

NEWS RELEASE

As old as the hills; Cothelstone Hill's past gets brought to life

A weekend of activity is planned on the 20th and 21st June, to learn more about Cothelstone Hill's fascinating archaeological past, funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Sharing Heritage Programme. Students from Bridgwater College will be working with experts from the South West Heritage Trust on a dig to uncover the ancient secrets of this beautiful hilltop in the Quantocks. The dig will be open to visitors to talk to the experts, and find out more about what is being uncovered. There will also be events happening all weekend, including wildlife walks, wild skills events and heritage tours. For more information or to book onto an event follow this link: www.quantockhills.com/events/view

The aim of the archaeological work is to better understand the nature of the features on the hilltop, and to find a place to plant a replacement clump of trees, that will eventually replace the iconic Seven Sisters trees when they finally fall. There is so much archaeology on Cothelstone Hill that it is important to plant the trees where ancient underground archaeology will not be compromised by the roots of the new trees as they grow. This exciting project at Cothelstone Hill, led by the Quantock Hills AONB Service, has been given £5,400 to expand our knowledge of the historic heritage of the hill and run events to allow local communities to explore the area.

The Quantock Hills AONB Service works with partners to conserve and enhance the landscape of the Quantock Hills, which was designated England's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Cothelstone Hill Heritage Project is a partnership project with South West Heritage Trust and Bridgwater College that will improve the condition of a scheduled monument by slowly removing a clump of trees, where the roots of which are damaging the features underground, over the next few years.

Bob Croft, South West Heritage Trust said: "Cothelstone Hill has a wealth of heritage features and it is really exciting to be involved in a project which can offer local people the opportunity to learn more about this special hill."

Chris Webster, of Bridgwater College, said: "It's great for our students to be involved in a project in such wonderful location. It presents opportunities for our students not only to undertake archaeological investigations but to also engage with the local community and users of the hill."

Nerys Watts, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: "Sharing Heritage is a wonderful opportunity for communities to delve into their local heritage and we are delighted to be able to offer this grant so that Cothelstone Hill Heritage Project can embark on a real journey of discovery. Heritage means such different things to different people, and HLF's funding offers a wealth of opportunities for groups to explore and celebrate what's important to them in their area."