

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

PO Box 70 Budleigh Salterton EX9 6WN
www.ova.org.uk

Spring Newsletter

Volume 36/2 ~ April 2015
Registered Charity No 278266 c Otter Valley Association 2015



Heritage Assets and reports on talks & activities, pages 4 to 9.

Summary annual report, pages 17 to 20

Cakes all the way at Mevagissey, page 10



Walks and Activities Diary, pages 11 to 16 and 21 to 25



Walks Reports, pages 26 to 34

A bench on Hawkerland Common - from David's birding friends, see page 35



(Interim) Editor's Jottings ~Haylor Lass

A SPRING Newsletter rightly packed with being out-and-about. The activities section has a long list of walks for you to enjoy – you don't have to go on all of them! There is also an interesting farm tour arranged – get your application in quickly (page 5/6).

Winter season evening talks have come to an end – interesting reports in this issue – and note one more important evening for the AGM, notice below. A summary report is contained in the pull-out centre pages: the full Trustees Report and Accounts will be available at the AGM and on the website.

Last time I promised you a colour cover and pictures – I'm very sorry it didn't happen due to a hiatus between me and the printers. I'm keeping my fingers crossed this time and, if we get it right, I hope you will appreciate it.

I greatly appreciate the help I have had in preparing this edition from Jacqui Baldwin, who is going to step fully into the role as editor for the July edition. Thanks to all of you who have contributed reports this time – I trust you will continue your literary efforts and will be kind to Jacqui by getting your copy accurate and in good time – it does help enormously. Deadline for the next edition is **Saturday 20th June** for the issue 'on the streets' from 12th July. (I'm planning to be well away from it all by then on a small Scottish island!).

Otter Valley Association

**The 36th Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.30pm
on Wednesday 13th May 2015 in the Village Hall, Otterton.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 14 May 2014
3. Matters arising
4. Annual Report including Trustees Report and Accounts
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Executive Committee Members
7. Appointment of Independent Examiner
8. Any Other Business
9. Date of next AGM

**The meeting will be followed by refreshments
and an informal picture quiz by Haylor Lass**

Old Devonshire Milestones

ON 8TH JANUARY, at Knowle Village Hall, 50 members and guests enjoyed a talk given by Tim Jenkinson, the Devonshire representative of the Milestone Society*. The society was formed in 2001 to identify, record, observe and interpret for the public benefit 'the milestones and waymarkers of the British Isles'. It is a registered charity.

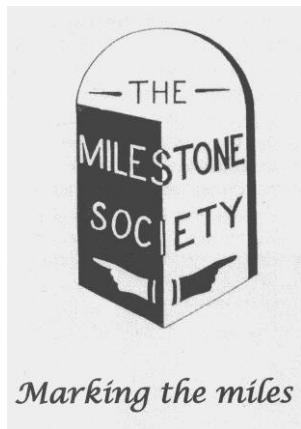
The first milestones on record were erected by the Romans during the period AD43-410. They marked every thousandth double step, being 1618 yards. The eventual British standard mile became 1760 yards. In 1555 an Act of Parliament made local parishes responsible for the state of the roadways. Despite this, water filled holes in the roads sometimes resulted in the death of both riders and horses, from drowning. Turnpike trusts were set up between 1706 and 1840 and a network of managed roads was established. Passage on these roads was chargeable and toll houses were built where the collection of dues took place. Although the one in Newton Poppleford is the oldest one in the county, the one on Shaldon Bridge was operating until 1947. Your writer can recall the dues being collected.

The milestones erected were usually of granite, although in Ashburton limestone was sometimes used. These were not as durable though. In Holsworthy and Bude some examples have been found in slate. An unusual wooden milestone (if that is not a contradiction of terms) is to be found at the Travellers Rest on the A30, however there is doubt about its age. Between Brent and Plymouth some cast iron milestones were erected; however of the 15, only 4 have survived, now classified as Grade 2 listed. Devonshire has the greatest network of roads in any county in the British Isles, some 8,000 miles along which an estimated 1,200 milestones were erected. Unfortunately only about 700 have been located and recorded. Many have been lost as a result of roadside working machinery and road improvement projects. Some of the stones recorded distances with great precision using the measures of miles, rods, pole and perch.

Tim illustrated his talk with numerous pictures and many amusing anecdotes which really brought his most interesting talk into the 21st century.

Bob Wiltshire

* *Milestone events, activities and pictures at www.milestonesociety.co.uk*



Guided Farm Tour

A guided tour with George Perrott, Farms Manager – Clinton Devon Estates on Monday 15th June 2015

We are privileged to have this unique opportunity of being taken around areas of Clinton Devon Estates by trailer, to visit some of their recent and topical projects. With commentary from George Perrott and his colleagues we will learn about their stewardship and approach to care of the farming environment. There will be opportunity for discussion.

The covered trailer will take up to 30 of us, and the evening tour will begin at 6.00pm, from Pophams Farm, Hawkerland Road, Colaton Raleigh EX10 0HT. There is plenty of space for parking at the farm. The tour will take about 2 hours, and the cost is £5 per person. The tour will go ahead rain or shine.

As there is limited space on this visit, applications for the tour will be opened randomly on the 15th May, 2015. Please complete the form below and return to Roger Saunders, together with a cheque payable to OVA and a stamped self-addressed envelope.

✂ -----

Guided Farm Tour from Popham's Farm, Colaton Raleigh 6.00pm Monday 15th June 2015

Please send metickets

Name(s)

Address

.....

Postcode

Tel: Email

I enclose a cheque for £.....(£5.00 per person) payable to the OVA
and a **Stamped Addressed Envelope** (reply address overleaf)

Heritage Postboxes

FOLLOWING ON from the piece on Budleigh Salterton postboxes in the Winter Newsletter I must add the rarity we have in Otterton. There are three boxes in the village and the Post Office have threatened to remove or close down one. You've guessed it – the rarity. The other two are in the wall of the Old Post Office and at the Kings Arms.

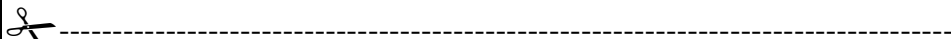
The rarity is on The Green. It is an ER VII. It was the first box to be installed in the village, in 1910, set into the wall of a cob barn next to No 17 The Green.

This was a listed building of the 17th. Century or earlier.

It was used as a store for the Mill and later a workshop for George Baker, carpenter, who lived at No.17. He is remembered as walking daily to Sidmouth to make coffins for an undertaker. The Bakers lived here to 1973 by which time the listed barn had been demolished and the postbox was re-sited on The Green.

It has been included on the local heritage list which, hopefully, will prompt the Post Office to change its mind.

Gerald Millington



Ticket Application for **Guided Farm Tour**

Roger Saunders

Roundhill

11 Knowle Road

Budleigh Salterton

EX9 6AS

Local Heritage Assets Listing Project

IN 2014 we embarked on a local heritage asset listing project, in partnership with East Devon District Council, Devon County Council's Historic Environment Team, and the Fairlynch Museum. Details of the project were presented to all five Town and Parish Councils, and most were supportive. Following English Heritage good practice guidance, public nominations were sought during Autumn 2014. The nominations were then photographed and put on a map on the OVA website. Two local heritage consultation exhibitions were held in February in Budleigh Salterton and East Budleigh.

The exhibitions involved considerable work researching, photographing and mapping the nominations, as well as contacting the landowners. In Budleigh Salterton the nominations included good examples of Victorian and Edwardian houses, 1920s-30s public buildings and private residences by notable architects, such as Hatchard-Smith, and many interesting items of street furniture. In the Otter Valley the nominations included a whole variety of architectural and natural features, including the 'Mark Rolle' farm buildings and cottages.

The next stage of the project is to assess all the nominations against the agreed English Heritage selection criteria, and carry out some more research, before handing over the list and details of the local heritage assets to the Conservation Officer at East Devon District Council for further consideration. Hopefully this will be done by the Summer. East Devon District Council will then have to determine and ratify the local list.

All the nominations can be viewed on the OVA website under the 'Built Heritage' section. We are grateful for a grant of £744 from the AONB to cover some of the costs of this project.

Dee Woods

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## Joint OVA - Fairlynch Talk

**O**N THE MORNING of Saturday 7 February, 52 members of OVA and Friends of Fairlynch met in Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton, to hear two distinguished speakers noted for their stunning wildlife images.

David Spears' talk was entitled 'Tiny Lives in Rivers and Estuaries.' He is a Fellow of the Royal Microscopical Society, the Royal Photographic Society and the London Zoological Society.

*continued overleaf*

David studied Zoology and Neurobiology at university before pursuing a career in wildlife photography. He filmed with David Bellamy and David Attenborough, later setting up his own production company; Clouds Hill Imaging Ltd, specialising in producing video and photographic images for the broadcasting and publishing industries worldwide.

From award-winning photos of tiny amoeba to the smaller aquatic vertebrates, many of them found in the River Otter, his riveting talk took us through nature's food chain with all its predators and victims. We were shown bacteria which live on decaying leaves, pond skaters which feed on daphnia, water boatmen which suck the juices out of tadpoles and a dragonfly nymph swallowing a minnow. There was also an eight-legged moss-eating tardigrade or waterbear, scarily magnified tens of thousands of times, and tubifex or sewage worms, which need little oxygen to survive and are a measure of water quality – of particular relevance to a healthy River Otter. Encouragingly, David hinted that it was possible for the aspiring micro-photographer to acquire the basic equipment inexpensively on eBay. A fascinating talk which transported several members of the audience enthusiastically back to their school days.

The second speaker, Mike Langman, was equally passionate about birds, the title of his talk being 'Make a Note of It'. After leaving art college in 1983, he worked for the RSPB and his bird illustrations can be seen in nearly every RSPB reserve. His work has been published in over 50 books and regularly appears in all of the UK's bird-watching magazines.

Mike's talk took the form of an interactive presentation, grabbing the audience's attention from the outset when his mobile rang and there followed a spoof 'conversation' with his Auntie Flo about a bird she had spotted. The need to note the essential features of an object was brought home to the audience when he asked us to draw from memory a badger's head. Not one of us got the black and white markings 100% correct! Later on a volunteer drew a puffin from descriptive details given by the audience and, after some modification, the end result was at least recognisable.

More picture tests followed; the difference between a blue tit and a coal tit. Spot the farmyard goose amongst the mute swans, the Mediterranean gull in a flock of black-headed gulls. The lesson from these enjoyable tests was clear; it's about observation and a quick sketch rather than photography or hand-written notes. Binoculars and sketch pad are the essential tools. Oh yes, you also need lots and lots of practice!

**Trevor Waddington**



# 'The Boys'

ON 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, before an audience of 49 members and guests at the Masonic Hall at Budleigh Salterton, our speaker gave a most memorable talk about the Hampden Bomber which crash-landed on Dartmoor 74 years ago.

The story began on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1941 when the bomber was returning from an attack on a German U-boat base at Lorient in France. Hampden X3054 was attempting to reach her base at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire. However, the radio was not receiving any signal and the presence of low cloud resulted in the navigator relying entirely on 'dead reckoning'. In the absence of hard data, be it radio, visual or these days satellite information, the navigator has to calculate his position using estimated speed and course.



Although initially accurate, as time goes on, it inevitably becomes less so, mainly as a result of the vagaries of wind. In marine instances there is also the effect of tides and currents. In this particular incident, the plane found its way over Dartmoor, deliberately flying low to try and get a positional fix, and eventually hitting the hillside of Hamelsdown near Widecombe at an estimated 180mph. Three of the crew died instantly. The pilot was recovered from the wreckage but died from his injuries shortly afterwards at Moretonhampstead hospital.

Despite the title of the talk being a rather unassuming 'The Boys', John Lowe proved to be a natural raconteur and spoke in a very clear and often moving way. He had discovered an inscribed gatepost bearing a cross and four sets of initials, whilst walking on Dartmoor. There began his quest to find out the story of its origin.

He spent some years assembling the facts and researching the history of his find. Despite some difficulties overcoming officialdom, he was able to speak to numerous people involved in this incident and eventually managed to piece together the whole story. A tenacious mind was a prerequisite of his mission. He has written a most readable short book upon this whole episode which took place during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and is a monument to the heroic deeds of the men of Bomber Command who lost 55,000 men, representing a half of their total number.

**Bob Wiltshire.**

# Fifty Shades of Grey ~ Mevagissey in March

**A**T THE END of March, fifteen lucky walkers gathered at Bodrugan Barton, near Mevagissey, for a wonderful weekend of walking and fun. We met for an afternoon walk along the Gorran Valley to Gorran Churchtown, where we stopped to admire the fine old church and its interior. Patrick Hamilton kindly told us about the local geology and the famous Pentewan stone that parts of the church were built of. We walked on to Gorran Haven, and somehow the group managed to split up, but were reunited again, thanks to the wonders of mobile telephony. We followed the coast path back to Bodrugan's Leap, and turned up the valley back to Bodrugan to have tea and a sumptuous choice of cakes. Some of the ladies had been busy baking, and it looked just like a WI market. That evening all 15 of us met for a delicious home cooked meal in the beautiful farmhouse, which was a very convivial evening. Saturday morning dawned rather damp and misty, but fortified by a wonderful breakfast cooked by Iain Ure, we set out from Mevagissey to walk inland and uphill towards Heligan and down the Pentewan Valley. This was delightfully varied and we stopped for an excellent lunch at the Ship Inn at Pentewan. Afterwards we toiled up the coast path but were rewarded with good views of Mevagissey and Portmellon where we stopped for coffee and cake before looking around the old harbour. After tea and more cake back at the Farm, and a swim in the indoor pool for those still feeling energetic, and a rest for those less so, we met up at the local pub, the Barley Sheaf, for another excellent meal. Rosemary and David had thoughtfully organised a live blues band to play for us after dinner, which was much enjoyed by those who liked that style of music. On Sunday, we awoke to strong, gusty winds and greyness and a change of hour. Heartened by another of Iain's breakfasts, we set off for Polkerris for a morning walk. An intrepid group battled the elements up through the woods and around the coast path to Gribbin Head, and the 84 foot tall red and white Daymark, where it proved difficult to stand up, but we were compensated with wonderful views and a pleasant descent to Polridmouth Cove. From there we walked inland around the edge of the Menabilly estate (former home of Daphne du Maurier, and inspiration for 'Rebecca') and back on part of the Saints Way down to Polkerris. We stopped for a very welcome lunch break at the Rashleigh Inn, where the food and drink were excellent, before heading back to Devon.

We all had a thoroughly good time, despite the somewhat inclement weather, and this was due entirely to the thoughtful and careful planning, organisation and detailed research carried out on our behalf by Rosemary and David Hatch:

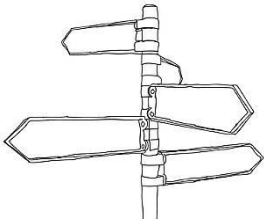
We cannot thank them enough. Again next year?

**Dee Woods**

# A Walk for Everyone

## Spring Programme of Walks 2015

**S**INCE THE START of the year, it has been gratifying for the Walk Leaders, who have welcomed lots more members joining them for good exercise and good company in the ‘great outdoors’. However, if you have been waiting for Spring to kick-start your activity, you may have missed some great walks, but your time has come!



We know that some like to keep their ‘CV of trails walked’ up to date, and in recent years you have been able to ‘tick off’ “The River Otter, From Its Source To The Sea”, “The Exeter Green Circle”, “The East Devon Way”, and, just a few weeks ago, “The Templer Way”. Next up is “The Exe Valley Way” and in this edition you can read about our plans, starting on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April

2015 to walk from Exmouth, the 63 miles to Exe Head, high up on Exmoor, in seven easy stages. If you want to remind yourself of some of the challenges offered by the East Devon Way, you can do so when we start from Sidbury on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

Mention of these linear routes, reminds us that we have access to arguably the finest National Trail: the South West Coast Path, and we shall be crossing the border into West Dorset to experience some of its challenging delights on the 12<sup>th</sup> June, and 4<sup>th</sup> July. Devon sections of the Path feature in walks on the 15<sup>th</sup> April, 29<sup>th</sup> April (this walk also manages to take in the circumnavigation of Salterton, East Budleigh, Otterton and Colaton Raleigh! And there’s an alternative version on 5<sup>th</sup> August), 14<sup>th</sup> May, 24<sup>th</sup> June, the 15<sup>th</sup> July, and the 11<sup>th</sup> August. The Coast Path is deservedly a popular destination for walkers at this time of the year!

As ever, Dartmoor is featured on 8<sup>th</sup> April, when we are at Haytor, and again on 26<sup>th</sup> July, when the train will take us to Okehampton, and we will be at Belstone on 19<sup>th</sup> August. If you like to combine a walk with a train ride, then have a look at 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> August, when we will be following in the footsteps of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Our local luminary is a popular man, since he also features in a local walk on the eve of midsummer, the 20<sup>th</sup> of June. *continued overleaf*



One of the joys at this time of year is the profusion of wild flowers, and three walks, on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 6<sup>th</sup> May and 17<sup>th</sup> June should provide plenty to enjoy. We hope that nature will also abound, when we visit the Aylesbeare Nature Reserve on 10<sup>th</sup> July, but please let Mike know if you want to come, since numbers are restricted. If you like Aylesbeare Common, there is another opportunity to visit on 11<sup>th</sup> April.

Of course, we have not neglected our much loved Otter Valley and we shall be setting out from Woodbury on 20<sup>th</sup> May, Newton Poppleford on 27<sup>th</sup> June, Bystock Nature Reserve on 21<sup>st</sup> July, back to Woodbury again on 29<sup>th</sup> July for a whistle stop tour of seven of the Commons, as the OVA's contribution to the Pebblebed Heath Week, and East Budleigh on 8<sup>th</sup> August.

Please keep telling us if there is an area you would like us to visit, or better still, why not offer to share your passion and lead a walk?

Happy walking and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Chris Buckland and Mike Paddison



## The Exe Valley Way ~ Route Description

The Exe Valley Way (EVW) is a 63 mile route, stretching from Starcross, beside the broad expanse of the River Exe Estuary, through beautiful and relatively unspoilt Devon countryside, before crossing into Somerset, and rising on Exmoor to a height of 1450' / 442m and its source at Exe Head, just 6 miles from the Bristol Channel.



From the fast flowing waters and steeply wooded valleys of Exmoor, where it largely succumbs to its tributary, the River Barle, the Exe meanders down to the coast. The majority of this river valley walk follows footpaths at the water's edge, but often we are taken away from, and high above the river, along quiet lanes with good views, or through 'chocolate box' villages and market towns.

We have divided the route into 7 stages from the 'sea to the source': if you are not free to complete the whole walk, please join us when you can. We shall also endeavour to use public transport wherever possible. This will take us as far north as Dulverton, beyond which we will need to drive, leaving some of our cars at each end of the walk.

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April, 10.00am – WALK**

Start at the Joney's Cross CP, (OS Explorer 115, SY 057 898). 5 miles, 2.5 hrs. A gentle walk to Aylesbeare via Randelhayes farm and back via Manor Farm and Aylesbeare common.

*Walk Leader:* Graham Knapton, 01395 445872

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 10.00am – WALK**

Start at East Budleigh Church CP, (OS Explorer 115, SY 065 848). 9 miles, 4½ hours. 'Glass hill and other delights': A varied walk giving an ever-changing perspective, using the coast path, local roads and tracks. Visiting Ladram Bay, High Peak and Windgate then returning inland via Otterton and Bicton. Some hilly sections, could be muddy. Please bring a picnic lunch.

*Walk Leader:* Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 09.30 – 16.30 – Norman Lockyer Observatory, AONB Conference – 'Stepping Out',** Further investigations in East Devon Landscape History. Cost £14 Programme and **booking** at eastdevonaonb.org

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April, 11.00am – WALK****Exe Valley Way Stage 1, Starcross to Exeter Quay**

Meet at Exmouth Marina (OS Explorer 110, SX 994 807) by 10.30am to catch the Ferry at 10.40am to Starcross (OS Explorer 110, SX 987 817) to start the walk at 11.00am. 8 miles, 4 hours. We follow the Exe Estuary Trail, so this is a completely flat section on mainly tarmac paths alongside river marshes and meadows, past Powderham Castle, England's oldest lock, and the temptations present at the Turf Lock and Double Locks Hotels, before finishing at the canal basin and the Exeter city quayside. After Topsham, we'll need OS Explorer 114. A tranquil walk, except when it seems a train passes close enough to touch, physically undemanding and, for the trained eye, birds to identify. Please bring a picnic and of course, there is a plethora of cafes on the Quay, at the finish. Return by train from Exeter Central or frequent bus nos. 52, 57, or 58 from the Bus Station to East Devon, and on by the 157 or 357 from Exmouth.

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland 01395 444471 & Mike Paddison 446550

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 10.00am – WALK**

Start at Manor Inn CP, Lower Ashton (OS Explorer 110 SX 844 841). 4½ miles, 2½ hours. We walk via the church with lovely screen, along footpaths, through fields and woods with a view of Canonteign falls, returning to the car park via the riverside path bordered by a plethora of wild flowers.

Food is available at the local pub.

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland 01395 444471 & Mike Paddison 446550

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 10.00am – WALK**

Start at Lime Kiln CP (OS Explorer 115 SY 073 820). 10 miles, 6 hours.

“**So near, yet so far**” We start along Marine Parade and South West Coast Path to West Down Beacon, head inland to Dalditch Farm via Castle Lane, continue via Hayes Wood to Yettington and Colaton Raleigh via Bicton and Back Lane and a well-earned break. Return along the riverside. Please bring a picnic.

*Walk Leader:* Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2.00pm – WALK**

Start at the Salcombe Hill National Trust CP (OS Explorer 115, SY139883), 2 miles, 2 hours. “**A bluebell walk**” A guided walk to Soldiers Hill and Combe Head Wood to view the display of bluebells that are usually their best at this time of year. **Note:** the path to the woods is quite steep with rough steps.

*Walk Leader:* Graham Knapton, 01395 445 665

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May, 7.30pm – OVA’s AGM**

Taking place in Otterton Village Hall. Hear about the OVA’s work in the last year, elect your representatives and share refreshments.

*Followed by a Picture Quiz from Haylor Lass.*

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 10.00am – WALK**

Start at the Seaton Down picnic area (by Seaton Water Tower), (OS Explorer 115, SY 233 913) 8 miles approx.

A hilly walk along a route via Beer and Branscombe Mouth, returning along the coastal path to Seaton Hole. Please bring a picnic lunch.

*Walk Leader:* Ted Swan 01395 567450

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May, 10.00am – WALK**

Start at Woodbury free CP, (OS Explorer 115, SY 011 871), 4½ miles, 2½ hours.

A short, morning circular walk to Woodbury Salterton using lanes, paths and farmland tracks.

*Walk Leader:* Carole Steen 01392 873881

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 10.00am – WALK**

Start at Sidbury CP (behind Sidbury Social Club), (OS Explorer 115 SY 139 918), 7 miles, 4 hours. A lovely walk touching parts of the East Devon Way.

Following footpaths, green lanes and hopefully bluebell-carpeted woodland glades. The walk starts towards Hatway Hill, passes through the Donkey Sanctuary towards Harcombe followed by a steep climb to the top of Buckton Hill and a sharp descent down into Sidbury, hopefully in time for a well-earned drink in the Red Lion. There will be a stop for your packed lunch in a covered barn half way through the walk.

*Walk Leader:* Jan Stuart, 01395 568235



**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May, 11.00am – WALK****Exe Valley Way Stage 2, Exeter Quay to Thorverton**

Arrive by train to Exeter Central, or bus nos. 52, 57, or 58 to the Bus Station and walk to the start at Exeter Quay (OS Explorer 114, SX 920 920) at 11.00am. 9½ miles, 5 hours. This starts as an urban section, but after Cowley is along rural paths giving good views across the valley, to reach the attractive village of Brampford Speke. This stage follows the wide, flat valley floor of the river to reach the village of Thorverton, and bus no. 55A for the 28 minute ride back to Exeter. Please bring a picnic.

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland & Mike Paddison

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June, 10.15am – WALK****Exe Valley Way Stage 3, Thorverton to Tiverton**

Meet at Exeter Bus Station by 9.35am to catch bus no. 55B at 9.45am, arriving at Thorverton at 10.10am, ready to start the walk (OS Explorer 114, 926 024) at 10.15am. 8½ miles, 4½ hours. A hilly section, high above the river and along quiet lanes brings us down past Bickleigh Castle to the famous Fisherman's Cott public house, alongside the rushing weir, for lunch. Now refreshed and ready for an easy section along the wooded east bank of the river to Tiverton and the 40 minute return journey by bus no. 55 / 55B to Exeter Bus Station. Please bring a picnic if required.

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland 01395 444471 & Mike Paddison 446550

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 10.30am – WALK**

Start: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground CP, (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 999) at 9.30 am to share cars to the walk start point. **'Colmer's is watching you!'** The walk starts at Higher Eype Service Area (OS Explorer 116, SY452922) at 10.30 am (café opens at 6.45am and free parking!), 8 miles, 6+ hours. This is a walk with everything, requiring some appetite for hills but, boy, is it worth it! There are plenty of opportunities for refreshment stops to restore body and soul. The route starts out through Lower Eype, skirts Eype Down heading towards Symondsburry and an excellent café. After refreshments, the highlight, a short climb up the iconic Colmer's Hill, crowned by fir trees, which affords extensive views in all directions. The day ends over the sea cliffs from Seatown, after a visit to The Anchor pub should thirsts need quenching. There may be the opportunity to end the day with a meal in the New Inn pub in Lower Eype depending on timings.

*Walk leader:* Vivien Insull, 01404 811267

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015, 6.00pm – GUIDED FARM TOUR**

A guided tour of Pophams Farm, Hawkerland Road, Colaton Raleigh with George Perrott, Farms Manager of Clinton Devon Estates.

For full details and **application form see page 5.**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June, 10.00am – WALK**

Start: Park near Stockland Church, (OS Explorer 115, ST245047). 5 miles, 3+ hours. **‘A wild flower walk’** The walk starts with a gentle uphill climb towards Marlpit Cross and a final steeper section to the village of Heathstock. Then we head in an easterly direction, past Paradise Farm, downhill to Three Ash Cross and Waterhouse Farm in the River Yarty valley. The route follows the river back to Stockland enjoying the abundance of wild flowers.

Please bring your own picnic. Sorry, no dogs.

*Walk Leader:* Margaret Read 01392 759332

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June, 10.30am – WALK**

Start: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground car park. OS Explorer 115 SY 088 999). 10 miles, 5+ hours. **‘In the footsteps of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’.**

Walking up the River Otter to Ottery St Mary, the home of Coleridge. Historic town walk followed by lunch at the Volunteer Inn, returning via White Cross.

Easy start but more challenging uphill return.

*Walk Leader:* Iain Ure 01395 568158

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June, 10.00am – WALK**

Start at The Donkey Sanctuary CP, (OS Explorer 115, SY161892). 4 miles, 2½ hours. A walk visiting Salcombe Regis and Weston Mouth, includes parts of the coastal path with splendid views, there are some steep climbs.

Lunch is available at the Donkey Sanctuary if desired.

*Walk Leader:* John Jones 01395 443651

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June, 10.30am – WALK**

Start: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground car park. (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 999). 7 miles, 4 hours. A pretty, circular walk following green lanes, footpaths and bridleways, visiting Venn Ottery, Metcombe and North Hill; and returning via Venn Ottery Common and Aylesbeare Common, providing spectacular views over the Otter Valley towards East Hill.

We will stop half way through the walk to eat our packed lunches.

*Walk Leader:* Jan Stuart 01395 568235.

# Chairman's Report

**F**IRST, I would like to thank the many volunteers who have helped the OVA. Amongst other activities, over the last 12 months our volunteers have written, edited, sorted, addressed and hand delivered over 2,400 newsletters. They have planned and led on average a walk a week (almost 3,000 miles walked by OVA members), booked and organised seven talks, pulled many thousand Himalayan balsam plants, launched a Heritage Asset listing programme, sold OVA books, launched a new website and edited and submitted articles for OVApedia. Without our volunteers the OVA would very quickly cease to function – so thank you all for your time and effort.

But we need more volunteers; the Executive Committee would welcome new members, either as Village representatives (currently we have vacancies for East Budleigh, Otterton and Colaton Raleigh) or in other posts (Honorary Secretary, Events). Please contact me or another member of the Executive if you are interested.

As you will see from the more detailed reports which follow, the OVA has continued its active programme of walks, talks, planning comments and other events. We have also continued to work with other groups to improve the scope of our activities – holding joint talks with the Fairlynch Museum, helping local schoolchildren visit the Pebblebed Heaths with the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, and working with the Lower Otter restoration project. Both the annual litter pick and the Himalayan Balsam campaign have involved the cooperation of many different organisations.

In the absence of a dedicated Events volunteer, we have not managed as many events as in previous years. However, Graham Knapton has organised a programme of well-supported talks on a wide range of subjects, ranging from the microscopic (Tiny Lives in Rivers and Estuaries), to the visible but hidden, (Old Devonshire Milestones), plus several dealing with wartime Devon. The trustees thank Graham, and also Clive Bowman for his excellent audio-visual technical support. We held a well-attended Christmas Party at East Devon Golf Club in December, with the raffle prize, a Fortnum and Mason hamper generously donated by an OVA member.

After many years of subscriptions at £3/individual or £5/family we bravely decided that this was the year to increase them to £5 and £9 – still a pretty good deal. This was a big undertaking for the OVA (and especially our Membership Secretary Clive and Treasurer Trevor Waddington), with over 650 standing orders to be changed.

*continued overleaf*

Between the efforts of Clive on data entry and monitoring, and a handful of volunteers who delivered the renewal and reminder letters, we are almost done. However, there are still a number of members who have not updated their details. If you are one of them please act soon –we don't want to lose you as a member!

Roger Saunders, OVA Chairman

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## Website

**W**E NOW HAVE a brand new, cutting edge, web site. It has three adaptive templates which brings us into the modern era of wide screens, tablets and smart phones. It has a very different look with scrolling images on the home page showcasing the wonderful scenery and OVA activities within our valley.

Within days of doing so, the details of our Local Heritage Asset project had been picked up by Civic Voice and the Devon branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Clear evidence that this website is already raising the profile of the OVA. This is a major new development for us by Cosmic, the Honiton based social responsibility IT and consultancy business we have used before.

After nearly ten years as our web master and playing a key role in the development of this and the previous web site, Alan Huddart has stepped down. We are delighted that Martin Smith has taken over from him. The new site has great potential and we would welcome more volunteers so that we can fully exploit this.

Although much of the web site is new we did transfer all the old articles into it. Some of these go back to our very first web site and we are gradually refreshing each section. If you find something that looks a bit out of date, please let us know.

David Daniel

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## Natural Environment

**2**014 was the fourth year in which the OVA has been involved with **Himalayan Balsam**, and the third in which we have been integrated into the Otter Valley Invasives Project sponsored by the Environment Agency. Most of the latter's work, as in 2013, was concentrated in the upper Otter.

*continued*

The OVA input in 2014 was again concentrated on the Colaton Raleigh Brook, leaving East Budleigh and Newton Poppleford to tackle their own tributaries.

In previous years, severe infestation in the upper Colaton valley had limited progress, so in 2014 the aim was to consolidate in that problem area and extend downstream through the village to the flood plain. This was successfully achieved with three sweeps being completed throughout the whole length of the tributary. Details can be seen in the illustrated Annual Project Report on the OVA website.

A major factor in this success was the boosting of our volunteer pool from 16 to 27. In part, this was the result of the publicity ensuing from our investment in a gazebo and new posters that were located, with staff, on the Otter riverbank on two Saturdays in late June. Volunteers pulled HB nearby. Another innovation in 2014 was the investment in a brushcutter that was used to good effect on the flood plain downstream from the Colaton brook. An aim in 2015 is to link this zone to the Colaton brook proper.

There was close liaison throughout 2014 with Dr Sam Bridgewater (Clinton Devon Estates), a large contingent of CDE and OVA volunteers joining forces to kick start the season on 13<sup>th</sup> June; and Sam organizing, as last year, an excellent barbecue/seminar for all volunteers in the Otter Inn at Colaton Raleigh on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Sam continues to provide invaluable digital cartographic services to record progress throughout the Lower Otter.

The **Water Vole Project** sadly ran aground in 2014 as East Devon District Council no longer had staff time to supervise the project.

OVA continued to support Sam's **field ecology seminars** for primary school pupils on Bicton Common in early June. They were, as always, well organized and greatly enjoyed by the children. Topics included the invasion of heath by birch; flora and fauna (including nightjars, Dartford warblers, adders, ants and butterflies); tree height measurement; and aquifers.



The **annual litter-pick** in the Otter estuary on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2014 was very well supported and the weather wonderfully kind.

**Beavers** on the Otter hit UK headlines during the year and the OVA has supported the Devon Wildlife Trust in its plans for a 5-year monitoring project.

Patrick Hamilton

# Planning - The new Local Plan

**M**ANY OF YOU will have seen in the local newspaper that there is now a revised draft of East Devon District Council's (EDDC) Local Plan for Housing Development in the area from 2013 - 2031, which, at the time of this newsletter's publication, will be available for consultation.

This plan puts forward a *"provision for 17,100 new dwellings over the 2013 to 2031 period. Planned provision at March 2015 is expected to provide 18,391 homes and this provides flexibility in respect of policy."* This is 3,000 more houses required than in the previous version which covered 2006 - 2026 and was rejected by the Inspector. These numbers are derived from a consultancy study which uses a national formula and recommends minimum and maximum housing allocations for the area. EDDC chose to accept the maximum number in contrast to Mid-Devon who chose the minimum requirement.

Unlike the failed plan, as our Chairman said in the Budleigh Salterton Journal, this draft is very vague. For example, in the failed plan the Budleigh Salterton Strategy had a number of houses allocated and the sites where they were to go. In this 2015 plan there will be *"moderate growth"*, no mention of numbers, no mention of where the moderate growth will be and, more worryingly, no mention of the built-up area boundary. This is in contrast to Sidmouth which will have *"limited growth, within the built-up area boundary."*

Cranbrook will take 8,000 of these new houses, leaving 10,000 for the rest of the area. Exmouth and Axminster will see *"large scale development"* but as East Devon has two thirds of the District covered by AONBs inevitably there will have to be a lot of development within the AONB.

The Villages Development Plan has yet to be published but, given the numbers of houses needed, it is unlikely that they will escape lightly.

The planning application that has taken up so much of the Executive Committee's time has been that of Clinton Devon Estate's proposal to build 21 homes in East Budleigh. The site is in the East Devon AONB; is outside the village boundary; across the road from the village centre necessitating schoolchildren crossing the busy B3178 to get to school; it is grade 1 agricultural land (the majority of agricultural land in Devon is grade 3 grazing land; grade 1 land is at a premium and of course a lot has been lost in East Devon as the Cranbrook development is on grade 1 land). But perhaps the most important fact is that the village had a consultation and this site was rejected wholeheartedly by the villagers in favour of a brownfield site.

Nicola Daniel



**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July, 10.45am – WALK****Exe Valley Way Stage 4, Tiverton to Bampton**

Meet at Exeter Bus Station by 9.50am to catch bus no. 155 at 10.00 arriving at Tiverton Bus Station at 10.37am, ready to Start the walk (OS Explorer 114, SS 955 124) at 10.45am. 8miles,4 hours. This section is entirely on quiet but hilly lanes through the thickly wooded and steep sided valley, high above the river, with good views to the other side. We leave the Exe near the end of our walk to follow a different valley, that of the River Bathern, on which the village of Bampton stands. There's a very welcome café in the High Street, should we have to wait for the 398 bus back to Tiverton, to catch the 55 or 155 to Exeter. Please bring a picnic.

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland & Mike Paddison

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July, 10.45am. – WALK**

Start at Abbotsbury CP (OS Explorer OL15, SY 579 852), 9½ miles, 4+ hours. Abbotsbury is approximately 50 miles, 1hr 30mins, drive from Newton Poppleford. We suggest meeting at Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground CP (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 999) at 09.00am to share cars. Walk commences with a steepish climb up to the Ridgeway to obtain good views. Walk along the ridge and then down to West Bexington and back along the coast path to the ruins of St Catherine's Chapel on the hill above Abbotsbury.

Please bring a picnic or take advantage of refreshments available at West Bexington and tea at the end of the walk in Abbotsbury.

*Walk Leader:* Bettina Wilson 01395 260599

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July, 10.00am. – WALK with Toby Taylor (RSPB)**

Start at Joneys Cross, (OS Explorer 115, SY 898 057), 2½ hours leisurely walk. **'From bees to birds'** A visit to Aylesbeare Common, to meet up with the RSPB Warden for a guided walk around this reserve, nothing too strenuous, but taking time to look at what makes this heathland site special.

**This walk has a limited number of places.** Reservation requests to [mike.paddison@me.com](mailto:mike.paddison@me.com) – first come first served!

*Walk Leader:* Toby Taylor (Warden RSPB)

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July, 10.00am. – WALK**

Start at White Bridge, (OS Explorer 115, SY 076 830). 5 miles, 2½ hours. **'With no contempt for familiarity'** A popular and much loved local route along the coast to Brandy Head, site of the WWII look out. Then returning inland via Monks Wall, Otterton, and the Mill for refreshment and reflection, before setting off along Park Lane, overlooking the River Otter to White Bridge.

*Walk Leader:* Chris Buckland 01395 444 471

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July, 10.30am – WALK**

Start at Bystock Nature Reserve, North Entrance CP, (OS Explorer 115, SY 030 849). 6 miles, 3½ hours. A walk based upon a Devon Wildlife Trust route starting at Bystock Nature Reserve, taking in Squabmoor Reservoir, East Budleigh and Hayes Barton. Please bring a picnic.

*Walk Leader:* Brian Gannon 01395 443502

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July, 12.00 noon – WALK**

Start: Okehampton Railway Station, OS Explorer OL28, SX 5926 9443, 10miles, 6 hours. **‘Aiming high!’** A romantic day out on the moor, travelling on the old Southern Railway from Exeter to Okehampton, now maintained by enthusiasts and only open on Summer Sundays. The *challenge* is to climb three increasingly higher tors, to reach the peak of High Willhayes (621m), Southern England’s highest point with unsurpassed views.

Return gently downhill through East Okement valley.

Outward: Meet at Exmouth Railway station to catch the 10.21 to Exeter Central connecting with the 11.03 to Okehampton arriving at 11.49.

Return: Our walk aims to return to Okehampton Station in time for tea and the 17.59 to Exeter St Davids connecting with the 18.50 to Exmouth, arriving at 19.20. If you want to use public transport throughout, the 357 bus dep 09.20 Granary Lane, dep 09.23 Budleigh Salterton Public Hall; arr 09.39 Exmouth. The return bus departs 20.01 Exmouth, arr 20.15 Public Hall.

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland 01395 444471 & Mike Paddison 446550

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July, 10.00am. – WALK**

Start at Woodbury Castle, (OS Explorer 115, SY). 8½ miles, 4 hours.

**‘The Magnificent Seven’**, a contribution to Pebblebed Heath Week. A walk over varied terrain visiting all the seven Commons surrounding Woodbury Common. *Full details in the summer edition and website.*

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland 01395 444471 & Mike Paddison 446550

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August, 11.15am – WALK****Exe Valley Way Stage 5, Bampton to Dulverton**

Meet at Exeter Bus Station by 9.50am to catch bus no. 155 at 10.00 arriving at Tiverton Bus Station at 10.37am, in time to continue on the 398 that leaves at 10.50am, arriving at Bampton at 11.13am, ready to start the walk (OS Explorer 114, SS 956 223) at 11.15am. 8 miles, 4 hours.

Lose sight of the Exe as we cross high agricultural land, farms and lots of mud before briefly reacquainting ourselves as we cross the river at Exebridge, where it disappears north, not to be seen again until Exmoor!

*continued*

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August, continued.** Now it is the River Barle, a 'mere' tributary that takes centre stage; a strong, wide, powerful river, whose steeply wooded valley we now follow, across the border into Somerset, the Exmoor National Park and our finish at Dulverton. Plenty of cafés if we have to wait for the 398 bus to Tiverton and the 55 or 155 connection to Exeter. Please bring a picnic.

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland 01395 444471 & Mike Paddison 446550

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August, 10.00am. – WALK**

Start at Budleigh Salterton Public Hall free CP, (OS Explorer 115, SY 061 821). 4½ miles 2½ hours. A walk over varied terrain visiting the Golf Links, Knowle Hill Plantation, Dalditch Common and returning via Shortwood Lane.

Some muddy areas in wet weather.

*Walk Leader:* John Jones, 01395 443651

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August, 10.00am – WALK**

Start at East Budleigh CP (SY 065 849) 5 miles, 2½ hours. 'A little local walk'. Along Hayes Lane, through the woods and over the commons returning via Yettington with long-time local resident, Stan.

*Walk Leader:* Stan Herbert, 01395 445 113

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August, 10.30am – WALK**

Start: The Green, Otterton, (OS Explorer 115, SY 0803 8525). 5½ miles, approx. 3 hours. The walk is a mixture of riverside paths, green lanes and some tarmac road. Initially we head up the Otter, then turn eastwards to Sea View Farm and then Bars Lane to the short, steep climb up High Peak, which looks a little sorry now shorn of its trees, but the bonus is that there are now wonderful views all around. The walk then descends steeply and briefly from the summit, and onwards to Ladram Bay where can pause for coffee and/or a snack. Refreshment can be purchased in the café. We return via Monks Wall, Culliver Cross to Clamour Bridge and Otterton via the River Otter. Food is available at the Mill or the nearby Kings Arms.

**Outward** travel by bus 157, dep Budleigh Public Hall at 10.00, or bus 157, dep Newton Poppleford at 10.01, arr Otterton at approx. 10.15.

If coming by car, park in the high street or up by the Church (1<sup>st</sup> right immediately past the Mill). Return travel by bus 157 either direction.

*Walk Leader:* Brian Gannon, 01395 443502

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August – WALK CANCELLED**

**The SW Coast Path from Seaton to Lyme Regis ("The Undercliff")**

Sorry to disappoint you but, due to continuing cliff falls, the path is closed until the cliffs 'settle'.

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August, 11.30am – WALK****Exe Valley Way Stage 6, Dulverton to Withypool**

Meet at Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground CP (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 999) at 9.00am for car sharing, before driving to Withypool (OS Explorer OL9, SS 844 354), [1½ hours], where we will leave some cars, and all return to Dulverton (OS Explorer OL9, SS 913 278) for the walk at 11.30am. 9 m, 4½ hrs. Now we are on the Two Moors Way that will take us to our destination. The first half is a very attractive, level, waterside walk through the beautiful wooded Barle Valley, before we emerge onto the high downland of Exmoor with extensive views, and descend to the unspoilt village of Withypool, where a café awaits, before the drive back to East Devon. Please bring a picnic.

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland & Mike Paddison

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August, 10:00am – WALK**

Start at Belstone CP, SX 6210 9377, 8miles, approx. 4 hours.

From the CP, the walk follows the valley of the River Tor, fording the river and onwards past the white hill hut circles climbing steadily to the White Hill stone circle by Little Hound Tor. Then on to Hound Tor, with a possible extension to Wild Tor if the group is keen and time permits. Both of these tors are good spots for lunch with fine views in good weather. The return continues to Methal Hill and across the river. Finally up onto Higher Tor and Belstone Tor, descending via the nine stones cairn circle and back to Belstone: potential local hostelry. The walk is on an open and, at times, rough moorland with some places very exposed, and two significant steady climbs. We ford the river twice and cross boggy ground, good boots + spare socks needed!

*Walk Leader:* George Norman, 01395 442 307

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 11.45am – WALK****Exe Valley Way Stage 7, Withypool to Exe Head**

Meet at Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground CP (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 999) at 9.00am to make car sharing arrangements, before driving to Simonsbath (OS Explorer OL 9, SS 773 393), [approx. 1 hour 45 mins], where we leave some cars, and all return to Withypool (OS Explorer OL9, SS 844 354) to start the walk at 11.45am. 11 miles, 5½ hours. A good opportunity to test our navigational skills on the open moor as we find our way down to the floor of the Barle, with only the sky above until, suddenly we are at Simonsbath. A brief respite for lunch (bring picnic) and we are off again for the final leg across the expansive and featureless moor, to discover the source the River Exe and wobble our toes in its murky water.

*Walk Leaders:* Chris Buckland 01395 444471 & Mike Paddison 446550

**Finally**, a couple of dates for your diaries to round off August: details to be confirmed in the next newsletter once timetables are published.

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August, 10:00am – WALK**

Start at the Bowd Inn layby, (OS Explorer 115, SY 1044 8982). 8½ miles 4+ hours. **‘Following more of the footsteps of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’ – Day 1** Beginning with a morning walk on some of the Coleridge Heritage Trail to Ottery St Mary. Then either bus back to the start, or pub lunch and afternoon walk back along the river and railway track to the Bowd layby. Timings and details to be confirmed in the July Newsletter and OVA website once the summer timetables are available.

*Walk Leader:* Haylor Lass, 01395 568786

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August, 10:00am – WALK**

**‘Following even more of the footsteps of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’ – Day 2 – ‘A day in the Quantocks’** Start 9.50am at Bishop’s Lydeard Station, (TA4 3RU; ST 1643 2895). From the station, a short bus ride then walk up to and along the ridge of the Quantock Hills, including some of the Coleridge Way. Pub lunch at West Quantoxhead, then short afternoon walk to Williton Station and a ride back on the West Somerset Railway to the start. Timings and details to be confirmed in the July Newsletter and OVA website once the summer transport timetables are available.

*Walk Leader:* Haylor Lass, 01395 568786



**Walks Alterations and Diversions**

Sometimes ‘things happen’ whether it be the illness of a walks leader, closure of a path, discontinuance of a transport link, or just exceptional weather – and it is necessary to either change or cancel a walk. We don’t do this lightly, but we have no way of knowing who is planning to come on a walk. We will try to ensure that any changes are noted on the website – so do check there – and if you lets us have your email address we will send out a notice of any cancellation.



**H**OT News of this spring’s litter pick: some 70-80 people, including lots of children, did a great job of clearing the estuary area on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April. Weather good, tide right, school holidays .... no space for a fuller report, so photos next time, including prizewinners.

# Walks Reports

## Walk the Walk - 10<sup>th</sup> January 2015

The first OVA walk of the year  
Started with sun, ended with beer.  
From Knowle Hall we all set off  
Banishing colds, flu and a cough.

Pooh Lane, then onto the cycle path  
It was uphill, we didn't laugh.  
Walked Dalditch Common and into the wood.  
Our boots got quite muddy but the view was good.

The plantation path lead us over a stream  
Then up a bank. Now that was extreme!  
At Squabmoor we rested, some feet were sore.  
The reservoirs history was explained by Haylor.

The path over East Budleigh Common we did take  
Then on to Bystock Ponds, where some folks had cake!  
A chill in the air, but most people felt fine  
So we set off again, thirty one in a line.

Over puddles like small lakes we went without hitch  
Then down the path to the farm at Dalditch  
And so back to Knowle with lunch for some  
From overworked bar staff; there was only one!

So ends an adventure of which many will talk  
That's til they do their next OVA walk

Steve Hagger



## Trinity Hill, snow & rain - 14<sup>th</sup> January

The weather forecast for the day was not good, rain coming in later, there had been snow overnight on high ground and, to cap it all, it was pouring before I had even left home. Undaunted, I drove to Trinity Hill in improving weather and by arrival it was a cold clear cloudless day with a few millimetres of snow underfoot.



I was joined by eight other stalwarts and we were rewarded by a glorious winters' day with far reaching views through the clear air. Our route took us initially through Trill Farm on a very long descent using the permissive paths available there. The old farmhouse was in the process of being rebuilt but using many of the original materials for the re-construction, it should look good when completed. We skirted around above Musbury village traversing a level route to reach Musbury Castle. We stopped for a few minutes to admire the wonderful view across the Axe valley and beyond trying to identify the villages and landmarks spread out before us.

From here we picked up the East Devon Way and descended towards the outskirts of Uplyme where we halted for lunch in a draughty field. Needless to say our picnic was a rather hurried meal and we were soon on our way through the heavily wooded area of Woodhouse Hill. The good weather slowly succumbed to more overcast conditions and by the time we arrived back at Trinity Hill it was decidedly iffy. The snow at the start of the day had all but gone and as we drove home the rain began.

The moral is don't be put off by a poor weather forecast. With the right clothes, winter walking can be an uplifting experience with an air clarity unobtainable during the warmer months. The only downside – mud!!

Ted Swan



## Two Canine Encounters - 21<sup>st</sup> January

Heather politely pulled her dog aside as the nineteen walkers headed purposefully in single file up the Coast Path from Budleigh towards West Down Beacon – with its promise of stupendous views and a mid-walk breather when vacuum flasks and snack boxes could emerge from day-sacks. Behind them, fleetingly, the wan winter sunshine pierced a gap in the clouded sky and illuminated the chalky white cliffs of Beer Head.

A shaggy figure, with more than a passing resemblance to his two Border Terriers, followed in their wake, hurrying to catch up after a brief pit stop.

“*Er, are you all walkers with the OVA?*” Heather enquired of him, as the three dogs exchanged olfactory greetings. She explained that she had only recently joined the OVA and was looking forward to participating in future guided walks. The hirsute straggler assured her of a warm welcome and – with a valedictory handshake – pressed on to join his companions.

*continued overleaf*

Described as “*a devious figure-of-eight route*”, Chris Buckland’s chosen walk explored an eclectic mix of beach, promenade and coast path, golf course and lesser known urban byways, such that Tim – who had lived in Budleigh for most of his life – confessed that he had viewed aspects of the town he had not seen before.

Through it all wound the severed thread of the old railway track formation, but the walkers who joined the trackbed at the line’s summit 300 feet above sea level arrived 48 years too late to catch the last train towards Tipton St John; they descended the 1 in 50 ruling gradient through a deep cutting hewn through Triassic sandstone towards Knowle. *[A visit to the Salterton Arms in Budleigh will reward you with many photographs of the line and its stations as they once were.]*

Descending from the line at Dalditch Lane to pass under the 50 foot high brick bridge, the party encountered none other than our august Chairman of the OVA exercising his two Schnauzers; the two Border Terriers, by now in the vanguard, were delighted to take the opportunity for further olfactory exchanges.

After an opportunity for boot washing at a ford it only remained to rejoin the track formation via the town centre and return to the starting point at Kersbrook, beneath the skilfully constructed, but now sadly redundant, oblique brick bridge, 170 miles and 6½ chains from Waterloo.

## Gruff



## Mud! - 31<sup>st</sup> January

On Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January we were fortunate enough to join an OVA walk around the lovely mid Devon countryside. Eleven of us met at the Exeter bus station and took the X5 to Newton St Cyres, 20 minutes later we had arrived in the centre of the village.

Our leader, Mike Paddison, set us along a quiet road for an early deviation to the Beer Engine, originally the Railway Hotel, but now a pub and brewery.

Unfortunately for the men in our party it didn’t open until 11am so we did a U turn back to the footpath towards Creedy River.

After a walk along the edge of a huge arable field bordered by the river we assembled for a group photo on a footbridge before turning towards the first of our railway line crossings. We were walking along old agricultural paths used by farm workers and villagers going from Newton St Cyres to Stoke Canon which by now were getting very muddy!

Seeing our first snowdrops was quickly followed by a field with five muddy Shetland ponies who came to nuzzle us, no doubt hoping for a carrot which none of us had had the foresight to bring. Just when we were wondering when it would be coffee time we came across a barn on Bidwell Farm which was ideal for a quick stop before walking onto Upton Pyne where we enjoyed the lovely smell of a wood bonfire.

As we walked on to Brampford Speke more animals inspected us from afar – were they llamas (**lama glama**, widely used a pack animal and for meat in the Andes. *Ed*) or were they alpacas? (**lama pacos**, a very much smaller cousin of the llamas, and bred for its wool. *Ed*.) A voice of authority from a nearby group of villagers pronounced them to be alpacas.



On arrival at Brampford Speke we walked through the lovely old churchyard belonging to St Peter's, the beautiful village church. We sat on a stone wall next to the primary school and enjoyed our sandwiches. As we left the churchyard, and crossed over the River Exe, we saw some recently planted trees to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First World War “dedicated to the people and animals who served, suffered and died in that conflict.”

Following the old paths and a disused railway track we walked on to Stoke Canon where we finished our walk and enjoyed a drink beside the log burner in the lovely warm surroundings of the community pub before taking the bus back to Exeter. Thank you Mike for organising this very pleasant 6 mile walk on a lovely cold but mainly dry sunny morning with good company. As one member of our party said, this report could be summed up in one word “mud”!

Sue Newman



## Countless Shades of Grey - 15<sup>th</sup> Feb

It was one of those days that winter is all about, nothing moving, nothing growing, perfect stillness and a fine blanket of grey cloud protecting us from colder temperatures. It was in these conditions of wintry benevolence that 16 walkers and 3 dogs set out to explore the many faces of Woodbury – the common, the wood, the country park and the castle.

We started from the Four Firs car park, crossing the road and taking the old East Devon Way before diverting through Woodbury Wood, the trees silently and patiently waiting for spring to bring new life.

*continued overleaf*

We skirted Woodbury itself and wended our way along quiet country lanes. As always, plenty of chatter and debate enlivened our walk, nothing grey or shady about this group of walkers!

At Hogsbrook Farm we started the return journey speculating along the way which of the country piles had belonged to Nigel Mansell. As we passed the Country Club all was quiet on the greens, no golfers teeing off and the buggies, like the trees, waited patiently for warmer weather to spring into action. Leaving relatively modern mansions behind we entered the timeless security of Woodbury Castle which offers its majestic and welcoming shelter in peace.

On leaving the castle we took the new route for the East Devon Way over Woodbury Common back to our starting point having passed a very pleasant 3 hours, or 5-6 miles, enjoying our beautiful countryside in its dormant state.

Vivien Insull



## The Templer Way - 18<sup>th</sup> Feb & 11<sup>th</sup> Mar

Fifteen walkers arrived at the foot of Haytor Down on a cool, bright day in February to walk seven and a half miles, the first stage of the Templer Way. We had gathered at Exeter Bus Station to take the bus to Bovey Tracey and then the short drive by taxis to gather at the Dartmoor National Park Visitors Centre.

The route links the granite quarries of Dartmoor with the seaport of Teignmouth 29 km away. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries three generations of the Templer family were involved in exporting first china clay, via a canal, then granite from Dartmoor to Teignmouth Docks.

We paused for a group photo at the Templer Way logo near the original granite quarries then set off on the downhill route. The granite rails were clearly visible on the ground and we enjoyed very clear views of the surrounding moorland as we approached Yarner Wood. Beyond the woods we passed fields and mature apple orchards. We skirted the edge of Bovey Tracey and entered the Great Plantation, once part of the Templer Estate, but now owned by the Forestry Commission. This was the only really muddy part of the walk and we ended the first stage at the very busy Drumbridge Roundabout.

The second stage of 10½ miles on 11<sup>th</sup> March saw us again meeting at Exeter Bus Station for the bus to Drumbridge Roundabout.

We walked through Stover Country Park, originally part of the Templer Estate and passed Stover Lake with plenty of wildfowl. We then pressed on to our lunch stop at the Newton Abbot town quay.

There were plenty of picnic tables and the weather remained dry though cloudy. Our final five and a half miles followed the Teign Estuary where it is only possible to walk along the shore within two hours of low tide. The rocky surface was quite slippery at times and there were large quantities of seaweed along the shore. After a welcome break for refreshments at the pub at Coombe Cellars we walked through the village of Shaldon before taking the ferry to Teignmouth. Many thanks to Mike & Chris for leading us on this interesting Devon route.

Sheridan Brenchley



## 'First Timers' Report - 25<sup>th</sup> February

Our welcome as 'first timers' on an OVA walk was so warm that I was 'persuaded' to write this report – how could I refuse?!

Fourteen of us set off from Knowle via Shortwood Common and Hayes Wood to Hayes Barton where Brian Turnbull, our leader, entertained us with some interesting details about Sir Walter Raleigh who was born here in 1552. The pigs we passed were happily wallowing in the mud but some of us were slipping and sliding as it was very messy underfoot after recent rain. However we all made it to the area at Wheathill used as a Royal Marine camp during WW2 and it was fascinating to make out reminders of that time and to see one of the original buildings still having a useful purpose as a bat hibernaculum. Our route took us past Squabmoor Reservoir where the fishermen looked very cosy in their shelters. A beautiful bank of snowdrops greeted us on the last lap of this 5½ mile walk before we passed Lily Farm Vineyard and were back in Knowle just as the drizzle began.

I had previously noticed several buildings in the area with my initials prominently displayed and when we were given a brief history of Mark Rolle and his legacy in this part of the world I decided that I must read the relevant OVA book on this subject.

This walk was a great introduction to the OVA with great walking, scenery and company. The regular brief stops for information and explanation from Brian brought the area to life and helped us understand how the use of this land has evolved. Thanks to him and the rest of the group, we hope to walk with you again soon.

Maggie Rumsey



## Put a 'Spring' in your step - 4<sup>th</sup> March

Mike's pep talk at the Otter Inn rendezvous point promised a 'flat-ish' walk, mostly dry under foot with just a few exposed sections where the cold wind would make itself felt. We all forgave him any slight inaccuracies as we toiled to 496ft above sea level and managed to negotiate the water-filled ruts with a bit of nimble foot work. After all, the sun shone brightly and there was a definite feel that Spring had arrived as we found snowdrops, primroses, celandines and even violets in flower.

The spirit of bonhomie that pervaded the group of 19 continued in our sheltered coffee spot in the



Hawkerland Valley. Chris took

advantage of the general sense of wellbeing to present an advertisement for the second stage of the Templer Way: the following week's walk. The gorse was in full bloom on Colaton Raleigh Common and a kestrel surveyed a newly burnt patch of heathland from his perch in a dead tree in the hope that the springtime swaling might have exposed some small rodents. This practice, if well-controlled, is designed to rejuvenate the heather, check the growth of gorse and bring a flush of new vegetation for the benefit of wildlife in general. Wonderful panoramic views over the Otter Valley, Peak Hill and the distant sea were a treat for us all and one keen photographer in particular. The whole walk remained within the boundaries of Colaton Raleigh parish.

After a little over three hours and just under seven miles in total, we returned to starting point and to conclude this congenial gathering, 15 walkers opted to stay on for a pub lunch.

David Hatch



## A Misleading Walk - 18<sup>th</sup> March

The accuracy of the blurb for this amble turned out to be a bit of a curate's egg. It was indeed a "short mainly level walk along local lanes" but "and the banks of the Otter" was misleading. The nearest we got to the river was some way off, across the dismantled railway. This however did not mar our enjoyment one scintilla.



The clerk of the weather had laid on a beautiful, mild, sunny, apparently windless morning with only a slight haze. Although distant views of the landscape had not yet lost their wintry starkness, there were intimations of spring in plenty.

We saw primroses and the green sprouts which would be bluebells; butterflies in a courtship dance (unfortunately as they were flying between us and the sun, it was impossible to identify them); catkins, white violets, occasional daffodils and a ladybird.

Our route followed various paths and short lengths of road in an anticlockwise direction around Colaton Raleigh. Although at one point we missed a turning from the planned route it was no matter as our leader knew exactly where we were and we agreed unanimously to continue in the current direction rather than retrace our steps.

We were a smallish group. Only eight of us set off from the pub car park along a path parallel to the road down towards the river. There was some speculation about why this should be. Was it that the majority of walkers regarded 3 miles of lanes as not sufficiently challenging? As we walked down towards the river, our leader pointed out a hill to our left (with a big house on it) around which we were to walk.

Where the path ran parallel to the river and then past Yonder Hill towards the main road we caught sight of a stark new concrete road at frequent intervals. It's believed this has been built to enable livestock lorries transporting pigs to bypass Colaton Raleigh. Further on, as we climbed gently towards a high point of our walk, we could see a rather more elevating construction: a Belvedere in the grounds of Bicton which was built by Louisa Rolle as a birthday present for her husband. Like a few gifts in my experience (birthday or otherwise) it turned out to be of more use to the donor than the recipient. It became the home of Louisa's extensive china collection and is still known as the China Tower.

Towards the end of our walk we were given an opportunity to see behind the unusual thatched wall which is one of the more notable features of Colaton Raleigh. The wall screens Place Court from Church Road, but we were viewing it from above and to the south, through bare trees, which enabled us to see the buildings reasonably clearly and appreciate the ecclesiastical-looking architecture of parts of the house and also a mediaeval-looking barn. After approximately five miles we returned to the pub for a welcome drink.

This has turned out to be rather a pot-pourri of an account, if you wanted a description of the route, I am unable to furnish it – you had to be there!

**Kerensa Pearson**

# The Otter Valley Association

## Executive Committee

(01395)

|               |                   |        |
|---------------|-------------------|--------|
| Chairman      | Roger Saunders    | 443248 |
| Vice-chairman | Haylor Lass       | 568786 |
| Hon Secretary | Iain Ure          | 568158 |
| Hon Treasurer | Trevor Waddington | 443978 |

### *Committee Chairmen*

|                     |                  |        |
|---------------------|------------------|--------|
| Natural Environment | Patrick Hamilton | 445351 |
| Planning            | Nicola Daniel    | 445960 |
| History             | David Daniel     | 445960 |
| Events              | <i>vacancy</i>   |        |

### *Parish Representatives (to whom queries should be addressed initially)*

|                    |                  |        |
|--------------------|------------------|--------|
| Budleigh Salterton | George Maddaford | 446077 |
| East Budleigh      | Christine Hadley | 443607 |
| Otterton           | Joan Cullen      | 567574 |
| Colaton Raleigh    | <i>vacancy</i>   |        |
| Newton Poppleford  | Haylor Lass      | 568786 |

### *Other EC Members*

|                             |                                       |        |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Assistant Minutes Secretary | Robert Wiltshire                      | 444395 |
| Membership Secretary        | Clive Bowman<br>membership@ova.org.uk | 446892 |
| Publicity Secretary         | <i>vacancy</i>                        |        |

### *Other contacts*

|                         |                                     |                  |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Webmasters              | David Daniel, 445960 & Martin Smith | 442333           |
| Talks Organiser         | Graham Knapton                      | 445872           |
| Walks Organisers        | Chris Buckland<br>Mike Paddison     | 444471<br>446550 |
| Newsletter Distributors | Pam and Tony Harber                 | 445392           |

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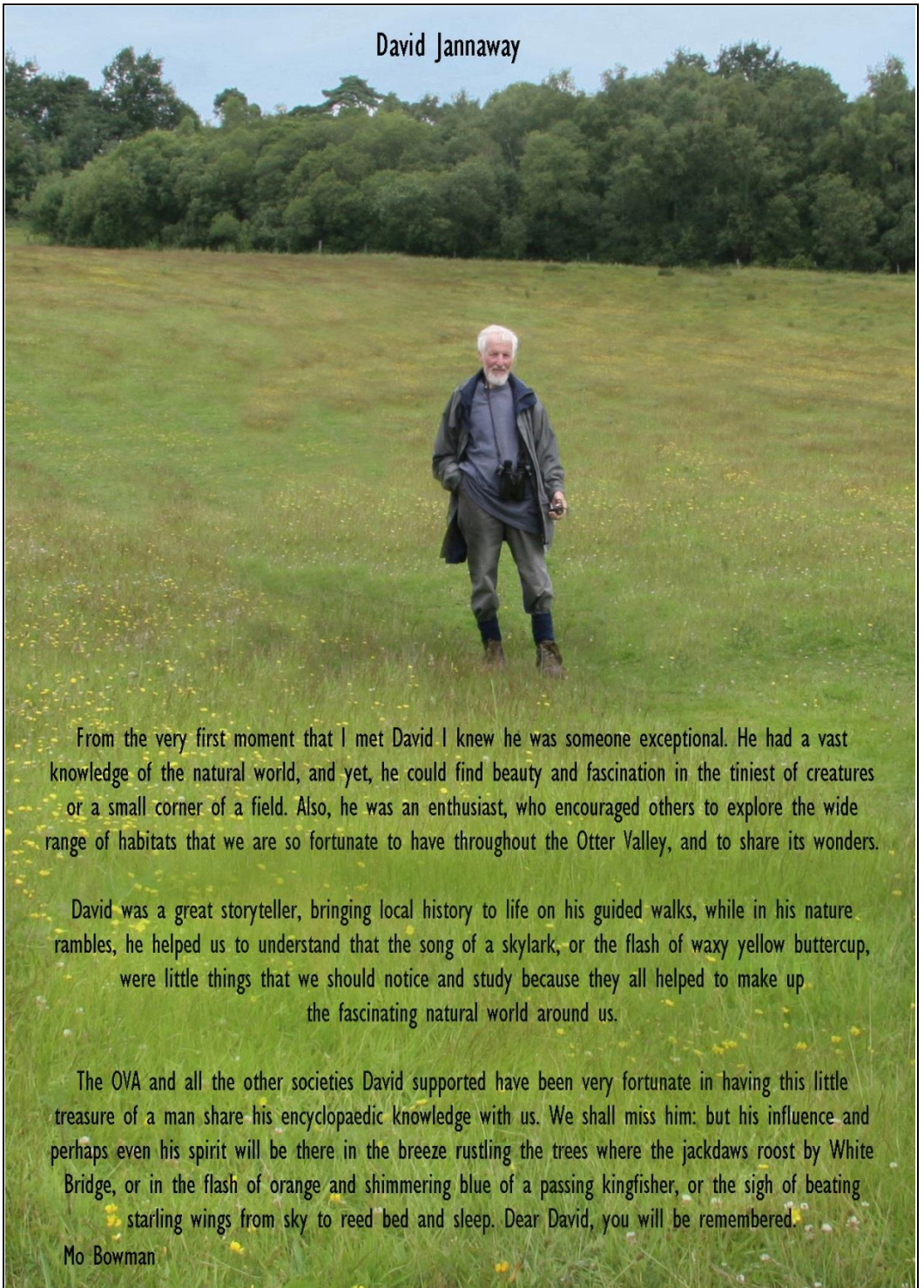
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## David Jannaway



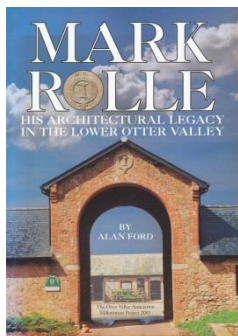
From the very first moment that I met David I knew he was someone exceptional. He had a vast knowledge of the natural world, and yet, he could find beauty and fascination in the tiniest of creatures or a small corner of a field. Also, he was an enthusiast, who encouraged others to explore the wide range of habitats that we are so fortunate to have throughout the Otter Valley, and to share its wonders.

David was a great storyteller, bringing local history to life on his guided walks, while in his nature rambles, he helped us to understand that the song of a skylark, or the flash of waxy yellow buttercup, were little things that we should notice and study because they all helped to make up the fascinating natural world around us.

The OVA and all the other societies David supported have been very fortunate in having this little treasure of a man share his encyclopaedic knowledge with us. We shall miss him: but his influence and perhaps even his spirit will be there in the breeze rustling the trees where the jackdaws roost by White Bridge, or in the flash of orange and shimmering blue of a passing kingfisher, or the sigh of beating starling wings from sky to reed bed and sleep. Dear David, you will be remembered.

Mo Bowman

# OVA Publications



## **Mark Rolle His Architectural Legacy in the Lower Otter Valley**

Ever wondered about the many improved farm buildings and cottages in this area? This lavishly illustrated book gives a very readable picture of how a large landed estate was managed in the last 40 years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

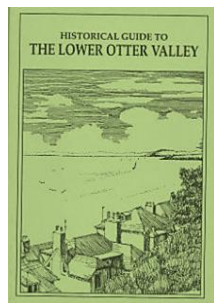
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



## **Twelve Walks in the Otter Valley.**

The area of the Lower Otter Valley is covered by a network of footpaths, mostly waymarked and in good condition. OVA members have compiled these walks, each with clear directions and illustrated with a sketch map. They range from 4 mile easy walks to a more energetic 9½ miler. There are notes on places of interest to whet your appetite for further exploration.

£3.00 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



## **Historical Guide to the Lower Otter Valley**

Want to know more about the area you live in or are visiting? This book is packed with detailed information about the places, buildings, people and natural history of this beautiful area, from the very earliest times to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

£3.50 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)

## **Leaflets**

The OVA also publish a number of leaflets about the history, flora & fauna and walking in the lower Otter Valley.

They can usually be found in the Tourist Information Centre and in other outlets around the valley.

