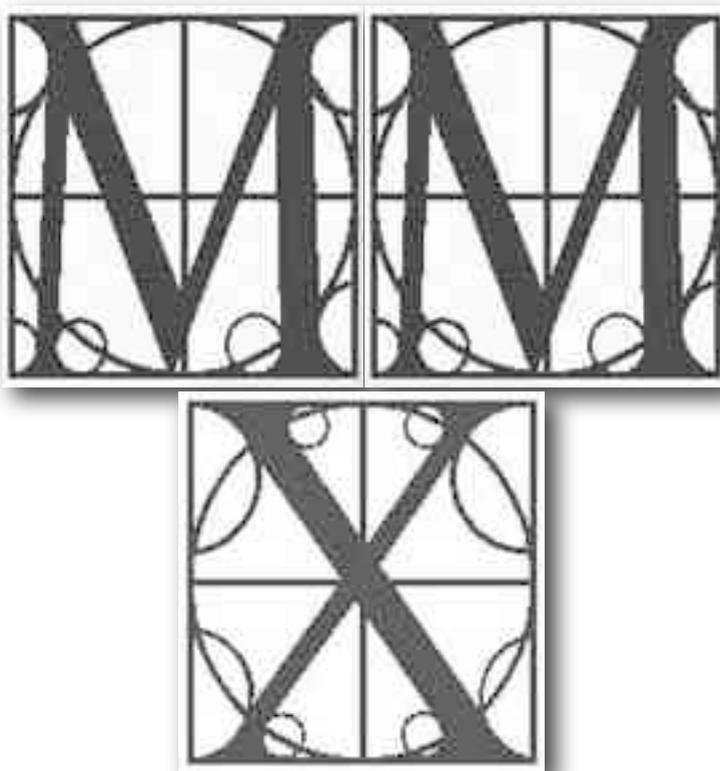


OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

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Chairman's Message



Happy New Year to all. The OVA's programme makes an early start this year with visits to Sidbury Manor in March and the Tale Valley Trust in April as well as our walks and talks. Let's hope we will have some fine spring weather to enjoy.

One of our longest serving parish representatives, Alan Jones, stood down from his role in Colaton Raleigh before Christmas. His involvement with the OVA and the Parish Council meant that he was uniquely knowledgeable and experienced. The Executive Committee will miss his contributions to our discussions and we thank him for his long standing commitment to the Association. We are very grateful to Neville Bennett, who also serves as Secretary of the Natural Environment Sub-Committee, for agreeing to join the Committee as a new representative.

A special thank you to the Events Committee Chairman, Nicky Daniel, and her team for their hard work in planning our activities in December. The Christmas Tree Festival in the Methodist Church enabled local organisations to provide a seasonal focus for their aims, revealing the imagination, artistic skills and creativity of members. No doubt the Christmas Party at Woodbury Park lived up to expectations, through the careful planning and efforts of all the volunteers involved.

At the time of writing there is no news from English Heritage about the proposed listing of the maritime buildings in Budleigh Salterton, nor of when the planning application for the Longboat Café will be brought back to the Development Management Committee. There should be the opportunity to make representations on the more detailed plans when they are published.

Some members may be aware that the Civic Trust, to which we were affiliated, no longer exists. Efforts are being made to create a new national umbrella body for civic amenity associations and also to gather support for a South West body. We are keeping an eye on events without committing ourselves to participate in either at present. More information is available via the website www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk.

Helen Tickle



From the Editor



Happy New Year! I hope that Father Christmas brought you everything you wanted. As we enter the new decade the articles in this edition reflect some of the hopes and concerns that we carry with us as we put the Noughties behind us.

The first article, by Patrick Hamilton, on sea level rises is in two parts and is based on a presentation he has given to the Natural Environment Committee. This is something that will have an impact on us all in the future, especially in the Otter Valley. The Copenhagen Summit is in progress as I write and we do not yet know the full outcome. The first part of Patrick's article looks at the global picture while in the next edition of the Newsletter he will focus on the local impact.

We also have an article from Alan Jones on the demise of local democracy in the management of our footpaths. I have had the pleasure of knowing Alan since I first joined the OVA and know how passionately he has served the OVA in all his roles. I feel sure he will be missed now he has stepped down from the Executive Committee and I wish him well for the future.

I am continually impressed with the work of the Events Committee. You will see in the 'Forthcoming Events' and 'Diary' sections how hard they work to provide an interesting and varied programme of walks, talks and events. Not only that but they have fun doing it. Nicky Daniel has an appeal for a Talks Officer on page 10. If you have any inclination to get involved but don't want a front-of-house role then this might be an ideal position for you. The OVA needs you!

Finally, may I appeal to those members who go on walks or visits and take their cameras to let me have the option of including any photo's you take in the 'Reports' section of the Newsletter. We are fortunate to have two professional photographers amongst the members who are generous with their photographs and I would like to thank Mo Bowman and Lucilla Phelps for their photo's in this and other issues. However, the old adage of a picture being worth a thousand words certainly applies in a publication like the Newsletter, so even if we do not have a description of a walk or event a photograph would tell the story.

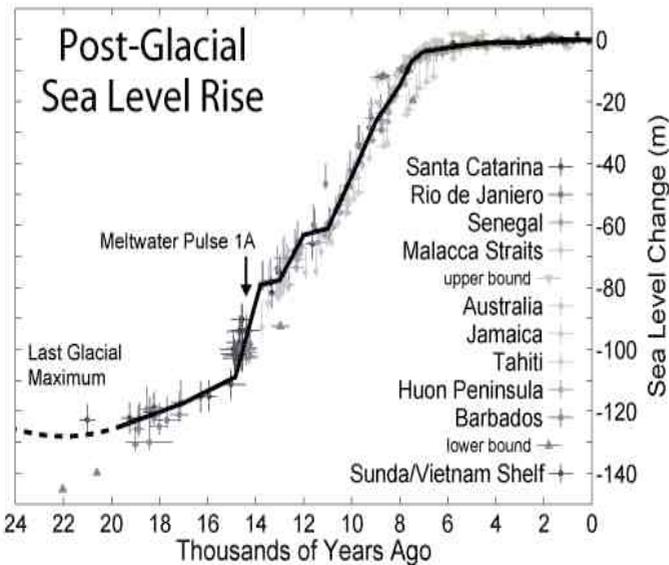
Nick Speare

Sea Level Rises: Potential and Local Impact; Part 1

The behaviour of the oceans is an important dimension of the debate on climate change. Their major impact, but not the only one, is on sea levels. How serious is this issue? What has been happening and why? What is likely to happen, especially in our local area? What follows is an attempt to address these questions; the likely impact on our local area forms the focus of Part 2 which will be in the next Newsletter. It is written on the basis of material readily available online and in one important academic work (Sugden, 2009). Nonetheless it is simply a layman's summary of the issues that emerge.

Context

Of some things we can be certain. First, sea level has changed dramatically since the last ice age, as the graph below demonstrates.



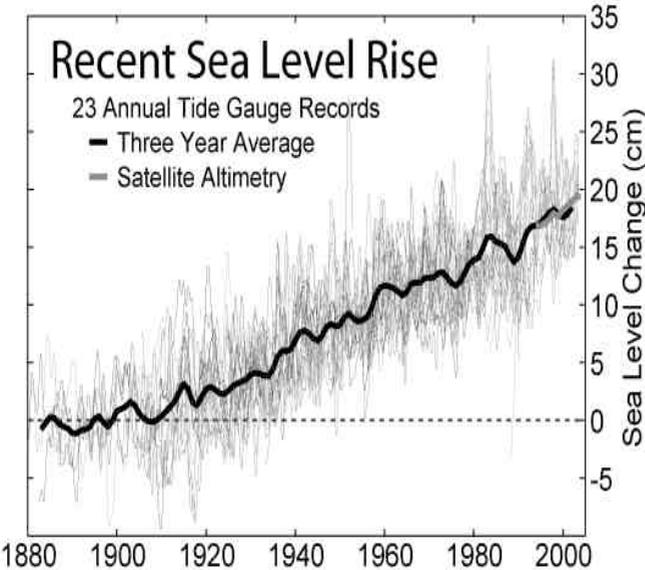
Since the last Glacial Maximum 21,000 years ago, the sea has risen some 130m, mostly before 8000 years ago. For scale, West Down Beacon (GR 045811), the highest point of the cliffs between Budleigh Salterton and Exmouth, is 129m above sea level, so that we have to imagine the sea at a level lower by this amount. At that time, the whole of the

English Channel was land, with the coastline having retreated to a line from Scilly to the tip of Brittany. With the melting of the continental ice sheets, sea level rose and the coastline advanced to its present position drowning the English Channel. Thereafter, it has continued to rise but at a reduced rate.



Natural Environment

In the last 120 years, tide gauges have recorded this slower rise. Their results are backed up by satellite altimetry. The rate of this recent rise works out at



18cm per century (1.8mm p.a.), although it accelerated in the last decade to 30cm per century. As to an explanation of this recent growth, scientists seem agreed that the principal cause has been thermal expansion: when water warms, it expands. Melting ice has been much less important, maybe contributing just 0.3 mm p.a. over the last century. (Both graphs can be found in Wikipedia).

So what is all the fuss about? These amounts are very small.

The Future

Prediction of future sea level change takes us from the certain to the uncertain. In 2007, the 4th report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a body set up by the UN and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), predicted that there would be a 30-60cm rise in sea level by 2100. However, this was based solely on prediction of the continued thermal expansion of water. The effect of melting ice was not included because it was judged too difficult to measure and relatively small in comparison.

In considering the probabilities, two introductory points may be made about ice melt:

Floating ice, when it melts, makes a negligible direct contribution to sea level change. However there are indirect effects. The loss of the Arctic Ocean's white ice cover, which reflects much of incoming solar radiation back into space, would mean that the exposed ocean would absorb solar energy and be warmed. A NASA scientist has now predicted complete removal from 2012.



Natural Environment

Furthermore, if the land-based ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica lost their floating ice-shelf fringes, they would thereafter be bathed with ever-warmer ocean waters.

Continental ice, primarily in Greenland and Antarctica, represents the great unknown in relation to future sea level change. The IPCC's assumption that they would contribute relatively little seems to have been made because the snow-line diminishes in altitude from about 5,500m at the equator to sea level at about 65°N&S. Beyond, the freezing level descends ever-deeper polewards so that the surface of ice sheets in these polar latitudes is well below 0°C. It is therefore assumed that climate warming will not produce significant melting but rather that the warmer air may transport more moisture and lead to more snowfall. This would increase ice volumes and compensate for any melting of floating ice shelves by warmer ocean water. The IPCC also assumed that significant changes would take millennia to complete. After all, the ice in Antarctica is, in places, over 4300m (c.14,000ft) and in Greenland over 3000m (c.10,000ft) thick.

Before exploring the IPCC 2007 position, it is worth establishing the potential for sea level rises. It is daunting. If they melted completely, the small ice-sheets in Patagonia and the Canadian and Russian Arctic would raise sea level by 0.5m; the Greenland ice cap would add another 7.2m; and Antarctica a massive 61.1m. These calculations are secure. It is the probable rate of melt that is uncertain. How valid then was the IPCC conclusion that ice would contribute little over the next century? It is an important question given that the 2007 IPCC document forms the major baseline for the climate change conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The glacial geomorphologist, David Sugden, addresses this question in a recent book. He concludes that the major ice sheets will respond quite differently to global warming and understanding this is essential before attempting predictions. First he draws a distinction between Greenland and Antarctica. To understand ice sheet behaviour he suggests that "*It is helpful to distinguish an accumulation zone of an ice sheet which sees a net accumulation of snow each year from an ablation zone which experiences net loss each year. The boundary between the two is known as the equilibrium line. The altitude of the equilibrium line (ELA) varies according to the climate. In the case of the Greenland Ice Sheet it is at around 1100-1200m. In Antarctica where mean annual temperatures are everywhere below zero, it is at sea level.*"



Natural Environment

This means that there is virtually no ice melt from the surface of the Antarctic ice sheet but a great deal in Greenland, roughly a half of the surface area lying in the summer melt zone. Add to this the different geography in which the wedge-shaped Greenland is flanked by relative warm ocean waters to west and east and that these generate a higher snowfall than in Antarctica, and a picture emerges of an altogether more dynamic ice sheet. Sugden stresses the higher turnover of the Greenland ice sheet, more ice being created and more melting each year per unit area than in the Antarctic. Although only some 11.5% of the world's ice lies in Greenland compared with 88% in the Antarctic, Greenland exchanges water with the oceans at about 30% of the Antarctic rate. Importantly, he concludes that this greater dynamism means that ... *"one can state with some confidence that the Greenland Ice Sheet will be quick to respond to climate change."* More specifically, he notes that, in the last interglacial when the climate was only slightly warmer than now, the Greenland ice cap was significantly smaller by an amount corresponding to a 2-3m rise in world sea levels. Such a rise is therefore a distinct possibility.

Sugden then draws a distinction between the West and East Antarctic ice sheets. The latter is nearly ten times larger than the former and is quite different in behaviour. It is very cold, stable and receives snowfall only at the periphery. It is a massive ice sheet that has survived at least 14 million years through not only previous interglacial periods of the last 2 million years but also the preceding warm Pliocene about 3-4 million years ago. He concludes that its 55m of sea level equivalent, will probably be unaffected by any current global warming. This is good news!

The West Antarctic ice sheet is another matter. It is much smaller, with a sea level equivalent of only 6m but it is grounded not on land but an archipelago and often on land below sea level. Like Greenland, it is more exposed to ocean water, receives more snowfall and is altogether more dynamic than its larger neighbour, with fast ice streams and a high turnover. It will be very sensitive to changes in ocean temperatures. Moreover, at the last interglacial it was much smaller than at present and could easily revert to that state. *"We should not be surprised to experience sea level changes of up to a metre or so in a matter of decades"* (Sugden; *My underlining*)



Conclusion

Over the last few years the press and web have been full of reports from scientists working at the front line in both Greenland and Antarctica. Most assume that the 2007 IPCC report understates probable sea level rise and that there will be a rise of at least 1m by 2100. The authoritative US Geological Survey expects a rise of at least 1½ m. Sugden's conclusions confirm a rise of this magnitude or even more. If both the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets were to shrink to their equivalents during the last interglacial then 2 - 3m and 1m respectively might be added to sea level. The smaller ice caps could add up to 0.5m to this. The crucial issue and the great unknown, is the time scale over which this might happen, especially for Greenland? Sugden notes that the West Antarctic ice sheet could react in decades rather than centuries. The Greenland ice sheet, despite being so dynamic, would respond more slowly because it is grounded on land so that ice could not float away as in West Antarctica. There would be a longer time lag and it could continue melting for centuries. Nonetheless there will be a contribution to sea level rise from Greenland over the next 100 years and this will be over and above the possible 1m from West Antarctica, up to 0.5m from the smaller ice caps and a 0.4m contribution from thermal expansion. 1.5m thus looks like a very prudent minimum estimate for sea level rise to 2100. Climate scientists are currently struggling to convince the world to take action to prevent a 2°C rise in temperature. If we fail and warming continues on towards a 4°C rise, then the implications are obvious.

In Part 2, the impact of such sea level rise on East Devon will be examined, together with implications, especially for planning.

Patrick Hamilton

The source is: Sugden, D.E., 2009 "Ice Sheets and Ice Caps" in Eds., Slaymaker, O., Spencer, T., Embleton-Hamann, C., "Geomorphology and Global Environmental Change", Cambridge, UP 388-402. Thanks are due to Prof. Sugden for reading this essay and making suggestions.

Annual Estuary Litter-pick



This year's spring-clean of the Otter Estuary will take place on **Saturday March 27th** between **10 a.m. and 12 noon**. Come and join in the cleanup – you might even win a prize!

Debris deposited in the estuary by winter storms and thoughtless people needs to be removed to protect wildlife and preserve the unspoilt beauty of the area. The cleanup depends on the efforts of as many OVA volunteers as possible, so please make a note in your diary. EDDC will be on hand to remove the collected rubbish and the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust will also be there to remove litter from the eastern side of the estuary.

Parking in the Lime Kiln car park will be free for litter-pickers and rubbish bags will be provided. For a Saturday morning activity with a difference why not turn up with family and friends and have fun helping the environment? As an added inducement the OVA are this year offering a prize of £10 in book vouchers for the most unusual or interesting item of litter collected.

It will be muddy, so bring Wellingtons or walking boots and protective gloves. Children must be supervised by an adult as deep mud can make parts of the area hazardous even at low tide. A health and safety briefing will take place before the start of the litter-pick and all participants are requested to wait for this briefing before starting. Dogs are not permitted in the nature reserve.

Norman Crossland

OVA Message Board & Forum



The OVA Message Board & Forum is now available. This is an Internet based equivalent of an actual message board where people can post and reply to posted messages. These messages are usually sorted within discussion categories, or topics, chosen by the host or the visitor. A message board is also called a "web board" or a "forum".

It is accessed from the left hand menu on the website.

Our message board is private to OVA members and postings will only be seen by registered members. You have to Register first (you choose a user name, password, provide an email address and confirm a security code). I then get an email and can admit you to the Board. When I have approved you as a member I send an email back to you and you can then login and read and post messages.

It can be used for a variety of purposes – offering or looking for car sharing to events, commenting on OVA outings, putting forward new ideas for the OVA, discussing topics like “Himalayan Balsam”, “Badger Culling”, “Green Initiatives” or whatever seems relevant to the OVA and the members.



There is a link from the Board to our newsletters on the web. Only 2009 newsletters are there at present but we hope to put on the earlier newsletters eventually including some very early examples.



Happy posting.

Alan Huddart
Webmaster

P.S. When you choose a user name for the Board please choose something to enable me to recognise you as an OVA member

Talks Officer

We have had no response from the membership following the Chairman's plea in the last newsletter for a TALKS OFFICER.



It would be tragic if this vital part of the OVA programme were to fall by the wayside due to no volunteer coming forward from our 1100 membership.

The technical side is ably taken care of by Clive Bowman. The Events Committee members man the doors. The Parish Reps open up the hall and the various committees put forward ideas for speakers.

Please will someone come forward to fill this interesting position. Contact either me or the Chairman if you would like to discuss the role.

Nicky Daniel

New website for Walkers



Walking in England www.walkinginengland.co.uk has thousands of walks to download and print FREE!

I am a keen walker and found that, although there is a load of information about walking on the internet, it was often hidden away and difficult to find. So the website came into being.

www.walkinginengland.co.uk gives you, county by county, all the information you need for the best walking in the Country. Details of;

- thousands of walks to download and print free,
- all the walking groups in the country, maps and walk books
- plus loads more information.

Check out the website and find some new walks!

John Harris 01920 822887

www.walkinginengland.co.uk

What was P3?

How the parishes lost their footpaths.

20 years ago footpaths were regarded as unworthy of the expense of upkeep. If a parish wanted money for work on a path it could ask County to pay. County would say no. After all footpaths were for visitors not for ratepayers. The footpaths were in an abysmal state.

Then someone nationally realised that tourism was the main industry of holiday regions and grockles were valuable customers. So Natural England provided money for a new system, the Parish Paths Partnership (P3). The money was generous. With it came a bold new idea. It would be spent, not nationally, and not by County, but by the parishes. County would provide



a “Parish Liaison Officer” for each parish who would “offer advice” to the parish. There was no requirement that the parish follow the advice.

This worked extremely well. The parishes were free to use their discretion in deciding what work should be done. Heavily used paths received more attention than paths leading nowhere, relics of the days when paths served to get people to work rather than for pleasure. Within 3 years of the new system paths in parishes which joined the system were nearly all in good order.

After the initial period counties were left to decide whether to continue the system and if so, how. Devon is to be congratulated on enthusiastically continuing P3. Since then the support offered to parishes by County has expanded. New parish wardens were appointed. They were all walkers, keen to make a success of the system. All of them walked the paths they were responsible for instead of just sitting in the office.

Inevitably however as County took charge it introduced managerial tools and moved control from the amateurs in the parishes back to County. This led to some weird red tape such as rules as to what state a path should be in. There were 3 categories of path, and for each category a maximum was set for the height of grass and the depth of water that could be allowed, and so on. Parish representatives had previously decided such matters more flexibly and more effectively by common sense. ➤

Footpaths

County also set targets. One counted how many footpaths met the criteria laid down. That meant each path was of equal value. Indeed a doctrine arose at County that you must not discriminate between paths – all paths are equal. This ignores reality.

During this period we in the Otter Valley Association took our eye off the ball. The Footpath Committee was disbanded. Paths were made the responsibility of parishes. Parish representatives on the Executive Committee would report on paths when this was needed.

Now although walking is the most popular active pastime in the country most people don't walk very much. So the parish representative might well not be interested in paths. And even where they were interested they would probably know little about the paths in their parish unless they also happened to be the parish footpaths officer. So footpath matters had little airing on the Executive Committee.

The lack of a footpaths committee also meant that parish footpath officers had little knowledge of what was happening in other parishes except where they purposely asked around. Mostly this didn't happen so they did not always realise that the difficulties they were having were common to all parishes. There was no pressure on County from the OVA. The footpath officers in P3 parishes became little more than monitors, and even this function is now frequently taken over by County.

P3 was a staggering unbureaucratic improvement on what went before . But it now exists only in an etiolated form. The availability of money keeps our paths in good order, but much less efficiently than under the original P3. The loss of parish control is dismal. It has lead to a loss of efficiency of the sort which can't be measured statistically. It is a sad loss of local democratic control.

Alan Jones

(A shorter version of this article appeared in the Parish Magazine of Newton Pophelford and Colaton Raleigh in September - Ed.)

Please let your Parish Rep have any suggestions of ways in which the OVA might contribute to Footpath matters beyond liaison with Parish Footpath Officers.

Heavens Above! The Alternative Weather Forecast

Winter Forecast January – April 2010



I love the winter. It is the most self-indulgent of seasons when nature hugs herself tight, and so do I. Coming from a generation that lies awake at night listening to its arteries silt up and for whom cholesterol has replaced Beelzebub as the quintessence of evil, I rely on the winter months to burn up the saturates and provide an excuse to lay down more. There is privacy within winter too which no other time of year gives. Spring, summer and autumn are open season in the Otter Valley, but only in winter, in our countryside, can one find quiet, still, empty spaces and plug into the naked circuit of the landscape, anticipating the nascent promise of what lies waiting beneath; the story yet to be told.

There will be several such quiet, still days of expectancy folded into our valley this next three months, but cling onto that cholesterol too, because you will need it to keep you warm. It is going to be a brutally cold, sharp and wet winter when leaden grey skies and scarcity of sunshine will make the sight of a freckle faced Ovarian as common as an Amish lap-dancer.

January

There is a Babylonian cuneiform tablet in the British Museum that says: “When the full moon moves to Mercury, storms will follow” so the eclipsed full moon opposing Mercury on New Year’s Eve should presage a dramatically turbulent, wet and windy end to the old year and start to the new, with storms, tempests and days of leaden rain; days in which to savour a bad mood. A cold, high-pressure system clears the skies and cheers us all up mid-month, perhaps with a flurry of snow; but reach for your woollies in the third week because this is the week when bleak midwinter either bites with its teeth or lashes with its tail – possibly both. Severe weather will grip the whole country now, when the eclipse of the 15th brings a week of intense gale force winds, hail and possibly snow, before eventually dying down into spasmodic but insistently miserable rain throughout much of the rest of the month.



Weather

February

The abnormally large Full Moon of 30th January pulls in daytime storms, frosts, and yet more gale force winds into February. Snowstorms, blizzards and high drifts will make the headlines and even our sheltered little valley should get a buffeting. This is a crisis period when the tides of water and emotions could o'er leap themselves. Lag your lofts, because if I am correct about the big freeze in the first week of February then burst pipes, broken banks and thawing snow drifts could result in flooding during the second week. Dark pewter skies ripped by sudden spurts of wind in the third week; but month end finds us catching our breath at last in one of those nice calm mild and pleasant patches I mentioned earlier – apart from the 26/27th that is.

March

March is topsy-turvy! We could be basking in near tropical humidity at its opening, enjoying nebulous streaks of gossamer mist instead of rain. One or two light showers around the beginning of the month won't damp our spirits either because they are guaranteed to be interspersed by bright and sunny periods. Mars smiling at Venus on the 10th indicates rising daytime temperatures as daylight hours grow longer, but don't put your geraniums out yet because there are still hard frosts at night. Mid-month is pleasantly clement, but a disturbing clash of hot and cold fronts in the 3rd week results in hail or thunder storms. Fair and foul weather intermingled from then on, with the wind blowing gustily and lustily through both, until the Moon pulls herself tight to the Earth again on the 28th bringing yet more squalls. March may prove the old adage wrong in that it tippytoes in like a lamb but roars out like a lion! Let's look forward to spring around the corner.

Weather Tip: To shorten winter, borrow money due back in the spring.

Gardening Tip: Never play leapfrog with a pyracantha.

Caroline Allen

For your weather in greater detail see:

www.caroline-allen.co.uk/weather_or_not.htm

It was interesting to compare the last forecast to the weather we actually experienced. Caroline's forecast was remarkably accurate. Ed.

JANUARY - MARCH

 **January 9, Sat - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate) / Pub lunch**
Knowle Village Hall, CP, SY052827. 5½ miles, 2½ hours. Circular walk over the commons including a visit to Bystock ponds. May be muddy. Optional lunch at the Dog & Donkey.
Walk leader: Steve Hagger, 01395 442631

 **January 12, Tues - 7:30pm. TALK Otterton Village Hall**
“Beyond Old Harry” – the future for the Jurassic Coast
Speaker: Rod Lawrence

 **January 20, Wed - VISIT to Starling Roost**
Greylake Reserve ST399346
(Details Page 16)

 **January 20, Wed - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**
Peak Hill CP, SY109872, 5 Miles, 2½ hours. Along the byways of Bulverton, may be muddy.
Walk leader: Bettina Wilson, 01395 578450

 **January 27, Wed - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**
Kersbrook (under railway bridge), SY069830. 5½ miles, 2½ hours. Along part of old railway track and back on coast path.
Walk leader: Shane Badham, 01395 567531

 **February 3, Wed - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**
Four Firs CP, SY031863, 5miles, 2½ hours. Bicton, East Budleigh and Woodbury Commons, good views, may be muddy.
Walk leader: Jed Falby, 01395 445455

JANUARY - MARCH

continued



February 17, Wed - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Budleigh Salterton Free CP, SY061821. 4½ miles, 2½ hours. Golf links, Knowle Hill Plantation, Dalditch common, Shortwood Lane.

Walk leader: John Jones 01395 443651



February 27, Sat - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate) / pub lunch

Weston CP, SY166890. 5½ miles, 2¾ hours. Circular walk including the coastal path, starting on east side of the hill.

Walk leader: Peter Hills, 01395 568576



March 3, Wed -7.30pm. TALK. Public Hall Budleigh Salterton

“Walking the Pilgrims Way to Santiago de Compostela”

Speaker: Dr. Graham Taylor



March 6, Sat - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

White Bridge, SY076830. 5 miles, 2½ hours. Coast path (exposed), Monks Wall, Otterton, Park Lane.

Walk leader: John Jones, 01395 443651



March 13, Thurs

Final submissions for April Newsletter



March 23, Tues & March 24, Wed - VISIT to Sidbury Manor

See Page 17 for details



March 24, Wed - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Squabmoor Reservoir CP, SY038843. 5 miles, 2½ hours. Commons and woods, tracks and paths. May be muddy and stony.

Walk leader: Brian Leveridge, 01395 443358



March 31, Wed - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Joney's Cross CP, SY057898. 5 miles, 2½ hours. Harpford Common, Newton Popleford, Dotton and Vennings Copse. Tracks and lanes, may be muddy and stony.

Walk leader: Gordon Wilson, 01395 568594

APRIL - JUNE

 **April 17, Sat - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

Crook Plantation, Stowford, SY 057866. 5 miles - 2½ hours. Woodbury and Bicton commons, Yettington

May be muddy.

Walk leader: Shane Badham, 01395 567531

 **April 21, Wed - 10.30am. WALK (Moderate) /Pub Lunch**

Tally Ho Inn CP and local road parking, SX940904. 4 miles, 2½ hours. Providing an unusual perspective this walk around the pretty Ludwell Valley gives panoramic views over both Exeter and the Exe estuary with optional lunch at the Tally Ho Inn, please note later start time.

Walk leader: Trish Bisley, 01392 410423

 **April 24, Sat - 10.00am. WALK (Energetic)**

Church CP, SY148888. 4 miles, 2½ hours. Local paths around Salcombe Regis including coastal paths with splendid views.

Walk leader: Steve Hagger, 01395 442631

May 4, Tues -7.30pm ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Details and Agenda in next Newsletter.

 **May 8, Sat - 10.00am. WALK (Easy) / Pub Lunch**

Peak Hill CP , SY109872. 5 miles, 2½ hours. Jed Falby's artists' walk , easy going with two short stops for sketching with demo by Walk Leader Jed. Non artists very welcome to come along. Optional pub lunch at the Kings Arms, Otterton.

Walk leader: Jed Falby, 01395 445455

 **May 15, Sat - 10.00am. WALK (Energetic)**

Colaton Raleigh church (roadside parking), SY082872. 7 miles, 3 hours. Riverside, green lanes, coast path, Mutters Moor, Passaford Lane (steep).

Walk leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

APRIL - JUNE

continued

 **May 26, Wed – 10.00am. TOWN WALK (Easy)**

Budleigh Salterton Methodist Church car park (donation to Lions).
Learn more about Budleigh's history through its people and places.

 **June 2, Wed - 10.00am. WALK (Easy)**

Joney's Cross CP SY057898. 3 miles, 2½ hours. If you're interested in wildlife this is the walk for you. Easy walk across the commons looking for wildlife on the ground and in the air with expert commentary

Walk leader: David Jannaway , 01395 567159

 **June 10, Thurs**

Final Submissions for July Newsletter

 **June 19, Sat - 10.00am. WALK (Energetic) and Return Boat Trip**

Lime Kiln CP (charges apply), SY073820. 7 miles, 3 hours. Walk along the coastal path to Sidmouth returning to Budleigh (Steamer Steps) at 4.00pm by Stuart Line Cruise Boat (cost £5 for members and £7 for non members, must be booked in advance – see application on page 27 for details).

Walk leader: Steve Hagger, 01395 442631

 **June 30, Wed - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

Colaton Raleigh church (roadside parking), SY082872. 4½ miles, 2½ hours. An introduction to Mark Rolle and his architectural heritage. (see page 19)

Walk leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

OVA Poetry Competition

Most of you will be familiar with Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'Sonnet: To the River Otter' while you may also recall the poem 'To My Sweet Otter Vale' that we published in the October 2008 Newsletter and Robert Sellin's 'Requiem for a Lone Pine' that featured on the cover of the Jan. 2009 edition. These sparked the idea of an OVA poetry competition for which I have to thank Brian Turnbull.

We are looking for unpublished poems, maximum 16 lines and any format from haiku to blank verse on a subject of your choice but which must be related to the OVA or its Area of Benefit. This is the overarching criteria which your entry must meet or it will be disqualified.

Please submit your entry to me via the usual channels. However, I will not be judging the competition. My qualifications to do so are non-existent and I am, therefore, pleased to announce that as a number of the committee of the Literary Festival are members of the OVA, they have agreed to provide a panel of three judges to evaluate the entries.

Your entries must reach me by the 14th February which will allow the Judges time to assess their merits of the entries and come to a decision in time for me to announce and publish the winning entry in the April Newsletter. Space permitting, I will publish entries from runners up and others in later editions.

The winner will receive the unofficial title PLOVA (Poet Laureate of the OVA).



Ed

Visit to Somerset Starling Roost

In association with Axe Vale Conservation Society

Did you see Bill Oddie being moved to tears on Autumn Watch? It wasn't dust in his eyes, it was because he was witnessing a flock of between **2 and 4 MILLION** starlings filling the sky! This amazing sight can be seen by up to a dozen OVA members, meeting up with Ian Waite of the AVCS, on January 20th.



You can either join him for the whole day, meeting 10am at Greylake Reserve ST399346, taking a packed lunch, to see ducks and birds of prey etc.

Or, you could go just for the afternoon to see the starlings at Ham Wall Reserve, meeting 2.30pm at Ashcott Corner ST449397. Details of this arrangement might change nearer the time if the starlings decide to change their roost!

If you are interested, please phone me (01395 446892) by 15th January so that I can let Ian know who is going. We shall have to make our own way there, but it might be possible to arrange a car share. Ian will request a small donation towards AVCS on arrival.

Mo Bowman

Sidbury Manor

Visits 23rd and 24th March

Historic houses which have remained a family home and are only occasionally open to visitors are particularly intriguing to many people. Sidbury Manor is situated amid privately owned land, out of sight of the village of Sidbury but with views towards the Iron Age Hill Fort, Sidbury Castle, and the sea at Sidmouth. The building was started in the 1870s on a new site rather than redeveloping an older structure and is a fine example of the Jacobean style interpreted by the Victorians. Much of the original furnishings, including those designed by William Morris, remain. The magnificent gardens contain specimen trees planted from the 1880s, including magnolias which may be in bloom and naturalised daffodils. Steep steps lead up to the top of the walled gardens.

We have booked visits on two consecutive days as only 25 people can be accommodated on each afternoon. We will be guided around the house and garden by Sir John and Lady Cave. Tea and biscuits will be included. The tour will begin at 2pm. The cost is £10 per person.

Sidbury Manor is not accessible by public transport but parking will be permitted at the house. The estate road is a turning on the left on the A375 Sidford to

Honiton Road by Sidbury war memorial, a short distance before the village church on the right. Please share cars if practicable. Tickets will be allocated in order of receipt of cheques.



Booking Form is at the back of the newsletter.

Visit to the Tale Valley

Last October's newsletter contained an article entitled "Ratty's Back" outlining some of the work of the Tale Valley Trust. We are negotiating a visit to their Demonstration Site, where we hope to have the services of the Education Warden, perhaps a glimpse of water voles, followed by lunch at Escot Park. It is expected that this will take place during the last week of April, possibly the 27th or 29th. Full details in the next newsletter.

Walks Programme April to June

As well as featuring the normal lanes, tracks and commons there are three walks you might like to note in your 2010 diaries.

On 21 April there is the chance to walk in Exeter's 'secret' Ludwell Valley with fine views over the city and the Exe Estuary followed by an optional lunch in the Tally Ho Inn.

Many members will be aware of the significance of the letters 'MR' on many buildings in the Otter Valley. Brian Turnbull's walk on 30 June will be visiting several of these buildings and Brian will be providing an erudite commentary on Mark Rolle's contribution to the local built environment. Not to be missed by those of you interested in local history (*see opposite page*).

More variety comes on 19 June with Steve Hagger's walk to Sidmouth and return to Budleigh via a Stuart Line Boat. This will give everyone the chance of a leisurely sea trip accompanied by an expert commentary from the crew on the way back.

John Jones

Mark Rolle Walk

30th June 2010

It is nearly ten years since the publication of Alan Ford's splendid book "Mark Rolle - his Architectural Legacy in the Lower Otter Valley" which was the OVA's Millennium Project.

It describes how in 1842 Mark Rolle, then only six years old, unexpectedly inherited the vast Rolle Estates in Devon, including most of the Lower Otter Valley. Many of the buildings on the estate were cob and thatch, and some were in a poor state of repair.

On reaching adulthood, Mark Rolle appointed a vigorous new steward, Robert Hartley Lipscomb, and together they embarked on an intensive programme of agricultural improvement. The period from 1865 until Lipscomb's retirement in 1892 saw intense building activity. The work continued, although at a slower pace, under Lipscomb's successors until Mark Rolle's death in 1907. Alan's book paints a vivid picture of these remarkable men who had such an impact on the built environment we see today. It lists no less than 87 farms and cottages but, more than the quantity, it is their quality which impresses.

You may know some of these buildings with their distinctive M R signature stones. They can be found all over the Lower Otter Valley, and elsewhere including Beer and Exmouth. However, the greatest concentrations are around the villages of East Budleigh, Otterton and Colaton Raleigh.

As a keen walker and a fan of Mark Rolle, I thought it would be interesting to combine an undemanding walk with the opportunity to enjoy a selection of M R buildings. I hope you will join me on 30th June.

Alan Ford should have the last word. "The use of local materials, the inventiveness, the variety and the element of fun, which stops short of whimsicality; these are qualities well worth striving to emulate in the buildings of today."

Brian Turnbull

Note: "Mark Rolle: his Architectural Legacy in the Lower Otter Valley" is available, details on inside back cover or from local bookshops. Buy it!

Interested in Bats?

Plan ahead for the spring when bats come out of hibernation!

The OVA has two bat detectors available free for members to borrow. They are very easy to use. We will loan you the detector, with instructions for use and bat identification leaflets from the Bat Conservation Trust. We will also give you a log form to record bat sightings (or should it be hearings?). Filling out the form is entirely voluntary, but will help the OVA to keep a record of bat contacts in the area.



If you would like to borrow one please send an email to rsrbioventures@aol.com with “Bat Detector” as the subject. When picking up the detector you will need to provide a £60 cheque as a security deposit and a form of ID, the cheque will be returned to you at the end of the loan period. Initially the loan period is limited to five days per loan, but this will be reviewed when we get a better idea of demand. The detectors available are the Magenta Bat4 model.

Roger Saunders

Where the OVA Dares

Exmoor Walks September 26th 2009

Imagine yourself standing on the crest of an escarpment 200 metres above sea level looking out across a deep and thickly wooded valley or ‘cleave’ towards the Bristol Channel. This is ‘England’s Little Switzerland’, beloved by Romantic poets. You have out-climbed even the buzzards which are taking advantage of the thermals to soar lazily above the trees. Without warning, a smaller bird streaks in out of nowhere and attacks one of the buzzards. The larger bird is as surprised as you are and, in the space of a breath or two, all the birds have vanished, leaving the scene as peaceful as before.



This was – quite literally – the high point of a day of walking with Tony Burges, the Exmoor and Dartmoor guide, on the North Devon coast. True to the OVA’s Green Agenda policy, many of us had shared transport to Lynton and, having all eventually located the car park where we were to meet,

Reports

we set off westwards on our morning walk. The early low cloud soon ► lifted and Tony allowed us frequent stops to take photos of the magnificent views of the coast and a group of Exmoor ponies we met on the way.

We then descended to Lee Abbey, a beautiful Gothic building (somewhat marred by the addition of a concrete Tower Lodge built in 1960) now used as a Christian Centre. From there, we returned to Lynton via the Valley of Rocks and the coast path, pausing only to view the ‘ghost’ of the white lady on Castle Rock and Mother Meldrum’s Cave, mentioned in ‘Lorna Doone’. The wild goats which roam the area could be seen, heard – and smelled! – along the way.



After lunch, the group split up, some ‘doing their own thing’, whilst the majority followed Tony along an eastward route which merged with the Two Moors Way and Tarka Trail. It was here the buzzard incident took place. Eventually a steep zigzag path, ending in steps clearly designed for giants, took us down through Myrtle-berry South Camp, an Iron Age enclosure, and on to the National Trust café at Watersmeet where we enjoyed some welcome refreshment before following the East Lyn river down to Lynmouth, watching the dippers bobbing on the rocks along the way.

Our final lap consisted of a trip back up the cliff on the Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway. This could hardly be called cheating after 8¼ miles over what was, for the author at least, some fairly challenging terrain. Besides, the railway claims to be one of the most environmentally friendly tourist attractions in the country. Since it operates using gravity fed water from the West Lyn River, it needs absolutely no power and the water is simply dropped on the beach without wastage or pollution. We were thus able to end a day (which, thanks to our knowledgeable and informative guide Tony Burgess, had been tremendously enjoyable) with the satisfaction of knowing that our carbon footprint had been kept to a minimum.

Photos: Mo Bowman FRPS

Barbara Farley

Talks

We have had two illuminating talks this new season. George Wilkins spoke on the National Parks and Kimmo Evans about the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It was very interesting to learn about the different roles of each body, particularly one following on from the other.

Unfortunately the gremlins attacked the projector during George's lecture but very professionally he was not phased by the upset (*see Steve Hagger's verse overleaf*).



On January 12th Rod Lawrence will speak on the future of the Jurassic Coast. It will be a dark night but Rod is a superb speaker and it will be very worthwhile to stir yourselves from the warmth indoors and come and hear him speak.

On March 3rd Graham Taylor will be "Walking the Pilgrims Way to Santiago de Compostela". Again, I hope you will be able to join us.

oooooOooooo

Christmas Tree Festival

Over a wet and windy weekend the only sparkle to be seen in Budleigh Salterton Church Christmas Tree Festival. The OVA had a splendid tree decorated entirely with recycled material, including the paper for the competition. The tree was on its fifth outing and proudly wore its rubbish. I wish to thank Maureen De Viell and Rosemary and David Huggett for helping to make the tree such a success and the church for making it a joy to participate.



The number of plastic bags on the tree was 73 and the winner was David Banfield who guessed the exact number. A £10.00 book token has been sent to him.

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Nicky Daniel

In the Dark over National Parks? Or... the curse of the Lone Ranger

Report of talk by Dr George Wilkins (with apologies to Cyril Fletcher)

This is a tale of sad lament, of how an OVA evening went.

We gathered together at Peter's Hall, tales of National Parks to enthrall

Dr Wilkins, for it was he who spoke, told us of Exmoor and Pembroke

We saw a scene from every park. Then all of a sudden it went dark!

"The bulb is bust, oh no, oh bother. Has anyone got another?"

A spare was found in some drawer, and to the rescue sprang Haylor.

But try as he could, to change that light, the original bulb was stuck in tight

"I've an idea" said someone called Steve, "Anyone got a projector up their sleeve?"

"I've one at home" said another man, "I'll fetch it here if you lend me your van."

So a second projector soon was found, but the carousel this time was round.

And as the first was long and straight; the slides were swapped; we had to wait.

Meanwhile George told of dry stone walling, but by then he was stalling

Till the projector shone again, showing us moors in sun and rain.

For minutes we rode our new found luck, till a slide of Snowdon stuck,

Fingers poked and wires were wiggled but that slide could not be jiggled

Till with deft skill and slight, Haylor pushed it out; just right

The crowd then gave loud applause, the show carried on without much pause

They say things happen in sets of three's, so we waited for the next freeze

Which happened soon, and what is worse, I'm sure I heard a curse

So we gave up, and gave George a clap. He was an understanding chap.

And so the moral of this tale of woe, if public speaking you are to go,

Learn your notes and quell your fear, but check for GREMLINS in your gear!!

Steve Hagger

Autumn Walk - 7th November 2009



Who thought November was always dull and cold. Not so on the 7th when 25 members set off from Four Firs car park in brilliant sunshine! The forecast was for showers later in the day (which never materialised) but we had a splendid walk taking in Woodbury Castle, Hayes Wood and Black Hill Quarry.



The views were good, the autumn colours brilliant and it was interesting to observe that many birds were already settling on the ponds left as a result of the restoration of the quarry (*see the report on the quarry visit in the October edition. Ed*) Although the quarrying has ceased after 75 years, much spoil has to be moved before the restoration will be complete.

Photos : Lucilla Pbelps FRPS FBIPP

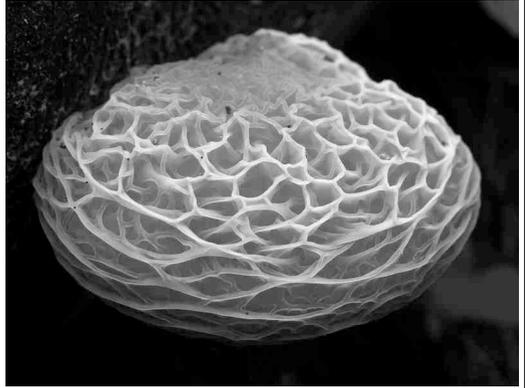
Stuart Lovett

Fungi Walk – 11 November 2009

Twelve people gathered at Newton Poppleford Sports Ground for the annual Fungi Walk. Most of us were novices but Marion Nalder was a very knowledgeable and informative guide. She explained the essential part that fungi play in nature's own bio-degradable scheme.

I think we expected to find large, easily seen, bright fungi but what we found on the Sports Ground were very small, but beautiful and delicate specimens in yellow, orange, russet, browns and greys.

We then walked along a green lane and found many different examples in the leaf litter and on fallen logs. To Marian's delight we found an exquisite coral coloured *Rhodotus Palmatus*; its more prosaic name in English is 'wrinkled peach'. Marian had not seen one in over 10 years since it usually occurs on dead elm wood.



As a result of the morning's activities we will look a good deal more carefully in the hedgerows and woodland on future country walks.

Judith Heaney

APPLICATION FORMS

Steve Hagger's Walk and Return Boat Trip Saturday 19 June

Please reserve me ___ Member places @ £5.00 and ___ Non-member places @ £7.00 on the return boat trip

I enclose a cheque for £_____ payable to 'OVA'

Name(s)	Address, Phone & Email

N.B Applications to be received by 31st March

(address for return overleaf)



Sidbury Manor Visit 23 or 24 March

Please send me _____ tickets for the visit to Sidbury Manor on:
23rd or 24th or I have no preference (Please delete as appropriate)

Name	Address, Phone & Email

I enclose a cheque for £_____ (£10 per person) payable to 'OVA' and a

STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE

N.B Applications to be received by 12th February

(address for return overleaf)

Application Forms

Walk and Boat Trip
Steve Hagger,
8 Warren Drive,
BUDLEIGH SALTERTON
EX9 6EL



Sidbury Manor Visit
Nicky Daniel
7 Marine Parade
BUDLEIGH SALTERTON
EX9 6NS

Christmas Gifts

Mark Rolle His Architectural Legacy in the Lower Otter Valley



£4.95 via your Rep (or plus £1.00 P&P)

12 Walks in the Otter Valley



£2.50 via your Rep (or plus £1.00 P&P)

Historical Guide to the Lower Otter Valley



£3.50 via your Rep (or plus £1.00 P&P)

1842, 1890 and 1933 Maps of Budleigh Salterton



£8 each or £20 a set (cannot be posted)

Available from your Parish Representative, our website -www.ova.org.uk

or order from:

Booksales

OVA

PO Box 70

Budleigh Salterton

EX9 6WN

Officers *et al*

Executive Committee

(01395)

Chairman	Helen Tickle	443901
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Hon. Secretary	Roger Saunders	443248
Acting Treasurer	Martin Smith	442333

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Events	Nicola Daniel	445960
History	David Daniel	445960

Parish Representatives (to whom all queries should be addressed initially)

Budleigh Salterton	Clive Bowman	446892
	John Jones	443651
East Budleigh	Mitzi Crossland	445129
Otterton	John Winson	568274
Colaton Raleigh	Neville Bennett	567887
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Newsletter Editor	Nick Speare	443944

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The OVA was founded in 1979 It is a member of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. It is registered with the Charity Commissioners and is also affiliated to the CPRE and a member of the AONB Partnership