

Summer  
Newsletter  
Volume 37/3  
July 2016

## Offer Valley Association

PO Box 70 Budleigh Salterton EX9 6WN

[www.ovala.org.uk](http://www.ovala.org.uk)  
Registered Charity  
278266

© OVA 2016

*BTC 17/50*

*Burrows/Charles 08/2015*

## OVA Weekend Away to West Woolley – the Photo Album Report page 10



This quarter's cover "River Otter ; Upstream from Otterton bridge" was created by OVA member Bernard Charles. More of his artwork is on display at the Otterton Mill

## From the Editor

It was a pleasure to meet so many of you at the new member event at Otterton Mill and at the Annual General Meeting in May. Feedback about the 'full colour' newsletter has been very positive and I am grateful for your suggestions and submissions. Keep them coming!

At 8.00am on 22<sup>nd</sup> June I joined a group of OVA members attempting to walk the complete route of the East Devon Way in one day. Knowing my limitations I did not over-commit and my section started at Woodbury Castle and finished at Harpford Church where I excused myself on the pretext of meeting the deadline for this issue. I note from Penny's report (see page 14) that this section was one of the fastest stages of the 'challenge' at 3mph – next time I will join at the end when the pace has slowed a little!

Thanks to Penny and Paul Kurowski for coming up with the idea and, literally, running with it. The whole event was brilliantly organised. Congratulations to the nine who completed the challenge – I hope your feet and knees have now recovered. Talking of great walking 'feats' please see below.....

**Jacqui Baldwin**

## Well done Chris!



On 14 May at the AGM of the SW Coast Path Organisation, held on the Isle of Portland, our very own Walks Organiser, Chris Buckland, in recognition of his completion of the 630 mile trail, received a certificate from the Chairman, Andrew Lack, to rapturous applause, especially from those members of the OVA who were also in attendance.

**Chris and his fellow 'completers'**

The organisation does a great deal of work to protect the path for future generations. Information can be found on [www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk](http://www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk)

## **Chairman's Report**

The OVA AGM was held on 18 May to a packed audience in the Masonic Hall in Budleigh. I suspect that many of the audience were more interested in the talk about the FAB link project (see page 5) following the meeting than to hear my pronouncements about the OVA!

Following the AGM vote I am very happy to welcome Penny Kurowski to the Executive Committee as Honorary Secretary, a position that was vacant last year. Jon Roseway is taking over as Treasurer from Trevor Waddington, who has served his three years. Trevor will remain on the EC as a Trustee. As mentioned in the last newsletter, Geoff Lake is our new talks organiser. We still have a few gaps for volunteers, principally Village Reps for Otterton and Colaton Raleigh, plus someone to help organise events.

So what to expect from the OVA this year? We will continue to support the school visits to the Pebblebed Heaths in collaboration with Clinton Devon Estates. The Natural Environment Committee is maintaining the Himalayan Balsam control programme, which is just starting for the year. If you would like to be involved please contact Patrick Hamilton. Planning will continue to occupy our time, and especially that of our planning representative, Nicola Daniel. We are closely involved with the development of the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan. We hope that once it is completed and adopted it will provide more local control over planning in the town. There are several large developments that have been proposed in our area, including Budleigh, (Care home plus houses, on appeal) and East Budleigh (Syon House, withdrawn but it could come back). We feel that, with the adoption of the East Devon Local Plan, the bar has been set higher for the approval of local development.

The Lower Otter Restoration Project is developing, with funds being sought before firm proposals are submitted. The OVA has a representative on the stakeholder committee and we will keep you informed of developments.

I hope that we continue to hold events, since they are generally well supported. We had a full house at a new member and volunteer party at Otterton Mill in May. If you have an idea for an event that falls within the OVA objectives please get in touch – we can help.

**Roger Saunders**

## Meet our new Officers



### **Penny Kurowski – Honorary Secretary**

I lived most of my life in Reading until retiring to East Budleigh with my husband Paul last year. In a varied career I worked for British Nuclear Fuels, had a dressmaking business and then joined Sport England where I spent 15 happy years distributing lottery funding to help more people get active. I have always loved the great outdoors, and especially the sea; we haven't regretted our move for a second.

On joining the OVA we were made very welcome and have really enjoyed the walking and organised talks. Retirement feels like a wonderful holiday, so when the Hon Secretary post was advertised, it felt like a good opportunity to do something interesting and constructive.

### **Jon Roseway – Treasurer**

My wife Marilyn and I moved to East Budleigh five years ago from a similar village in another AONB, the Chilterns. No real change then, you may think, but we wanted to be near the sea and avoid the mayhem of construction work for the planned High-speed train (HS2). Soon after our arrival we joined the OVA as it seemed like a 'good thing' to support, but quickly came to enjoy the walks and talks. My participation was restricted by work commitments to mostly weekends, but I did manage to fit in a bit of balsam bashing. I stopped work a year ago and this coincided with East Budleigh needing a new rep, so I signed up, one thing led to another and now I am Treasurer as well!



### **Geoff Lake – Talks Organiser**

I was born and grew up on the Isle of Wight where my family have lived for generations. I am a Mechanical Engineer (University of Birmingham) and ex company director having spent 30 years in manufacturing, principally electronics, in the U.K. and Vancouver B.C.



I've an interest in agriculture and gardening having once had a hobby smallholding and a lifelong interest in aviculture/ornithology triggered by my late uncle's involvement with Peter Scott and the London Zoo. My wife and I retired to Budleigh in 2014 moving from Hampshire. Budleigh is a very special place and I believe it is important to retain and protect its unique character. It is a privilege to be living in the town.

To whet your appetite, I have now booked October's talk (the history of Garton & King, the iron founders in Exeter) and for November (the trials and tribulations of running a small farm at Yellingham, Payhembury). Full details will be available in the next newsletter.

## **The FAB Link Project**

The FAB (France – Alderney – Britain) project plans to build an electrical interconnector underwater and underground between France and Great Britain via the island of Alderney. Chris Jenner, Development Manager, presented an overview of the project to OVA members after the AGM in May.

The project would allow transmission of up to 1400 MW between the two countries, and also allow transmission of energy generated by tidal stream renewable energy generated by Alderney. The project raises a lot of questions including why do it, and why should we be interested? Chris answered these questions and more.

So why do it? The project claims that it will facilitate cheaper electricity (France is a lower cost producer than the UK), help with energy security, and increase the amount of renewable energy using the Alderney tidal scheme. And, of course, this is a commercial project, so FAB link hopes to make money from it.

Why should we be interested? The main reason is that, despite being an AONB, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and the Commons being European Special Areas of Conservation, the project's chosen point of landfall is most probably



Budleigh Beach. Chris explained that Budleigh met key criteria for the programme: the beach is easily accessible, while much of the rest of the coastline has high and crumbling cliffs. The Exe estuary is not suitable for geological reasons. Budleigh provides a relatively direct route to the planned National Grid connection near Exeter Airport, and cable is expensive to lay - so the more direct the route the better.

Physically the interconnector consists of two 320kV underground cable circuits (four cables in two trenches). The pairing of positive and negative allows the current to be balanced. The construction phase requires a working width of 30m, with a 12m permanent easement when finished. All the cables will be underground, with no need for overhead lines and pylons. The landfall is likely to be accomplished by directional drilling underneath Lime Kiln car park, about 700m offshore. When completed the only sign of landfall will be a small covered inspection pit.

The route the cables will take from Budleigh to Exeter has not yet been finalised, but two alternatives have been suggested. One would follow the footpath to the west of the River Otter (Little Otter footpath) to White Bridge, through fields past East Budleigh and Otterton before heading west to the commons and Exeter. The other route would follow Granary Lane. In either case there would be considerable disruption during the cable laying process. FAB have promised that their Environmental Reports and Surveys will be made available at a Public Consultation in July, and all land will be fully reinstated to its original condition, including hedgerows. Traffic management plans will be agreed with EDDC and Devon County Council.

When will it happen? As you may have noticed preliminary work has already taken place, with drilling from Lime Kiln car park and offshore surveys completed. The Public Consultation is due to take place in the Methodist Church Hall on 26 July (2- 8 pm), followed by planning submissions at the end of the year. Construction would then start in 2018.

**Roger Saunders**

## Local Heritage Asset Listing Project

In 2014 a small team embarked on a local heritage asset listing project, in partnership with EDDC, Devon County Council's Historic Environment Team and the Fairlynch Museum. Details of the project were presented to all five town and parish councils, and most were supportive. Following English Heritage good practice guidance, public nominations were sought during Autumn 2014. Some of the nominations were then photographed and mapped on the OVA website.

Two consultation exhibitions were held in February 2015 in Budleigh Salterton and East Budleigh. We were grateful for a grant of £744 from the AONB to cover the some of the costs. The exhibitions were well attended, and informed the general public about the 279 nominations that had been received for the draft list of local heritage assets. These included street scene features, Victorian, Edwardian and Arts and Crafts style houses, as well as rural buildings and other heritage features.

There was much local support for the project, and some further nominations were received. The owners of nominated assets had been notified, where possible, and quite a number were pleased to have their properties recognised as a local heritage asset, and supplied further information. There were also a few owners who did not wish their properties to be on a list of local heritage assets.



**Brick pillars at Otterton Park**

The next stage was to photograph the nominations, and then assess them against the agreed English Heritage selection criteria. These included rarity, age, aesthetic value, group value, historic association and evidential value. Further research was carried out, and one of the team undertook a detailed analysis of Budleigh Salterton's unique and distinctive character, to help inform the process. We had meetings with

relevant EDDC officers and were pleased that a planning policy, EN8, in the new Local Plan 2013-2031, specifically mentioned local listing:

*EN8 – Significance of Heritage Assets and their Setting*

*When considering development proposals the significance of any heritage assets and their settings should first be established by the applicant through a*

*proportionate but systematic assessment following the East Devon District Council guidance notes for 'Assessment of Significance' (and the English Heritage guidance 'The Setting Of Heritage Assets') or any replacement guidance, sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset. This policy applies to both designated and non-designated heritage assets, including any identified on the East Devon local list.*



In April 2016 we sent the details of 239 local heritage assets in the lower Otter Valley to the Conservation Officer at EDDC for further consideration. We are aware that the Sid Vale Association are also about to complete a similar exercise for their local area. East Devon District Council will then have to agree and ratify the list of local heritage assets. The list will then be used when development proposals are being considered for planning permission. All the nominations can be viewed on the OVA website under the 'Built Heritage' section.

**Dee Woods**  
**Project Co-ordinator**

## **Woodland Management in Lower Otter Valley**

I joined a group of about twenty other OVA members at the edge of Harpford Woods on a sunny April evening. We had come to hear about the threats and opportunities of commercial woodland management, hosted by Clinton Devon Estates (CDE), and led by Head of Forestry, John Wilding MBE.

After walking down a woodland track we stopped to admire the view towards Harpford Common, while John explained the lifecycle of trees on a commercial plantation. In the earliest stages saplings are planted with tree guards to protect against rabbits. The plants are checked periodically to make sure that they are growing straight. As the trees grow bigger deer can be a problem, so CDE try to manage the deer population to protect against excessive tree loss.

As we moved on to a more mature part of the plantation we could see a Logset harvester at work in the distance. The timber is sold as standing trees and then harvested by an outside contractor.



While you might think that trees are robust, it turns out that they are in constant danger from a long list of predators, ranging from large mammals down to the microscopic. CDE has been busy harvesting its stands of larch ahead of the threat of a fungal disease caused by *Phytophthora ramorum*. This pathogen infects larch, Japanese larch, holm oak and rhododendron (see the effect left). Wind-blown spores from infected plants spread the disease; according to the Forestry Commission its permanent presence in the UK is inevitable. The only treatment is to destroy infected trees as soon as possible. CDE use a drone to survey their woodlands looking for evidence of disease.

Another fungal disease recently in the news is the Chalara Dieback in ash (caused by *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). Although most concentrated in the east of England, this disease is now widespread and can't be contained. The best hope of keeping a population of ash trees in this country is to identify and breed resistant varieties of tree.

Moving up the predator size scale, we heard about the Great Spruce Bark Beetle (*Dendrochronus micans*) (DM). The pest burrows into spruce trees and causes dieback above the area of infestation. John pointed out an example to us. Happily this pest can be controlled – by another beetle (*Rhizophagus grandis*). This little beetle is a highly specific predator for DM. It is able to discover and colonise the DM brood chambers. Only a few need to be released at the disease site, and they reduce DM numbers by 80-90%.

Surprisingly given this litany of disease, John considers that the biggest threat to UK hardwoods is the grey squirrel. While undoubtedly fluffy and entertaining, this introduced species has the bad habit of bark stripping. Many trees are susceptible including beech, oak, pine larch and spruce. Trees in the 10-40 year age range are targeted. Damaged trees are more susceptible to fungal disease, and if the main stem is stripped will not grow into mature trees. John believes that a lot of UK woodland is at risk because of squirrel damage.

The commercial tree species of choice for CDE is Douglas fir, which appears not to be affected by many of the diseases so far listed. The best trees are straight and without side branches (which cause knots). While John and CDE grow the best fir that they can, it turns out that the best quality timber comes from Scandinavia where the colder climate results in slower growth, and much denser timber.

Following a Q&A session we toured the rest of the plantation and headed for home before dark. Many thanks to John Wilding and Kate Ponting for the very informative tour.

**Roger Saunders**

## **West Woolley Weekend – 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> April**

### **West Woolley Farm to Marsland Mouth & Return - 1<sup>st</sup> April**

Sixteen weekend walkers managed to get to West Woolley Farm in North Cornwall in good time to start our walking weekend. The weather was not looking promising, but we donned our rainwear and set off from the village across some fields to enter the delightful Marsland Valley Nature Reserve. This is a wooded valley with a stream, and our way down to the coast took us on a circuitous route down and up and then down and along until we eventually reached the sea at Marsland mouth, right on the Cornwall/Devon boundary. The wood was delightful with spring flowers, mostly primroses and some early bluebells and wood anemones. We stopped briefly at an old mill and read all about the flora and fauna that inhabit this magical place. After a brief respite at the coast we headed back inland, uphill of course, on footpaths and small lanes through Gooseham and on to Hobbs Choice. Our leader, Chris, only got us lost once, but a helpful farmer soon put us on the right road. We returned to our cottages suitably tired out after six or more miles, to enjoy a cream tea in our cosy cottages. Later we had a very enjoyable buffet organised by Paula and Rosemary. What a great start to the weekend!

### **Dee Woods**

### **Welcome Mouth to Hartland Point – 2<sup>nd</sup> April**

After breakfast, fifteen walkers set off from West Woolley Farm in five cars towards Welcome. Ten walkers were driven to Mead and walked down the

rough track to Welcome Mouth. Unfortunately it was raining, with a strong wind, so we sheltered in the lee of a bank, awaiting the arrival of the drivers who had left the cars at Hartland Point.

The first challenge was to cross the Strawberry Water (which, after all the rain, was in spate) on some large stepping-stones (see inside front cover). The second was to scale the cliff. The beach looked very dramatic from above with dark grey sand, white foaming sea, gigantic waves and sharp black pointed rocks running at right angles to the shoreline. The climb from Welcome Mouth was very steep, narrow, muddy and tricky in the wind. On our way along the clifftop we passed some extremely interesting rock formations, folded and vertical strata and sheer black cliffs. The path dipped up and down into little hanging valleys with streams and we noticed that the flora was different to our walk the previous day. At one



point the path was diverted due to a recent cliff fall. The rain finally stopped when we reached Spekes Mill Mouth, where the waterfall (the highest on the SWCP) was a magnificent sight, surging over the rocks towards the sea. Now that the weather had improved we saw swallows and heard skylarks singing and we really felt that it was Spring!

The buildings of Hartland Quay

suddenly appeared and we took a break for lunch overlooking the sea. The tide had come in during our walk and watching the huge waves crash over the rocks was exciting. We decided to leave the walk here to visit St. Nectan's Church in Stoke but our indefatigable friends set off uphill again for the last three miles to Hartland Point.....

### **Rosemary Hatch**

..... Fortified by food and drink, consumed while enjoying views of Hartland Quay, we set off keenly to cover the last three miles. The sun almost shone and we strode out across the greensward, past sheep grazing beside a ruined tower, through whose arch we viewed Hartland's distant church. We dropped down to cross the Abbey River. The climb back up was a steep one but we felt our goal could not be far away. That was probably when we asked Ian and Dee (who'd done the walk before); "Is that the last steep climb or do we have to go up and down once more?" Their answers were non-committal! Sure enough, it was not once more, but another three times that, no sooner had we reached a high

point, than we had to descend into another valley. And then there was the mud! It had rained all morning, after all. Still, we were entertained not only by Chris doing his usual tumble, but also by Peter, a relative new-comer to the sport of covering your backside in grime. And he did it so elegantly!

Still, the sea views and the Atlantic rollers, not to mention the unusual geological features made it all worthwhile. We reached Hartland Point with its lighthouse and views North to, some of us thought, the coast of Wales. And were very glad to see the cars which would take us back to West Woolley for tea and cakes.

**Jean Quinn**

### **Clovelly to Hartland Point – 3<sup>rd</sup> April**

Eight of us left West Woolley at 9.15 on a misty drizzly morning, taking some cars to the end of this linear walk, near Hartland Point. We regrouped for the start of the walk in the car park, high above Clovelly Village. With Ian and Dee at the helm, we headed west on the coastal footpath, pausing for a few moments to watch the Inshore Lifeboat, with helicopter above, on an exercise out at sea.

A short distance along the path we gathered for a photo at the Angels Wings, an unusual shelter tucked away in the woods, with carved wooden supports and oriental style roof. It was built in 1826, and restored to its former glory in 1934. Following the path on a steady climb through the woods we came across a slate roofed summerhouse, the plaque informing us that it had been built for Dame Diana Hamlyn in 1820. On the Historic England Website it is described as “an unusual building, part of the romantic landscape created in a lovely wooded valley on the edge of the sea, and part of the landscaped park around Clovelly Court.” Today, Clovelly Village, the estate, and Clovelly Court are currently in the ownership of John Rous, a descendant of the Hamlyn family who have owned Clovelly since 1738.

We then took a detour from the path to a viewpoint on the cliff edge where we looked back on the striking and aptly named Blackchurch Rock, rising out of the sea at the foot of the cliffs. Returning to the main path, our route then tumbled steeply down to Mouthmill beach where we stopped for coffee and a snack in warm sunshine. Coffee over we climbed up from the beach where the next stretch of footpath was a series of steep ups and downs through Brownsham Woods, with pretty paths and full of spring flowers, leading up to Windberry Head and Brownsham Cliff. There was some disappointment that we were just too late to take part in the Easter Rabbit Competition, advertised on posters in the woods!

We stopped for lunch on Fatacott Cliff. It was now chilly and damp so we sought out the best hedge shelter we could find and kept the lunch stop brief. A misty Lundy Island could be seen out to sea. The section of the walk after Brownsham Cliff was a notable contrast to the morning, following flat grassy topped cliffs, with some very wet and slippery sections. The weather kindly cleared for the final stretch of coastal footpath to Hartland Point, where Chris treated us all to a very welcome cup of tea in the sunshine at the Cafe Kiosk.

**Peter Paine**

### **Bude to Widemouth Bay and SWCP return – 4<sup>th</sup> April**

The West Woolleyers gathered in Bude for the final walk of the official long weekend that promised something a bit flatter along the canal side – heaven for knees that had been through the mill on the previous few days. We resisted the temptation to hire kayaks and paddle down the canal and even turned our noses up at a pedalo ride in a large black or white swan and set off on foot.

We headed off against the tide of dog walkers eventually crossing the canal at Roddsbridge over a low bridge that would have made navigation with a loaded barge tricky. The canal was built to transport sand and seaweed, used as a soil fertiliser, to Launceston 20 miles away. The original plan had been to link the Bristol Channel and English Channel by canal but this was abandoned with the arrival of the railways. The canal now ends at Helebridge so there is no through navigation and we did not, therefore, have any entertainment at the lock gates.



At Helebridge we left the towpath and headed up a moderate hill across fields to Widemouth Bay. We then headed back to Bude on the SW Coastal Path although on more moderate inclines and, to some extent, less spectacular scenery than we had seen on previous days. There were still some good viewpoints along the way at Lower Longbeak and Efford Beacon and the visibility

was good enough to see long distances either way. We ended this stretch of the SWCP at Compass Point in the octagonal structure that provided respite from a passing shower.

Needless to say we then headed off to the nearest pub for a tasty lunch before some of the revellers headed for home and the remainder back to West Woolley to continue their holiday. Many thanks to Rosemary who researched and led this enjoyable walk and gave us a summary of the places of interest.

**Vivien Insull**

## East Devon Way 24 Hour Challenge – 22 June

At 5am on a rather wet morning, eight brave walkers (Chris had rushed home – he had forgotten his boots!!) gathered by the sign at the start of the East Devon Way for a photo shoot with Ervine Kewley, our valiant support driver, and Chris Woodruff from the AONB.



We set off 10 minutes later for a walk through growing daylight up the estuary, along the backroads of Lymptone, through woods and over the commons (we think, it was hard to tell due to the mist) to Woodbury Castle. Chris joined us three miles into the walk – he had started 11 minutes after us so must have run!

At Woodbury Castle, as with at the other checkpoints, we were met by Ervine and the minibus, complete with chairs, hot and cold water for drinks, and a variety of snacks, as well as spare supplies. We were also joined by Jacqui Ruhlig and Jacqui Baldwin. Their company was very welcome as we made our way to Aylesbeare Common for another pitstop followed by a long stretch to Sidbury.



We were sad (and somewhat envious) to leave Jacqui B at Harpford, but pressed on to Sidbury for the welcome public toilets, a lunch stop in the car park, and for Jacqui R to catch the bus home. Chris Woodruff joined us there for more photos – as surprised as us that we were an hour ahead of our predicted time.

The hill out of Sidbury proved challenging, the taste of more to come on this eastern half of the route. It was a long trek to Money Acre Cross, where the welcome sight of scones and jam lifted the spirits. Jon Roseway had joined in as back up support; first job – spread scones with jam and hand them round!



The sun was beginning to show its face by now and we finally saw some of the views which are such a feature of this walk in good weather. Onwards we went, and then gradually down to the river at Colyton. Colyton car park saw a weary and footsore band; there was much application of zinc plaster and blister patches. Penny wondered if she could go on – cramp in the calves made walking a few steps agony, and Steve was hobbling too. However, we all agreed to keep together and complete the walk as a group. It was hard to get moving again after a sit down and food, but move we did, a shortish stretch to Musbury, where we agreed that Jon could stand down, as we were resolved to finish together. We gathered head torches (we had really slowed down by this point and knew we would finish in the dark) and started up Musbury Hill, back into the mist. This felt like the steepest climb yet, and the way down was steep too. We wended our way past farms and cottages, climbed and descended steep hills and finally reached the outskirts of Uplyme. Steve and Paul had been a little way off the back of the “pack” and we suddenly realised that they were missing! Had there been a disaster? No, we had missed the turning, they had taken it, and were already at the minibus! We were soon with them, and enjoying a quick cup of hot chocolate before tackling the final 1.5 miles to Lyme Regis.



Somehow we found new energy and completed this section in 40 minutes to reach the finish at the seafront at 10.55pm. Would there be a pub still open? Yes ... thank you to Pearl in the Pilot Boat who welcomed us, served us, and stayed open while we enjoyed our celebrations.

Then it was a final photo by the anchor on the seafront before the weary crew climbed aboard the minibus, found space amongst the bags of spare boots and clothes, and slept while Ervine drove us through more fog back to Exmouth.

What a day! What a sense of achievement! When we dreamed up this idea, we had no idea of what we had let ourselves in for. Thanks to everyone involved, especially Ervine and Jon, our support drivers, and our fellow walkers, the team spirit was brilliant.

Walkers for the complete route: Chris Buckland, Sue Newman, Jane Harris, Nigel Pinhorn, Richard Critchley, Steve Hagger, Neill Curtin, Paul & Penny Kurowski

Walk stats:        Distance: approximately 40 miles  
                      Total time taken: 17 hrs 45 mins  
                      Total walking time: 15hrs 40 mins

As for walking pace, the fastest stages (the first 2) were about 3mph, the slowest one was the last one at 2.1 mph. The final spurt into Lyme Regis was 2.25 mph!

**Penny & Paul Kurowski**

## Walk Reports

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

### **Holcombe and Coly Valleys – 16<sup>th</sup> April**

#### ***“Over the Hills and Far(a)way”***

Jon Roseway, our walk leader, had thoughtfully put out an “OVA” sign so that we didn’t miss the start of the walk at Knapp Copse Nature reserve. He told the eight of us who had chosen to walk the route that the site was a former rubbish tip. Tipping ended in the early 1980s since when the site had been taken over by Devon County Council and restored subject to ongoing remedial measures to address potential pollution issues.

The walk started out on level ground and then through woods covered with bluebells. Down a steep slope and the beautiful countryside views unfolded before us. There was an abundance of spring flowers growing along the banks. We passed a very smart B&B at Rancombe Hill right on the East Devon Way

footpath. More fantastic countryside views appeared, some beautiful wooded Coombes and a field of sheep with their young lambs. No sooner had we sat down for our lunch than we had a quick hailstorm to add flavour to our offerings.

Joyce was in familiar territory now as she used to ride in the area so she was able to show us a detour which avoided a very wet area. We passed Sallicombe Farm and then yet more fantastic views. A little donkey took my eye as we passed the riding stables and then we spotted our first orchid, the early Purple orchid, *Orchis Masalla*. We then reached the hamlet of Church Green with its' 14C church where there is a yew tree rumoured to be over 1000 years old. As we climbed out of the village, Joyce told us to turn around to see the best views in East Devon in her opinion. The sun came out as we reached the end of the 8.8 mile walk, one I would like to repeat again when there is less mud to negotiate. Thanks to Jon for leading us on such an interesting walk.



**Heather Fereday**

### **Devon Coast to Coast – Stage III – 20<sup>th</sup> April**

Eight of us set off from Newton Poppleford at 8.30am to meet up at Holne where a taxi took us back to Ivybridge where we had finished Stage II.



A bit tricky finding the route out of Ivybridge but we were soon on our way knowing we had a long uphill climb. The wind blew for most of the walk and we were very glad of our windproof jackets. Chris set off in his polo shirt and shorts but before too long out came his fleece and ski mitts though we had the 'pleasure' of his knobbly knees throughout the walk!

Finally at midday Chris gave in to our pleas of 'Is it Coffee time yet?' and after a quick refuel off we set again onwards and upwards. There was a short discussion as to whether we should climb to the ridge or take a longer, more sheltered, walk. We carried on to the ridge and were rewarded with soaring skylarks, nearly gale force winds and fantastic views across Dartmoor.

We looked down at Piles Copse – one of the last 3 ancient woodlands on Dartmoor. At 2 o'clock we stopped for lunch on a sheltered grassy bank having covered 6.5 miles. The next part of the walk was along a stony track, one shouldn't say any part of the moor is monotonous but this came close! I think we were all glad when the path finished and we struck out over the grass, successfully crossing some patches of bogs and streams

We made our way down through Scoriton village and stopped for tea at Chalk Ford – a really pretty area with a lovely stream running through it. A really interesting day – many thanks to Chris (and Graham) for so skilfully guiding us.

**Sue Newman**

### **Uphill and Down Dale - Weston to Branscombe – 22<sup>nd</sup> April**

Baking, cleaning the car, cooking, cutting the grass, dusting, going to the gym, ironing, shopping, washing, are all activities that don't get done when there is an OVA walk on a Friday morning. And so it was that a group of self-indulgent, pleasure seeking, hedonists set off from wet and wonderful Weston and headed for the sea.

After a couple of hundred yards, a delightful wild flower strewn permissive path took us the half mile to the top of Weston Cliff and a spectacular view of the Mouth below and High Peak in the distance. Immediately to our left was the Wild Flower Meadow, planted in 1992, and currently carpeted, not by the ubiquitous Primrose, but the equally colourful, less common, Cowslip.

We continued east over Coxes Cliff, with the wind in our face, past frisky bullocks to open downland, with imaginary views of Portland, before descending a narrow, slippery and in places, broken, path to the secluded beach, which is Littlecombe Shoot. Sadly, a depository for a large volume of plastic detritus, brought in on winter tides.

The walk along the pebble strand began as an inevitable slog, but the low tide soon revealed a strip of shingle that raised spirits and feet alike. Past a block of terraced chalets, which at least were painted brown, to Branscombe Mouth and, joy of joys, a sign in the window of the "Sea Shanty" said 'Open', signalling the prospect of a cup of tea to take away! Plenty of empty seats with commanding views, but this was a day to breathe in under a narrow overhang, with paper cup in cupped hands.

A chap at the back of a group going to Sidmouth wanted to know if there was “an easier way”, avoiding Branscombe West Cliff. He was advised that there was only one way, which was the best way, and was wished good luck.

Once you reach the top of the climb, you are rewarded with level downland walking, and far reaching views of the protruding chalk and sandstone cliffs enjoying a peaceful paddle in a soft sea. Quite a contrast with the hard, black, foreboding granite cliffs pummelled by angry waves that some of us had witnessed along the Hartland Peninsular, the week before.

Onwards, past the remnants of the Iron Age ramparts of Berry Camp, the Romany Van, whose gate is now adorned by twentieth century, garish advertising memorabilia for “Green Shield Stamps”. Go and have a look, but if you still have any, I think it’s too late to cash them in. This time, through the invitery gate into the Cowslip meadow, making straight for a Trigonometry Point, painted white, and raised on a three foot platform, apparently adopted by a family as a memorial to one of their number who enjoyed 18 happy years working for the Ordnance Survey.

Backs to the sea now, as we returned to our cars, near the remains of Weston Manor House, and the exciting prospect of all those household chores, we had turned our backs on this morning, but which, humbled, restored and recreated we will attack with relish on our return.

**Chris Buckland**

### **Colmer’s Hill - 30<sup>th</sup> April**

The walk description was correct – the iconic Colmer’s Hill *was* watching us throughout most of this most enjoyable and beautiful walk! The weather was sunny and warm, the sky clear and blue – an ideal day for such a varied and interesting hike. Eleven lucky walkers crossed meadows in Lower Eype and through some fabulous bluebell woods, making our way to Symondsburry for a coffee stop in the sunshine. Colmers Hill beckoned us from above and we made the steep ascent to the top for a picnic lunch overlooking the pretty Dorset countryside.

This conical sandstone hill is visible from miles around and is topped by several pine trees planted during WW1. Although sunny it was a little early in the year to see butterflies but we did see several small tortoiseshells flitting about looking a little ragged after their hibernation. However, a true indication of the arrival of Spring was the sight of one Orange Tip butterfly looking for Lady's Smock plants on which to lay its eggs.



We'd been told that the next part of the walk involved the "perils" of Hell Lane, a deep, mysterious, ancient hollow-way considered to be the most impressive and interesting example in Dorset. The conditions underfoot had improved since Vivien's "recce" so although we emerged at the other end rather mud-spattered, it hadn't been as wet as we'd expected. Part of our route had been covered by Julia Bradbury in a recent TV programme and there were a lot of opinions expressed about it along the way! We crossed a stile through some boggy fields in the direction of Chideock, to inspect the Martyrs Monument – a wooden cross next to the grassy humps and hollows which are all that remains of the moat of a Norman Castle built here in 1086. The castle was partially destroyed by the Roundheads during the Civil War and through the years has practically disappeared. Chideock is a very pretty village with a lot of thatched houses, bisected by the busy A35, which we had to cross again.

Following a footpath bordered by wild garlic and bluebells we reached Seatown which, on a Bank Holiday weekend, was not unexpectedly crowded with visitors and children enjoying the good weather and the beach. We could see the steep cliff path towards Thorncombe Beacon ahead of us but the reward for the climb was wonderful, clear views along the coast, Chesil Bank and Portland Bill when we finally reached the top. Three of the group, who were "in training" for the 38-mile Challenge, had sprinted ahead up the slope and were waiting for the others at the summit. From here we could see a circular man-made pool below us which called to mind that famous passage in Thomas Hardy's "Far from the Madding Crowd": "The sheep washing pool was a perfectly circular basin of brickwork in the meadows, full of the clearest water. To birds on the wing, its glassy surface, reflecting the light sky, must have been visible for miles around as a glistening Cyclops Eye in a green face." An old wheeled lambing hut in the next field recalled once again the scenes from the book and reminded us we were

walking in Hardy Country. A short downhill walk brought us back to Down House Farm for a Dorset cream tea before tackling the final mile to the car park. I really enjoyed the hike – it had everything one could wish for: fields, bluebell woods, history, wildflowers, seaside, cliffs, and a splendid tea shop near the end! Thank you Vivien for researching and leading this superb walk.

## **Rosemary Hatch**

### **Pinhoe to Killerton – 6<sup>th</sup> May**

Five very keen walkers arrived early at the starting point for today's walk and took full advantage of the offer of tea and biscuits in Joyce's delightful garden. At the appointed starting time another two walkers joined us and a total of eight set off on this hot sunny spring morning.

The residential environment rapidly gave way to countryside with views to the airport and the hills beyond. As we passed around St Michael and All Angels Church further views across Exeter to the hills of Dartmoor in the distance were visible. Crossing green fields we settled into our walk enjoying the warmth of the sun, the sounds of bird song and the natural bouquets of wild flowers scattered around us - Bluebells nestling with Pink Campion, white Ladies Smock and patches of Stitchwort. A field of some unusual sheep was passed and later on Alpacas were seen.

Skirting around a farm we crossed the bridge over the M6 and headed across the fields towards Broadclyst. Here we stopped for lunch and a drink in the scenic garden of the Red Lion Inn. Suitably refreshed we headed off across the field to eventually cross another footbridge back over the motorway. From here it was a stroll across fields and through woods full of bluebells.

Further on we came across an old stone gateway into the Killerton Estate. Passing this we headed for Columbjohn chapel situated in a very quiet picturesque spot beside the river Culm. Then as we turned the corner footpath we all stopped still, for in a field at the side of the pathway was a cow that had just given birth. We very quietly passed by into woods, again clad with bluebells but in this case lined with white wild garlic flowers. The smell of the garlic flowers overpowered the bluebells.

We climbed up the embankments of Dolberry Iron Age Hill Fort and around the top of Killerton Park. Here we stopped to look at the glorious views across the countryside and noticed a large wooden frame. It formed an ideal photo opportunity and a nice place to rest in the sun. It was then a short stroll through the grounds to Killerton Chapel and the tearooms where we took a well-deserved break for tea and cakes. There was still a bit more walking to do as we headed back along lanes and roads to Broadclyst where a bus was caught back to Pinhoe. Many thanks to Joyce Thomas for leading and sharing one of her favourite local walks with us.



### **A Familiar Story - Seaton, Beer and Branscombe – 12<sup>th</sup> May**

You may remember that when I reported on this walk in 2015, I described the rain and mist that greeted us at the start at Seaton Tower, and the complete absence of views from this lofty perch. You may also remember that Ted chose that occasion to test his then recently reproofed jacket, which he had possessed for twenty five years. This year the weather was identical, although Ted's jacket is now twenty six years old and remains waterproof, as he was able to demonstrate.

Our figure of eight (mile) route took us down to Couchill Farm, the scene of a dog attack on our Leader on a previous visit. We scuttled through the farmyard, while the dogs barked; those less intimidated dallied to "ooh and aah" at the sheep. On across expansive hillsides, one of which "had been felled for match sticks", quietly past mother and foal a week old, its owner informed us, and into the quiet, off season attractiveness of the seaside village of Beer.

Soon off again, uphill towards the exposure to be endured on Beer Head, and, as the rain got heavier, Iain's optimism that it would stop at 10.30am increased proportionately. He was right, but had overlooked the possibility that it would start again at 10.35am. Over the top, past the remains of a Roman settlement, now teetering on the cliff edge, and then merciful relief from the elements, (Ok, so I was in shorts, but it is summer.) as we dropped down through the Underhooken, protected by the canopy of chalk capped sandstone cliffs. We saw an old quarry cave entrance, now suspended halfway up the cliff face, and heard unsubstantiated talk of soaring Kestrels. At last, sunshine and sustenance at the

Sea Shanty, a prerequisite for the steep, slippery and sweaty climb out of Branscombe, up the 140 metres ascent of Stockham's Hill.



Our return to Beer elicited attempts to push down closed shop doors in pursuit of ice cream. Gratification was achieved by a walk down to the beach café where Duckys duly delivered. Another purchase was for expensive, fresh scallops, although somewhat prematurely, before a rumour (unsubstantiated) that scallops were about to be sold off at an 'end of the day' price.

The last of many hills took us back to Seaton Tower and the stunning view of the Axe Valley that had been denied us at the start, some five hours earlier. Thanks Ted. Third time lucky with the weather in 2017.

**Chris Buckland**

### **Devon Coast to Coast Stage IV, Holne to Dunstone Down – 25<sup>th</sup> May**

Eleven walkers made their way out of the village and were soon heading along the Dart valley below Bench Tor admiring delightful views. We crossed the very narrow C15th New Bridge passing under the bridge onto the river bank. We followed the riverside path where a kingfisher was spotted in flight, then climbed up the valley passing the scattered outcrops leading to Leigh Tor.

Then on to Dr Blacknall's Drive and more spectacular views to Bench Tor. We reached Bel Tor corner where the ice cream van was rewarded with our custom. Then downhill towards Primm cottage where, in a field nearby, a young foal was standing with its' mother close by. We soon reached the little ford at Ponsworthy where there were two stone slabs making a suitable lunch spot.



Suitably refreshed and with the bonus of chocolate brownies in celebration of a recent birthday, we then turned left onto a delightful path leading to woodlands carpeted with bluebells and a few early purple orchids. We crossed the river at a footbridge at Jordan Mill and up past Drywell farm and across the crossroads marked by Drywell Cross.

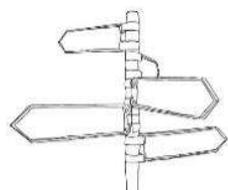


We soon reached the crossroads on the edge of Dunstone Down at the southern end of Hamel Down and made our way to the Two Crosses where the cars were parked; Haytor being clearly visible on the horizon.

We then drove back to Holne for welcome refreshments. This was a most delightful section of our Coast to Coast journey and I am looking forward to the next section.

**Heather Fereday**

## **A Walk for Everyone - Summer Programme 2016**



This is a programme about couples! Several of our Walk Leaders will be bringing you not just one, but two walks as their welcome contribution to another packed programme; some short, some longer, some close by and others to explore, but all designed to get us outdoors and active this summer!

We shall be strolling round the Otter Valley on two evenings: from Newton Poppleford on 5 July and Otterton on 17 August. Brian Gannon will be reminding us how attractive Bystock Ponds is, now that its future is secure, on 19 July, before returning on 9 August with a very different walk to the top of High Peak. Jon Roseway will be showing us two different facets of Branscombe on the 4 August and again on 29 October, both with far reaching views from the coast path. Long-time resident Stan Herbert shares his local knowledge on 6 August and in his own village of East Budleigh on 1 October. One of our highlights is a return to Dartmoor, where David Buss will take us Tor hopping on 31 August, and he will be back for our first visit to Portland on 13 September. It's worth the travel to enjoy such stunning views but only if there are views to see, of course! So please note our request under David's entry.

I know we can have too much of a good thing, so there are some great walks when you will only see the Walk Leader once! Bettina Wilson will be leading us away from Exton, on the Estuary, on a new walk on 9 July, quickly followed by another new walk round Colyton, which includes a guided tour and tea that Margaret Read is leading on 15 July. Please note our request under Margaret's entry. We will be meandering over the Commons again, as the OVA's contribution to the Pebblebed Heath Week, on 27 July.

OVA walkers were probably the last people to walk the Undercliff from Seaton to Lyme Regis when it closed after the path had fallen into the sea in 2014. Now, the realigned path has reopened at last, and Haylor will be giving us the opportunity to (re) acquaint ourselves with this unique section of coast path on 26 August. Peter Paine will be taking us to Exmoor for a beautiful walk, not to mention the hospitality that follows (!), on 3 September. As befits a Walk Leader who often wears 'wellies', Jan Stuart will be visiting three local stretches of water on 10 September.

It's back to Dartmoor on 28 September when Paula Paddison will be showing us it's softer side, as we head off from the iconic Yarner Wood. If it is high level views you crave, then there are few more impressive than those from the hills of West Dorset, where we return on 14 October. On our walks in the Otter Valley, we frequently stop to admire the architectural legacy of Mark Rolle, and although the man himself cannot be with us, Brian Turnbull is an expert, who will inform this fascinating topic on 19 October.

We are already half way through the 117 mile Devon Coast to Coast trail; do please join us on any or all of the final 6 stages on 13 July, 30 July, 12 August, 24 September, 5 October, and our celebration at Lynmouth on 10 October!

Following last years' successful brewery walk and tour, we are pleased that Andrew has once again come up trumps. On 22 September we will be undertaking a similar venture to a local vineyard, including a walk, talk, tasting and a meal.

Given the advanced notice this Newsletter provides, it is a good idea to check the website for any late and unavoidable alterations to the walks schedule and travel arrangements.

**Chris Buckland and Mike Paddison**

# Events Programme – July to September 2016

## **Saturday 9 July, 10:00am - WALK**

Start: Opposite the Puffing Billy Inn (01392 877888) in Exton (OS Explorer 110, SX 982 864). 5½ miles, 2½ hours.

### ***“More Puff than Billy”***

The walk climbs up through the fields to Woodbury and descends using quiet lanes to Ebford, and threads back along the estuary to the start. A pub lunch is an option, but please order your food before the start of the walk.

*Walk Leader:* Bettina Wilson 01395 260599

## **Wednesday 13 July 2016, 10.00am – WALK**

Meet at Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 899) at 9am to share cars. See website for transport details.

### ***Devon Coast to Coast - Stage VII - Binneford Cross to Morchard Road***

Start: Binneford Cross (OS Explorer 113, SX 758 972) 9 miles

Finish: Morchard Road, A377 south of village (OS Explorer 113, SS 756 043)

Rolling farmland and wooded valleys. Please bring appropriate food and drink.

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

## **Friday 15 July 2016, 10.00am – WALK**

Start: Colyton CP (payment required) (OS 115, 246 940) 6½ miles, 3½ hours

### ***“Colyton and a River Walk”***

The walk starts alongside the River Coly, crosses the river at Ratshole Gate and continues along lanes and tracks climbing gently to Sand Pit Hill. Onto White Gate, then descending to Holyford, through butterfly filled meadows with views to the sea, and along lanes back to Colyton for lunch. This is followed at 2.00pm with a guided tour of Colyton finishing with a tea at about 3:15pm.

**Please notify me by 10 July if you wish to come on the guided walk and bring £3.00 on the day.** *Walk Leader:* Margaret Read 01392 759332

## **Tuesday 19 July, 10.30am – WALK**

Start: Bystock Nature Reserve, north CP (OS 115 SY 030 849). 7½ miles, 4 hrs.

### ***“A Devon Wildlife Trust Walk from Bystock Ponds to Hayes Barton”***

A walk taking in Bystock ponds, Squabmoor reservoir, Hayes Barton, & Black Hill quarry. Please bring a picnic lunch and wear suitable clothing

Directions to Start: on the B3179 coming from Budleigh Salterton turn right, just after the St Johns Road dip, into Wrights lane, at the end of this lane turn right, the car park is on the right about 300 yds along just after the cream cottages. If

coming from Woodbury Castle direction turn left at Pine Ridge, (up slope onto unnamed road). Car park is about a mile along on the right after cream cottages.  
*Walk Leader:* Brian Gannon 01395 443502

### **Wednesday 27 July, 10:00am - WALK**

Start: Woodbury Castle, (OS Explorer 115, SY 0324 8732). 9 miles, 5 hours.

#### ***“The Magnificent Seven”***

A contribution to Pebblebed Heath Week. Starting off at Woodbury Castle, the first kilometre or so will take us to the convergence of the boundaries of Woodbury, Colaton Raleigh, and Bicton Commons. From there we walk in a southerly direction through plantations, WW2 ruins and the new cattle enclosures, along country lanes to Shortwood Common and then onto Dalditch Common, the most southerly point of the walk. Our journey back will take us along paths overlooking Squabmore Reservoir and into the rarely visited Wythycombe Raleigh Common. From there it is a short walk to Bystock Fishponds and beyond to Wrights Lane and the start of the Blackhill quarries. We then walk, via Four Firs, back to Woodbury Castle. The walk may be muddy in places. Sturdy shoes/boots will be essential and clothing should be appropriate for weather conditions that can quickly change. Please bring a picnic lunch.

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

### **Saturday 30 July 2016, 10.30am - WALK**

Meet: Newton Popleford Recreation Ground (OS Explorer 115, SY 088899) at 9am to share cars. Further transport details will be given on the OVA website.

#### ***Devon Coast to Coast Stage VIII - Morchard Road to Witheridge***

Start: Morchard Road, A377 south of village (OS 113, SS 756 043) 11 miles

Finish: Witheridge (OS Explorer 114, SS 803 145) Also required, OS Explorer 127.

Hilly farmland and wooded combes, trackless and pathless fields. Please bring appropriate food and drink.

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

### **Thursday 4 August, 10.00am - WALK**

Start: Branscombe Village Hall (OS 115, SY 1975 8872). 8 miles, 4½ hours

#### ***Through the Hole and over the Edge!***

Car parking at the Village Hall (donation requested). We walk out of the village past Hole House and climb gradually up to Edge Farm. Then turn towards Weston village and reach the coast path via Weston Combe. Following the coast path eastwards to Branscombe Mouth before returning to our starting point. Please bring a packed lunch.

*Walk Leader:* Jon Roseway 01395 488739/ 07887936280

**Saturday 6 August, 10.00am - WALK**

Start at East Budleigh CP (SY 065 849) 5 miles, 2½ hours.

***“A little local walk”***

Along Hayes Lane, through the woods and over the commons returning via Yettington, with long time local resident, Stan.

*Walk Leader:* Stan Herbert, 01395 442030

**Tuesday 9 August, 10.30am - WALK**

Start: The Green, Otterton, (OS Explorer 115, SY 0803 8525) 5½ miles, 3 hours.

***“Keep looking up!”***

The walk is a mixture of riverside paths, green lanes and some tarmac road. We head up the Otter, then turn eastwards to Sea View Farm and then Bars Lane to the short, steep climb up High Peak. The walk then descends steeply and briefly from the summit, and onwards to Ladram Bay where we can pause for coffee. Return via Monks Wall, Culliver Cross to Clamour Bridge and Otterton via the River. Food available at the Mill or Kings Arms.

Outward travel by bus 157, dep Budleigh Public Hall at 10.00, or bus 157, dep Newton Poppleford at 10.01, arriving at approx. 10:15. If coming by car, park in the high street or up by the Church (1<sup>st</sup> right past the Mill). Return by bus 157 at 12 mins past the hour towards Sidmouth or 14 mins past towards Exmouth.

*Walk Leader:* Brian Gannon, 01395 443502

**Friday 12 August, 10:30am – WALK**

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9am to share cars. Further transport details will be given on the OVA website.

***Devon Coast to Coast Stage IX Witheridge to Knowstone***

Start: Witheridge, The Square (OS Explorer 114, SS 803 145), 8.25 miles

Finish: Knowstone, Church steps (OS Explorer 114, SS 828 231)

Field paths and woodland tracks, commons, quiet country lanes. Please bring appropriate food and drink.

*Walk Leaders:* Mike Paddison 01395 446550, Chris Buckland 01395 444 471

**Wednesday 17 August, 10.00am to 4.00pm - EVENT**

**Joint OVA/Clinton Devon Estates Himalayan Balsam Awareness Day**

Otterton Mill

An opportunity for the public to learn how we tackle this invasive species on the Otter and to join in short ‘pulling sessions’.

### **Wednesday 17 August, 6:30pm - WALK**

Start: The Kings Arms, Otterton (OS Explorer 115, SY 082 853) 4 miles 2 hours

#### ***“A Summer Evening Stroll in the Otter Valley”***

A comfortable country walk, circumnavigating the village, ending with an optional celebration at the pub. If you haven't walked before, or you are returning after a break, or simply cannot get enough of OVA walking (and who can blame you!), you will be very welcome.

*Walk Leader:* Chris Buckland 01395 444471

### **Friday 26 August, 9.45am - WALK**

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS explorer 115, SY 088 899)

#### ***“Re-acquaintance with this Unique Area of Geology, Plants and Wildlife”***

Catch the 9.56am bus, number 9A from Newton Poppleford, via Sidmouth, to arrive in Lyme Regis at 11.20am. Walk to Seaton - 7.5 miles; some of the terrain is quite rugged - reasonable fitness and stout footwear required. There are no escape routes, short cuts or cafes between the end points, so bring packed lunch and plenty of liquid refreshment. We aim to return on the 4.00pm bus from Seaton Marine Parade, arriving back in Newton Poppleford at 4.54pm. There are later buses if the group wishes a more leisurely pace or time to explore.

*Walk Leader:* Haylor Lass, 01395 568786

### **Wednesday 31 August, 10.30am – WALK**

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground CP (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 999) at 9.00am to share cars.

#### ***“Ten Easy Tors!”***

Start: Haytor Visitor Centre, (OS Explorer OL28, SX 766 772), 9½ miles, 5 hrs.

Not the route of the famous challenge, but a mere 9½ mile walk across undulating Dartmoor with the prospect of magnificent views throughout. Tors visited are Haytor, Saddle Tor, Pil Tor, Top Tor, Bell Tor, Chinkwell Tor, Honeybag Tor, Hound Tor, Greater, and Holwell Tor. Please bring a packed lunch. Light refreshment available at the end of the walk at the Dandelion Café, Moorlands Hotel near the Haytor Visitor car park.

*Walk Leader:* David Buss 01395 442621

### **Saturday 3 September, 10.45am – WALK**

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground at 9.15am to share cars to depart at 9.30am (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 999). Journey time about 1¼ hours.

#### ***“Exmoor, the Quantocks and the Brendon Hills”***

Start: Hamlet of Monksilver at 10:45, (OS OL9, ST 073 376), 11 miles, 5 ½ hours.

Peter will be leading the walk in the beautiful and little walked countryside on the edge of Exmoor, the Quantocks and the Brendon Hills. Starting in the hamlet of Monksilver our route will take us via Sticklepath, the Roadwater valley, Nettlecombe and back to Monksilver along the Woodford valley. This is an 'off the beaten track' walk of about 11 miles on footpaths, bridleways and old tracks, a couple of steep climbs rewarded by some great views across the coast and rolling countryside of North Somerset. Bring a packed lunch (our lunch stop will be near a pub so a lunchtime pint/drink will also be on offer). At the end of the walk we will stop for well-deserved tea and cakes before heading for home.  
Walk Leader: Peter Paine 01404 815214 / 07812 772163

### **Saturday 10 September, 10.00am - WALK**

Start: East Budleigh Church CP, (SY 065 849) 8 miles, 4 hours.

#### **“Water, water everywhere.”**

An interesting walk taking in 3 different stretches of water. The first is a walk by Squabmoor reservoir, now used for fishing. We then visit the lovely Bystock Nature reserve with its man-made ponds that are a host to an abundance of wildlife. We walk on towards the Blackhill Quarry works where we encounter more areas of water some very deep and quite eerie glinting through the trees. We cross Bicton Common and make our way back to East Budleigh passing by Hayes Barton, Birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh. Please bring a packed lunch.  
*Walk Leader:* Jan Stuart 01395 568235.

### **Tuesday 13 September, 11.00am - WALK**

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 899) at 9.00am to share cars or meet at the start point.

#### **“An island visit”**

NB. As a major attraction of this walk is the stunning views of the coastlines along East and West Dorset, it is very 'weather dependent'. So a decision about whether the walk will take place or not will be deferred until 11 September. Please send David an email ([david.buss@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:david.buss@yahoo.co.uk)) to register your interest and he will email you on Sunday evening to confirm or otherwise. If you do not use email, please phone David on Sunday evening on 01395 442621.  
Start: 11:00am at the car park on New Ground DT5 1LQ on the northern end of the Isle of Portland SY 689 730. 9 miles, 5 hours plus lunch break.  
Fabulous views throughout. We visit the quarries where the famous Portland Stone was quarried, Rufus Castle, Church Ope Cove, the three Old Lighthouses, Pulpit Rock, Tout Quarry Sculpture Park and Nature reserve. Refreshments (or your own picnic) and toilets available at the halfway point.  
*Walk Leader:* David Buss, 01395 442621/07920 114 573

### **Thursday 22nd September, 1.00pm or 1.30pm - WALK and Vineyard Visit**

Meet, depending on take up, either the Pebblebed Vineyard at SX 98680 88833 or the Public Hall, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton.

Approximately 5 mile fairly level circular walk from Pebblebed Vineyard at Clyst St George followed by a talk, including a demonstration of methode champenoise, vineyard tour and wine tasting and optional light meal at Topsham Pebblebed Wine Cellar.

By kind permission of John Pyne of Postlake Farm the walk will cross the vineyard and surrounding private farm land visiting Woodbury Salterton and Woodbury keeping to tracks and quiet lanes. Depending on demand a minibus will be available by a private loan from BS Scouts for travel to facilitate those who would prefer to enjoy the wines.

Cost £15 per head plus optional meal cost of roughly £10 and a contribution, if appropriate, for the donation for the minibus loan. Wine can be purchased at the Vineyard. **Indications of interest as soon as possible please to [andrew@beresfords.net](mailto:andrew@beresfords.net)** so that details of the walk and visit can be finalised. Interested parties will be notified by email about the final arrangements.

*Walk Leader:* Andrew Beresford, 01395 446543

### **Saturday 24 September, 10.00am – WALK**

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 899) at 8.30am to share cars. Further transport details will be given on the OVA website.

***“Devon Coast to Coast Stage X, Knowstone to Tarr Steps”***

Start: Knowstone, church steps (OS Explorer 114, SS 828 231). 10 miles

Finish: Tarr Steps (OS Explorer OL 9, SS 868 321) NB. Also required, OS Explorer OL 9. Rolling fields and wooded valleys.

*Walk Leader:* Chris Buckland 01395 444 471

### **Wednesday 28 September, 10.00am. WALK**

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 899) 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 Explorer OL28, SX 785 789 / TQ13 9LJ) 6 miles

The walk commences with a steady climb through towering stands of ancient oak woodland; drenched with lichen and ferns and pass bird hides which are famous for spotting pied flycatchers, lesser spotted woodpeckers and wood warblers to name but a few. 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 and drop down onto the road that leads to the entrance to Becky Falls. The next stage is a walk along the path below Houndtor Ridge to arrive at Holn Brake where we enter Yarner Wood. After a short walk through the wood we reach the car park.

There are toilets at the car park, but no other facilities so bring a picnic lunch.

*Walk Leaders:* Paula & Mike Paddison, 01395 446 550

### **Saturday 1 October, 10:00am – WALK**

Start at East Budleigh Car Park (SY 066 849) 4 miles

#### **“Return to Budley”**

Very interesting town walk, including a visit to the historic parish church of All Saints’, East Budleigh. Stan will share his vast local knowledge of the people and places of bygone East Budleigh. Optional lunch at the Sir Walter Raleigh.

*Walk Leader:* Stan Herbert 01395 442030

### **Wednesday 5 October, 10:00am – WALK**

**Meet:** Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 8.30am to share cars. Further transport details will be given on the OVA website.

#### **“Devon Coast to Coast Stage XI, Tarr Step to Simonsbath”**

Start: Tarr Steps (OS Explorer OL 9, SS 868 321) 11 miles

Finish: Simonsbath, Ashcombe CP (OS Explorer OL 9, SS 774 394)

Riverside paths, uneven and wet in places; open common. Please bring appropriate food and drink.

*Walk Leaders:* Mike Paddison 01395 446 550, Chris Buckland 01395 444 471

### **Monday 10 October, 10.00am – WALK**

**Meet:** Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS Explorer 115, SY 088 899) at 8.30am to share cars. See OVA website for transport details nearer the date.

#### **“Devon Coast to Coast Stage XII, Simonsbath to Lynmouth”**

Start: Simonsbath, Ashcombe car park (OS Explorer OL 9, SS 774 394) 11.25 miles

Finish: Lynmouth, The Pavilion on The Esplanade (OS Explorer OL 9, SS 723 497)

Open common, rough paths, tracks, and wooded valleys. Please bring appropriate food and drink.

*Walk Leaders:* Mike Paddison 01395 446 550, Chris Buckland 01395 444 471



On the heaths cattle are back grazing the loops on Colaton Raleigh common where the action of their hooves and browsing prevents the purple moor grass from dominating and allows water in the runnels on the slopes to keep moving. This helps provide ideal conditions for one of our rarest species - the Southern Damsel fly. Dartmoor Hill ponies and a small group of cattle have also returned to Bicton common.

It has been a busy time for education and public engagement with a number of events taking place on the commons. There is a full programme of activities planned for Heath Week which starts on the 24th July. Look out for the Heath Week guide available in a number of outlets or find details on Facebook.

Back in May a request was made for volunteers to help with butterfly and bird surveying. There was a fantastic response and over thirty local people have now been trained enabling them to head out and assist with expanding the annual monitoring programme of Silver-studded Blues and Nightjars, and also support the RSPB to do the same on neighbouring sites. Thank you to everyone who has helped this season. Your support is really appreciated. Volunteers continue to meet fortnightly, and if you'd like to join on a Wednesday for some active work, you'll receive a warm welcome and caramel wafers at coffee time! There are a range of tasks over the next few months and activities in the school holidays suitable for younger volunteers too. Please do get in touch.

In partnership with a range of organisations The Conservation Trust's Space for Nature report, a study of the biodiversity of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SSSI, has been published and is now in the public domain. It can be downloaded from [www.pebblebedheath.org](http://www.pebblebedheath.org)

Please remember at this time of the year to guard against fire, close gates to keep livestock safe and also be mindful to check yourselves and pets for ticks after walking in the countryside. Thank you!

**Kate Ponting**

**For more details [kate.ponting@clintondevon.com](mailto:kate.ponting@clintondevon.com) or telephone 01395 443881**

# The Otter Valley Association

## **Executive Committee (01395)**

Chairman	Roger Saunders	443248
Vice-chairman	Haylor Lass	568786
Hon Secretary	Penny Kurowski	742942
Hon Treasurer	Jon Roseway	488739

## **Committee Chairmen**

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

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

Budleigh Salterton	George Maddaford	446077
East Budleigh	Jon Roseway	488739
Otterton	<i>vacancy</i>	
Colaton Raleigh	<i>vacancy</i>	
Newton Poppleford	Haylor Lass	568786

## **Other Executive Committee Members**

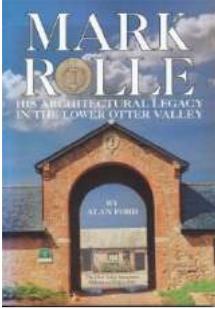
Assistant Minutes Secretary	Robert Wiltshire	444395
Membership Secretary	Clive Bowman membership@ova.org.uk	446892
Publicity Secretary	<i>vacancy</i>	

## **Other Contacts**

Webmasters	David Daniel 445960 & Martin Smith	442333
Talks Organiser	Geoff Lake	446828
Walks Organisers	Chris Buckland Mike Paddison	444471 446550
Newsletter Distributors	Pam and Tony Harber	445392
Newsletter Editor	Jacqui Baldwin jacquibaldwin@btinternet.com	567599

**Publications:** Visit [www.ova.org.uk](http://www.ova.org.uk) or for book sales, contact Andrew Beresford by phone on 01395 446543 or email [booksales@ova.org.uk](mailto: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 19<sup>th</sup> century.

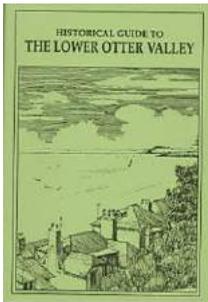
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



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

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

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



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

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

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

## **Leaflets**

The OVA also publish a number of leaflets about the history, flora & fauna and walking in the lower Otter Valley. They can usually be found in the Tourist Information Centres and in other outlets around the valley.