

# Countryside Matters



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## CLINTON DEVON ESTATES

Welcome to the latest edition of Countryside Matters, Clinton Devon Estates' newsletter.

This autumn marks 100 years since the end of the First World War and we take a look at the Devon Remembers website which was launched in 2014 to honour the men and women from our community who lost their lives during the conflict.

Funded by Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust and Clinton Devon Estates and produced by volunteers, the website serves as a digital memorial of the 1914-18 generation from our area.

Bicton Arena is the South West's finest equestrian competition venue and, under the expert leadership of arena manager Helen West and her dedicated team, continues to expand its offering to competitors looking for well-run, well-equipped facilities in stunning surroundings.

In this issue, Helen provides an insight into her work as a top-level cross-country course designer.

We also have news about our bat preservation work, the reintroduction of cattle to Hawkerland Common and one of our solar parks hitting an incredible energy production milestone. Also inside are details about the new codes of conduct that have been published for mountain bikers and horse riders on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths.

We hope you enjoy reading about our work and invite you to share our news.



Volunteers Jane Bennett, Sheila Jelley and Margaret Brett with Lord Clinton at the website launch in 2014

# Lest We Forget: Memorial website continues to honour 1914-18 generation

A little over four years ago the Devon Remembers website was launched – with the invaluable assistance of a team of dedicated volunteers – to provide a digital memorial to those men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Great War of 1914-18, *writes Andrew Howard.*

The site, [www.devonremembers.co.uk](http://www.devonremembers.co.uk), has so far been visited by almost 15,000 people and continues to help make connections across the world.

It lists the names and known details of more than 200 people from the parishes of Beer, Budleigh Salterton, Colaton Raleigh, East Budleigh, Huish, Merton, Newton Poppleford and Otterton, all of which have strong ties to the Clinton Devon Estates. Where possible, photographs are included. In addition, the Beer section of the site includes details of everyone from the parish known to have served in World War I.

The website, funded by Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust and Clinton Devon Estates, went live almost exactly 100



Click the image above to see a video about the website

years on from the start of the Great War, and the centenary of the end of that dreadful conflict is an appropriate time to reflect on the website's continuing value.

*Continued >>*





Sailors from Beer march off together to an uncertain fate on August 3, 1914



Lieutenant Miles Walker from Budleigh Salterton



Private Frank Cowd from Budleigh Salterton



Brig.-Gen. Hon. J. F. H.-S.-F. TREFUSIS, D.S.O., Irish Gds.

Brigadier General The Honourable John Trefusis, son of Lord Charles Clinton



Private A.T.H. Hutchings from Merton



Private Peter White (top centre) from Branscombe



Seaman Jethro Westlake (far left) from Beer



### The memorial in St Peter's Church, Budleigh Salterton

#### >> From page 5

Intended primarily as a tribute, the site was also designed to serve as a resource for local historians, schools, and anyone researching this era and the impact of war on the communities of East and North Devon.

The site was launched at the Fairlynch Museum in Budleigh Salterton, and would not have been possible without the meticulous research conducted over many months by a team of volunteers based there. Volunteer researchers and local historians from other parishes in East and North Devon also gave their time freely to help honour those who fought and died for their King, country and community.

Devon Remembers honours hundreds of men and women, from Walter Abbott to Albert Yeats, not only soldiers, sailors and airmen, but also Red Cross and Women's Transport Service volunteers who helped save countless others.

Some of the tributes, such as that of nurse, artist and author Joyce Dennys, are fascinating. Countless others, of those who did not come home, are both poignant and tragic.

Included among the latter is one to The Hon John Frederick Hepburn-Stuart-Forbes-Trefusis, known more affectionately as 'Jack Tre', the son of Charles, the 20<sup>th</sup> Baron Clinton, and the Dowager Lady Clinton, Margaret.

Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Irish Guards in 1901, after war broke out he went to France with his regiment as part of the British Expeditionary Force and was promoted to Major. The website hosts a transcript of the diary he kept in the trenches. Later he

became the youngest Brigadier General in the British Army but died in October 1915, aged 37, killed in action by a sniper.

He was buried at the Guards Cemetery at Windy Corner in Cuinchy, north east France, alongside hundreds of his fallen comrades.

The website remembers not only those who died in battle, but also those who succumbed to disease while on duty, such as Nurse Phyllis May Maltby, 29, who died of pneumonia in December 1918 at the 1<sup>st</sup> London General Hospital, and Private William Harding of the Royal Marine Light Infantry who died of an unknown illness at Stonehouse Barracks Hospital in Plymouth in November 1917, aged 49.

Great care was taken by all the volunteers to ensure the information published online is as accurate as possible, with details cross-referenced to sources such as the 1911 and earlier censuses and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). Indeed, wherever possible, CWGC "Remembered with Honour" files are available to download for each individual.

Also available are photographs of, and links to, physical memorials such as those in St Peter's Church in Budleigh Salterton and All Saints in Merton, and others at home and overseas where the honoured were laid to rest.

The website continues to receive comments from descendants and other relatives of those it honours, often from people born thousands of miles from Devon. Some comments are from people who are able to provide fresh information, others from those seeking more details about their family's history and role in the conflict. All are equally welcome and we help whenever we can.



# How much sun does it take to power 1,522 years of TV?

In little over three years, Liverton Solar Park in Exmouth has generated a massive 20 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity – enough energy to boil 133 million kettles, power 28 million showers, or for 1,522 years of television.

The major milestone was achieved on August 31st, 2018 following a record-breaking year for renewable energy in Britain according to the National Grid. Since its establishment in March 2015 the park has provided low-carbon electricity to more than 1,200 homes a year in Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton as well as to Liverton Business Park.

Clinton Devon Estates built the park, located on the outskirts of the business complex, to contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of the local area; the more energy is generated from the sun, the less coal, gas and oil are needed to produce electricity.

The electricity is fed into the local distribution network and with the average UK household using 3,900kWh of electricity a year, Liverton is generating the equivalent amount of electricity consumed by around six per cent of the 20,600 households in and around Exmouth.

“The park is generating significant amounts of electricity for local consumption, which was our objective all along,” explained John Wilding, Head of Forestry and Environmental Economy for Clinton Devon Estates. “Hitting this milestone signifies that we are fulfilling what we set out to achieve when the plans were being drawn up.”

The electricity generated at the park has contributed to a record-breaking year for the renewable energy sector, with Britain generating more electricity from renewable and nuclear energy in 2017 than from gas and coal, with 2018 on course to be the “greenest” ever.

Mr Wilding continued: “This huge milestone is a significant marker in our ongoing effort to help reduce Exmouth’s carbon footprint and contribute to the nation’s renewable energy generation, which has increased so much during the summer months, that power stations using fossil fuels are being switched off.



**Solar power: John Wilding at Liverton Solar Park**

“The majority of the country’s power stations used to be located in the coal fields of the north, but there is a certain amount of energy which is lost through its transmission, so decentralised renewable energy generation, whereby solar parks like Liverton power their local areas, is a more energy efficient and sustainable way to power the country.”

Despite this summer’s prolonged heatwave and numerous sunny days, the park’s energy production is similar to last year because of the long winter.

Throughout March, when the area was blanketed in snow, and April, when the region was awash with rain, the park was 15 per cent below its target production, known as the budget. However, the long spell of sunny days which followed brought the budget back on track in time for autumn’s 20 million kWh (20 megawatt hours) milestone.

The 25-acre park is also becoming a nature reserve. The grass is evolving naturally into a wildflower meadow, increasing the area’s biodiversity with the number of species increasing year-on-year. The hope is that school visits will be possible in the future as a way of engaging the local younger generation with the role solar parks play locally, and globally as they contribute to combating global warming.

With over 23,000 panels producing 5,900MWh annually and 130km of wires, peak performance is achieved through programmed maintenance, including occasional cleaning and 24-hour monitoring.

*This year equestrian Helen West, manager of Clinton Devon Estates' Bicton Arena in East Devon, became an advanced level cross-country course designer – only the second woman in Britain to achieve this standard. She gives Fran McElhone an insight into this niche field of expertise*

"Cross-country is a hugely risky sport, riskier than Formula 1, so when your name is on the course, it's a massive responsibility," says Bicton Arena manager Helen West. "Riders will always make mistakes, horses will rarely make mistakes, so you can't make the sport safe, but you can design the course so it is as safe as it can be," adds the 38-year-old who is now qualified to design the most advanced cross-country courses in Europe.

"It would be easy to let fear take precedence and create a course which is essentially a show jumping course in a field with a hedge around it," she admits. "So it's quite a challenge getting that balance right."

Riding professionally for 14 years has stood Helen in good stead to become an advanced level cross-country course designer in a field so niche, she is now only the second woman in the country to achieve the accreditation.

The International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) three and four-star examination is the highest possible accreditation in Europe, held by only a handful of people in the UK including champion equestrian Captain Mark Phillips who employed Helen at his Gloucestershire stables after buying a horse from her that she'd produced.

"When I first came to Bicton in 2013, we were spending a lot of money on commissioning other people to design our cross-country courses and thought it made sense to learn how to do it myself," explains Helen, who has competed at various four-star courses countrywide. "I didn't expect to take to it so much and get such a kick from it," she adds.

Since 2015, when Helen was awarded a course design scholarship with British Eventing, she has been designing Bicton's cross-country courses, which are renewed for every event. This led to her appointment as course designer for the prestigious Nunney International Horse Trials last summer and this year Helen has designed nine courses including at Ballindenisk in Ireland.

Helen was the only woman on the FEI one and two-star course three years ago, applying for promotion for the advanced level accreditation earlier this year. Admission onto the course is at the discretion of the organisers with only those showing exceptional aptitude awarded a place. Federation guidelines describe the four-star courses as the most difficult to set because "the margin for error is the smallest".

The process culminated in an intensive assessment - four, 11-hour days - in August with Helen becoming the only other female to attain the accreditation alongside equestrian Sue Benson, who designed the course at the 2012 London Olympics.

"It's been a vertical learning curve and you don't stop learning," Helen continues. "I've competed on a lot of courses,



**"You put on a totally different hat when you're the designer..."**

on a lot of horses over the years, but you put on a totally different hat when you're the designer. You see things differently as a rider - as a rider there are things I never would have thought about."

Helen explains that occasionally fatalities do occur in the sport, with the majority of cases occurring when a horse rotates over a jump and then falls onto the rider. "One thing I've been looking at is how to construct the course to reduce the chances of horses rotating," she explains. "Looking at a course from a risk management perspective brings a whole new dimension to it. But there's a balance between thinking about safety and creating something innovative and outside the box."

When Helen assumed her role at the helm of Bicton Arena, the venue hosted one British affiliated horse trial. Within four years there were three, including an international event. Helen hopes to be considered for the design of three and four-star events next year and aims to establish a three-star cross-country event at Bicton in 2019.





**Top of her game:  
Bicton Arena  
manager Helen West**

Helen is supported by a committed team including site manager and accredited course builder Matt Lynch who is responsible for bringing Helen's vision to life. "He's the one who makes the course look beautiful and makes my drawings reality," says Helen. "Matt is brilliant, I hand him my designs and then he goes out on his tractor, roughly puts the fences in place, and then I come along and stand there waving my arms about to show him exactly where I want them and he always knows which way I want him to turn the steering wheel!"

Helen, who competed at her first international show jumping competition last year with her "demanding but characterful" 10-year-old Irish sports horse Eebay, said the biggest thing she's learnt when it comes to designing is - for the sake of riders and horses - to trust her gut instinct, even if it does mean upsetting the apple cart.

"Sometimes I'll come along and get Matt to dig up a post he's spent half-a-day banging in because it's slightly thicker than it should be and it's changed the distance between posts," she

continues. "But whereas normally I'm someone who likes to keep the peace, with course design you have to be a bit of a diva!"

"There have been times I've wanted to move a post a stride but have convinced myself it's ok and then watched hundreds of horses go through, and wished I'd spoken up and just said, sorry guys, but I need you move it a few inches that way. I've learnt to go with my gut instinct and make changes."

Capt Mark Phillips, who was part of the British eventing team that won gold at the 1972 Summer Olympics and is the father of the Queen's granddaughter and Team GB rider, Zara Tindall, said that there is a "massive shortage" of young course design talent worldwide.

"Helen has the perfect platform at Bicton to step into the world of three/four-star course design to display her talents. I hope she can grasp her opportunities with both hands and finish up designing at the pinnacle of the sport."



# Step into the Arena



## *Land Rover Pony Club Regional Championships*

The Bicton Arena team enjoys hosting the world's finest equestrians as much as it does next generation riders.

Bicton successfully bid to host the inaugural Land Rover Pony Club Regional Championships in 2016, regarding it as an excellent opportunity to support grassroots riding and share the wonderful Grade I listed parkland with the riders of the future.

The South West event has been growing in popularity and this year the three-day contest over the August bank holiday weekend attracted around 350 riders from as far afield as Cornwall, Hampshire and Wiltshire with participants enjoying warm and sunny riding conditions.

The event, which features dressage, show jumping and eventing, is one of only a few low-level courses around: with the jumps set at 80cm for both the show jumping and cross-country courses, the event is ideal for young riders and ponies. Once again, the youngsters, aged between nine and 13 years old showed exceptional promise.

Bicton Arena manager Helen West, said: "There are lots of young aspiring riders looking for something to aim for each year and the standard was impressively high again."

Riders who have qualified in their local areas enter as teams of four.

"One of the best things about Pony Club events is the experience it gives young people to be part of a team which you

don't get riding for yourself," continued Helen. "Working as a team involves supporting each other and this gives riders important life skills as team players and that sense of camaraderie."

She added: "We hold some very prestigious events here, including three international horse trials a year now, and this is wonderful, but it's lovely to be able to put something back into the sport and provide a grassroots event for the next generation of riders and a platform for young riders to realise their potential."

"We're so lucky to have such wonderful facilities here and it would be a crying shame if the young riders couldn't make use of it. It's very rewarding seeing them competing and gaining valuable experience."

## *Bicton, you're our favourite place to ride!*

Readers of the country's longest-standing equestrian magazine, Horse and Hound have chosen Bicton Arena as their favourite competition venue following a vote earlier this year.

This is a huge accolade and one the team is very proud of because it's a testament to the hard work of all who strive to make the venue as friendly and welcoming as possible.

"There are some seriously smart venues out there with wonderful facilities, so this shows that we must be getting the competitor experience right," said Helen. "We try to be as friendly and flexible as possible so we're really pleased people are enjoying coming here."

"It's a testament to the huge team of volunteers, judges and officials who help stage Bicton's events. It's also recognition of the hard work of our events and sponsorship coordinator Beccy Barrett who is our social media guru and has really helped boost our online profile."

"People are welcome to come along and watch the horse trial events at the arena," Helen continued. "We enjoy giving members of the public the opportunity to see what goes on here."

Bicton Arena is a CIC\*\* venue and covers 156 acres of Clinton Devon Estates' Grade 1 listed parkland and attracts around 10,000 horses and 20,000 riders and spectators annually.

Bicton is currently one of only two venues in the country to host international horse trials as well as top-level show jumping and dressage competitions. This year, the venue hosted events on all but two weekends.

"I've no doubt that there are venues out there that have far superior facilities to us, but Bicton is particularly beautiful and people seem to really appreciate their surroundings," said Helen.



**Riding high: A cross-country competitor takes part in the Regional Championships in September**



Bicton received a further boost this year when British Dressage, the body which oversees affiliated dressage competitions and training, voted the arena as the best venue of 2017.

"There are places that have far more extensive facilities than us, so this is testament to how well run our events are," said Helen. "Our arena assistant Gemma Cooke runs all our dressage events and she is uber organised which always results in absolutely seamless events, which the dressage riders love."

### *Bicton Arena Charity Challenge*

This autumn, jockeys, eventers and show jumpers went head-to-head in an obstacle relay race in aid of mental health charity Mind.

Inspired by the loss of two prominent equestrians to suicide last year, Bicton Arena's Charity Challenge raised funds for the charity through donations and sponsorship.

The exciting spectacle, which members of the public were invited to watch, involved riders racing over a series of obstacles before passing the baton to



their next team member, with the fastest team going through to the next round until the final three remained.

Everyone took to the dance floor during a disco in the marquee afterwards.

Helen said: "It was a great night and hugely entertaining. It's always such a lot of fun to watch the teams pit their wits against each other and fly down the course which this year included the steeple chase fence as the final obstacle before they galloped flat out to the line."

Jockey Nick Scholfield, added: "Mind is an important charity and all of the jockeys were delighted to help raise money for it. Taking part is always great fun."

To donate visit [www.justgiving.com/Vicki-James2](http://www.justgiving.com/Vicki-James2) or text NAGS42 plus the amount to 70070.

### *And now for the weather...*

In October, Bicton Arena is hosting the British Eventing International Horse Trials which was due to take place in August but was cancelled due to the ground being too firm following the long heatwave.

Although it was disappointing to cancel the event, its unexpected rescheduling provided an opportunity to create an event which could serve as a qualifier for Badminton Horse Trials in May 2019.

The weather significantly impacted on the national equestrian event calendar this year, with the long, damp, snowy winter causing several spring events to be called off. Less than two months after Devon's second snowfall, the heatwave commenced resulting in the hottest August

on record, creating the worst conditions Helen has ever seen.

"Unfortunately we had to cancel the horse trials in August, with just two weeks to go," said Helen. "But this disappointing decision turned into an opportunity to host the event in the autumn instead, when there are fewer events around. We also decided to include a traditional format which involves a steeplechase and roads and tracks which means the event served as a qualifier for Badminton."

But while events elsewhere around the country were called off at the beginning of the season still suffering the aftermath of the long winter, Bicton's International Horse Trials in April was the first event of the year, nationwide, in which all three days were completed. As a result, the event was heavily oversubscribed, with the team having to turn down 200 riders.

Helen added: "Bad weather makes it very expensive for us! Wet grass gets damaged easily so requires more repairs, and ground that is like concrete needs a lot of irrigation."

"There has been a decline in riders attending events across the country because of the ground condition."

"It's essential that the ground is of the optimum condition; horses are becoming more valuable and riders fussier about where they'll ride, so this is something we take very seriously."

*For more information about Bicton's facilities and events calendar visit, [www.bicton-arena.co.uk](http://www.bicton-arena.co.uk)*



or at the Land Rover Pony Club  
er.





# Country park living at Plumb Park,

The concept for Plumb Park was conceived many years before the first turf was cut last winter.

For well over five years, Clinton Devon Estates worked with specialist master planners and architects to bring forth a development that will not only help to fulfil the current and future housing need in Exmouth but will also provide a positive and lasting legacy for the community.

The opening of the show homes at Plumb Park in August was a significant milestone in this ongoing joint venture between Littleham 2010, a Clinton Devon Estates company, and leading homebuilder Taylor Wimpey Exeter. Finally, prospective homebuyers were given the opportunity to visit the much-anticipated site and get a taste of what living at Exmouth's newest neighbourhood could be like.

Located off Buckingham Close, Plumb Park will feature 264 two, three and four-bedroom homes, 66 of which will be affordable.

There has been "unprecedented" interest in the development and since August, three styles of show homes - The Seaton, The

Littlesea and The Colyford - have been open seven days a week for viewing.

Almost all the homes due for completion this year have been bought and reservations continue to be taken.

LHC Design - the same firm behind the award-winning Clinton Devon Estates' Rolle Estate Office at Bicton Arena - designed the homes bespoke for Taylor Wimpey's flagship development.

The architects drew inspiration from the Avenues Design Statement so the development will complement the much-admired Douglas Avenue and other Avenues and will stay in-keeping with the countryside-meets-town location.

A key part of Clinton Devon Estates' vision was for the homes to be set sympathetically within beautifully landscaped surroundings and public open space. The 14-acres of parkland at Plumb Park are already taking shape, with public access to Donkey Hill now open, offering a stunning panorama over the Maer Valley and the River Exe Estuary.







# Exmouth's newest community



*Not just homes...*

*...allotments, a community orchard, a children's play area, woodland and 1.5km of hedgerows too*

With stunning views as far as the eye can see out over the Jurassic Coast towards Torbay, the top of Donkey Hill is the ideal location for a striking granite topograph.

The monument will display the distances to notable surrounding locations and landmarks around all four compass points and will have pride of place on top of the large grassy hill which was recently opened to the public for the first time.

Locations that feature on the monument include Phear Park, National Trust property A la Ronde and Orcombe Point as well as landmarks further afield such as Mamhead Castle, Portland Bill and Berry Head.

Long-established family firm Williams & Triggs memorial stonemasons created the topograph which was designed by Architects at LHC Design.

For more information about Plumb Park visit:  
[www.taylorwimpey.co.uk/find-your-home/england/devon/exmouth/plumb-park](http://www.taylorwimpey.co.uk/find-your-home/england/devon/exmouth/plumb-park)



# What we're doing in Devon to protect Britain's bats

*As dusk falls, hundreds of nocturnal predators set off across the Devon countryside to feed, writes Kate Ponting, Countryside Learning Officer for Clinton Devon Estates...*

A single pipistrelle bat weighing five grams, the same as a 20 pence coin, can consume over 3,000 insects in a single night.

Bats do well in East Devon: 16 out of the 17 species of bats known to breed in the UK can be found in the county. Our rural landscape with its abundance of woodland and hedges provides protection and food as well as features to help bats navigate across the countryside.

An evening walk by the River Otter this summer revealed five bat species including both the smallest and largest species. In the gloom, the presence of bats and their identification, would be very difficult without bat detectors; electronic devices that bring the bats' echolocation calls into an audible range for human ears to hear. Each species shouts at a slightly different frequency enabling them to navigate and locate prey, while enabling us to identify which species is passing acrobatically overhead.

From late September bats start to return to their winter roosts. Beer Quarry Caves, the historic underground network in the limestone owned by Clinton Devon Estates, is internationally important as a bat hibernaculum. Greater and lesser horseshoe bats, along with a few other types, use the regular temperature offered by the caves to hibernate in the winter. Greater horseshoe male bats are often grouped in clusters, but females and all lesser horseshoes tend to be more solitary.

The farmland around the caves is protected under a countryside stewardship agreement to provide measures to support this bat population.

Several years ago on East Budleigh Common, redundant military buildings from Dalditch Camp were repurposed as bat hibernacula and support the roosts of horseshoe, long eared and other bats. New signage has recently gone up to encourage anyone who might be drawn to the graffiti clad buildings hidden in the trees, to leave the bats in peace. However, anyone with an interest in knowing more about these flying mammals can join organised bat emergence walks which are usually scheduled for warm, early summer evenings.

The Devon Wildlife Trust launched the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project to secure the future of this species in the county and works across important roost sites around Devon. In 2017 a group, including project members, the East Devon AONB and Clinton Devon Estates came together with local ecologists, businesses and organisations to champion bats in the village of Beer.

The Bat Friendly Beer Working Group shares similar aims to the Devon Wildlife Trust project including to promote Beer as bat friendly, encourage collaborative working to maximise opportunities and deliver a number of benefits for the community. Communities which are bat friendly quickly realise that what is good for greater horseshoe bats is good for other bat species, as well as other wildlife, and people too!

**Sleep tight: A greater horseshoe bat by Michael Symes/Devon Wildlife Trust**







*Devon is one of the UK's largest strongholds for endangered bats...*

The population of greater horseshoe bats have plummeted by over 90 per cent in the last 100 years due to various factors such as disturbance to their roosts and intensive agricultural practices.

Devon remains a stronghold for this endangered species with about a third of the UK's population thought to be surviving in the county.

This summer, Clinton Devon Estates supported the Devon Wildlife Trust's Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project which is working towards sustaining the county's bat population.

The five-year partnership project was made possible by National Lottery players through a £785,500 Heritage Lottery Fund grant and involves local landowners, farmers and communities across the county working together to ensure Devon remains a place where greater horseshoe bats can live and flourish.

There were more than 25 bat festival events this summer and as part of its involvement, the Estates hosted a farm walk near Beer, which was followed by an underground cave walk at Beer Quarry Caves, and a number of practical conservation days.

Clinton Devon Estates is also one of several member organisations belonging to the Bat Friendly Beer Working Group which held its first meeting in May 2017 and meets at least three times a year.

Beer Quarry Caves is an internationally acclaimed bat hibernaculum, located on the outskirts of the village and through collaborative working the group aims to deliver a number of benefits for the bats, other wildlife, nearby residents and visitors to Beer.

In 2014, Clinton Devon Estates was accepted onto DEFRA's Higher Level Stewardship scheme for two of its tenanted farms near Beer; the scheme requires farmers to carry out a package of habitat management plans designed to deliver significant environmental benefits in high-priority areas.

In Beer, this has been to support the foraging habitats of the greater horseshoe bat, while raising public awareness through educational on-site visits.



Grazing cattle have been reintroduced to large parts of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths to help manage the unique environment more sustainably.

Forty iconic Red Ruby Devons are among the animals now grazing at Hawkerland Common, joining around 80 beef cattle and ponies already at home elsewhere on the heaths. New cattle grids have been constructed to help manage the cattle while keeping the need for additional fencing to a minimum.

The Pebbledbed Heaths provide a home for thousands of species, many of them very rare, and it is important that this internationally recognised landscape is actively managed to ensure its survival. Livestock grazing is an essential component of managing the heaths which reduces the need for intensive management, supports local farmers in the production of high-quality beef, and minimises waste.

Paul Swain, operations manager for the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust which manages the land, explained: "Wandering cattle is reminiscent of an old-fashioned, traditional era of land management, but it's the most effective way of managing an open landscape like the Pebblebed Heaths where there is a lot of gorse and heather.

"This type of terrain is suited to hardy breeds of cattle such as the Red Ruby which has adapted to grazing rougher vegetation.

"Grazing on heathland such as this helps to create a mosaic of micro-habitats with small areas of short vegetation and open ground which support a wide variety of insects and other animals. It also suppresses scrub and bracken. Because the cattle graze gradually and continually, there are also benefits

in mitigating the effects of atmospheric nitrogen and phosphorus deposition."

The majority of Devon's cattle grids are in the Dartmoor and Exmoor national parks, with others in rural areas to facilitate livestock grazing. The installation of two cattle grids at Hawkerland, near Newton Poppleford, means the animals can make use of the entire 80-hectare section of common, which is dissected by a narrow road, expanding their grazing zone.

Despite being costlier than fencing, cattle grids are far more long-lasting, and as the owner of the land, Clinton Devon Estates was keen to allow the animals more room to roam as well as to preserve the heathland's open aesthetic.

Livestock has grazed sections of the Pebblebed Heaths since the 1990s. Around five years ago they were moved from Hawkerland Common because temporary electric fences proved too costly to maintain.

Following a consultation process in 2009, planning permission for permanent fencing was approved in 2012. This work was funded by the Government's Countryside Stewardship while the cattle grids, installed following consultation with Devon County Council, the Highways Authority, were funded by Clinton Devon Estates.

Susan and David Smith have lived along the road where the grids have been installed for more than a decade and have welcomed the return of the cattle. "It's the most wonderful sight to see animals grazing naturally," said Mrs Smith. "They're helping to manage the heaths naturally rather than the land having to be managed artificially by people with machines. The cattle are doing a fantastic job!"





# Game on, Tom

## Clinton Venison makes national shortlist

Clinton Venison's Tom Garner has flown the flag for Westcountry produce in the finals of the national Eat Game Awards.

Wildlife ranger Tom is a familiar face to many shoppers who regularly visit his stall at Budleigh Salterton Farmers Market to purchase his venison sausages, burgers, roasting joints and steaks. So popular is his produce, it's not uncommon for Tom to have sold out within a couple of hours.

"It was a great honour to reach the finals of the Eat Game Awards, especially as all the finalists were nominated by members of the public," he said.

"Clinton Venison was the only finalist from the South West in the Best Farmers Market Stall category so we really were flying the flag for the Westcountry in these awards.

"We are very grateful to all those who helped us achieve national recognition and continue to support us."

Clinton Venison is produced from wild deer which are expertly and locally managed in-house by Tom to provide high quality, flavoursome meat which is low in fat, high in protein and rich in essential minerals such as iron and vitamin B2.

The responsible management of wild deer is an integral part of the overall management of Clinton Devon Estate's 1,900 hectares of sustainable high-quality multi-purpose woodlands, ensuring the welfare of deer stocks and protection of the Forestry Stewardship Council certified woodland.

Responsible deer management not only safeguards deer from the impact of over-population but also protects the area's native broadleaved woodlands.

Budleigh Salterton Farmers Market is held on the last Friday of every month at Rolle Mews car park on Fore Street from 9am until 1pm.

**For more about Clinton Venison visit,**  
[www.clintondevon.com/what-we-do/clinton-venison.ashx](http://www.clintondevon.com/what-we-do/clinton-venison.ashx)



# PEBBLEBED HORSE

CODE

By following this code and encouraging others to do the same, you can be sure that you are enjoying the heaths in a way that respects other visitors, landowners, animals and wildlife. While keeping routes in good condition for all to use and enjoy.

Pass slow  
and say hi!

Follow tracks  
to protect the  
landscape and  
wildlife, avoid  
widening tracks

Take care of  
yourself and the  
tracks, avoid  
routes that  
are sensitive  
to damage

Always shut  
the gates, read  
and follow  
signs and  
report any  
problems

Explore  
scheduled  
monuments  
such as  
Woodbury  
Castle on foot

Organised  
horse riding  
events need  
a licence  
from the land  
manager



*"Everyone who uses the heaths has the opportunity to be custodians of this precious landscape"*

## Riding in harmony with nature

Horse riders, mountain bikers and conservationists have joined forces to encourage fellow riders to be more respectful of nature, wildlife and walkers when they visit the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths.

The heaths are a beautiful natural recreation ground attracting thousands of visitors, on foot, on bikes and on horseback every year.

But the heaths also have special recognition as one of Europe's most important conservation sites, covering around 1,100 hectares of linked heaths from Woodbury Common to the Jurassic Coast. With over 3,000 different species of flora and fauna, they hold a raft of designations including as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a Special Protected Area and a Special Area of Conservation.

Owned by Clinton Devon Estates and managed by the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, the heaths' preservation is essential for the wildlife which calls them home and for their many visitors.

A series of codes of conduct have been introduced this year as a means of ensuring their continued protection. Following the dog code in the spring, a Pebblebed Bike Code and a Pebblebed Horse Code were introduced this summer.

'Love to ride, love the heath' is the tagline of the new bike and horse codes which were developed by experts from the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, in partnership with the RSPB, Devon Wildlife Trust and the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership with input from the local mountain bike and horse riding communities.

The codes' key message is for riders – regardless of the means of transportation – to

be considerate to all users of this precious landscape, and include the following points:

- Slow down and give a friendly greeting
- Follow the tracks and avoid widening paths or creating new lines through the undergrowth
- Always shut gates and be mindful of livestock
- Follow signs and report any problems
- Obtain the required licence for organised events

Katie Lee from East Budleigh has been riding her horse Ebony on the heaths for seven years and welcomed the code, describing it as "common sense" way horse riders can do their bit to help preserve the landscape. "I feel very lucky to have the heaths on my doorstep," she said. "It's a very therapeutic place to ride and we should all do what we can to preserve it."

"The code is a common sense approach to enjoying the area alongside wildlife and all those who use it, and if it encourages horse riders to work together to make the space safe and enjoyable for everyone for years to come, then that's a good thing."

The bike code has been described by Cathy Debenham, mountain bike guide at Bike Guide Devon, as a "common sense way mountain bikers can do their bit for nature". "The code will help the different users of the commons understand their rights and responsibilities," she said. "It will hopefully foster understanding about its conservation value – if mountain bikers don't know it is a habitat for rare birds and wildlife, they are less likely to understand why they shouldn't be building ramps and jumps there or making their own lines through the heathland."

"Everyone who uses the heaths has the opportunity to be custodians of this precious landscape."

Kim Strawbridge, Pebblebed Heaths Site Manager, added: "Today's horse riders and mountain bikers play an important role in the future of their sport as well as the condition of the heaths and the much-loved trails."



## CLINTON DEVON ESTATES

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