



View from a peat cutting,
Furzehill July 2017

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

After staff changes, the Mires team is up to full strength again, read on to see what we've planned for the year ahead!

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- Restoration works
- Project staff update
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RESTORATION

Crowdy Reservoir, Bodmin Moor

We strayed unusually far from our normal turf in 2017 when we headed down to Crowdy Reservoir on Bodmin Moor to direct restoration of 55 ha of mire surrounding the South West Water owned reservoir. The site proved to be exceptionally wet, and a specialist 15 tonne amphibious excavator was required, which could literally float across the wettest areas! This site holds areas of amazingly species rich mire, including rare species such as bog cranberry and white sedge. Our restoration works aim to protect and expand these areas of the site, and slow the flow into the reservoir itself.

Future Sites

The EMP is currently in discussions with landowners around new sites that have the potential for mire restoration. We are also looking to revisit a site to do maintenance and improvement works, since knowledge and expertise around restoration techniques has developed considerably since the original works took place.

PROJECT STAFF

Dr Martin Gillard, Historic Environment Officer

Martin joined the team in June, and brings a wealth of experience in commercial, curatorial and research archaeology. His experience on Exmoor dates back nearly twenty years and includes his PhD thesis, which investigated the medieval landscape of Exmoor. He is enjoying the challenge of protecting, enhancing and exploring the archaeology of the region as part of the EMP.



Conrad Barrowclough, Project Officer

Conrad joined the team in October, and already has a good knowledge of many of the mires sites having led botanical monitoring work from 2012 to 2015. Conrad is an experienced botanist, and brings a range of ecological expertise to the team, being particularly keen on the beautiful sphagnum mosses which fill the pools at the restored mire sites!



Team Christmas Walk

The team headed out across the Chains for the Christmas walk this year, and were able to view some of the blocked ditches and peat cuttings worked on in 2013. The site has responded amazingly well, with bog plants rapidly colonising the ditches. We then trekked over to the spectacular viewpoint at Chains Barrow (with an unexpected dip in the bog on the way!) before looping back via Pinkery Pond.



Restoration works at Crowdy
Reservoir, February 2017

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Guy Freeman recently delivered the initial findings of his PhD research to the partnership.

Guy's research focused on examining the impact of mire restoration works on the agricultural value of the moor; a piece of work critical to the project since the landowners we work with understandably want to know what restoration works may mean in terms of productivity and livestock welfare.

Guy is in the process of revising his final thesis, and presented initial findings to the partnership in late 2017. In summary, research found;

- Dense purple moor grass which dominates drained mires is avoided by livestock.
- Plants associated with blanket bog tend to have a higher value to grazing animals in the late summer and autumn when purple moor-grass has died back.
- Due to the range of species associated with restored mire sites, restoration may extend the grazing season.
- Drainage of mire sites therefore fails to increase agricultural productivity, while also damaging the hydroecological function of these sites; a processes which restoration works seek to reverse in the long term.
- Tick and liver fluke abundance was not found to increase as a result of restoration.

This excellent research adds support to restoration work, and is being communicated back to partnership members and landowners to further the understanding of agricultural management on Exmoor blanket bog sites.

EVENTS & VOLUNTEERING

Guided Walks - Codsens Moor

Saturday **21st April** and Monday **30th July**
10:30am - 1:30pm

The EMP team will be running two guided archaeology and ecology walks at the restoration site on Codsens Moor this year.



Mire Vegetation Training days

Tuesday 29th May – Basic bog plants identification training day – at Blackpitts

Tuesday 5th June – Mosses and more advanced identification of bog plants – at the Pinkery Centre

Mire Vegetation Surveying

June – August

Join the EMP team on various location across the moorland as we carry out our vegetation monitoring.

Simonsbath Mire Volunteers

Every 2nd Monday of the month join us carrying out minor maintenance work on restoration sites.

Meet: 10am, Ashcombe car park in Simonsbath

Further details and where to book for all of the events will soon be available at the link below:

<http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enjoying/events>

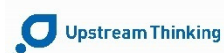
With thanks to the many researchers, volunteers, mire landowners and farmers and supporters of the Exmoor Mires Partnership.

As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or if you would like to get involved and please pass this on to friends and anyone who you think might be interested. Do take a look our website and "like" our Facebook page to keep up to date with the constant advances in our knowledge of your peatlands.

The Document Library section of our website contains many articles and reports: www.exmoormires.org.uk

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 Exmoor Mires  Exmoor Mires



The Exmoor Mires Partnership is a partnership between the local community, farmers and landowners, the Exmoor National Park Authority, Historic England, Natural England, the Environment Agency and South West Water.