



Exmoor Centre

A remote basecamp for exploring the wilds of Exmoor

St. Mary Lyncombe Exmoor Trust Newsletter – April 2013

Spring cleaning at the centre Thursday April 25th please come along and help out for a few hours! 12 – 5pm



St Mary Lyncombe centre is a charitable trust served by a small group of trustees chaired by John Gale. Now in his late 80's, John was Head of Ilfracombe Grammar School in the 1960's and subsequently of Ilfracombe Community College. During his time at The Grammar School the parents, teachers and students raised the funds and built the Exmoor centre. The land was given by Dora Cartwright Williams whose home beside Hoarook water was swept away in the Lynmouth floods of 1952. St Mary Lyncombe lies hidden away in the beautiful Hoarook valley by the river that travels on to Watersmeet and Lynmouth. The centre was established to give local children and families the experience of staying on the wild and beautiful Exmoor; hundreds, maybe thousands have had this opportunity. It is thanks to John and a group of volunteers that it is still standing!

Keeping the centre open and in a good enough condition is a struggle. We are lucky to have here, Will Bowden as manager of the centre. Will grew up in Lynton, went to Ilfracombe College in

John's time as head there and is passionate about the centre. Over the years we have had a great deal of financial support and encouragement from, amongst others, Devon County Council, Exmoor National Park, The Exmoor Trust, Ilfracombe Rotary Club and a host of other groups and individuals. With no endowment we have continually needed to attract support from donors and volunteers who share our concern for Exmoor and who are convinced of the value of experience and knowledge of the natural environment to young people.

Trustees are committed to making the experience for visitors a comfortable one whilst recognizing that what is unique about the centre is that it lies away from all the modern conveniences and technology that we have in our homes. Access to the centre is on foot – a 20 minute walk across moor land. We have worked hard at providing a sustainable source of energy to the centre and we are still working on this. We have installed solar panels and a wood burning stove, water comes from a natural spring. The centre is booked most weekends by families and several groups use the centre for overnight stays during the week. Every year we offer an Educational programme, currently we are planning to invite groups of local school children to the centre for a series of Bushcraft days at the end of their summer term in July.



Voices of Hoar Oak Valley

In partnership with the friends of Hoar Oak cottage – a remote semi derelict cottage on the moor, we have been involved in a project to collect memories of the centre and it's early days. Many lovely and amusing stories are emerging! People whose ancestors lived in Hoar Oak cottage – people now in various far flung places have been uniting to share their stories. Will can be contacted for more information.

Spring Cleaning April 25th 12pm – 5pm

Working on the centre, maintaining it and doing minor repairs can mean quite an expedition. If there are a few of us involved it makes a great difference and it is good to sit down and share a picnic lunch by the log fire! We are preparing the centre for the season ahead and have some projects that are underway that we would love to have help with. You do not have to be big and strong – just willing to spare a few hours. Bring something to share for lunch. We will be cleaning the centre inside and out – basic cleaning materials will be provided.

Please let one of us know if you are planning to join us. We can offer transport to and from the centre in Will's 4 by 4 – Leaving the National Trust Car Park, Hillsford Bridge at 12 and returning 5, it is not suitable to bring your own vehicle to the centre. If you are planning to make your way on foot there is limited parking available by Cheriton Ridge .

Well behaved dogs welcome but please be aware that sheep and cattle graze the moor. If you can't make it on the 25th but would like to be involved, get in touch.

Please ring or e mail Liz or Will with any queries and take a look at our website for more information.

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