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# 'Uncovering Ham Hill's Past for its Future'

**Ham Hill Heritage Fund Project Newsletter March 2026**

**Join us for a week of discovery as we celebrate the  
National Lottery Heritage Fund project**



We're thrilled to announce a week of events at Ham Hill to celebrate the National Lottery Heritage Fund project '*Uncovering Ham Hill's past for its future*'. Running from Saturday 11 April to Saturday 18 April, the events programme will offer a rich mix of activities for all ages, showcasing the hill's remarkable heritage, wildlife, and geology.

Festivities begin at 10am on Saturday 11 April at the Visitor Centre, Ham Hill, Stoke sub Hamdon (TA14 6RW), where visitors can enjoy a wide range of themed events throughout the week.

As part of the celebrations, the official grand opening of the brand new Ham Hill Visitor Centre will take place from 11am on Thursday 16 April. The new Visitor Centre offers an exciting space for learning, engagement, and celebration of the natural and cultural heritage of one of Somerset's most iconic landscapes.

Across the week, there will be plenty of opportunities for visitors to explore, learn, and take part in activities that celebrate everything that makes Ham Hill special. Some of the things visitors can look forward to are:

- Axe throwing
- Guided walks
- Historical re-enactments
- Birds of prey
- Craft and nature activities
- Drystone walling demonstration
- Family activities, and more

Everyone is welcome to come along, explore, and get involved.

All events and activities are free, as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project, but some activities, such as guided walks, need to be booked in advance. For more information visit [discoverwildsomerset.digitickets.co.uk/tickets](https://discoverwildsomerset.digitickets.co.uk/tickets) or check out the [Ham Hill Country Park Facebook page](#).

## New signage and info panels installed across the hill



The installation of the new signage at Ham Hill marks an exciting step forward in enhancing the experience for all who visit this much-loved site. Clear, accessible, and thoughtfully positioned signs help everyone - from first-time visitors to long-time locals they can now navigate the landscape with confidence. Waymarked trails will help visitors explore Ham Hill to discover new areas. By improving signage, we're making sure Ham Hill remains safe, welcoming, and easy to explore for people of all ages and abilities. We understand that any change to a historic or natural setting can prompt questions. While the new signage does have a more contemporary look, it was designed with care to balance practicality with sensitivity to the surroundings. The materials and style were chosen to be durable, unobtrusive, and able to withstand the elements without constant replacement. Their modernity isn't about altering the character of Ham Hill — it's about protecting it, reducing visual clutter over time, and helping visitors enjoy the site more fully. The aim is always to support the landscape, not compete with it.

## **New outdoor seating is on the way!**



We're also pleased to share that brand-new outdoor wooden seating for the Visitor Centre has arrived today (Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April), just in time for our big week of events! These new picnic benches are designed with a rustic feel and include accessible versions so that everyone can relax, socialise, and enjoy the outdoor space comfortably. We're excited to add these improvements to our outdoor area and hope they'll make spending time outside even more welcoming for all.

## **The Hollow takes root as a creative, welcoming learning space**



The new outdoor classroom now officially named The Hollow is proving popular, and has already hosted a wide range of activities. This space was funded through the Friends of Ham Hill. Recent events include charcoal making and fire-lighting sessions, as well as school visits where pupils enjoyed den building and flint-and-steel fire lighting.

Yeovil for Families have also been making great use of The Hollow, visiting every Tuesday afternoon to create a natural tunnel through the dogwood on the bank beside the site. In addition, our Wednesday volunteers have constructed a dead hedge to form a natural screen, helping to create a more defined and sheltered learning area.

This area will not be open to the public and is for ranger-led activities only.



## Five-Star stays for six-Legged guests at Ham Hill

Every Monday over the past five weeks, work experience students from Yeovil College have done an amazing job constructing two Bug Hotels near the Visitor Centre with the help of our Ranger Tessa. This involved using old wooden pallets and timber and natural material like twigs, moss and stones to create habitat for insects.



## Stonework with a View: New Drystone feature coming soon



Ranger Geoff and his brilliant volunteers are building a new drystone wall with built-in stone seating that borders the car park and the seating area outside the Visitor Centre. Work has begun, and the project will be in full swing during the Easter holidays, starting week commencing 12 April.

Visitors will have the chance to watch the craftsmanship in action, learn about this ancient technique, and chat with our resident expert Geoff along with his fantastic team of drystone-walling volunteers. It's a great opportunity to see traditional skills up close and discover how these beautiful, durable structures are created.

## Volunteer team helps the Visitor Centre flourish

The Visitor Centre is quickly becoming a popular stop for both locals and visitors from further afield. Adam, our Visitor Services Manager, reports encouraging visitor numbers, and the team has been delighted by the many positive comments received.

We're also thrilled to have a growing volunteer team - now at 27. Their enthusiasm, knowledge and friendly welcome help make every visit to Ham Hill memorable. Their support brings the centre to life and enhances the experience for everyone who visits.

### We asked Visitor Centre volunteer Paull why he volunteers:



“When I first became a councillor at South Somerset District Council in 2003, my very first planning meeting was about building what is now the ranger centre at Ham Hill. Now, many years later I'm retired and back on the hill as a volunteer in the new Visitor Centre. It feels like a real full-circle moment, and when I heard they were looking for volunteers, I knew I had to be part of it. It's wonderful here and I get so much joy and satisfaction meeting and helping our visitors.”

## Ham Hill Vehicles sporting National Lottery Heritage stamp

You may have spotted that our Ham Hill vehicles are now proudly sporting National Lottery Heritage Fund livery - a cheerful reminder of the support powering the 'Uncovering Ham Hill's past for its future' project, thanks to National Lottery players.



The Heritage Fun vehicle branding is our way of saying a big thank you to the Heritage Fund and showcasing the partnership that's helping secure Ham Hill's future. So, if you spot our Rangers out and about in the newly branded vehicles, give them a wave - it's a sign of more exciting things happening across the hill!

## Visitors asked to tread carefully to protect ground nesting skylarks



The skylarks are back at Ham Hill, and their beautiful song is filling the flat fields once again - a sure sign that spring is on the way.

Skylarks are ground-nesting birds, which means their nests are hidden in the long grass and can be easily disturbed. Even one loose dog or someone wandering off-path can accidentally destroy a nest or cause parents to abandon their chicks.

To help give these endangered birds the best chance to thrive, the rangers have installed signage to ask visitors to:

- Keep dogs on a lead
- Stick to footpaths along the outer edges of fields.
- Avoid the long grass

These small, short-term actions in the breeding season, make a huge difference in helping skylarks breed safely and recover locally.

# Volunteer Highlights

## Practical volunteers

Our practical volunteers have been hard at work over the past weeks, helping to keep Ham Hill looking its best and ensuring our paths, habitats and visitor areas remain welcoming and well-maintained. Here's a snapshot of what they've achieved:

The team completed the clearing of the upper rampart on the Northern Spur for the year — a major task that helps protect this important historic feature. They also tackled invasive buddleia across the area, helping native plants and wildlife to thrive.

Volunteers have been busy improving access too, removing old fencing and clearing scrub along key pathways so new fencing can be installed safely.

Path restoration has also been a big focus. Volunteers have been laying stone, removing spoil and helping to repair sections of the path network to ensure our routes stay safe and enjoyable for walkers. They also transported cut timber from recent tree-felling work to the ranger compound — a job that takes both muscle and teamwork!

Finally, the team cut back scrub along several visitor paths, opening up routes and making sure they remain clear and accessible.



## Construction volunteers

This volunteer team carried out important site-wide maintenance, removing old and broken timbers from various areas. Clearing this material not only improves safety but also keeps the landscape looking natural and well cared-for.

They've also been busy removing outdated interpretation plinths across the site, making way for new, improved signage as part of our ongoing heritage and visitor-experience upgrades.

Meanwhile, work continues in Hedgecock Woods, where volunteers are steadily building new steps to improve access, reduce erosion and make woodland routes easier and more enjoyable for visitors.

**A huge thank you to all our volunteers — their dedication makes a real difference, and Ham Hill is better for all their hard work.**