

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

www.oval.org.uk
Registered Charity
No 278266
© OVA 2017

OVA
PO Box 70
Budleigh Salterton
EX9 6WN

AUTUMN
Newsletter
Volume 38/4
October 2017

**This issue's cover "The Fall" was photographed and produced by Mo
Bowman**

From the Editor

It is sad to see Summer come to an end but Autumn is a wonderful season with much to look forward to and appreciate: clear, bright, crisp days; beautiful colour in the trees as so brilliantly captured by Mo Bowman on the cover of this issue; blackberries (I picked my first load last week); fungi (particularly the Fungi Foray on 7th October); bonfire night and the new season of Strictly Come Dancing!

As I write this it is exactly 13 weeks until Christmas Day – I hear loud groans and, usually, I would agree. However, this year there is an exciting event to look forward to during the festive season as you will see on page 15. This is in addition to the walks and talks programme which is described in the later pages. So get your Christmas Party clothes dusted off and join us on 18th December. I look forward to seeing you there!

Jacqui Baldwin



Anyone with an interest in wildlife conservation or landowners who'd like to erect a Barn Owl box on their building may be interested in an event Clinton Devon Estates are hosting in partnership with the Barn Owl Trust, on Wednesday 25 October.

For more details contact

kate.ponting@clintondevon.com

01395 446918

Acting Chairman's Report

Welcome to our autumn newsletter. Whilst I regret seeing the end of summer, autumn brings the benefit of the new season of OVA talks! Our first two talks cover Conservation Areas (October) and Bees (November); full details are given in diary listings in this newsletter. If you have ideas for future talks, or know of an interesting speaker please get in touch.



I am pleased to announce that, after a break of several years, there will be an OVA holiday party this year, on December 18th at Woodbury Park Golf Club. An application form is in the centre pages of the newsletter – I look forward to seeing you and your friends there.

Behind the scenes, the two big infrastructure projects in the Otter Valley are making steady progress. The Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP) held a public consultation in July, outlining the remaining project options to address the problems with the lower Otter floodplain. Although the turnout was a little low, those attending expressed a clear preference for Option 3, which would allow the restoration of the Big and Little Marshes, while retaining most of the embankments. The cost estimate for this is £8-£9 million. More radical options include realigning the river and removing all obstructions; but, at a cost of £20 - £40 million, this seems to be an unlikely choice.

All the project options are listed on the project website (<http://www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk/>). The OVA continues to emphasise that whatever option is chosen footpath and road access must be maintained. Modelling and survey work are being carried out to select a preferred option. After that funding would have to be obtained for the project to go forward.

The high capacity electricity cable (FAB link) project has received planning permission to build its converter station near Exeter Airport, and has started survey work along the Otter Estuary. An archaeological survey of areas that were believed to have been docks or havens in the past is scheduled. Actual construction is due to begin in 2018.

Local Neighbourhood Plans have made good progress. East Budleigh has a finalised plan that is incorporated into the East Devon Local Plan. Budleigh Salterton is close behind, having completed a public referendum (95% approval), and should be incorporated into the East Devon Local Plan in October.

Quoting from George Bernard Shaw: “the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place”. So I think it is worth reviewing how we communicate with the OVA membership, and asking you how well it works.

Our primary communication method is through this newsletter, which every member should receive. Here we cover all our walks, talks and other events. We also have articles about any major projects that the Executive is involved with.

Our website (www.ova.org.uk) also has the full listing of all events, news about our teams, publications and much more. This is the place to go to get the most up to date information about our events. If you are interested in what goes on at the Executive Committee meetings, you can read a monthly summary (About Us/Executive Committee Reports) on the website.

The OVA has a Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/OtterValleyAssoc/). It lists events and also newsworthy items of local interest, plus pictures of OVA events. It is also a place for members (and non-members) to post comments. If you would like to receive Facebook notifications from the OVA please visit and “like” the page.

Supplementing all this, there are monthly posters of OVA activities displayed around the area, and reminder emails (if you have given us your email address) for talks. And finally, we try to attend local events with an OVA display stall (e.g. the Scarecrow Festival in East Budleigh and the Budleigh Salterton Club day event) where there will usually be members of the Executive Committee available – as well as all our leaflets and books.

I hope that we have addressed Mr. Shaw’s problem, what do you think?

Roger Saunders, Acting Chairman



STATISTICS 1 JULY 2016 TO 30 JUNE 2017

OVA walkers and walk leaders have continued to clock up the miles as the statistics below for 2016/17 show. The number of walks increased again – up to 866 – with 603 miles covered in total. The programme for the next three months begins on page 22.

Summary

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Total number of walks:	63	85	86
Total number of walkers:	643	859	866
Average attendance:	10.2	10.1	10.1
Range of attendees:	1 to 33	2 to 35	1 to 45
Total number of miles walked:	412 miles	634 miles	603 miles
Total number of miles walked by Members:	4154 miles	6077 miles	6058 miles
Number of Walk Leaders:	22 of which 17 led 2 or more walks.	28 of which 18 led 2 or more walks.	27 of which 20 led 2 or more walks.

Distances and Attendance

Distance (miles)	Number of Walks			Average Attendance		
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
0 < 4.99	7	12	14	12.3	13.2	11.3
5 < 9.99	50	61	57	9.8	10.1	9.6
10 < 13.4	6	11	15	10.8	6.9	10.5
40	0	1	0	0	9.0	0

Map Reading Workshop

On 24th July a group of 16 walkers gathered at Otterton Village Hall to discover the delights of map reading, route planning and compass navigation skills. Most of us were either very rusty or had never been shown how to use a compass to find our way accurately when out on a walk.

Iain Ure and Chris Buckland took us through the basics of map work and route planning in a fun and informative way, with plenty of time to try out these new techniques. They showed us how to use a detailed route planner which we tested in the afternoon on Peak Hill and Mutters Moor (see below), pacing distances and taking and following compass bearings. We all managed to navigate a tortuous route around Mutters Moor and find our way back to the car park without getting lost. Quite a feat!



It was a very informative and worthwhile day, enjoyed by everybody. We even asked for a follow-up day on Dartmoor (now scheduled for 19th October – see Event Programme) which should really test our new found skills. Very many thanks to Iain and Chris for putting on this invaluable course, explaining things so clearly, and for all the hard work involved in the planning and course preparation.

Dee Woods



Conservation Trust preserves ancient monument for future generations

Woodbury Castle is a nationally important archaeological site and prominent landmark occupying the highest point of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths on Woodbury Common. It is a hillfort or iron age enclosure characterised by its deep earthwork ramparts enclosing a level interior of approximately two hectares studded with deciduous trees. It dates back to 500 – 300BC and became a Scheduled Monument in 1923; Scheduled Monuments are prehistoric monuments recognised as deserving of state protection.



The site was put on Historic England's *At Risk Register* several years ago when it became apparent that the area was suffering from erosion (shown left) due to a high volume of visitors but also due to damage from tree roots and scrub growth. Last year the Trust secured funding from Natural England's Countryside Stewardship scheme to undertake extensive restoration work.

The collaborative project, which got underway last month, is benefitting from additional funds granted by *Historic England*, and Devon County Council's *Historic Environment Team*. *Devon Archaeological Society* have also been involved with the design work.

The funding will enable better interpretation at the monument, creating a sense of welcome for visitors so they become aware of its archaeological significance upon arrival, while promoting an understanding and appreciation of its national and historical importance.

Volunteers are being sought to assist with some of the work, and the Trust plans to establish a volunteer archaeological monitoring scheme to give local people with an interest in archaeology or natural history the opportunity to be involved in ongoing preservation work. The Trust has planned guided walks for people to learn more about the site.

There will be several stages to the work: access to the site will be improved with new steps and deep erosion scars caused by visitor use on banks and ditches will be repaired under archaeological supervision. The repaired banks will be seeded and selective tree and scrub removal will let in more light allowing ground vegetation to establish which is vital for safeguarding the earthworks into the future.

The careful removal and crown reduction of a selected trees and scrub on the site of the castle itself and in the immediate vicinity will open-up a view which has been blocked for many years, allowing people to appreciate the hill fort's original function as well as enhancing the monument's setting and its imposing ramparts. The work will also help to protect buried archaeology, including the remains of an Iron Age round house, which are at risk of damage from tree roots. Careful ongoing monitoring and management of the remaining large beech trees will help ensure the health of these specimen trees.

New information panels telling the story of the site with illustrations of the original hill fort and its inhabitants by Exeter based artist Jane Read will be installed (see image right), in addition to a sign at the entrance to the monument and improvements made to the car park with the old signs removed and a new sign for the hillfort installed at the entrance to the monument.



Kim Strawbridge, Pebblebed Heaths site manager explains “We want people to be involved in the project and are keen for people to join us for our guided walks to learn more about this special monument and why the works are so important to securing its future,”

**Kate Ponting, Countryside Learning Officer kate.ponting@clintondevon.com
01395 446918**



The Gardens, Newton Poppleford

Many of you will have noticed the very striking daffodil sculpture outside 'The Gardens' on Newton Poppleford High Street. On the wall beside the daffodils is a blue plaque and, on a recent visit to the property, the interesting history of the house – and the part it played in putting Newton Poppleford on the horticultural map - was revealed.

As the plaque indicates the property was the home of Walter Hill who, while working as nurseryman to Percy Kendall, bred the famous, large trumpet King Alfred daffodil which received a First Class Certificate from the Royal Horticultural Society in March 1899. It is hard to imagine the village at that time, with a small population mostly employed by local farmers or market gardeners and many acres of land given over to bulb and daffodil production. Breeding any bulb is a lengthy process, taking 5-7 years, but the RHS recognition meant that parent King Alfred bulbs could be sold for high prices – reportedly as much as six guineas each. The flowers themselves were a by-product of the bulb production and in the Spring they were picked, bunched and boxed up by local girls to be sent twice a day by train to the market in London. Sadly, available land had to be turned over to food production through the two world wars and bulb production diminished. However, in 1999, the centenary of the King Alfred daffodil was celebrated by the inhabitants of Newton Poppleford with the erection of the blue plaque at 'The Gardens' and signage at the village entrances showing its status as the 'birthplace' of the bulb.

Since 2013 Stephen and Jill, the new owners of 'The Gardens', reputedly one of the oldest habitations in the village, have been lovingly restoring the Listed property and, in the process, uncovering many original features including an inglenook fireplace and bread oven. Behind the house you can see the drying room where the original bulbs were dried. Much of the work has been carried out by local craftsmen using locally sourced materials and the results are a credit to them and the owners. The re-erection of the blue plaque has created much interest from locals and visitors alike and Jill says that they have enjoyed explaining the story of the house and making people more aware of an important time in the history of Newton Poppleford.

Jacqui Baldwin



Devon Wildlife Trust

For the second successive summer, locals and visitors to Otterton have been able to enjoy the sight of ‘baby’ beavers on the River Otter. Following the remarkable birth of five kits to the ‘Otterton’ female in 2016, this summer the same family group increased by a further four juveniles. And again mother and kits were far from camera-shy, with observers and photographers congregating on summer evenings to see the young beavers. Expect to see these animals show up onscreen in at least one wildlife TV series later this year.



An adult beaver photographed at Otterton this year – courtesy of Mike Symes, Devon Wildlife Trust

But perhaps the most pleasing breeding success occurred elsewhere in the River Otter catchment. In 2016 DWT introduced a male and female beaver, unrelated to the existing animals on the river, on a private site on a tributary of the Otter. Why?

When the River Otter Beaver Trial began in 2015 the genetic testing of the beavers showed that they were very closely related to one another. This finding could have implications for the long term health of the river’s beavers if the population was

left alone. So, to address this problem, the Trial's licence gave DWT permission to release further, unrelated, beavers with the intention of widening the genetic diversity of the whole population. So in May last year they did just that.

The following weeks were a tense time. The beavers were unknown to one another. It was hoped that they would bond and then breed, but they could have decided to go their separate ways. To keep a close eye on their progress DWT used a series of discreet cameras around their home. A year on and the Trust can report good news. The cameras showed that the two beavers decided to stay and pair up. Best of all the new couple have started a family, with two kits being born this summer.

The footage shows the kits exploring their new home. The hope is that in a year or two the pair will venture further and leave home to meet, mix and mate with the original river Otter beaver population. At that point, the aim of increasing the genetic health of the beaver population will be well on its way to being fulfilled. A conservative estimate of the number of beavers on the River Otter is now 22 – still well below what the river could comfortably accommodate.

With the five-year River Otter Beaver Trial now at the halfway stage – and without any funding from national or local government or any public bodies – Devon Wildlife Trust has launched a new fundraising product to help them continue England's first beaver re-introduction project. If you would like to contribute or purchase any of their beaver fundraising gifts, please visit the website www.devonwildlifetrust.org where you will see full details or contact the Trust on 01392 279244.

School Visits to the Pebblebed Heaths

In the last issue Roger Saunders highlighted the OVA's collaboration with Clinton Devon Estates to help local school children visit the Pebblebed Heaths as part of their school curriculum. The OVA donates money to pay for transportation from school to heath and back.

To show how enjoyable and educational these visits are for both the children and their teachers here are some quotes from the feedback form completed by a teacher from Feniton Church of England Primary School:

“The children were very excited about going to the pebblebed heath and thoroughly enjoyed the day. The practical experiences meant that they remembered the learning when questioned in mini plenaries.”

“their class teacher has taken the photos and the information in order to follow up the visit in literacy as well as in science. Parents have commented on how much the children enjoyed and learnt from the day.”

“Much of the ‘working scientifically’ aspect of Year Four fieldwork can be ticked off for both science and geography! Also, it is right on our doorstep, so no long coach journeys and all that that entails with young children.”



This year the following visits took place:

Drakes C of E Primary - Years 4, 5 and 6: ‘A Journey across the Heaths’ trail finding/map work, pond dipping, heathland management at Stowford and Colaton Raleigh Common.

Feniton C of E Primary - Year 4: plant classification, geology and heathland management including conservation grazing and virtual ‘swale’ at Bicton Common.

Newton Poppleford Primary - Year 3: Woodland tree identification, comparison with heathland, heathland management at Bicton Common.

Newton Poppleford Primary - Year 4: Rivers and Environmental Change on the River Otter and at Otterton Mill.

Woodbury Salterton Primary – Year 3 and 4: River walk from Otterton to Budleigh Salterton.

OVA Contribution to Heath Week - A Trio of Trigpoints

We set off from Uphams car park in a southerly direction across Bicton Common. There were a lot of interesting flowers and wildlife to look at including the Cinnabar Moth caterpillars that eat the poisonous (to livestock) common ragwort. We had glimpses of the amazing restoration work at Black Hill Quarry.

Mike had checked the walk seven weeks previously ... but seven weeks is a long time in Nature, which meant that he had trouble finding the first trigpoint – the path to it was well hidden under a tree surrounded by gorse, brambles and saplings. This trigpoint (167m) looked somewhat unloved but the mounting plate brass screw in the top was immaculately bright and shiny; however, the view was uninspiring.

Mike mentioned that there is a website <http://trigpointing.uk> where you can discover all about trigpoint bagging and I recalled reading an article in Walk magazine about someone who had bagged all 6,190 of the UK's surviving trigpoints. Rob Woodall, "Britain's top trig bagger", bagged his final trigpoint in 2016 ... he started in 2002! The website explains the history and how the trigpoints (triangulation pillars) were used by Ordnance Survey to create accurate maps of the land.

Carefully crossing the B3180, we could see the second trigpoint luring us into more gorse and brambles – undeterred we made it. This trigpoint (176m) was well-weathered and the mounting plate had been concreted in.



Into Aylesbeare Common Nature Reserve and the third trigpoint (159m) was bagged. Once again, walking through gorse and heather to reach our objective. – *[photo left]*

The 10.3 miles was completed in six hours and included breaks for coffee, water and a leisurely lunch.

The quote of the day has to be Mike's: "I can't see why people get excited by some concrete lumps with bits of inlaid brass"!

Paul Kurowski



Your invitation to the

**OVA
CHRISTMAS
PARTY**

Monday, 18th December

Woodbury Park Golf Club



OVA CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Executive Committee is delighted to invite you and your friends to the OVA Christmas Party to be held at Woodbury Park on Monday, December 18th. It will be a great opportunity to participate in the social side of our organisation, spend time with old friends and maybe meet some new ones. We particularly extend a welcome to single members and new members. Please feel free invite non-members to join in the fun.

The evening will commence with drinks at 7 pm, followed by a three-course meal in the Greg Norman Suite. As well as delicious food and good company, there will be entertainment comprising a table quiz, special-prize raffle and your old favourites from the Harlequin Strummers, a local ukulele band. Why not book some places right now!

The cost is £27.50 per person. This will include a welcome drink (glass of sparkling wine or fruit juice), a Christmas meal with choices to suit most tastes and coffee. Wine, beer and other refreshments can be purchased at the en-suite bar.

Tickets are available until November 6th and will be mailed to you on receipt of: (1) a completed application form (multiple forms for large groups), (2) a cheque payable to the OVA, and (3) a stamped self-addressed envelope. Send these to: OVA, PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN. Also indicate each person's choice of food plus any dietary requirements and the name of anyone you would like to sit with (8-10, max 12).

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





Starters

Spiced Parsnip & Apple Soup with truffle croutons and herb oil (gf)
Smoked Salmon Terrine with Lemon & Dill Toasts
Caramelized Shallot Tarte Tatin with redcurrant syrup

Main Courses

*Roast Devonshire Turkey with sage, apricot & chestnut log roast
and gravy (gf)*
Slow-roasted Belly of Pork and a sage velouté (gf)
*Stilton & Artichoke tart with black pepper pastry
and watercress coulis*
All served with seasonal vegetables and garlic & herb roast potatoes

Desserts

Traditional Christmas Pudding with brandy sauce (gf)
*Clementine Posset with cranberry compote and cinnamon
shortbread (gf)*
Stilton and biscuits with grapes and celery



Christmas Party – Application for tickets

Please send me Tickets

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

Address

Postcode Tel:

Email address

I enclose a cheque for £

Menu selection (please tick)

Starter	Soup*
	Terrine
	Tarte Tatin
Main Course	Turkey*
	Pork*
	Vegetarian option
Dessert	Christmas Pudding*
	Clementine Posset*
	Cheese

Person 1	Person 2

Please add 'gf' if you require the gluten free version

I would like to be seated with

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

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

A Walk for Everyone - Autumn Programme 2017

The nights are drawing in and the days are getting shorter and cooler. Hopefully, we can entice you to join some of the new programme of walks that our walk leaders have very kindly agreed to lead. If there are any budding walk leaders out there, please make yourself known to one of the walking group team as we are always looking for new ideas.

Please note, for walks where we leave our cars in Newton Poppleford on a Saturday, we have been asked to use the other car park off Station Road so please be aware and go to the correct car park. I would also urge you to keep an eye on the OVA website where we record any changes to the walk programme due to inclement weather or illness.

We have a mix of walks of varied lengths to tempt you out this autumn. We start in October with Vivien who is leading a new walk on Exmoor and then Iain and Chris are further developing our map reading skills on Dartmoor. Both Jon and Ted (in January) are taking us around Branscombe and Jon hopes that his run of good weather for this walk continues. David Buss is leading two walks, in October from Sidford and in November from Newton Poppleford.

In early November, we are hoping to see some early autumn colour with Stella along the River Teign. There is a guided bird watching walk with Colin along the river Otter and a grand circuit of Otterton with Iain. Mike takes us across the Hawkerland Valley on an “easy” walk finishing with lunch at the Otter Inn and Peter is taking us around his local Tipton patch and also offering to finish the walk off with a pint or lunch at the local Inn.

In December, Paul and Penny are leading us around Exeter on the Green Circle, a walk of two stages. Brian Turnbull is tempting us with two local walks, one from Colaton Raleigh in December and later Crook Plantation in January. Chris Buckland suitably refreshed, we hope, after his “summer holiday” nursing his troubled feet will be taking us on his mince pie walk. Welcome back Chris, we missed you. David Daniel has been persuaded to lead his popular Boxing Day walk with the option of lunch at the Sir Walter Raleigh.

In the New Year, Steve is tempting us with a gentle walk along the River Otter, we have a second chance to visit Branscombe with Ted’s energetic walk around this area. There is an invigorating walk up to Woodbury Castle with Brian and Jon is

offering a walk circumnavigating Newton Poppleford with lunch at the Otter Inn. We will also have the opportunity to complete the final stage of the Exeter Green Circle with Paul and Penny at the end of January.

Heather Fereday



Events Programme – October 2017 to January 2018

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

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

Saturday 14th October, 10.15–10.30am - WALK

Meet at Newton Poppleford CP off Station Road (**Not the Rec CP**) (OS 115, SY 085 895) at 9.00am to share cars.

“More Exmoor”

Start: Wheddon Cross Car Park (OS OL9, SS 924 388) 9 miles, 5 hours.

This is a circular walk on the high moor picking up the Coleridge Way to Higher Brockwell, then heading along the Macmillan Way to Dunkery Beacon, the highest point on Exmoor at 519m, before dropping down through Blagdon Wood and Quarne Wood to the start. The autumn colour should be good with fine views on a clear day. Bring a packed lunch and, if the gods are with us, there will be a café open for tea on our return or a pint in the pub.

Walk Leader: Vivien Insull, 01404 811267

Thursday, 19th October - MAP READING FOLLOW UP

The venue will be in North East Dartmoor, probably near South Zeal. The walking distance will be about 6 -7 miles to include map reading exercises. We will share lifts which we can arrange when we have established the number of attendees. You do not need to have attended the first training day which was offered in order to attend the follow up. Trainees to bring or share a map, either OL28 Explorer or 191 Landranger and have a compass.

Course Leaders: Iain Ure, 01395 568822 and Chris Buckland, 01395 444471.

Please email Heather Fereday by Monday, 16th October if you wish to attend so we can confirm numbers and arrange lifts.

Wednesday, 25th October, 10.30am - WALK

Start: Branscombe Village Hall, (OS 115, SY 197 887) 8 miles, 4½ hours

“Bootiful Branscombe!”

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

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway 01395 488739/ 07887936280

Conservation Areas – TALK - Monday 30th October at 7.30pm

The Peter Hall, St Peter’s Church, Budleigh Salterton.

Speaker: Nicky Daniel

Why do we need Conservation Areas? In the 50th anniversary year of the first conservation area in the country we will look at the role they play in the lower Otter Valley. To be followed by refreshments

Tuesday, 31st October, 10.30am - WALK

Start: CP opposite The Blue Ball Inn, A3052, Sidford. 7½ miles. 250m ascent. 3 hours

“The Sweetcombe Valley”

From Sidford, we follow Snod Brook and pass the Grade II listed Knowle House, then head northwards to join the East Devon Way briefly before returning through Harcombe Hill Wood, a privately managed ecological restoration and sustainable woodland, then descending to Harcombe Village before rejoining our outward route at Knowle House. Lovely views and, hopefully, plenty of autumn colour. Lunch at The Blue Ball Inn. *Walk Leader:* David Buss, 01395 442621/07920 114573

Friday, 3rd November - 10.15am – WALK

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

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

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

Described as perhaps the most famous walk on Dartmoor, this walk extends the usual route to take in Cranford Castle - an old Iron Age Fort. We follow the famous Hunters Path with panoramic views across Dartmoor and to the Teign Gorge below. Next we descend to Fingle Bridge then a short stroll along the river before heading into Hore Woods and a steep climb up to the top of Cranford Castle for lunch. After admiring the view across to Castle Drogo we descend to the river Teign and walk alongside the river and then climb back up to Castle Drogo for tea and cakes. Please bring a packed lunch.

Walk Leader: Stella French, 01395 445724

Friday, 10th November - 9.30am - Guided Bird Watching WALK

Meet: the South East corner of Lime Kiln CP at 9.30am. (OS 115, SY 073 819)

A leisurely 2-3 mile walk along the river Otter watching and identifying the arriving winter birds with Colin Randall, a knowledgeable local member of the Devon Birds bird-watching group. No equipment or knowledge necessary, although a pair of binoculars would be useful if you have them. Wrap up warmly as it's not a vigorous walk, rather a stroll with lots of stops.

Walk Leader: Colin Randall, 01395 444302

Saturday, 11th November - 9.30am - WALK

Meet on Otterton Green for all or part of this beautiful 12 mile circuit and do bring a picnic.

"Otterton Annual Parish Boundary Walk."

Starting from the Green we walk along the River Otter to Otter Head and then eastward along the coast to Ladram Bay. Those wanting a shorter walk can easily return inland back to the village. We then go past High Peak before stopping for lunch at Mutters Moor. We return via Passaford Farm and along the River back to the Green for approximately 3.30pm.

Walk Leader: Iain Ure, 01395 568822

Wednesday, 15th November - 10.00am - WALK

Start at Colaton Raleigh, the Otter Inn (OS 115, SY 0778 8734), 6½ miles

"Hawkerland before lunch"

An 'easy' walk north, briefly by the River Otter turning west along green lanes, agricultural tracks and footpaths via Monkey Lane to cross the Hawkerland Valley, before returning to Colaton Raleigh, via Morish Cotley and Kingston, and lunch at the Otter Inn.

Walk Leader: Mike Paddison 01395 446550.

Wednesday, 22nd November - 10.00am - WALK

Meet: The Playing Field CP in Tipton (OS 115, SY 091 917) 7-8 miles.

If you park in this private car park, then please make a contribution to the honesty box. Roadside parking is also available.

“Join Peter for a walk from Tipton St John”

Follow footpaths, tracks and green lanes before returning along the river Otter for a pint/lunch in the village pub.

Walk Leader: Peter Paine, 01404 815214/07812 772163

Tuesday, 28th November - 10:30am - WALK

A linear walk that starts and ends on the 157 bus route.

Start: 157 bus stop opposite Back Lane, Newton Poppleford (which leads to the Recreation Ground CP) OS 115, SY 084 897. 7½ miles, 3 hours.

“The Lower Otter Valley”

From Newton Poppleford, we walk south along the west bank of the River Otter where we will see evidence of the beavers, cross the river to walk above and around Otterton to reach the east bank above Clamour Bridge, then rejoin the west bank at White Bridge to take us to the estuary, ending with a walk along the promenade to the 157 bus stop and/or a venue for lunch. Lovely views throughout.

Walk Leader: David Buss, 01395 442621/07920 11457

To Bee or not to Bee! – TALK - Thursday 30th November at 7.30pm

Otterton Village Hall, Otterton.

John Eustace of Lympstone will present a background to the honey bee, the pros and cons of keeping bees and a year in the life of a bee keeper.

Monday, 4th December - 10:35am - WALK

Start: Topsham Road, bus stop just past the Crematorium entrance (OS 115 SX, 939 907) 6½miles, 4 hours (including lunch stop).

“Exeter Green Circle – Part One”

Explore the green outskirts of Exeter – you may be surprised at what you find! This walk takes us from Topsham Road to Iron Bridge in the city centre through a succession of parks and open spaces. You can then either travel straight home (we will have bus and train timetables with us) or pop into the city centre for a bit of Christmas shopping. Please bring a picnic lunch unless the weather is awful, in which case we will find a pub/cafe instead.

The start point of the walk is on the 57 bus route. You can take the 9.40am number 58 bus from Budleigh Salterton Public Hall and change at Exmouth Road

for the 57 (this is the 9.51am bus from Exmouth). If travelling from Newton Poppleford, take the 9.49am number 9 bus and change at Livery Dole, taking the 57 towards Brixington.

Nearer the time, please check the OVA website (or contact the walk leaders) for the latest bus times.

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

Thursday, 7th December - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Colaton Raleigh Church (OS 115, SY 082 872), 5 miles

"An ideal walk for a short winter's day"

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

Walk leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

Friday 15th December, 10:00am - WALK

Start: Knowle Village Hall CP (OS 115, SY 052 827), 7½ miles

"Exploring the Western Front: a Mince Pie Walk"

A largely level walk to Orcombe Point, the Western Gateway to the Jurassic Coast, using the disused railway track to Littleham Church, and attractive rural paths under the shadow of Exmouth's brooding urbanization above. Distant views across the Exe estuary to Berry Head before the gradual climb back along the coast path to West Down Beacon with views to Beer and Portland. (Yes, even in December... sometimes!) Please bring a picnic. Perhaps a drink to celebrate another year of OVA Walking at 'The Dog and Donkey' on our return?

Walk Leader: Chris Buckland, 01395 444 471

Monday, 18th December – 7.00pm – OVA CHRISTMAS PARTY

Tuesday, 26th December - 10.30am – BOXING DAY WALK

Start: East Budleigh car park (OS 115, SY 066 849), 4 miles

"A Celebration"

Gentle Boxing Day walk across the commons at this time of good cheer.

Optional lunch at the Sir Walter Raleigh.

(Please telephone walk leader by Sunday, 3rd December 2017 to book lunch)

Walk Leader: David Daniel, 01395 445960

Saturday, 6th January - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Newton Poppleford CP off Station Road (OS 115 SY, 085 895) 4-5 miles, 2 hours

"Walk in the New Year"

A walk along the river and paths of the Otter Valley to Tipton St John and return.

Walk Leader: Steve Hagger, 01395 442631

Wednesday, 10th January - 10.00am - WALK

Meet: at Newton Poppleford Rec Ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.15am to share cars, or meet at the start point. Start: Blackberry Camp Hill Fort (OS 115, SY 188 924) at 10.00am 7½ miles, 4 hours + lunch.

“Hills above Branscombe”

An energetic hilly walk (1,400 feet of ascent) in the area to the north of Branscombe. This is an attractive area but there are no facilities en route so please bring a picnic.

Walk Leader: Ted Swan, 01395 567450.

Tuesday, 16th January - 10.00am- WALK

Start: Crook Plantation (OS 115, SY 057 866) at 10.00am – 5 miles, 2½ hours

“Woodbury Castle and Colaton Raleigh Common”

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

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

Wednesday, 24th January - 10.35am - WALK

Start: Newton Poppleford Rec Ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) 8 miles, 4½ hours.
Bus Option: 157 from Budleigh Salterton Public Hall (10.00) to Back Lane (10.27) for 10.35am start.

“Pop goes the Weasel”

This walk circumnavigates Newton Poppleford on river banks, footpaths, green lanes and quiet roads. We start out on the East Devon Way by Harpford footbridge and climb gradually to Joney’s Cross before descending to Stoneyford and along Naps Lane with rapidly increasing anticipation of lunch at the Otter Inn. Anybody who wants to shorten the walk by 2½ miles can take the bus back to the start or into Budleigh Salterton. For the final section, we meander northwards along the river Otter to the start point.

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway, 01395 488739/07887 936280.

Monday, 29th January - 10:50am - WALK

Start underneath Iron Bridge (OS SX 915 928) 6½ miles, 4 hours (inc lunch stop).

“Exeter Green Circle – Part Two”

Following on from Part One, this walk takes us from Exeter city centre out around Redhills and skirting the western part of the city before crossing the canal and river to arrive back at Topsham Road. **FULL DETAILS IN NEXT ISSUE**

Walk Reports

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

8th July East Devon Way Stage 3 – Hare and Hounds to Newton Poppleford: it's a dog's life

15 people, including two new walkers and George the dog, got off the bus at the start of the walk at The Hare and Hounds. After a quick safety briefing, we set off single file along a half mile stretch of road as cars whizzed by until we came to the start point of this stage of the East Devon Way. The sun was shining but it was a humid day particularly in Knapp Copse which, despite the recent dry spell, had a flowing stream. We stopped for lunch with an expansive view overlooking Sand: an historic house and gardens; none of us had visited it but were interested in doing so – have a look at <http://www.sandsidbury.co.uk> for information and opening times.

We had a steep descent through Buckley Plantation down a loose and slippery chert-filled path. At the bottom we met a stile: Heather and Paul climbed over it, Jackie decided that she would go through the two bars ... Heather and Paul encouraged her to go lower so that her rucksack would go under the top bar only to see the bar go up – it was hinged! With the top bar hinged back, the remaining 12 people and George had an easier time going over the stile!

We strolled into Sidbury where some took the opportunity to visit St Giles Church which has a 7th century Saxon crypt, open every Thursday afternoon in summer when guided tours take place.



Near to Goosemoor Farm, we were confronted by a closed gate with many bullocks standing in behind it blocking the way ahead. George was sent to the back of the group whilst the bravest led the way forward shooing the beasts ahead of us until they turned into a field. Having ascended Beacon Hill, we needed a 10-minute stop to gaze over Harpford Common and Sidmouth to the sea.

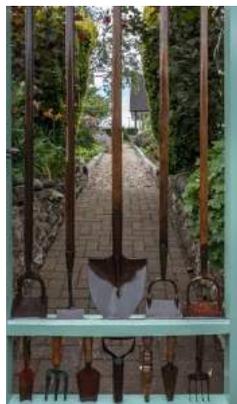
George made the most of a water-filled bath (trough for cows) twice whilst the rest of us looked on enviously! We descended into Harpford, past the Grade II listed St Gregory the Great Church, crossed Harpford Bridge and back to Newton Poppleford.

The 10-mile walk on the EDW was well sign posted in this direction except for the entry into Harpford Wood. As usual with dogs on a walk, George probably went twice as far as the rest of us ... 20 miles in that heat and humidity would have been too much!

Paul Kurowski

17th July East Devon Way Stage 4 - Newton Poppleford to Brixington

A dozen enthusiastic and excited 'East Devon Way'farers met at the start point ready for the day ahead. As has become the norm with each stage of this route, the weather was glorious and jackets were soon relegated to the backpacks and hats donned.



This ten mile section of the East Devon Way started with a gentle climb through meadows and orchards up to Harpford Common and through Aylesbeare Nature Reserve where we inspected a prospective winner of 'Gate of the Year' award (left). Glorious views of the countryside and beyond to the sea and as far as Portland awaited as we walked over the heathland. Under the guidance of our leaders Paul and Penny Kurowski, and with the pressures of bus schedules, we kept up our steady pace over the afternoon as we crossed Lympstone Common passing by quarries and plantations and walking on pebblebeds.

The open moorland suddenly disappeared as we headed downhill to the contrast of the suburbs of Exmouth. Continuing to lose height, we eventually came to our bus stop with plenty of time in hand. Weary, hot, sticky but very happy with our day's exertions we boarded the bus home and looking forward to the final section of this varied and attractive 40 mile walk. By reaching Brixington on the outskirts of Exmouth we are within touching distance of the end. Bring it on!

Anne Underwood

21st July East Devon Way Stage 5 - Brixington to Exmouth

The East Devon Way is a 40 mile inland and hilly route stretching between Lyme Regis and Exmouth which is well way-marked. After recently walking four stages each of 8 – 10 miles, this final stage seemed a (not so) grand finale of just four miles. Nine of us set off from Brixington and headed across fields towards Lympstone. Despite some rain in the air, we were lucky with the views across the river Exe and remained warm and fairly dry right to the end of the route. The group had some walking wounded – a painful foot, recent dental work, a forehead attacked by a hanging bramble - but we bravely carried on!



The final mile was along the cycle route by the estuary with the parish church tower beckoning us towards Exmouth. Once satisfied we had completed the course, our leaders, Paul and Penny Kurowski, very kindly produced glasses and a bottle of Prosecco! As the weather started to deteriorate we celebrated our success in completing the walk from Lyme Regis back to Exmouth. An innocent passer-by was called in to take a windblown photo and then the group headed for the Oddfellows pub for a lunch to mark the occasion.

It has been a varied and attractive walk, the company has always been good and the use of public transport, timings and route well organised by Penny and Paul. Congratulations and thank you to everyone!

Anne Underwood

3rd August Ten Tors – the Easy Way

After 24 hours of continuous heavy rain the previous day, and with even more forecast, we set off for Haytor in apprehensive mood. Would mud 'n flood force us to modify our ambition to climb Ten Tors? The staff at the Visitors' Centre assured us that they were not aware of any problems, so five plucky walkers set off in hopeful mood for which we were to be rewarded with glorious panoramic views across Dartmoor and the surrounding areas

Having made the brief but bracing ascent to Haytor, we bagged our first tor in less than 10 minutes. Haytor is Devon's most visited tor, not least because of its

proximity to a couple of car parks and an ice cream van. It's not the highest on Dartmoor but it's visible from many places around the county and beyond, and has provided a useful bearing for travellers and workers for centuries.

Following our third bagging - Pil Tor - we headed north for a short level walk that brought us to Top Tor where it was unanimously agreed that it was time for our coffee break. For much of this walk, navigation was hardly challenging as the next tor was usually visible before we left the previous one, and the smooth grassy pathways were clearly visible as they meandered through the lush green bracken. Continuing in our northerly directions, we bagged Bell Tor, Chinkwell Tor (at 458 metres, the highest of our ten tors) and Honey Bag Tor where we were joined by one of the locals for lunch - see photo.



7 out of the 10 tors bagged, but only half the ten-mile circuit completed. Heading south, we rounded the eastern side of Chinkwell Tor to avoid the mire, then we headed due east to reach Holwell Lawn, famous for its arrays of bluebells in May but coated in bracken in August. We turned northwards again to the most northerly part of our walk, Hound Tor. A very short stroll took us past the Medieval Village, which was excavated as recently as the early 1960s, and our penultimate tor, the impressive Greater. A steep descent brought us to the stone clapper bridge over Becka Brook, probably the prettiest location on this walk. Deep breaths, then we took on the steepest climb of the day to get to Smallacombe Rocks where we looked back across the valley to see several of the tors already bagged.

The route to our final tor, Holwell Tor, brought us to the famous granite railway which we followed to its destination at the quarry, active from 1820 to 1919, that provided granite stone for buildings including The British Museum and the Exeter War Memorial.

Having bagged our target of Ten Tors, we returned to the granite railway which we followed to the entrance to the Haytor Quarries, now a beautiful oasis in the surrounding moorland with its pools, plant life and rock outcrops and, on this occasion, a magnificent display of waterlilies. We finished off a great day with a visit to Moorlands to enjoy well-earned cream teas in their Tin Pickle and Rhum Café.

David Buss

23rd September, Yarner Wood, Trendlebere Down and Houndtor Ridge

After an uneventful journey to Yarner Wood we were thankful to find plenty of parking spaces and the other members of the group who had driven directly there.

We set off on a long but steady climb, past the first of several hides, through the wood in dappled sunshine. The leaves were just beginning to change colour and the wood had a heavy atmosphere because of the recent rains. We continued along the ridge and at the top we emerged into bright sunshine at the NE entrance to Yarner Wood.

After a short stretch on the road, we left the woodland behind to strike off on heathery moorland paths. At the highest point on the path over Trendlebere Down we stopped to appreciate the panoramic views over Bovey Tracey towards the sea to our right and to Manaton Church on the left hand side. We descended through the prickly furze to the Bovey Tracy/Manaton road and continued alongside a leat once used to supply water to a pottery in Bovey Tracey which closed back in the 1950s. Here by the roadside we were rewarded by a show of interesting colourful fungi, including the attractive but poisonous red and white Fly Agaric.

Next we entered the Bovey Valley woodlands and skirted Becky Falls. The low water levels meant that we couldn't have a "free look" at the waterfall itself. We continued just under Houndtor Ridge and found our favourite picnic spot where we had our lunch enjoying wonderful views towards Black Hill and beyond.

The last part of the walk went through the valley, passing the ancient stone Hisley Bridge until we reached the end of the woodland and Trendlebere Down to enter into Yarner Wood and back through woodland to the car park.

We had completed the walk in record time so it was decided to adjourn to the nearby Ullacombe Farm Shop for refreshment. Most simply had tea but significant others were tempted by the generous cakes on display.

Mike Paddison (with contributions from Rosemary Hatch)

The Otter Valley Association

Executive Committee (01395)

Acting 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	Pat & Geoff Porter	567055
Colaton Raleigh	<i>vacancy</i>	
Newton Poppleford	Haylor Lass	568786

Other Executive Committee Members

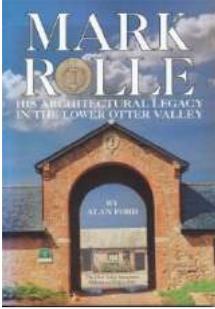
Assistant Minutes Secretary	Robert Wiltshire	444395
Membership Secretary	Clive Bowman	446892
	membership@ova.org.uk	
Publicity Secretary	<i>vacancy</i>	

Other Contacts

Webmasters	David Daniel 445960 & Martin Smith	442333
Talks Organiser	Geoff Lake	446828
Walks Organisers	Heather Fereday	446796
	Peter Paine	01404 815214
Newsletter Distributors	Pam and Tony Harber	445392
Newsletter Editor	Jacqui Baldwin	567599
	jacquibaldwin@btinternet.com	

Publications: Visit www.ova.org.uk or for book sales, contact Andrew Beresford by phone on 01395 446543 or email booksales@ova.org.uk

OVA Publications



Mark Rolle

His Architectural Legacy in the Lower Otter Valley

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

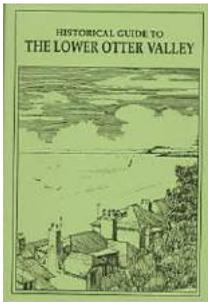
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



Twelve Walks in the Otter Valley.

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

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



Historical Guide to the Lower Otter Valley

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

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

Leaflets

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