



Park Life

News from the New Forest National Park Authority

Spring/Summer 2018



FREE!

Secret forest will be saved for the nation



The new Franchises Lodge nature reserve. Photo credit Terry Bagley RSPB

A secret forest will be saved for the nation by the RSPB with help from the New Forest National Park Authority.

Like the children's classic book *The Secret Garden*, few people have been in the 1,000-acre privately-owned woodland at Franchises Lodge near Nomansland, which is the size of over 1,300 football pitches.

The RSPB is only beginning to discover the rare plants and animals that live there and the charity plans to work closely with commoners to help improve the new nature reserve's value for wildlife.

The spectacular woodland also provides a bridge between two already internationally-important wildlife areas - Langley Wood National Nature Reserve to the north and the Forestry Commission's Crown lands to the south. It's an extremely rare chance to turn a huge piece of the north of the National Park into a special place for nature, making the Forest bigger, better for nature and more joined-up.

RSPB Chief Executive Mike Clarke said: 'This is one of the most significant purchases in our 129 year history. It is also our first nature reserve in the New Forest. We are delighted to take on the land from its previous owners who we know are passionate about the site, its woodlands and wildlife and we hope to build on their work over the years, safeguarding it for future generations.'

The RSPB says it wants people to enjoy the site, but needs to understand much more about its nature and ecology and consider the views of local communities before making any decisions about access beyond the existing rights of way. Any major changes would be determined through consultation with the community and would need to go through the normal planning processes.

New Forest National Park Authority Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre said: 'This is very good news for the Forest. The acquisition of this site by the RSPB is significant as it gives us the opportunity to undertake landscape-scale improvements to these

habitats in a prime location adjacent to the Open Forest.

'We are pleased that the RSPB is keen to work with commoners and other local people to ensure that the site is managed appropriately. This will bring the same benefits to a wide range of species as it does on the Open Forest and will ensure this important site flourishes for years to come.

Julie Melin-Stubbs, Wildlife and Conservation Manager at the New Forest National Park Authority, heard in 2013 that Franchises had come onto the market and contacted the RSPB.

She said: 'This is an incredible opportunity for both wildlife and people. I will never forget the day I spoke to the RSPB and found to my delight they were interested in exploring the opportunity of acquiring the land.'

'There are some woodland areas which are so special they have been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation, but we're certain that more treasures will be revealed as the RSPB investigates further and starts to manage the land specifically for wildlife and for people to enjoy.'

The land is valued at around £5 million and RSPB ownership has been enabled by a gift in lieu of tax as part of a settlement with HMRC; a legacy to the RSPB of £1.5 million; £200,000 from the New Forest National Park Authority and £25,000 from Friends of New Forest.

A public appeal will be launched in May to help fund a 25 year vision being developed for the nature reserve.

Award winning musical instrument maker in tune with the Forest

A maker of traditional musical instruments has fulfilled his ambition of moving to the New Forest and using local wood to produce unique handcrafted guitars and stringed instruments.

Alex Potter moved to Sway last year and takes pride in using New Forest grown timbers, such as yew and walnut.

Alex Potter Instruments is one of 24 new businesses which joined the New Forest Marque local produce scheme last year. The scheme, now totalling 140 members, includes craftspeople, food and drink producers as well as hotels and restaurants, and is supported by the New Forest National Park Authority. Alex, 28, said: 'Although I grew up in London, some of my earliest memories are of walking under the huge and ancient trees that can be found here. It's a place that has had a profound impact on my life.'

'Working in the Forest also presents a massive

opportunity. With the help of organisations such as the New Forest Marque and local conservationists, tree surgeons and small sawmill operators I now have access to some of the beautiful ancient timbers cut each year as part of essential forestry work.

'I'm looking forward to developing my skills further in an area surrounded by talented musicians, skilled craftspeople and old, old trees.'

New Forest Marque Operations Manager Claire Lee said the scheme gives businesses a distinctive 'New Forest' banner under which to sell their goods and services, encourages people



Alex Potter Instruments uses locally sourced wood to produce unique handcrafted guitars and stringed instruments.

Photo credit: Nick Fleming

to 'buy local' and helps support the New Forest economy.

She said: 'It's fantastic to see relationships being forged between producers, makers and sellers, and the support this gives the local community.'



For details about the New Forest Marque visit newforestmarque.co.uk

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Forest organisations work with Government on 'Green Brexit' for the future of commoning and farming

Consultation on Command Paper on agriculture – 'Health and harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit'

A new agricultural policy must support the unique nature of the National Park's commoning and farming system if the New Forest is to thrive, say Forest organisations.

The Government's Command Paper on agriculture states that a new environmental land management scheme will be the cornerstone of agricultural policy in England and will fund environmental activities that all farmers and land managers can do – things like improving the health of soil and water quality – as well as more targeted activities like restoring wetland and woodlands.

New Forest National Park Authority Chairman Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre said: 'Commoning and farming are vital in maintaining the fragile New Forest landscape, over 50% of which has the highest level of protection for its rare habitats and species.'

'The Command paper is a very welcome addition to the conversation about the future of environmental land management and reflects what Forest landowners are already doing – working

The Government consultation on the Command paper on agriculture closes on 8 May 2018.

with the environment and the public good in mind. Now we must turn this into a policy that can reflect the specific circumstances in the New Forest to support commoners, farmers and landowners.'

The New Forest Future Farming Group includes the Commoners Defence Association, Verderers, National Park Authority, New Forest Land Advice Service, Forestry Commission, CLA, NFU and Natural England.

The group presented a paper to National Parks Minister Lord Gardiner last summer, asking him to work with the group to ensure appropriate levels and delivery of funding to support land management after Britain leaves the EU. This was followed by a visit from Defra Deputy Directors Marie Southgate (Land Use Policy), Guy Horsington (Future Farming Policy) and Sarah Severn (Rural Policy Team) in January.

They visited farms, commoners holdings, the Beaulieu Road sales yard, a wetland restoration and the Verderers Court so that they met and spoke to a wide range of relevant people and organisations.

Seasonal snaps



Pictured is previous winner Matt Roseveare's stunning image of a Roe deer at Brockenhurst (www.mattrphotography.co.uk).

Why not enter your National Park photos in our Seasonal Snaps Facebook competition for a chance to win great prizes?

Our 2018 competitions dates are:
Spring: 25 April - 9 May
Summer: 8 - 22 August
Autumn: 7 - 21 November

Pictures must capture the season and have been taken within the National Park. Winners are chosen by a public vote on the National Park Authority's Facebook page.

Big thanks to volunteers

Destroying invading plants, cataloguing historic documents and surveying rare wildlife are just some of the tasks 500 volunteers have undertaken to help the New Forest.

Volunteers have contributed over 5,000 days during the past two years and their hard work has been crucial to the success of 21 projects which make up a Heritage Lottery Fund scheme, Our Past Our Future.



Woodland warriors

There are many privately owned woods in the New Forest. Now volunteers and the New Forest Land Advice Service are working with landowners to ensure 120 hectares of this private woodland is brought back into active management.

They are improving habitats for threatened wildlife, making woodlands more able to withstand pests and diseases and training people in the skills they need to look after them in the future.

Volunteers have been helping to restore woodlands by thinning trees, creating glades, and removing rhododendron and other exotic plants which choke native species.

Land Advice Service Manager Julie Melin-Stubbs said: 'Up to 15 people take part in the task days and jobs can be found for any level of experience. There is often a roaring fire to burn the scrub and hot drinks and biscuits are provided to keep everyone fuelled! Volunteers find the days really enjoyable as it's a chance to get some fresh air and exercise, meet new people and get a great sense of achievement.'

Fighting plant invaders



Volunteer Patsy Baverstock pulling Himalayan balsam

Himalayan balsam was introduced to the UK by the Victorians as an ornamental garden plant. However it is highly invasive, spreads rapidly and out-competes our native wildlife, forming large colonies of plants sometimes up to five metres tall.

In 2017 alone, volunteers spent over 3,200 hours removing Himalayan balsam from New Forest waterways with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Regular volunteer Patsy Baverstock said: 'I volunteered to pull Himalayan balsam and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. We went to many different places, some where the balsam was very dense and other places where the impact of previous pulls could be seen. I found the work satisfying and very enjoyable, being on land the general public don't get to, with the peace and beauty of the area being an added bonus.'

Focus on freshwater habitats



Surveying rivers and streams
Copyright Freshwater Habitats Trust

The New Forest's rivers, lakes, ponds, ditches, bogs and streams, are home to wildlife of national and international importance.

However there are still pockets of pollution and some species have declined, such as eel and the common toad.

The Freshwater Habitats Trust is working on the River Beaulieu and its streams, teaming up with two farms and a plant nursery to reduce sediment and nutrient pollution, and installing eel brushes to help them move upstream.

Meanwhile 30 volunteers are monitoring the water quality using simple kits to measure nitrates and phosphates in the water courses every other month at 60 locations. With this baseline data, they'll be able to see how effective the practical measures will help the river catchment in the long term.

Jo Shorrocks

I love volunteering for the New Forest National Park. I have worked on Working Woodland and the Better Boundaries projects working outdoors with the National Park officers enabling me to learn about the flora and fauna as they are happy to pass on their knowledge. Plus I have loved working for all the other wonderful people who come and volunteer their time.

Elizabeth Sharp

I have now been volunteering for the NFNPA archaeology team for a little over a year now and I have to say I cannot think of a more beautiful place to spend a few hours of the day surveying with a great group of people.

New Forest Knowledge

A new website providing access to the wealth of New Forest information held in museums, archives and libraries, both locally and nationally is now live thanks to the help of volunteers. Visit newforestknowledge.co.uk

SIGN ME UP!

Fancy getting involved in volunteering?

Check out opportunities online at newforestnpa.gov.uk, pick up a volunteer guide and keep an eye out for our Volunteer Fair every January with over 40 organisations and 700 visitors.



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Children help to save our 'plastic planet'



Ranger Chris Marshall talks to William Gilpin School, Boldre, about our 'plastic planet'.

A staggering 13,500 children from over 60 primary schools are looking at ways they can reduce plastic waste in the New Forest, its rivers and sea.

The New Forest's unspoilt natural beauty is one of the things that people value most about the National Park.

Sadly, some people deliberately throw food packaging from their cars, leave litter in parking areas and even deliberately dump quantities of waste materials.

Now the New Forest National Park Authority's two education staff with help from rangers are visiting over 60 primary schools to teach children about the impacts littering has on their local environment.

They're demonstrating how easily plastic can go from the heathlands and woodlands to the ocean and back again, with potentially disastrous consequences through each stage of its journey.

From the Forest to the food chain and rare birds to marine wildlife, pupils learn how plastic

pollution does not just affect the animals roaming the Open Forest and how important it is to reduce, re-use and recycle, and take litter home.

New Forest National Park Authority's Lead Education Officer, Sue Palma, said: 'The response from schools has been so encouraging. Throughout the New Forest, from Southampton to Bournemouth, schools are doing their best to eliminate single use plastic from homes, classrooms and school kitchens.'

'For example, cooks at Sopley Primary School - Katie Whitcher and Adele Jackson - spoke proudly of working with school dinner providers HC35 to replace single use plastic dishes and cups with reusable ones, and teaching the children to separate food waste from other waste. Redbridge

Find out what is being done to tackle litter in the Forest at newforestnpa.gov.uk/litter.

Primary School is one of many determined to discontinue the use of plastic straws.

'All the children we have met so far care about the environment, and are considering ways in which they themselves can ensure that the world will be free of single use plastic before too long.'

Jane Flood, Head of Learning, said her pupils at Netley Marsh Infant School, enjoyed the plastic planet assembly. She said: 'The children loved the story of the plastic bag in the New Forest and what can happen when the animals come across plastic in their environment. Thank you to the education team for making this problem come alive. Maybe these children can keep our Forest beautiful.'

Forest campaign to reduce plastic bottles

Residents and visitors can fill their water bottles with free tap water in local businesses thanks to an innovative scheme to cut plastic waste.

Refill New Forest is part of a national project to make it easier for people to find free refills and reduce the use of disposable plastic bottles.

Over 30 businesses in and around the National Park have already signed up. You can find them by downloading the Refill app and look out for a window sticker on display.

The project is part-funded by the New Forest National Park Authority's Sustainable Communities Fund, which aims to strengthen the



wellbeing and sustainability of local communities.

Businesses interested in signing up can register via the app or email refillnewforest@gmail.com.

Great British Spring Clean



Over 20 litter picks were arranged in March by New Forest communities, the Forestry Commission, National Trust, and Hampshire County Council at Lepe Country Park and Lymington Keyhaven Nature Reserve as part of a national effort to tidy up our countryside.

Pictured at the launch at Milford on Sea are (left to right): New Forest District Council Environment Portfolio Holder Cllr Alison Hoare; NPA Deputy Chairman Edward Heron; Nigel Matthews, NPA Head of Recreation Management and Learning; Forestry Commission Deputy Surveyor Bruce Rothnie and Milford Parish Councillor Bob Bishop.

England Coast Path proposals in the New Forest National Park



Ponies on the National Park coast
Copyright Natural England

Natural England's proposals to improve public access along a 35 mile stretch of coast between Highcliffe to Calshot have been published.

If approved, this route will become part of the England Coast Path - the 2,700 mile long distance walking route and England's newest National Trail currently being developed around the entire English coast.

Fran Davies, Natural England's Area Manager for Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight said: 'We're excited to publish our thoughts on the

new route through this historic and environmentally-rich coastal landscape, including a section on the southern shore of the New Forest National Park.

'Our proposals incorporate existing and new access, giving people the right of access to some parts of the coast for the first time. We've worked closely with many landowners and partner organisations to get to

this stage, for which we're hugely appreciative. We look forward to hearing people's views on these proposals for the new route along this beautiful stretch of coast.'

New Forest National Park Authority Chairman, Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre, said: 'When the Secretary of State has decided the route, we will be responsible for installing and maintaining the part that will be in the New Forest National Park to the highest standard.

'This should enable people to experience the wonderful New Forest coast, whilst also protecting the working landscape and the many wildlife species that thrive here.'

Anyone can make representations to Natural England about the report by midnight on Wednesday 9 May 2018. Owners and occupiers of affected land can make objections about the

The full report, proposed route, and forms and guidance on how to make a representation or objection are available at gov.uk.

About the England Coast Path

The England Coast Path will be England's longest, newest and most challenging National Trail, passing through some of our finest countryside and coastal locations.

It will secure legal rights of public access for the first time to coastal land including foreshore, beaches, dunes and cliffs.

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 places a duty on the Secretary of State and Natural England to secure a long distance walking trail around the open coast of England, together with public access rights to a wider area of land along the way for people to enjoy.

Natural England is the government's independent adviser on the natural environment.

It is working on the entire coastal route, with new sections opened in Cumbria, Norfolk and the North East.

The entire 2,700 mile route will be completed and opened by 2020.

report on specified grounds, which will be considered by a Planning Inspector before the Secretary of State makes a final decision.

Copies of the report can be viewed in local libraries, at Lepe Country Park, and in New Forest District Council and the National Park Authority offices.

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Chirpy outlook for New Forest grasshopper

A new study has found that the UK's largest grasshopper is prospering in the New Forest despite a worrying national decline.

The results suggest that the Large Marsh Grasshopper remains widespread in the Forest, with few signs of population change in the last 20 years. The species is one of the rarest in the country, only found in the New Forest and a small area of Dorset.

Populations of the Large Marsh Grasshopper have declined dramatically in England during the past 50 years and it has been lost from many areas. This decline is largely due to the widespread drainage of wetlands and extensive peat extraction.

This study was commissioned by the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLS) and shows that the New Forest is very special for wildlife that isn't found elsewhere.

Consultant entomologists Martin Harvey and Paul Brock, who carried out the survey for the Forestry Commission, said: 'We were pleased to find that Large Marsh Grasshopper remains widespread in suitable habitat across the New Forest, on land managed under HLS.

'Some strong populations were recorded, and there is no sign of decline in range since the last major survey in the 1990s. As long as its preferred habitat of wet bogs with plenty of Sphagnum moss continue to be maintained and restored, this spectacular insect should be able to thrive into the future.'

The grasshopper is usually found in these wet, marshy locations, making the New Forest's extensive bogs and mires a perfect habitat.

These wet areas are home to thousands of species and are widely considered to be internationally-important habitats. In fact, the National Park is home to 75% of the valley mires in north-western Europe.

Along with grasshoppers, this habitat supports plants such as mosses, bog asphodel and white beaked sedge as well as numerous beetles, dragonflies and damselflies.

For many years these habitats have been disappearing across the south of England, but a wetland restoration scheme has been working to reverse this trend in the New Forest to sustain and strengthen wildlife populations. Since 2010 more than 10 miles of waterways have been restored to reverse the damage caused by artificial straightening of streams since the Victorian era that drained mires.

The 10-year HLS agreement with Natural England is held by the Verderers of the New Forest. The scheme is managed by them in partnership with the Forestry Commission and the New Forest National Park Authority.

To find out more about the work of the HLS scheme in the New Forest and read the full Large Marsh Grasshopper report visit hlsnewforest.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

- Grasshoppers can jump about 25cm high and around 1 metre long. Relatively speaking, if humans could jump as far as grasshoppers do then we could leap more than the length of a football field.
- The adult grasshoppers are also good flyers, enabling them to move between the many different wetland areas within the New Forest
- The fossil record shows that primitive grasshoppers first appeared during the Carboniferous period, more than 300 million years ago, long before dinosaurs.
- Only male grasshoppers 'chirp' – the sound is made by rubbing their hind leg against the edge of their wing, known as stridulation.
- Grasshoppers 'ears' are found on their abdomen.

Look out for rare birds that nest on the ground

The New Forest is an important stronghold for rare birds that nest on the ground and we can all help them survive.

Much of the National Park is designated a 'Special Protection Area' partly because of the breeding populations of three species - woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.

Wading birds include the curlew, redshank, snipe and lapwing, each of which is becoming rare in the south of England. The National Park contains some of the most important

and rare wetlands in Europe – as much as 75% of the UK's lowland bog habitat. Wet valleys, or mires, are essential for wading birds. Here they probe for worms and other invertebrates beneath the surface.

The main dangers are that these ground nesting birds either can't find a quiet enough area to stake out their territory, or they are frightened away from their nests, leaving eggs



or chicks vulnerable to the cold, or to predators such as crows or foxes.

These predators are always looking for a meal and will quickly investigate when the birds are flushed from their nests.

Nigel Matthews is the New Forest National Park Authority's Head of Recreation Management and Learning. He said: 'We can all help these rare species to survive by making sure we stick to the wider tracks when we're out in the Forest

between March and July. The birds become accustomed to this, but are quickly alarmed if we or our dogs stray into the heather or on the narrow pony tracks.

'You'll see signs at key locations and rangers will be out and about reminding people. Forest organisations have developed a dog walking code and are working with commercial dog walkers and even at puppy training classes so owners know how they can help save these fascinating birds.'

Did you know?



The **male snipe** displays by making a 'drumming' sound in flight. It dives down steeply so that the air vibrates its outer tail feathers.



Incubation takes a month, but within hours of hatching the tiny **curlew** chicks can run around.



The **redshank** is sometimes called the 'warden of the marsh' because its loud alarm call alerts other birds to danger.

Copyright Mike Read



Dartford warblers are vulnerable to cold weather, so many may have died during the recent snow. Their nest is close to the ground, in gorse or heather.

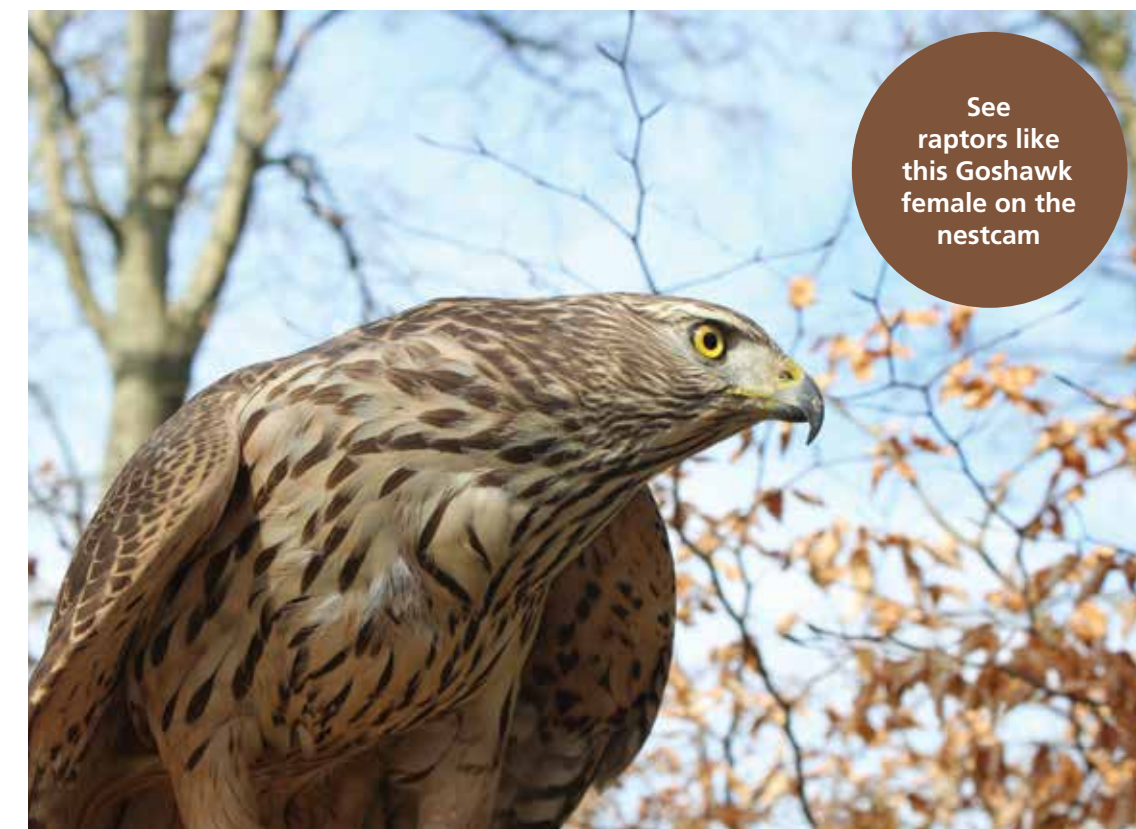
Photo Credit: Dean Eades



The male **lapwing** has a dramatic swooping display flight that shows other lapwings where its breeding territory is.



Nightjars are summer visitors to the UK; they feed at night on moths and other insects and have a far-carrying churring song.



See raptors like this Goshawk female on the nestcam

Make a date with nature at the New Forest Reptile Centre

Visit the Reptile Centre and check out the cutting-edge 'raptorcam' technology which shows birds of prey in their nests as they breed, hatch eggs, feed chicks and teach young how to fly. Staff and volunteers are on hand to explain more about the birds' behaviour and answer any questions, with the live webcam on show to visitors.

You can also see reptiles and amphibians native to the New Forest close up in outdoor 'pods'.
A Date with Nature runs daily from 30 March to 2 September, 10am to 4.30pm. Entry to the Reptile Centre on the A35 west of Lyndhurst is free, although donations for parking are welcome.

Building Design Awards

The New Forest is well known for its free roaming animals, wide open heathland and ancient commoning traditions.

But the area's distinctive and attractive buildings also make an important contribution to its unique character. The special character and appearance of the New Forest National Park can be maintained and improved through fresh and interesting building design.

To celebrate this, the annual New Forest Building Design Awards recognise the best new developments from the previous three years. The winners are chosen by a panel of National Park Authority members.

Leo Randall, Chairman of the New Forest National Park Authority's Planning Committee said: 'Hundreds of planning applications are submitted in the National Park each year – with more

than 80% approved - and as the planning authority we appreciate the importance of good design in the National Park.

'We are pleased to be rewarding buildings that have been positively received by people and would like to thank all the residents, parish councils and architects for nominating projects for an award.

'We were pleased with the quality of buildings put forward and the panel felt that the winning schemes make a positive contribution to the character of the built environment of the New Forest. Congratulations to all the winners.'

Individual building category winner:

Mill Stream, Mill Lane, Burley.

Owners: Anna Lawrence and Chris Walter. Architect: Steve Sherlock of Sherlock Architecture.

Panel comment: 'Everything about this dwelling is finished to a high standard and is understated.'



Extension category winner:

Stuckton Farm, Stuckton.

Owner: Paul Allen. Architect: Ivan Maughan of Maughan Architecture.

Panel comment: 'The conservatory enhances the character of the building rather than detracts from it.'

Meet the apprentice rangers

Apprentice rangers Martyn Meaker, 27, and Peter Dovey, 38, have a passion for working in the outdoors.

Over 12 months, they are gaining experience with ranger teams from the New Forest National Park Authority, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Hampshire County Council and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. They are also attending a course in

land management at Kingston Maurwood College, Dorchester. Martyn and Peter are two of seven apprentice rangers which the scheme, backed by the Heritage Lottery Fund, plans to train over four years.

Why did you want to become a ranger?

It's something I've always wanted to do. I was brought up on a farm but as a boy was talked out of becoming a gamekeeper as 'there is no money in it'. Having been a carpenter for 15 years I decided I didn't want to do it anymore. I got sick of the materialistic side of things, people spending thousands on fitted kitchens, and not thinking about the planet. So I moved back to Britain from New Zealand. It's hard to get into this line of work and I kept getting turned down. So after two years of trying and getting accepted as an apprentice was quite an emotional time to be honest.

What do you like best about the apprenticeship?

All of it. It's easy to want to learn about it, even in your own time, when it's something you

want to do and you're absorbed by it. People at the Wildlife Trust have an encyclopaedic knowledge of wildlife which has been fascinating and our time with the National Trust has been more about how we care for the land and practical tasks.

What's been your best wildlife encounter?

I was volunteering with the Wildlife Trust and asked what the funny noise was that I was hearing on an evening - it was a nightjar which makes an eerie churring sound. It was a brilliant moment to see such a rare bird for the first time the next night.

What has surprised you about the New Forest?

Seeing how important volunteers are to achieving good things for the area and how many people do actually volunteer and turn up in all weathers!



MARTYN

PETER

How did you get onto the apprenticeship scheme?

I've lived in the New Forest my whole life and have my own ponies out on the Forest. I saw an advert for the role and it went from there.

What have been the highlights of the apprenticeship so far?

It's really the knowledge that I have now about the Forest, even though I've lived here for 27 years. Learning skills like chain-sawing has been brilliant and meeting the general public. I'm excited about the future.

What's the most unexpected thing you've learnt?

The biggest surprise has been how many people feed the ponies, which is bad for them. I also never knew how endangered the heathland is - it is rarer than rainforest and we have it in abundance here so we're very lucky.

Which task have you enjoyed most so far?

Burning the gorse and heather to keep all the plants healthy and not too leggy so all the ponies and other animals can munch on the new shoots.

Shakespeare no fear



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Partnership launched to ensure business and the environment thrive



Business and community leaders have launched a new partnership aiming to ensure our most precious landscapes work in harmony with the economy.

The Green Halo Partnership brings together organisations from across central southern England to protect and enhance our 'natural capital' - the benefits we derive from nature such as clean air and water, protection from flooding, food and healthy outdoor activities.

Architects, wildlife charities, councils, utility businesses, health bodies, universities and civil engineering firms are among over 40 organisations already on board.

They have identified a range of actions and projects which taken together will help maintain and enhance our natural resources and so help protect the unique character and identity of the New Forest and surrounding area. New Forest National

Park Authority Chief Executive Alison Barnes said: 'Companies and organisations in the south have shown that working with the environment in mind has benefits now and in the future. For example, water saving measures are not only good for our environment but for a company's bottom line; designing eco buildings is not necessarily more expensive and results in energy savings and less use of natural resources; creating communities with green space is good for wildlife but also for our health and wellbeing.'

'These organisations have shown their commitment to working together to create a world class environment and world class economy here in the south.'

Following the launch in November 2017, the partners are bringing together their ideas for projects around four themes:

- Supporting the local economy
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Encouraging sustainable living
- Enhancing the natural environment.

For more details see newforestnpa.gov.uk/greenhalo

Take an open-top safari for a new view of the Forest

Ride open-top through the treetops and experience the New Forest as you've never seen it before.

With three different routes, passengers enjoy grandstand views of the New Forest National Park on the popular double-deckers.

You can hop on and off wherever you like and catch the next Tour, or switch between routes, all on the same ticket. Multi-day tickets are excellent value for money and the best option for the full experience at your leisure!

Hear the stories of the people, places and animals on the audio commentary – with characters, sounds and music, bringing the view to life. You can also take in a walk or cycle ride from the Tour (bikes go free) with easy routes in the guidebook on board.

Customers also receive money off entry to attractions along the routes such as Beaulieu Motor Museum.

Operated by MoreBus in partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority, last year over 38,600 passengers hopped on the Tour.

New Forest National Park Authority Deputy Chairman Edward Heron said the Tour helps the environment by encouraging people out of their cars and supports the local economy. He said: "Covering the length and breadth of the National Park, the three scenic routes saved around 146,000 private car miles last year."

"The Tour also provides a boost to local businesses, contributing an estimated £555,000 to the New Forest economy while stopping at local villages and attractions."

The tour runs from 7 July until 9 September 2018. Tickets can be booked online at thenewforesttour.info. They can also be bought on board the bus, from the New Forest Travel Concierge at the New Forest Centre in Lyndhurst or at Brockenhurst Railway Station.



The green route takes you through spectacular countryside

2018 EVENTS CALENDAR · March-October

MARCH

EASTER CRAFT CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS

Sat 31 Mar, 10am - 2pm

New Forest Centre, Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY

Have an 'egg-citing' time with our children's Easter crafts and make lots of fun things to take home. Six activities for £5 if booked in advance by 26 March or £1.50 per activity on the day.

APRIL

WILD PLAY DAY AT THE BEACH



Crabbing at Keyhaven

Wed 11 Apr, drop in between 10am - 3pm

Hurst Spit, Milford on Sea, SO41 0PY

Discover fun ways to explore, play and get creative in the outdoors. Come and try crabbing, beach art, seashore scavenging and much more. Wear some old, warm clothes and don't forget your wellies! Suggested donation £1/child. Parking charges apply. Suitable for all (children must be accompanied by an adult). No booking required.

Enquiries: 01590 646600

AUGUST

FUN IN THE FOREST

Thu 2 Aug, 10am - 3pm

Wilverley inclosure car park, Brockenhurst, BH25 5TZ

Catch up with the New Forest National Park rangers for a host of activities such as bug hunts, scavenger hunts, colouring and crafts. Wear old clothes and be ready for forest fun! No booking required. Suggested donation £1/child. Suitable for all ages (children must be accompanied by an adult). Enquiries: 01590 646600

MARINE WONDERS

Thu 7 & Wed 8 Aug, 10am - 4pm

Lepe Country Park, SO45 1AD

Come to Lepe for two days of marine-themed fun: the ever popular seashore safaris, arts and crafts, storytelling and much more. Free event, donations for craft activities welcome. No booking required. Parking charges apply (free for blue badge holders). Suitable for all ages. Enquiries: 02380 899108

SUMMER WILD PLAY DAY

Tue 14 Aug, drop in between 10am - 3pm

Whitefield Moor, Rhinefield Road Brockenhurst SO42 7QB

Discover fun ways to explore, play and get creative in the outdoors, from your back garden to the New Forest woods, streams and heaths. Create some forest art, sail leaf boats, explore with scavenger hunts and much more. Wear old clothes and don't forget your wellies! Suggested donation £1/child. Parking charges apply. Suitable for all ages (children must be accompanied by an adult). No booking required. Enquiries: 01590 646600

FUN IN THE FOREST

Thu 16 Aug, 10am - 3pm

Puttles Bridge car park, Brockenhurst, SO42 7QB

See Thu 2 August for details.

FUN IN THE FOREST

Thu 23 Aug, 10am - 3pm

Anderwood car park, Lyndhurst Road, Burley, BH24 4HS

See Thu 2 Aug for details.



Wild Play at Hurst beach

SEPTEMBER

LYMINGTON-KEYHAVEN NATURE RESERVE OPEN DAY

Sun 16 Sept 10.30am - 4pm

Lymington-Keyhaven Nature Reserve SO41 8AE

Come to Hampshire's premiere coastal reserve and enjoy the spectacle of birds as they stop off on their annual migrations. Stalls, crafts, guided walks, family activities, wildlife viewing and more. Joint event with Hampshire County Council, Hants & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the National Park Authority.

OCTOBER

WALKING FESTIVAL

Sat 13 - Sun 28 Oct

Various times and location across the National Park.

The festival will boast dozens of guided walks led by knowledgeable local experts to help you discover more about the history, heritage and wildlife of the Forest. The 2017 Festival saw 1,500 people enjoy 75 behind-the-scenes family strolls, history hikes, wildlife walks and more, all led by expert guides.

AUTUMN WILD PLAY DAY

Wed 24 Oct, drop in between 10am - 3pm

Holmsley Campsite, Forest Road, Burley BH23 8EB

See Tue 14 Aug for details.

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Enjoying a walk at Beaulieu Road during the Walking Festival

New Forest Centre Events

Family Discovery Days

New Forest Centre, Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY

Learn about the New Forest and have fun with our family-friendly activities. No need to book, just drop in between 10am and 3pm - different activities each day. (Museum entry is free, donation per craft activity.)

Apr 3, 5, 10, 12

May 29, 31

Jul 31

Aug 2, 7, 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30

Oct 23, 25

Exhibitions in the New Forest Gallery

New Forest Centre, Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY

Gallery open daily 10am - 4.30pm from 1 April to 29 October (10am - 3.30pm at all other times).

Maps: The New Forest Unfolded

21 Jan - 15 Apr, open daily

Discover the biography of the New Forest and its people through maps chosen from the Christopher Tower Reference Library.

Ancient and Remarkable Trees

21 Apr - 8 Jul, open daily

A selection of images of trees in the New Forest by photographer David Russell.

The Sixth Annual New Forest Open Art Exhibition

14 Jul - 8 Sep, open daily

An exhibition showcasing the best of the creative New Forest.

Barry Peckham - Retrospective

15 Sep - 28 Oct, open daily

A collection of oil paintings by renowned local artist Barry Peckham.

Commoning Voices Exhibition

3 Nov - 6 Jan, open daily

A thought-provoking exhibition which reveals, through audio, video, artefacts and beautiful photographs from the past and present, the intimate relationships between commoners, their animals and the forest.

Please keep your distance!



Pony at Bolderford Bridge, copyright Ian Sampson

Commoners, rangers and New Forest communities are asking people to please keep their distance from animals when out in the National Park.

All the ponies - as well as the cattle, donkeys, sheep and pigs - you see in the National Park belong to people, known as commoners, who live locally and care for them.

Many rare and special plants and animals, which were once common across Southern England, find a home in the New Forest because of the traditional commoning activities and their survival depends on this ancient practice.

Commoner Lyndsey Stride, from Emery

'The New Forest is really one big farm, and the ponies and cattle are "farm animals".'

Down, said: 'I am out in the Forest every day in all seasons, I love to watch my ponies and cattle grazing and browsing and I am always amazed by how varied and healthy their diet is, from prickly gorse and holly to

the fresh spring plants in the bogs. I always keep my distance so as not to disturb them and I would encourage all visitors to the New Forest to do the same.'

Whilst New Forest ponies make fantastic riding ponies the Forest-run ponies are left to live as natural a life as possible. The commoners don't supplement their feed as this encourages the animals to wait in the same place rather than foraging over a wide area. Ponies that become accustomed to being fed in the campsites and car parks often lose body condition.

'It breaks my heart when I see visitors feeding the ponies and donkeys - I know they are well intentioned but it really puts the animals at risk,' Lyndsey said.

'Sadly, every year a few people are hurt by ponies or donkeys that have learned to expect food, or are protecting their foals. Children are especially vulnerable, so it's vital that people keep their distance.'

Lyndsey said: 'The New Forest is really one big farm, and the ponies and cattle are "farm animals".'

'Commoners are responsible for their animals; we recognise them when we see them on the Forest and know each one by name,' she said.

'We usually know where they are (although some of them are good at hiding - especially when you want them)!'

The commoners also advise:

- Never walk through the middle of a group of cattle or pigs and be wary of walking through large groups of ponies.
- If you come across fast moving ponies and riders be quiet, stand still, keep all group members together and if possible stand next to a solid object such as a tree.
- All mothers will protect their children. Never walk between a mother and her baby - a mare and foal, cow and calf, or sow and piglet.

Commoning facts

- Commoning has been a way of life since medieval times - local people have rights attached to land they rent or own which enable them to graze animals on the New Forest to maintain its special nature. Their commitment is vital to the New Forest we all love.
- There are currently around 700 commoners of all ages who are immensely proud of their animals and commoning traditions.
- Once common, rare and precious species of plants and animals thrive here specifically because of the way the area is grazed by the commoners' animals. These include southern blue damselfly, silver studded blue butterflies, and plants including chamomile and small fleabane.
- New Forest ponies are a recognised native breed of ponies and are now on the endangered species list.

Male silver-studded blue butterfly at Strodgemoor Bottom,
copyright Claire Sherwood



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