

DESIGN

POSTBRIDGE VISITOR CENTRE

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK





DESIGN OVERVIEW

A state-of-the-art, fully accessible energy-efficient visitor centre, featuring the latest technology to bring history to life in amazing detail and giving visitors to the national park a unique and special experience.

“ This was an excellent and sensitively designed project, set in a spectacular landscape, constructed from traditional materials and detailing, to refresh and bring life back into the existing visitor centre. ”

CHRIS JAY
DESIGN DIRECTOR



PROJECT

POSTBRIDGE VISITOR CENTRE

The new visitor centre at Postbridge, which opened in August 2020, was built to share and celebrate Dartmoor's incredible Bronze Age heritage. One of the highlights is the story of the internationally significant Bronze Age finds at Whitehorse Hill.

Dartmoor is the most important area for Bronze Age archaeology in Western Europe, with more than 1,500 burial cairns and over 4,000 hut circles.

In 2011, a small stone-built coffin-like box was excavated at Whitehorse Hill and it is believed the remains inside were those of a high-born young woman. She was buried with personal items including a woven basket containing beads, a leather and textile band and a finely woven bracelet with tin studs.

The centre tells the story of who she was and how she lived, through her own eyes, and replicas of the items are on display alongside a handcrafted roundhouse.

Linking with the government's 25 Year Environment Plan, as well as the 2019 National Landscapes Review, this is the next step in Dartmoor National Park Authority's long-term plan to connect people with Dartmoor's fascinating history, heritage and habitats.

The authority secured £500,000 from the Rural Development Programme for England to fund the building works. This helped expand on the already improved offer at Postbridge, which was funded, in part, through the National Lottery Heritage Fund Landscape Partnership, Moor than meets the eye.

Incredibly, the modernisation project only needed an extra six weeks to complete despite work being significantly impacted by measures limiting the spread of the pandemic.



POSTBRIDGE VISITOR CENTRE INTERIOR

KEY BENEFITS

Double in size, the new visitor centre, which is visited by 58,000 people a year, features a single-storey addition, with a new reception area for visitor information, together with the exhibition spaces.

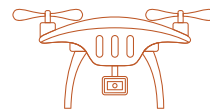
The building incorporates a mix of traditional and modern materials, such as steel framing, natural granite walls – sourced from a local quarry – zinc roofing, aluminium windows and Douglas Fir cladding, the timber of which was grown indigenously.

This design reflects the local vernacular of agricultural buildings found on the moor.

High-level windows provide natural daylight, keeping walls free for exhibition displays. These link seamlessly into the landscape helping people to confidently explore the surrounding area’s amazing cultural heritage.

The building can now accommodate events, activities and school visits; encouraging people to stay longer and visit local shops, cafes and pubs, which supports the local economy.

Despite the many challenges of working in the middle of Dartmoor through some extreme winter-weather conditions, the project was completed within budget and to a very high quality, thanks to the collective effort of all involved.



POSTBRIDGE VISITOR CENTRE INTERIOR



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