

Project Update 13: Autumn 2013

Summer is now a distant memory but what a great year it's been! With the south west experiencing dry and sunny weather throughout the last few months, people have been able to make the most of the beautiful countryside that the region has to offer. Like all outdoor activities, the success of Countryside Mobility is very dependant on the weather and 2013 has been a bumper year for the scheme with more people than ever becoming members, and enjoying the benefits of the growing Trampler and Wheelyboat hire network.

This year Trampler all-terrain mobility scooters have become available for hire at new countryside locations including Moors Valley Country Park, Dorset; National Trust Parke Estate (Devon); National Trust Arlington Court (Devon) and St Michael's Mount (Cornwall). This autumn National Trust Lydford Gorge (Devon) and the Axe Estuary



Rosamund Osbourn
at Arlington Court

Wetlands Centre (Devon) are also due to become partners. For 2014 we already have a healthy list of new partner sites ready to be involved offering even more variety of accessible places to visit.

For Rosamund Osbourn from Combe Martin in Devon, the Arlington Court Trampler has opened up new possibilities. "Twelve months ago I visited Arlington Court with my husband, a keen walker, and used my own, lightweight, mobility scooter since a lung condition prevented me from walking very far. Sadly, my own scooter was unable to cope with the rough tracks and steep gradients. As a Countryside Mobility member, I was delighted to find that this Spring the National Trust at Arlington had acquired a Trampler, a more powerful, larger wheeled and versatile member of the scooter family. This enabled me to ride beside my husband throughout the park, to the distant lake and up and down the winding tracks. It was the next best thing to being able to do the walk yourself and gave a wonderful sense of freedom and independence. The Trampler is secure, easy to drive and most comfortable to use. I recommend it to any disabled person with a hint of adventure and a desire to get out into the real countryside."

With more than 30 countryside sites now involved in the partnership, the South West continues to stand out as one of the best accessible destinations in the UK (possibly the world?), thanks to all the Countryside Mobility partner sites involved in the scheme and to everyone who has used the equipment and supported us!

Countryside Mobility Wheelyboats...

Two new Wheelyboats have been launched this year in partnership with the Wheelyboat Trust. In May Wareham Boat Hire joined the scheme and in August around 50 people helped celebrate our latest Wheelyboat launched at Maunsel Lock Canal Centre on the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal in Somerset.



Maunsel Lock Canal Centre Wheelboat

The Wheelyboat Trust is a registered charity dedicated to providing disabled people with the opportunity and freedom to enjoy waters large and small all over the UK. The charity was established in 1985 and has since launched over 150 boats. For wheelchair users the boats are simple to board via the roll-on, roll-off bow ramp and the level deck provides access to every corner of the boat including the helm. For more information visit: www.wheelyboats.org

Countryside Mobility in the news...



BBC filming at Siblyback Lake

In August Esther McVey, the government Minister for Disabled People, highlighted the need to improve accessibility of the coast and countryside to benefit from the 'purple pound'. As almost 20% of the UK population is disabled (11.5 million), councils were urged to make tourist hotspots accessible to everyone. As a result the Department for Work and Pensions issued a press release highlighting Countryside Mobility.

Esther McVey said: "As well as the importance of equal access, it makes good business sense to ensure local areas of beauty and interest can attract as many people as possible. Often a small change can make a big difference to disability access and so we'd encourage working in partnership with disabled people and their organisations, as they know what works best in their local areas on the ground. There are already successful schemes in place. Disability Action Alliance member Living Options Devon, operates the Countryside Mobility scheme which aims to improve access to the countryside for people with limited mobility who live in or visit the south-west region."

As a result, Countryside Mobility was featured on BBC1's Breakfast News, BBC Spotlight News and in national newspapers. This fantastic media coverage has helped raise the scheme's profile and we'd like to thank Graham Pitt (pictured) for taking part.

New Tramper sites...

Details of all CMSW partner sites can be found on our website (we can also post information) and we are in negotiations with many new sites for 2014 and beyond.

St Michael's Mount, Cornwall



A Tramper is now available to at the historic island of St Michael's Mount (near Penzance). During high tide periods, the Tramper can only be used on the island and so any visitors wishing to use it must be able to make their own way across to the island. At high tide, the island can only be accessed by boat or by amphibious vehicle both of which can be accessed via steep steps. At low tide it may be possible to take the Tramper across the causeway, subject to weather conditions. The Tramper was

National Trust Arlington Court, Devon

Arlington Court and the National Carriage Museum (near Barnstaple) joined the scheme this year and the Tramper is proving popular. The Regency house contains treasures for all tastes, from model ships to shells, all collected by the Chichester family. The 19th-century picturesque garden is a perfect place to explore. The tranquil estate, abundant with wildlife, includes an ancient heronry and is perfect to explore with the Tramper.



Moors Valley Country Park, Dorset



2 Trampers are now available to hire at Moors Valley Country Park (near Ringwood). Explore the miles of well signed paths in the peaceful forest, relax with some fishing or a picnic by the lake, experience a ride on an authentic narrow-gauge steam train, or even take part in more adventurous activities like 'Go Ape' on a high wire forest adventure swinging through the treetops. Afterwards enjoy refreshments in the restaurant. One of the Moors Valley Trampers was kindly funded by the Nineveh Trust.

Axe Estuary Wetlands Centre, Devon...new site coming soon!



Situated near Seaton, Devon the Axe Estuary Wetlands is a wildlife and bird watchers paradise, near Seaton. The saline lagoon at Black Hole Marsh attracts a variety of wildfowl and waders including Oystercatchers, Dunlin, Black Tailed Godwit and Ringed Plover. East Devon District Council are currently making numerous improvements to the visitor facilities on the site including new accessible toilets. In 2014 a new cycle route will link nearby reserves together extending the Tramper routes available

considerably. The Tramper was generously funded by the Nineveh Trust.

Hestercombe Gardens, Taunton...new site for 2014!

Hestercombe Gardens near Taunton will join the scheme in 2014. A Tramper will be available for visitors to explore some of the fifty acres of lakes, temples, cascades, tranquil woodland walks, formal terraces, vivid colours and fantastic views. Hestercombe is a unique combination of three centuries of garden design: Coplestone Warre Bampfylde's Georgian landscape garden, the Victorian terrace and shrubbery and the stunning Edwardian garden design by Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll. All have undergone acclaimed restoration works and today provide important examples of gardens in contrasting styles that continue to grow and develop. The award-winning visitor facilities include the warm and welcoming Stables Restaurant and Coffee Shop.



Lydford Gorge nr Okehampton, Devon...new site coming soon!



Hire a Tramper to explore part of this lush oak-wooded steep-sided river gorge (the deepest in the South West), on the edge of Dartmoor near Tavistock. The Tramper can be used to descend the steep (but safe!) path to the bottom of the gorge to the magical 30-metre-high Whitelady Waterfall. Throughout the seasons there is also an abundance of wildlife and plants to see, from woodland birds to wild garlic in the spring and fungi in the autumn.

Full details of all sites can be found at www.countrysidemobility.org

Solar Powered Tramper...



In 2013, Wimbleball Lake's Tramper became powered by the sun thanks to a Somerset company's new product!

Solar Systems, a specialist in solar technologies, unveiled their new 'PluginSolarpanels' which aim to provide a solution for homeowners or businesses who want to use solar technology and make savings on their energy bills.

The South West Lakes Trust has installed the product at Wimbleball Lake to offset the electricity consumption of its Tramper all-terrain mobility vehicle which is supplied by Countryside Mobility South West - as far as we know it's the first Tramper to be completely carbon neutral!

To find out more about PluginSolarpanels visit www.pluginSolarpanels.co.uk

Brotherwood Automobility...

During 2013 Countryside Mobility was supported by Brotherwood Mobility who very generously leased us a specially adapted vehicle at a heavily discounted rate.

The VW Caddy Maxi allowed us to transport our demonstration Tramper all over the South West and still seat 5 passengers. We very reluctantly returned the vehicle in October but hope to lease a similar vehicle again next year. For details of the range of new and used Brotherwood Automobility adapted vehicles available visit: www.brotherwood.com



Find us on Twitter and Facebook

Our newsletters are published every six months but you can also keep up to date with Countryside Mobility news, details of events and notifications of new sites by becoming a Facebook friend or by following us on Twitter:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CountrysideMobility

Twitter: @CMSouthWest



National Trust Penrose Estate...



Access around the National Trusts Penrose Estate near Helston, Cornwall is to be improved as part of a £150,000 pathways scheme.

The project will create new routes, improve surfacing on existing routes and formally designate over 12km of permissive routes as bridleways – improving access for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, local mobility scooter users including visitors using the CMSW Trampler based there.

Practical improvements will include a new easy access link from Porthleven to the coast path to Loe Bar, improvement to the surfacing along the main access route from Helston and creating a boardwalk and new circular link routes. Mike Hardy, head ranger for the National Trust at Penrose, said: “At Penrose we have worked closely with and listened to groups who tell us what a great place Penrose is to visit, and their views have really shaped the improvements. The support from individuals and community groups for the grant has been amazing, and our thanks go out to both them and the Rural Development Programme for England who are funding 75 per cent of the £150,000 project.”

Enid Johns, a Helston resident and campaigner for disabled access, said: “Over the past five years the National Trust has been improving the route from the amenities area towards the Helston Lodge, making it safe for the disabled and elderly. The improvements will help more people to visit and enjoy Loe Pool and Penrose”.

Send us your photos!

Have you taken any photos whilst out and about on Trampers or Wheelyboats? If so, we would love to see them and with your permission we would like to use them on our website and for other promotional work. Please email photos to:

info@countrysidemobility.org or post them on our Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/CountrysideMobility>

Countryside Mobility is a Living Options Devon (registered charity:1102489) project supported by the Big Lottery (through Natural England’s ‘Access to Nature’ grant scheme) that works to improve access to the countryside for people with limited mobility living in and visiting the South West.

This newsletter is available in alternative formats on request.

For more information visit our website www.countrysidemobility.org or contact us: **Tel:** 01392 459222 **Email:** info@countrysidemobility.org

