

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN

Newsletter

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OVA

PO Box 70

Budleigh Salterton

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www.ova.org.uk

WWI Centenary Battle's Over

www.ova.org.uk
Reg. Charity
278266



Stella French and Mike Paddison of the OVA Walks Team with the Chairman celebrating their “Highly Commended” second place award at the East Devon AONB Annual Meeting on 20th September. The Acland Award went to Axe Vale & District Conservation Society. See Page 5.

Front cover image “WW1 Centenary Battle’s Over” photographed and produced by Mo Bowman

From the Editor

Those of you who attended our 2017 Christmas Party will be delighted to hear that, by popular demand, we are going to do it all again this year. Those who were not there now have the chance to find out what you missed. Details and booking form in the centre pages and the date for your diary – **Monday, 17th December**

As you will see there has been a lot to report in this newsletter and I sincerely apologise to anyone who has submitted something that has not been included. Please don't let it put you off!

This issue seems to be dominated by wildlife – we have bats, beavers, dormice, dragonflies and wasps but what is the creature pictured? Geoff Porter, a member of our NEC and Otterton rep, poses the question “What am I? fly, hoverfly, wasp or bee?” For the answer see page 34



Jacqui Baldwin

Volunteers

Everything we do – and we do a lot of things - has to be done by volunteers. Is there any way in which you could help? Whatever your area of interest or expertise we would be glad of your input whether on a regular basis or just a few hours – distributing newsletters, getting involved with the Natural Environment team, leading a walk, becoming a village rep, organising events, joining the Executive committee, publicity, history, planning – even writing an article for this newsletter! Fresh ideas and fresh faces are always welcome. See the point of contact list (inside back cover) for the relevant person who will be very happy to hear from you.

Chairman's Report

My report for this edition is largely a summary of some of the contributions being made by others, so I don't want to steal their thunder. Membership has increased by 28 since the AGM. This is promising but we must try harder, as it used to say on my school reports.

The Executive Committee have discussed many items recently, which have been reported in the notes published on our website. One of the discussions was as the result of a notification from the Campaign to Protect Rural England on the subject of fracking (the extraction of shale gas). We are not involving ourselves with the rights or wrongs of this subject and we are strictly apolitical. However, we are concerned that the Government is proposing to fast-track planning for test drills by negating the requirement for planning permission. Such a step disregards local opposition, if such exists, and oversteps Local Authority autonomy.

As many of you will recall, last year's Christmas party was a great success (at least our table thought so!). This was thanks to Jon Roseway who put a huge amount of time and effort into the organisation. This year Geoff and Pat Porter are picking up the baton. At risk of being repetitive we are going to use the same location and the same format. I hope that you will agree and support this social event.

At the AGM I asked if there was an appetite for another party to celebrate our 40th Anniversary. Hands were dutifully raised to register support and we are planning an early evening strawberries & cream and pink champagne reception with a little light music. Probably some time in June 2019 so don't book your holidays yet.

Nicola Daniel, the Chair of the Planning Committee has, as always, been very active in her quest to 'preserve the best and improve the rest'. We have been disappointed to find that the Neighbourhood Plans, now part of the East Devon Planning Process, for Budleigh Salterton and East Budleigh are not proving to be the blue-prints that we were led to believe. I have also to report that the Heritage Assets list has still not been adopted by the EDDC. More of this from Nicola.

The Lower Otter Restoration Project is still under discussion and I am pleased to report to you that the Environment Agency wish to keep us updated upon this subject. A meeting is to be held shortly. Note, it is only the fact that we represent such a large number of people that such bodies as the Environment Agency feel that we should be consulted.

The Autumn/Winter season of talks has now been confirmed. There is an interesting range of subjects arranged by Geoff Lake of which there are full details on page 7.

We advertised the possibility of another farm visit this year. The particular farm favoured was Stantyway Farm, however this is only going to be possible in late Spring or Summer next year and we have therefore postponed and will announce a date as soon as possible.

And now finally, before the editor guillotines my contribution, I want to remind you all that it is always the same people who do the work for the Association, be they enthusiastic helpers or committee members. This is what holds us together. Although this is not a 'call to arms', we do need more interaction from you all - be it encouragement or even criticism. Constructive criticism can be very beneficial. Not only do we need new members but more active involvement from existing members. We need to ensure that the OVA still exists and remains relevant for another 40 years.

Bob Wiltshire, Chairman

Acland Award 2018



The Acland Award is presented annually by the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership in recognition of examples of excellence and exemplar activity taking place within the AONB.

Each year the partnership focuses on a new area of activity to highlight the range and diversity of projects taking place across the AONB.

This year the focus is on Health and Wellbeing projects that seek to enhance people's physical and/or mental health through closer connection with the environment of the East Devon AONB. The OVA nominated the Walks Team as deserving of celebration and public recognition and we are delighted to have received confirmation that we have made the shortlist of four finalists. Winners will be announced on 20th September.

STOP PRESS: OVA Walks Team were "Highly Commended" runners up

Heatwave reveals a Roman Farm at Bicton



The summer heatwave and parched ground has helped the aerial reconnaissance team at Historic England to see 'beneath the soil' and find traces of our past.

The picture above (courtesy of Historic England) shows an aerial image of a Roman farm discovered at Bicton after marks in a field of grass cut for silage were revealed, indicating different phases of activity. It is thought that the central enclosure may have contained farm buildings, fields and paddocks attached to a central area; a form of settlement that 'probably' dates to the Roman period.

Mysterious Neolithic ceremonial monuments, Iron Age settlements, square barrows and the farm at Bicton were all discovered by the flying archaeologists as the exceptional weather provided perfect conditions for making new discoveries across the country. These findings demonstrate that even in well-explored areas there is still the potential for new revelations if conditions are right. Some of the sites will require further survey and research to provide more understanding of their importance.

Autumn/Winter Talks Programme

Tuesday 30th October at 7:30pm - Budleigh Salterton Masonic Hall

Wartime Dalditch Camp, Woodbury Common

Simon Fogg will be giving a talk on wartime Dalditch camp on Woodbury Common, giving a presentation with photos of the camp remains, what life was like in the camp and of the war relics found on site. He will also have some of the artefacts on display.

Thursday 29th November at 7:30pm - Otterton Village Hall

Wastewater treatment in the Otter Valley

Tony Griffiths, Wastewater Process Manager, South West Water, will give a brief overview of wastewater treatment in general and then some of the various process variations. He will then talk through the Otter Valley in particular detailing the existing SWW treatment facilities. He will also provide an overview of the legislation that governs wastewater treatment, what SWW has to do to comply with that legislation and where he believes future regulations will go. Tony will conclude with a short piece on how householders can help to protect the environment.

Wednesday 30th January 2019 at 7:30pm - The Peter Hall, St Peter's Church, Budleigh Salterton.

The history of the RNLI in Exmouth

The RNLI from Exmouth will present a talk focusing on the local history of the RNLI and lifesaving along our coastline.

Wednesday 27th February 2019 at 7:30pm - East Budleigh Village Hall

Coastal change and coastal erosion risk management in East Devon

Dave Turner from East Devon District Council and Harriet Googe from the Environment Agency will be explaining the roles of their respective organisations in managing the risk of flood and erosion from the sea, and how they work together to manage those risks through from high level strategy to local schemes.

Tuesday 26th March 2019 at 7:30pm - Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton.

Electric power distribution in East Devon

Paul Elsen, Western Power's Distribution Manager for Devon, will present a talk about power distribution in East Devon including the infrastructure, street architecture, the impact of new housing and industrial development, and an outline of future developments.

Planning Report

We are all privileged to live in this wonderful part of Great Britain. Due to the very special natural environment and the exceptional historic heritage of the area we have many “designated assets” which have formal protection given by legal statute. So it is with great sorrow that I have to report that East Devon District Council, in its quest for housing and the need to create employment for those who buy the houses, appears to give a greater weight to development irrespective of the harm which may result in our protected areas. Please bear with me for the length of this article but I do feel that many of you will be interested in the details of these important planning applications.

East Budleigh, Pynes Close, behind the High Street

On heritage assets the government says in NPPF para. 175 “These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations”. The OVA cannot understand how this site in East Budleigh, a site of historic interest in its own right; in the AONB; in the East Budleigh Conservation Area; within 45 metres of the Grade 1 listed church; adjacent to 10 listed thatched, cob cottages has had approval given for two rectilinear, sedum-roofed dwellings, dug 3.5 m. below the ground level of the adjacent cob garden walls. Historic England, the watchdog of the historic environment also expressed strong reservations on three separate occasions on the layout, the depth of excavation and the design of the houses.

This site could not have had a more ‘protected’ status and to be able to make an informed decision, legally, the application should have had a detailed Heritage Impact Assessment, but none was provided. This application was also a test case for the East Budleigh Neighbourhood Plan as it was contrary to many of the policies. To make it even worse this decision was taken by the planning officers, not the Planning Committee. This happened because the three District Councillors made no comment on this very sensitive application and did not ask for committee review in spite of 17 objections from the community and Parish Council. The deciding factor in approving the application was the weight given to the addition of two houses in the village. This is in spite of EDDC achieving its ambitious housing approvals and build out rates and East Budleigh having its local housing needs catered for in Frogmore Road. Therefore, there is no imperative that makes the need for two additional houses exceptional.

The OVA tried to get the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to review the application but was out of time and have also made a complaint to EDDC regarding failures in the procedure that was followed. This is being considered by the Monitoring Officer. The association has also sent the record of this application to Civic Voice as an example of poor planning decisions affecting Conservation Areas.

Blackhill Quarry

You may be aware that a couple of weeks ago EDDC granted, by a narrow vote (six to five), planning application 17/3022 to extend an industrial site at the defunct Blackhill Quarry submitted by Clinton Devon Estates (CDE). Most of us, including long standing residents, thought that the Blackhill Quarry operations were subject to a planning condition to restore the site to heathland at the discontinuation of quarrying and also that CDE, the landowners, through the Pebblebed Heaths Trust, was working towards this happening. In fact, at one stage, the OVA were led to believe that CDE were thinking of an Interpretation Site on the quarry workshop site. There were 195 objections to planning application 17/3022, including two by the OVA.

This application is for the expansion of a heavy metal engineering works, adjacent to an internationally recognized site of great environmental significance, working for five and a half days a week. It is contrary to EDDC Local Plan 2013-2031, Strategy 46. Aggregate Industries (AI), the present owners of the extraction rights, has ceased operations because it could not demonstrate the 'exceptional circumstances' demanded by the government's NPPF for major development in an AONB. The planning application 17/3022 also falls within this policy and cannot be described as exceptional.

The OVA understands the need for increased employment. We note that the 34 engineers at Blackhill (23% of Blackhill Engineering global workforce) have recently designed flood defence gates for New York City Hospital, worked for the European Space Agency and on the piers at Hinkley Point. But we question the long term compatibility of expanding such heavy engineering endeavours in such a sensitive environment. There are over 60 employment sites in the East Devon District, and the engineering works could be relocated to a bigger site with better access. Indeed, given that this site is effectively a dead-end for further expansion, this looks to be a short term fix rather than a strategic decision of a company intent on major expansion.

Blackhill has been quarried since the early 1930s and subject to a series of planning applications and approvals to continue. In the 1980 planning approval

there was a condition “E” relating to a workshop on the site which could only be used by the quarry extracting company as a Commercial Regional Workshop. When AI acquired the extraction rights they did not wish to use this area and in 1995 CDE applied to East Devon District Council to lift this Condition. This was carried out. At this point, therefore, the working site we know of as Blackhill Quarry became divided into two: a site with a lot of hard standing concerned with quarrying activities run by AI and a separate commercial workshop which became Blackhill Engineering, a subsidiary of SC group, formally Super Cat based at Dunkswell. Blackhill Engineering posted a loss in its 2017 accounts. It is probably a shock to many of you that the Blackhill Engineering works site actually exists at all. Until very recently no signage has been displayed outside the quarry to indicate its separate presence and it is omitted from the EDDC Employment Land database for the district, which is reviewed annually.

Following the awarding of the European nature conservation designations i.e. Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area, orders were served on AI to restrict quarrying at Blackhill Quarry in 1999 and eventually to cease. The Quarry operations were subject to a planning condition to restore the AI site to heathland at the discontinuation of quarrying. The hard-standing part of the site was to be restored to a RSPB Nature Reserve. The recent planning application sought approval for the expansion of Blackhill Engineering workshops into this defunct part of the AI site thus halting the restoration of this part of the heathland into a bird reserve. Remember CDE had had the Condition E removed from the Blackhill Engineering workshops in 1995 so, although not generally known, this workshop and activity would remain in any event.

Much has been written by CDE that this is a gain for the environment. Initially CDE offered no other area to make up for this loss of heathland and it was only under the instigation of the watchdog of the natural environment, Natural England, that it offered a mitigation site. What is being offered is the cutting down of an area of coniferous forest to return eventually into heathland; the substitution of one habitat for another rather than the return of a brownfield industrial site to nature. No matter what mitigation is put in place, the net result of this plan is the loss of 3,500 sq.m of potential valuable habitat. The OVA considers the offset site a poor one being on the southerly edge of Bicton Common, separated from the main Heaths by the engineering works. There will be light, noise, pollution and, due to its isolation, poor wildlife corridors. Also the adjacent reconstituted quarry pits will, with their steep slopes and lakes, inevitably have a different biodiversity profile from the surrounding heathland. The isolated offset site will not integrate with either of these. It is ironic to consider that because of the sensitivity of the

Heaths they are surrounded by a 400 metre 'development exclusion zone' where houses cannot be built because of predation by cats, but this doesn't apply to noise, light and pollution from heavy industry!

Ladram Bay

It is, therefore, with great trepidation given EDDC's emphasis on employment, that your committee awaits decisions on two Ladram Bay retrospective planning applications. Incursions have been made into the AONB beyond the caravan park boundary with the loss of a Devon Bank and an extension of an elevated viewing deck or 'ice cream deck' directly in the World Heritage Site (WHS). The deck has been created by physically driving piles into the WHS. As an OVA member with engineering experience observes: the pile driving must have caused damage and the site is vulnerable to short term storm damage - this will inevitably give rise to the need for more substantial foundations.

The deck visually disrupts the view of the cliffs and will interfere with the natural process of erosion which the designation requires. We must remember that this is the most protected site that we have in East Devon and yet the Jurassic Coast Trust, as the organisation responsible for the protection of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, was not formally consulted on this application as it claims it should have been - it was the OVA who notified them. The Trust has had to respond in the same way as any member of the public and their response is: Object (with a lot of detailed reasoning).

This unauthorised development compromises the WHS status and some members of the general public have also alerted the UK National Commission for UNESCO, with whom Jurassic Trust is now having to liaise. The OVA has sent in an objection to EDDC and has also written to David Bellamy outlining our concerns at the granting of a David Bellamy Gold Conservation Award to the Caravan Park in the light of the above.

Local Heritage Assets List

Finally, for the third time since 2016, EDDC has postponed the long-promised formal review of the Local Heritage Assets List by the Strategic Planning Committee. So, 100 hours of work wasted as the list is not legally accepted for planning purposes - as demonstrated by an Inspector's decision on a recent planning application which dismissed any idea of the "specialness" to the community of a beautiful Hatchard Smith house in Budleigh Salterton.

Dr Nicola Daniel, Planning Committee Chair

Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP)

Throughout the summer technical surveys have continued in the lower Otter valley to ensure there is a full understanding of the benefits and potential negative impacts of restoring the Big and Little Marsh floodplains of the valley. This work has been undertaken under the auspices of the Lower Otter Restoration Project, a partnership between Clinton Devon Estates and the Environment Agency.

The preferred option, which has been developed in response to a changing climate, rising sea levels and failing sea defences would keep most of the existing embankments in place, but create breaches allowing water to flow across the floodplain. New footbridges would ensure continuity of existing access, with the creation of new wildlife habitat including mudflat, saltmarsh and reed bed. The current work has been commissioned by the Environment Agency and includes extensive computer modelling of the effects of undertaking the work. The predictions to date are very positive: water levels and flood risk would be no higher than they are now, and new intertidal and freshwater habitats would be created.

The EA renewed their commitment to the project in August. A public exhibition on the Lower Otter Restoration Project will be held later this year once the technical studies have been completed. Details of the project can be found at: <http://www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk/>

The project is also talking to South West Water about the existing ground-water drinking water abstraction and sewerage outlet pipe in the estuary and has submitted initial proposals to Devon County Council for an embankment with culverts to raise and protect South Farm Road, although detailed technical drawings have not yet been developed.

Providing funding can be assured, the scheme will provide new and improved access and amenities including maintaining the South West Coast Path and relocating the Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club. It will also protect the old municipal tip in the flood plain and deliver compensatory habitat for the construction and maintenance of flood defences in the Exe Estuary such as Starcross, Cockwood and Exmouth.

Dr Samuel Bridgewater, Head of Wildlife and Conservation, CDE

LORP – The OVA View

The Lower Otter Restoration Project is a plan to return the Otter estuary to a more natural state of salt marsh and inter-tidal habitat and enhance its attractiveness for both wildlife and human visitors. In the early 1800s the current embankments were built alongside the river, cutting off the sea's access to salt marshes and creating extra grazing for the adjacent farms. It also created problems of trapped floodwater behind the embankment.

The Project has been prompted by considerations of long-term sustainability of the area. Maintenance of the embankments has become more difficult and expensive as they age, and steadily rising sea levels and more extreme weather events have exacerbated the problems – as was demonstrated by the collapse of a small section of the bank just north of Lime Kiln car park on Friday 14th September. It is recognised that eventually a major storm would destroy the embankments irreparably, cutting off the South West Coast Path and the walk up to White Bridge and disrupting access to South Farm. This is a certainty within the next 30-50 years, but because of the unpredictability of extreme weather events, it could happen next week!

In addition to Clinton Devon Estates and the Environment Agency, who are interested in creating more rare inter-tidal wildlife habitat and have access to funding, a number of other bodies who have statutory, management and environmental interests in the area are involved in the consultation and planning process. The OVA has a representative on both the Technical Steering Group and the Stakeholder Consultations.

The OVA Executive support the Project in principle, because we understand that change is inevitable and we believe that a managed process of change would be better than waiting for an unplanned disaster. Our role in the consultation is to ensure that the Project gives due consideration to our members' and residents' interests – maintaining access for walking, both the long-distance way and the short strolls for wildlife watching – protecting the road access to White Bridge and South Farm – enhancing the wildlife habitat and if possible creating new access and viewing points – ensuring no greater risk of flooding to properties and vulnerable areas (like the old buried rubbish tip near White Bridge).

Haylor Lass, Vice Chair

Dormouse Survey

If you have noticed that for the last few weeks there have been black boxes placed in the hedges along the path from the Budleigh Lime Kiln car park up to White Bridge, and also along the narrow path on the West side then we can reveal all.

The traps are dormouse (hair) traps set by fully licensed personnel from Jakobs who have been commissioned by the EA to undertake protected species surveys as part of the Lower Otter Restoration Project (see previous page). The boxes were put in place in May and will be kept in place until September 2018 (they will be picked up on the last survey visit).



The location of the boxes is marked with tape so the ecologists can easily find them again on the next visit. Each survey visit is a month apart and the vegetation can grow dramatically between each visit making the boxes difficult to locate if they don't mark them.

Wasps in the Willow

Those walking beside the River Otter below Otterton recently may have noticed lots of wasps in the willow trees. It's often thought that wasps are attracted to willows by aphids that exude sweet honeydew. But an on-line search unearthed an alternative explanation. These willows have been recently pruned and this results in the trees producing high concentrations of salicylates, (Salicylic acid), in their sap. This chemical closely resembles wasp pheromone which naturally attracts them.

So, if you plan to prune your willows best leave it until the wasps are no longer active.

Geoff Porter

Many congratulations to OVA member David White who has had one of his fabulous photographs selected for the 'Countryfile' calendar 2019. Don't forget to buy your copy in aid of 'Children in Need'.

British Dragonfly Society Common Clubtail Dragonfly Survey



Despite its name, the Common Clubtail Dragonfly, (*Gomphus vulgatissimus*) pictured left is becoming increasingly rare. It is now a 'Near Threatened' insect on the British Red List. The Common Clubtail is a quite large dragonfly, 45-50mm in length and 28-33mm across its hind-wings with a black and yellow abdomen. As its name suggests, the body becomes enlarged toward its tail.

It is mainly found along the Welsh/English border, S.W. Wales and Central Southern England. It is rarely seen in S.W. England.

Nevertheless the national survey focused on rivers where it might be found including the River Otter. Designated rivers were divided into survey areas one kilometre square. O.V.A. members, Bob Wiltshire with Lisa Boorman and Geoff Porter volunteered to survey two squares above Otterton, Geoff from Ricketty Bridge to the Colaton Raleigh - Burnt House Farm footpath and Bob and Lisa up-river from there to Wrinkly Cliff below Newton Popleford.

Each species of dragonfly prefers different types of water, from still ponds to fast-flowing rivers and streams. The Common Clubtail prefers calm-flowing sandy bottomed streams, rivers and ponds generally avoiding fast flowing rocky-bottomed waters. The dragonfly is on the wing from mid-April to mid-August. The survey comprised of three visits on still, warm, sunny days with temperatures above 17°C when dragonfly larvae climb from the water and emerge as adults leaving behind their larval case (exuviae). Volunteers were tasked to look for these cases as well as adult dragonflies by searching the waters' edge. On the lower section a footpath runs alongside the Otter whilst the upper section runs through Clinton Devon Estates farmland. The Estate kindly granted Bob and Lisa permission to access the riverbanks but on both sections reaching the waters' edge was very difficult due to thick vegetation. Survey by boat was not possible and this restricted the ability to thoroughly survey the river.

Unsurprisingly no Common Clubtails were found though other species of damsel and dragonfly were.

In the early surveys, Broad-bodied Chaser, Large Red Damsel and both Beautiful and Banded Demoiselle (pictured) were seen. Over the later surveys Banded Demoiselles proliferated and were by far the most common species overall. Common Goldenring, Common Blue Damselfly and Southern Hawker were also seen.



Should you wish to know more about the results of this survey, visit <https://british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/clubtail-count>

Geoff Porter

River Otter beaver update

At the start of the River Otter Beaver Trial in 2015 two beaver families lived on the river. Now Devon Wildlife Trust have revealed that eight family groups live in the river's catchment. Four of these beaver families live on the main river, while the other four have taken up residence on streams which flow into it.

In summer 2018 three of the beaver families are known to have had kits. Devon Wildlife Trust think that four out of the remaining five families may also have had kits, but verifying this is hard due to the secretive, nocturnal nature of the beavers, and the thick summer growth of bankside plants.

The family group who in previous years had been very visible close to Otterton has been much less in evidence during the summer of 2018 as they have re-located to private land nearby, beyond the view of visitors.

In the coming winter it is anticipated that kits born in 2016 will begin to establish their own territories and form more new beaver families.

The River Otter Beaver Trial is scheduled to continue until 2020 when the Defra will make a decision about the long term future.



Your invitation to the

**OVA
CHRISTMAS
PARTY**

Monday, 17th December

Woodbury Park Golf Club



OVA CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Executive Committee is delighted to invite you and your friends to the OVA Christmas Party to be held at Woodbury Park on Monday, December 17th. It will be a great opportunity to participate in the social side of our organisation, spend time with old friends and maybe meet some new ones. We particularly extend a welcome to single members and new members. Please feel free to invite non-members to join in the fun.

*The evening will commence with drinks at 7 pm, followed by a three-course meal in the Greg Norman Suite. As well as delicious food and good company, there will be piano accompaniment, a table quiz, prize raffle and the popular Harlequin Strummers.
Why not book some places right now!*

The cost is £30.00 per person. This will include a welcome drink (punch or fruit juice), a Christmas meal with choices to suit most tastes and coffee. Wine can be pre-ordered via Emma Woolley at email:

woodburypark.events@theclubcompany.com

Tickets are available until November 9th and will be mailed to you on receipt of: (1) a completed application form (multiple forms for large groups), (2) a cheque payable to the OVA, and (3) a stamped sae. Send these to: Christmas Dinner, OVA, PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN. Also indicate each person's choice of food plus any dietary requirements and the name of anyone you would like to sit with (tables of 8-10).

Alternatively, you can receive an application form by e-mail (if you've given us your address), which should be filled in and returned. You will receive an e-ticket once you have made a BACS transfer to the OVA bank account.





Starters

*Cauliflower Cheese Soup with Apple and Watercress
Chicken Terrine with Roast Chicken Crackers & House pickles
Crispy Mussels, Spiced Tomato with Curry Mayonnaise*

Main Courses

*Roast Devonshire Turkey with Smoked Bacon and Sourdough
Bread Sauce and all the trimmings
Slow-roasted Belly of Pork, crispy Cheek, Black Pudding &
Mustard Mayonnaise
Squash Risotto, toasted nuts & seeds, crispy Kale
and Brown Butter
All served with seasonal vegetables and roast potatoes*

Desserts

*Traditional Christmas Pudding with Clotted Cream
Warm Rice Pudding with Gingerbread Crumble & Baked Apple
Stilton and biscuits with grapes and celery*



Christmas Party – Application for tickets

Please send me Tickets

Name(s) (2).....

Address

Postcode Tel:

Email address

I enclose a cheque for £

Menu selection (please tick)

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Starter | Soup* |
| | Terrine* |
| | Mussels |
| Main Course | Turkey* |
| | Pork* |
| | Risotto* |
| Dessert | Christmas Pudding* |
| | Rice Pudding* |
| | Cheese |

| Person 1 | Person 2 |
|----------|----------|
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Please add 'gf' if you require the gluten free version of starred* items

I would like to be seated with

Any queries or prefer to get this form electronically? Please email info@ova.org.uk

Don't forget to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your application form.

Himalayan Balsam Awareness Event



On a bright Sunday morning in mid-August, four members of the OVA, sporting the new corporate polo shirts, set up a gazebo near to Otterton bridge to raise awareness of the problem that Himalayan Balsam plants pose to the environment in general and to the Otter river bank, in particular.

The ongoing campaign to first clear its tributaries was described. Demonstrations of how to dispose of these unwanted alien plants and safety precautions when working near to water courses were emphasized and informative literature (including OVA membership forms) were distributed. We had a good response, probably encouraged by a large bowl of free sweets which were popular with the children and some guilty looking adults!

David Hatch, NEC Chair

A Walk for Everyone - Winter Programme 2018/19

As I am writing this in Coverack on the Lizard in Cornwall where they had flash flooding last July, the wind is blowing from ex Hurricane Helene and the remains of Hurricane Florence are promised next week. We therefore turn our thoughts to walks closer to our locality, in the Otter Valley and on the Commons. Please have a look at the programme, we have several morning walks of 5 miles or so duration. Further afield, we have three Dartmoor walks on offer, one starting at Widecombe in the Moor with new walk leaders, David and Rosie Conner. The second starts in Yarner Wood with Mike and Paula, and Stella is leading her popular Castle Drogo Walk again. Colin is leading our annual bird watching walk along the Otter and Iain is taking us further afield along the Great Western Canal from Tiverton to the hamlet of Lowdells. Please also don't forget to join Brian on his "Sir Walter Raleigh Anniversary walk".

Given the advanced notice the Newsletter provides, please check the OVA website for any late and unavoidable alterations to the walks schedule and travel arrangements.

We look forward to seeing you on a walk somewhere soon.

Heather Fereday

Events Programme – October 2018 to January 2019

Please consult the OVA Website for late alterations or additional information.

All OS references are to Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale Explorer maps

Monday, 8th October - 10.30am - WALK

Start: Car park at Widecombe in the Moor (OL 28, SX 720 768). 8 miles, 4 hours

"Walking with the ancients"

Meet at Newton Poppleford Rec Ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.30am to share cars or meet at the start point.

A moderate 8 mile circuit with spectacular views and evidence of ancient dwellings and final resting places. We walk up from Widecombe in the Moor to Bonehill and pass beneath Chinkwell and Honeybag Tors to Natsworthy. Via Heathercombe we proceed to the abandoned settlement of Grimspound.

We then follow the Two Moors Way to Hameldown Tor (529m) and along the ridge of Hamel Down to regain Widecombe. Quiet lanes and moorland tracks. Bring a picnic.

Walk leaders: David and Rosie Conner, 07831 406959

Saturday, 13th October - 10.00am - WALK

Meet at Newton Poppleford CP off School Lane (OS 115, SY 065 848) at 9.00am to share cars or meet at the start point.

“Yarner Wood, Trendlebere Down, Becky Falls and Houndtor Ridge”

Start: Yarner Wood CP (OS OL28, SX 785 789 / TQ13 9LJ) 6 miles

The walk commences with a climb through towering stands of ancient oak woodland drenched with lichen and ferns and past bird hides which are famous for spotting pied flycatchers, lesser spotted woodpeckers and wood warblers. We exit the wood at North Lodge, the most westerly point of the wood and commence a short walk over the western side of Trendlebere Down. The next stage is a walk along the path below Houndtor Ridge to arrive at Holn Brake where we enter Yarner Wood again. No facilities en route, so bring a picnic lunch.

Walk Leaders: Paula & Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

Wednesday, 17th October - 10.30am - WALK

Start: East Budleigh CP (OS 115, SY 066 848) 5-6 miles 2.5 hours

"Squabmoor and Bystock"

A walk up to the commons, taking in Squabmoor Reservoir and Bystock Ponds. Steep in places, but promising great views if the weather is good, and perhaps some wildlife. Optional lunch in the Sir Walter Raleigh pub afterwards.

Walk leader: Penny Kurowski, 01395 742942 pandp@kurowski.me.uk

Saturday, 20th October - 10.30am - WALK

Start: Branscombe Village Hall, (OS 115, SY 197 887) 8 miles, 4.5 hours

“Bootiful Branscombe!”

Parking at the Village Hall (donation requested). Anyone who can offer others a lift or needs one should contact the walk leader. The walk circles the centre of Branscombe giving good views of this charming village. It then follows the SW coast path eastwards to Branscombe Mouth for lunch at the Sea Shanty Café and continues via the Under Hooken to Beer. Returning along the cliff top (with impressive views of Lyme Bay on a clear day) completes a figure-of-eight. Paths are generally well-made, but can be steep and/or rocky over short sections.

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway 01395 488739 / 07887936280

Thursday 25th October – 10.00am - WALK

Start: The village of Rawridge. Meet under footpath sign at entrance to Ottervale Close, which is the first right turn after entering the village from the Honiton direction. (OS 115, SY 200 063), 4.5 miles, around 2hrs+.

There is plenty of parking in the Close itself and also in several spots along the road that runs through the village.

“An Upper Otter potter”

After crossing the infant Otter, we climb steadily up to and then south along the whaleback of Hartridge, with lovely views on either side, before descending to the pretty isolated hamlet of Beacon. Here, we turn back down into the Otter valley towards Pound Farm, before heading north along the bridleway that runs through the ancient Mobuns estate and then back over the bridge to the cars.

Walk leader: Chris Gooding, 01395 265707/07852 630431

Monday, 29th October - 10.00am - WALK

Start at East Budleigh Church CP (OS 115, SY 065 848) 8 miles, 4 hours plus picnic lunch

“Sir Walter Raleigh Anniversary Walk”

To mark the 400th anniversary of the death of Sir Walter Raleigh, this walk links places associated with his life: East Budleigh, Hayes Barton, Bicton Common, Colaton Raleigh, along the River Otter back to East Budleigh.

(For those preferring a shorter walk, buses run from Colaton Raleigh to East Budleigh at 6 minutes past the hour)

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

Tuesday, 30th October – TALK – *Wartime Dalditch Camp* - see page 7

Friday, 2nd November - 10.15am – WALK

Meet: Newton Poppleford Rec Ground (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.15am to share cars or meet at the start point.

“Castles, hills and autumnal colour along the River Teign”

Start: Castle Drogo Car Park (NT) (OS 191, SX 725 902), at 10.15am, 6/7 miles, 4 hours + lunch. Note NT Membership cards will be required for free parking.

Described as perhaps the most famous walk on Dartmoor, this walk extends the usual route to take in Cranford Castle - an old Iron Age Fort. We start our walk at Castle Drogo where we follow the famous Hunters Path with panoramic views across Dartmoor and to the Teign Gorge below descending to Fingle Bridge for a coffee break. It's then a short stroll along the river before heading into Hore Woods and a steep climb up to the top of Cranford Castle for lunch. After admiring the view across to Castle Drogo we descend to the river Teign and walk alongside

the river admiring the autumn colours then climb back up to Castle Drogo for tea and cakes. Please bring a packed lunch.

Walk Leader: Stella French, 01395 445724

Wednesday 7th November - 10.30am - WALK

Start: Littleham Church (OS 115, SY 028 813) 4 miles, around 2.5 hours

"Up, Down and Around the High Land of Orcombe"

An immensely varied walk through hidden farmland, eventually emerging onto fields high above the sea, with far ranging views across Lyme Bay. A lovely descent takes us to the obelisk above Orcombe Point and then onto the beach at Rodney Bay. Then follows a gorgeous stroll along one of Devon's most beautiful stretches of sand towards Straight Point, where we head up to and through the Devon Cliffs holiday park at Sandy Bay and then back down to the church at Littleham.

Walk Leader : Chris Gooding, 01395 265707 / 07852630431

Tuesday, 13th November - 9.30am - Guided Bird Watching WALK

Meet: the South East corner of Lime Kiln Car park (at the corner by the beach/estuary) at 9.30am (OS 115, SY 073 819).

A leisurely walk along the river Otter watching and identifying the arriving winter birds with Colin Randall, a local member of Devon Birds. No equipment or knowledge necessary, although a pair of binoculars would be useful if you have them. Wrap up warmly as it's not a vigorous walk, rather a stroll with lots of stops.

Walk Leader: Colin Randall, 01395 444302

Thursday 22nd November – 10.00am – WALK

Start at the Bowd Inn car park (overflow area if not lunching) (OS 115, SY 108 900) 5½ miles, 2½ hours

"Thanksgiving Day"

Walk through autumnal Harpford woods, along riverside paths to Tipton St John village and back up the hill on the gently graded old railway track. Woodland paths are muddy. Optional lunch at the end, including roast turkey if desired.

Walk Leader: Haylor Lass 01395 568786

Wednesday, 28th November – 10.00am – WALK

Start: East Budleigh Church Car Park (OS 115, SY 065 848), 9 Miles, 4.5 hours.

"Coast and Country"

A varied walk giving an ever-changing perspective using the coastal path, local roads and tracks. Visiting Ladram Bay, High Peak and Windgate, returning inland via Otterton and Bicton. Some hilly sections. Please bring a packed lunch.

Walk Leader: Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

Thursday 29th November – TALK – *Wastewater treatment in the Otter Valley*
see page 7

Friday, 30th November - 10.45am - WALK

Start: Topsham Road, Exeter bus stop just past the Crematorium entrance (OS 115 SX, 939 907) at 10.45am, 6.5miles, 4 hours including lunch stop.

“Exeter Green Circle – Part One”

Explore the green outskirts of Exeter – you may be surprised at what you find! This walk takes us from Topsham Road to a coffee stop at the community cafe in 13th Century St Katherine's Priory. We then walk on to Iron Bridge in the city centre through a succession of parks and open spaces. You can then either travel straight home or pop into the city centre for a bit of Christmas shopping. Bring a picnic lunch unless the weather is awful, in which case we will find a cafe.

The start point of the walk is on the 57 bus route. You can take the 9.40am number 58 bus from Budleigh Salterton Public Hall and change at Exmouth Road for the 57. If travelling from Newton Poppleford, take the 9.49am number 9 bus and change at Livery Dole, taking the 57 towards Brixington. The start time for this walk is dependent on the bus bringing walkers (and leaders) from Budleigh Salterton, if you are travelling independently please be at the start by 10.45 and wait for us!

Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski, 01395 742942 pandp@kurowski.me.uk

Tuesday 4th December - 10.30am - WALK

Start: Otterton Green, by lower bus stop (OS 115 SY 080 853) 4 miles, 1.5 hours

“Otterton and a little bit of everything”

A varied walk south from the village before crossing Clamour Bridge and gently climbing Colliver Lane to reach the coast path at Crab Ledge. The walk along it north affords wonderful views, until we turn inland to reach Stantyway Farm and find Lea Lane. We now continue inland between fields, before turning to descend, briefly very steeply, back down into the peaceful lane of Behind Hayes at Pepper's Corner, tucked away at the back of the village. We follow this lane to Roper's Lane, which soon leads us back down to the Green and a choice of locations for refreshments if required!

Walk Leader: Chris Gooding, 01395 265707 / 07852630431

Monday, 10th December - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Colaton Raleigh Church (OS 115, SY 082 872) 6 miles, 3 hours

“An ideal walk for a short winter's day”

Along the riverside, up and down green lanes and over the commons, visiting Dotton, Goosemoor and Naps Lane. Optional lunch at the Otter Inn.

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

Friday, 14th December, 10.00am – WALK

Start: Knowle Village Hall CP (OS 115, SY 052 827), 7½ Miles, 4 hours

“Exploring the Western Front: a Mince Pie Walk”

A largely level walk to Orcombe Point, the Western Gateway to the Jurassic Coast, using the disused railway track to Littleham church, and attractive rural paths. Distant views across the Exe estuary to Berry Head before the gradual climb back along the coastal path to West Down Beacon with views to Beer and Portland. (Yes, even in December....sometimes!) Please bring a picnic.

Walk Leader: Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

Monday, 17th December – 9.00am - WALK

Meet: Newton Poppleford Rec CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.00am 11+ miles, 4.5-5 hours

“A Winter Canal Walk”

Drive to Tiverton and leave a car/cars at car park, EX16 4HX (£3 to park). Drive on to Lowdwells and park at TA21 0JY. Start the walk at 10.30am or earlier depending on car parking and navigation. Walk back to Tiverton making a linear walk. Please bring a packed lunch.

Walk Leader: Iain Ure, 01395 568822

Please let Iain know by Friday, 14th December if you intend to join the walk either by phone on 01395 568822 or email on urewoods@globalnet.co.uk.

Monday, 17th December – 7.00pm - OVA Christmas Party!!

Saturday, 5th January - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Knowle Village Hall, CP (OS 115, SY 052 827) 6 miles, 3 hours

“A New Years Revolution”

A circular walk visiting Bystock ponds, heath and woodlands. Optional lunch afterwards at the Dog and Donkey.

Walk Leader: Steve Hagger, 01395 442631

Tuesday, 8th January - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Crook Plantation (OS 115, SY 057 866), 5 miles, 2.5 hours

"Woodbury Castle and Colaton Raleigh Common"

An invigorating walk up to Woodbury Castle then along the East Devon Way to Hawkerland Cross before skirting the Common back to the start.

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

Saturday, 12th January - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Joney's Cross CP (OS 115, SY 0574898) 5 miles, 2½ hours.

“Colaton Raleigh Common”

A walk along paths, tracks and lanes across Colaton Raleigh Common and the Hawkerland Valley.

Walk Leader: Graham Knapton 01395 445872.

Saturday, 19th January - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Wheathills Plantation car park (OS 115, SY 040 848) 5.8 miles, 3 hours

“Three Plantations”

The walk takes in Shortwood Common, Dalditch, and Bystock Fishponds.

Walk Leader - Sarah Westacott, 01395 277644

Thursday 24th January – 10.30am – WALK

Start at the Lime Kiln CP, Budleigh Salterton, (OS 115, SY 073 821) (Pay & Display, or 157 bus from Newton Poppleford 9.16am, Otterton 9.29am, East Budleigh 9.34am and alight at Granary Lane to walk a mile to the start)

“The Lower Otter”

Level, easy 6 mile walk alongside the river Otter from sea to Newton Poppleford Bridge. See things you didn't notice in the summer when the leaves hid so much. Return by the 1.15pm bus – arriving Otterton 1.29pm, East Budleigh 1.34pm, Granary Lane 1.39pm (and walk the mile to Lime Kiln), Public Hall 1.44pm. Option to do only half the walk - either catch an earlier return bus at Otterton, or join the walk at 11.30am at Otterton.

Walk Leader: Haylor Lass 01395 568786

Wednesday, 30th January - 10.50am - WALK

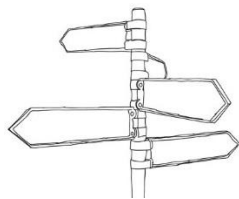
Start underneath Iron Bridge (OS 114, SX 915 928) at 10.50am, 6.5miles, 4 hours

“Exeter Green Circle – Part Two”

This walk takes us from Exeter city centre out around Redhills and then skirts the western part of the city before crossing the canal and river to arrive back at Topsham Road. We can then travel back to Exmouth by the 57 bus, with connections to onward journeys. Please bring a picnic lunch – if the weather is awful we will find a pub instead.

The start point of the walk can be reached by taking the 9.40am number 58 bus from Budleigh Salterton Public Hall (arrives Exeter city centre 10.35am), the 9.40am number 57 bus from Exmouth (arrives 10.23am) or the 9.49am number 9 bus from Newton Poppleford (arrives 10.24am), and then walking to Lower North Street, which is under the Iron Bridge.

Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski, 01395 742942 pandp@kurowski.me.uk



Lost Ways – an Opportunity

You may have heard that 1st January 2026 is the cut-off date for adding historic paths to what is known as the Definitive Map: the official record of the public's rights of way in an area. When a path is on this map, it not only means we have a right to walk on it, but it is much easier to protect and maintain. However, any path which came into existence before 1949 and that has not been added to the map by 2026 will be lost – forever!”

Devon County Council (DCC) is carrying out a Definitive Map review on a parish by parish basis but has not got to parishes in the OVA area yet. The review is an ideal time to flag up “Lost Ways”, and we think DCC will get to Budleigh Salterton and East Budleigh with Bicton parishes next year. If there are routes that we know people are using (but are not recorded as Rights of Way), then now is the time to start collecting evidence and submitting it, as it can take time to prepare.

This is a volunteering opportunity for an interested OVA member. It is not a task to be undertaken lightly, as it requires gathering evidence and spending time poring over old maps and comparing them with the Definitive Map. However, if you have some time on your hands, like desk-based research and have access to a computer (many of the relevant maps are freely available on the internet) then this could be a good project for you!

There is plenty of information available on how to go about the project so, if you are interested, please get in touch and I can pass on what I have found out so far. You can also read more on the Ramblers' website at www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way.aspx

If you are aware of paths which have been used in the past, but are no longer public rights of way, and you have some evidence of this, then please get in touch and we can pass the information to the relevant parish Footpath Officer to raise when the Definitive Map review happens, or to a volunteer who has decided to work on the project.

Penny Kurowski, Honorary Secretary

East Budleigh Bats

In June the OVA lent their two bat detectors to some East Budleigh residents who wished to monitor the bat movements around the Pound in the village, July being the optimum time to do this. In return the OVA asked for a report on their findings. This is a summary.

East Budleigh is a haven for bats especially one site: a barn with access on the eastern side of the Pound in the village. Using our detectors and a more sophisticated one connected to a computer, they have recorded as many as 14 of the 18 known species in the UK. Bats can be identified by the frequency and pattern of their echo-locating pulses. This confirms and extends the survey conducted by Richard Green Ecology for Clinton Devon Estates which found: the rare Greater Horseshoe (roosting); Lesser Horseshoe (roosting); the very rare Grey Long Eared (roosting); Natterer (roosting); Soprano and Pipistrelle (roosting). These findings make this one of the most species rich sites in Devon. Of these, the finding of Grey Long Eared, Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats are, perhaps, the most exciting as they are some of the rarest bat species in the UK.

Those who saw the BBC Spotlight programme, presented by Adrian Campbell, or listened to him on Radio Devon, on 9th August, will have heard about the three Grey Long Eared Bats in East Budleigh, one of which was found dead, allowing for positive identification and viewers to see.

Grey Long Eared Bat

The UK population of these is of high conservation concern because it appears to be declining, fragmented, with several maternity colonies being lost in the past few decades. There are only eight known maternity colonies left in the UK and females have only one pup a year. The overall estimated population size is around 1,000 making it one of the rarest of UK mammals.

The Grey Long Eared Bat (*Plecotus austriacus*) is a medium sized bat with ears nearly as long as its body. They are enchanting creatures, who hunt for moths, crane flies, woodlice and beetles. Their foraging mode is both gleaning of insects from surfaces and slow insect hawking. The bat is highly manoeuvrable, being able to adjust its flight mode to the



foraging habitat, flying fast and straight in open habitats, and adopting a slower, fluttering flight when foraging within vegetation structures.

The echolocation pulses produced by these bats are very quiet so they can only be detected from short distances. This is thought to help with finding insects on foliage as well as not warning moths of their presence. Sometimes they do not bother to use echolocation but can listen for the tiny sounds that a moth's wings make as the moth warms up, as its ears are specially attuned to these noises. The extinction risk is high due to its habitat specialisation of foraging close to or within the vegetation, its small foraging ranges and limited long distance dispersal ability as a result of its flight morphology.

In the UK, grey long-eared bats tend to live in close proximity to human settlements and roost almost exclusively in man-made roosts making the barn in East Budleigh an important site. However the barn is currently subject to an application for planning permission (18/1464). If approved the barn will be demolished, the surrounding habitat that the bats feed off, rich in moths and other invertebrates will be disturbed, and the safe linear corridors the bats use between their roost and their feeding grounds could be fragmented .

So far the formal applicant's survey does not identify the type of roost. This is particularly important as some species like the Grey Long Eared bat are so rare that research advice from the University of Bristol states that maternity roosts should not be destroyed under any circumstances as this would compromise the favourable conservation status of the species, particularly as research has shown maternity roosts of this species do not respond to mitigation measures.

As a result residents have formed their own conservation group: The East Budleigh Parish Wildlife Protection and Conservation Group; and are seeking to raise awareness of the threat to the favourable conservation status of these and the other rare bats on the site. The Group recognise the need to protect these wonderful mammals, their roosts, foraging habitats and the landscape that links them.

David Daniel

Walk Reports

All walk reports and accompanying photographs can be found on the OVA website. Below is just an abridged selection. Many thanks to all contributors.

Dartmoor views, woods and a Stannary town visit: Friday 6th July

It was a very hot day when we met up in Ashburton for the start of our circular walk followed by a historic town trail. We set out across fields and along the river to Cuddyford Cross. Once here we continued to follow the river Ashburn into the welcome shade of the woods. After a pleasant stroll we knew the easy walking would have to change as we started to climb out of the woods along a lane towards Owlacombe Cross. Small glimpses of the surrounding hills became visible through gaps in the hedgerow and we stopped at one of these for a coffee break and to admire the views. Refreshed we headed back down into town to change our walking boots for lighter footwear to start the town trail.

Ashburton is one of four stannary towns in Devon which relates to the administrative functions connected with the mining of tin on Dartmoor. It also has a historic woollen industry which had many mills along the river and a wealth of old buildings. The other main feature of Ashburton is that it has the ancient Saxon office of the Portreeve which is still functioning today.

It was by now getting fairly hot as we followed a historic trail around the town noting the former gaming house, its slates carved with different suits from a pack of cards, Fish Scale house with its carved fish tail slates, the 18th Century water



conduit and across the road the former Golden Lion pub (home of the Monster Raving Loony Party until 2000). The St Lawrence Chapel is one of the oldest buildings and was originally a private chapel for the Bishop of Exeter. In 1314 the building was given to the town, administered by the Guild of St Lawrence and led by the Portreeve on condition that a Chantry School was maintained there. Next we strolled across the river noting the stone slabs on the river bed where wool was washed. We headed for St Gudula's Cross and Well after skirting around St Andrew's Church (pictured). The cross is thought to be 14th Century and the waters in the well were said to be good for weak eyes.

Back into Ashburton and welcome cool drinks in the Exeter Inn beer garden. This pub is the oldest in Ashburton dating from 1130 and is said to have had Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh as regular drinkers. Raleigh was arrested here and then imprisoned in the Tower of London on the 19th July 1603.

An enjoyable walk on a very hot day.

Stella French

Take the train for a pub walk: Monday July 16th 2018

You might think Sowton an improbable destination for an OVA walk; the name brings to mind the uninspiring functionality of a trading estate and serried ranks of cars at the Park-and-Ride, with a constant accompaniment of traffic noise. However, Paul & Penny were to demonstrate that the village that gave its name to these eyesores is in fact a haven of rural tranquillity.

Boarding the train at Exmouth, we skirted the sunlit glassy waters of the Exe estuary to alight at Newcourt station, opened three years ago to serve the housing development on the former naval depot site. Fourteen in all, plus Buster the dog, then set forth down Old Rydon Lane to the medieval bridge and causeway at Clyst St. Mary. The bridge was already 300 years old at the time of The Prayerbook Rebellion when 6,000 Cornish and Devonian rebels attempted to hold it against the King's army. They were routed, with over 1,000 killed and more drowned in the marshes; 900 prisoners were massacred later that day, and the village of Clyst St. Mary was burned.

A footpath took us across the fields to Sowton, with its Heavitree stone church - grade I listed, despite being significantly rebuilt in the 19th century. Here a chance encounter with the trustee of the village hall enabled us to visit the charming stone brick and thatch grade II listed former school, and gain an insight into community life within the village.



Heading on in a circular route back to Clyst St. Mary, we enjoyed tantalising glimpses of Bishop's Court behind trees beyond the fields; another grade I listed building, this country house was originally the Palace for medieval Bishops of Exeter, since significantly altered in Victorian gothic style. Many thanks to Paul and Penny for leading this walk.

Gruff

A Monument to Wellington, Tuesday 21 August 2018

Eight OVA members began the walk at the Wellington Monument car park on a bright but rather chilly late August morning. We didn't see the Monument at the start, as this treat was to be saved until our return! The first part of the walk was on a ridge on the Blackdown Hills and led us through lovely woodland and fields, with wonderful views over towards Haldon Hill, Dartmoor, the Brendon Hills and the Quantocks. We slowly descended on paths and lanes before eventually reaching the River Culm. A walk along the river bank brought us into Culmstock where we stopped for lunch. Of course we knew that, having walked downhill for so long, the next part would be challenging, especially as we could see our target, the famous stone Beehive, on the ridge far above us.



After a steady, long uphill climb we reached the building, a unique beehive shaped beacon hut said to date from Armada times which was used as part of a chain of fire signals. The remainder of the walk was through heathland, where the heather and gorse were in full bloom, then some woodland and field paths before coming upon the Wellington Monument itself. Planned after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the original design for a statue and plinth was pared down to an obelisk when the money ran out. At 175 feet, it is a striking landmark on the Blackdown Hills and is the tallest three sided monument in the world. Unfortunately it is still fenced off and closed to the public until enough funds have been raised to fully repair it.

Thanks to Iain Ure who led the walk and provided such interesting historical background.

Rosemary Hatch

Answer to Picture Quiz: I am a Fly, going under the wonderful name of the Waisted Bee-grabber - *Physocephala rufipes*. (Many thanks to Geoff Porter for the photograph and Lesley Kerry for identification).

The Otter Valley Association

Executive Committee (01395)

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------|
| Chairman | Bob Wiltshire | 444395 |
| Vice-chairman | Haylor Lass | 568786 |
| Hon Secretary | Penny Kurowski | 742942 |
| Hon Treasurer | Jon Roseway | 488739 |

Committee Chairmen

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Natural Environment | David Hatch | 01392 444290 |
| 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 | Jon Roseway | 488739 |
| Otterton | Pat & Geoff Porter | 567055 |
| Colaton Raleigh | <i>vacancy</i> | |
| Newton Poppleford | Haylor Lass | 568786 |

Other Executive Committee Members

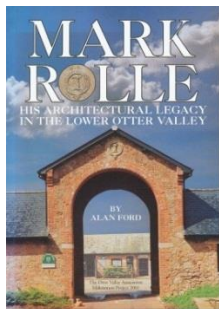
| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Membership Secretary | Clive Bowman | 446892 |
| | membership@ova.org.uk | |
| Publicity Secretary | <i>vacancy</i> | |

Other Contacts

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Webmasters | David Daniel | 445960 |
| | Martin Smith | 442333 |
| Talks Organiser | Geoff Lake | 446828 |
| Walks Organisers | Heather Fereday | 446796 |
| | Stella French | 445724 |
| Newsletter Distributors | Peter & Wendy Youngworth | 07718582535 |
| Newsletter Editor | Jacqui Baldwin | 567599 |
| | jacquibaldwin@btinternet.com | |

Publications: Visit www.ova.org.uk or for book sales or email booksales@ova.org.uk

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 overview of how a large landed estate was managed in the last 40 years of the 19th century.

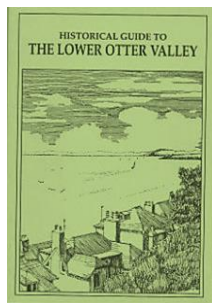
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



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 20th 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 Centres and in other outlets around the valley.