

Blackdown Hills AONB/Neroche Countryside Events spring/summer 2008

Planning and establishing an orchard

Saturday 1 March

10.30am to 3.30pm

[Cider with Roadies](#)

A practical outdoor course on for those who are thinking of planting an orchard and want to know where to start and how to do it. Local apple expert Adam Montague will lead the day on an organic holding near Hemyock. Please bring a packed lunch.

Cost: £10. Booking required.

Location: Directions on registration

For more information: Contact Adam Montague on 01392 881873 or email adam@ciderwithroadies.org.

Springtime animal tales

Saturday 8 March

10am – 12.30pm

[Blackdown Hills AONB](#)

Storytelling and farm visit for under 6s. A chance for little ones to come along to friendly Beech Hayes Farm, see baby farm animals and then listen to local storyteller Clare Viner tell some enchanting farmyard tales.

Cost: Children free, £3 per adult. Booking required.

Location: Beech Hayes Farm, Churchinford, TA3 7DW.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Skills in the Hills – the hedge event

Saturday 8 March

9.30am – 3.30pm

[Blackdown Hills Hedge Association](#)

The Blackdown Hills' popular annual hedge laying event returns with a packed day of competitions, beautiful crafts and tasty food. Demonstrations of traditional rural skills, a baking competition, hedgerow walks and more, with refreshments by Smeatharpe WI.

Cost: £1 per head. Booking not required.

Location: Lower Shelvin Farm, Luppitt. Map ref: ST 163 040.

For more information: For hedge laying contact George Pidgeon 01404 881634. For baking contact Kath Coombes on 01935 863207.

Churchstanton and Stapley walk

Saturday 8 March

10am

[Blackdown Hills walking group](#)

A 5-mile, moderate walk.

Cost: £3 for non-members. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Churchstanton Church. Map ref: ST 196 145.

For more information: Contact Gill Thomas on 01404 861406.

Conservation at Quantock Common

Saturday 22 March

10am – 4 pm

[Axe Vale and District Conservation Society](#)

Join a friendly work party and feel the satisfaction of getting stuck into some practical conservation. Non-members very welcome. Bring a picnic.

Cost: Free. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Higher Quantock (turn off at Rising Sun Cross signed North Hill). Map ref: ST 225 055.

For more information: Telephone 01297 445084.

Easter Trail at Wellington Monument

Monday 24 March

11am – 3pm

[National Trust](#)

Solve the clues and collect your chocolate treats!

Cost: £2 per child. Booking not required.

Location: Wellington Monument.

For more information: Contact Rachel Thompson at the National Trust on 01934 844518.

Membury area walk

Wednesday 2 April

10am

[Blackdown Hills walking group](#)

Cost: £3 for non-members. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Membury village hall car park. Map ref: ST 136 135.

For more information: Contact Gill Thomas on 01404 861406.

Neroche Touching the Seasons – spring

Sunday 20 April

10am – 4pm (guided walk at 11.30am)

[Neroche](#)

Join Neroche lead artist Michael Fairfax to explore the spring woodland landscape at Quants Moor through an artist's eyes. There will also be a guided walk to discover more about the history and wildlife of the area – chance to use our new hand-held digital information units.

Cost: Free. Booking required.

Location: Quants Wood. Map ref: ST 189 176.

For more information: contact Samantha Winzer on 01823 680846.

Blackdown Hills products showcase

Saturday 26 April

Time tbc

[Blackdown Hills AONB](#)

A chance to discover high quality local products at a celebration of all the initiatives helped by grants from the AONB's Leader+ fund, covering food and drink, woodwork, arts and crafts, farming and more. Also, learn more about what the AONB does, and tell us your views.

Cost: Free.

Location: To be confirmed.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Birdsong in Otterford Woods

Sunday 27 April

[Blackdown Hills AONB](#)

10am

A wonderful opportunity to listen to spring birdsong in the woodland. Ornithologist Donald Campbell will be on hand to help you identify different birds and their calls.

Cost: £5. Booking required.

Location: Meet at car park. Map ref: ST 225 140.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Dawn chorus walk and breakfast

Saturday 3 May

5am – 8am

[Neroche](#)

Get up early and experience the magical cacophony of spring birdlife in Thurlbear Wood, as part of International Dawn Chorus Day. With luck this will include the unmistakable sound of the nightingale. The walk will be followed by a hearty breakfast at the Farmers Inn.

Cost: Walk free, breakfast to be paid for separately. Booking required.

Location: Farmers Inn, West Hatch. Map ref: ST 272 199.

For more information: Contact Samantha Winzer on 01823 680846.

Neroche Herepath trails – grand opening

Saturday 10 May

10am – 4pm

[Neroche](#)

Join in the celebration as the first long distance off-road trail in the Blackdown Hills is formally opened. There will be guided tours for walkers and horse riders, stalls and displays and a chance to try out innovative new digital information units. Horse box parking available.

Cost: Free.

Location: Bickenhall Farm (directions on booking). Map ref: ST 288 194.

For more information: Contact Samantha Winzer on 01823 680846.

Stockland area walk

Saturday 10 May

10am

[Blackdown Hills walking group](#)

A moderate walk around Stockland parish and along the Corry brook.

Cost: £3 for non-members. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Stockland village hall car park. Map ref: ST 246 046.

For more information: Contact Gill Thomas on 01404 861406.

Butterfly walk at Thurlbear Quarrylands & Buckland Wood

Sunday 11 May

11am

[Butterfly Conservation](#)

Enjoy spotting rare butterflies on this walk with guidance from Butterfly Conservation experts. Scarce and beautiful species in these areas include marsh fritillary, duke of burgundy and many others. Please bring a packed lunch.

Cost: Free. Booking not required.

Location: Meet along track to Slough Green Caravan Park near West Hatch. Map ref: ST 274 212.

For more information: Contact Dr Michael Barry on 01823 461338 or email

michael.barry@doctors.org.uk.

Evening rhododendron walk

Friday 16 May

6.15pm

[BH walking group](#)

An evening walk around Blackborough to enjoy the rhododendrons.

Cost: £3 for non-members. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Sheldon church. Map ref: ST 120 086.

For more information: Contact Gill Thomas on 01404 861406.

Spring flowers and natural history

Saturday 17 May

2pm

[The Otterhead Trust](#)

A walk at Otterhead Lakes including tea and biscuits at the coach house.

Cost: £5. Booking required.

Location: Meet at Otterhead Lodge car park. Map ref: ST 224 141.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

In search of curlew and dartford warblers

Sunday 18 May

10am

[Blackdown Hills AONB](#)

A guided walk with naturalist David Allen through Blackdown and Sampford Commons in search of these two rare species of breeding birds. Enjoy splendid wide views from the best heathland in the Blackdown Hills.

Cost: £5. Booking required.

Location: Meet at Wellington Monument car park for car sharing to the site. Map ref: ST 143 167.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Churchstanton and Stapley walk

Wednesday 21 May

10.30am

[Blackdown Hills walking group](#)

A moderate walk around Churchstanton and Stapley.

Cost: £3 for non-members. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Churchstanton church. Map ref: ST 196 145.

For more information: Contact Gill Thomas on 01404 861406.

Blackdown Hills food and drink festival

Saturday 24 May – Sunday 1 June

A celebration of good food and drink produced in the Blackdown Hills. The launch on Saturday will be followed by a week of events, tastings and special menus at local restaurants, pubs and farms where you can enjoy a huge range of high quality food and drink.

Cost: N/A

Location: Various sites.

For more information: Event details at www.blackdownhillsfoods.co.uk. Contact Nick Strange at Beech Hayes Farm on 01823 601565 or email beechhayes@aol.com.

Wildlife gardening workshop

Wednesday 28 May

10am – 1pm

[Blackdown Hills AONB & Devon Wildlife Trust](#)

All you need to know about wildlife gardening with John Hayward from Devon Wildlife Trust, whether you're an expert or a complete beginner. Learn the principles, look at the best plants and habitats to bring in the birds and butterflies and make your own 'creature feature' - a home for wildlife in your garden.

Cost: Free. Booking required.

Location: Hemyock parish hall.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Butterfly walk at Langfield Heathfield & Buckland Wood

Wednesday 28 May

11am

[Butterfly Conservation](#)

Enjoy spotting rare and beautiful butterflies on this walk with guidance from Butterfly Conservation experts. Bring a picnic.

Cost: Free. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at the lay-by at the Jubilee Seat. Map ref: ST 106 226

For more information: contact Dr Michael Barry on 01823 461338 or email michael.barry@doctors.org.uk.

Butterfly walk at Mount Fancy & Staple Common

Sunday 1 June

11am

[Butterfly Conservation](#)

Join Butterfly Conservation for another chance to learn more about the butterflies of the Blackdowns. On this walk we will be looking for wood white, small pearl-bordered fritillary and chimney sweeper moths.

Cost: Free. Booking not required.

Location: Meeting point to be decided.

For more information: contact Dr Michael Barry on 01823 461338 or email michael.barry@doctors.org.uk.

Archaeology walk at Witness Moor and Hembury Hillfort

Saturday 7 June

2pm

[Devon County Council and Devon Archaeological Society](#)

A guided walk at Witness Moor exploring the whetstone mining heritage of the area and the adjacent prehistoric hillfort of Hembury Hill. It will also look at how the woodland is managed today.

Cost: Free. Booking required.

Location: Meet in the Witness Moor Woodland car park. Map ref: ST 112 036.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Source to sea - part 1

Tuesday 10 June

10am

[Blackdown Hills AONB & East Devon AONB](#)

The first in a series of three walks tracing the River Yarty from its source in the Blackdown Hills, along its course to meet the Axe and flow out to sea. Part one will start at Deadman, where we will find the source of the Yarty. Along the walk we will look out for bog flowers and learn about the river's fascinating aquatic life.

Cost: £5. Booking required.

Location: Meet in Forestry Commission gateway. Map ref: ST 233 163.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Summer bushcraft and forest open day

Saturday 14 June

10am – 4pm

[Neroche](#)

A family day in the woods, learning how to build shelters, light fires, make tools and search for wild food. During the day there will also be guided walks to see the Longhorn cattle and the majestic veteran oaks, plus storytelling and other activities.

Cost: Children £4, accompanying adults free. Booking required.

Location: Meet at Forestry Commission entrance north of Staple Fitzpaine village. Map ref: ST 261 191.

For more information: contact Samantha Winzer on 01823 680846.

Wild food walk - part 1

Sunday 15 June

10am

[Blackdown Hills AONB & East Devon AONB](#)

A new culinary adventure with naturalist David Allen! Walk at low tide on the mud flats of the Axe Estuary in search of wild food, then enjoy lunch on the beach with an open fire. This event in East Devon AONB is one of a pair of wild food walks, with the second in the Blackdown Hills in the Autumn. Numbers are strictly limited so book early.

Cost: £15, to include lunch. Booking required.

Location: Meet in lay-by near Axmouth bridge. Map ref: SY 253 901.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Springwatch 08 in the Blackdown Hills

Saturday 21 June

12.30pm

[Blackdown Hills AONB and Devon Wildlife Trust](#)

Find out what's on our doorstep by exploring Blackdown and Sampford Commons with local expert Edric Hopkinson from Devon Wildlife Trust. There will also be plenty of fun wildlife activities for children. The site is home to precious plants and wildlife - a great place for a wild day out!

Cost: Free. Booking required.

Location: Meet at Wellington Monument car park and car share to site.
For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Breeding birds and summer meadows

Wednesday 25 June

10am

[Blackdown Hills AONB](#)

Learn how to spot and record breeding birds on this early summer walk at Alston. We will also take a closer look at the plant and animal species which fill the wildflower meadows at this time of year.

Cost: £5. Booking required.

Location: Meet at Chubbs Farm, Alston. Map ref: ST 307 026.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Carnivorous plants on Hense Moor

Sunday 29 June

10am

[Blackdown Hills AONB](#)

Take a close look at the four species of insect-eating plant on this guided walk with ecologist David Allen in the best bog in the Blackdowns, and see the results of recent conservation.

This is rough and wet terrain so suitable footwear is essential.

Cost: £5. Booking required.

Location: Meet at Luppitt Village Hall. Map ref: ST 170 066.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Heritage of Otterhead House and Victorian garden

Sunday 6 July

2pm

[The Otterhead Trust](#)

A fascinating walk led by historian Roy Coombs, who has a wealth of knowledge about Otterhead. Tea and biscuits at the Coach House.

Cost: £3. Booking required.

Location: Meet at Otterhead Lodge car park. Map ref: ST 224 141.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Buckland and Staple Hill walk

Thursday 10 July

10am

[Blackdown Hills walking group](#)

A moderate walk with some steep sections. Buckland, Staple Hill and Birchwood.

Cost: £3 for non-members. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Buckland St. Mary church. Map ref: ST 271 134.

For more information: Contact Gill Thomas on 01404 861406.

Source to sea - part 2

Sunday 13 July

10am

[Blackdown Hills AONB & East Devon AONB](#)

On this walk we continue our journey down the Yarty, starting at the old pack-horse bridge at Beckford. As we explore this beautiful stretch of river we will learn about water quality, how it affects wildlife, and how to test it.

Cost: £5. Booking required.

Location: Meet by Beckford Bridge. Map ref: ST 266 015.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Nightjar and bat hunt

Wednesday 16 July

7.30pm-9.30pm

[Neroche](#)

Join local experts Richard and Alison Whiteside for an expedition across Culmstock Beacon in search of the mysterious heathland bird, the nightjar. There will also be a chance to use electronic bat detectors.

Cost: Free. Booking required.

Location: Meet near Purchas Farm. Map ref: 108 154. Please check details when booking.

For more information: contact Samantha Winzer on 01823 680846.

Neroche Touching the Seasons – summer

Sunday 20 July

10am-4pm (guided walk at 11.30am)

[Neroche](#)

Join Neroche lead artist Michael Fairfax to explore the summer woodland landscape of Quarts Moor through an artist's eyes. During the day there will also be a guided walk at Wellington Monument to discover more about its history and restoration.

Cost: Free. Booking required.

Location: Quarts Moor and Wellington Monument. Map ref: ST 152 169 and ST 143 168.

For more information: contact Samantha Winzer on 01823 680846.

Wambrook Green Fair

Sunday 20 July

[Green Fair](#)

A rural fair inspired by the woodland and the tradition of the Green Man. There will be plenty for children and adults to enjoy, including stalls, entertainment, stories and refreshments.

Cost: Entry by donation.

Location: Wambrook, near Chard (follow the signs from the Toll House).

For more information: Please note this event is subject to change, please call to confirm details. Call Libby Lister on 01460 64605 or Carole Kelly on 01460 54017.

Evening walk at Lemon's Hill

Saturday 26 July

7pm

[Blackdown Hills walking group](#)

An evening walk at Lemon's Hill and Bolham.

Cost: £3 for non-members. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Lemon's Hill. Map ref: ST 153 118.

For more information: Contact Gill Thomas on 01404 861406.

Walk to Rower Tower

Tuesday 5 August

10am

[Blackdown Hills walking group](#)

A circular walk with some more demanding sections, from Yarcombe to Rower Tower.

Cost: £3 for non-members. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Yarcombe village hall car park. Map ref: ST 245 082.

For more information: Contact Gill Thomas on 01404 861406.

Blackborough and the whetstone mines

Sunday 10 August

Meet at 2.30pm

[Blackdown Hills AONB](#)

A fascinating tour of the Blackborough area, followed by a delicious farmhouse cream tea.

Learn about the history of the whetstone mines, Garnsey's Tower, and much more.

Cost: Free. (Separate charge for cream tea). Booking required.

Location: Pounchydown Farm, Blackborough. Map ref: ST 093 088.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Source to sea - part 3

Sunday 17 August

10am

[Blackdown Hills AONB & East Devon AONB](#)

The final part of our river walk series takes us to the Axe estuary where we will explore the flowers and wildlife of the estuary area and find out what happens where the river meets the sea.

Cost: £5. Booking required.

Location: Meet in lay-by near Axmouth Bridge. Map ref: SY 253 901.

For more information: Contact the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email

blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk.

Combe St Nicholas walk

Thursday 20 August

10am

[Blackdown Hills walking group](#)

A morning walk with some climbs, muddy in places. Lunch at local pub or garden picnic, weather permitting.

Cost: £3 for non-members. Booking not required.

Location: Meet at Cearhays, Combe St Nicholas. Map ref: ST 298 108.

For more information: Contact Gill Thomas on 01404 861406.

Butterfly walk at Thurlbear Quarrylands

Wednesday 27 August

11am

[Butterfly Conservation](#)

Join this special walk looking for the brown hairstreak & silver-washed fritillary butterflies with experts from Butterfly Conservation.

Cost: Free. Booking not required.

Location: Meet along track to Slough Green Caravan Park near West Hatch. Map ref: ST 274 212.

For more information: contact Dr Michael Barry on 01823 461338 or email

michael.barry@doctors.org.uk.