

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

SPRING Newsletter

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Membership and Data Protection – Important Update

As many of you will already know through communications from banks/building societies, national organisations and national charities, the Government is introducing a new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25th May this year. This replaces the 1998 Data Protection Act and the 2003 Data Protection Act, and gives you more control over what personal data organisations and institutions hold on your behalf, this includes the OVA.

The GDPR requires the OVA to let you know via direct contact (this newsletter) or on the website, what information it holds, why and what it is used for. All this information would have been provided by you either when you joined the OVA by completing an application form, or subsequent notifications of changes of address, email addresses or membership format.

The OVA holds the following information in order to provide the benefits of membership described below:

Names and addresses

Email addresses

Telephone numbers

When subscription payments have been received to validate membership.

The OVA does not hold any personal bank account details, or more personal details. The above information enables the OVA to send you the quarterly newsletter (by distributor or post), email you reminders about talks or special events, plus if the Executive Committee decides there is an important issue it should bring to members attention.

You have the right to ask at any time what personal information the OVA holds on your behalf, requests in writing please to 'Membership' at the OVA post box address, and to request any of this information be corrected or deleted. The OVA will not share/sell any of your personal information that it holds with any third party, and only release when required to do so by Law or the Police.

In preparation for the GDPR coming in to force, the OVA will have both a 'Privacy Policy' and 'Cookies Policy' on its website, full details are available from the links in the top banner, or by sending an SAE to 'Membership' at the OVA postbox address.

For information, the 'OVA Data Controllers' are the Trustees of the OVA Executive Committee, and the 'OVA Data Processor' is the elected Membership Secretary.

This information is correct at the time of going to publication. Any changes will be reflected by updates to the 'Privacy Policy' and 'Cookie Policy' on the website, dated 17th March 2018.

This issue's cover "Decorative and Working Boat Cluster" was photographed and produced by Mo Bowman

From the Editor

Firstly, apologies to anyone who received the last issue of this newsletter slightly later than usual. Our new distribution system had one or two 'teething troubles'. Hopefully we have now hit our stride and this has arrived with you in good time.

A number of events have taken place since the last newsletter, not least our Christmas Party which was very well attended and thoroughly enjoyed (photo on page 18), three very interesting talks and the Annual Litter Pick about which more in the next issue. Coming up we have a number of events, most importantly the AGM, notice of which is below. A summary report is contained in the centre pages and the full Trustees Report and Accounts will be available at the AGM and on the website. For the more energetic we also have a fantastic Walks Programme, a guided tour of Woodbury Common on 16th May and a Skittles Night on 14th June.

Jacqui Baldwin

Notice

The 39th Annual General Meeting of the Otter Valley Association will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 8th May 2018 in Otterton Village Hall

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 10th May 2017
3. Matters Arising
4. Annual Report including the Trustees Report and Accounts
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Executive Committee Members
7. Appointment of an Independent Examiner
8. Any other business
9. Date of the next AGM

The formal business will be followed by refreshments and presentation by Sam Bridgewater, Conservation Manager, Clinton Devon Estates about their 'Space for Nature' initiative.

The significance of the Otter Valley in the water supply of East Devon

This lecture was given by Dr Marcus Adams, the resource strategist for the South West Water Authority, before an audience of 41 members and guests on 22nd February at the Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton.

Dr Adams' key role is to ensure the strategic long term supply of freshwater to Devon and Cornwall' to predict any shortfall and to propose solutions to rectify such events. In 1976, the year of the most recent 'great drought', which was taxing to water authorities, East Devon did not have any rationing due to the abundant water supply from the Otter Valley.

On an average day, SWWA uses 420 million litres (now known as megalitres) of water. Regrettably, of this, 84 megalitres is attributed to leakage. With old steel pipes, as one leak is fixed, the resulting increase in water pressure creates further leaks elsewhere. Also, losses are experienced following winter thaws (*a case in point following our recent visit from Storm Emma*). Massive peaks in consumption are experienced during the summer with the influx of large numbers of visitors.

Our supply of water for the region comes 45% from rivers, 45% from reservoirs and 10% from groundwater. This third source is significant because it rarely varies in availability and furthermore is pre-filtered and thus requires little treatment. Most of the rock in the southwest does not support aquifers (underground water supplies). However, the Otter Valley is composed of Triassic Sandstone which is a mixture of sandstone and sand through which water flows and it has the ability to store huge quantities of water. This water is accessed through springs, wells and boreholes sometimes hundreds of metres in depth. There are 21 boreholes in the Otter Valley which supply the whole of East Devon. Water treatment takes place at Kersbrook, Ottery St Mary and Dotton.

The boreholes that penetrate the ground pass through Mercia Mudstone. If water is pumped too hard it will result in the presence of particles. Threats to water quality are generally from oil spills, industrial leakage, nitrate fertilizers (although this can be filtered out) and landfills. Sometimes iron finds its way into the water and, although not a health issue, can play havoc with the pumping equipment. Over-extraction of water from the groundwater supply can result in a diminution of the river levels. Sometimes water from boreholes is pumped directly into rivers. A groundwater module simulator can predict the flow of water and the resulting

ecological effect on the health of the river. Water quality in the River Otter is considered to be good although the presence of phosphates is a constant problem (as it is elsewhere).

To remove water for commercial or private use requires a licence if more than 20 cubic metres is extracted a day. Time restrictions are enforced and users must prove that their need is genuine. Such restrictions particularly apply in the Otter Valley.

To ensure future supply, the SWWA are obliged, by statute, to produce a 25 year plan. In order to do this they have to make allowance for a population increase from 1.7 million to 2.1 million.

Although we already knew that we were living in a most beautiful part of the country, most of us present were not aware of the strategic importance of the Otter Valley in the supply of this vital utility. Our thanks to Geoff Lake for sourcing such an excellent lecturer on a very interesting subject.

Bob Wiltshire

Skittles Evening at the Maltsters Arms, Woodbury

Come and join us for a fun evening on 14th June

Cost, to include Buffet Meal, will be £10 (payable on the night)

Action commences at 6.30pm

As numbers are limited please **book early to avoid disappointment**



Reserve your place now by contacting
Dee Woods either by email

urewoods@globalnet.co.uk

Or telephone 01395 568822

New Housing and the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan

On 19th January the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) held a seminar to review the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP). There were 180 attendees and amongst them several members of the Executive Committee plus the BBC and ITV.

The GESP is separate to the East Devon Local Plan with its housing and employment targets. There is also another layer of planning with The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership with its growth targets. Yet another factor in this mix is the 'minimum housing needs' recently imposed by the government on all areas.

From the GESP website:

What is the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan for?

The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan will be a new formal statutory document, providing the overall spatial strategy and level of housing and employment land to be provided in the period to 2040. When adopted, it will sit above Local Plans for each area which will continue to be prepared to consider local level issues. Neighbourhood Plans will also be promoted so communities can continue to be empowered to make the detailed planning decisions for the benefit of their area.

We learnt that the City of Exeter and the districts of East Devon, mid-Devon and Teignbridge have a combined to form the GESP which will overarch all the local plans, run to the year 2040 and, of course, have its own housing and employment targets. Obviously the government will want the biggest target of all these assorted targets to be implemented! That was really as much as we learnt about this plan from the members of the GESP presentation team - there were so many unanswered questions. We were not given any projected housing or employment figures and where these should be located. No answers on transport and infrastructure needs for the increased population. There was an uneasy feeling in the room that this plan was created to accommodate Exeter's housing needs.

Sir Hugo Swire, MP for East Devon, was also unhappy. He thought that planners were being carried away with grand strategic plans and not concentrating on getting Exeter right and utilising all the brownfield sites in the city. He probably summed up a lot of the audience feelings by saying "do we want to be an Area of Economic Growth or do we want to preserve the local area and vernacular?"



Cranbrook development 2015

With so many competing assessments of housing need for Devon the CPRE have commissioned an independent research company to make an assessment and we heard some preliminary findings. 8% of homes are vacant in East Devon compared to just 4% in England as a whole and 4% are second homes in East Devon.

After the seminar we had lunch at Darts Farm and shared a table with two long-standing Exeter residents. We mentioned that we had attended this seminar and we had our ears blown off as they railed against the enormous amount of university housing being built in the city for Asian students which should have been built on the university campus. They wanted these sites used instead for social housing. They should have been speakers at the seminar!

Nicola Daniel

Statement on CPRE website:

*As announced at the seminar, **CPRE Devon has commissioned an independent research firm to analyse all the statistics, facts and figures to help us understand what Devon's housing needs really are. This comprehensive report will be completed later this Spring. We believe that the information which it will provide will be invaluable to those who may wish to challenge major new housing proposals in their communities and we will make it available to our members.***

Celebrating the life of Raleigh

A celebrated Victorian artist's masterpiece will be returning home for the third time this summer when Budleigh Salterton's Fairlynch Museum celebrates the life of one of Devon's best known historical figures.



Sir John Everett Millais' iconic painting 'The Boyhood of Raleigh', one of the treasures of Tate Britain's collection, became one of the most reproduced images in 19th century art following its appearance at the Royal Academy's 1871 exhibition. Set on Budleigh beach the work shows the young Walter Raleigh with his half-brother Humphrey Gilbert listening to a sailor's tales of exotic lands.

Sir Walter Raleigh was born between 1552 and 1554 at Hayes Barton, outside East Budleigh. As Queen Elizabeth I's court favourite he rose from relatively modest origins to become wealthy and influential before falling from favour under Elizabeth's successor King James I. His trial for treason in 1603 and subsequent imprisonment in the Tower of London are seen by many as a miscarriage of justice. 'Nobody is sure of the exact date of Raleigh's birth, so 2018 is a special year for us,' says Fairlynch Museum Chairman Trevor Waddington. 'It will be 400 years in October that he was executed at the Palace of Westminster after his attempts to set up the first English-speaking colonies in the New World. This is all very much part of the run-up to the Mayflower 400 celebrations in which Devon will play such an important part.'

Alongside 'The Boyhood of Raleigh' Fairlynch Museum will be exhibiting a second Millais painting of the artist's son - the first time the two paintings will have been seen together. Also on show will be armour, weapons and domestic items of the period on loan from Exeter's Royal Albert Memorial Museum and from private collections. A star attraction will be a pair of beautifully embroidered 1590s kid leather gloves associated with Raleigh.

Opening on 28th May as part of Budleigh Salterton's Gala Week, the **RALEIGH 400** exhibition will run for three months until 31 August. The OVA has made a financial contribution to the Fairlynch Museum to help with the cost of bringing this iconic painting to the town.

Woodbury Common; managing its ecology, heritage and working with visitors to secure a sustainable future.

A walk with Kim Strawbridge, Site Manager at 2pm on 16th May 2018

We have been invited by Clinton Devon Estates to visit Woodbury common for a walk with commentary from site manager, Kim Strawbridge.

Kim has been in post on the heaths for a year and has already delivered a number of key projects including the restoration of the scheduled ancient monument at Woodbury Castle. We will learn about their stewardship of the hill fort, other projects and measures the Trust are taking to educate and manage visitor pressure here and across the heaths. There will be opportunity for discussion and questions. The tour will begin from the Castle car park (SY 032 872).

The event will probably take about an hour in total. Access to the Castle is via good steps, but the walk may go over uneven or muddy areas. This event may not be suitable those unable to stand for short periods.

There is limited space for car parking at the Castle, ample alternative parking is available at Estuary View which is the car park immediately opposite. The tour will go ahead rain or shine.

This visit is limited to 35 people, if you want to take part please email Budsalt@gmail.com or complete the form below and return. **We will contact you only if the tour is over-subscribed.**



.....

Guided Heathland Tour at Woodbury Castle - 2pm, 16th May 2018

Please reservespaces

Name(s)

Address

..... postcode

Tel: email

Our Heritage Assets - The Red Telephone Box

The iconic red telephone box was chosen as the emblem for the Otter Valley Association's Local Heritage project in 2014. It is known as the K6 kiosk and was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (1880–1960) who was the grandson of the famous architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott. He designed many public buildings in the eclectic style of simplified historical modes, often termed 20th century traditionalism. Sir Giles designed many public buildings and churches. His greatest commission was the New Liverpool Anglican cathedral, built in the gothic style and not finished during his lifetime, but he also designed Battersea power station and the Bodleian library in Oxford.

History

The K6 kiosk was commissioned by the General Post Office in 1935 to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V. The design needed to be suitable for universal use, not repeating the mistakes of earlier kiosks. In fact eight kiosk types were introduced by the General Post Office between 1926 and 1983. The K2 and K3 were attractive designs, also by Gilbert Scott, but had proved problematic. The K2 was too large and too expensive; the K3 too brittle. The General Post Office turned again to Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, with his triumphant new kiosk appearing in 1936. Some 8,000 kiosks were installed as part of the 'Jubilee Concession', allowing towns and villages with a Post Office to apply for a kiosk.



Guided Walk

Otter Valley Association

PO Box 70

Budleigh Salterton

EX9 6WN

A year later under the 'Tercentenary Concession' celebrating the Post Office's 300th anniversary, a further 1,000 kiosks were installed for which local authorities paid a 5 year subscription of £4. In 1939 a more vandal-proof Mk II version was introduced. In 1949 the Royal Fine Arts Commission intervened again, and bowing to pressure allowed rural examples to be painted in different colours. Gilbert Scott did not want the kiosk to be painted red, but the GPO thought it would make it very visible. Subsequently kiosks have emerged painted in colours such as green and battleship grey, and after the 2012 Olympics, gold.

Heritage legacy



Between 1936 and 1968 60,000 examples of the K6 were installed. There are around 2,500 listings for the K6 kiosk in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. There are approximately 8,400 non-listed K6 kiosks, giving a total number of surviving K6 kiosks of approximately 11,700 (about 20% of all K6 kiosks). Of the eight kiosk types introduced by the General Post Office, the K6 was the most common type introduced, and is also the most common type in terms of surviving kiosks. The majority of listed kiosks, more than 90%, are K6 variants. Many have ceased to be used, and some have been sold off, so you sometimes see them in gardens.

Some that are no longer in use have been sold to parish councils and have found new uses as information points or book exchanges. In Kingston upon Thames town centre in the late 1980s a row of them was tipped on edge and turned into an art installation.

In the Otter Valley the telephone boxes in Otterton, Yettington and Newton Poppleford have been listed, but not those in Budleigh Salterton and East Budleigh. These are included on the proposed list of Local Heritage Assets, which has been sent to East Devon District Council for consideration.

Dee Woods



In January the Government published ‘A Green Future – our 25 year Environment Plan’. This document, which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan sets out how the Government intends to improve the natural environment – focusing on issues such as clean air, minimising waste, mitigating climate change and using resources from nature more sustainably. Anyone wishing to comment on this document can do so via the Devon Wildlife Trust website on which there is also a link to the publication.

Listen out for.....

A brand new radio station which will broadcast from high on Dartmoor. Skylark will broadcast no traditional programmes but will be a community radio producing a ‘soundscape’ of the park and those living and working in it. The content will comprise local voices, field recordings, new writing and music all of which will be produced locally. Visitors to the park will be able to tune in to enhance their enjoyment, and knowledge, of the area.

Look out for

Local events and exhibitions commemorating the 100th anniversary of the first Act of Parliament to give voting rights to women. These will provide an insight into the local women who fought for – and against – women’s suffrage such as Gertrude and Eleanor Acland of Killerton, Annie Leigh Browne, Mary Thomasina Browne (later Lady Lockyer), Eliza Aitken Davies and Amelia Tracey. Sidmouth Museum will have a display of items, including a rare anti-suffrage doll and a banner from the Sidmouth and District Branch of the suffrage movement. Killerton has a special exhibition showing how women’s fashion was politicised during the campaign.

Pebblebed Heaths Wellbeing Workshop

On Wednesday 28th February I represented the OVA at a “Pebblebed Heaths Wellbeing Workshop” at the Budleigh Salterton Hospital Hub.

There is a great deal of academic work being carried out on visitor numbers to the heaths; why people visit; the damage people cause to the environment; the effects of increasing population etc. It was acknowledged that the heaths promote Health and Wellbeing and discussion centred on encouraging more people to enjoy the benefits without damaging the environment. Some academics are even trying to calculate the health-giving effects as a mathematical sum. The general consensus was that this get together of interested partners and discussion of so many issues was the way forward in the management of the heaths.

Nicola Daniel

Planning Review – January to March

The last three months have seen a lot of important planning issues affecting our area. Firstly, the Executive Committee apologise for communicating the Blackhill Quarry planning application to our e-mail members. However, this is such an important application as it affects the natural environment of the Pebblebed Heaths and also the surrounding network of roads. There had been Clinton Devon Estates articles in parish magazines and local newspapers and your committee felt that a different viewpoint should be presented to you. We are now awaiting more documents from CDE.

We hope that finally the Local Heritage Assets List will make some progress at East Devon District Council. We have written e-mails to Chief Executive, EDDC, about the slow progress, offering our help (many Civic Societies work in partnership with their councils in this way). We have also tried to enlist the support of our ward councillors. Now we learn the first paper goes to their Strategy Committee at the time of going to press. We thank the EDDC Councillor for Otterton for his efforts in acquiring this information. However, there is a considerable amount of work to be carried out before the List is up and running. As mentioned above, your committee have offered help to EDDC as has the Sid Vale Association but, unlike other authorities, this has not been accepted.

There has been a worrying trend of planning applications being approved for infill developments in gardens with EDDC laying down conditions as to size, position of windows etc. This approved application is then resubmitted with an amended, much larger dwelling. Some applicants, in the face of objections, respond by submitting plans for a slightly smaller dwelling which is still very much larger than the original plan stating that they have “responded” to comments. It is difficult to understand how the Planning Authority then approves something which is totally contrary to their original conditions - causing much heartache to the neighbours.

The Budleigh Salterton Hospital gardens have provoked much comment from members. I expect that most of you are aware that the BS Neighbourhood Plan has only managed to retain just over a third of this garden as an open space and Clinton Devon Estates have fenced off their portion with a wooden fence. The problem is that they appear to have encroached and fenced off a small amount of the town’s open space, as defined by the Neighbourhood Plan Inspector – see plan below.



Nicola Daniel, Planning Committee Chair

Smuggling and the Otter Valley – Part 1

Smuggling in this country probably dates to the 14th century when large quantities of wool were exported and were taxed. As Oppenheim states “Smuggling in the shape of the secret export of wool was another branch of maritime enterprise in Devon, and piracy, of course, an ordinary business venture”. By 1320 imported goods e.g. salt, grain, iron etc., were taxed. This was to pay for the cost of financing the armies in France during 100 years wars. Smuggling these goods took place along the South West including along our local coastline. At this time both the port of Sidmouth and harbours in the Otter Estuary were trading these and many other goods.

The 1684 Quarter Sessions record that 8 men of Otterton and one of East Budleigh were heavily fined for smuggling tobacco. From various witnesses statements (including the accused), it appears that during June, 35 bags of tobacco were brought into Ladram Bay in a Brixham or Teignmouth fishing boat. Three horses of Richard Lee and Richard Dolling, both Otterton farmers, were employed to bring the bags into the village to John Rice, mason’s house. The haul was split up between other houses – Abraham Bollin’s yard in East Budleigh; Richard Warry’s house in Otterton (he was servant of Richard Duke – Lord of the Manor); Richard Dolling’s farmhouse. All consignments were seized by Ralph Merson, His Majesties Surveyor of Customs at Exeter. In addition to the four already named, others were George Austin, who farmed today’s Houseterns in Fore Street ; Robert Gringel, butcher; Humphrey Dyer, butcher; Elias Dolling a shipwright, all of Otterton and William Teed, butcher of East Budleigh. Collectively they were fined £160.



The Church Cottage, Otterton 1990. Note entrance to cellar beneath extension. Manor House in background.

Otterton must have had temporary hiding places for contraband. The cavities holding candles/lanterns in some of the old cottages/farmhouses, served as street lamps, but also to guide the movers of contraband. There is a huge cellar under Church Cottage (pictured on the previous page) and another under the old Manor House next to the Church, which are connected by a tunnel.

There were also hiding places in Salem Chapel and its roof space. Both the Minister, Revd. Samuel Leat of the Chapel (1768–1807) and the Vicar, Revd. Matthew Munday of East Budleigh (1741–1794) sponsored smuggling and became rich leaseholders in Otterton and East Budleigh. Revd. Ambrose Stapleton (1794–1852) probably also benefitted. Both the East Budleigh vicars lived at Vicars Mead in Hayes Lane (pictured below), which has a hidden passageway inside its outside walls almost certainly to have been used for storing contraband.



Gerald Millington
Archivist, Clinton Devon Estates

Part 2 will appear in our next issue.

Acting Chairman's Report 2017-2018

In advance of the OVA Annual General Meeting (Tuesday 8th May 7.30pm in Otterton Village Hall), I will give a quick review of our activities over the last year. Some of the topics are covered in more depth elsewhere in this newsletter.

Following the business part of the meeting we will have a talk about the new Clinton Devon Estates (CDE) Space for Nature Initiative by Dr. Sam Bridgewater.

I would like to thank the many volunteers who keep the OVA running. During my time as Chairman our volunteers have written, edited and delivered thousands of newsletters, organised and led thousands of miles of walks, pulled up millions of Himalayan Balsam plants, bagged tons of litter from the Otter Estuary, organized talks, responded to planning issues affecting our membership area, maintained the membership database and the website and managed our finances. Clearly, without these efforts the OVA would rapidly grind to a halt and our natural environment would be in much worse condition.

There have been some changes in personnel in the last 12 months. As mentioned in my last report, Peter and Wendy Youngworth have taken over as newsletter distributors. We also managed to fill the long-standing vacancy for Otterton Village Rep with Geoff and Pat Porter. Most of the Executive Committee has agreed to stand again at the AGM, with the exception of me. I will definitely be standing down this time. It has been an honour and a highly rewarding experience to be Chairman with the support of a dedicated and hardworking committee, but I think the OVA will benefit from a new leader.

There are still a few gaps in the Executive Committee, we need a village representative for Colaton Raleigh and would love to have an Events organizer. Can you help? If so please get in touch.

The OVA ran a wide range of activities for our membership last year. A full programme of walks, both local and further afield, has been organized by our walks team. We have held a varied and well supported talks programme – with talks on the local Beavers and East Devon water resources particularly well attended. The Executive Committee agreed to donate the profits from the beaver talk (almost £200) to the Devon Wildlife Trust.

The Natural Environment Committee (NEC) has continued the fight against Himalayan Balsam, with considerable success on the targeted tributaries. The 2017 litter pick was well attended with volunteers and supported by Clinton Devon Estates, East Devon District Council and the East Devon AONB. If you are interested in being a part of the NEC please contact Patrick directly (pat@bishopdams.f2s.com) or through the OVA web site (info@ova.org.uk).

On the events side, in December we held a well-attended Christmas Party at Woodbury Park. There are several new events planned for the next few months. CDE have kindly agreed to provide a walk and talk about Woodbury Common and Woodbury Castle in May (see elsewhere for details). We also plan to hold a skittles evening in Woodbury.



OVA Christmas Party 2017

Planning issues have continued to occupy our time, and especially that of Planning Chairperson Nicola Daniel. Sometimes progress can seem to be slow, we still are waiting for the District Council to act on the Heritage Asset List we sent them almost two years ago, despite our best efforts to move things along. While I reported last year that Blackhill Quarry was closing there is now an application to keep part of the site as a heavy engineering facility. On the positive side most of our local area is either protected by Neighbourhood Plans, or working towards completing them.

Membership numbers are showing a slow but steady increase, we now have about 800 members. Both the website (www.ova.org.uk) and our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/OtterValleyAssoc) supplement the newsletter in providing information to the membership and a wider audience.

Overall, I believe the OVA is well positioned for the future, and I hope that my successor enjoys leading the organization as much as I have.

Roger Saunders, Acting Chairman

The Natural Environment Committee – Annual Report 2017

Himalayan Balsam (HB) Project update

The project again constituted by far and away the most time-consuming activity of the year, our sixth year attempting to control this invasive species along the Colaton Raleigh tributary of the Otter. It was a good year. Long stretches above the village are now so clear that it is a waste of time having four people walk the riverbanks. On the other hand, near the hamlet of Stowford, there are still areas where at least half a dozen are needed to fan out and scour the area. Ironically, success means that the same area has to be covered but the plants are few and far between and have to be carefully sought out, especially since each can pack some 800 seeds in their explosive pods.

On the opening day of the 2017 season the OVA team joined forces with Clinton Devon Estates (CDE) at Yettington to tackle the top end of the Budleigh brook that flows on down to East Budleigh village. It felt like a time warp. As in 2012 in Stowford Woods the density of white stems was so great that they formed a continuous wall with no soil visible.

Again there were some downsides in our campaign. As in 2016, the appearance of new “hotspots” and, in one case, the re-appearance of an old one, caused frustration. The former were usually the result of the movement of farm machinery. CDE are hoping to set up a reporting system to allow prompt action in future. One large hotspot re-appeared in the brook by the adventure playground in the village which had formerly been controlled by a local resident. We have high hopes that its elimination will result in a great improvement in the stretch from the village down past the church to the flood plain. The aim, as always, is to exert such control over the Colaton Brook that we will create time to help teams in neighbouring valleys. We managed this only once in 2017 helping the Tipton St John team at Fluxton. More should be possible in 2018.



We did have one excellent result in 2017. Following pleas at the AGM and in the Newsletter the number of active volunteers jumped from the depressing low of just 11 in 2016 to 25. Thank you so much! One of the great pleasures of participation in the HB project is that of meeting new people and developing new friendships. Of course the need is still there

so if anyone reading this report fancies some fresh air, modest exertion and a good social experience all in a great cause, please volunteer!

Finally, an unexpected development during the year, following a feature on Gardeners' World about a Rust (*Puccinia*, a type of fungus) that can inhibit the vigour of HB, David Hatch, on behalf of the OVA, contacted CABI (Centre for Agricultural and Biosciences International) with a request that the Otter valley might be considered as a candidate site for their release programme in 2018/19. Seeds from four locations on the Otter banks have been sent for screening and we await the outcome of tests to see if the particular biotypes of HB prevalent here would prove susceptible to rust infection. Could this be the long-term solution to the appalling infestation levels on the Otter flood plain?

On Friday 9th February 2018 Dr Sam Bridgewater (CDE) chaired the annual review meeting of all stakeholders in the HB programme.

The Three Pines Project is an NEC initiative to supplement the iconic hilltop pine trees near Budleigh Salterton, which are ageing, with new plantings this Spring. Work to fence off an area will be starting in March and the OVA has received offers of help from the tenant farmer, Tom Pyne. At the time of writing planting is set for 17th April.

The Annual Spring Litter-Pick was held on Saturday 25th March 2017 and will be repeated in 2018 on Saturday 31st March. The environmental damage caused by plastic has featured prominently recently which gives added importance to this annual event. The tracts of salt marsh and mudflats in the estuary below White Bridge, are populated throughout the year by some of our favourite birds (redshanks, dunlin, curlew, lapwing, egrets etc) and it is great that so many volunteers are happy to give up a Saturday morning to ensure that the plastic threat to their lives is eliminated.

Patrick Hamilton, Acting Chairman, Natural Environment Committee

Planning

This year has seen the adoption of the East Budleigh and the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plans. This involved a great deal of effort and it is hoped that they will make a positive contribution to their respective village and town.

The Local Heritage Assets List we hope will finally start on its way to adoption, but we fear progress will be very slow. Correspondence from your Executive Committee to the East Devon District Council Chief Executive and then to Councillors have finally achieved this after nearly 2 years.

The other planning application, although not strictly in our area, which will affect a lot of people is that of the expansion of a heavy metal industrial unit at Blackhill Quarry. This has met with much opposition with 192 objections on the EDDC website.

It is a worrying trend that the people of East Devon are applying more and more often for retrospective and amended planning applications.

Nicola Daniel, Planning Committee Chair

2017-18 Membership Report

Membership has steadily increased again throughout the year, ending at over 800. But as always at this time of year, we also lose a few. Our biggest loss is always from those who move out of the area, and feel they must leave the OVA. Yet over 185 of members live outside of the Otter Valley, and 41 outside of East Devon, some of whom either come here on holiday regularly and want to know what events/walks/talks the OVA has arranged, or to just keep up-to-date with the community they were once part of.

This year we have also started recording where our new members come from, whether via the website, or the colourful 'Welcome' leaflet. From walks, talks, publicity around the valley, friends or neighbours, even our Facebook presence. This will help the Executive Committee decide how best to publicise the OVA, and how to maximise those opportunities going forward into the future.

Clive Bowman, Membership Secretary

A Walk for Everyone – Spring Programme 2018

Now that Spring is well and truly here (*note: it is snowing heavily as this contribution is added to the newsletter! – Ed*), we welcome you to our latest programme of walks – we hope there is something here to tempt everyone. If you like a shorter stroll then perhaps you would like a 2 mile ramble to see bluebells on 2nd May, or maybe a 3 mile exploration of Woodbury on 20th June? If you fancy something more challenging there are plenty of walks ranging from 5 to 9 miles, some with a pub lunch or a cream tea along the way, so do check the details to see if you need to bring a picnic.

There are walks in the Otter Valley and some further afield in Dorset and on Dartmoor. As always, we will suit the pace to those walking with us, and take breaks for points of interest.

The long distance walk we are tackling in stages this year is the Devon Heartland Way which runs from Okehampton to Stoke Cannon and takes us to some of the less visited parts of our beautiful county. The 43 mile walk is split into 6 stages - we start on 30th June and we look forward to some glorious walking (see separate article and the programme for more details).

Our Winter programme was beset by bad weather and, on two occasions, disrupted by traffic problems in Newton Poppleford. We apologise to anyone who was disappointed and we hope for better things in the summer!

Our walks are free, open to everyone, and there is no need to book – just turn up on the day at the appropriate time and place. Regardless of the time of year, we are likely to encounter mud and/or uneven paths so do wear suitable footwear. If you are unsure of anything or worried about the weather, then feel free to contact the walk leader – you can also check our website for last minute changes.

If you are new to the OVA or to walking with the OVA, do please get in touch with Heather or Peter from the walk team (details at the back of the newsletter) if you have any questions. They are also keen to hear from anyone who would like to lead a walk.

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

Penny and Paul Kurowski



Devonshire Heartland Way - Overview

Our long distance path for 2018 is the Devonshire Heartland Way which is an inland route of approximately 43 miles in length. It mainly uses ancient footpaths and bridleways and in some places minor country roads. The stages we will cover are as follows.

- Stage 1 – Okehampton to Sampford Courtenay – 8 miles
- Stage 2 – Sampford Courtenay to North Tawton – 6 miles
- Stage 3 – North Tawton to Clannaborough Cross – 8 miles
- Stage 4 – Clannaborough Cross to Crediton – 10 miles
- Stage 5 – Crediton to Newton St Cyres – 7 miles
- Stage 6 – Stoke Canon to Newton St Cyres – 5 miles

We will use a mix of cars and public transport and ask you to email me on feredayh@gmail.com or phone me on 01395 446796 if you are interested in walking any/all of the walk so that we can make transport arrangements. The last section will be walked from East to West to give a second opportunity to visit the Beer Engine pub in Newton St Cyres for lunch. Full details are given in the Events Programme below.

Heather Fereday

Events Programme – April to July 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.**

Friday 13th April – 10.00am - WALK

Start at East Budleigh CP (OS 115, SY 066 849) on bus route 157
6 miles, about 4 hours, including stops for refreshments

“A Ramble with Temptations”

Through East Budleigh village, then fields and tracks on a hilly back route to Budleigh Salterton, and perhaps a break for an ice-cream and a stroll along the beach. Returning alongside the Otter, looking out for interesting wildlife before a break for lunch at Otterton Mill. Finishing along back roads to East Budleigh.
Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski, 01395 742 942 / 07792 619 748

Wednesday 18th April - 10.30am - WALK

Start: OVA Jubilee Shelter on the Budleigh seafront (OS 115, SY 067 818).

8 miles, about 4 hours + lunch.

"Some country, some coast"

This walk takes us via Lime Kiln car park, White Bridge, Colliver Cross, Stantyway to Ladram Bay where we have our picnic lunch. We then return back along the coast path via Brandy Head and White Bridge, then along the well-trodden path past the bird hide and return to our start point.

Walk Leader: Jacqui Ruhlig, 01395 443763

Saturday 21st April - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Knapp Copse Reserve CP (OS 115, SY 155 957) 8 miles, 5 hours.

"Over the hills and Far(a)way"

This walk gives us the opportunity to enjoy springtime in the unspoilt farmland and woods around Farway. There are a few hills to climb (maximum ascent of 100m) but the views of the Holcombe and Coly valleys make it worth the effort. Bringing a packed lunch is recommended, although refreshments are available afterwards at the Hare and Hounds.

Anyone who can offer others a lift or needs one should contact the walk leader.

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway, 01395 488739/ 07887 936280

Thursday 26th April - 10.00am - WALK

Start: New Bridge Car Park, OL28, SX 711 708 (Sat Nav TQ13 7NT) at 10.00am

7 miles, 4.5/5 hours.

"New Bridge"

Meet at Newton Poppleford recreation ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.00am to share cars or meet at the start point.

A circular walk offering wonderful views of the Dart Gorge (in clear weather!) - a combination of upland moor, woodland, fields and riverbank. The route from medieval New Bridge will be via Mel Tor, Ponsworthy and Leusdon, returning on the riverside path. Dr. Thomas Blackall owned Spitchwick Manor in the late 1800's and created a scenic carriage route for himself high above the Gorge.

Please bring a packed lunch. Possibility of cream tea/drinks at the Tavistock Arms, one of the oldest pubs in the country, at the end of the walk if the walkers wish to do so. Moderate level walk.

Walk Leader: David and Rosemary Hatch, 01392 444290

Wednesday 2nd May - 2.00pm – WALK

Start at the Salcombe Hill National Trust CP (OS 115, SY 139 883), 2 miles, 2 hours.

“A Bluebell Walk”

A short walk to see the display of Bluebells on Combe Head Wood and Soldier’s Hill which are usually at their best at this time of year. The walk may be extended if the bluebells disappoint and the walkers request it. **Note:** the path to the woods is quite steep with rough steps.

Walk Leader: Graham Knapton, 01395 445665

Tuesday 8th May – 7.30pm – OVA Annual General Meeting

Otterton Village Hall followed by Dr Sam Bridgewater speaking about Clinton Devon Estates’ Space for Nature initiative.

Wednesday 9th May - 10.00am - WALK

Start: East Budleigh Church CP (OS 115, SY 065 848). 9.5 miles, 4.5 hrs.

“Coast and Country”

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

Walk Leader: Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

Saturday 12th May - 10.00am - WALK

Meet at Newton Popleford CP off School Lane (OS 115, SY 085 895) at 9.15am to share cars or meet at the start point.

Start at Kentisbeare village hall CP (OS 115, SS 068 079) (£1 fee payable). 5 miles, 3 hours.

“Finding the Bear”

A walk from Kentisbeare to Orway, Henland, Blackborough, Hollis Green and return. A good pub for lunch in the village.

Walk Leader: Carole Steen, 01392 873881

Wednesday 16th May – Visit to Woodbury Castle (see page 9)

Saturday 19th May - 10.00am - WALK

Start at Sidbury CP, (OS 115 SY 139 918), 7 miles, 4 hours.

“Sweets and hares”

A walk through the Sweet and Har(e) combes, dipping in and out of the East Devon Way. The walk starts with a moderate climb up Hatway Hill, loops around Higher Sweetcombe Farm and traverses towards Harcombe for good views of the Sid Valley. There’s a good chance of seeing bluebell glades and/or donkeys along the

way. A steep ascent to the top of Buckton Hill is followed by a steep descent back into Sidbury, hopefully in time for a drink in the Red Lion. Bring a picnic lunch.
Walk Leader: Jon Roseway, 01395 488739/ 07887 936280

Friday 25th May - 10.00am - WALK

Meet at Newton Poppleford Rec Ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 8.45am to share cars, or meet at the start of the walk.

Start: Charmouth Sea Front Heritage Centre. (OS 116, SY 364 930), 7.5 miles.

“If the cap fits.....?”

.....then this is the walk for you! Starting at sea level, unsurprisingly we walk uphill, along the coast eastwards to the top of Cain's folly. Inland now, still gaining height up Stonebarrow Hill and along the ridge to Chardown Hill, before plummeting down to the remains of the mediaeval hamlet of Stanton St Gabriel. We continue by walking behind Golden Cap, leaving a short climb to the top of its familiar table-top summit; at 191 metres the highest cliff on the south coast. Needless to say, the views of the Jurassic coast and Lyme Bay are magnificent. The return is a 3 mile undulating route along the Coast Path to Charmouth and tea and cake at the beachside cafe to celebrate a satisfying day out! Please bring a picnic.

Walk Leader: Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

Wednesday 30th May - 10.00am - WALK

Meet at Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground CP (OS Explorer SY 088 899) 8.5 miles, 4.5 hours.

“Around the Beacon”

A varied walk along paths, lanes and tracks heading out to Venn Ottery and Fluxton before crossing the Otter on our way to Waxway. We return going around Fire Beacon Hill and passing through Harpford.

Walk Leader: Graham Knapton, 01395 445872

Wednesday, 6th June - 10.00am - WALK

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

Start at Thorverton CP by the post office (OS 114, SS 923 021), 7 miles, 4 hours

“Hoskin’s Landscape”

Some long uphill climbs, Hoskin’s country, earthwork, views to the sea and two moors. Some road walking.

Walk Leader: Margaret Read, 01392 759332

Wednesday, 13th June - 10.00am - WALK

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

“The River Yarty and Castle Mound”

Start at Membury, Beckford Bridge (limited parking) (OS 128 ST 265 014), 5 miles, 3 hrs

Some road walking, Yarty valley, church and the Lancet, Membury Castle and Fort.
Walk Leader: Margaret Read, 01392 759332

Thursday 14th June – 6.30pm - Skittles Evening, Maltsters Arms, Woodbury **See page 5 for details**

Friday 15th June - 10.00am - WALK

Meet at Newton Poppleford recreation ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.00am to share cars or meet at the start point.

“River, Woods, Moor and Cream Tea”

Start at the Bridford Wood CP, North Dartmoor (OL28, SX 803 883), 7.5 miles, 3.5 hours + lunch. Teign meadows and fine views on open downland.

Walk Leader: Iain Ure, 01395 568822

Wednesday 20th June - 10.30am - WALK

Start: Outside the Maltster's Arms in the middle of Woodbury (OS115 SY 010 871) 3 miles, about an hour and a half.

“A Woodbury Wander”

A fairly short, gentle stroll from Woodbury to Woodbury Salterton via Watery Lane and Higher Pilehayes Farm, returning along lanes and through fields to the start. Can be wet in places after rain.

Walk leader: Chris Gooding, 01395 265707/07852 630431

Friday 22nd June - 10.15am - WALK

Meet at Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS115, SY 088 899) at 9.00am to share cars. **Parking at start point is limited. If anyone is planning to go directly to the start, please contact Vivien to check the location.**

“An Ancient Dorset Beauty”

Start: Powerstock Common (OS 117, SY 547 974) at 10.15am, 8/9 miles, 5 hours. The walk starts across Powerstock Common, a Dorset Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve, and then heads towards Eggardon Hill, an historic site with panoramic views. Eggardon Hill was a Bronze Age Burial Site, Iron Age Fort and seat of a Saxon council. After exploring the hill and enjoying a picnic lunch we head off to

Nettlecombe and a welcome stop at the Marquis de Lorne pub for refreshments. The return walk takes an alternative route back over the Common.
Walk Leader: Vivien Insull, 01404 811267

Saturday, 30th June - 11.00am - WALK

Start at Okehampton station forecourt (OS 113, SX 590 944) at 11.00am, 8 miles, 4 hours plus lunch.

“Devon Heartland Way - Stage 1 - Okehampton - Samford Courtenay”

We first make our way to the hamlet of Stockley Hamlets by way of a bridleway and footpath. Then minor country roads and footpaths to the village of Samford Courtenay passing the hamlets of Corscombe, Halford Manor, Rowden Manor and Trecott. Please bring a packed lunch.

Please either email me or ring me by 25th June if you wish to join this walk so that we can organise car shares.

Walk Leader - Heather Fereday, 01395 446796/feredayh@gmail.com

Friday, 6th July - 10.00am - WALK

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.45am to share cars or meet at the start point.

"Dartmoor views, woods and a stannery town visit"

Start: Ashburton car park 10.30am (OL 28, SX 754 699) 6 - 7 miles

Discover Ashburton, one of the four stannery towns of Dartmoor, and explore its surroundings. The walk starts by heading into the countryside to the north of Ashburton through woodland en route to Owlacombe Cross. We then descend to the edges of Ashburton with splendid views across to Dartmoor from the high level Terrace Walk where we have our picnic lunch. Returning to Ashburton we then make a short tour of the town taking in the great variety of independent shops, the historic buildings including St Lawrences Chapel and the old Railway Station before heading for one of the tea shops.

Walk Leader: Stella French, 01395 445724/07896 088858

Saturday, 14th July - 11.00am - WALK

Start in Samford Courtenay (OS 113, SS 632 011) at 11.00am, 6 miles, 3 hours plus lunch.

“Devon Heartland Way - Stage 2 - Samford Courtenay - North Tawton”

From Samford Courtenay, we take very old parish tracks to the hamlet of Honeychurch and the church of St Mary’s. The route then follows minor country roads and footpaths to the market town of North Tawton. Please bring a packed lunch.

Please either email me or ring me by 9th July if you wish to join this walk so that we can organise car shares.

Walk Leader - Heather Fereday, 01395 446796/feredayh@gmail.com

Monday, 16th July - 10.40am - WALK

Meet at Exmouth Station at 10.15am. Outward via train, dep. 10.23am, arr. Newcourt 10.40am.

Start: Newcourt Station (OS 192, SX 961 903), 10.40am, 5.5 miles, 3.5 hours (to include lunch).

“Take the train for a pub walk”

A walk from Newcourt station over the Clyst River Bridge to the village of Clyst St Mary. Then through fields to the village of Sowton with its grand church and thatched village hall before returning to Clyst St Mary for lunch at the Half Moon Inn. After lunch, a gentle half hour or so takes us to Digby and Sowton station for the train back to Exmouth. This is an opportunity to explore in detail places we usually see fleeting from the car or train. The going is easy with only gentle climbs. It may be muddy in places if it has been wet.

We suggest that if you don't have a railcard, you travel in groups of 4 to take advantage of a “Groupsave” train ticket - buy a return from Exmouth to Digby and Sowton.

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

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

Thursday 19th July - evening walk with Ted Swan, further details in the next newsletter or check the website.

Wednesday 25th July - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Mutter's Moor CP (OS115 SY 109 873) 4.5 miles, around 2.5 hours with a stop for a snack.

“What's the Mutter”

A gentle walk around the plateau, affording lovely glimpses of the Sid and Otter valleys before descending Seven Stones Lane to meet the coast at Windgate and returning to the start via the short but steep ascent of Peak Hill. Can be wet in places after rain.

Walk leader: Chris Gooding, 01395 265707/07852 630431

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.

Squabmoor and Dalditch Camp – 7th February

Nine of us met at Dalditch Farm in brilliant sunshine for what proved to be a very interesting and informative walk led by Brian Turnbull. We were very fortunate that Simon Fogg, who has written a book "Wartime Dalditch Camp and Finds on Woodbury Common" (available from Best Books in Exmouth, Littleham Post Office and the shop in Colaton Raleigh), had decided to join us as he was able to provide extra insight on the area. Brian had also helpfully supplied us with maps of the Dalditch Camp area taken from the OVA website – just put "Dalditch Camp" in the search box on the website and you will find it.

We walked up past Squabmoor reservoir and onto East Budleigh Common. We were soon in an area known as The Triangle, and enjoying the extensive views to the sea. We explored the graffitied building which was once a decontamination building used by soldiers after they had been training with mustard gas. Now it is a bat hibernaculum! It was hard to believe, looking around us, that during WW2 this wooded area was once the site of Nissen huts and the busy life of an army camp.



Further on Simon pointed out the site of the church and the cinema – there is no obvious trace of these buildings now. More substantial was a second decontamination centre and a couple of brick built ammunition stores. The most impressive remains were of a firing range: a trench for the riflemen and a tall, curved, brick wall for them to aim at (pictured).

A quick stop for coffee in the warming sun and we were soon walking down the hill and back to our cars. Simon hopes to be providing a talk for OVA members in the autumn – if today is anything to go by, it will be well worth attending.

Penny Kurowski

The second half of the Exeter Green Circle - 29th January

We had seven walkers on the first half ...this time there were eight of us. After a briefing about the walk, I expressed my view that this was the better half with 11 kissing gates, three viewpoints and two 'skinny gates'. Heather confessed to never having seen the Iron Bridge before ... its cast iron sections were brought by sea and canal from South Wales in 1834 and cost £9,000; it stands by the former St. Anne's Well Brewery. After some photos, we set off on the second half of the Exeter Green Circle – the brochures said that we were still in for 'miles of surprises'.

We passed St. Bartholomew's Cemetery and crossed the River Exe on Millers Crossing which spans the river above Blackaller Weir and then across the Flowerpot Playing Fields. Following the boundary of Exwick Cemetery, we came to our first muddy hill; at the top, after a couple of roads, another steep muddy ascent through Barley Valley Nature Reserve brought us to the first viewpoint and coffee; unfortunately, this is when it started drizzling and the views across Exeter and out to the Exe Estuary were somewhat hazy.

We crossed Dunsford Road, the main road to Cornwall before 1970, ready to join Little John's Cross Hill. It was at this point I confessed that Penny and I had not found the cross on our recce walk. There was a stone stump at the side of the road then someone spotted the actual cross very close to a house opposite the entrance to Little John's Cross Hill. Little John's Cross is a granite boundary stone from the 15th century placed by the Littlejohn family to mark their estate.



From Little John's Cross Hill we joined Hambeer Lane an ancient ridge-top green lane with fine views over the city and south into the steep back gardens and to the Haldon Hills on the skyline. The sun came out and we lunched basking on Roly Poly Hill with views over the fruit farm toward Ide. Across a muddy field, a metal bridge across the Alphin Brook and we were walking parallel to the noisy A30. We crossed the busy link road and stepped into the relative tranquillity of Ide Lane on the outskirts of Alphington. In Alphington Village we passed St. Michael's red stone church tower and the war memorial to enter Clapperbrook Lane that was part of an ancient route to by-pass Exeter's walled city. Thatched cob cottages

vied with modern houses with massive windows along the walk. Charles Dickens' parents once lived nearby.



We crossed the Alphin Brook at the Hennock Road bridge as the drizzle set in again. Passing the huge Exeter Energy Recovery Facility, we crossed a railway bridge and a swing bridge across the canal to enter Riverside Valley Park. Construction on the Exeter Ship Canal began in 1563 – it allowed ships from the far corners of the world to reach the heart of Exeter and made the city

prosperous. We saw some of the on-going River Exe flood defence works before reaching the ruins of Countess Weir Paper Mills (above) dating from 1638 to 1885. The interpretation board provided a fascinating insight as to how Dutch linen rags were turned into paper.

Five of us completed the Circle in the two walks – and despite the weather, the second half of the Circle walk was definitely more interesting!

Paul Kurowski

Two Rivers Way – 24th February



On this very cold but sunny day a group of keen walkers caught a bus from Exeter heading to Stoke Canon. The only thing preventing us from racing ahead towards the River Exe was the level crossing that closed its gates just as we approached. So we took the time to admire the impressive thatched roof on a nearby medieval cottage while the train went past.

The weather was glorious, not a cloud in the sky as we headed across the fields towards the River Exe. Crossing the bridge we walked through the villages of Bramford Speke and Upton Pyne passing the field with alpacas in it. Our coffee break took place in the shelter of a large open barn.



Afterwards we approached a notoriously muddy field that has a brook running across it, but it was dry, so we quickly headed towards the railway line and the River Creedy. It was then a gentle amble along the banks of the river on our way to the famous Beer Engine pub at Newton St Cyres. Sometime later we headed home on the bus feeling well satisfied, and there still wasn't a cloud in the sky.

Many thanks to Mike Paddison for leading such an interesting walk.

Stella French

Steps Bridge and Mardon Down – 6th March

I was one of the fortunate few that managed to meet up with the walk leader despite the closure of the road leading to Newton Poppleford. The weather was delightful with plenty of sunshine as we headed to Dartmoor and Steps Bridge where the walk started. Climbing up a hill and along a ridgeway we surprised four deer who quickly disappeared down into the steep valley. Patches of snow were scattered around us.

We headed to Heltor Rock a small isolated Tor on the edge of Dartmoor taking in the panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. The next stop was Mardon Down where we encountered the 'headless cross' and had our lunch. Apparently it is just a standing stone and was never a cross.



After a walk through the woods where we encountered more extensive areas of snow we reached the River Teign at Clifford Bridge. We were in search of the wild daffodils along the river banks and although there was extensive evidence of them the cold weather had delayed their flowering and most were still in bud. It was a great varied walk that finished in the traditional way with a very good cream tea in a nearby village. It was also unusual in that it left us all with very clean boots.

Many thanks to Iain for leading such an interesting walk.

Stella French

Do ya ken Kenn? – 14th March

Nobody kened Kenn, so a group of 11 keen walkers met there to rectify the situation. We were capably led by Penny down into the valley of the River Kenn, then through pleasant woodlands, leaving behind the noise of traffic on the A38. There were lambs frolicking in the fields, and birds singing in the hedgerows. We followed an ancient Holloway gently uphill until we got views of the Exe estuary in the distance. Sadly it had started to rain by then so the views were somewhat fuzzy. After following a path dating back to the Iron Age, we stopped off for lunch at the welcoming Ley Arms, a lovely old pub (1290) in Kenn for some excellent refreshments.



Suitably resuscitated, we visited the interesting medieval church of St Andrew (pictured) to admire the C12 font and carved screen and pews. The churchyard was delightfully decked out with wild daffodils. Then it was uphill and quickly back to Kennford to regain the cars before the rain became a heavy downpour.

Many thanks to Penny for such an interesting and varied walk in a lovely area.

Dee Woods

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

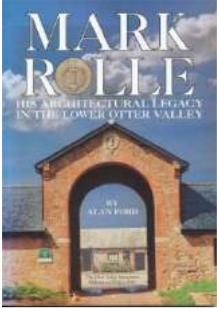
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Publicity Secretary	<i>vacancy</i>	

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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.

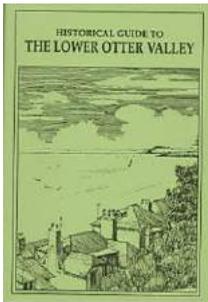
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



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.