

Spring events 2015

Grab your walking boots, rucksack and flask of sugary tea as the Quantock Hills AONB Service launches its Events Programme for 2015. The new programme lists events through the year, where you can join Quantock Hills AONB Rangers and specialists, who will take you on a range of 'wild' experiences. From bluebell bimbles, to learning how to light fires in the Wild Skills day, to identifying the differing calls of owls local in the Quantocks, to wandering through a wildflower meadow. Come the Easter holidays Ranger Rebekah West will be leading a Wild Skills day, where you can learn how to light a fire, track animals and make simple tools and instruments such as an 'elder whistle'. Lunch will be cooked over an open fire, and the day wouldn't be complete without toasting marshmallows on a stick! Quantock AONB Manager Chris Edwards says: "These events are about experiencing the very best of the Quantock Hills, from the iconic deer rut in the autumn to the carpet of bluebells in the spring. It's about enjoying the very best that this nationally important landscape has to offer."

Quantock Hills
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Thursday 9th April - Wild Skills, hone your bushcraft skills and spend the day learning how to track animals whilst exploring the woods with the Quantock Rangers. Lunch will be cooked over a fire and there may even be the odd marshmallow (if you're lucky!) £10pp



Sunday 26th April - Bluebell Bimble, join Quantock Ranger, Rebekah West and walk through the iridescent violet blue carpet of bluebells at Cothelstone Hill, while she explains some of the history of the Hill and why it is so special to the Quantocks. £5pp



Booking essential for all Quantock Hills AONB events at
www.quantockhills.com/events/view

Keep your dog under close control this Spring

Nothing is more evocative of spring than seeing new lambs by their mothers out in the Quantock countryside. But please remember that it is at this time of year when sheep and lambs are at their most vulnerable. Quantock Rangers, local farmers and the Police would like to highlight the problems that some dogs can cause to livestock on the hills. From 1st March – 31st July dog owners are required by law to keep their dogs on a lead when being walked across Open Access land. In all other areas of the countryside dogs should be kept under close control. It's not just the physical attacks that cause harm but simply allowing a dog to chase sheep may cause ewes to abort or become injured.

Rebekah West, Quantock Hills AONB Ranger said: "We'd like to take this opportunity to remind all dog owners to please keep their dogs on leads when walking close to lambs or sheep. I also have to be extra careful with my dog Moss - being a lurcher there is nothing he likes more than to run, but across the common, he is always on a lead, and will only be let off when I am confident it won't be at the detriment of wildlife or livestock. Even if lambs are not present in a flock, the ewes may well be in lamb and a dog chasing them could cause them to abort"

"There have been many times when Quantock Rangers have had to deal with the aftermath of dog attacks on sheep and in all cases I believe they could have been easily avoided - it's never easy visiting a farmer to tell them that their livestock has been injured or killed".

Between 1st March and 31st July, keeping your dog on a lead on Open Access Land is also to protect ground nesting birds, as dogs run about in the undergrowth, they flush birds such as Nightjars and Skylarks off their nests and may cause them to abandon them.

If your dog does kill or cause harm to livestock, you can be liable for a significant fine and for the value of the livestock harmed - your pet may also be dispatched, the cost of which will also have to be borne by you. Moreover, if your dog is actually seen in action harassing livestock it could be shot on sight.

If you actually witness an attack in progress, call **999** otherwise any incidents witnessed should be reported to the Police on **101** or directly to the Quantock Hills AONB Office on **01823 451884**.

