

A generous gift results in the 6000th bike donated to Exeter cycling charity

Exeter-based charity 'Ride On Cycling for All', is delighted to be gifted a Voodoo Mountain bike, making it the 6000th bike donated since the charity was formed. Located on Exeter Quay, 'Ride On' was established in 2011 by bike ability instructor, Martyn Laxton.

Working at a school in Teignmouth at the time, he was concerned that many of the pupils either didn't have bikes, or they were of very poor quality. Martyn persuaded some friends to donate bikes and to help do them up and it proved so successful that he felt it would be a great idea for a social enterprise.

Starting the charity in his garden shed, he quickly moved into a lock-up provided by Teignmouth Town Council, and in 2014 the charity relocated to its current workshop at Haven Banks. The kind benefactor of the 6000th bike was David Greensmith, former Commercial Manager of Exeter City Council who sadly suffered a stroke in October 2022 and retired through ill health. A keen motorcyclist, David was the founder of the World's first global motorbike ride in memory of those lost through the Pandemic, raising thousands for COVAX in 2021.

David explains: "I've been riding motorcycles since I was 17 and following my stroke was devastated when I had to give up my beloved motorbike, which was a limited-edition Café Racer. My mountain bike has been sitting unused in a neighbour's garage for the last year because I no longer have the strength in my left arm to ride it safely, so I thought it was time to donate it to someone who would benefit, and I was delighted to hand it over to Will Page who heads up this wonderful local charity."



Benefactor David Greensmith donates mountain bike to Will Page (Head of Charity) © Glen King

Many bikes around Exeter are found abandoned and these get sent to the Charity's workshop where

they have a band of around 30 volunteers and four professional mechanics. All the bikes get fully ser-

viced and the charity then sells them on with a full warranty and new cables. The ones that can't be saved are

stripped back for parts and sometimes a bike may be made up of up to four different bicycles.

Once a week the charity runs a scheme called 'Bring your own bike', where people come into the workshop and can use all the tools and have access to the mechanics and their extensive knowledge and expertise whilst working in a safe environment.

Will Page explains: "Volunteers range from younger people to those who are retired and want to offer their skills to give back to the community. They are crucial for us because if we were looking to refurbish all the bikes ourselves, we couldn't afford the labour costs – so they are a major part of our success. My background is teaching and passionate about education and a firm believer that people work in different ways, so we also work with young people on a programme called 'Schools in Exeter', supported by Exeter City Council through their Live & Move project. We have a cargo bike and mobile workshop helping young people who are struggling in main school education to spend time with our mechanics who help and guide them on fixing their own bikes and it's such a joy to see their eyes light up."

He concludes: "People understand that as a charity, we care, and that the newly renovated bikes mean they are affordable to a wider audience. People buy bikes as their main way of transport to get around the city, particularly college and university students, as well as people riding to work. This means we are helping to reduce the number of car journeys being made around Exeter and our vision is for a cleaner, healthier, and active Exeter."

Lustleigh bell ringers recognised for their contribution to community heritage

Robert Brown, Tower Captain of the Lustleigh bell ringers, accepted an award on behalf of his team for their contribution to preserving a much-cherished part of the community's heritage which stretches back several hundred years. The award was presented recently at the Lustleigh Society's AGM. Along with assistant, Ann Cotton, and a regular team of bell ringers, Robert has ensured that the bells are rung not only for church services but also to mark many commemorations, most notably the 100th anniversaries of Lustleigh's World War One fallen. They have also rang out to mark special occasions connected with the Royal Family.

The current set of bells is 100 years old this

year. Cast by Gillet and Johnston of Croydon during their peak in 1923, the bells are considered amongst Devon's finest. The first bells had been installed in St. John the Baptist parish church sometime between the 15th and 16th centuries.

In awarding the Lustleigh Society's "Heritage Award 2023", chairman David McGahey said: "The sound of the bells of the Lustleigh parish church are an integral part of our heritage. There is a longstanding tradition of bell ringing in the village with the team being distinguished competitors in local bell ringing competitions in the past.

"The sound of church bells is slowly becom-



David McGahey and Captain of the Bellringers, Robert (Bob) Brown

ing lost in this country: many churches do not have active ringers or working bells. Lustleigh is extremely lucky that it still has an active bell ringing community."

The Lustleigh Society exists to research, care

for and promote the heritage of the parish of Lustleigh. It manages the Lustleigh Community Archive which contains records, maps, parish magazines, photographs and a rich variety of historic documents