get into some interesting situations...

So what is this idyllic pursuit? Why, caving of course! “Caving, or potholing, is all about exploring a subterranean environment as a team,” says Simon Mullens, owner and senior instructor at Isca Outdoor. “People think caving is only about crawling through tiny holes and getting wet – it’s not. Many caves have passages as wide as rivers and chambers as large as cathedrals. Try caving and you’ll see a natural environment that you would never otherwise experience.”

As the temperature underground remains constant all year round caving is a very popular winter activity.

Pridhamsleigh Cavern, just outside Buckfastleigh is one of around 100 caves in Devon, but one of the few large enough to explore and probably the best for an introductory trip.

“Pridhamsleigh is a good fun cave, with lots of different options,” says Simon. “Think of it as a big block of Swiss cheese - it’s a relatively small area, but a very complex structure. You could spend three hours in Pridhamsleigh and never visit the same spot twice.

“It also has a lake at the bottom of the first system which is pretty spectacular, so it gives groups something to aim for.”

“Depending on the group, we can choose any number of routes to return by – an easy option or a more challenging one. People are always really buzzing when they exit the cave,” he says.

Jon Whiteley, a member of the Devon Speleological Society and rescue controller for the Devon Cave Rescue Organisation, has been caving for over 35 years. Ask him what the attraction is and, like many cavers he says: “Exploring ‘virgin’ caves where no-one else has ever stood before is a very special feeling. I’ve stood in a newly discovered cave that has been visited by fewer people than have stood on the moon!” Which is 12, by the way.

“Caving is unlike any other sport in that you can only experience it by doing it,” adds Jon.

Brendan Stone, Head of Outdoor Learning at Pixie’s Holt Outdoor Learning Centre at Dartmeet, regularly takes groups of youngsters into Pridhamsleigh. “Caving is always popular as it is something people don’t do on their own and is a unique environment.”

“We kit groups up in full caving suits and provide helmets and lights; at this stage they haven’t seen the cave so there is always an air of anticipation and sometimes trepidation! The entrance to the cave is quite small and takes a leap of confidence for some, but we say that if they can get in the entrance they’ll be fine in the rest of the cave as it opens up into larger passages and caverns once inside.”

“Pridhamsleigh is well known as a muddy cave so before long we hear squeals from those children who aren’t used to getting their hands dirty but a quick demonstration of mud face painting breaks down that barrier.”

“We usually spend about two hours underground and in that time we pass through the ‘Crystal Chamber,’ so called because of the beautiful white crystal deposits in the roof. Here

HOW ARE CAVES FORMED?

A cave or cavern is a natural underground space large enough for a human to enter. The formation and development of caves is known as speleogenesis. Caves are formed by various geologic processes and may involve a combination of chemical processes – erosion from water, tectonic forces, microorganisms, pressure and atmospheric influences.

Solutional caves are the most frequently occurring caves and form in rock that is soluble, such as limestone. Rock is dissolved by natural acid in groundwater that seeps through bedding-planes, faults, joints and so on. Over millennia, cracks expand to become caves or cave systems.

Limestone caves are often adorned with spectacular formations created when the dissolved limestone slowly precipitates out of solution to form flowstones, stalactites, stalagmites, helictites, straws and columns.

POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS:

Caves are really small and I will get stuck!

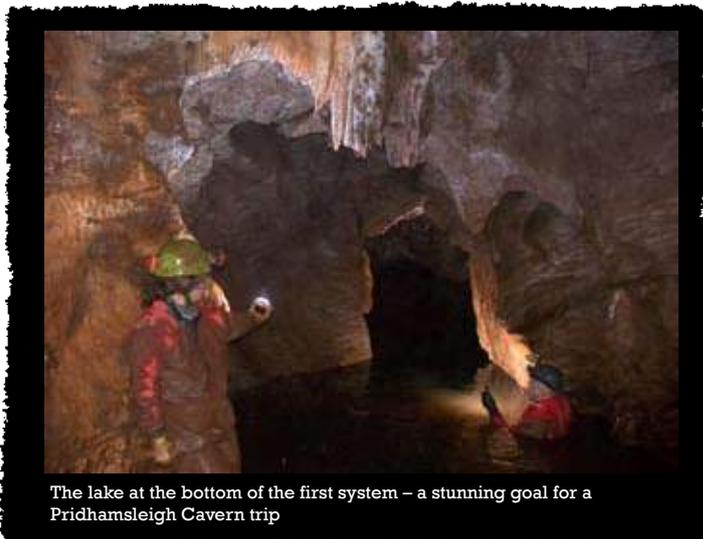
If you can get into somewhere, you can get back out - people getting stuck is very, very rare! *I wouldn't be able to crawl about in a cave.*

If you can crawl under a table, you'll be OK in a cave *I don't want to get wet!*

You don't have to. In Pridhamsleigh, if you are careful, you can get away with only one knee and one hand getting wet, or if you're careless, you could end up lying in a very muddy puddle.

But isn't it really dangerous?

No, especially if you follow guidelines and work with professionals. You only tend to hear about caving, or potholing, in the media when something goes wrong. Statistically, it is far less dangerous than horse riding.



The lake at the bottom of the first system – a stunning goal for a Pridhamsleigh Cavern trip

there are good examples of flowstone where the water trickling over the rocks has turned into rock over the years through a process known as calcification.

“It also provides an ideal opportunity to talk about how fragile and special the environment is by citing an example of vandalism many years ago when a large piece of rock that formed a ‘curtain’ was broken off. We are very conscious of the need for groups to recognise the importance of conserving the cave so we talk a bit about how the cave has changed over the years since it was first discovered and how groups like ours have increased their usage of the cave. It’s a dilemma for all outdoor learning practitioners; how do we conserve sites that we also want to use? How do we encourage others to be respectful of environments whilst still enjoying and appreciating them?”

Pridhamsleigh's other gems include the Mudslide, the Coal Chute, the Cheese Press and the Maze and ultimately, the underground lake. Stretching approximately 100ft long and 20ft wide it is rumoured to be about 90ft deep.

“Coming across an underground lake is a real surprise to most people. Due to its remoteness it has retained many of the beautiful colours on the walls and ceiling caused as minerals run down the stone walls and produce bright greens and reds.”

Brendan says that apart

from experiencing a unique environment, the greatest benefit for groups is the need to work together. “To physically and, at times, emotionally support each other, to lead the way and to take it in turns; it’s a great ‘team-building’ activity.”

Once back in the daylight the children see their suits and hands covered in rich red Devon mud.

“Cleaning and maintaining the kit is also part of the group’s responsibility so the trip is usually rounded off with a stop off at the Ashburn stream where suits and helmets are washed, with group members up to their knees in cold water, and sometimes much deeper!”

Brendan says caving is often a highlight of a young person’s trip to the Dartmoor Centres as can be seen from their end of week reviews which include:

“I learnt that I am able to conquer my fears of dark places.”

“I enjoyed caving the most because you got to slip and slide everywhere and it was muddy!”

“I’d like to do caving again because it was amazing.” ■



A group of youngsters from Pixie’s Holt Outdoor Learning Centre emerge from Pridhamsleigh muddy and happy.

HOW DO I GET INTO CAVING?

If you haven’t done it before, join a local club or go on an organised trip **DON’T** just go exploring on your own!

CAVING CLUBS

DEVON SPEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
www.devonss.org.uk

Founded in 1947 it is one of the oldest established clubs in the country, meeting nearly every Wednesday of the year, plus weekend meets and visits to other caving areas all over the country and sometimes beyond. New members are always welcome.

Find out more via the website, or email: the Secretary secretary@devonss.org.uk

THE PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP
www.plymouthcavinggroup.org.uk

Established in 1963, The PCG is a small and friendly caving club with regular visits to caves and mines in Devon and Cornwall. New people always welcome.

BUYING KIT

ISCA OUTDOOR has an online shop at: www.iscaoutdoor.co.uk/shop

CAVECLIMB of Cheddar is the only retail caving shop in the south of England. Call to check opening hours on: 01934 741623 Or shop online on: www.thecavingandclimbingshop.com

EXPERT TUITION

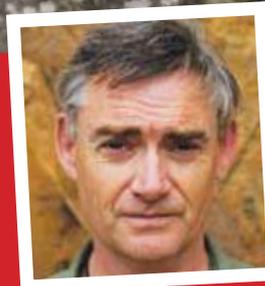
SIMON MULLENS
ISCA OUTDOOR
01392 494053
www.iscaoutdoor.co.uk

BRENDAN STONE
PIXIE’S HOLT OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTRE
Dartmeet
Tel: 01364 631500
email: dartmoor.centres@devon.gov.uk

MOOR TOR

Whilst many visitors prefer to simply drive around enjoying pretty towns or seeking out Devonshire cream teas, Dartmoor's true majesty can be experienced hiking between its famous tors and heather moorland. Yet making the transition from pottering around to attempting more adventurous walks does require a degree of confidence and preparation. So what better way to instill confidence than by following a tried, tested, and published route? In this case, a cracking walk recommended by the renowned outdoors writer and publisher Ken Wilson.

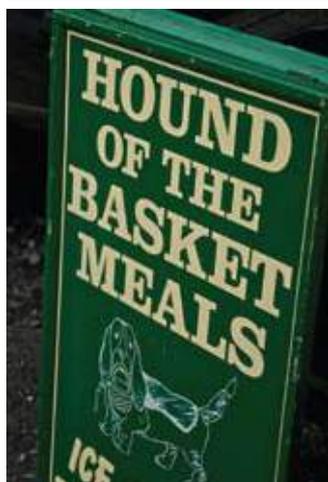
His book, *Wild Walks* (published 1988) is a classic that compiles some of the UK's finest walks. His selection for Dartmoor in *Wild Walks* not only strings together Dartmoor's most iconic rock-formations and Bronze Age relics but also demonstrates with good weather it's possible to navigate more challenging routes by using the landscape's visual features. Although no hiker should ever set off on Dartmoor without a good map, a compass is also a godsend if the notorious mists descend.



Mark Stratton is a globetrotting freelance travel journalist and photographer writing for many national newspapers and magazines. He lives on Dartmoor with his partner and two slightly naughty horses.



“There is little pleasure to be gained from struggling along a contrived route across desolate and boggy hills just for the sake of wilderness,” wrote Ken. Instead, he pieced together a circular hike we shall follow called the ‘The Moors and Tors of Eastern Dartmoor’. It combines wilderness (without ever straying too far from public roads) and the spellbinding symmetry of Eastern Dartmoor’s tors, which by late autumn exude a rich tapestry of moorland colours.



Top, Hound Tor
Middle, Hameldown Beacon
Above, Hound of Basket Meals Tea-Van

Our day long adventure commences in the picturesque moorland town of Widecombe-in-the-Moor. Ken seemed in a hurry to escape the cream teas and coach parties of this well-visited town made famous for its September Fair that spawned the legend of Uncle Tom Cobby. And indeed, it doesn’t take long to access open moorland shortly after passing the aptly named 14th-century Old Inn.

Thereafter, the first hour of this hike heads roughly northwards along glorious Hamel Down. This broad moorland ridge delivers both the sensation of wildness and antiquity. The standing stones, inscribed boundary stones, and Bronze Age barrows en route make interesting and useful navigational pointers following the well-trodden trail along the Down. But these relic stones are mere hors d’œuvres for what waits at Hamel Down’s end.

Grimspound left Ken purring with pleasure. “I found it a moving experience to approach Grimspound through wet, clinging mist and suddenly be confronted by the massive lichen encrusted boulders, left where they had fallen thousands of years ago,” he wrote, before calling this 1.6ha compound of 24 huts the finest Bronze Age relic on Dartmoor. It’s well worth exploring this exceptional site and keeping an eye open for low-flying hen harriers.

Thereafter, Ken’s trail diverts steadily eastwards beneath King’s Barrow towards a remote wooded valley, which is entered at Heathercombe Brake. En route he explains the decaying wooden posts you’ll notice were

erected around 1940 “to deter German gliders from landing on the flattish moor”.

Once inside the enchanting and privately owned Heathercombe Woods, our route ventures steeply downhill through an oasis of exotic gardens and new plantations until a tiny hamlet of late 15th-century granite longhouses. There, I decided to go off-piste from Ken’s trail, instead continuing through the woods due south towards Natsworthy Gate to avoid some tricky navigation ahead onto Cripdon Down.

But we return eventually to Ken’s walk at a much-revered memorial called Jay’s Grave. Flowers invariably adorn this tragic grave of young farm girl, Kitty Jay, who was ‘taken advantage of’ then cruelly shunned by the local community and eventually committed suicide around the late 18th-century. Her tragic spirit, however, lives on in local memory and occasional ghostly apparitions.

From here, we climb onto craggy Hayne Down to begin an enchanting afternoon southwards bagging tors. The highly-visible tor formations, for those without memories stretching back 280million years, are jointed granite stacks of subterranean magma exposed by erosion then slow-weathered into remarkable formations such as Bowerman’s Nose. Ken notes this 10m-high pinnacle guiding hikers onto Hayne Down resembles the “head of an old man with a thrusting chin and very prominent nose”. I’d also add sporting a baseball cap, which may well have ravens (real ones) perched upon it.

From Hayne Down, next up is the ever-popular Hound Tor whose name failed to impress Ken. “It is said to resemble a pack of hounds although I cannot see the likeness,” he protested. I have to agree because to me Hound Tor’s assemblage of rock chimneys resemble a mini Manhattan skyline. See what you think?



Grimspound

FOOT FILE

LENGTH: 22.5km (14miles)
 TIME: 6-8 hours
 START/FINISH: Widecombe-in-the-Moor
 SUITABLE FOR: Reasonably fit
 MAP: OS Explorer OL28
 PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Service • 271 'Haytor Hopper' Saturday and summer service links Widecombe to Newton Abbot (which has rail connection). • 672 limited to Wednesday only links Widecombe and Newton Abbot.
 PARKING: Widecombe has several car parks providing all day parking (from £0.70-£1.30)
 LITERATURE: *Wild Walks* by Ken Wilson & Richard Gilbert



On Hound Tor

Getting to it, however, I wasn't so impressed with Ken's direct route so I'd recommend heading back down to the small lane from whence you came and follow this due south to Hound Tor's car park where the wittily named Hound of the Basket Meals tea van might be rustling up refreshments.

From Hound Tor an awe-inspiring section scales the heights towards Dartmoor's very own 'Twin Towers' - Haytor Rocks. Again, using this massive megalith as a horizon marker, follow a decent footpath beyond Hound Tor to the left of the jagged Greater Rocks. You'll know you're on the right track (excuse the pun) because the walk dissects an old tramway. Ken researched this long-abandoned stone tramway to discover it was once used

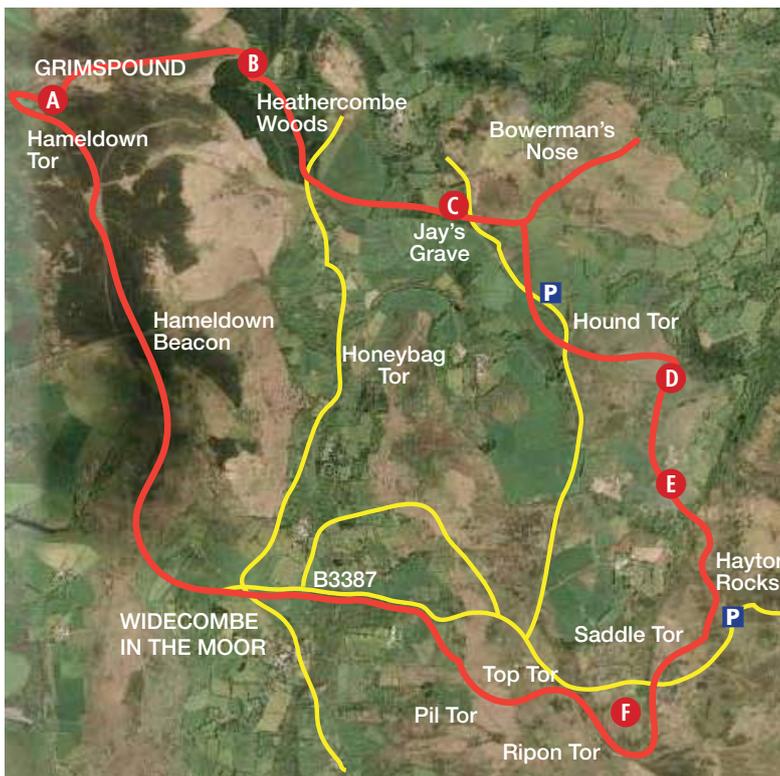
by horse-drawn wagons to transport granite from local quarries. He dates it to 1820 and explains how local granite made its way into grandiose London buildings such as London Bridge and the British Museum.

Such features inspired our intrepid author to wax lyrically: "Man's uses of natural resources on the

moor, whether the huts and enclosure at Grimspound, the numerous standing stones or, far more recently, the granite rails of Haytor Down, blend harmoniously with the wild moor and in no way detract from the beauty of the landscape."

And that 'beauty' is never more evident for non-vertigo sufferers than by ascending Haytor's stone-cut steps onto its 457m summit for the best 360° panorama on Dartmoor. On a clear day one can easily see the South Devon coast.

It's also possible to spy the final hour of our walk, which traces a succession of smaller tors that Ken blithely notes, "come thick and fast". And by the time you've scaled Pil and Top tors, the now visible 33m-high perpendicular tower of Widecombe Church should prove a welcoming sight. This marks the end of a long circular walk where you will most definitely have earned a cream tea whether shared with Uncle Tom Cobby or not. ■



- A** Take bridleway east of Grimspound for 1.5km skirting King's Barrow towards Heathercombe Brake at (GR716813) – entering through a woodland hunting gate just beyond new tree planting.
- B** Steep downhill through woods first to hamlet's junction (GR718811) for right turn signed 'Natsworthy Gate' then bridleway to Jay's Grave (GR732799).
- C** Access Bowerman's Nose via bridleway opposite Jay's Grave to Moorhayes (GR738798) then return back to Moorhayes to take lane south to Hound Tor car park (GR740792).
- D** South of Hound Tor is a well-defined footpath running left of Greater Rocks (GR747786) that plunges downhill through woodland marked 'via Leighon'. After crossing stream, soon exit woodland and leave footpath to Leighon to hike uphill ahead onto rising moorland.
- E** Continue south across a broad pass crossing tramway to Haytor Rocks (GR757770).
- F** From Haytor, head downhill (towards car park) and negotiate westwards Saddle, Rippon, Pil, and Top tors, for roughly 4km back into Widecombe skirting the B3387.

5 OF THE BEST

Grimspound Bronze Age Settlement

The chunky walls of this 3000 year-old Bronze Age settlement were once thought defensive although recent theories suggest they were to contain livestock.

Church House

This National Trust property is a wonderful two-storey church property built around 1540.

Hen Harrier

Elusive moorland bird that swoops low over open moorland while the males' striped tail earns the sobriquet 'ringtail'.

Rock Scrambling Hound Tor

Relive your childhood and go for a rock scramble on this famous adventure playground.

Dartmoor Ponies

You'll see many crossbred ponies but the true Dartmoor pony, a breed recognized since the Middle Ages, are strong-bodied with flowing manes and singular colour: such as brown, bay, or black.

Shortcut

If the weather is bad, shave 1.5-2 hours off this walk by skipping the moorland section from Hound Tor onwards. This involves a 4km road walk back to Widecombe by initially following the lane running south from Hound Tor car park before joining the B3387 westwards into Widecombe.



Jack Russell is a passionate kayaker who has paddled and raft-guided extensively around the world (USA, the Alps, South East Asia, Costa Rica). He has kayaked the Devises to Westminster Canoe Race nine times and is a member of the DW Thousand Mile Club. He was one of the first batch of Level 5 BCU coaches in the country and set up The Adventure Centre at Kelly College on Dartmoor. He has skied to the North Pole and today runs a motivational company in Devon operating nationally, with over 6000 people per year: www.positivejack.com

A MECCA FOR BOAT, BODY AND BLADE

Dartmoor is one of the last great wildernesses in southern England. From the high moor flows the magical River Dart whose waters provide some of the best white water paddling in Britain.

Between Newbridge and Holne Bridge the river follows an adventurous four mile circuit through the sublime oak woodlands of the Holne Chase Estate. It is known by canoeing enthusiasts, or paddlers, as 'The Loop' and is rightly regarded as the classic SW paddle. When the winter waters are high the river attracts paddlers from far and wide to visit and stay on Dartmoor.

Active Dartmoor caught up with Jack Russell, a British Canoe Union level 5 kayak coach, who has been kayaking the River Dart for over twenty-two years and asked him to describe why The Loop is one of the big ticks in the world of adventurous activities.

Newbridge, River Dart © Visit Devon



I still vividly remember my first trip down the Dart's section called The Loop, a four mile meander that is classed as grade 3. (Grade 1=gentle flow to grade 6=melt waters of Everest!) In those days kayaks were long and cumbersome, you could have landed a helicopter on the back of my boat! When I saw the river for the first time I was gob-smacked; I never imagined that we had such amazing white water in this country. My first trip was upside down more often than not so I completed my first underwater survey of the Dart - and wanted more.

The rush of this white water drug was incredible - but legal, self-manufactured and the high was health-enhancing, honing my body and mind. I was hooked; I needed more; I had become a Dart addict. Many afternoons were spent skiving university on the middle and upper Dart to fuel the addiction!

Later I spent a year in America, followed by a season at the world's premier white water Centre in North Carolina, paddling big volume rivers with staff that were preparing for the Atlanta Olympics in 1996.

Coming back to the Dart, I remember thinking that its beauty in winter time was comparable to the American rivers without the volume.

So why is The Loop section a world class classic?

It's accessible to many levels of ability. The four mile stretch is deeply beautiful; during autumn the river banks display every colour of leaf and the water is pure, except when in flood. But even then the brown water's nutrients are good for your skin! The trip has many challenging milestones along its length - all of which are engraved into the psyche of a Loop Veteran - The Washing Machine, The Spindryer the Triple Drops. The Loop also

feels friendly; always a play hole or wave where people chat, bonded by the passion of being on the water.

When the big rains come, the run-off from Dartmoor's granite and bogs can send The Loop into spate, then flood. Paddlers call it 'out of its box' and the water becomes peat brown in colour, resembling strong Yorkshire tea. Good decisions have to be made in this state: do I have the skill, knowledge and attitude to paddle? Am I putting myself and others in danger? Saying no is often a wise move for people who want to continue the sport. Kayaking rivers like this is a serious undertaking and like all adventurous activities, participants need to serve their apprenticeship. To be world class at any activity, one needs to have put in 10,000 quality hours and have executed the skill consistently well over 10,000 times over 10 years. In other words; almost three hours per day.

Our rivers are not open to paddlers all year round. Contrary to popular belief, we do not have high enough levels of rainfall (unless you live in Tavistock!). There are a limited number of dam-controlled release rivers and other activities and interests such as fishing means the Loop on the Dart is only open from 1st October until 14th March each year. However the Dart has been a source of inspiration to many world-class paddlers who have cut their teeth on its waters.

In terms of progression, the River Dart has it all. The lower Dart for beginners, The Loop for intermediates and the upper Dart for advanced paddlers. Some of my fondest memories in the outdoors have been on The Loop. One trip etched into my memory includes a big day one October, after 48 hours

of rain. The Dart was running high. An average run would take about an hour without stopping to play; however this trip straight down the middle took 20 minutes. Trees, fences, all obstacles had to be avoided at all costs! Stay on the liquid conveyor belt and keep smiling.

In the past I have guided and coached hundreds of people down The Loop. Today I use the Dart for a very different purpose. I have two small children, a tolerant wife and I own a full-on motivational company. So time is precious and I often find that I can leave home in Topsham and within two and a half hours, often early in the morning, I can have paddled The Loop and be back home. When I run The Loop I pick my time carefully, am well within my paddling ability and comfort zone. The river can provide such a heightened awareness and such a feeling of being alive that I find the experience deeply spiritual.

So there you have it; the Dart Loop has got something for everybody. The top wave for the park and play boaters, the safe holes and waves for the intermediates who want to progress (although the Washing Machine and Spin Dryer can have you at 90 degrees in high water!). The big volume produces some beautiful waves that will give you amazing rides without the crowds.

The Loop not only provides pleasure to thousands of paddlers, but also brings in vital revenue to the region; many local businesses see a boost in winter as a result. The weekends can be busy. It's always important to look after such a beautiful river and not to take access for granted. Take care to leave the Dart's special qualities better than you found it.

So bring on the winter and let the kayak fuel fall from the skies... ➤

DART ESSENTIALS

ACCESS AND CONSERVATION

The Loop is part of the Holne Chase Estate owned by the Simpson family. *Active Dartmoor* caught up with Mark Simpson for a coffee before the start of the 2011 paddling season "Its about getting the balance right," said Mark. "There is a wide range of demand for lots of sporting activities on the estate and sometimes there are conflicting interests. The river is important for salmon and migratory trout so the riparian and conservation interest is very high. Paddlers are welcome on The Loop with permitted access between 1st October and the 14th March. An agreement that has been in place for 15 years."

Paddlers put in at Newbridge and the preferred egress is at the Water Works Bridge at the River Dart Country Park. This saves vehicle congestion at Holne Bridge.

River Dart Country Park offers lots of facilities for paddlers from dormitory accommodation and hot showers to a cafe, bar and instruction. The car parking arrangements are more flexible this year too, with the installation of ticket machines rather than a flat rate for the day.

The Dart Valley is a Special Area of Conservation important for its oak woodland and associated wildlife and rare lichens. On the river it is not unusual to see dippers and mergansers. An offer is also an occasional sight. In the autumn months salmon return from their feeding grounds off Greenland and run the river to cut their redds and spawn a new generation. In the spring small salmon known as parr drift downstream to shoal up

and become smolts before entering the sea to grow on into adult salmon.



EQUIPMENT

BOAT

Today these are smaller and more manoeuvrable with less volume. You sit in the water rather than on it. A good starter boat will cost anything from £400 upwards.

BODY

As a climber I've noticed that paddlers grow strong backs with big lat and delt muscles! Paddlers wear a helmet and buoyancy aid, a dry-cag and salopettes with fleecy underclothing and wetsuit slippers.

It is important to warm up for any sport and paddling is no exception. Despite modern equipment it is still a strenuous activity, so warming up is essential to avoid injury and to be at one's peak performance.

BLADE

The paddler's blade is a special piece of equipment. They are now cranked to facilitate paddling and are usually buoyant which is handy for support strokes. The cadence of a blade is shorter so paddlers make quicker more precise strokes for accuracy and manoeuvrability.

BRAIN

The rewards of paddling are high! But as with all adventurous activities, good judgement is essential for a successful and safe outcome. Judgement is gained with experience and training.

SO NOW YOU WANT TO TRY PADDLING

Roger Sell of CRS ADVENTURES 01364 653444 at the River Dart Country Park states. "The Dart has got something for everyone. We offer beginners "white water ducking" a chance to paddle sections of the Dart with expert tuition.

HAVEN BANKS in Exeter www.haven-banks.co.uk/havenbanks_022.htm offers courses in paddling.

THE BRITISH CANOE UNION lists local clubs and instructors on its website www.bcu.org.uk.

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY has a canoeing code of conduct for paddlers to follow: www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/visiting/vi-enjoyingdartmoor/vi-canoeing

Background illustration by Julie Perren



River Dart Country Park

Camping and Touring excellence on Dartmoor

- Open for paddlers from 1 October 2011 to 14 March 2012
- Accommodation available onsite, easy access to the River - from £25.00 per person
- Café bar open weekends for hot food & drinks, Sunday Carvery every weekend
- Live entertainment Friday nights
- Day visitors also welcome to the Park (restricted facilities)
- Onsite parking
- Drying room facilities available for those staying onsite

River Dart Country Park
 Holne Park,
 Ashburton, Devon, TQ13 7NP
 Tel: 01364 652511
 info@riverdart.co.uk
 www.riverdart.co.uk



Contact us on 01364 653444
 Check out our website at www.CRSAventures.com

Spirit of Adventure, your local activity providers, based right in the heart of Dartmoor National Park



Young Spirit



Courses



Adventure



Water skills

Activity & Adventure Specialists
 01822 880277
 martin@spirit-of-adventure.com
 www.spirit-of-adventure.com

WWW.SPIRIT-OF-ADVENTURE.COM



Explore Believer Forest

Enjoy the tranquility of a picnic by the East Dart River or an exhilarating walk up to Believer Tor to take in the stunning views. Explore the forest itself and discover a wealth of wildlife, archaeology and grazing Dartmoor ponies. **Believer Forest, near Postbridge**



www.forestry.gov.uk



MOOR BUSHCRAFT

Mark Lane is a Wilderness Guide. He teaches a range of bushcraft, woodcraft, primitive living and wilderness skills. Mark is a member of the *Dartmoor Wilderness Guide Community* – a growing community of guides and instructors dedicated to professionalism, safety and knowledge for activities that take place in the wild outdoors.

To find out more please visit www.wildernessguide.co.uk

Bushcraft can mean many things. For some it is a broad set of wilderness skills; to travel with more knowledge and less equipment, to survive in most environments when modern safety nets are absent. For others it is a way of living within and passing through nature, allowing them to live on the land in a more natural way. For a few, bushcraft connects with our ancestors, linking us to their close bond with the earth - a source of their physical and spiritual strength and resilience.

Whatever your motivation these skills, once learned, open up a fresh dimension to the world around you and how you interact with it. These skills are not exclusive or elitist, they belong to all. They have been

passed on by those who have trodden the ancient trails before us. This knowledge should be preserved for the next generation.

Dartmoor is one of southern England's last remaining wild places. However, it still has a long history with man. It has some of the highest concentrations of Bronze Age remains in Europe. Once, the bleak, rolling 'seascape' of Dartmoor was part of an endless tract of forest – the last vestiges of which shelter in the deep valleys that frame the Moor. This combination of wilderness and pre-historic link with man makes it one of the best places to, through the use of bushcraft, link us to a time when man's relationship with nature was more primary.



Hunter-Gatherer

If 'bushcraft' has taught me anything then it is that there is a world of potential standing around us just waiting to be unlocked. Some of this potential is easy to spot, some of it takes a keen eye, a bit of imagination or a bit of knowledge or skill to release. But it's there, there is no mistaking it, and it's all around us. You just have to learn to see.

Being a Gatherer (as in Hunter-Gatherer) is not something you are necessarily born with but it is most definitely something that can be nurtured.

As I stroll along I am subconsciously casting about and cataloguing everything – this stone, that plant, this bit of wood, that bit of bone...all can be potentially used, re-used and made into something else...something more useful. Sometimes I make note of something to go back to, and check out again. Sometimes I walk past, ponder and circle back to mull the options of the resource sitting, jutting out of the embankment. Is it a new knife handle? A stave for a bow? Is it a future hearth for my bowdrill set, a length of fibre for cordage, a pressure flaker for knapping flint or is it a branch destined to be a spoon?

Firm foundations

If bushcraft was a tree then its roots would be fire, water and shelter. Its branches would then be campcraft, outdoor skills, nature awareness and tracking, foraging, primitive and woodland crafts. As a whole, this blend of knowledge links us to the hunter-gatherer that is still echoed by the nomadic, forest and aboriginal peoples of today.

Fire

Fire is incredibly important in a number of ways. It purifies and makes safe our water through heating; it makes certain foods more digestible and palatable through cooking; helps preserve our food through smoking and dehydrating; gives us warmth and dries our clothes and shelters; wards off animals through its light and insects through its smoke. It helps make tools and process certain materials; enables us to signal for help and attract attention. It also gives us our most critical survival tool: good morale.

Water

The importance of water cannot be underestimated. After air, it is our most immediate necessity. We can only last about three days without water before permanent damage and even death can result. Poor hydration results in diminished performance and poor decision-making. Hydration keeps us warm or cool and is essential for countless bodily functions. In many parts of the world access to a good supply of clean water is a rare commodity. Locating water and making it safe for consumption is a major consideration for the outdoors.

Shelter

Ensuring that you can shelter from the elements is a priority outdoor skill. In extreme or unpredictable weather the majority of people may not survive more than a few hours before succumbing to exposure. A good shelter is one that protects you from the elements (be it sun, rain, wind or snow), is matched to the conditions and resources available, and is appropriate for the duration for which it is required. For a short break a lee of a rock or a root bowl will suffice, for the longer term some form of construction may be required. In all situations however, you need to think that shelter starts at 'skin-layer' and works outwards into your environment: suitable clothing to protect/shelter you from the environment is a pre-requisite.



TOP TO BOTTOM:
Cooking over a woodland campfire
A tinder bundle bursts into flame
A thermal A-frame shelter
Elderflower Cordial
A parachute shelter

BE AWARE

LEAVE NO TRACE - the 'tug' of the wildlands is, in great part, due to its wild-ness. This pristine, unsullied environment is a place of rawness and beauty. A place of elemental simplicity overlaid with the perfect symmetry of nature. It should remain that way. It is important to share this responsibility of preserving its integrity so it remains for our children and their children's children.

FIRE - open fires are **not allowed** on access land on Dartmoor. The risk of a fire spreading, damaging the delicate environment, its wildlife and putting other people at risk is too great. On private land you will also need the **landowners, permission**. But remember – fire can spread, even underground. It also leaves unsightly scarring and sterilises the ground on which it has burned.

SHELTER - all the land on Dartmoor is owned by someone – and that means the things you might make your shelter from belong to someone too. Damaging someone's land is criminal damage unless you have permission to make shelters. The same goes for firewood or even the wood you take to make a spoon.

SHARP THINGS - bushcraft involves fire, knives and axes – know how to use them safely and that you have a first aid kit and know how to use it. Also remember that carrying edged tools (axes, knives, saws, bill-hooks, machetes etc.) in public places without good reason is **against the law**.

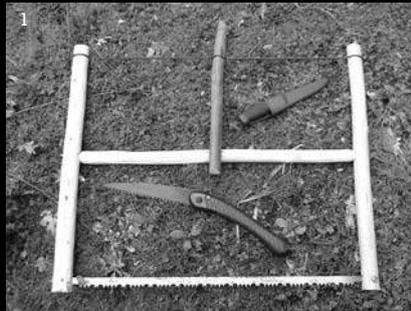
PLANTS - foraging is great fun but unless you know what you are doing can result in poisoning yourself or others. There are plants that can kill. Get to know your plants from an expert. Also some wild plants are protected (Wildlife and Countryside Act) and wild plants should not be uprooted.

Woodland Crafts & Crafts

'Crafts' is a rather broad church that encompasses many of the skills and equipment to extract, process and use the raw resources around us safely and sustainably. Being able to take unusable raw materials and create something out of them not only helps us access and utilise our environment but it provides an interface with nature that is both aesthetically pleasing and spiritually rewarding. Importantly, it also provides a route to understanding the properties and nature of things and helps preserve and pass on the knowledge of forefathers (and foremothers) to a new generation.

Plants and Trees

Understanding the uses of various plants, shrubs and trees around us is an important part of unlocking and processing these resources for medicinal, food, shelter or other purposes. Without this knowledge, understanding our environment, its indicators, its biology and even its topography becomes a closed book. Access to an important resource to sustain oneself in the wilderness is denied.



To distinguish detail in this 'green blur' helps us grasp the potential in nature and also bonds us directly to the wisdom of past peoples. To understand the methods by which Gatherers found and made useful various plants is part of creating a continuous and developing living history. This knowledge will equip you with an extra perspective as you travel through nature. It will become a place where you can eat the view, become as close to nature as you can by becoming a part of its food chain and seeing into the 'green blur' through the unhindered eyes of our ancestors.



The humble spoon

Spoon carving seems to be a niche unto itself. After all it is just a utensil isn't it? Well, a very useful one by all accounts. But it is more than that. Much more. I teach spoon carving because it encompasses many of the grips and cuts you would use in greenwood carving on other, larger projects. It also gets you up close and personal with the qualities and grain of different woods. Apart from its practical application it is a nice thing to busy the hands on those long campfire evenings; the end result is something that is a cross between a piece of folk art and something practical that you can use.



OF COURSE

One of the best ways to learn bushcraft and its associated skills and crafts is by attending a course by an experienced practitioner. These are almost always held on private land with full permissions for the activities taught – the instructors are usually trained in instructing, are skilled, properly insured, CRB checked, have first-aid certificates and have properly risk assessed their activities. However, do your own checks beforehand to make sure. They can often provide you with references and testimonials.

- WildWise does a range of bushcraft courses on/ around Dartmoor (www.wildwise.co.uk)
- Dave Budd teaches woodcraft, woodland forging and bow-making from his ten-acre woodland (www.davebudd.com)
- Jon Mac is an amazing spoon-carver and teaches it at Hennock (<http://spooncarvingfirststeps.blogspot.com>)
- Dartmoor Training Centre (part of Devon Discovery/Devon Learning Partnership) runs bushcraft experiences/bushcraft group events from its base on Dartmoor – for more information email Brendan Stone at dartmoor.centres@devon.gov.uk
- Embercombe holds a Wildcraft course each year (www.embercombe.org.uk)

1. A swede saw made from branches
2. A dog rose-wood ring
3. A ponassed trout cooking over a fire
4. A flint spear-head
- 5-8 Goose-grass being picked, dried, roasted, ground and made into a coffee
9. Willow bark cordage
10. Nettle tea
11. Cherry bark container
12. Sycamore and Hazel spoons

MY STORY

I was greatly influenced by my grandfather, Eddie – he was a great ‘West’ countryman and someone that seemed to belong to an altogether older, wiser world. Before Eddie passed away he gifted me a kernel of knowledge of woodland skills and crafts and the secret bounty of the fields and hedgerows. He also instilled in me the desire to continue learning, experimenting and passing this knowledge on to those who would listen (hopefully my two small children). My son is only five but he can light a fire with flint and iron and also has a wonderful eye for spotting animal signs and useful plants.

Both my children will grow up in a very different world, as will their children and their children’s

children. It makes me sad that we have lost much of the resilience and self-reliance that has come with understanding nature and ourselves living within its folds.

The future will present many challenges to existing resources and will promise many climactic events to test the mettle of mankind. I hope that passing on these skills and knowledge will help at least a few, to be more resourceful and resilient when they come to find that there is nothing to fall back on but themselves, knowledge and the rich tapestry of nature around them. It will be them who take forward and lead humanity to a point where we can start a new chapter rather than be its final page. ■

RECOMMENDED READING

Bushcraft by Ray Mears, (ISBN 978-0340825167)

Bushcraft, Outdoor Skills and Wilderness Survival by Mors Kochanski, (ISBN 978-1551051222)

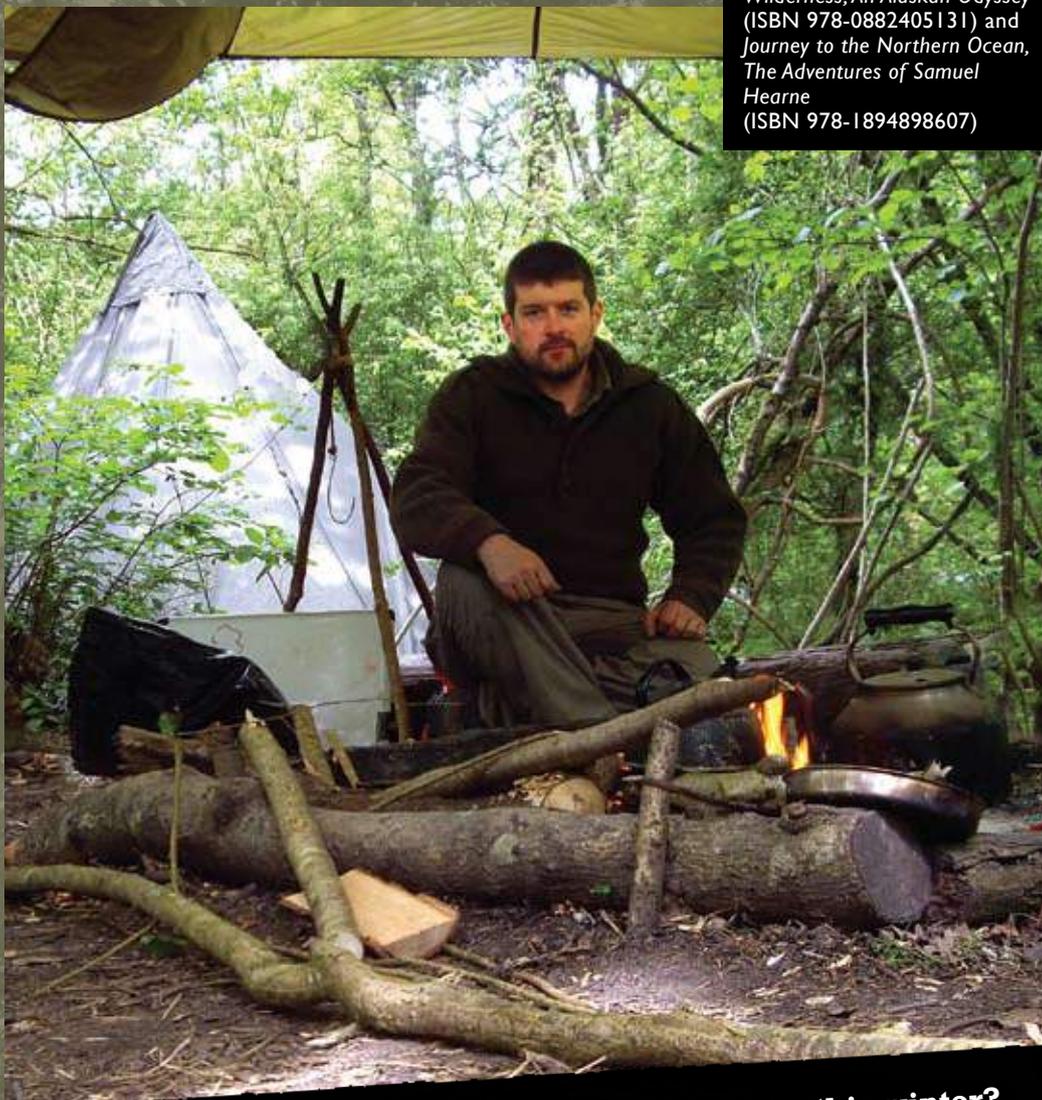
Bushcraft Skills and How to Survive in the Wild by Anthonio Akkermans, (ISBN 978-1844762705)

Survival Advantage, Survival Foods and Techniques for the North-West European Environment by Andrew Lane, (ISBN 978-0952282402)

The Field Archaeology of Dartmoor by Phil Newman, (ISBN 978-1-84802-033-7)

What will I be reading around the campfire this winter?

Richard Proenneke, *One Man’s Wilderness, An Alaskan Odyssey* (ISBN 978-0882405131) and *Journey to the Northern Ocean, The Adventures of Samuel Hearne* (ISBN 978-1894898607)



What will I be doing in, on and around Dartmoor this winter?
 I'll be making craft items in the woods, training in cold weather camping and trekking, eating the foraged wild foods that I picked and pickled earlier in the year. I'll also be tracking and waiting for the sap to rise, heralding Spring.

Adventure Okehampton

Nestled on the edge of Dartmoor is a perfect get away for adventure-seeking people looking for an exciting holiday break.

By Nicola Elson



Adventure Okehampton is situated in the Dartmoor town of Okehampton and provides the perfect place for people to escape on a thrill-seeking adventure holiday. Run by father and son team John and Paul Elson, Adventure Okehampton was founded in 1997 through John's love of the outdoors and his desire to extend his hobbies.

"I have always been a rock climber and I love walking and outdoor activities," explains John. "So when I found

this location I saw the opportunity to extend that."

"Being next to Dartmoor provided us with a perfect location for the types of activities we wanted to offer."

John chose his home town, Okehampton, as a place to start his business. Its proximity with Dartmoor allowed him to create opportunities for the activities he now offers. Activity Manager, Michelle Hambley, gave us an idea of the activities that Adventure Okehampton offers.

"We have a wide range of activities for both

young and old, allowing us to cater for a variety of guests. We have an onsite archery range, low ropes course and climbing wall and lease a few lakes where we do kayaking and water sports. We also have a high ropes course and host the new event the Big Oke Abseil."

When asked, receptionist Hannah said: "The biggest selling activity we do is Gorge Scrambling – I think the kids just want to get wet!"

Due to the varied choice of activities available, Adventure Okehampton sees a large number

of different people throughout the year. During the school term groups from schools all over the country come to Adventure Okehampton for residential trips, and throughout the holidays families, couples and individuals come on activity breaks. "We get a wide range of people," explains Hannah. "A mixture of children and adults all here for the different activities."

Starting as a small, singular building with only 45 beds, Adventure Okehampton was originally an

THE TOP 7

We asked the staff at Adventure Okehampton what they can't live without when doing an activity:



JOHN

I must have my iPhone on me all the time, so I can call people if I'm in trouble, and it has a compass in it!



MICHELLE

I do a lot of paddling, so I need to have my aqua pack at all times. It keeps everything I need dry.



MICK

I need to have my map and compass with me all the time, because in a compass the batteries never run out!

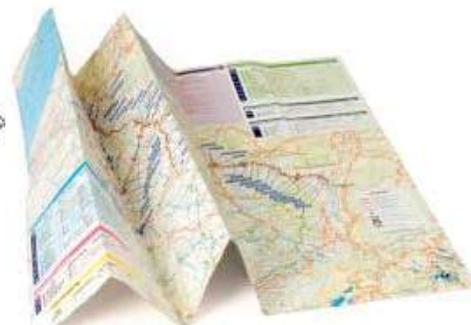


DAVE

I must have my waterproof jacket with me, as it is good to always be prepared when doing activities on Dartmoor.

What's hot at Adventure Okehampton?

We have the exciting trip down the river Exe coming up. This is a 2-day boat trip that travels the length of the river, following its curving meanders as it makes its way to the sea. We make camp on the riverside overnight, sleeping under the stars with the gentle flow of the river sending us to sleep. It makes a perfect birthday treat, for both young and old, or for just a fun weekend out.





accommodation facility as part of the Youth Hostel Association. However, it has now grown to over double its size, with 180 beds spread over two sites. They now offer more activities and are becoming known for their activity breaks as opposed to their accommodation.

When I entered Adventure Okehampton, the calm atmosphere struck me. Smoothly I was guided to reception and told where I needed to go. Looking through the initial controlled and friendly atmosphere, however, I felt the underlying buzz of excitement radiating from all of the guests as

they made their way to their next activity. The staff greeted me with smiles and hospitality, and made me feel immediately comfortable. I could understand why so many people visit, as it is a very accepting place, and I can say from past experience that there is something for everyone, that leaves you feeling buzzed and wanting to go again. ■

FACT FILE

ADVENTURE OKEHAMPTON
CONTACT: 01837 53916
LOCATION: Klondyke Road,
Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1EW
www.adventureokehampton.com

Try something different!
Different activities that Adventure Okehampton offers:



WEASLING

"This is a low level climbing activity that has proved really popular with us," says Michelle. "It involves squeezing through holes and climbing around rocks with an added letterboxing challenge."



GORGE SCRAMBLING

This is a fun sport that gets you dressed in a wetsuit and scrambling up a river. You climb upstream and attempt to clamber up rushing waterfalls with an inevitable belly flop in at the end!



THE BIG OKE ABSEIL

This is a new activity that Adventure Okehampton runs every Saturday through the summer holidays. It is a freefall abseil down Meldon Viaduct, where you descend 100ft to the valley floor alongside the West Okement River. "It's exhilarating," says Dave, who has done it before. "It's really fun and very scary, but definitely worth it."



PHIL
I need my waterproof trousers when I'm doing activities as they are easy to store in my backpack and I can sit down anywhere on Dartmoor with them on.



ANDY
I need a flask of coffee on me when I'm walking on Dartmoor, so I never get cold or dehydrated.



MADDIE
I need my spare contact lenses when I am doing activities just in case I lose one; I know I am always prepared.





have an adventure

Get out and about with the National Trust on Dartmoor

Castle Drogo, Lydford Gorge, Finch Foundry,
Parke and Plym Valley.

Go walking, cycling, orienteering, running,
wildlife watching or just enjoy a lazy day or
cup of tea in fabulous surroundings.

Explore our places at www.DartmoorNT.org.uk



National Trust
Time well spent

INDOOR CLIMBING

Climbing walls have come a long way since a PE lecturer called Don Robinson built the first wall, chipping out mortar and inserting pieces of real rock into a dank and dingy corridor at Leeds University in 1968. Today walls are built with multifaceted features often made from multiplex board with modular holds bolted on and set to a graded route defined by the colour of the holds.

My first forays into climbing were out on the big multi-pitch routes in Bristol's Avon Gorge. For training we used to traverse left to right and back again on the finger wrenching brick edges of the truck-stop toilet block on the Bristol Portway! Today a beginner is more than likely to have their first taste of climbing on an indoor wall with its top ropes, bouldering areas and lead walls. They would be supervised by a qualified instructor and have the option to hire all the necessary equipment. Piped music, changing facilities and heating all add up to an alternative but attractive climbing experience to that found outside. A good wall will always have a cafe too!

With climbing now recognised by the International Olympic Committee and the potential for the sport to be part of the Olympics, walls and training facilities such those in the south west are going to be essential. They will professionally cater for the increasing interest and growth in popularity climbing is now experiencing.

What does this mean for Dartmoor? Well, with the world class bouldering on the tors and excellent sport climbing on the limestone crags in the south Devon areas, the addition of a quality indoor climbing scene is good news for the winter months or bad weather days, giving the local climbers much needed training facilities. The growing choice of local walls also provides friendly opportunities for parties and an introduction for the novice into climbing.

Essentially for the committed climber, a local wall means that time set aside after work, or a weekend trip for visiting climbers coming to Devon need not be a wash-out if the weather doesn't behave. Opportunities for climbing on a dark winter's evening, as part of a birthday party, or to take part in a hard core indoor bouldering competition now exist to the north, south, east and west of Dartmoor. ➔

Dartrock
Climbing
Centre

The Quay Climbing Centre

The South West's newest indoor climbing wall opened in September 2011 in the heart of Exeter's quayside quarter. It is the result of an ambitious vision by a team of enthusiastic local climbers and entrepreneurs to create a regional climbing centre. The group of four: Damian Johnson, Alison Smith, Paul Russell and Aaran Eade are excited to be starting a business that will contribute positively to the leisure environment for those living in Exeter while also offering something special for visitors. "Our mission is to create a climbing facility which can become a community focal point for like-minded climbers and non climbers to learn and develop their skills in this fantastic sport."

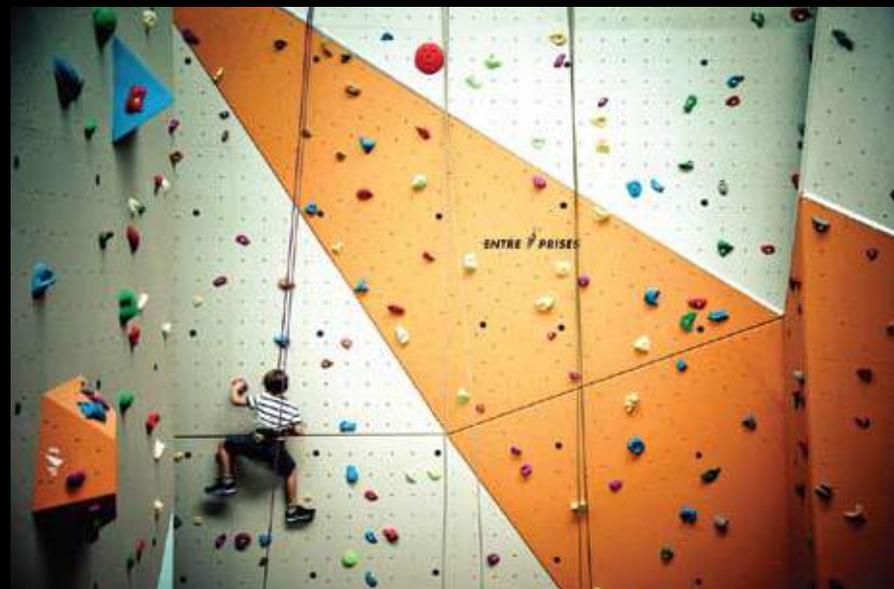
The dream was easy, but finding the right location was a major challenge for the team in a region which does not have a large number of tall industrial buildings such as can be found further north in the country. After a lengthy search the team were blessed to find and secure the Old Electricity Building, right in the heart of Exeter's quayside area.

"If you look at a map of climbing centres across the UK, the South West is noticeably under-represented. There are some fantastic local walls but there is no large regional centre. With a dedicated and growing climbing population attracted by the exciting outdoor opportunities on Dartmoor and the sea cliffs of Devon and Cornwall, we feel that the Old Electricity Building is the perfect site to create a centrally located facility that can provide all-weather climbing for everyone," says Damian Johnson, Managing Director of The Quay.



The design brief was to create a climbing space that offered something for all abilities whilst including cutting-edge features that would make this the destination of choice for experienced climbers seeking to train indoors. It will enable schools and groups, as well as complete novices, to learn in a segregated area so that they can focus and learn within their comfort zone. For experienced climbers the lead wall will offer a mixture of overhangs and hanging roofs and a centre-piece prow that will provide climbing lines up to 20 metres long rising right up into the apex of the building. "Bring your 50 metre rope – you will need it," says Paul, with a huge grin on his face.

The original workshop and office spaces in the building have been developed into two boulder rooms – one is designed for novices and for teaching while the other is designed to challenge even Dartmoor boulderers on a rainy day.



INDOOR CLIMBING

The Quay will be able to offer national schemes such as NICAS, CWA, CWLA, Sport Leadership and First Aid training and, for the complete beginners, Taster Sessions, Beginners courses and Learn to Lead courses. "It will provide a fantastic opportunity for the local climbing community and visitors to train hard indoors during the rainy season and for newcomers to develop their technical competence and confidence before heading outdoors to have a go on the real stuff," says Paul.

In addition, coming to The Quay in Autumn 2011 will be the UK's first Clip n' Climb centre. This is a unique and exciting new challenge that will appeal across the spectrum with over 24 themed elements. Users will be able to experience the thrill of scaling a high wall but without the technical requirements of traditional climbing and with some additional added features to boost the fun and the WOW! factor of their experience.

The Quay will also have the all essential climbing wall cafe!

The UK's first Clip n Climb is opening at the Quay Climbing Centre in early October. Follow the progress on facebook or their website www.clipnclimbexeter.co.uk. A grand opening weekend is planned for the first weekend of October half term where you can visit and experience the thrill of this unique new climbing challenge.

FACT FILE

THE QUAY CLIMBING CENTRE LIMITED
CONTACT: 01392 426 850
LOCATION: Haven Road
Haven Banks Exeter EX2 8AX
www.quayclimbingcentre.co.uk

Dart Rock

Dart Rock is a wall built by climbers for climbers based on a long-held dream of two ambitious climbers Robbie and Paula Warke. It is based on the southern edge of Dartmoor, mid-way between Plymouth and Exeter at Buckfastleigh.

The 10m high climbing centre is a state-of-the-art facility and utilises the space at Dart Mills to provide a light and open climbing environment. There is a wide range to cater for all abilities with over 100 leading routes, plus routes with in situ top ropes. The diversity of facilities is well thought through with four climbing walls, a dedicated teaching area and a classroom.

Paula states: "Dart Rock Climbing Centre's mission is to provide the safe enjoyment of all rock climbing activities in an environment accessible to all ages and abilities, without prejudice or elitism. Above all, safety and enjoyment are our business. Watch out for the expansion of our bouldering walls which will challenge the most dedicated of climbers!". Often you will find experienced climbers, families, birthday parties, scout groups or school parties rubbing shoulders in the friendly atmosphere. The centre's series of indoor and outdoor climbing courses offer expert tuition for the first timer or for the more experienced to learn new skills.

Dart Rock is very popular for its children's clubs on weekends - Little Lizards (5-12 yr olds Saturday mornings) and Chameleons (12-17 yr olds, Sunday mornings) which are fantastic for getting even the youngest people climbing. There's even an under 5s climbing club known as the Geckos every Friday from 1 to 2 pm!

This Autumn Dart Rock will be hosting two rounds of the British Mountaineering Council Leading Ladder competition, as well as master class and a lecture by the renowned Scottish climber, Dave McLeod on 30 October 2011. The day will include a dry tooling competition as well as a boulder competition that boasts problems set by British Team member Gaz Parry, with fun competitions and prizes.

FACT FILE

DART ROCK CLIMBING CENTRE
CONTACT: 01364 644499
LOCATION: Dart Mills,
Old Totnes Road, Buckfastleigh,
TQ11 0NF
www.dartrock.co.uk

The Barn

Initially, The Barn was conceived and built by local climbing guru Simon Young. The way he has made use of the space has stood the test of time - proving to be an excellent training facility for lead climbers, plus a well-regarded range of routes and angles for the top rope climber.

The Barn's masterpiece is the freestanding boulder that mimics the world famous boulders of Fontainebleau. The flow of climbers over the boulder works well (see competition video on the website). Climbers measure a wall by the quality of routes set and the frequency that routes are changed. This is a bit of a dark art but the Barn is renowned for getting this right - there is a good range of entertainment for the expert or beginner.

The owners, Brian and Alice also stock good quality climbing equipment for sale at the wall and on their website. Brian is well known for his famous coffees. He said: "There was a gap in the market here - and we fill a role for folks in this part of Devon, and Cornwall - people will regularly drive for up to one and a half hours to climb/train here."

FACT FILE

THE BARN CLIMBING CENTRE
CONTACT: 01822 870521
LOCATION: Eastacott Barton,
Milton Abbot, Tavistock,
PL19 0QP
www.barnclimbingwall.co.uk

Rock and Rapid

A little further away from Dartmoor, the Rock and Rapid Adventure Centre based at South Molton. There is an impressive steep lead wall for training, plenty of top ropes for climbers, improvers and beginners and a quality bouldering cave with good routes and a steep Woody training board.

There is always a great atmosphere at the climbing centre, friendly staff, a cafe and a shop selling climbing equipment.

Rock and Rapid caters for all needs and is able to run sessions from Corporate Groups to Birthday Parties and Family Fun to Stag Mayhem.

FACT FILE

ROCK AND RAPID ADVENTURE CENTRE
CONTACT: 0333 600 6001
LOCATION: Hacche Mill,
South Molton, EX36 3NA
www.rockandrapidadventures.co.uk

AN AUTUMN STOMP

Sue Viccars explores around Meavy and Sheepstor



Sue Viccars is a freelance outdoor writer and editor, specialising in southwest England – especially Dartmoor and Exmoor

A varied, non-taxing walk that visits a 16th-century leat, a Victorian reservoir and the burial place of the three Great White Rajahs of Sarawak! Coupled with that are constantly changing views, from lofty tors around Burrator to rolling fields and wooded valleys. Some paths will be muddy in winter.

A From the pub cross the green; turn left. Where the lane bears left turn right, signed Burrator Dam. Pass through oak woods, and three gates; a fourth leads into woodland. Take the left fork uphill to the Plymouth (Drake's) Leat (completed in 1591, to carry water to Plymouth). Follow the leat to a footpath junction; the uphill left fork meets a lane. Keep ahead to the dam.

B Cross the dam; pass a picnic area; eventually turn right by 15th-century St Leonard's Church in Sheepstor (worth a visit). Drop to cross a stream.

FOOT FILE

LENGTH: 5 miles (8km)
 TIME: 2½ hours
 START/FINISH: The Royal Oak Inn, Meavy SX 540672
 TERRAIN: Woods and field paths, quiet lanes; high stiles; one short steep ascent; boots essential
 MAP: OS Explorer OL28 Dartmoor
 PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Hourly (from 10am) from Yelverton
 PARKING: Laneside near pub



C Soon turn right through a gate along a track (dogs on leads). At track end bear slightly left, then right along a field edge. A gate leads to two gateways: keep left, and along the right edge of two fields. Cross a high stile, then two more on a fenced path. Follow a downhill path beneath oaks; cross a high stile onto a path. Turn right, soon bearing right downhill. Follow signs left over a stile on a fenced path. Another leads into woodland; follow the fence right. Cross a stile/footbridge/stile onto a lane, opposite Yeo Farm (1618).

D Turn left to a junction by medieval Marchant's Cross, once the tallest in the area (until car damage in 1937).

E To shorten the walk to c3.75 miles (6km) turn right and later left to the pub. Turn left uphill; where the lane bears left keep ahead across a high bank/stile into a field. Bear half right, then left along the hedge. Pass through a gateway, then diagonally left across the field. Pass through two gates;

bear right over a stile onto a lane. Turn right; descend to Lovaton, bearing right at the phone box. Look for a stile right onto a track; cross and turn left. Follow the path under trees, keeping right at a fork, then crossing a stile.

F At the next footpath junction turn right over a stile past oaks. A signpost points right over Lovaton Brook. A gate and hedgebanked path, and another gate lead to a lane. Turn right across the Meavy and right into the village. ■

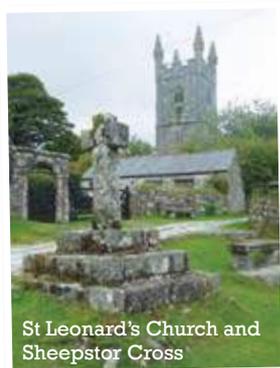
Sheeps Tor, seen from the route

WHERE TO EAT

Meavy is famed for two Royal Oaks: the magnificent oak tree on the green (said by some to date from the time of King John, 1166–1216) and its namesake: The Royal Oak Inn. This deservedly popular traditional pub – a 15th-century church house inn – positively draws you in after an autumn stomp. Flagstone floors, a welcoming open fire... and a good, varied menu strongly emphasising local produce (booking advisable). Dogs (and boots!) welcome in the public bar.

THE ROYAL OAK INN

Meavy, Devon PL20 6PJ
 Tel: (01822) 852944
 info@royaloakinn.org.uk
 www.royaloakinn.org.uk
 Open: Daily 11am–11pm (Easter–end Sept); 11am–3pm, 6–11pm (Oct–Easter)
 Food: Mon–Fri 12 noon–2.30pm, 6–9pm; Sat & Sun 12 noon–3pm, 6–9.30pm
 Sunday lunches £12.95 (vegetarian nut roast £9.95); meals £5.50–15.95; local produce (beef from Greenwell Farm, Meavy; Country Cheeses, Tavistock; Tamar Valley Fruiterers; Langage Ice Cream; Dartmoor Brewery, Princetown; Luscombe organic drinks); children's menu; takeaway fish and chips £5.95



St Leonard's Church and Sheepstor Cross



Ordnance Survey mapping © Crown Copyright: AV49/11



Ben Bradford is a climbing instructor who works at the Dartmoor Centres and is a Trainee British Mountain Guide. He has climbed all over the UK and the European Alps and made significant ascents in Alaska and the Himalayas.



CLOUD WATCHING

With this article, Ben Bradford continues his short series on weather for walkers.

Being out on Dartmoor means many different things to people, but for me I like a mixture of physical effort and also quiet times appreciating the area I'm in. Sometimes this is at the belay of a rock climb after completing a hard section or having a drink stop whilst out running cross country on the moor.

It's at these times that I find myself not looking at hand holds, or where my feet are going to tread next but at the greater expanse of the moor and the sky above it. Whether I'm rock climbing in good weather or running in inclement conditions I enjoy keeping an eye out on what's happening around, and above me.

Watching and trying to identify the clouds feels like a natural thing to do at these moments.

Appreciating the different forms clouds take and attempting to predict what the weather has in store is a skill that is easily lost in our modern lifestyles, but put your geeky cloud spotting hats on, and you'll find yourself learning more about the weather without trying.

In the last issue of *Active Dartmoor* we looked at summer showers, and keeping an eye on those building cumulus clouds. This time we're looking at a longer sequence of weather, the passage of a low, or 'depression'.

In the UK a low pressure or 'depression' system sweeps across the Atlantic picking up plenty of moisture on its way, ready to give Dartmoor a good soaking when it hits the south-west. You can nearly always associate a 'low' with wind and rain. Typically a series of fronts lie within a depression, which are simply boundaries between warm and cold air. Warm air of course, rises, and as it does so the moisture-laden air turns into clouds and therefore rain.

The warm front usually arrives first, and helpfully gives us plenty of warning with its clouds. The warm air of the front pushes over the cold air it's replacing very gradually and the first wispy clouds can appear a day or so in advance of the front itself. "Trace in the sky the painters brush, the winds around you will soon rush".

These wispy clouds are known as cirrus clouds and are



Top right, High level cirrus clouds over Swincombe valley can herald an approaching front

Above, Low level stratus clouds are typical over the moor, these thickened into an nimbo-stratus, to give us a good soaking



Left, Crepuscular rays shining from behind cumulus clouds

Below, A mixed sky over Hay Tor, cumulus clouds hiding higher cirrus”

Bottom, Thickening cloud over Hameldown during the passage of a warm front, not long before the rain



right at the upper limit that clouds form, around 20,000ft - 40,000ft, and they are indeed frozen ice particles rather than water vapour like the lower cloud varieties.

After these first cirrus clouds we get a pattern of gradually lowering clouds as the front approaches.

The cirrus spreads out and covers more of the sky, giving it a milky veil.

This cirrostratus thickens and lowers turning into altostratus when it blocks out the sun giving that overcast, rain-is-on-its way look.

In fact rain is on the way, and pretty soon too. As the altostratus thickens light rain starts to fall and gets heavier as we get the final cloud in the warm front sequence, the nimbostratus. nimbus means rain in Latin, and the nimbostratus produces lots of it, for hours sometimes.

This is the classic sequence of a warm front. The high cloud spreading, lowering and thickening over the course of a day or more giving prolonged rain (courtesy of the nimbostratus), and as the front passes, the cloud thins and breaks up into fluffy cumulus again, and we are standing on a now warmer moor.

A cold front is quite different from a warm front. Whereas the warm front is a long drawn-out affair lasting several hours, a cold front is a short sharp shock, delivering heavy downpours followed by sunshine and a fresh, clear sky.

A good warning cloud for an approaching cold front

is the classic cirrocumulus and altocumulus, known as a mackerel sky. “Mackerel sky, mackerel sky, not long wet, not long dry.” A cold front is much steeper than a warm one and causes the air to rise much more rapidly creating strong winds and large towering clouds which produce these sharp, short-lived showers.

Thunderstorms are not uncommon at the leading edge of a cold front. A few heavy showers followed by more cumulus clouds and a slightly cooler feel in the clear skies typify the cold front.

We often see these two classic sequences occur one after the other, but at other times we can get a mixture of the two, known as an occluded front.

A warm front moves slower than a cold front and so the cold front gradually catches up and the two fronts merge, squeezing the warm air upwards into a sandwich between two areas of cooler air.

These occluded fronts are harder to identify by a quick glance at the sky because they are indeed a mixture of the two fronts and a great deal of variables exist that affect their characteristics.

Taking only a quick glance at the sky will tell you little about the weather to come, but over a few hours you can see the clouds constantly changing, giving you a better idea, and if you are lucky enough to be out when a big low is sweeping across the country, don't worry about the rain. You might see some good clouds. ■

MORE INFO

WEATHER

www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/sw/sw_forecast_weather
Dependable forecast with specific mention of Dartmoor's weather

www.dartcom.co.uk/dartcam

Random pictures looking into the north moor with a good view of the sky.

“I’M SURE IT WAS THIS WAY.”

Some see the moorland landscape of Dartmoor as a challenge for their fitness and navigational skills, while for others, like this group of Dartmoor poets, the route they take is not as important as what they find on the way.

One day you may see us, a small informal group wandering on the moor pausing to look around, storing images in head and heart and notebooks. There are never more than eight of us and we know each other well now, having met every few weeks for nearly six years to find new places, lose ourselves and gather what we need for our writing. We have walked in all weathers: sun, snow, thick mist and rain so heavy that writing was impossible, for the paper dissolved before thought or pen could reach it.

Each walk we choose is different in quality, some planned and organised to take in something special to one of us - the stone circles above Mill Farm, the river below Widgery Cross with the poem written by a soldier killed in the First World War, the East Dart at Bellever after heavy rain when the ground is unsteady with

‘water blisters’. Others are of a more exploratory nature, following paths that often don’t go quite where we thought. We have ‘lost’ and ‘found’ each other, failed to meet at all, left messages that were never seen and arrived back at our starting place not sure exactly where we’ve been.

When we stop for lunch we read work to each other, poems that have arisen from the last walk or the one before, or notes made a year or two ago. Often it seems as though we do little writing but talk together and enjoy wherever it is we find ourselves. Nevertheless over the years these walks have produced poems that have been published, a sense of well being and friendship coming from being out together in wild places known and unknown but always rich in experience.

Journeying

*We string out along the lane,
each on a different journey,
tracing contours of parting and sorrow.*

*The dog holds us together,
the need to coax him over hurdles,
avoid old bones, pick a way through bog cotton.*

*The rain eases.
Birdsong close by.
We are enfolded.*

Lyn Browne

Stone Circle at Shilstone

*In the grey stone circle
on dead bracken bed
Meg lies at our feet
eyeing the sky line for sheep;
gorse, more than yellow, shining
like sudden sunlight.*

*There's a brotherhood here
or sisterhood
rocks all shapes, leaning, touching,
the loyalty of the circle
holding one another.*

*We watch the build-up of clouds
Gathering poems
In the silence.*

Maggie Clark

Burrator Reservoir

*Picking along the shoreline
among the bones of upturned trees
whose heads drown in water
their sky-searching roots can't reach,*

*I find an accidental beach,
a sandy silt, succouring a sparse apology
for grass, a willow whose branches
bend to kiss the ground,*

*a patch of passing sun, a breeze
freshening my cheeks, tying knots in my hair,
bringing from another shore –
the one I can't see how to reach,*

*ripples on ripples on ripples
emptying themselves at my feet.*

Jennie Osborne

A GOOD BUNK UP

Johnny Baker visits the transformed Fox Tor Cafe and Bunkhouse in Princetown and discovers a hive of activity and the perfect cappuccino.

“Take them to the Fox Tor,” Matt tells me. “They’ll love it. It has new owners - the place has changed - it’s like a proper outdoor cafe now.”



Photograph by Mike Kinsey of snapstarcouk

I was looking for a meeting place for clients who were down from London on a climbing course. In the competitive outdoor market they were precious to me so I was anxious to make sure our day got off to a good start with a friendly place, a tasty breakfast and a decent coffee. I wasn't disappointed with Matt's recommendation.

Fox Tor Cafe and Bunkhouse is located in the centre of Princetown backing onto the open moor that runs up to South Hessery Tor, Fox Tor Mires and the South Moor. It is a licensed cafe that welcomes locals, regulars and outdoor sorts. The bunkhouse has space for twelve with simple bunk-rooms, showers, a kitchen and dining area, drying room and clean toilets. There is good car parking and the cafe has wi-fi for those that need to remain in touch.

A year after my first visit I caught up with the proprietors

Dave and Abbi Oppenshaw to find out what makes the place tick.

I discovered that indeed the pair are a cunning duo with a well thought through vision and an eye for detail. They took on the Fox Tor in May 2010. After running a busy and successful ice cream shop in Polperro, Cornwall, they were looking for a business opportunity that matched their outdoor interests; Abbi is an enthusiastic walker and Dave is a keen paddler.

I ask them why Dartmoor? Dave replies: "Somebody said to me recently that Dartmoor means perfect tranquillity amidst nature's madness! Four seasons in one day, for example, while walking across the moor - I think that sums it up perfectly. It is like an escape from everything." Dave added, "Princetown is in the heart of all this and still only 20 minutes from the centre of Plymouth; there is huge potential up here, it just needs the right people to get involved and give it



Photograph by Mike Kinsey of snapstarcouk

a real push. It's a small town that already has a massive personality; it would be great to be a part of encouraging more people to get up here and enjoy what Princetown and the surrounding area has to offer."

The overall atmosphere at the Fox Tor is a welcoming one.

I sit down in the front part of the cafe with its leather sofa, pot plants and cast iron woodburner stove. The decor is a refreshing green and the place is spotless, despite my muddy boots and dumped-in-the-middle-of-the-floor rucksack. Dave states: "We would welcome any group



how in some way."

Abbi is clearly passionate about coffee and has discovered the perfect blend with the Rocca brand. "Our new machine was a big investment and all the staff are trained in its use and can make a decent coffee." This is something I quickly discover - it's as good as any I've drunk in a French or Italian alpine cafe. The result is I end up spending most of my time interviewing Dave with a frothy grin.

The cafe employs ten people and caters mainly for regulars from Plymouth and the surrounding area of Dartmoor. "We have one family who come up early nearly every Saturday morning," says Dave. "They then breakfast at the cafe before returning home for a day of chores, sports trips and generally running around. Getting out to Dartmoor is clearly important to them and they've obviously got it nailed in terms of keeping the kids involved."

The bunkhouse is also popular with groups. "We see groups such as the Dartmoor Plodders and the Yogi cycle group on a regular basis. We can provide early breakfasts, packed lunches and sometimes an evening meal. Walkers, cyclists and paddlers are usually in residence but youth

groups on Duke of Edingburgh expeditions and Ten Tors training also make the most of our facilities," says Dave.

The cafe takes a pride in its food with lots of home made cakes and scones cooked by Abbi. "We are applying for our Dartmoor First award," says Dave. "It's an initiative for local businesses to prove their loyalty by stocking and supporting local goods and produce - we're also a member of the Dartmoor Partnership which aims to support local business and promote Dartmoor as a destination."

I ask Dave what's next: "We're still investing in the buildings such as new roofs, windows and decor. Next year we really want to work with local providers

and push the activities more, such as guided walks, cycling and rock climbing. Our emergency supplies of outdoor kit like head-torches, puncture repair kits and guide books are selling well and we want to expand that range too - its a case of watch this space!" ■



Photographs by John Baker

FOXTOR CAFE AND BUNKHOUSE

www.foxtorcafe.com
enquiries@foxtorcafe.com
01822 890238
Open 7.30am on weekends,
9am on weekdays

What the punters say:

"Visited here several times, fried breakfast is just superb."

"I live in Princetown and have been to the cafe on a number of times, I've always found the place welcoming."

"Dave and Abbi have been great hosts making us very welcome, the facilities have been clean, comfortable and very good value. The drying room is excellent for drying out wet kit. The facilities allow you to self cater or you can breakfast in the Fox Tor Cafe if you prefer. The cafe has a warm friendly atmosphere and is great for a hot chocolate and a hot meal on a cold winter's day."

OTHER BUNKHOUSES ON DARTMOOR

TAVISTOCK BUNKHOUSE

tavistockbunkhouse.co.uk
info@tavistockbunkhouse.co.uk
Tel: 01822 613115

SPARROWHAWK BACKPACKERS (MORETONHAMPSTED)

sparrowhawkbackpackers.co.uk
ali@sparrowhawkbackpackers.co.uk

SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE BUNKHOUSE

spirit-of-adventure.com
martin@spirit-of-adventure.com
Tel: 01822 880277

RUNNAGE FARM

runnagecampingbarns.co.uk
runnagecampingbarns@tiscali.co.uk
Tel: 01822 880222

ADVENTURE OKEHAMPTON

adventureokehampton.com
admin@adventureokehampton.com
Tel: 01837 53916

For more accommodation visit dartmoor.co.uk

AVON CALLING!

Although only a few miles from the A38, this surfaced walk from Shipley Bridge to the dramatic Avon Dam Reservoir takes you out into open moorland and gives you a real taste of the south moor. It is a great route to explore if you fancy a gentle stroll or have young children, but do bear in mind that sections are quite exposed if the weather is bad.

Start from the main car park at Shipley Bridge but take a moment to look at the remains of the 19th century naphtha works along the west side before you set off. Naphtha was a substance distilled from peat and used in candles and mothballs. The structure was subsequently used as a clay settling plant.

Head north past the toilet block along a narrow surfaced path to join the bridleway along the service road to the reservoir. This 'road' is only open to authorised vehicles so you shouldn't be disturbed by any traffic. However, being surfaced it makes an ideal route for wheelchairs and cycles. Turn left and follow the bridleway as it heads north alongside the River Avon. In summer there are great slabs of granite exposed along the water's edge, which make great sunbathing spots, but in autumn and winter these are often covered by swirling peaty water after heavy rain.

When the road divides after a short distance, keep right alongside the river following the curves and meanders deeper and deeper into the moor. After you pass beside a metal gate look out for the remains of Brent Moor House on your left. Once variously a farm with an orchard across the river and a hunting lodge, it became a holiday home between the wars and then a youth hostel but was

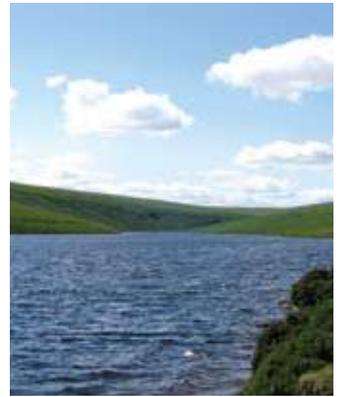


The walk up from Shipley bridge is a family favourite

blown up in 1968 because it was in such poor repair. Legend has it that when it was standing, the house was haunted by the ghost of a nanny who had smothered a baby and then drowned herself in the waters of the Avon.

As you continue northwards the valley still feels quite closed in and hidden for some stretches. Then, as you cross a

bridge and approach the dam it opens out to give clear views up to Brent Moor and Zeal Plains on your left and Dockwell Ridge and Smallbrook Plains on your right. Not far from the dam you will see the remains of a Bronze Age settlement, Ryder's Rings, on the opposite side of the river. The construction of this great double pound reflects



the type of granite found in this area, mainly small blocks and slabs. There are no large set stones in the walls of the hut circles, which have consequently collapsed into piles. Shortly after Ryder's Rings the path splits.

The easier route continues along the surfaced road to the base of the dam while a rougher route leads more steeply uphill to the reservoir itself. The dam was completed in 1957 and the reservoir now covers 50 acres. Environment Agency rod licence holders may fish for natural brown trout free of charge at this reservoir from 15 March - 12 October.

To return to the car park simply retrace your steps downhill all the way. Although this is a linear walk, the views are stunningly different in each direction and there is plenty to see from gnarled old trees alongside the path to buzzards and ravens overhead. ■



Photographs by John Baker



The views unfold the closer you get to the Dam



How to get there

The Avon Dam Walk is situated on the south side of the National Park, 5 miles from South Brent and within easy access of the A38.

Leave the A38 at Marley Head.

At the first roundabout take the first exit towards South Brent. At the second roundabout take the second exit towards Avon Dam and continue to follow the signs for Avon Dam (straight across at first cross roads, bear left at next junction and right at the following one to reach the main car park at Shipley Bridge).

- A** Park in the main car park and take a moment to look at the naptha works before you follow the narrow path past the toilet block.
- B** Keep right alongside the river and look out for the great slabs of granite stretching into the water.
- C** Pass the ruins of Brent Moor House on your left.
- D** Look out across the river for a view of the remains of the Bronze Age settlement known as Ryder's Rings.

FOOT FILE

LENGTH: 5 mile trip there and back.

SURFACE: Tarmac.

ACCESS: A steady continuous climb alongside the River Avon (but downhill all the way back of course!)

STATUS: The route follows a bridleway so it is open to horse riders and cyclists as well as walkers.

FACILITIES: Free parking with disabled parking bays, public toilets (including disabled and baby changing). Please bear in mind that this car park can be very busy at peak times.

MORE INFO

For more information on this and other reservoir sites contact South West Lakes Trust:

www.swlakestrust.org.uk

For more detailed access information on this route and other similar routes see *Easy-Going Dartmoor* on the Dartmoor National Park website:

www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

To download this route online visit dartmoor.co.uk

TRAILVENTURE

John Warren says "It doesn't matter whether you walk the dog twice a day, or are half way up Ben Nevis, we all want to be dry and comfortable in the great outdoors".



Enjoy the outdoors together!

"Come on kids, we're going outside." "Ohhhhhhhhhh! Do we have to?" A familiar conversation up and down the country, but keep them warm and comfortable and the initial objections are soon quashed.

As parents we are fully aware of the issues parents face when buying children's clothes – you'll want your kids to be comfortable, but also not grow out of them too quickly or the clothes themselves fail due to poor quality.

Where do you draw the line when it comes to kids clothes? Buy the cheapest and compromise on the quality or pay over the odds for the labels? Trailventure stock Sprayway children's wear - made with those childhood adventures in mind, with durability and performance paramount. A great of example of this is the Junior Rainpant – these have been hammered by John's two outdoor loving girls (pictured). They have also thoroughly tested the Hawk Jacket and Alaska Fleece over the last 18 months and they are all still warm, waterproof and going strong!

The ancient stannery town of Ashburton lies along the course of the little river Ashburn in the heart of the South Devon countryside.

Ashburton is an excellent gateway to the moor with many shops that will benefit the outdoor enthusiast. In the welcoming town centre one shop has grown a reputation over its 13 years of trading for good service and a wide range of stock. It is easy to see that Trailventure was born out of its creator's passion for the outdoors. Under John's ownership the shop has geared up for looking after families too - a feature not always apparent in the outdoor marketplace.

"As a family-owned business, we provide outdoor clothing, footwear and equipment for the whole family, to suit a variety of activity levels, from a weekend walk to longer treks further afield. To say that weather conditions on the moor can vary is a massive understatement; one minute you're admiring the view

to lands afar, the next you're being battered by horizontal rain and you can't see beyond 10 yards in any direction – you've got to love it! Character building apparently, so my Dad said – a phrase that may have been repeated to our two children, but not yet fully understood!"

John grew up locally with many of his childhood weekends spent exploring the National Park. Now running a business on the southern slopes of the moor, his appreciation of Dartmoor has grown still further. "Not only does it bring important business to the whole area, but offers a sanctuary from the hustle and stress of everyday life," he states. "There's nothing better than having your pasty sat on Bench Tor, looking down into the Dart valley or off towards Torbay, on a warm spring day, with skylarks replacing mobile phone rings. Alternatively, you could be up in the middle of the north moor, in the driving rain and mist, on a Sunday morning, thinking 'Surely there is no one else stupid

enough to be out in this, apart from the dog and I' and then out of the gloom appear a group on Ten Tors training. It's all special and it's all Dartmoor."

Trailventure's stock is selected with a view to maintaining a solid range of gear, for those starting out, to the more experienced walker. From Hi Tech to Meindl and Craghoppers to Paramo and Rab, they have something for everyone: walking boots, shoes, waterproof shells and trousers, fleeces, softshells, base-layers, rucksacks, daypacks, sleeping bags, socks, walking poles, maps, books, food and usually a healthy sale rail, with end-of-line bargains. Trailventure also offer discount to store members, Ramblers Association, BMC, Ten Tors and Duke of Edinburgh participants.

The core of the Trailventure staff have been there for many years and have immense experience in boot fitting, and have always proven helpful in selection of the right gear for individual needs. They speak with



authority and from personal experience gained from local wanderings to East African treks and safaris. Even the youngest member of staff has the 45 mile Ten Tors under his belt! ■

FACT FILE

TRAILVENTURE
CONTACT: 01364 652522
LOCATION: 7 North Street
Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7QJ
www.trailventure.co.uk

Shining a light on one of the most ESSENTIAL items of outdoor kit

As the September nights are drawing in and autumn weather arriving early, I've been digging out some essential kit to keep in my rucksack over the next few months: the sort of things that prepare me for a bit of wild weather, being a bit cold and tired, some tricky navigation and some walking in the dark. Quite often I find the longer nights creep in a little unexpected at first, and coming off the hill, or finishing a climb in the twilight has a tense sense of urgency. Having a head torch eases the

stress and means getting back to the car with my dignity and wellbeing intact rather than floundering around the moor in the dark.

Usually a lamp and battery attached to an elasticated cradle that sits snugly over the head, the headtorch is a crucial bit of kit has been around for years. My first torch was a Petzl zoom which had punk-pink head straps and required a hard-to-get-hold-of flat battery. Whilst the configuration hasn't changed much over the years, head torches have improved dramatically and there are now

some really funky units using LED technology that are light, dependable and long lasting. Most lamps now use standard AA or AAA batteries giving the option for using rechargeable batteries too.

I look for a headtorch that will work in all weathers, is comfortable on the head, has a good powerful beam of light when I need it, standard batteries and is easy to switch on and off with gloved hands. I prefer a 3 watt LED which for a regular walker and climber provides a good compromise between cost and brightness.

In the last couple of years I've carried a dinky Petzl e+lite as a back-up in my first aid kit, or as a main torch for adventure racing.

Here we review some good options worth considering. They also make a very worthwhile gift at Christmas! ■

USEFUL FEATURES

DIFFERENT BRIGHTNESS MODES

To save power or to boost out a beam of light worthy of the Eddystone lighthouse in times of tricky navigation.

REGULATION MODE

LEDs work like pit ponies - they just keep going - but then they fade out to a point where the light becomes unusable. A regulation feature reduces this fade but increases the price of the unit.

STROBE

For attracting attention. (Remember though that the international distress signal is six flashes over a minute)

RED FILTER

For preserving night vision - this might be of use to those needing a tactical advantage eg the Royal Marines; but I have rarely used my red filter.

INSTANT 'OFF' FROM ANY POSITION

With some torches you have to scroll through the brightness modes before finding 'off'. Very annoying.

ADJUSTABLE HEADBAND
For comfort and for wearing over hoods, hats and helmets

WATER RESISTANT BATTERY CASE

Worth considering because of the occasional rain on Dartmoor...

Petzl e+ Lite RRP £27.99

The Petzl e+LITE can live in the bottom of your pack, your glovebox or your first aid kit and be forgotten about until you need it. The e+LITE makes a great back-up light for those using a brighter light and also appeals to minimalists who use a proximity light and want to keep their pack weight to an absolute minimum i.e. mountain marathoners and long distance trail runners. A friend made a recent ascent of the North face of the Matterhorn starting at 2am using one of these, so it has to be good!



Petzl Myo XP RRP £65.00

For serious walkers. This is a high performance storm proof lamp that has a good boost beam - and a big price tag too. There is now a regulated version which means no sudden light drop off. I find it's difficult to use with gloves. I use the Flip up diffuser to switch between penetrating beam or wide proximity lighting and I also like the battery life indicator.



Silva Alpha £199.00

A serious christmas present for your loved one. The Alphas are Silva's top-of-the-range headtorches; excellent for adventure racing, night orienteering, night running, and mountain biking. These are regulated super bright torches with wide and extensive beams, and a maximum output of a massive 15 watt giving an 150m beam! The equivalent of wearing a WW2 search light on your forehead.



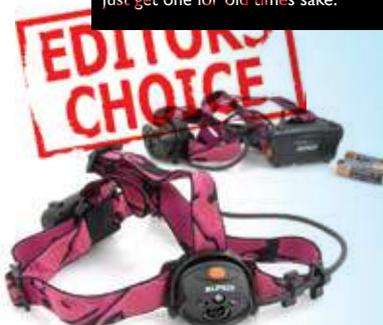
Black Diamond Icon RRP £64.99

Well designed with a long beam and different light settings that combine a 3 watt LED and 4 super bright standard LEDs to produce a versatile torch. The Icon is ideal for just about any sport as it provides a 100m beam on full power or a bright proximity light lasting for 164 hours. It is easy to switch between modes.



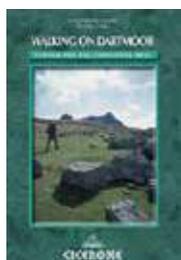
Alpkit Gamma £12.95

A review winning budget priced headtorch. It has 1 Watt LED giving a respectable 51 lumens of light. Last January I came off Ben Nevis after a winter climb with a student who was using one of these - it was every bit as good as mine which cost 60 quid more. Available in Fandango pink, so I might just get one for old times sake.



BOOK REVIEWS

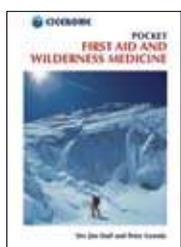
This season we look at some essential winter reading



Walking On Dartmoor

by John Earle

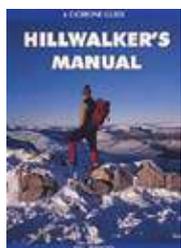
John describes 43 walks between 2 and 12 miles with 5 longer routes throughout the National Park. A Cicerone guide that should be on every Dartmoor walkers bookshelf. **£12.00**



Pocket First Aid and Wilderness Medicine

Jim Duff Peter Gormley

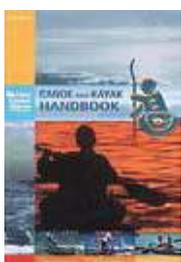
A practical handbook written by doctors with outdoor experience. An invaluable reference book for travel and outdoor, wilderness and mountain activities. **£9.99**



The Hill Walkers Manual

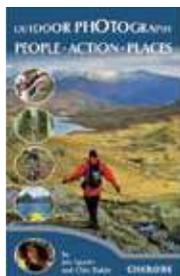
by Bill Birkett

A comprehensive and practical manual with everything the hillwalker needs to know from safety to photography and equipment. **£12.95**



Canoe and Kayak Handbook: Handbook of the British Canoe Union

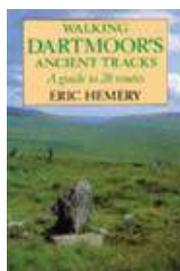
Written by enthusiastic and current British Canoe Union coaches and practitioners, this book is an invaluable source of information for both novice and expert alike. For the newcomer it will provide a firm foundation in their chosen aspect of the sport. **£18.95**



Outdoor Photography People Action Places

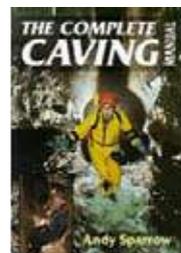
by Jon Sparks and Chiz Dakin

Whilst digital cameras are highly technical with lots of features, the essential ingredients of a good photograph are still people, places, light and the photographer. The authors have a wide range of practical outdoor experience and use this to best effect to explain the essential concepts and make the most of your digital camera without getting bogged down in the technicalities. **£14.95**



Walking Dartmoor's Ancient Tracks: A Guide to 28 Routes

by Eric Hemery
The definitive guide to Dartmoor's most important and hitherto uncharted historic tracks. The moor's traditional travel routes have been shrouded in mystery and many of them were in danger of being lost altogether. Through meticulous research and intensive field work Eric Hemery has established the historical background to the 28 tracks described here. An important feature throughout the book is the use of recorded evidence from experienced moormen, present and past, for route details. Detailed maps and illustrations allow readers to follow in the steps of monks, merchants, and tin miners. **£13.95**

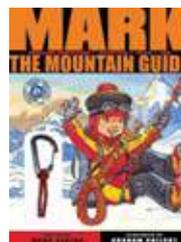


The Complete Caving Manual

by Andy Sparrow

Andy began caving in 1971 and is one of Britain's most experienced cavers and instructors. He has been involved in the exploration of new cave systems in Britain and his complete manual has yet to be bettered.

It is great reading for beginners and a thorough reference for the experienced caver. It is well researched with useful references, good diagrams and excellent underground photographs. Covering history, techniques, equipment, wildlife and conservation, Andy has produced a thorough and readable manual for this activity. Updated in 2009. **£16.99**



Mark The Mountain Guide

by Mark Seaton and Graham Philpot

It's a beautiful morning at the Marmot Mountaineering School, when an enormous avalanche suddenly blocks the path back to High Alp Village. An exciting adventure ensues, as Mark the Mountain Guide helps his students to get home safely. The book features a play section, packed with facts and tips on safe mountaineering, and comes complete with a mini replica carabiner. A new action series, perfect for little adventurers! **£9.99**

OWL PROWL

Tamzin Grey searches out this enigmatic creature of the night

It's an early autumn evening on the edge of the moor. A rough track stretches downhill ahead of us in the fading light and all the familiar landmarks are sinking back into the dusk. We can no longer see the tor behind us and individual trees are lost, becoming merely blocks of deeper darkness when then the first owl call comes as exciting and eerie as ever, the classic to-wooo hoot.

The tawny isn't far from us, away in a patch of woodland to our right but we won't see it unless we're lucky. It calls again, the longer broken call this time and we stop to listen. A few seconds later there's a reply over to our left and then faintly another owl in the distance.

The temptation to join in the conversation gets the better of me. I count a few seconds, cup my hands and call back. Calling to tawny owls and receiving an answer is one of those special autumn and winter treats that never fails to excite a sense of wonder. If you can get the sound right, which isn't hard with a bit of practise, you can join in a, sometimes lengthy, dusk conversation.

Tawny owls seem fairly easily fooled. Listen to the rhythm of their calls and exchanges for a few minutes then cup your hands and try to mimic the nearest owl. You will probably find that the single and broken calls alternate and that some owls have a huskier tone than others. Less often you will hear the shriller kee-wick call which is harder to imitate.

Do your best and see what happens. You will normally receive a reply quite quickly if your call is realistic. If you're feeling really confident you might even attempt to imitate the squeal of a dying vole, which is sure to excite any nearby owls. However, if you find it hard to make the right sounds

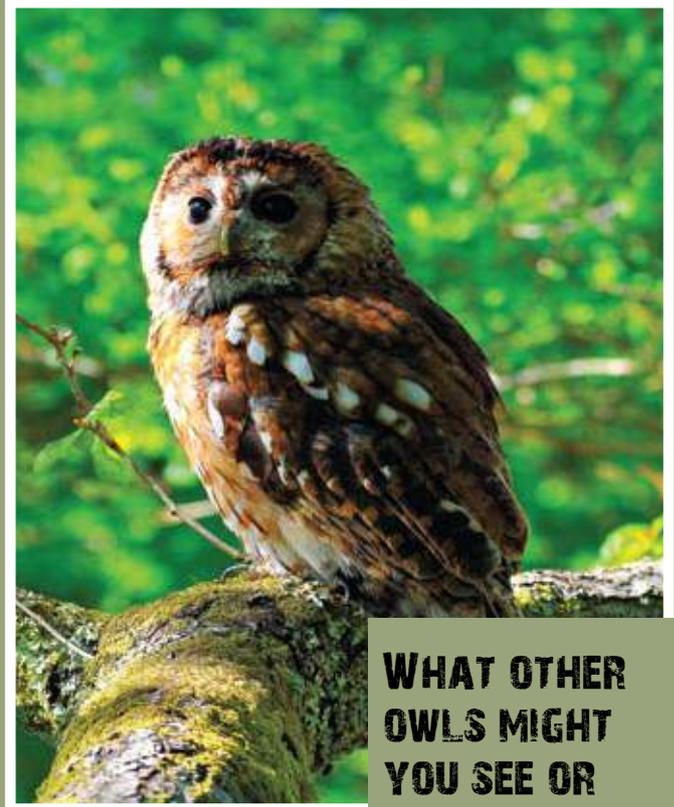
then there are plenty of owl call whistles on the market that sound very real.

Once you've perfected your call you'll often find that one or more owls fly in closer and closer to you. If you're lucky you might even catch a glimpse of them flying overhead or perched in a tree trying to see the elusive owl that's calling them.

Tawny owls are found throughout the National Park, frequenting the moorland margins, plantations and enclosed farmland wherever there is both tree cover and stretches of open ground. They nest from March onwards in tree holes or rock crevices and feed mainly on small mammals but will also take birds, frogs, fish, large insects and worms. Typically they locate their prey from a perch, relying on their incredibly sensitive eyes and ears in the dim light. They then pounce forwards through the shadows, their soft plumage enabling them to fly soundlessly and surprise their victims.

Calling owls is great fun but remember that owls only have a limited time in which to hunt so don't distract them for too long. Also listen carefully to their tone and stop calling if you sense a sudden change or if the owl flies in very close.

Throughout the ages owls have been associated with folklore and mythology, some believing them to be ill omens while others have seen them



Photograph: Tawny owl by Steve Waterhouse

WHAT OTHER OWLS MIGHT YOU SEE OR HEAR IN THE NATIONAL PARK

Tawny owls are by far the most common species of owl in the National Park but there are two other species that you might come across if you're lucky.

LITTLE OWL

These tiny owls were introduced from the continent in the nineteenth century and are most likely to be seen or heard in enclosed farmland where there are plenty of farm buildings and hollow trees to provide nesting sites. They make a rather plaintive mewling 'kiew' sound.

BARN OWL

Often described as ghost-like and once thought to be an ill omen, the silent swoop of a barn owl through car headlights is now a rare treat. Occasionally you may even be lucky enough to come across one quartering open ground in search of prey. You are most likely to see these owls in areas where there are old barns, ruins and exposed buildings such as church towers.

as symbols of good luck and wisdom. Whether you believe in any of the stories or not there can be no doubting that listening and watching for tawny owls adds a whole new dimension to a night walk. ■

Top tips for night walking

- Make sure that you know the area where you're going – explore it in daylight first if it's new to you.
- Walk with at least one other person and make sure that you leave details of your proposed walk with someone you can trust.
- Always carry a headtorch and spare batteries.
- Think carefully about where to leave your car.
- If you take a dog with you ensure that it is under close control.
- Keep noise to a minimum especially if you're using public rights of way close to houses.
- Maximise your chances of seeing wildlife by wearing dark non-rusty clothes that will blend in with your surroundings.



Jim Hardcastle is a mountain-biking runner who likes coffee and Dartmoor a lot.
Twitter: JimHardcastle
Web: www.vmcg.co.uk



APPS ON DARTMOOR

What have Dartmoor and iPhones got in common? They're both great to look at but it's what you do with them that makes them amazing. The iPhone has proved such a success because of the apps. The applications that allow you to create the device you want, that suits you, that adds value to your life. Same as Dartmoor. Cool to look at but add a dose of biking, climbing or trail-running and the place becomes legendary.

Ipulled into the public car park at Belstone ahead of the rain clouds. Quick check that no-one's around while I change from office gear to running gear. Stretch. Trainers on. Stretch. Bladder into running pack along with a water-proof. Stretch. Am I warmed up? That'll do. iPhone out. Double click the folder for my 'Outdoors' apps. The nerd in me comes to life. I've collected all my outdoor apps in one folder for ease of access. Which one to choose from...?

Believe me there are literally hundreds of thousands of apps now, and not just for iPhones. Apps go across platforms

these days to suit most smartphones. Outdoor apps tend to fall into three categories: where do I want to go? Where am I? Where have I been? Some do all three. They all have one thing in common; they know where you are. Well, to be precise, they know where your phone is. This is Location Based Services (the next big thing, mark my words)

The Dartmoor app (dartmoor.co.uk) is a good example of off-site information that provides a Location Based Service. A couple of clicks and I can see myself as a blue dot on the map with lots of other dots around me representing the theme I selected e.g.

Things to do. I click on the one nearest me then I have a short description and direct link to their email, telephone number and website. Smart.

The Where am I? service is so simple but really helpful. I find this most useful in cities! But I've also got a nifty app that gives me Altitude, six figure grid reference and Lat & Long. No fuss, no maps, one click. Great for that quick double check to reassure me.

Where have I been? How fast did I go? When was I going my fastest? Which was my slowest km? How many calories did I burn? The nerd in me springs forth. There are hundreds of apps that will track your run, ride or walk. They'll collate more

stats than you'll ever need, transfer it to a map, upload it to a website. Many even encourage you as you're going along with a voice (normally American) that tells you how far you've gone and what your time was for the last km! You can turn this off.

But you know what elevates these apps beyond the statistical? It's the ability to share and connect. This is the social media age. Be social. Share your routes, challenge others to see if they can do it faster. Upload your route directly to Facebook - although there are dangers in this that you'll reveal how unfit you are or that you'll look like a show-off! ■

So which app did I choose for my run from Belstone towards Oke Tor? None of them. Times like this, with the weather closing in, I want a phone full of battery life. If I trip on a slippery bit of granite I want a phone to call for help, I'll give a grid ref using the map I put in my pack. I won't be that bothered that I've done the last mile in 7:30 mins or that I've burnt 240 calories! Using the GPS function in your phone drains the battery like taking the plug out of the bath. Until battery life is improved I won't be using my phone for mini-adventures across the

moors. The nerd in me is quite satisfied tracking the runs and rides around my local woods.

Some of the most popular:

Trailguru
www.trailguru.com



Great front page with all your records on Camera option to take a pic and geo-locate it to your position. Upload and share to your on-line profile, you then get amazing maps and graphs of your track emailed and monthly aggregates. Does seem to have connectivity problems and used to stop altogether if someone phoned you!

Memory Map
www.memory-map.co.uk



The great all-rounder but it does take some getting used to.

Really nice ability to create a route then follow it. Great stats page including the current time of day, something forgotten by most apps.

Endomondo
www.endomondo.com



The most popular amongst my friends because it's clear and easy to use.

Free version available. Great history section with lots of data and splits upload

to share function and create direct link to friends.

Lots of sport categories to track you, including Pilates!?

Nike+
nikerunning.nike.com



I really like the map that shows your route with a shaded line from red to green showing how fast or slow you're going. Lots of variations to challenge yourself against set distances or time. Frustrating amount of time to click through all the choices before the start screen.

Apps and Search & Rescue Smartphones are great for the 'willing and able' casualties. Those willing and able to help themselves. Recently an injured man was rescued in the Lake District after sending a photo of his view to the mountain rescue team. The Wasdale team instantly recognised the view and he was out in no time.

For the 'unwilling and unable' casualty they are redundant. The police can 'ping' them to see where they were last used which can help. There is also a common concern about walkers relying on their apps too much and forgetting basic maps and skills. I think this does most people a disservice. There will always be people who are accidents waiting to happen.

Team members will use them as another complimentary tool, a double check of the location or take a pic of the potential evidence. Clever software and web-based mapping systems are being looked at by search and rescue teams around the world with the main purpose of tracking team members via their phones and providing better feedback to the search coordinators. But battery life and coverage are the great limiting factors.



Quick Response code - get an app that can read this and see where it leads you!

Dartmoor National Park Official Guide
www.dartmoor.co.uk



The Dartmoor app promises to provide a comprehensive and interactive guide to Dartmoor National Park and surrounding towns.

Tap into a wealth of rich content including information on Where To Stay, What to Do, Eating Out and What's On.

Slick mapping showing you exactly where you are in relation to nearby hotels, activities, attractions, shops, events and more.

Quickly search and refine results to obtain extensive information including prices, opening times, directions, descriptions and high resolution images.

Use the favourites option to create with ease your own bespoke Dartmoor itinerary.

Updated regularly with quality assured content, it is set to be the must have app to Dartmoor National Park for first time visitors and clued up locals alike.



My dictionary defines a "camp" as "temporary quarters of nomads, gypsies, detainees, holiday-makers, Scouts, Guides, or travellers". No mention there of the long and noble tradition of camping, let alone wild camping, that takes us back to our earliest pre-history, and the need for shelter in a wild country. And aside from the fundamental need for shelter, no mention of the sheer pleasure of camping out; as Thoreau put it, "We now no longer camp as for a night, but have settled down on earth and forgotten heaven".

The dictionary does not attempt to try to define wild camping, and I for one am glad of that small mercy.

Imagine... the bliss of waking up warm and snug, high above the world, the quiet of a dry morning on the fly sheet, the door unzipped to face the dawn, fresh dew still washing the grass, all with that slightly smug sense of satisfaction of being self-sufficient that comes with wild camping. Even when the rain threatens to wash the tent away, and the wind tests the strength of nylon and pegs and guy lines and morale, that primeval pleasure of securing shelter from the storm is hard to shake off.

The wonderful thing is that despite wild camping being arguably one of life's great (free) pleasures, we enjoy no statutory right to wild camp legally in England and Wales without the permission of the landowner, except, that is, on Dartmoor.

For that we have to be thankful for Article 6 in the Byelaws made under Section 90 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and Section 11 of the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985. I'm not going to bore you with any more detail (check out the info box for the full text), but in brief, camping is legal, and allowed, on common ground if you stick to the following:

Cool Camp-Craft

Camp 100m or more from the road

Avoid enclosed moorland, farmland, flood plains or archaeological sites

Camp out of sight of roads and houses

Use a cooking stove – no open fires

Avoid a certain few specified areas – the best plan is to **check out the map published by Dartmoor National Park here: <http://tinyurl.com/3keep3u>**. The purple areas on the linked map are ok, pink and grey ones should be avoided.

As ever, be aware of live firing on the military ranges in the northern part of Dartmoor – check out the new MOD website at: <http://tinyurl.com/3f45s7v>

So – with the above list in mind – is there any excuse not to look out the tent, pack the old rucksac, check the map and set out for a night "on the moor"?

Photograph by Jane Elsworth

FREEDOM

Tom Dixon - a Scotsman in Devon - discovers that wild camping is arguably one of life's great (free) pleasures, despite the fact that we enjoy no statutory right to wild camp legally in England and Wales without the permission of the landowner. Except, that is, on the Dartmoor Commons.

Extract from Dartmoor Commons Act 1985

ARTICLE 6: CAMPING

(1) No person shall knowingly use any vehicle, including a caravan or any structure other than a tent for the purpose of camping on the access land or land set out for the use or parking of vehicles except on any area which may be set apart and indicated by notice as a place where such camping is permitted.

(2) No person shall knowingly erect a tent on the access land for the purpose of camping:

(a) in any area listed in Schedule 2 to these byelaws;

(b) within 100 metres of any public road or in any enclosure.

(3) No person shall camp in a tent on the same site on the access land for more than two consecutive nights, except on any area which may be set apart and indicated by notice as a place where such camping is permitted.

ARTICLE 8: FIRES

No person shall light a fire on the access land, or place or throw or let fall a lighted match or any other thing so as to be likely to cause a fire. This byelaw shall not prevent the lighting or use in such a manner as not to cause danger of or damage by fire of a properly constructed camping stove or cooker.

Link to full Byelaws: <http://tinyurl.com/3ptw95m>

CAMPING WITH MOOR CARE

- Take all litter home
- Guard against risk of fire
- Ensure you do not pollute streams or rivers
- Avoid disturbing wildlife particularly during the moorland lambing and bird breeding season, from 1 March to 31 July

WHAT'S ON

A guide to what's happening on Dartmoor over the next few months

For a wilderness area Dartmoor has a lot going on from sporting endurance events, family woodland fun days, outdoor skills workshops to wildlife safaris and nocturnal rambles - so check out this winter events list and discover a place for all seasons.

Details of events on the moor can also be found at www.dartmoor.co.uk/site/events



SEPTEMBER

24 DNPA - 10:00: 3hr Walk, Discovering Fungi - Fact, Fiction & Folklore (Trendlebere)

NT - 11:00: Castle Drogo WW2 Event. until 5pm. Vehicles, displays and re-enactments from the Military Vehicle Trust recreate the atmosphere of war time Britain. Step back in time and follow the family trail to find out what life was like as a war time evacuee at Castle Drogo. Normal admission prices apply and £2 per child for family trail. Contact 01647 433306. Until Sunday 25 September 2011.

Greener Teign - Eco Walk and Trail Teaser 2.00pm - 5.30 food at 6.00pm at Burncombe Farm to help promote Moving Planet Day, an international initiative encouraging communities to move beyond fossil fuels in order to reduce carbon emissions to 350 parts per million. An unmissable afternoon! Tickets are available on-line, just go to www.greener-teign.org.uk and follow the link Moving Planet Walk to make your payment or Tel:01647 252553.

24 Tour of Dartmoor Cyclosporitive. Further information www.pendragon-sports.com 01963 220137.

25 DNPA - 10:30: 6hr Walk, 60th Anniversary Walk - Archaeology (Shipley Bridge).

OCTOBER

2 DNPA - 10:00: 6hr Walk, The Grimmest of Graves (Gutter Tor).

4 NT - Woodland Walk at Buckland Abbey - 01822 853607.

6 NT - Fungus Foray at Plymbridge Woods 01752 341377.

7 Wildwise and Blacksmithing Craft Camp (Friday 7 - Sunday 9) - Moretonhampstead - 01803 868269.

8 DNPA - 10:00: 3hr Walk, Discovering Fungi - Fact, Fiction & Folklore (Trendlebere).

9 DNPA - 10:30: 6hr Activity, Beginner's Guide to Map and Compass (Princetown).

DNPA - 10:30: 2.5hr Walk, In Search of the Dartmoor Pony (Postbridge).

NT - 10:00: Fungi Foray in Hembury Woods until 12 noon. Adult £4, child £2. Booking Essential on 01626 834748 (weekdays only). Assistance Dogs only are welcome.

Dartmoor Challenge Walk for Marie Curie Cancer Care - Widecombe-in-the-Moor - 01884 703536.

13 Gidleigh Park - Fungi Foray - 01647 432367.

15 DNPA - Easy Going Dartmoor Mini Bus Tour (Tavistock) Please book on 01822 616958.

16 DNPA - 10:30: 5hr Walk, The Forest on the Hill (Haytor, Lower Car Park).

DNPA - 10:30: 4hr Walk, 60th Anniversary Walk - 1950's Dartmoor (Postbridge).

Follow Active Dartmoor on:

facebook

twitter

18 DNPA - Easy Going Dartmoor Mini Bus Tour (Newton Abbot). Please book on 01626 335775.

19 Gidleigh Park - Fungi Foray - 01647 432367.

22 DNPA - 10:00: 6hr Walk, 10 Tors & the Ten Commandments (Haytor, Lower Car Park).

NT - Halloween Trail at Lydford Gorge (Saturday 22 - Sunday 30) - 01822 820320/820441.

NT - Halloween at Castle Drogo - Trail, crafts and food (Saturday 22 - Sunday 30) - 01647 433306.

23 DNPA - 09:45: 2.5hr Activity, Introduction to Nordic Walking (Haytor, Lower Car Park) Nordic walking engages the muscles of the upper body and therefore burns more calories than ordinary walking. Cost £7.00 which includes tuition and the use of poles. Booking essential 01822 615513.

NT - 10:00: Fungi Foray in Hembury Woods until 12noon: Adult £4, child £2. Booking Essential on 01626 834748 (weekdays only). Assistance Dogs only are welcome.

24 Wild Woods 'n' Willow - 10:00: Wildcraft Survival Course until 4pm **Shelter Building and Tracing** (module four) suitable for children aged 8 - 14. Cost £25 per child concessions available. For more information and to book visit wildwoodswillow.org.uk or telephone Charlie 01647 432769 or Linda 01647 231330.

25 DNPA - 10:30: 1.5hr Stroll, 'Good For You' Stroll (Princetown).

26 DNPA - 11:00: 2hr Walk, Children's Dartmoor Discovery Trail (Hound Tor).

NT - Family Orienteering at Parke - Bovey Tracey 01626 834748.

27 NT - Young Birdwatchers - Plymbridge and Upper Plym - 01752 341377.

28 NT - Spooky Night at Lydford Gorge - 01822 820320/820441.

29 NT - Halloween Capers at Buckland Abbey - 01822 853607.

31 NT - Halloween Trail at Plymbridge Woods - 01752 341377.

NOVEMBER

10 NT - Archaeological History of Plymbridge & the upper Plym - 01752 341377.

13 DNPA - 10:00: 5.5hr Walk, Remembrance Sunday (King's Oven).

20 DNPA - 10:30: 6hr Activity, GPS - Get Lost On Dartmoor No More! (Princetown).

DECEMBER

8 NT - Industries of Dewerstone and Plymbridge - 01752 341377.

11 10:30: 2.5hr Walk, Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust Conservation Task (Postbridge).

26 DNPA - 11:30: 3.5hr Walk, Boxing Day Walk to the East Dart Falls (Postbridge).

27 NT - Wind Down and Warm Up at Castle Drogo - 01647 433306.

31 DNPA - 14:00: 3hr Walk, Watch the Sun Go Down On 2011 (Haytor, Lower Car Park).

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.dartmoor.co.uk
01837 52200

DNPA - Dartmoor National Park Authority:
www.dartmoor-mpa.gov.uk;
01822 890414
www.discoverdartmoor.co.uk

NT - National Trust:
www.DartmoorNT.org.uk

If you have an event that you would like to publicise in Active Dartmoor please email Active Dartmoor simon@activedartmoor.com
Thinking of organising an event on Dartmoor? Please contact the Dartmoor National Park Access and Recreation team on 01626 832093

DIRECTORY

Our useful list of activity providers based on and around Dartmoor

ADVENTURE OKEHAMPTON

Adventure Sports, Cycling and Mountain Biking, Canoeing, Orienteering, Adventure Sport Centre. Okehampton 01837 53916

AIRTOPIA BALLOONS

Adventure Sports, Ballooning, Flying, Aircraft/Ballooning Ugborough 01364 73969

BLACKADON BARN COTTAGES

Walking, Ivybridge 01752 897034

BOVEY TRACEY GOLF CENTRE

Golf, Bovey Tracey 01626 836464

CRS ADVENTURES/DART RIVER ADVENTURES

Adventure Sports, Boating and Canoeing, Climbing and Mountaineering, Extreme Watersports, Outdoor Activity/Pursuit Centre. Ashburton 01364 653444 01364 652511

DART ROCK CLIMBING CENTRE

Adventure Sports, Climbing and Mountaineering, Adventure Sports Centre. Buckfastleigh 01364 644499

DARTMOOR DRIVING

Horse Riding Ashburton 01364 631438

DARTMOOR NATURE TOURS

Walking, Safari Tours Bovey Tracey 07858 421148

DARTMOOR PONY HERITAGE TRUST

Animal collection, heritage/visitor centre, event venue, nature trail 01626 355314 07890 372 709

DEVON CYCLE HIRE

Cycling and Mountain Biking Sourton 01837 861141

IBEX OUTDOOR

Adventure Sports, Boating and Canoeing, Climbing and Mountaineering, Walking, Canoeing, Adventure Sport Centre, Outdoor Activity/Pursuit Centre. Ivybridge 07971497531 01752 837082

MOOR CYCLES

Cycle sales and repairs Okehampton 01837 659677

RIVER DART ADVENTURES

Adventure Sports, Fishing, Boating and Canoeing, Swimming Pool, Walking Ashburton 01364 652511

ROADFORD LAKE

Okehampton 01566 784859

SKAIGH STABLES

Dartmoor horse riding Okehampton 01837 840429

SOUTH WEST LAKES TRUST

Fishing, Boating and Canoeing, Walking, Multi-Activity Centres, Wind Surfing, Outdoor Activity/Pursuit Centre Okehampton 01566 778503



www.spirit-of-adventure.com

SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

Adventure Sports, Cycling and Mountain Biking, Climbing and Mountaineering, Walking, Multi-Activity Centres, Canoeing, Orienteering, Activity Centre Yelverton 01822 880277

THE DARTMOOR CENTRE

Group Accommodation and Outdoor Activities Princetown 01822 890761

TREASURE TRAILS

Cycling and Mountain Biking, Walking, Devon 07960 630900

TREE SURFERS

Adventure Sports, Tavistock 01822 833409

WEEK FARM

Fishing/Fishery, Okehampton 01837 861221

WINGSTONE FARM

Horse Riding, Manaton 01647 221215

WRANGATON GOLF CLUB

Wrangaton 01364 73229 01364 73229

CAOB ROCK Princetown



Former railwayman's cottage on the edge of Princetown. Superb views across the Moor. Well equipped and sympathetically furnished. Bring your boots or bike and discover Dartmoor from the front door.

2 Bedrooms (sleeps 4) Parking, linen and heating included. Visit Britain 3 star self catering. Dartmoor Partnership accredited. From £300/pw. Short breaks from £50/pn Open all year

David & Monika Bright Tel: 01392 851345 herpoldtbright@aol.com www.escapetoprincetown.co.uk

The Carpenters Arms

A delightful traditional country pub - located a few minutes from Haytor in the lovely Dartmoor village of Ilsington.



• Families • Dogs • Horses • Muddy boots and wet coats are all welcome!



Traditional Sunday Roast. Home cooked and locally sourced menu with childrens portions available. A good range of well kept real ales, beers, ciders and wines. Ample parking in the village

Ilsington, Haytor, Devon TQ13 9RG 01364 661629 www.carpentersilsington.co.uk

Lowertown Farm

Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

Farmhouse accommodation on Dartmoor. Perfect for walkers, climbers, horse riders and paddlers of the River Dart. Quality local pubs nearby, full traditional English breakfast. Fresh eggs from our chickens and ducks Great guest reviews, online bookings through our website. Guest sitting room with log burner.

Putting Dartmoor First award Holiday with your horse! Fantastic riding through woodland, quiet lanes and open common www.lowertownfarmdartmoor.co.uk 01364 631034

Fox Tor Cafe

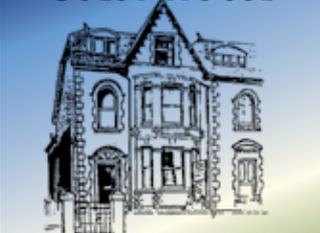
Licensed Cafe Off-Licence Bunkhouse

We provide bunkhouse accommodation and have the only off-licence in Princetown. We welcome everyone in our cafe from walkers with dirty boots to businessmen in need of our free WiFi. We also welcome well behaved dogs on a lead! We have an open fire as well as a woodburner!



Two Bridges Road, Princetown PL20 6QS 01822 890 238 foxtorcafe.com

'MEADOWLEA' GUEST HOUSE



You're sure of a warm welcome from Mark & Lesley Poole 65 Station Road Okehampton Devon EX20 1EA Tel: 01837 53200 meadowleaguesthouse@tiscali.co.uk www.meadowleaguesthouse.co.uk

River Dart Country Park

B&B is available in Holne Park House or the newly refurbished Coach House, prices from £90 per room.



River Dart Country Park, Holne Park, Ashburton, Devon, TQ13 7NP Tel: 01364 652511 info@riverdart.co.uk www.riverdart.co.uk

The Royal Oak Inn

The Royal Oak at Meavy is in an idyllic location next to the village green. If character is what you want then you could find no better place! Food is served seven days a week, home cooked, locally sourced. Walking groups welcome... Muddy boots and muddy paws welcome in the bar!

Meavy, Dartmoor, Devon PL20 6PJ Tel. 01822 852994 Email. sjearp@aol.com www.royaloakinn.org.uk

To advertise in Active Dartmoor Magazine call Susie on 01392 201227 or email: info@zaramedia.co.uk

Get an endorphin high on Dartmoor

If it's a faster pace of life you're after, a rush of adrenaline, get on your bike and get cycling, run, hike, yomp, and climb.

Not enough? Canoe some of the best water in the UK on the River Dart, take in the moor on horseback and challenge yourself. Take a look at our guide to wild Dartmoor, enjoy the outdoors for free, swim in fresh cold waters and sleep out under the stars. Visit castles and ruins, go letterboxing, take a master class, go to the zoo, swim al fresco. Thought morris dancing and snail racing had long since disappeared? It's all part of what makes Dartmoor real.

2,040ft is the height at which you will be standing when you have climbed High Willhays. The most elite military force in the world uses Dartmoor as its training ground; that's a pretty high standard and one we like to keep. The Dartmoor landscape is simply breathtaking, whether you are experiencing it from a horse, your trusty bike, in a boat or on foot, with friends, on your own or with family in tow. Dartmoor spans over 368 square miles of adventure activity.

Getting people active on Dartmoor is something the official tourism organization for Dartmoor, the Dartmoor Partnership is trying to promote. The tourism body

has gained help to raise the profile of Dartmoor as a centre for activity. It has joined forces with Edgemoor Publishing to embark upon the three year project, which will see exciting events, new websites, this magazine and a whole heap of passion to get Dartmoor on the activity map.

The project has already begun in earnest; part of that is the publication you are reading now, Active Dartmoor magazine. The project is funded by Greater Dartmoor LEAF, as well as partners, The Duchy of Cornwall, Dartmoor National Park Authority and West Devon Borough Council and totals £130,000. And the aim; to give everyone of all shapes and sizes, ages and abilities, the tools with which to get active on Dartmoor.

The Dartmoor Partnership is managing the project, upgrading its current website www.dartmoor.co.uk and

creating a fuller and more comprehensive and interactive facility.

Users will have access to interactive maps, walks, bike routes, and wild swimming spots, places to eat, drink, sleep and shop. The new updated website will be the next step, a mine of information for the general public, media and those who live on Dartmoor.

Further technology has already come about with the launch of the new Dartmoor iPhone app back in June. It is a first for a tourism area in the South West and visitors will be able to receive information from the website, wherever they are, whenever they want, at the touch of an iPhone button, on the move, at home or standing at the top of a tor. Places to eat and stay, walking routes and things to do, visit and see as well as information will be available and bookings can be made direct.



Dartmoor.co.uk's new app.



dartmoor.co.uk

So what are you waiting for?
Go on,
get out there.
It's good for you!



Quay climbing centre

Climbing for everyone...

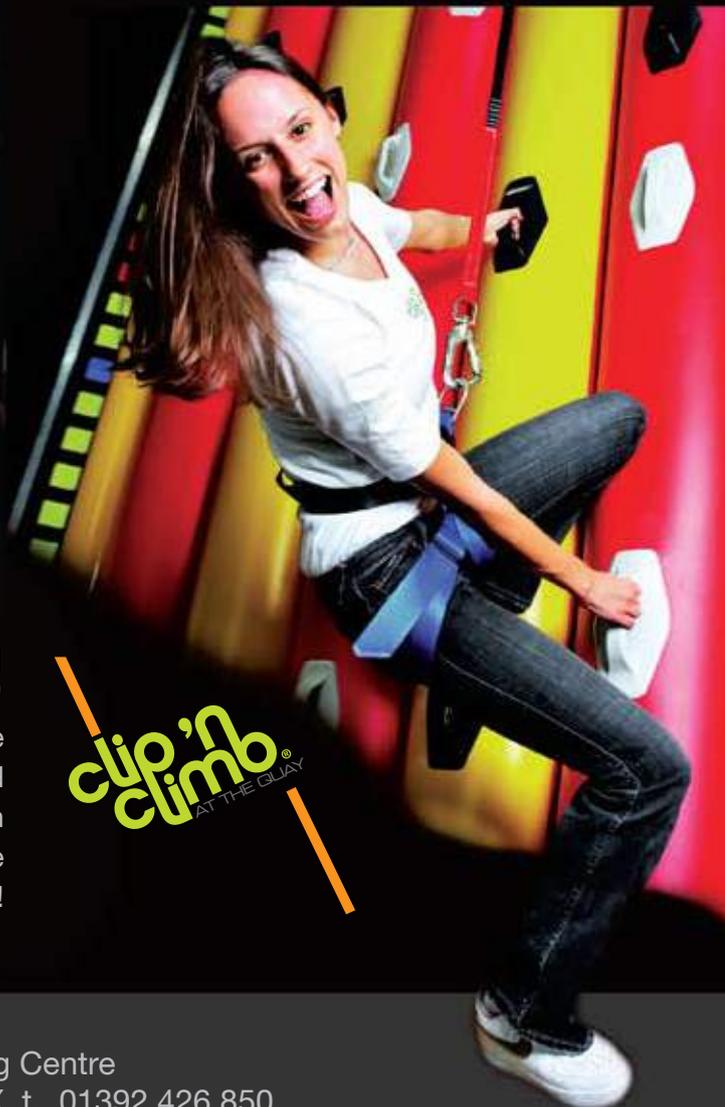
Located in the heart of Exeter

The newest climbing wall in the South West offers something for all abilities, from beginners to experienced climbers, and we have 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!



Who, dares...climbs!

The UK's first Clip 'n Climb centre opens at the Quay in Autumn 2011. Challenge yourself and your friends on a 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 www.clipnclimbexeter.co.uk