

A Landscape Partnership to ensure the New Forest's distinctive landscape survives despite future change and modern-day pressures.

This is the third newsletter from the Heritage Lottery funded Our Past, Our Future landscape partnership scheme, led by the New Forest National Park Authority and 10 key partners. Many of the 21 projects have made great progress and a lot of work has already taken place.

Keep reading to find out about some of the key successes so far.

Top right, New Forest Show Below, (left to right) Ros Kerslake, Heritage Lottery Fund Chief Executive with Marian Spain Plantlife Chief Executive and Alison Barnes, New Forest National Park Authority Chief Executive.



## Working with local communities and volunteers

Many of the projects are working closely with the local community and engaging a wide range of people.

Our network of volunteers is continuing to grow. Over **350** people have been involved in different activities including scanning important historical photographs at the New Forest Centre, undertaking surveys of habitats and species, participating in an archaeological dig at Buckler's Hard in Beaulieu, and pulling up Himalayan Balsam along the banks of New Forest rivers.

**There are many volunteer opportunities available over the winter, so get in contact to find out more.**

In July over **4000** people visited the New Forest National Park Authority's stand at the New Forest Show, which focussed on the work of Our Past Our Future (OPOF) and featured activities related to some of the projects. The largest mindfulness colouring wall in the UK proved to be popular with visitors, depicting giant line drawings of habitats before and after restoration. **Hundreds** of children and adults spent a few minutes learning about the Forest whilst colouring to the sound of bird song. The stand was awarded the 'best large stand' in the show.

In August the scheme hosted a visit from Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), showing her some exemplary work that the scheme had already achieved.

**160** people attended a conference by the New Forest Knowledge project on 'Ecology and management of the New Forest in an era of climate change', resulting in some lively debates about research in the Forest.

Newsletter produced by the New Forest National Park Authority on behalf of the OPOF partners



## Heaths, woods and grassland

Over the summer the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has been working closely with the New Forest Land Advice Service and volunteers to undertake breeding bird surveys and to monitor butterflies, bees, bats and reptiles. This will form the baseline data for future monitoring of sites where practical restoration and enhancement work will take place. The New Forest Land Advice Service has been continuing to liaise with private landowners to plan work such as removing invasive willow from important species-rich grasslands (Stepping stones project), coppicing woodlands (Working woodlands project) and restoring hedgerows (Better boundaries project). Practical work is now planned for this winter at many sites and it is hoped that many people will volunteer their time to help with this important conservation work.

## Rivers and streams

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has been working with landowners and volunteers to reduce the impact of invasive non-native plants from the banks of the Lymington River and its tributaries. Over the summer more than 246 volunteers helped clear Himalayan Balsam from 89 sites, clocking up over 450 days' worth of work. The Freshwater Habitats Trust has trained 35 volunteers who are now regularly monitoring the water quality of 60 sites in the Beaulieu River catchment as part of the Living Waters project.

Living Waters  
volunteers being  
trained

## Heritage

An archaeological excavation was held this summer at Buckler's Hard, Beaulieu, as part of the annual Festival of Archaeology. Buckler's Hard was once a thriving shipbuilding village where warships for Nelson's Navy were built and it is now one of the Beaulieu Estate's many attractions, unfolding its shipbuilding heritage. The excavation was led by the New Forest National Park Authority and focused on identifying and investigating several buildings marked on old shipyard maps held by the Beaulieu Estate. More than 40 volunteers helped across the five days, with many returning for a further three days in November. This gave those interested in the Forest's heritage training in archaeological excavation techniques and an opportunity to gain some practical experience in a protected landscape.

Species-rich grassland



Volunteer scrub-  
bashing, Winsor





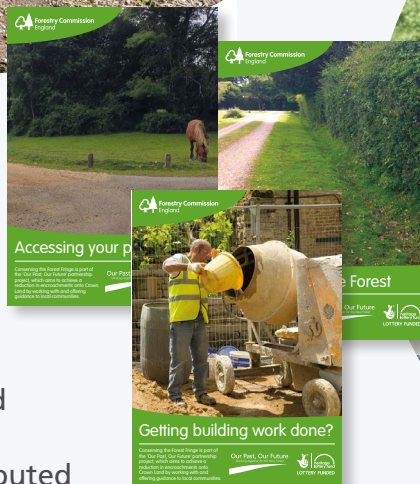


Archaeology dig at Buckler's Hard



## Historic Boundaries

The Forestry Commission is currently working with Redlynch and Woodgreen parishes and their residents to reduce damage caused by unauthorised parking on verges, fly-tipping and misplaced residential fences or constructions. Leaflets (see right) have been distributed and a drop in session in Woodgreen was attended by local residents, with further sessions to be planned. Work has also progressed in selected locations to install wooden posts to prevent existing and further unauthorised parking on verges.



For more information on any projects under this theme please contact the lead partners listed below:

Project	Contact
<b>Working Woodlands</b> - working with the owners and managers of woodland to encourage more sustainable management.	<b>Tom Murphy</b> , New Forest Land Advice Service tom.murphy@nflandadvice.org.uk
<b>Better Boundaries</b> - restoring, enhancing and creating traditional boundary features, such as hedgerows.	<b>Angela Peters</b> , New Forest Land Advice Service angela.peters@nflandadvice.org.uk
<b>Conserving the Forest Fringe</b> - improving community knowledge of the importance of historic boundaries and how they should be maintained.	<b>Sean Marsh</b> , Forestry Commission sean.marsh@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
<b>New Forest Invasive Non-Native Species</b> - removing invasive non-native species, particularly in river environments.	<b>Catherine Chatters</b> , Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust catherine.chatters@hiwwt.org.uk
<b>Living Waters</b> - improving, protecting and restoring the freshwater environment and people's connection with it.	<b>Pascale Nicolet</b> , Freshwater Habitats Trust pnicolet@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk
<b>Nature's Stepping Stones</b> - working with the owners and managers of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in order to make environmental improvements.	<b>Angela Peters</b> , New Forest Land Advice Service angela.peters@nflandadvice.org.uk
<b>Rediscovering Our Archaeological Heritage</b> - uncovering and conserving hidden, unknown and decaying heritage sites and archaeological features.	<b>James Brown</b> , New Forest National Park Authority archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk
<b>Historic Routes and Green Spaces</b> - identifying and raising awareness of rights of way of historical importance within local communities.	<b>Gareth Owen</b> , New Forest National Park Authority garethowen@newforestnpa.gov.uk



# Discovering Forest heritage and inspiring a new generation

## Verderers Hall Restored

Over the summer the Forestry Commission has overseen work to restore the Verderers Hall in Lyndhurst. This has included restoration to some structural elements, such as the stained glass bay window, and improvements to the outside access path and gate to improve accessibility. Inside, repairs have taken place on the tiled floor, the ceilings and walls have been redecorated and the audio visual interpretation has been improved. Some further work is still to be completed, including door entry controls, CCTV, furniture procurement and completion of the interpretation, which will include two films being produced by a local film maker. All the work will be completed by January 2017 and a launch event will be held in spring 2017.

## Drive safely in the New Forest this winter

The Commoners Defence Association is running a winter campaign to encourage people who regularly drive across the Forest to drive with extra care. While many drivers think that driving up to the speed limit is safe at all times, recent evidence has shown that 40mph can be too fast at night – especially if there are cars coming the other way with their headlights on. Awareness posters (see right) will publicise two messages to regular commuters by working with the New Forest Business Partnership and local employers, as well as shops and other places throughout the Forest.

## Walking Festival

The New Forest Walking Festival took place between 15 and 30 October. The crisp and bright autumnal weather encouraged 1,900 locals and visitors to take part in over 78 walks. Some of the walks linked directly to the work of the other OPOF projects, such as the wild play inspired activity trail around Bolderwood during half term. Walks covered a diverse range of activities, including dog walks, tours round historical sites, bird watching and even alpaca walks. Those who took part joined expert guides to go behind the scenes and find out more about the wildlife, history and culture of the National Park.

## First Wild Play Site Agreed

A permanent wild play site is planned for Holbury Manor Park and Warren Copse, just outside Holbury. The site is owned by Fawley Parish Council and is adjacent to a residential area with two primary schools within easy walking distance. The local community currently uses the site for walking and other general recreation, but the addition of a dedicated wild play area within the woodland will provide a space for children and families to explore the outdoors all year round. It will also enable them to connect with nature and develop a desire to protect and preserve their local environment. The site is currently being cleared and is due to open in spring 2017. It is hoped that local volunteers will champion the site and the project will work with the local schools and community to publicise the site and encourage its use.



Above left - Bay window and tiled floor restoration, Verderer's Hall

## Hidden gravestone inscriptions revealed

Archaeological surveys have begun with four local groups in Minstead, Copythorne, Emery Down and Burley to collect accurate records of the monuments in their graveyards, including those that have become illegible or deteriorated due to lichen growth, neglect and general decline. The graveyards were initially mapped and each monument was given a unique identification number. Volunteers are being trained and are surveying the monuments to record specific information, such as the type of monument, materials, inscriptions etc. The before and after pictures demonstrate how volunteers are now able to use a process called Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), which uses fixed point photography with a moving light source, to read illegible inscriptions. The information gathered by volunteers will be used to create management plans for the graveyards and identify any



monuments that require conservation. All the information gathered will be held digitally and be made publicly available, allowing people to trace family members and find out more about the area's heritage.



Above left- before RTI, above right - after RTI

For more information on any projects under this theme please contact the lead partners listed below:

Project	Contact
<b>New Forest Knowledge</b> - providing online access to knowledge, data and information about the New Forest.	<b>Kath Walker</b> , New Forest Centre kath.walker@newforestcentre.org.uk
<b>Heritage on my Doorstep</b> - inspiring and supporting interested community groups to get involved with and discover more about their local heritage.	<b>James Brown</b> , New Forest National Park Authority archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk
<b>Common Cause: Verderers Hall</b> - repairing and enhancing the Verderers Hall, including improving interpretation and accessibility.	<b>Richard Burke</b> , Forestry Commission richard.burke@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
<b>Common Cause: Shared Forest</b> - increasing public awareness and understanding of roaming livestock and their owners.	<b>Jo Ivey</b> , Commoners Defence Association jo.ivey@newforestnpa.gov.uk
<b>Common Cause: Through Our Ancestors' Eyes</b> - collating a photographic and document archive of commoning, forestry and agriculture in the Forest.	<b>Clare Bates</b> , Commoners Defence Association clare.bates@newforestnpa.gov.uk
<b>Foxbury</b> - restoring native woodland and heathland at the Foxbury estate, with an emphasis on community, education and sustainable recreation.	<b>Dylan Everett</b> , National Trust dylan.everett@nationaltrust.org.uk
<b>New Forest Connects</b> - delivering a diverse programme of events, activities, training and other interpretation to inspire people about the Forest's culture and natural heritage.	<b>Jim Mitchell</b> , New Forest National Park Authority jim.mitchell@newforestnpa.gov.uk
<b>Wild Play</b> - creating exciting areas for kids to be able to engage with the natural world in an informal setting.	<b>Claire Pearce</b> , New Forest National Park Authority claire.pearce@newforestnpa.gov.uk
<b>New Forest Arts Festival</b> - an annual arts event on the heritage of the New Forest.	<b>Beki Mole</b> , New Forest National Park Authority beki.mole@newforestnpa.gov.uk



## Developing Forest skills

### Improving Skills

A series of heavily subsidised rural skills courses for farmers and commoners, and a programme of traditional building skills courses for builders, agents and home owners have been run over the first year of the scheme. These have included subjects such as cattle breeding and management, tractor driving, tree safety, historic masonry and cob wall structures. Feedback from participants has been positive and the experience from this first year will be used to determine which courses are run in subsequent years.

For more information on any projects under this theme please contact the lead partners listed below:

Project	Contact
<b>New Forest Rural Skills</b> - delivering a training programme for farmers and commoners and a mentoring scheme for young and new commoners.	<b>Richard Austin</b> , New Forest Land Advice Service richard.austin@newforestnpa.gov.uk
<b>Apprentice Ranger Scheme</b> - offering two environmental conservation apprenticeships per year.	<b>Gillie Molland</b> , New Forest National Park Authority gillie.molland@newforestnpa.gov.uk
<b>Building Skills</b> – a training programme for agents, builders and house owners to develop specialist traditional building skills.	<b>Lisa Crouch</b> , New Forest National Park Authority lisa.crouch@newforestnpa.gov.uk
<b>Veteran Trees</b> - providing the most up to date training in the care and management of ancient trees.	<b>Nik Gruber</b> , New Forest National Park Authority nik.gruber@newforestnpa.gov.uk

### Apprentice rangers start work

The New Forest National Park Authority is working together with the Forestry Commission, National Trust, Hampshire County Council and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to offer two Environmental Conservation apprenticeships per year over four years. The first Apprentice Rangers are now in post and began their placement with the National Trust at the beginning of November. They will receive a variety of land management qualifications, including chainsaw training, with the taught element of the project being provided by Kingston Maurwood College in Dorchester.



Sheep breeding course



The Partnership would like to acknowledge funding from the following



Cob wall building

If you want to find out more about any of the projects or volunteering for the Scheme, then please contact the team:

Email [Ourpast.ourfuture@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:Ourpast.ourfuture@newforestnpa.gov.uk)  
Web [newforestnpa.gov.uk/landscape-partnership](http://newforestnpa.gov.uk/landscape-partnership)