

Quantock Hills AONB celebrates 60th anniversary at Halsway Manor

The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, with a week-long series of events that showcase some of the best ways to experience the Quantocks at Halsway Manor, National Centre for Folk Arts.

Designated in 1956, and protected in law as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for the exceptional quality of its wide open heathland hilltops, its atmospheric ancient oak combes, its rugged Jurassic coastline, abundant wildlife and rich archaeology, the Quantock Hills is one of the finest landscapes in the country.

In order to celebrate 60 years of protected status, the Quantock Hills AONB Service is working in partnership with Halsway Manor, National Centre for Folk Arts and the South West Heritage Trust, and supported by Friends of Quantock to put on a week long programme of events, walks and talks that celebrates all things Quantock.

The **Quantock Experience Week**, running from Monday 27th June – Friday 1st July, will include experiences unique to the Quantock Hills and include wildlife walks, beer tasting, live music, green woodworking, ceilidhs and song walks. Talks by specialists in the area, such as Professor Peter Haggett, Emeritus Professor in Urban and Regional Geography at Bristol University, Tom Mayberry, CEO of South West Heritage Trust, Archaeologist Hazel Riley and Geologist Dr. Andy King. Wildlife walks will be led by the Quantock Hills Rangers and cover bats, deer, bushcraft and plant identification. There will be discussions about landscape character, live archaeological digs and lots more.

You can book on for the whole residential week, or just a day at a time, or even book one event at a time. You can find out more about this week of festivities and book in the "What's On" pages at www.halswaymanor.org.uk The cost of these activities varies according to days/dates and residential status, prices start from £20 for the Quantock landscape day (including lunch).

To find out about other 60th celebrations including a children's poster competition, and a fundraiser walk with the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme also celebrating their 60th anniversary - go to www.quantockhills.com

Designated in 1956, alongside the Gower Peninsular and the Llyn Peninsular in Wales, The Quantock Hills became the first AONB to be designated in England. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are some of the most beautiful and cherished landscapes in Britain. There are now 46 AONBs in Britain, 33 in England, four in Wales, one straddling the English/Welsh border and eight in Northern Ireland - they cover 18% of our countryside.