



FRIENDS OF THE COMMONS

Events April to September 2014

Please contact Dr. Sam Bridgewater by email (Sam.Bridgewater@clintondevon.com) or phone (01395) 567138 to become a Friend of the Common and book your place on any of the events. Being a Friend of the Common is free, as are the events. Spaces are limited.

Some events (e.g. butterfly walk) will be dependent on the weather.

Tuesday April 29th 2014. Get to know.....Bicton Common!

10am to 12 noon. Meet at Uphams car park (E of Yettington); OS041861

Bicton common covers an area of over 100 hectares, and is the site of the Royal Marine endurance course, the Commando Challenge and significant WWII infrastructure including an old firing range. Currently the focus of a grazing scheme, this Common is adjacent to Blackhill quarry, and supports a great variety of habitats including mire, reedbed and dry heathland vegetation. Join natural Conservation Manager Dr Sam Bridgewater and find out about the habitats and wildlife of this Common, the history of its management and the conservation challenges ahead. *Please bring suitable clothing/boots for the day's weather and binoculars if you have them.*

Thursday 15th May 2014. Dartford Warbler Walk, Colaton Raleigh Common

8am to 10am. Meet at Warren car park (ca. 1 km N of Woodbury castle on the B3180).

Join Ed Lagdon (Commons Warden) on Colaton Raleigh Common for a walk in search of the elusive Dartford warbler, and find out about the changing fortunes of this iconic species. *Please bring suitable clothing/footwear for the day's weather and binoculars if you have them.*

Tuesday June 3rd 2014. The Changing Face of Woodland Management in the South West.

6.30pm to 8.30pm. Meet at Woodbury Wood (B3179 between Four firs and Woodbury (SY020865))

Woodlands cover ca. 11% of the landscape of East Devon and 17% of land managed by Clinton Devon Estates. The provision of a strategic timber resource, landscape enhancement, promoting wildlife and public access have all been historic drivers for woodland creation. Today foresters across the UK are having to adapt their practices in the face of climate change and threats from diseases and alien species. Meet Clinton Devon Estates' Head Forestry John Wilding at Woodbury Wood and find out how woodland management has changed over the centuries and how future woodlands may differ from those of today. *Please bring suitable clothing/footwear for the evening's weather.*

Thursday 12th June 2014: Butterfly Walk

1300 to 1500. Meet at Uphams car park (E of Yettington); OS041861

The Pebblebed Heaths and associated habitats within the SSSI are a superb place to see butterflies. Over 50 species have been recorded from the SSSI, with 24 species seen on an annual basis. These include the rare silver-studded blue. Join local heathland ecologist and butterfly expert Lesley Kerry on Bicton Common and find out why the heaths are such a good place for viewing this group, how we monitor their fortunes, and what conservation work can be done to safeguard their future. *This event will be weather dependent.*

Wednesday 25th June 2014. Trials and tribulations of an organic farmer in the Lower Otter valley

6.00pm to 8pm. Meet Pophams Farm (E of Colaton Raleigh); OS 072878

Clinton Devon Estates has significant local farming interests, with the focus of activity being the organic dairy herd in the lower Otter valley. Meet farm manager George Perrot for a tour of Home Farm and find out about how the farm is managed, how farming practices are designed to protect the environment, and the challenges, benefits and legislation related to organic farming.

Monday 30th June 2014. Nightjars at dusk! (in association with the OVA)

8.30pm to 10.30pm (dusk is at 2139). Meet at Mutter's Moor car park, nr Sidmouth (SY109873).

A summer visitor to Devon, the Nightjar is a nocturnal bird that can be seen hawking for food at dusk and dawn. Its churring call is one of the rarely heard but quintessential sounds of summer. Join Dr Sam Bridgewater, the Conservation Manager of Mutter's Moor on a search for this illusive bird, one of our heathland's most enigmatic species. Mutter's Moor is managed for conservation and public access by the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust. *Bring suitable clothing, a torch, appropriate clothing to keep warm and a flask of something hot to drink!*

Wednesday July 9th 2014. Moth trapping on Bicton Common

10pm to midnight. Meet at Uphams car park (E of Yettington); OS041861

Poorly recorded, moths are a fabulously diverse group with over 300 species observed from the Commons. Dependent on the weather and the location, one might easily see over 50 species on a single outing. Led by moth enthusiast Kim Leaver, this night-time event is a unique opportunity to view this under-appreciated group close up, and meet such beautifully named species as the Willow Beauty, the Narrow-winged Pug and the Red-necked Footman! *Please bring suitable clothing/footwear. This event will be weather dependent.*

Tuesday 15th July 2014. Meet the Commons' grazing herd

10am to 12 noon. Meet at Stowford car park (E of Colaton Raleigh Common); OS056865

Grazing is a vital tool in managing heathlands sustainably. The Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust has been grazing on the Commons for many years to help maintain habitats in the best possible condition for wildlife, with plans now expanding to encompass Bicton Common. Join Senior Commons

Warden and experienced grazer Paul Swain on Colaton Raleigh Common and find out how the presence of cattle benefits the heaths. *Please bring suitable clothing/footwear for the day's weather.*

Tuesday 5th August 2014. Get to know.....Hawkerland!

6pm to 8pm. Meet at Joney's Cross car park (OS058898)

Covering over 70 hectares, Hawkerland is one of the most beautiful of the Commons with a broad range of habitat types supporting a diverse fauna and flora. Discover this Common with staff from the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust and local wildlife expert Lesley Kerry and learn about its past and present management. *Please bring suitable clothing/footwear for the day's weather.*

Saturday September 13th 2014. Walking the East Devon Way: East Budleigh to Aylesbeare Common

10am to 2pm. Meet at Wheathills car park (East Budleigh); OS040848.

The East Devon Way follows a 40 mile route from Exmouth to Lyme Regis, through the beautiful East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Seven miles of this route crosses the Pebblebed Heaths using a mixture of rights of way, permissive routes and minor roads. Join members of staff from the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team on a wonderful four hour hike, and discover more about the origin and role of the AONB, the East Devon Way and the cultural and wildlife features of interest on one of its most evocative stretches. Features of interest include the old WWII military camp, Blackhill quarry and Woodbury Castle. *Please bring suitable clothing/footwear for the day's weather, a packed lunch and binoculars if you have them.*

Monday 15th September 2014. An evening with the Director of Clinton Devon Estates.

7pm to 9pm. Rolle Estate Office, Bicton Arena, Yettington, EX9 7BL.

Clinton Devon Estates manages 1,900 hectares of woodland, 1,000 hectares of heathland and 1,400 hectares of organic farm, as well as owning commercial and industrial sites and a significant property portfolio. The Estate has changed much during its 600 year history. Today responsible stewardship and sustainable development are at the heart of everything the Estate does. Meet John Varley, Estates' Director, for an evening of discussion regarding Clinton Devon Estates and its role in the 21st century.