

Project Update 15: Autumn 2014

Bumper Year for Countryside Mobility!

2014 has been a busy year for Countryside Mobility with new hire sites becoming involved, record numbers of people benefiting from the service, and success in winning a number of tourism awards! The scheme, aimed at helping people with limited mobility to explore and enjoy outdoor visitor attractions was established in 2010 by the charity Living Options Devon (LOD), and now supports well over 30 south west visitor attractions through the innovative all-terrain 'Tramper' scooter hire service.



In January, Countryside Mobility staff and volunteers attended the South West Tourism Excellence Awards in Plymouth and received the Bronze Award in the 'Access for All' category of the 2013/14 awards. This was followed by the national Visit England Awards for Excellence in May to receive the Highly Commended Award in the 'Access for All' category. To top off the year the scheme won a Gold Award in the 'Access and Inclusivity' category of the Visit Devon 2014 Tourism Awards in November.

James Maben, Countryside Mobility Project Manager said: "2014 has been a great year for Countryside Mobility with record numbers of people benefiting from the service and the number of partner sites steadily growing. Winning these prestigious awards is the icing on the cake for us and is a real stamp of approval from the tourism industry. We couldn't run the scheme without support from all the different organisations that work with us and hire out our Trampers so a BIG "thanks" goes to all our partners and to everyone who has used the scheme equipment and supported us."



Countryside Mobility team at Visit England Awards

Diana Crump, Living Options Devon's Chief Executive was thrilled with the news commenting: "It is an honour that Countryside Mobility has won awards this year and Living Options Devon feels extremely proud to host such an innovative and important regional access for all project. Countryside Mobility makes a real difference to disabled visitors and locals across the South West, and we are proud that more and more attractions are working with us to ensure that the region is accessible for all. Our huge thanks go to all our partners whose enthusiasm and commitment have been key to the success of this scheme."



New Trampler sites...

A number of new Trampler scooter hire sites joined the scheme in 2014 and some exciting new locations have already been confirmed for 2015! Thanks to funding from the Wolfson Foundation, Countryside Mobility has been able to buy 5 more Trampler scooters for new sites. However, we need to raise more money to buy more scooters to expand the scheme so if you would like to help us with fundraising then please get in touch! Full details of all Trampler and Wheelyboat hire sites are listed on our website (or we can post information if required).

Axe Estuary Wetlands, Seaton, Devon...



Situated near Seaton, Devon the Axe Estuary Wetlands is a wildlife and bird watchers paradise.. The saline lagoon at Black Hole Marsh attracts a variety of wildfowl and waders including Dunlin, Oystercatchers, Black Tailed Godwit and Ringed Plover. East Devon District Council have made numerous improvements to the visitor facilities including new accessible toilets. In 2015 a new cycle route will link nearby reserves together extending the Trampler routes available considerably. This Trampler was generously funded by the Nineveh Trust.

Lydford Gorge, Lydford Devon...

The South West's deepest gorge, The National Trust's Lydford Gorge, began hiring a Trampler scooter in 2014 and Countryside Mobility member Rachael Martyn was the first person to make use of the scooter. Rachael said:

“Using the scooter was absolutely brilliant! Being able to get right down to the bottom of Lydford Gorge with my family and friends is such a wonderful thing - and when you get to the bottom, what a spectacular sight the White Lady waterfall is! I find it difficult to walk and the scheme allows me to really enjoy and appreciate the natural environment, the smells, the beautiful wild flowers and the wonderful countryside. I can't believe I would have missed out on all of this without Countryside Mobility and am so grateful for the freedom that the scheme has given me.”

The Lydford Gorge Trampler is available between March and October each year.



New Tramper sites...

Dartington Hall Gardens, Totnes Devon...

Thanks to funding from the Friends of Dartington and the Nineveh Trust, a Tramper is now available for hire at Dartington Hall. For Roger Pink from Dartington, the scooter has been a big help: "The scheme has made me much more adventurous around Dartington Gardens than I would have been. It's given both me and my wife Mary a new lease of life, as we can go for a walk together again. Joining Countryside Mobility was very simple and the scooter was really easy to use".



Glen Lyn Gorge Devon...



Glen Lyn Gorge is a dramatic gorge near the mouth of the River Lyn near Lynmouth on Exmoor. A number of steep paths lead to waterfalls and viewing areas with great views into the gorge, across Lynmouth and over to the Welsh coast. The Tramper can be used on two paths. The first gives access alongside the river to 'Moses Pool' and the second leads upwards through woodland to a viewing area at the top of the gorge.

Avon Heath, Dorset

Avon Heath is great for families, is very accessible for all abilities and interests and has an excellent visitor centre and cafe. The miles of tracks offer Tramper users an opportunity to explore some of Dorset's internationally important heathland and its rare wildlife. The park is dominated by lowland and wet heath, acid grassland and heather, which is broken only by clumps of birch and pine. Some of the rarer species to look out for are Sand Lizards and Smooth Snakes, Dartford Warblers, Woodlarks and Silver-studded Blue butterfly.



National Trust Trelissick, Cornwall...new site coming soon!



National Trust Trelissick near Truro in Cornwall is set to join Countryside Mobility in 2015. On its own peninsula with ever-changing views of the estuary of the River Fal, Trelissick has one of the most amazing natural settings in the country. There are more than 12 hectares (30 acres) of elevated garden to explore, with twisting paths that lead through significant collections of hydrangeas, rhododendrons and year-round woodland plants.

Hestercombe Gardens, Taunton...new site coming soon!

Hestercombe Gardens near Taunton will join the scheme in 2015. A Trampler 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 garden design including a Georgian landscape garden, the Victorian terrace and the stunning Edwardian garden. All have undergone acclaimed restoration works and today provide important examples.



National Trust Lanhydrock, Cornwall...new site coming soon!



National Trust Lanhydrock near Bodmin will join the scheme in 2015. A Trampler will be available for visitors to explore the formal gardens and miles of footpaths around the wider country estate and parkland including ancient woodlands, meadows and tranquil riverside paths. Open everyday 10am-4pm.

National Trust Golden Cap Estate, Dorset ...new site coming soon!

The Golden Cap estate, a hidden gem near Morecombelake in Dorset, is set to start hiring a Trampler in spring 2015. The Trampler will give access to circular routes across rolling farmland with far reaching coastal views and well as the woodlands of Langdon Hill Wood. Rich in wildlife, they are home to large numbers of 'blue' butterfly in summer and many different fungi in autumn.



Full details of all sites can be found at www.countryside-mobility.org

Volunteering for Countryside Mobility...

Countryside Mobility is fortunate to have the support of volunteers who help behind the scenes to keep the project running smoothly. Here's a little introduction to who they are and what they do:



Amanda: "I have been volunteering for Living Options Devon and Countryside Mobility for a little over a year and a half, and love every minute of it. I mainly help out with the admin side of things as I am no longer very mobile. Before coming here I always thought that volunteering was for the benefit of the charity, but I couldn't of been more wrong - I get so much out of it, from being with the great members of staff and the other volunteers to being involved with the amazing work they do. I would highly recommend it to anyone that has a few hours to spare".

Terry: "After retiring from the NHS after 43 years' service, I found myself feeling a bit like a ship adrift in the ocean without a rudder. Eventually, through a family contact, I was introduced to Living Options Devon who run Countryside Mobility. As a 'service user' I have enjoyed being able to use the rugged all-terrain mobility scooters and meet others who use this valuable service. Volunteering has helped me to get involved and contribute to the record management system. It is satisfying to know that what I am doing contributes, if even in a small way, to the opportunities available to people who experience some degree of disability who perhaps would not otherwise be able to get out and enjoy our countryside. I get a great deal of personal satisfaction by being able to fill my time with a very worthwhile engagement and contact with other disabled people"



Clare: "I got involved with Living Options Devon as a disabled persons representative for Okehampton in 1990, and have been a volunteer for a number of years. I first starting helping Countryside Mobility in 2013 and now help out at least once a month with sending out Annual Members renewal reminders and other membership information. I enjoy volunteering with Countryside Mobility as I have a disability and know what a big difference it makes to people like me".

If you have some time to spare to help Countryside Mobility then please get in touch!



20 years of the National Lottery...

In the summer Countryside Mobility was asked to take part in a photo shoot as part of the 20th anniversary celebrations of the National Lottery. Countryside Mobility was funded by the Lottery between 2010 and 2014 and the scheme was selected alongside many other projects to take part. Tramper member Pauline attended the shoot in London at the iconic Holborn Studios, and a Tramper was kindly brought to the studios by David one of the Tramper engineers. The 'Where's Wally' style photo featured all of the different Lottery funded projects selected - each project was photographed separately and then the images were stitched together. **The finished image is below - see how long it takes you to spot Pauline on a Tramper!**



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Countryside Mobility is a Living Options Devon (registered charity:1102489) project 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 ww.countrysidemobility.org or contact us:
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