



## St. Mary Lyncombe Exmoor Trust Newsletter – January 2012



**Working weekend at the centre – February 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> please come along and help out for a few hours**

St Mary Lyncombe centre is a charitable trust served by a small group of trustees chaired by John Gale. Now in his mid 80's, John was Head of Ilfracombe Grammar School in the 1960's and subsequently of Ilfracombe Community College. During his time at The Grammar School the parents, teachers and students raised the funds and built the Exmoor centre. The land was given by Dora Cartwright Williams whose home beside

Hoarok water was swept away in the Lynmouth floods of 1952. St Mary Lyncombe lies hidden away in the beautiful Hoarok valley by the river that travels on to Watersmeet and Lynmouth. The centre was established to give local children and families the experience of staying on the wild and beautiful Exmoor; hundreds, maybe thousands have had this opportunity. It is thanks to John and a group of volunteers that it is still standing!

Keeping the centre open and in a good enough condition is a struggle. We are lucky to have two local brothers, Will and Jonny Bowden as managers of the centre. Over the years we have had a great deal of financial support and encouragement from, amongst others, Devon County Council, Exmoor National Park, The Exmoor Trust, Ilfracombe Rotary Club and a host of other groups and individuals. With no endowment we have continually needed to attract support from donors and volunteers who share our concern for Exmoor and who are convinced of the value of experience and knowledge of the natural environment to young people.

Trustees are committed to making the experience for visitors a comfortable one whilst recognizing that what is unique about the centre is that it lies away from all the modern conveniences and technology that we have in our homes. Access to the centre is on foot – a 20 minute walk across moor land. We have worked hard at providing a sustainable source of energy to the centre and we are still working on this. We have installed solar panels and a wood burning stove, water comes from a natural spring.



## Working Weekend February 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> 10am – 4pm Saturday and Sunday

Working on the centre, maintaining it and doing minor repairs can mean quite an expedition. If there are a few of us involved it makes a great difference and it is good to sit down and share a picnic lunch by the log fire! We are preparing the centre for the season ahead and have some projects that are underway that we would love to have help with. You do not have to be big and strong – just willing to spare a few hours.



Please let one of us know if you are planning to join us. We can offer transport to and from the centre in Will's 4 by 4 – Leaving the National Trust Car Park, Hillsford Bridge at 10 and returning 4, it is not suitable to bring your own vehicle to the centre. If you are planning to make your way on foot there is limited parking available by Cheriton Ridge . The working weekend is not designed to be a day out for the family – we will be planning these later in the year, older children and teenagers willing to lend a hand, very welcome! Well

behaved dogs welcome but please be aware that sheep and cattle graze the moor.

If you can't make it this time maybe we will see you at our next working weekend .. date

Please ring or e mail Liz or Will with any queries and take a look at our website for more information.

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