

Spring/Summer 2021

# TheValley

News from the Tamar Valley AONB

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TAMAR VALLEY   
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY





# Welcome



As we live through these unprecedented times it almost feels like we have turned the clock back to those early post war years as we are reawakened to the natural world for solace and wellbeing.

For some residents in the Tamar Valley AONB lockdown has brought many blessings, with less traffic and louder bird song, and it has been a time of reconnecting with vistas, ecology and a greater understanding of the biodiversity under our very feet. The hedgerow flowers have seemed more vibrant, the trees greener and the sky a richer hue of blue.

For many people of all ages this has also been a time of unprecedented loneliness, others have faced job insecurity and we have all really missed friends and community events. Now, as the days lengthen and our freedoms slowly return, we can all look forward to enjoying some normality by summer.

Throughout this time, our loyal Tamar Valley AONB team have worked tirelessly (with great support from the wider partnership) to deliver the final detail for the Tamara project grant application from National Lottery Heritage Fund.

We can now shout loud and clear that all the hard graft paid off and the scheme,

with a total funding of over £3 million, can be rolled out over the next 5 years.

My sincere thanks to both Corinna Woodall and Tim Dart for their resolve, their determination and strong leadership which helped us achieve this success. However, sadly Corinna decided not to return and Tim's 2 year secondment ended in January. Both I know will be greatly missed not just by staff and Partners but by our many volunteers and the wider community. On your behalf we all wish them well. We now welcome Dan Cooke who took over as manager in January 2021.

So keep watch as the projects unfold, we want the whole community to benefit from this ambitious Tamar Valley AONB Tamara project.

**As ever, Neil**

Cllr Neil Burden  
Chair, Tamar Valley AONB Partnership

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### More from us...

Sign up to receive monthly ebulletins from the Tamar Valley AONB - a great way to keep up-to-date with progress on projects and calls for volunteers in between issues of The Valley newsletter. Please visit: [www.tamarvalley.org.uk](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk) and click on 'News' to sign up. Alternatively, email Charlotte at [cdancer@tamarvalley.org.uk](mailto:cdancer@tamarvalley.org.uk)

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Front cover image © Lesley Strong



TAMARA  
LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

TAMAR VALLEY  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY



Images © Tobi O'Neill/TON  
Drone Services

# £3.2 million Tamara Landscape Partnership go-ahead thanks to National Lottery funding



A National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £2.3 million has been awarded to the Tamar Valley AONB for a project that aims to provide a brighter future for the Valley and its communities.

Thanks to the contribution of National Lottery players, the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme will work with farmers, landowners and communities over the next five years to manage and enhance landscapes that are rich in wildlife, as well as cultural and historic heritage. The project will help improve access to special places and promote ways for people to enjoy the landscape whilst improving their health and wellbeing.

With match-funding commitments from other partners, a total of £3.2 million will be invested across the Tamar Valley landscape over the next five years.

Stuart McLeod, Director London and South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we are delighted to support this ambitious project in the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, helping to conserve and promote its unique landscape by working with local communities."

James Luxton, Programme Manager for the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme, is delighted with the award: "This really is great news for the Tamar Valley, this investment from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and from our key partners will make a big difference to residents and visitors."

## Key details of the project include:

- Apprenticeships and internships to improve job prospects and to provide support for local businesses
- Advice and grants for farmers to reinstate landscapes and maintain traditional skills
- Community allotments with training opportunities and reintroduction of heritage varieties
- Social prescribing, including walking, running, art and bush craft
- Opportunities and support for local businesses as the Tamar Valley strives to become *the* destination for a low-carbon, sustainable holiday
- Benefits for walkers as the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail will be extended to reach the coast.



It is a great pleasure to receive this most welcome news. It was an uplift to the whole partnership and everyone who has worked diligently to achieve this. To have something to aim for and work towards over the next five years is a warm ray of positive news

**Councillor Neil Burden, Chair of Tamar Valley AONB Partnership**

We welcome the development & roll out of the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme, which will clearly benefit many of our traditional farms and the Valley's landscape, offering local advice, knowledge exchange and sharing best practice

**Martin Howlett, Cornwall NFU Environmental Spokesman**

Continued on back page...





Lamerton Bat Day May 2016

# A better place for the beloved bat

A five-year project to improve the outlook for the rare greater horseshoe bat has been hailed as a great success.

The Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project, which ended in January 2021, spent over five years working across Devon and the Tamar Valley to secure the future of this nocturnal wonder whose numbers have fallen by 90% over the last century.

The partnership project, led by Devon Wildlife Trust and supported by 17 other partners, including Tamar Valley AONB, has achieved and, in most cases surpassed, its initial goals.

Five years on, it is clear to see that greater horseshoe bats are now living in a place that better appreciates them, better manages land for them and better understands them.

The main focus of the project's work in the Tamar Valley centred around a maternity roost for greater horseshoe bats near Gunnislake. In this area, the project team helped improve habitat management on almost 2,500 hectares of land, helped restore and plant 19km of hedgerow, and secured over 200 hectares of land in Countryside Stewardship schemes. This has ensured that land is now better managed with horseshoes in mind for at

least the next five years.

The project engaged with several local schools and held a number of local community events to raise awareness and seek support. The project team also planted and improved five orchards in the area.

The team enjoyed working in and around the beautiful landscapes used by greater horseshoe bats. These incredible mammals can live to be up to 30 years old and amazingly only weigh the equivalent of two £2 coins! Their incredible ecology and importance as an indicator of the health of the landscape never ceases to amaze. We really are lucky to have this species on our doorstep and we hope it continues to thrive across the South West and within the beautiful Tamar Valley way into the future.

A huge thank you goes to everyone who's been involved in the project, from farmers managing their land and improving habitats, to community volunteers and school children working towards their bat buddy awards.

## DEVON GREATER HORSESHOE BAT PROJECT



### Did you know?

The greater horseshoe bat:

- Lives up to 30 years
- Weighs the same as two £2 coins
- Is an important indicator of the health of the landscape



Learning about local wildlife at Gulworthy Primary School





Planting at Hatches Farm Orchard



## Getting involved... helping our bats

**Are you a school interested in undertaking a Bat Buddy award?**

This is fully linked with the curriculum and all resources are available on the project website for at least the next five years.

**Are you a farmer interested in finding out more about managing your land for this fascinating creature?**

Please visit the downloads section of the website for information about managing a range of habitats.

**Would you like to encourage your community to become bat friendly?**

Then check out the website for information and useful downloads.



Meadow sowing at Morwell Barton

## Where do we go from here?

Through the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme, we hope to take the Bat Project forward by continuing:

- the engagement and great work with farmers in the Tamar Valley
- habitat improvement and decreasing fragmentation through our five-year Scheme
- to work with schools to engage and inspire them through their natural heritage



**Devon**  
Wildlife Trust



**HERITAGE**  
FUND



# Forest for Cornwall Programme branches out

by Lesley Strong, Tamar Valley AONB and Forest for Cornwall

One year on since the Forest for Cornwall was launched, an ambitious tree planting project is taking shape in the heart of the Tamar Valley.

## Forest for Calstock Parish

In 2019 Calstock Parish Council declared a climate emergency and set up an Environment and Climate Emergency working group. This group launched the Forest for Calstock Parish project, which aligns with the wider Forest for Cornwall scheme. They raised £3,502 for tree planting in three pilot areas. Online public

consultations on planting schemes are taking place and an interim report will be published.

COVID restrictions have delayed tree planting until autumn 2021, but the project continues to move apace thanks to the energy of the working group and the enthusiasm of the local community.

## Improving biodiversity in Launceston

A new project is helping to improve biodiversity in Launceston and promote the benefits of making time for nature.

Led by the Launceston Community Development Trust, the Forest for Launceston project aims to create a space for everyone in the community to enjoy.

Before Christmas, an appeal to support

the project raised over £6,000. This will help to fund benches, pathways, nest boxes for local wildlife and so much more. The project will also see the reintroduction of plant species to create a woodland/wildflower meadow mix.

For updates and news on the Forest for Launceston, visit [www.launcestonlife.com](http://www.launcestonlife.com) or the Launceston Life Facebook page.

## Naturally Healthy May

May is a fantastic time to get outside and enjoy some fresh air and spring weather. Now more than ever we recognise the health benefits of enjoying nature and the importance of being active outdoors.

Throughout May the Devon Local Nature Partnership will be sharing information about being 'naturally healthy'. Working with a range of partners, Devon's Naturally Healthy initiative encourages people to walk, cycle, enjoy gardening, take part in wild swimming, bird watching or other activities, ensuring that everyone is happier and healthier by being better connected to nature.

To find out more, visit [www.naturaldevon.org.uk](http://www.naturaldevon.org.uk) and click on Priorities, Naturally Healthy, or keep an eye on social media @activedevon and @Devon\_LNP.

## Tackling giant hogweed

There continues to be generally encouraging news following the survey and treatment of giant hogweed in the Tamar Valley in 2020.

The number of plants located and removed in the main survey area fell from 156 in 2019 to approximately 100 in 2020. The Tamar Valley Invasives Group is grateful that the majority of landowners involved in the project continued to

support efforts to control the plant during the spring lockdown, which coincided with the main survey season.

However, despite the continuing fall in giant hogweed numbers in the Tamar Valley, variation in the species' distribution from one year to the next highlights the challenges faced in eradicating non-native invasive species on a catchment scale.







Images courtesy  
Denise Mansell and Will Darwall

Living through unprecedented times, many have embraced the healing power of nature during lockdown. A quieter world has also had a restorative effect on nature itself. Here we take a look at some positive effects of life under lockdown.

# Nature heals

## Escaping to nature

*"When I find myself needing calm, some fresh air or to get perspective in my life, I take to the woods. The woods have always been my 'go to' place to get me through tough times. This escape to nature has helped me deal with the anxiety of a pandemic, the unknown of what was to come, and reassured me that the world was still a beautiful place to be."*

Denise Mansell, Plantlife volunteer

## If you build it, they will come

My husband and I were curious to see just how the new wetlands had matured since our last visit to Calstock. It was certainly a good day for bird watching as we spotted a male stonechat perched on top of one of the posts and then a large grey heron coasted overhead.

Further along more birds were floating on one of the deeper ponds. They all appeared to be 'socially-distanced' gulls.

As we neared the end of the footpath we saw a beautiful white egret, a large wading bird closely related to a heron.

As the wetland matures, it can only get better and I can imagine TV crews and twitchers from far and wide descending

on our peaceful village.

Jean, Tamar Valley Walk & Talk

## Making space for wildlife

Last year the news reported how wild animals were enjoying the freedom of a quieter world, venturing into areas they would normally avoid. This was a welcome good news story for many, offering an encouraging glimpse of how quickly nature can respond if given the chance.

A memorable encounter with wildlife took place in our own garden near St Dominick. During lockdown, we used this unplanned time at home to dig a garden pond. With the addition of some aquatic plants, it wasn't long before we had a new visitor to our garden – a female southern hawker dragonfly.

What a truly magnificent creature and as she moved across the pond, the surface below rippled, disturbed by the sheer force of her moving wings! We have felt a great sense of pride, knowing that our garden pond is helping to make a little more space for wildlife in the Tamar Valley.

Valerie Darwall







Millbrook artist, Sally Turner's mosaic depicting Lynher



Lynher in all her glory

# Lynher's Mosaic - An Inspired Tamar Community Project

**The spring/summer 2020 lockdown may seem an odd time to be thankful, but feeling gratitude in difficult times is well known to boost well-being.**

To keep up local spirits and inspire the waterways community to connect with their maritime heritage, Dominic and Barbara Bridgman of Lynher River Barge Community Interest Company (CIC) created the Lynher Mosaic Project.

The plan was to engage as many of the local community as possible in this mindfulness project. The pair commissioned Millbrook artist and boat builder, Sally Turner to create a large mosaic depicting Lynher, to celebrate the sailing barge being back in commission and commemorate the industrial heritage of Tamar sailing barges. It is made from actual pottery and glass fragments left over from the process, all found on the estuary beaches and Tamar field boundaries.

A COVID-safe drop-off point was established by volunteers to leave pottery and glass shards donations. The project soon grew and took on a life of its own.

Lynher's Mosaic Facebook page led to shared communication with like-minded

people. Sally posted videos showing technical information for mosaic making, while others shared historical and family anecdotes as well as photographs and accounts of precious finds.

Messages came from people who had moved as far away as New Zealand. Links were established with local people with a sailing barge family history and with local historians who have been documenting Tamar wrecks and military history. Pottery experts contributed by identifying shards from 18th century Germany and 17th century Portugal.

Lynher's fame spread too. Inspired by the area and Brunel's work nearby, James Goss created her in 1896 with lovely lines even though her purpose was to carry stone from the quarries and manure. She was even used for target practice in the Second World War! Years later, with incredible determination and passion, Charlie Force restored and refloated her in 1999.

## New lease of life

**Barbara and Dominic Bridgman took over Lynher's restoration in 2016. Today Lynher sails up and down the waterways once again with a new lease of life.**

Lynher River Barge CIC based at Cremyll on the Tamar Estuary provides education to the waterways community on traditional seamanship, boat building skills, vocational maritime training, the environment and sustainability.

For more information, visit [www.cremyll-maritime.org.uk](http://www.cremyll-maritime.org.uk) and [www.tamarbarge.org.uk](http://www.tamarbarge.org.uk)







The PRK sampling team at Budshead stream

## A snapshot of river life

**Get ready to get snapping at some of north west Plymouth's scenic spots.**

Westcountry Rivers Trust will be installing fixed-point photography (FPP) posts in Widewell Woods, Tamerton Foliot, Budshead Wood and Whitleigh Woods as part of its Plymouth River Keepers project.

Project officer Jenny Wytcherley said: "We'd love the community to get involved by taking photos of their local rivers and streams from the FPP posts.

"It will help us monitor water level and colour/turbidity, together with changes such as habitat management works and removal of fish barriers, as well as showcasing nature's changes throughout the seasons."

At the end of the project, the charity will create a time lapse film from all of the photographs taken, creating a lasting legacy for the community.

The photo process is quick and simple. You'll need a camera or smartphone and an internet connection so you can send the photograph to Westcountry Rivers Trust via email or social media. People will be able to take a photograph at any of the FPP posts by simply resting their camera or phone on the post in the position/direction identified (simple instructions will be available on each FPP post). This will mean that multiple photographs can be taken by different people, which will all show the same area. Photos can be taken at the FPP posts as many times as people would like – the more photos the better.

The FPP posts will be positioned at Westcountry CSI sample points, in addition to areas where habitat management works are planned to take place. The FPP posts will be installed in spring/early summer 2021 (dependent on COVID-19 restrictions). Find out more at: <https://wrt.org.uk/project/plymouth-river-keepers/>

## Recycling for charity

**The South Hill Association for Renewable Energy (SHARE) joined the Terracycle recycling programme to reduce the amount of hard-to-recycle plastics.**

We sent our first shipment containing biscuit wrappers in January 2019. For a full list of all the items we now recycle, from crisp packets to mascaras and lipsticks to inkjet cartridges, visit [www.south-hill.co.uk/charity-recycling](http://www.south-hill.co.uk/charity-recycling)

and join our Facebook group.

In March 2020, due to COVID-19, public collection points were closed. The collection bins at Green Meadows, Golberdon are still open for drop offs.

Thank you for your continued support and Keep on Recycling.  
Ali Humphreys, Recycling for Charity project lead volunteer



**Arts strategy to celebrate our outstanding landscape**

**From the industrial landscapes that inspired Turner to the work of Mary Martin, so evocative of our market gardening heritage, the Tamar Valley provides rich inspiration for art.**

In 2019, the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty made a commitment to explore how working with artists could attract first time visitors to our countryside.

First steps towards a 'National Art in the Landscape' strategy took place in September 2019, with a 'National Moment' of simultaneous events staged in AONBs across the country. This included the creation of our own apple heart in the grounds at Cotehele. The National Association Arts Strategy has given us a new focus to look at opportunities to integrate arts based connections in our work going forward.





# Celebrating 25 glittering years

Day 2 - Greystone Bridge © Les Deering

In 2020, the Tamar Valley AONB celebrated its silver anniversary. Officially designated on 30th August 1995, this coveted accolade marks a national level of protection to help conserve and enhance natural beauty.

The Tamar Valley was recognised as a landscape of high visual quality with a unique wildlife resource and remarkable heritage. Other 'special qualities' include its rare valley and water landscape with artistic and public appeal.

To mark 25 years since designation, a programme of celebration was organised. This included two local businesses brewing and blending a special commemorative beer and gin liqueur (see article on page 17).

A 25-day countdown to 30th August also took place across social media. Each parish within the Tamar Valley was virtually 'visited', highlighting and

remembering a variety of projects and milestones from the past 25 years.

The countdown culminated in a new brand being revealed for the Tamar Valley AONB. Find out more about our new look on page 17.

For further information about the Tamar Valley AONB, please visit [www.tamarvalley.org.uk](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk), follow @TVAONB on Facebook and Twitter, or tamar\_valley\_aonb on Instagram.

If you missed the 25-day countdown, here's another chance to remember just some of the many highlights from the past 25 years.

1

## Day 1

We start in our most northerly parish, **Milton Abbot**, the start of the Lifton Link walking route (part of the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail); a 5.5-mile waymarked route from Milton Abbot to Lifton through stunning countryside. For a pdf of the route map, please email [cdancer@tamarvalley.org.uk](mailto:cdancer@tamarvalley.org.uk)

2

## Day 2

We've crossed the River Tamar from Devon to Cornwall, into the parish of **Lezant**. Greystone Bridge marks the most northerly boundary of the Tamar Valley AONB. The bridge was built in 1439 and is Grade I listed.

3

## Day 3

Our Helping Hands for Heritage project provided expert training for volunteers on a range of heritage topics. One area of work was to train people to become 'Heritage Guides' to lead walks and give talks about heritage in the Tamar Valley.

One such guided walk was held in **Sydenham Damerel** with Heritage Guide Les Deering.

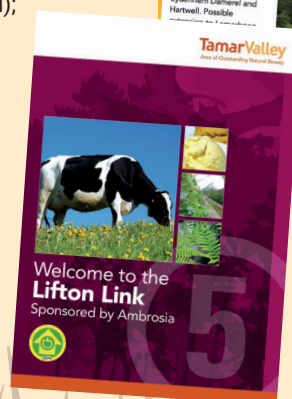
Come for a walk...  
with our Tamar Valley Heritage Guides

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May,  
10am - 12noon  
Sydenham  
Damerel &  
Horsebridge

A 4-mile walk with Les Deering, starting at this 15<sup>th</sup> century bridge, and passing through Sydenham Damerel and Hartwell. Possible



TamarValley  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Valley Area of Outstanding  
little more about it?  
ould help...  
TamarValley  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Above: Tamar Valley Heritage Guides publicity and the Lifton Link leaflet



4



Heath fritillary image courtesy of Peter Eeles

### Day 4

Now we head to **Stoke Climsland** parish.

Together with local landowners, Natural England and the Duchy of Cornwall, former heath fritillary habitat was restored to suitable conditions in Greenscombe Wood as part of the Heath Fritillary Project to encourage natural recolonisation and for reintroduction.

Data from 2012 showed more than 250 adult heath fritillary butterflies were recorded in one day compared to 2007 when only 49 were recorded. Numbers further increased in 2017 and 2018. Since then, numbers have remained stable.

5

### Day 5

In 2006, work began on the £6 million Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project, to bring alive the rich mining heritage of the Tamar Valley.

Just a few of the highlights from the 3-year project included the creation of 25km of tracks and trails at Devon Great Consols within **Gulworthy** parish, as well as conservation works to make safe significant mines in the area (great homes for the greater horseshoe bat!).

In 2009, a Sustainable Development Fund grant was awarded to trial a new bus service linking Callington and Tamar Valley villages and Gunnislake Station with Morwellham and the Tamar Trails. A total of 309 people used the service.

Left: Tamar Valley Line train travelling across Calstock viaduct and below, Tamar Trails  
© Barry Gamble

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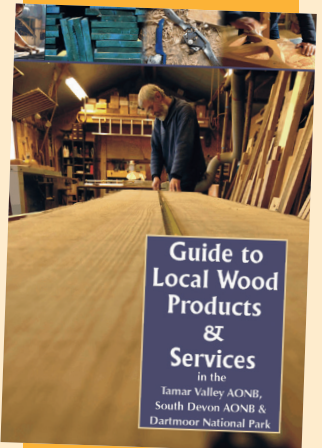
### Day 6

Staying in **Gulworthy** parish, a Sustainable Development Grant was awarded for a shared wood heat system for the school and church.

This was part of the brilliant 'Working the Woods' project, highlighting the links between protected landscapes and woodland.

Just two of the many achievements from this project included a 'Local Goods from Local Woods' exhibition, and a Guide to Local Wood Products and Services.

Below: 'A Guide to Local Wood Products and Services' publication







7

### Tamar Passenger Ferry

#### Day 7

Home of the AONB team, **Calstock** parish has been greatly involved in the work of the Tamar Valley AONB.

In summer 1999, the Tamar Passenger Ferry was launched, providing a welcome link across the river between Devon and Cornwall.

Unfortunately, the ferry service ceased to operate in recent years due to lack of funding. However, through the Tamar Landscape Partnership Scheme, a feasibility study is proposed to see if this greatly-missed service could be reinstated.

*Fingers crossed for its return!*



10

#### Day 10

As part of the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project, the **Tavistock Canal Poetry Trail** was created in 2012, with poetry written by local schoolchildren.

In 2017, the Trail was restored and new verses were also installed in Meadowlands and Abbey Bridge.

We look forward to seeing the 'gateway centre' (Guildhall Project) when it's completed, as an area is being dedicated to the Tamar Valley.

8

#### Day 8

One of the most exciting discoveries in the Tamar Valley AONB was the unearthing of Calstock's Roman Fort back in October 2011.

You can relive the dig through this short film that includes feedback from some of the volunteers and interviews with Dr Chris Smart. <https://youtu.be/v8maJp8i2kM>



We can't leave **Calstock** parish without a special mention that Gunnislake is the start of the beautiful Tamar Valley Line. If you haven't experienced this train journey yet, it's highly recommended.

**Above: Aerial image of Calstock Roman Fort © Barry Gamble**  
**Top right: part of the Tavistock Canal Poetry Trail**

9

#### Day 9

It's back into Devon, as we visit **Plasterdown Grouped Parish**, which includes Sampford Spiney and Whitchurch. A Rapid Woodland Assessment training workshop took place in July 2019 at Grenofen Woods as part of Plantlife's Building Resilience in South West Woodlands project. Volunteers learned about an easy-to-use tool that captures information to understand woodland condition and to identify woodlands that have potential to support rare lichens, mosses and liverworts.



River Tavy

## 11 Day 11

**Callington** is home to Tamar Grow Local and the Tamar Valley Honey Cooperative.

The honey cooperative is designed to provide low-cost equipment, a clean room for extraction, expertise and training for novice beekeepers, as well as helping producers to market their honey and bee-related products. Bee-keeping courses are also offered (although not at this current time).



## 12 Day 12

We have held some really lovely events in **Buckland Monachorum's** Community Orchard, with local apple enthusiast Celia Steven and botanist Martin Summers. The orchard has such a calming atmosphere with incredible views.

In 2005/6 the Tamar Valley AONB awarded a Sustainable Development Fund grant for the design and installation of an interpretation panel for the orchard, focusing on locally significant varieties of apple and the orchard wildlife. This poster was also created thanks to another round of Sustainable Development Fund money.



## 13

### Day 13

And now to **Bere Ferrers** Parish. The community here has been involved in so many great events and projects over the years. This includes one of the best shows in the Tamar Valley – the Bere Ferrers Spring Flower Show, displaying a huge range of local daffodil varieties.

Our Heralds of Spring Project recorded over 104 heritage varieties of daffodils in the landscape in its first year of surveying alone, many of which were recorded on the Bere peninsula.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time surveying the daffodils (as seen in Country Living magazine, Feb 2020).

Take a look at this video of 2017's Spring Flower Show  
[https://youtu.be/j6Srcu\\_tNLQ](https://youtu.be/j6Srcu_tNLQ)

## 14 Day 14

Just a couple of miles down the road to Bere Alston.

The Cordiale project was a collaboration between the Tamar Valley AONB and teams from other protected landscapes in southwest England and northwest France.

Part of the project included a weekend event called 'What's in your back garden?' in July 2012. Residents in Bere Alston dug a pit to look for history in their back gardens as part of the Festival of British Archaeology. The event was a success, with over 40 people taking part over the weekend, and 36 children from Bere Alston Primary School digging the following week.

**Above image:** Visitors to the village join in to dig one of the back garden pits in the centre of Bere Alston



## 15

### Day 15

Staying with the Cordiale project, we head to the parish of **St Dominic**, where we were inspired by the diaries that Joseph Snell, market gardener at Radland Mill, kept between 1914 and 1938.

The diaries gave an account of Joseph's life in the Tamar Valley from everyday incidents to the marking of the changing seasons as well as his work.

Throughout June 2012, 90 people from across the Tamar Valley became involved with 'Diarykeepers'. They wrote a diary entry every day during the month. Here's what happened:  
[https://youtu.be/\\_LTmvgfXUdM](https://youtu.be/_LTmvgfXUdM)





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Left and above: Sovereigns, Madams & Double Whites book launch, 2004, and Tamar Valley cherries from the orchard of James Evans and Mary Martin (courtesy of James Evans)

## 16 Day 16

**St Mellion** parish was also a market gardening area, particularly famous for cherries. The annual Cherry Feast still continues today (in normal times).

Take a look back at these wonderful oral history accounts that include market gardening in east Cornwall. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FA5FckY76cl&feature=youtu.be>

## 17 Day 17

Another area famed for its market gardening history is **Botus Fleming** parish.

A beautiful book, *Sovereigns, Madams & Double Whites* by Joanna Lewis, published by the Tamar Valley AONB in 2004, includes market gardeners from this parish.

The book was launched at Peterloo Poets (now Calstock Arts) in Calstock, and went on to win an Hoyer an Gof (Cornish Gorsedd) award.

## 18

### Day 18

Now we head to **Landulph** parish.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust applied to the AONB's Sustainable Development Fund in 2005/6 to restore two bird hides on the foreshore of Kingsmill Lake, to watch the birdlife found on the nature reserve within the Tamar Estuary.

'Unique wildlife resource' and 'rare valley and water landscape based around an unspoilt estuary' are two of the Tamar Valley's five special qualities; reasons why it was designated an AONB.

Pictured right: Pair of avocets © Allan Drewitt / Natural England



## Day 19

While we haven't been particularly active in the parish of **Pillaton**, we would like to be!

Can you think of any projects you'd like our help or support with?

What would you like to be conserved and enhanced in this area over the next 25 years?

20

**Day 20**

Back over to Devon to **Bickleigh** parish.

Tamerton Foliot marks the beginning (or end) of our 35-mile walking route, the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail.

In 2009/10 we awarded a Sustainable Development Fund grant to Devon Wildlife Trust's Warleigh Point Nature Reserve.

The grant was used to support habitat management by volunteers and supervised by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (now known as The Conservation Volunteers); coppicing, thinning and removing non-native trees.



21

**Day 21**

Today, we head to the Lynher area of our AONB and into **Landrake** parish, although this is more of a general Tamar Valley post...

From their initial meeting in 2004, with just a handful of members, the Drawn to the Valley group of artists is now 150 strong, with members from across the Tamar Valley area. They all draw inspiration from our special landscape, and showcase the great variety of creative work through group exhibitions and Open Studios events. We look forward to more of their beautiful exhibitions at the Tamar Valley Centre when circumstances allow!



**Above: Drawn to the Valley exhibitions at the Tamar Valley Centre**

22

**Day 22**

Now to **St Germans** parish.

One of the most popular training activities delivered through the Helping Hands for Heritage project was recording ancient trees.

Tim Kellett (Cornwall's Ancient Tree Forum) ran three sessions for around 30 volunteers, where they learnt about special trees and how to record them as part of the Ancient Tree Hunt. The trees were then confirmed as ancient, veteran or notable by Ancient Tree Forum verifiers.



**Left: Veteran Tree at National Trust's Antony House**

23

**Day 23**

In 2006, it was great to be involved with the Tamar Protection Society and the Elizabethan garden creation at Mary Newman's Cottage in **Saltash**.

A Heritage Lottery grant of £48,700 was awarded for the garden to include traditional varieties of herbs, fruit, vegetables and flowers. A further £11,500 from Cornwall Environment Trust was used to renovate the cottage windows and to upgrade the outdoor toilet and kitchen facilities, so that refreshments could be provided for visitors.



**Above: Mary Newman's Cottage, Saltash**





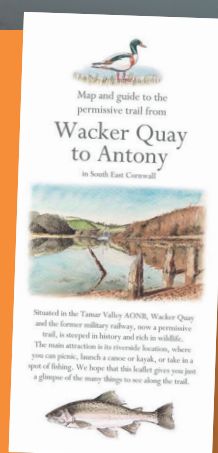
Beautiful Wacker Quay

## Day 24

Along the Lynher and into **Antony** parish for our next visit.

In June 2012, the Wacker Quay to Antony Trail opened. This was the result of 18 months' hard work by a small team of volunteers (Wacker Quay Community Group), the Tamar Community Trust and the Tamar Valley AONB.

Wacker Quay is one of the few places within the Tamar Valley AONB where people can enjoy stunning views and free public access to the River Lynher.



24

25

## Day 25

We head to our final parish, **Shevioc**.

In 2014, Shevioc Parish Council was awarded funds from the Sustainable Development Fund to create a circular walk. The money was used to purchase gates and stiles to link a new section of footpath to existing routes, providing access to all areas of the parish.



This project brought the community together, with landowners, farmers and the parish council working together to devise maintenance schedules for the pathways and hedgerows, while the local walking group kindly helped to install the gates and stiles.

# Special qualities of the Tamar Valley

**So why was the Tamar Valley designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1995?**

- A rare valley and water landscape
- A landscape of high visual quality
- A unique wildlife resource
- A remarkable heritage
- A landscape of artistic and public appeal

You can read more about these special qualities on page 11 of the Tamar Valley AONB Management Plan 2019-2024, online at [www.tamarvalley.org.uk](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk). Click on Caring, then Management Plan.

## Also celebrating in 2020...

**A belated happy anniversary to the following, who also celebrated key milestones last year.**

- Gunnislake Newbridge (500 years) - <https://gunnislake.org/>
- Tavy & Tamar Apple Group (20 years) - <http://www.tavyapples.org.uk/>
- Calstock Arts (10 years) - <http://calstockarts.org/>



## New look for AONB

During the first lockdown, much work was carried out behind the scenes with Cornwall-based Paul Eustice Design, to create a new look for the AONB that was launched on 30th August.

The 'bee' logo represents a sense of living and working together, with a shared understanding and a need to pull together to conserve everything we hold dear within our Valley. We are an industrious and fearless community – a hive of

activity and energy. The AONB's new-look website [www.tamarvalley.org.uk](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk) was also recently launched. See page 20 to find out how the brand has integrated Visit Tamar Valley and the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme.



### New Manager for Tamar Valley AONB

In December, we said a fond farewell to Tim Dart, who has managed the Tamar Valley AONB with enthusiasm, dedication and passion for the past two years. We wish Tim all the very best.

Dan Cooke joined the team in January as the new Tamar Valley AONB Manager. With formal qualifications and extensive experience in environmental management and in communications and community engagement, Dan is delighted to have joined the team and the wider AONB 'family'.

"It's great to be joining at such an exciting time with all the potential of the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme, the next important steps for farming and protected landscapes, and the impressive range of on-going projects with our partners," said Dan.

"I look forward to working with our local communities, partners and visitors alike."



Celebrating with Bere Brewery and Monarch Liqueurs  
Image of brewer © Lucy Jones Photography

## Enjoying a celebratory tippie

To commemorate 25 years of the Tamar Valley AONB, Bere Brewery produced a light, hoppy ale using 100% Tamar Valley hops. Named Ale of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the first brew sold out within weeks.

Monarch Liqueurs, home of the Tamar Tipple, paired fruits from Tamar Valley hedgerows to create a blackberry and elderflower gin liqueur, Tamara.

The AONB team had hoped to host a 'Taste the Tamar' event to launch the new drinks, but this unfortunately had to be postponed. Read more at [www.tamarvalley.org.uk](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk) and click on News, 12th June post.







Calstock Community Excavation 2019

# Remote working for archaeology project

by Dr Chris Smart

**Seeking new and innovative ways of working during a global pandemic has been challenging to say the least. But for one community archaeology project a rapid rethink was in order when work had to end almost overnight.**

The University of Exeter's Understanding Landscapes project, launched in winter 2018, set out to explore the historic landscape of the Tamar Valley, and particularly the Roman and medieval heritage of Calstock and Bere Ferrers.

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project made a great start in 2019, with volunteer-focused fieldwork centred on the Roman fort at Calstock. Geophysical surveys, test-pits, a four-week 'community-excavation' and indoor workshops cataloguing all of the finds were all greatly attended. The excavation produced lots of new information – timber buildings were found outside the fort, and more was learnt about the construction of the Roman road. Fieldwork and indoor workshops continued over the winter into 2020, but then Coronavirus put a stop to everything.

Within weeks the project turned to remote volunteering – steering members of the public through analysing LiDAR data for the wider Tamar Valley. LiDAR, which stands for Light Detection and Ranging, is a means of mapping the fine undulations of the ground surface using a laser scanner mounted to an aircraft. The data collected can be visualised to produce an image of all of the 'lumps and bumps' within the landscape.

In the months that have passed the group have discovered over 30 'new' enclosed settlements of prehistoric or Roman date, dozens of prehistoric burial mounds, many miles of old routeways and possible Roman roads, and have plotted traces of extensive 'lost' medieval field systems.

Great things have been achieved remotely by a small army of home-working volunteers and work with LiDAR will continue. But what everyone wants is to be back outside, uncovering the past in the Tamar Valley. The team hope that by the summer of 2021 that this will be possible – fingers crossed!



Home-working volunteer  
John Hill



Extensive traces of the  
medieval strip fields  
surrounding Milton Abbot



An enclosed prehistoric or  
Roman settlement, defined  
by a low earthwork bank  
and ditch, measuring 100  
metres across (Bury Hill,  
St Erney)



Possible Roman routeway  
between Kit Hill and  
Hingston Down



# A monumental step for people and the environment

**A major new initiative designed to help Cornish residents take their first steps back into work or education has just been launched.**

'Monuments Matter to People', a two-year project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) with the support of Community Led Local Development (CLLD), will allow unemployed or economically inactive residents from Torpoint, Saltash and Liskeard to take part in conservation training, develop valuable skills, and access wellbeing support.

The project will focus on creating a positive social environment to help promote improved education, health and wellbeing for the participants. The course will start in March 2021 and will be based at Maker Heights within the spectacular Rame Head.

The programme will include half a day of English, Maths and IT courses led by Adult Education, whilst the remaining half day will alternate between conservation training with the Cornwall Archaeological Unit; clearance work on the scheduled monuments; guided walks; and Samaritans-led mental health and wellbeing workshops. Participants can join for between 24 and 48 weeks, but are welcome to come for a taster.

Participants on the Monuments Matter course will contribute to the vital task of protecting and maintaining the scheduled monuments of Maker Heights. It is hoped that they will become more involved with their local environment and heritage, whilst improving their wellbeing and increasing their education. Should participants choose to, they can gain a qualification from Adult Education whilst on the programme.

If you live in Torpoint, Saltash or Liskeard, are aged 18 or over and are interested in hearing more about joining the project, please get in touch to find out if you're eligible.

Travel and childcare costs will be covered by the project in order to remove any barriers to participation, and lunch will be provided for attendees. Please note that only certain postcode areas will be eligible, and applicants must be currently unemployed or economically inactive.

Email: [MMadmin@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk](mailto:MMadmin@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk)  
Phone: 07597 528962  
Website: [www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/monuments-matter-to-people](http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/monuments-matter-to-people)

”

Monuments Matter to People is a part of the wider Cornwall AONB initiative, 'A Monumental Improvement', a project which seeks to safeguard and protect scheduled monuments in Cornwall.

This project is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



# Rebranding will help boost local tourism



**VISIT TAMAR VALLEY**  
BRIDGING DEVON AND CORNWALL



**Affectionately known for many years as 'We Love the Tamar Valley', last year the Tamar Valley Tourism Association (TAVATA) rebranded to become 'Visit Tamar Valley'.**

Established some twenty years ago, TAVATA has always sought to promote the Tamar Valley and support the many small businesses that make up the tourism and hospitality sector. However, with a new identity in place, increased resources, and a clear focus on promoting the Tamar Valley as a 'not to be missed' destination to the domestic tourism market, Visit Tamar Valley is ready to face a future full of opportunity.

Following the appointment of a dedicated marketing consultant, Sarah Bartlett from Tamar Marketing, a much greater emphasis has now been placed on destination marketing. Visitor newsletters are published regularly, supported by themed articles about the Tamar Valley.

The team also set about building collaborative relationships with key stakeholders in the Tamar Valley, and aligned itself closely with the Tamar Valley AONB and Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme. Towards the end of 2020, a brand-new destination website

was commissioned and built. The site launched in February 2021 and can be found at <https://visittamarvalley.co.uk>.

Visit Tamar Valley now has three membership options, carefully designed to help tourism businesses capitalise on the opportunities presented by a predicted upswing in domestic tourism during 2021, and hopefully recoup some of their losses from last year.

If you run a tourism or hospitality business and would like to find out more about how Visit Tamar Valley can support you, contact them via the website or email [marketing@visittamarvalley.co.uk](mailto:marketing@visittamarvalley.co.uk)

”

After a period of unprecedented challenge, worry and uncertainty for tourism businesses, we have emerged with a renewed vision and clear mission to help increase visitor numbers and spend in this wonderful, protected landscape

Simon Hirsh, Chairman of Visit Tamar Valley





Main image: Female Stonechat. Inset: Heron.  
Pictured below: Small group of Snipe

## Calstock's a hotspot for bird watching

**A newly formed forum for sharing sightings of the many varieties of birds visiting the Calstock Wetlands has proved extremely popular.**

Since it was formed in October 2020, more than 120 members have joined the Calstock Wetlands Birdwatchers Facebook Group. It is appreciated by people who are not able to visit the area, but can see it online as well as those who walk the river path to see the wetlands developing as a nature reserve. It is a large area, and it quickly became apparent that when reporting a sighting, everyone wanted to know where to look. So, a map was created and the various ponds and channels as well as viewpoints overlooking the area were given names for reference.

It has not taken long for some species to make this their home. The eastern most pond is popular with a flock of up to 40 snipe, so well camouflaged and hard to see with the naked eye. Last autumn, a trio of green sandpipers, and more recently a common sandpiper made this their home. Most days, a grey heron can



be seen stalking the long grass. Another pond appears to be a favourite with the gulls, mostly blackheaded, with several herring and greater blackbacked. The local mallards seem to favour the large pools in Town Farm Field for all night parties! A flock of teal, our smallest duck, pretty but painfully shy, can often be seen in one of the more remote ponds on the north side. Various raptors have also been seen, typically a kestrel and a buzzard.

To find the forum, look up 'Calstock Wetlands Birdwatchers Group' on Facebook, and ask to join.

In the next issue of *'The Valley'* we hope to update readers on more progress with the River Tamar Walkway & Wetland Project.

**Peter Thompson,**  
**Calstock Wetlands Birdwatchers Group**

## Environmental charity tackling river pollution

Plastic pollution hotspots in the Tamar catchment are being mapped by environmental charity, Westcountry Rivers Trust in a bid to prevent pollution at source.

Project manager, Andy Rogers said, "In 2020, working with Plymouth University, we were busy mapping out potential problem areas, carrying out macroplastic surveys around the catchment.

"This year we will be continuing this work as well as encouraging communities in the Tamar catchment to help us clean up their local rivers and streams."

There are already some dates pencilled in the diary, including in Tavistock to clean along the Tavy, and in August, in collaboration with Pentillie Estate, a clean-up on the Tamar.

The charity would love to hear from anyone who would like to organise a clean-up near their river or stream via [plastics@wrt.org.uk](mailto:plastics@wrt.org.uk).

The trust is working with 17 other partners to deliver the EU Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution project. Full details, including upcoming events, can be found at <https://wrt.org.uk/project/preventing-plastic-pollution-ppp/>



# As English as apple pie

To commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower's history-changing voyage when the 'Pilgrim Fathers' sailed from England to start a new life in America, a new variety of apple has been aptly named, the 'Pilgrim 400'.

The idea for naming an apple variety came from a conversation between two friends, horticulturist, John Stirland and local Buckland Monachorum resident, Celia Steven in 2015. Celia is the great granddaughter of Henry Merryweather, the nurseryman who raised the original Bramley apple.

The original 'Pilgrim 400' tree was grown from a pip planted in about 1970 in a residential garden in Southwell, Nottinghamshire and, interestingly, one of the tree's near neighbours is the original Bramley apple.

A local nursery was needed to graft and raise the trees and Endsleigh Gardens Nursery in Milton Abbot was chosen.

As part of the Mayflower 400 commemorations in 2020, forty of these specially grown trees were made available for local schools and community groups to purchase. All 40 of the commemoration edition trees have now been allocated but the nursery has a few more which are available for purchase.

## Useful websites

The Mayflower story:

<https://www.mayflower400uk.org/>

The 'Pilgrim 400' apple:

[www.pilgrim400.co.uk](http://www.pilgrim400.co.uk)

National Fruit Collection:

<http://www.nationalfruitcollection.org.uk/>

## Have you an apple you want to identify?

There is more on <http://www.fruitid.com/>



Above: Nursery owner with the new 'Pilgrim 400' apple tree

## AONB testing new soil scanning technologies

**Tamar Valley AONB is looking at new soil scanning technologies as part of the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS).**

Scanning measures how much carbon the soil contains. Higher carbon levels show healthy soil and help in the fight against climate change. This information could then form the basis of future payments to farmers and landowners.

The AONB is one of 11 national test and trials projects for ELMS that will inform the UK government in setting its own agricultural policy over the next 5 years.

We have now completed the soil scanning and are working with Duchy College, participating farmers and South West Farm Consultants to assess the results.



## Friends staying in touch virtually

Friends of the Tamar Valley are having virtual talks monthly (on the first Friday of each month). Please see [www.tamarvalley.org.uk/events](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk/events) for further details.

During the COVID crisis we have endeavoured to keep in touch with members and will start real talks and summer outings once the guidance allows. If you would like to become a member or join one of our talks, please contact Jane Kiely, chairman on 01752 466287 or email [janekiely3@gmail.com](mailto:janekiely3@gmail.com) for a Zoom invite.



Above: Fabulous flax material



Vicky Putler from Thorody

Mill Lane Acres is Tamar Grow Local's farm start project for new entrants into horticulture. It currently has seven tenants all running their own start-up growing businesses. We caught up with Vicky Putler from Thorody to find out about her new flax growing business.

## Spotlight on Thorody

### Who makes up your team?

Me and my partner Theo do the physical work, but we have a lot of support and guidance from Tamar Grow Local, Roger Pipe from Millfields Trust, Sophie Glover from Makers HQ and Karen Pilkington and the team from the Village Hub in Stoke, Plymouth.

### Why did you set up a business growing flax?

We have a lot of experience of the linen market and know that there is a market for UK grown flax. We believe Britain could have its own flax industry again. So, when we discovered Tamar Grow Local's farm start initiative, it suddenly all became possible.

### How does this project fit with your main business?

For the last 10 years I have run a printed textile business, Thorody. We hand print our designs onto high quality linen for interiors. Flax for linen is no longer grown

commercially in the UK and so we buy most of our linen from Belgium. We will now be able supply ourselves with home grown linen and help to revive the flax industry.

### What are you hoping to achieve in year 1?

In the first year we are planning to grow and process the flax and weave it into linen. We want to get small groups from Plymouth to help and experience growing and harvesting flax. We also want to set up a unit for processing the flax.

### What is special about flax?

Flax is an amazing plant, here are just some of its special qualities:

- thrives in British soil
- requires no irrigation, only rainwater
- requires little or no pesticides
- is a carbon sink – in Europe it captures 250,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year

### What are your long-term plans?

We'd like to grow more flax and encourage others to grow it too. Our aim is very ambitious. We want to revive the flax industry and develop it into a clean, environmentally friendly, sustainable business. Processing, spinning and weaving flax will also provide jobs and boost the local economy.

Mill Lane Acres is based in Metherell. For further details, see [www.tamargrowlocal.org](http://www.tamargrowlocal.org). For information on Thorody, visit: <https://www.thorody.com/>





# TAMAR VALLEY

AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

## About Us

The Tamar Valley AONB Partnership helps to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, by offering advice and assistance to community groups, landowners, farmers, residents and visitors.

There are 38 AONBs in England and Wales. The Tamar Valley itself covers an area of 75 square miles (195 sq km) and is the youngest of all AONBs, designated in 1995.

## Tamar Valley AONB

Tamar Valley Centre, Cemetery Road,  
Drakewalls, Gunnislake,  
Cornwall PL18 9FE

t: 01822 835030

(limited monitoring during COVID-19 restrictions. Please contact the team via email in the first instance where possible).

e: [enquiries@tamarvalley.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@tamarvalley.org.uk)

w: [www.tamarvalley.org.uk](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk)

## Help us keep the AONB special

We hope you enjoy exploring the Tamar Valley. Please follow government guidance and the Countryside Code when you're out and about, to keep this living, working landscape special.

## Your Valley, Your News

If you have a story that you would like to be considered for the next issue of *The Valley* (Autumn/Winter 2021), or would like to discuss advertising opportunities, please contact Charlotte Dancer, Information & Communications Officer for the Tamar Valley AONB.

## Produced by

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While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy within this newsletter, no responsibility will be accepted for any omissions.

This is a 100% carbon-balanced publication. The carbon footprint of the entire manufacturing process of this newsletter, and the paper used has been offset through the World Land Trust – helping to protect forests which were at risk of destruction or degradation.



## **£3.2 million Tamara Landscape Partnership go-ahead thanks to National Lottery funding from page 3...**

Image © Tobi O'Neill/TON Drone Services

Through ten specific projects, at least 250 activity sessions will take place to improve mental and physical health & wellbeing; fifty hectares of woodland will be restored; ten hectares of trees will be planted and five new orchards will be created.

This exciting venture, that has been three years in the planning, has been made possible through a strong partnership between the Tamar Valley AONB and 19 organisations. Key funders are the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Environment Agency, Historic England, the AONB itself and the Woodland Trust.

Further details on the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme projects were shared at the recent online Tamar Valley AONB Annual Forum, where the Scheme was officially launched (19th March).

You can follow the progress with the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme on social media (@TVAONB Facebook and Twitter, [tamar\\_valley\\_aonb](https://www.instagram.com/tamar_valley_aonb) Instagram), email the Tamara team at [tamara@tamarvalley.org.uk](mailto:tamara@tamarvalley.org.uk) or visit [tamaralandscapepartnership.org.uk](http://tamaralandscapepartnership.org.uk)



*Plymouth Community Homes is delighted to be involved in the Tamara partnership. We welcome the opportunities for our residents to access apprenticeships, training and learning activities that this project will deliver. The prospect of offering new careers in the beautiful Tamar Valley is exciting and uplifting*

**Helen Ryan, Head of Communities at Plymouth Community Homes**



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**Landscapes for life** .org.uk

**TAMAR VALLEY**  
One of the  
AONB Family