

Champion Schools Newsletter

Welcome to the second edition of your Champion Schools newsletter. Previous editions are available at <http://dartmoorsdynamic.org>

Hello!

**Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you,
happy birthday Dartmoor National Park, happy birthday to you!**

This Autumn, on Friday 30th October, Dartmoor National Park will turn 75 years old! Back in 1951 the first four UK national parks were created and Dartmoor was one of them. The other members of this awesome foursome are the Peak District, Lake District, and Eryri (formerly known as Snowdonia). Nowadays, Dartmoor is part of a much larger national park family - there are 15 national parks across England, Scotland and Wales. You can see where they all are on the map below.

Why are national parks important? Well, they are places of amazing beauty, with outstanding wildlife, and fascinating history. They are places that have been recognised as being so special that an invisible boundary has been drawn around them so that everything inside can be protected. National parks were also created so that every single person living in or visiting the UK can enjoy spending time in the outdoors for free. Anybody can live in, work in, or visit a national park. We are so lucky to have these special places protected for us all to enjoy and we have people from nearly 100 years ago to thank. If you want to find out more, look up the Kinder Scout trespass.

Dartmoor existed as a place long before it was named a national park. People have been enjoying its wonderful wildlife, stunning geology,

dramatic weather, and awe-inspiring views for more than 10,000 years. To discover Dartmoor is to follow in the footsteps of many who came before us. Why not celebrate being part of Dartmoor's history by getting out and about on the moor or in a woodland, visiting one of the picturesque settlements on Dartmoor such as Widecombe-in-the-Moor, or visiting one of the national park visitor centres at Postbridge or Haytor?

Whether you explore Dartmoor with us through attending a Champion School, with your friends and family, or with a local club, every new memory you make contributes to the living history of this incredible landscape. We also hope that you will protect and look after this special place so that people can continue to enjoy it for another 75 years! You can find out more about looking after Dartmoor in the Ranger Code article on page 2.

Hip hip hooray for Dartmoor National Park!



What's been happening?



Right:

1. Students from Buckfastleigh Primary School and South Devon Community College enjoyed bike and scooter skills sessions and led rides with the Bike It Moor project
2. Year 8 and 9 girls from South Devon Community College had fun connecting with nature during Girls Do Dartmoor
3. Students sampled water invertebrates at Venford Reservoir with the Westcountry Rivers Trust
4. Okehampton Community College students summited Belstone Tor as part of Girls Do Dartmoor
5. Local residents learnt about rivers, otters and peat during the Rivers and Moorland Festival in Ivybridge in June
6. Intrepid Woodland Trust volunteers explored the highest points of the moor searching for and measuring ancient and veteran trees



Dartmoor's
Dynamic Landscapes



A note from... Iain at Bike It Moor

Dartmoor – wild, open and full of life. I love to roam the moors, tuning into the countless sounds, smells, sights, textures and undulations. We are so fortunate to inhabit this environment, along with so many other lifeforms ... and rock older than we can imagine, created by the intense heat and pressure at the centre of the Earth, which is slowly revealed over millions of years of weathering. The tors are masterpieces. It's incredible to imagine how much this barrier-less expanse of earth has changed over time and continues to do so - forged over millions of years - shaped by the elements, not least the trickling, flowing, churning water we all rely on to live.

Through Bike it Moor, myself, colleagues and volunteers offer young people the opportunity to discover their identity and relationship with Dartmoor's landscape, and find a sense of belonging in the calm and safety of nature. We lead walks and bike rides in areas local to each school to give a taste of the moor's magic. Being self-propelled, the senses come alive - like our ancestors, we are open to the elements and reliant on our hearts, lungs and legs. Through movement (walking, pedalling) we create a rhythm in our bodies which matches our heart rate and breathing, helping us to be strong and healthy. We build confidence and connection together - for some, this is their first taste of an adventure that lasts a lifetime.



Students getting a taste of Dartmoor's magic on a led bike ride

As the poet John O'Donohue once said, "The world is full of magical things, waiting for the senses to grow sharper".

If you would like to get involved or support the project I would love to hear from you – email me on info@dartmoorsdynamic.org

I look forward to seeing you out there!

Iain

Please leave no trace, give nature space!

If you visit Dartmoor, you might see ponies, cows and sheep walking around – on the open moor, in fields, on the roads. You might also see birds and other wildlife including lizards and insects. Dartmoor is home to all these animals and many more. It is a special place and we all need to remember to treat it with respect and care so that we can all continue to enjoy it.

Following the Dartmoor Ranger Code is a great way to 'take moor care' when visiting Dartmoor. Please:

- Look after your dog – keep dogs on leads near livestock and in bird nesting season (1 March – 31 July). Pick up all dog poo and take it away.
- Leave no trace – bag up litter and take it home, leave gates as you find them.
- Be fire aware – no open fires on Dartmoor at any time; no BBQs or camping stoves in dry weather. Keep glass bottles out of direct sunlight – concentrated light can start a fire.
- Give nature space and don't feed the ponies.
- Use the right track when cycling or horse riding.
- Keep yourself and others safe – plan your adventure and be prepared for any weather.



The Dartmoor Rangers have produced a handy pocket-sized guide which you can pick up for free from the national park visitor centres at Postbridge and Haylor. You can also read about the Ranger Code at www.dartmoor.gov.uk/enjoy-dartmoor/Ranger-Code



Puzzles and competitions

DDL crossword

For help solving some of the clues, look back at the first edition of the Champion Schools newsletter - it's all about what Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscapes (DDL) is.

ACROSS

3. A rare, slimy creature that can grow to 30cm long and is found in the temperate rainforests of Dartmoor (3, 5, 4)

5. The Okement river runs through this DDL focus town in north Dartmoor (10)

6. A type of fish you might find in Dartmoor's rivers (6)

7. The thing to follow to take "moor care" on Dartmoor (6,4)

10. There is a famous prison in this DDL focus town (10)

DOWN

1. The name of a Dartmoor National Park visitor centre (6)

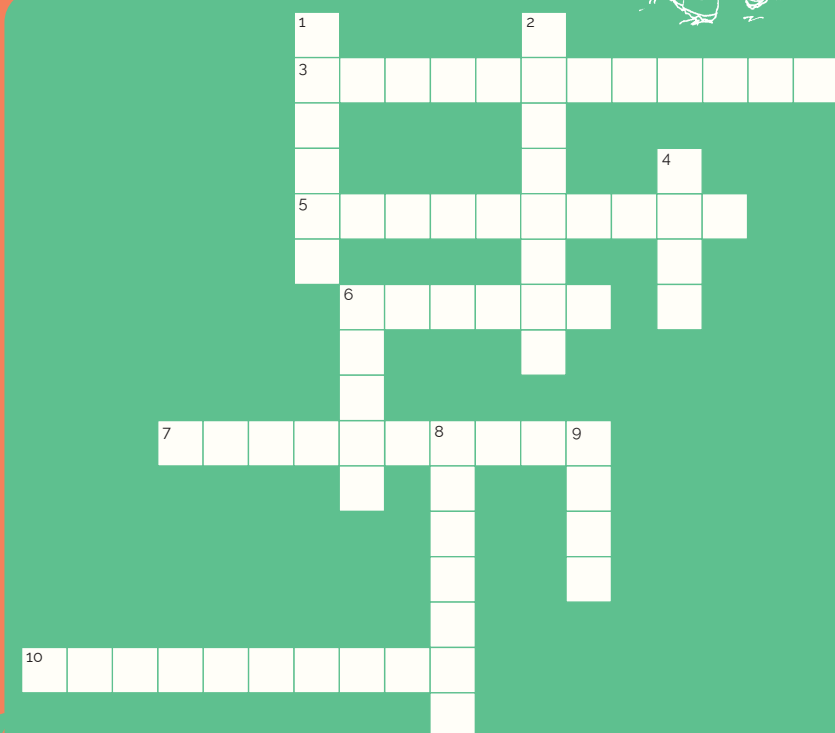
2. Your school is located in this national park (8)

4. The name given to the iconic granite rocks sticking out of the ground on Dartmoor (there are over 365 of them). (4)

6. There are lots of these woolly creatures grazing on Dartmoor (5)

8. An active form of green travel on wheels (7)

9. The river that runs through Ivybridge, one of the DDL focus towns (4)



Competition Time!

The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Hug

Have you got a favourite old tree on Dartmoor?

How to enter:

Email a photo of you and your tree to info@dartmoorsdynamic.org (if you can't reach the tree to hug it, a photograph of just the tree is fine, please don't fall off a hedge trying to get a hug). In the email tell us:

1. Where it is (we really like What3Words).
2. What makes it special to you.
3. The age of the applicant and the school they attend.

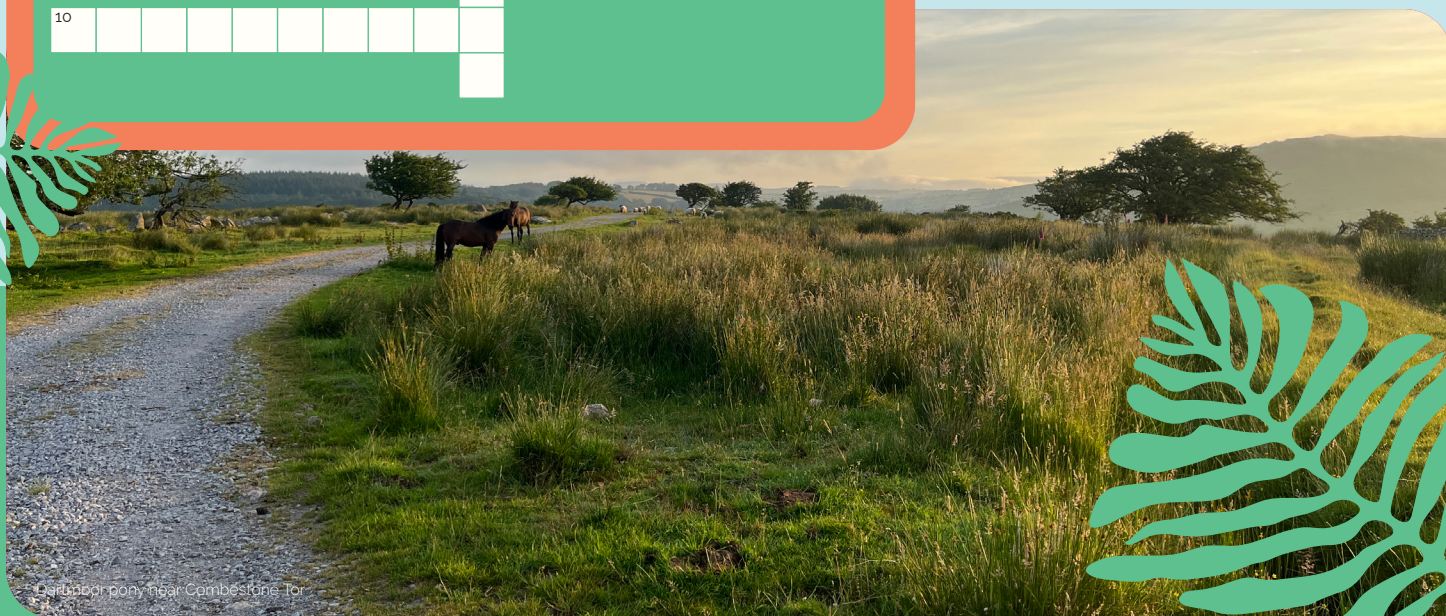
Competition closing date:
29 October 2026.

1st prize – binoculars
2nd prize – tree book
3rd prize – cuddly toy

Full terms and conditions on the DDL website.



Having fun hugging an ancient tree!



Ancient Trees, Ancient Tales



Ancient tree near Princetown

As part of the Dartmoor Ancient Tree Hunt, intrepid Woodland Trust volunteers and staff explored the highest points of the moor searching for ancient and veteran trees. These precious and rare trees are incredibly important for wildlife, being home to lots of fascinating creatures.

The Woodland Trust has also been visiting Champion Schools to explore ancient trees living nearby. Year 4 students from Stowford Primary School had a wonderful day learning about the myths and stories that surround some of our favourite trees. They heard about the Norse god Odin (Thor's dad), the

Ash tree Yggdrasil, and how Odin lost his eye. They learnt about Hazel trees being sacred in both Norse mythology – where they are considered the tree of knowledge – and ancient Celtic mythology – where they are believed to hold all the wisdom and knowledge of the universe.

Keep an eye open for ancient trees near you. If you spot one, you could give it a hug and enter the competition on page 3!

If you would like to arrange a storytelling date for your primary school, please contact Jess by emailing info@dartmoorsdynamic.org

Get involved!

Horse logging in Longtimber Wood, Ivybridge in September and October

Pop along to Longtimber Wood to meet the horses helping The Woodland Trust manage this ancient woodland. Watch the horses pull logs and learn how and why these beautiful animals are helping manage woodlands across Dartmoor. Free! No need to book. Suitable for all ages, children must be supervised by an adult. For exact dates and more details, email info@dartmoorsdynamic.org

Woodland School for Witches and Wizards, Saturday 24th October 10am-12pm or 1-3pm

A free, fun-packed event for 5-12-year-olds and their families. Older siblings very welcome. Learn broom building basics, make woodland potions and finish with spellcasting and stories. Come dressed for the weather (and in fancy dress if you can fit it over your waterproofs!). Places are limited and must be booked in advance – click here or email info@dartmoorsdynamic.org.

Location: East Dartmoor National Nature Reserve, Middle Trendlebere Car Park. Event organised by Natural England and Dartmoor National Park.

Celebrate Dartmoor National Park's 75th Anniversary

Buy a ticket for the 75th anniversary prize draw for the chance to win one of 75 fabulous prizes donated by local businesses and partner organisations. You can enter the prize draw online or at Haytor or Postbridge Visitor Centres. (Over 18s only – speak to your parent or guardian if you're under 18 and would like to enter. Full terms and conditions on the website.) All proceeds will support people and nature on Dartmoor. If you do visit one of the visitor centres, be sure to check out the limited edition 75th anniversary themed products for sale.



Contact us

info@dartmoorsdynamic.org
<http://dartmoorsdynamic.org>

Out and About



Dartmoor Youth Rangers and an adult volunteer improving paths near Bellever Tor



Dartmoor ponies at Bonehill Rocks

