

Dartmoor Changes

Chagford Listening Walk - 20th December 2003

Soon after 10am a group of 7 had accumulated, and a local couple joined the group 'on spec.' At the church, we were greeted with refreshments and by a group of 11 ringers waiting to perform whatever was required of them. Initially, we were taken right up into the bell chamber and had the opportunity, whilst standing on the frames, to ask questions about the bells, their working, history, and inscriptions. We asked the band to ring for the duration of our circular walk. In view of the rain and sou' westerly gale, we abandoned the planned walk which would have been up-wind of the church. Instead we went though the square and down past the school to Dogmash Bridge and then along the leat and the bank of the River Teign River to Chagford Bridge - and thence back up into the town. Despite the weather conditions our chosen route proved to be relatively sheltered and we paused several times to listen to the sound of the bells wafting on the wind. By the time we left, the rain had stopped and the sun was breaking through the clouds. (Andy Stevens)

The next Listening Walk is scheduled for March, and the AHA recording team will be at work on the West Moor in late February. See *Dates for Your Diary* for more information. There will also be Listening Walks in April and May — if you'd like details contact AHA on info@auneheadarts.org.uk or 01822 890 539 and we'll send information when the schedule is complete.

Focus on Farmers

In a meeting at Throwleigh at the end of November artists shared discussion and 'work in progress' and were introduced to new FoF curator/exhibition designer Simon Ryder, who writes:

Originally I wanted to apply to be one of the artists on the project but was unable to do so because of other commitments. So it was great when the opportunity to be involved came around again, but this time for a curator/exhibition designer.

I have been involved with a number of 'rural' or 'farm related' art projects through the artists group that I work with: artNucleus (www.artnucleus.org). We did one in a livestock market and another on farms around Gloucestershire, so I was very keen to be involved with Focus on Farmers as this is something close to my heart.

I grew up on and around farms in Hampshire and only since leaving London five years ago re-realised just how much that upbringing influences my outlook. I am now in Berlin and who needs another artist in Berlin? There are so many! Here, they need street cleaners not artists. But on Dartmoor and in many other rural communities I believe artists have a vital and exciting role to play.

The work produced has exceeded all expectations in terms of quality and now I am working with Nancy and Richard to see if we can expand the exhibition budget to do justice to the work. We will know in a few weeks at which point we can begin shaping the final exhibition. Fingers crossed.

The project has achieved its primary purpose: to represent the complexity of contemporary life of hill farmers on Dartmoor and Exmoor. The work is incredibly broad-ranging in scope, is extraordinarily rich in its narrative content and textures — it ranges from literal portrayals to abstractions.

Tony Hill and **Hannah Standen** have made screen and sound-based work. Tony's skill as a filmmaker is evident here. Some aspects of his final work contain very personal and moving fragments of conversations with the Coles about their way of life; some of the work is less intimate. Hannah's sound work is particularly strong in evoking portraits of people and place.

Kirsty Waterworth and **Beth Hamer** have three major projects under way including a video-based installation in which images are projected onto screens made of live grass and another installation using granite from the farm and neon numbers taken from the farm's Defra registration number.

Gregg Wagstaff and **Tania van Schalkwyk** have made two collaborative video pieces using a live performance of Tania's poetry in combination with two walks which explore the farm. They have also produced an extensive DVD containing images and sounds, including sound diaries from each of the children on the farm, and numerous 'monologues' from farmer Mike Malseed. Tania has also created a booklet of selected poems from the residency.

Tessa Bunney and **Louise Cottey** have been working independently of one

another. Tessa has taken hundreds of medium-format photographs, extending her well-recognised work with animal portraiture, exploring new ideas through the people and places on the farm, at livestock markets, at point to point races, etc. Louise spent her residency collecting materials such as wool fragments, plastic wrap, baler twine, etc., and weaving them onto fences and other spaces on the farm, to see how they would deteriorate over time. She has now collected these, and they will form part of the final exhibition. Each is a tiny, fragile, quite beautiful sculpture.

Focus on Farmers Workshops at Runnage Farm

On Monday 24th November, artists Kirsty and Beth, in collaboration with farmers Christine and Phil Coaker, held two schools workshops at Runnage Farm.

•• 9:30 – 12:30 Widcombe School. 30 x 5yr olds + staff / assistants

The morning started with Beth and Phil leading a 45 minute farm walk, and what a beautiful morning for it. As the sun shone Phil took great delight in his huge but tiny captive audience! (That many five year olds are quite a sight!) As he explained the ins and outs of Runnage, Beth ensured that each couple of children was filling their poly bag with a huge selection of found objects, from leaves and twigs to bike chains and plastics. Meanwhile, back in the yard, Christine and I prepared squash and biscuits and then cut up clay ready for rolling. All returned from their walk and after a brief refreshment break we started them off, rolling out the clay and then making all sorts of pictures and patterns by pushing into the clay objects from their bags. Some chose to leave objects in the clay, others chose to merely make patterns. Either way, after building a sausage wall of clay around the images it was time for another break whilst Beth and I prepared the plaster and poured it in. When the plaster had set the kids were delighted to find their casts revealed as the clay was pulled off. The morning was an absolute delight and the kids seemed to have a fantastic time. Great comments were made by both the staff and the little 'uns. (Kirsty Waterworth)

•• 13:00 – 16:00 Willobrook School from Exeter. 16 x 8yr olds + staff

This group arrived a little early, much to our panic, but were happy to sit and eat their lunch in the sun whilst we ate ours! The afternoon followed the same course as the morning. The only difference being that I accompanied Phil and the walk, whilst Beth prepared squash and clay. This group, unlike the first, had never been on a farm before, and the school had chosen the children with the most problematic home lives or those with least opportunities available to them to participate in the day. This made the afternoon more demanding than the morning but perhaps also more rewarding. Because of this also we were unable to do video work with them as it took all the time we had available to make the casts. This was definitely the right thing to do as it had been a great success in the morning and I would not have felt happy playing with video when I was covered in clay and plaster and the barn we were in was dusty and mucky as any farm barn in which 100 kids have been playing with clay etc!! Again comments were lovely from staff and kids. (Kirsty Waterworth)

Exhibition

Plans are underway for a *Launch Exhibition* in April — once details are finalised announcements will be posted to the AHA mailing list. The second FoF exhibition will be at the High Moorland Visitor Centre in Princetown from Friday, 21st of May to Wednesday, 30th June, 2004. Additional venues are being arranged — the exhibition will tour until July 2005.

Recent Walks

October: *Eight of us plus a keen but very elderly dog, met at Cross Furzes on a sunny morning and set off down the lane to the clapper bridge over the Dean, up past the magnificent beech trees and onto the Abbots way to Water Oak Corner. Why Water Oak? No oaks at all only a couple of scraggy pines, and unlike most places on the moor, not much water either. From there we headed for Pupers Hill negotiating the marsh at the source of Brockhill stream on the way – the dog fell in – but the humans managed fine. From the top of Pupers Hill we crossed the saddle of open moor to Ryders Hill, at 1600ft the highest point on the southern moor.*

Splendid views but too cold and windy to linger, so we had lunch in the great ditch formed by tin workings above the Mardle Valley. After lunch we headed for the ford across the river — all hands to the dog — and sustained by chocolate, continued along the slopes below Snowdon Cairns to Lud Gate and along the road back to Cross Furzes. A fine day's walk which we all (even the dog) enjoyed. (Sally Cottis)

November: *On an unexpected bright crisp November morning we set off from Wingstone Farm, Manaton and from there walked across the fields up over Hayne Down past Bowerman's Nose and over Swinedown to Jay's Grave where we stopped to gain our breath and chatter about dear Kitty Jay's plight.*

We then continued to Natsworthy Gate and into Heathercombe Woods following the path the Mariners used when catching their ships from either Ilfracombe or Torbay. The Pike family have owned these woods since the '50s and have planted some rare trees which we stopped to admire.

Continuing over farmland we were given permission to walk along a farm lane rather than follow a longer route to Easondon Tor. We took a leisurely lunch here and admiring the glorious views over Hameldown discussed which rocks were actually Whooping Rocks and whether the old tale was true that children with whooping cough were made to run around these rocks... some cure!

We then struggled through the overgrown bracken and gorse, was Juliette going to lead them astray yet again? Not this time. We reached the lane, continuing our walk past Barracot and gently back through the fields to the Farm and a welcome cup of tea, all agreeing that it was truly a magical day. (Juliette Rich)

River Dart Book



All Aboard for the book launch... (photo: Susannah Lash)

A community art project ended last week in a puff of smoke when its makers met, on a steam train travelling from Buckfastleigh to Totnes alongside the River Dart, to launch their artists' book "Dart". The river itself was the inspiration for this book which was made with a grant to the organiser Joanna Radford from a Tarka Country Millennium Award, funded with lottery money through the Millennium Commission.

The launch was the culmination of a year's work by a group of people all of whom live or work in or near the valley of the river. The inspiration for the artists' book was Alice Oswald's poem, which last year won the T S Eliot Poetry Prize, called "Dart" and tracing the river and its people from source to mouth. Several of the artists involved had personal connections with poet and river - Jilly Sutton had introduced Alice to one of the personalities in the poem, the stonewaller, and produced a sculptural print of him unloading stone from his boat. Sadly, the stonewaller himself died, very suddenly, a little while before

the end of the project but the print in the book remains a memorial to him.

Joanna had also recruited pupils from six primary schools along the river to produce images for the book, and the pupils, mostly years five or six, worked hard not only to produce handmade prints (woodcuts and dry point on plastic) but also to sew up the copy of the book that their school would receive. Forty books were made, one for each of the participants.

The launch, which was enjoyed by all those who joined the train, was made possible through the generosity of South Devon Railway Trust which hired the train for a special price to Joanna, and made packed lunches for everyone on the trip, because they too had recently received a lottery award for a development project for the railway. Even the guard was connected to the book - his mother had made one of the prints in it!

Part of the project was also to make CD Roms of the book and these should be ready for distribution by the end of January. These will run as stand-alone CDs where it will be possible to turn the pages of the book as if reading the real thing. They are free, in a limited number, to anyone reading this account who contacts the organiser, Joanna Radford, at Hannaford Old House, Poundsgate, Newton Abbot, TQ13 7NX, enclosing a self-addressed C5 envelope with a 34p stamp on it. (Joanna Radford)

The farmer flung the lamb - dead into the woodland below us. It looked plastic in its rigid state, like those farmhouse toys I played with as a child, like the tractor and bright red ear muffs driven and worn in a countryside barn, like a very noisy quad bike zooming across fields of idyll pastoral stuff-

The fox had incised a hole into the lamb's side, accessed an organ-ic(?) feast. There was no torn flesh, nor shards of meat- as expected from a late teenage propensity to watching midnight werewolf movies- only a mortician's peep hole into the original cause of death- pink lungs spotted black-

"Pneumonia" said The farmer as he held his dead livelihood in his hands.

extract from Tania van Schalkwyk's *Shearing Magnolia*

What is AHA anyway?

AHA promotes the creation of new artworks on and about Dartmoor:

- commissions local, regional and national artists
- provides exhibition opportunities for local, regional and national artists
- provides professional training and mentoring opportunities for early career and professional artists

AHA responds to the Dartmoor and regional community:

- collaborates with other organisations and groups to produce projects which culminate in new work, workshops, events, etc.
- assists individuals, organisations and communities with the development of project ideas for new work, workshops, events, etc.

AHA provides advice and assistance to artists and arts groups in Devon:

- Informal provision of links to networks, signposting to resources, opportunities and issues of self, project and organisational development via phone & email
- training through workshops organised by other cultural agencies in the region

Who is AHA?

We have a five-member Board of Directors: Susannah Lash, Willem Montagne, Richard Povall, Joanna Radford and Nancy Sinclair. Jackie Parsons was an early Board Member and when she resigned that position she stayed on as Secretary to the Board. All six of us share a common passion for Dartmoor. We also value creative collaboration between artists and others through high quality arts-based activities. Through AHA we try and link our passions for art and Dartmoor through the development of imaginative, inspiring and meaningful artwork with individuals, artists, and communities.

Why Members?

It is important to mention how central members are to AHA. It's clear that people join AHA for all sorts of reasons (opportunities to meet fellow artists, to come on our walks, to show support for our work, etc). People also participate in AHA projects and activities to varying degrees. Not everyone may be aware, however, that in addition to the modest amount of funds membership fees generate (about enough to support the printing and mailing of this newsletter each quarter) their involvement is significant for other very vital reasons. AHA's local and regional funders (Devon County Council, Teignbridge District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Arts Council England South West and others) need to see evidence of support for AHA's projects from the community we serve. Members are one of the most tangible bits of evidence to show that we are responding to the Dartmoor and regional community — and that they approve of and support the work we are doing. Your £5, £8 or £10 per year enables us to bring in the £1000s necessary to produce projects such as Dartmoor Sensing, Focus on Farmers, Dartmoor Profile, the monthly walks, the members-only Equipment Rental Programme, this newsletter, the email bulletins of activities and opportunities, and occasional special events. It also enables AHA to continue to grow as a regional voice representing the arts and artists to the funders, policy makers, educators and others who make and influence the decisions about how the arts go forward in the region.

If you are a Member we thank you for your support and encouragement — and don't forget your Membership means that you can attend the AGM and voice your opinions and ideas about the work AHA does. If you would like to become a member, or know someone who might like to, please use the Membership form on this newsletter — or if you'd like to set up a Standing Order you can download one from www.auneheadarts.org.uk or ring us on 01822 890 539 and we'll post one.

www.auneheadarts.org.uk

info@auneheadarts.org.uk

AHA Membership

Memberships are valid for the calendar year (January to December)

New memberships received in November or December run until end of the following year. Please make cheques payable to Aune Head Arts and allow 2-3 weeks for processing. Send to: AHA, c/o Court Gate Cottage, Harbournford, South Brent, Devon TQ10 9DT

- £5 Under-16, unwaged, single parent, conc.
- £8 Single full membership
- £10 Family membership
- £30 Organisational membership
- £250+ Dartmoor Angel *non-expiring membership*

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

A Standing Order Form is available on our website.

AHA Order Form

Please make cheques payable to Aune Head Arts. Send to: AHA, c/o Court Gate Cottage, Harbournford, South Brent, Devon TQ10 9DT

Lives & Landscapes video

___ VHS @ £10 ___ DVD @ £15

Dartmoor Profile CD Rom*

___ CD-Roms @ £10 each

* will run on most PCs and Apple Macs with CD drive

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

£ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

dates for your diary

February

Saturday 21st • 10:30am • Fernworthy Forest • WALK

Meet at small car park near Statts Bridge SX 667806. Depending on weather and fitness of walkers we will go out to Teignhead Farm which is very atmospheric. If the weather is wet we might stay in the shelter of the forest and look at the antiquities and possibly spot red deer. The walk won't involve too much climbing but will take at least four hours so *packed lunch essential*. Fireside warmth at Warren House Inn optional on the way back. Leader: Paul Sharman 01392 841 849, or psharman@eclipse.co.uk

Monday 23rd • 10am-4pm • Writers Group

Writing workshops will take place in Widecombe and run from 10-4. Please bring a packed lunch. Cost £12, concessions available. For further information, contact Caroline Wilson 01803 813 135, or caroline.wilson@dial.pipex.com

Saturday 28th • West Moor • Bell Ringing

We will be recording the bells for Dartmoor Changes at the following parish churches: Mary Tavy 10am; Peter Tavy 11:30am (tbc); Meavy 1:30pm; Sheepstor 3pm. Join us! (you don't have to ring - just come and listen!). To confirm details, contact Andy Stevens 01392 438 064 or andy@yorkcottages.freereserve.co.uk.

March

Saturday 20th • 10:30am • Shaugh Prior • WALK

Meeting point: Shaugh Prior Village at Lynwood (Clifton's home) parking for 4-6 cars so car share please. As you enter the village go past the church, continue about 1/4 of a mile downhill, past the garage, (keep going). Clifton's house is on the right at the far end of the village on a private road signposted Lynwood. An easyish walk with good climbs at the beginning up old quarry tracks through woods to the Dewerstone. Then across open level moorland to Cadover Bridge and return via North Wood and West Down (mostly level) with a steepish drop on a track back to the starting point. Good views and woodland scenery. In early spring the leaves will be starting out and the sights include stunning rocks, 19th century graffiti, water and industrial remains. 4 miles (2 to 3 hrs including breaks). As this is a short walk people can bring out their sketch books and cameras and have some creative time. Bring a packed lunch; pub visit post-walk, optional. Leader: Clifton Dennis: 01752 839 226.

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Monday 27th • 10:30am • Shaugh Prior • Listening Walk

See inside for more information. To confirm details, contact Andy Stevens 01392 438 064 or andy@yorkcottages.freereserve.co.uk.

April

Saturday 17th • 10:30am • West Moor • WALK

Meet at SX495800 (1 inch map). From Mary Tavy take turning signposted Brentor just north of Down's Garage on the A386; look for places to park on the moorland side of the cattle grid just outside the village. An easy walk bar one short steep climb near the end. Only one or two short wet bits to cross. We shall be walking the fields and woodlands and open part of the moor's western border, going down to the River Tavy for the lunch break. Constantly changing views of what William Crossing considered to be the best panoramas of the Moor. Lots to see, hear, draw and write about. Swimming at lunchtime for those who dare, bring a packed lunch. 5 hours. Leaders: Anne + Mike Malleson 01822 860 304 or malleson@onetel.net.uk

May

Saturday 8th • 2:30pm • Bluebell Stroll (reprise) • WALK

Meet at Furzeleigh Cross, Hennock SX830801 (1 inch map). A short stroll of less than 3 miles (approximately 1.5 hours), with a couple of steep climbs to see if we can catch the bluebells at their peak again this year — last year's timing was spot on. Good opportunities for photos, sketching or gazing at the views. Bring a snack. As there is very limited parking please try to fill your cars. Leader: Frances Kline, 01626 853121.

Saturday 15th • 4:30am • Dawn Chorus, Trendlebere • WALK

Meet at 4:30am at the car park by Trendlebere Down on the right of the road just past Holne Brake (SX785749). (Please note, this NOT the main car park for the Yarnor Wood English Nature reserve, which will be closed). Hear birds greet the sunrise at one of the Devon's best oak woodlands. After listening for the haunting 'churrs' of nightjar on the heath we'll drop down to the woods for the first songsters. By 5:30 the chorus should be in full voice and we'll try to help you learn the different songs. After a gentle stroll through the woods (a little steep in places but not precipitous — check with the leader if you've any questions on suitability) we'll head back to the car park to finish around 7:30am. It will be quite cold — wrap-up well. The area has a healthy population of ticks — wear long trousers tucked into socks and insect repellent to make yourself less attractive. Leader Tony Whitehead (p/t wildlife guide — works for RSPB in Exeter) would appreciate bookings 01803 814 068 (leave a message including contact details).

Walk Grading: Read the descriptions of the walks and review them on the 2.5" map (unless otherwise noted). If you're not sure about your ability to do a walk, you must take the responsibility to call or email the leader to check its difficulty. Inclement weather (rain and/or wind) will increase a walk's difficulty. Ground can become very boggy after prolonged rain. Remember — even in summer, you need to have extra clothing, food and water — on Dartmoor it can turn cold and wet very suddenly. Walkers are expected to wear appropriate clothing and footwear, and to bring suitable extra items for changes in the weather. Please note that the walk leader is responsible for making decisions about the final route details on the day.

Liability: walks are undertaken at the risk of the walker.



Widecombe School Workshop @ Runnage Farm (photo: Kirsty Waterworth)

AUNE HEAD ARTS

january 2004

In this issue:

Dartmoor Changes: report on the Chagford Listening Walk, forthcoming dates, etc.

Focus on Farmers: reports from the artists, schools workshops, and forthcoming exhibition information.

River Dart Book: excitement reigns on South Devon Railway: a report from Joanna Radford.

Also includes: forthcoming dates for your diary.



Hannah Standen and Gregg Wagstaff (photo: R. Povall)

Guest Editor: Emma Bush

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image: Philip Guy Stevens (courtesy of Andrew Stevens)



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