

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

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Newsletter July 2018 Vol: 39/3
OVA PO Box 70 Budleigh Salterton EX9 6SR
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This issue's cover “Uplifting Summer” was photographed and produced by Mo Bowman

From the Editor

After what seemed like a long Winter it has been lovely to see the countryside burst into life and to savour the long, light evenings. Hopefully the good weather will continue to enable us to enjoy some of the forthcoming events featured in this issue. We have walks, talks, Heath Week, Art on the Otter and a potential tour of Stantyway Farm to get us out and about. Let's hope that we don't have a repeat of the floods that occurred 50 years ago which are recalled by Haylor on page 12!

Jacqui Baldwin

Welcome to the new Chairman of the OVA

At the AGM held on the 8th May in Otterton Village Hall, Bob Wiltshire was elected as our new Chairman. Bob was brought up in Topsham and joined the Merchant Navy as a midshipman with the Blue Funnel Line in 1962, qualifying as a Master Mariner ten years later. After 24 years of seafaring Bob came ashore and the poacher turned gamekeeper as he joined the Dublin Port Company, remaining there for 15 years before retiring as Harbour Master. He, and wife Maureen, returned to Devon in 2005 purchasing a property in Budleigh Salterton.



Bob has been on the Executive Committee of the OVA for the past 7 years, holding the heady position of Assistant Minutes Secretary for a period. He has also just completed a 4 year term as Chair of Budleigh in Bloom making up for all the years spent at sea.

Bob can be contacted via email at bmwiltshire@waitrose.com

The new Chairman's first report is overleaf.

Chairman's Report

It is traditional that the incoming Chairman's report in the newsletter extols the virtues of his predecessor and this shall be no exception. Not only did Roger agree to stay in office for an extra year but he proved to be a most capable and efficient Chairman. I shall try to be the same. I am still trying to get to grips with all the acronyms such as ED AONB and CPRE (East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Campaign for the Protection of Rural England).

We are often reminded of the objectives which we try to fulfil. I feel that Waltham Forest (wherever that may be) Civic Society sums it up well; "Our aim is to preserve the best and improve the rest." Our finances are healthy at present and the Executive Committee will consider any project that is relevant to our ethos. Our main outlay at the moment is to cover the cost of transporting schoolchildren in our immediate area, not necessarily in our area of benefit, to the Pebblebed Heathlands where the staff of Clinton Devon Estates, the landowner, teach them about the historical formation of the area and the natural history.

We have recently been contacted on several occasions by non-members on various subjects such as the presence of a tripwire on the Otter bank, trees being felled without permission, leading a tree identification walk in Budleigh and taking part in a dragonfly and damselfly survey on the Otter, two species of which are endangered. This is very encouraging as it means that people think that we can help, sometimes erroneously. They may not all be members but potentially they are. Membership numbers continue to decline despite all the excellent activities and publicity that we engender. I am told that this is currently a common feature in organisations such as ours and is no reflection on us. We have agreed that we should be more proactive and to this end the TIC (Tourist Information Centre for the acronymatically challenged), have agreed to enclose an application form in all our publications which they sell/distribute. As members though, we are the greatest ambassadors of the OVA, and it is up to us to persuade or cajole our friends and neighbours into joining. We are involved in many projects such as the Lower Otter Restoration Project and also FAB. We are not just a group of people objecting to every new development in our area and frequently send messages of approval. Good people saying nothing has resulted in some of the worst things happening both worldwide and locally. It is only by representing a large number of people that we are able to exert any influence in our area.

Bob Wiltshire, Chairman

Forthcoming Talks

Following on from a programme of very successful Talks last Autumn/Winter we are pleased to announce the following will be taking place later this year:

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

Talk entitled: Wartime Dalditch Camp, Woodbury Common

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

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

Talk entitled: Wastewater treatment in the Otter Valley

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

We will bring you details of further Talks in the Autumn newsletter.

Advance Notice - Farm Tour

As a result of popular demand we are delighted that Clinton Devon Estates have agreed to host a Farm tour later this year. Unfortunately we do not yet have a date as this depends upon delivery of a new tractor trailer but the venue is likely to be Stantyway Farm, Otterton. New tenants, Sam and Nell Walker, took on the tenancy of this 264-acre organic arable farm - which attracts a huge diversity of plant and wildlife - last September.

If you would be interested please keep an eye on the website or register your interest by emailing info@ova.org.uk and we will give you further details as soon as we have them.

Preserving the Landscape

As announced in our Winter issue the OVA, in partnership with the landowner, CDE, and the tenant farmers, the Pyne family, planted successors to the iconic Scots Pines on the hillside on the East side of the Otter valley just beyond East Budleigh. On 17th April youngsters from Otterton Primary School planted five new saplings in a cattle-proof enclosure which had previously been cleared of brambles. It is hoped that we have done something to ensure future generations have the pleasure of this view.



..... and waging war against Plastic!

One of our most treasured local environments is the estuary below White Bridge on the Otter, consisting, as it does, of mudflats and platforms of salt marsh as well as the river. For 364 days each year the birds, including some of our favourite waders such as redshanks, curlew and dunlin as well as duck (teal, wigeon, mallard, shovellers) have this area to themselves but once a year we humans intrude, with the aim of removing potential hazards to their health that we have put in their way. Top of the list is plastic which, in a variety of forms, is swept into the area either by the sea twice a day, or by the river Otter which transports a steady stream of litter downstream. Plastic can of course be lethal to birds, even the smallest pieces.



On 31st March some 50 volunteers turned out despite the grey skies, a cold northerly wind and the threat of rain. Mercifully the rain held off and the usual wonderful job was completed in progressively brighter weather. Many kilos of litter was bagged and at the end of the exercise, our mayor, Cllr Alan Dent, awarded prizes (adult and children) for the most interesting finds. This event has been organized by the Otter Valley Association (OVA) for some 20 years now, in conjunction with Clinton Devon Estates, East Devon District Council and Keep Britain Tidy. It is good to look out across the salt marsh and walk the adjacent footpaths knowing that the birds can enjoy a safe environment.

Dr Patrick Hamilton, Natural Environment Committee

The Executive Committee of the OVA wishes to use this space to thank Patrick Hamilton for his long and sterling service as Chair of the Natural Environment Committee. He has achieved a tremendous amount over the years, not least organising the annual Litter Pick on the Otter. Patrick retired as Chair at the AGM in May although he is going to continue to fight the good fight against the dreaded Himalayan Balsam! The baton has been passed to David Hatch whose contact details appear on the inside back cover along with other committee members.

Thank you Patrick – enjoy your ‘retirement’!

.... and talking Rubbish



A talk giving an insight into the management, processing, disposal and recycling of waste in East Devon was given by Gareth Borton of the EDDC on 21st March 2018.

We were bombarded with facts and figures to justify the £5m annual spend on this scheme by EDDC. The service visits 69,000 households a year and makes 5 million collections, collecting 400 tonnes per week.

We were reintroduced to our old friends the caddy, the sack and the box. There followed long explanations of what went where. Gareth responded to questions - some quite sensible. The caddy. Where does the food waste go? To a plant at Holsworthy where it is turned into agricultural fertilizer. The process creates methane which is burnt off, producing power which is fed into the National Grid. Next the sack. The speaker produced numerous familiar items all carefully cleaned. Dirty containers may result in rejection. The sacks contain a mixture of materials. The much prized aluminium cans which currently market at £500 a tonne. Tin cans at £110 a tonne. Prices vary from day to day according to the commodity markets. Plastics which are so much in the news are valued for the polymers which they contain. Milk containers are more valuable than your common yoghurt pot.

A new processing plant is about to open at Greendale which will, amongst other things, sort plastics. The disposal of non-recyclable plastics takes place at the incinerator in Exeter, now known as the 'waste to energy plant'. The black plastic which is too expensive to recycle is very calorific. i.e. it produces too much heat and has to be diluted with less well burning material. Some wastes such as tetra packs and disposable coffee cups are being researched to overcome similar difficulties. Finally we were shown the box. Paper goes to a mill at Kings Lynn. Textiles go to the Salvation Army for £268 per tonne and are either recycled or baled up and sent to the needy in other countries. Small electrical items are processed in Exmouth where valuable metals are extracted. Glass is the biggest contaminant in the recycling business and so is kept separate from other hard materials. Broken glass can cause costly damage to processing machinery.

In East Devon, 57% of our waste is recycled, 41% goes to “waste to energy” and 2% to landfill at Broadpath near Willand. This amounts to approx. 16 tonnes per month and is made up of the ashes from the base of the incinerator, ash from the cleaning of the smoke from the chimney, (the air that leaves the chimney is cleaner than the ambient air when vehicle exhaust is taken into account) and finally the contents of the doggy bins (so delicately described). A worrying thought is that 15% of our waste is foodstuffs, which makes one realise what a wasteful nation we have become. A ‘green waste scheme’ is shortly to be introduced which will involve fortnightly collections from subscribers.

Of the 350 local authorities EDDC has risen from 140th to 30th in the league table and is still rising. In his thanks to the speaker Geoff Lake, who organised the talk, spoke of the importance of the public understanding of the recycling processes so that we can ensure the effectiveness of our participation in the system.

Bob Wiltshire

Smuggling and the Otter Valley – Part 2

The heyday of smuggling was in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars 1793 – 1815 and after into the 1820’s & 30’s. Taxable goods that were imported at this time included tobacco, spirits, wine, silk goods, tea, salt, pepper, sugar, cocoa etc. The early 1800’s saw great activity in smuggling. Small sailing boats were trading with the Channel Islands and with French Ports, even though there was a war on. Contraband was hidden on board among legitimate goods. Spirits and wine were shipped in kegs, which were sunk off shore, buoyed, and later an on-shore gang would row out and “creep” them. All contraband was brought ashore and hidden awaiting disposal. The gangs ashore were highly organised in the evasion of Customs Officers.

In 1786 John Rolle MP, a close colleague of the Prime Minister, William Pitt, was living at Tidwell House. He writes to Pitt that “upwards of 56 horses loaded with brandy and tobacco passed my house yesterday. They (the smugglers) are too powerful for the Revenue Officers to contend with.” By 1800 John Rolle had been created Lord Rolle and was supporting the smugglers from Bicton House. Smuggling was carried on in great secrecy. Many of the smugglers were local people and intermarried. When not smuggling they were carrying on their lives in fishing, farming, and as tradesmen, artisans. And their secrets died with them, so generally we have little information to go on.



In the 1840's one smuggler did publish his memoirs and left us with a rich source of information. This was John Raddenbury of Beer (1778-1844) or Jack Rattenbury as he later became known (pictured left). Rattenbury was the licensee of the Anchor Inn, Beer from 1810 to 1814. A Customs Report of 1807 gives us a picture of the coast where contraband landings were made - Chislebury Bay, Brandy Head, Otterton Point. Goods were hauled up the cliffs and hidden in the fields. One gang leader was Abraham Mutter, a turf-cutter on the moor that bears his name, who distributed goods hidden under turf on his cart. In 1816 Rattenbury in his sloop Volante, hauled up a raft of 35 kegs of spirit which had been dropped 4 miles off Sidmouth, landed them at Ladram Bay, carried them into a field where they were seized.

John Rattenbury was also involved with smuggling French Officers, Prisoners of War, back to France (for £100) in 1808, but was caught doing it. Over 900 escaped in this way during the War. In 1820 HMS Scourge recovered 80 tubs of spirits off Otterton Ledge which had been dropped by John from his boat "Hannah". The Scourge caught up with the Hannah off Salterton and drove it onshore by gunfire below High Peak. Rattenbury got away but in 1821, when he was at last arrested, he had become such a legend his bail was set at the enormous sum of £4,500.

In an extraordinary turn of events, after serving a prison sentence in Exeter gaol, Rattenbury is called to Parliament to give evidence on the conditions of the sea coast around Beer where a new harbour and canal were being considered. Who, after all, would know the coast better?

By the 1840's smuggling was in decline. The coastguard service had been formed to support the Customs Officers and they succeeded in suppressing activity. Both Salterton and Otterton had Coastguard Stations. The latter was leased from the Rolle Estates. Prior to this the Customs employed Riding Officers and the Preventive Water Guard with the Royal Navy patrolling in Revenue Cutters at sea and whose success had been limited.

Gerald Millington, Archivist, Clinton Devon Estates

Planning Review – April to July

The last three months have, as usual, seen a lot of planning applications in our area. I must stress that the great majority are good applications with well-drawn plans and any building approved, be it a house, garage or extension, will be an asset to the area. It is the very few which draw criticism and of course, a building/extension/garage is a large structure and is very visible to all.

The OVA is finding it very difficult to keep up with plans which are superseded by revised plans in many planning applications. In one case the applicant has submitted three sets of plans and many others are on the second set. EDDC has a duty to request plans to be accurate and we are finding that many are not - see eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1814453/final-validation-checklist-document.pdf.

Our two Neighbourhood Plans – East Budleigh and Budleigh Salterton - both consulted the local inhabitants and the overwhelming message was that the character of the village/town should be maintained. This is reflected in the policies contained within them. These plans are very welcoming to contemporary design but it should retain local distinctiveness and character.

Many more people are contacting the OVA with regard to planning matters. This is very welcome - just email info@ova.org.uk

If you are interested in the OVA's response to the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework it is now on the OVA website.

Nicola Daniel, Planning Committee Chair



Some of our members have become 'dragon hunters' and are taking part in the British Dragonfly Society's 'Clubtail Count 2018' looking for this elusive dragonfly along the Otter. Dragonflies are one of the UK's most charismatic group of insects, unfortunately, due the continued destruction and pollution of wetlands, many species of Dragonfly are under threat. For example, a scientific report published by Buglife earlier this year revealed that many of England's major rivers suffer from chronic pesticide pollution.

This is bad news for species like the rare Common Clubtail Dragonfly (pictured), whose aquatic larvae are highly sensitive to water quality.

50 years ago Flooding in the Otter Valley

On 10th July 1968, very heavy rainfall over the Blackdown Hills caused a tremendous flood down the River Otter, of a magnitude expected only about once in 500 years. 5 inches (125mm) of rain fell between 4.00pm and 10.00pm with the peak river levels down the valley between 3 and 8 hours later, in the early hours of the following morning.

The floods destroyed or seriously undermined ten bridges over the river, cutting the main A30/A303 route (before the M5 was built) into the West Country and the A35 by the River Yarty. The rail line was also undermined near Honiton, effectively isolating Devon & Cornwall from the rest of Britain at the start of the holiday season.

All of the James Green three-arch bridges over the Otter (designed by the first Devon County Surveyor between 1808 and 1815) survived – at Weston, Fenny, Gosford, Cadhay, Newton Poppleford and Otterton, though most were impassable until the water receded.

The army restored the A30 with a Bailey Bridge (pictured) opened on 13th July and followed with more temporary bridges over the Yarty at Marsh and Kilmington and over the Otter at Upottery and Tipton St John.



Down river towards Newton Poppleford the footbridge to Harpford survived, but the debris level shows that the river was running at handrail level during the night.

There was overland flow both sides of the main road bridge, where the fence posts and edge of the tarmac were swept away.



All this was recorded same day on maps showing the extent and direction of the flows and the location of the pictures taken. This was later used to provide area flood maps for future planning and advice. I am indebted to the staff at the Environment Agency for the pictures.

Incidentally, the flows in the River Otter have been recorded at Dotton gauging station since about 1910, but this flood does not appear as the highest on record. The reason is that in those days the recording was made by a float-operated pen writing on a paper chart wrapped round a clockwork-driven drum. This was housed in a kiosk a couple of metres above bank level, but the river rose to completely engulf the kiosk and the record became inky papier-maché!

Haylor Lass, Vice Chairman

(the full article is on our website - Ed)

In addition to the Otter Valley the whole of the River Sid catchment was affected, with water levels being recorded to a depth of 3 ft 9 inches in cottages in Sidbury, where sadly an 86 year old lady was drowned in the front room of her cottage. The Salty Monk at Sidford (then called Apple Garth) was flooded to a depth of 5ft, and Sidmouth town recorded over 100 properties being flooded. The river in the Byes flooded the entire width of the valley. Fortunately the rain ceased by 9.00pm – an hour after high tide, and by 10.50pm the sky was clear and the moon was visible! Teams of volunteers turned out to help in the clean-up operation which took several days and was a great tribute to all concerned.

The ‘Great Flood Exhibition’ in Kennaway House on 7th & 8th July 2018 will commemorate the event. There will be photographs and maps showing the extent of the flooding and the townsfolk involved in the rescue.



HEATH WEEK

2018

FESTIVAL DAY
FAMILY EVENTS
WALKS

29 JUL – 5 AUG

For the full programme
of exciting events visit
heathweek.org or  [/heathweek](https://www.facebook.com/heathweek)

A celebration of our heathland heritage

East Devon Heath Week is
organised by the following:



Otter Estuary put forward as Marine Conservation Zone

On 8th June the government launched a consultation asking the public for their views about protecting a new group of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) – areas at sea where wildlife is protected from damaging activities. In total 41 special places have been chosen for the public to comment on, nine of them in Devon’s waters, which include both the Otter and the Axe Estuaries.



The DEFRA website states *“The Otter Estuary is a small but important system supporting a number of habitats and wildlife. The mouth of the estuary is almost completely covered by a shingle bank of intertidal coarse sediment extending from the west coast of the river. The sheltered areas behind the bank have created the perfect environment for the formation of highly productive intertidal mudflats and saltmarshes. The saltmarshes within the site are important foraging grounds for wading birds and wildfowl, and provide a sheltered refuge at high tide. The Otter Estuary is one of the most extensive saltmarsh networks in Devon and is home to many species of specialised salt and flood-tolerant flowering plants, as well as an abundance of worms, crustaceans and tiny snails. The intertidal muds are a highly productive habitat and support a wide range of species including ragworm, mudshrimps and the commercially important cockle. At low tide these areas form vital feeding grounds for wading and migratory birds while at high tide, flatfish and others migrate to these areas to forage for food.”*

The consultation runs until 20th July and a final decision will be announced in approximately 12 months time. Anyone wishing to contribute to the consultation can do so at: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine>

Thanks to Lucilla Phelps for the amazing picture above which was taken from a drone.

Response to matters raised at the AGM on 8th May, 2018

The Executive Committee has discussed the following matters which were raised from the floor on the evening of our last AGM:

More involvement with young people and possible setting up of a Youth Group

We felt that we already had an interface with children in several ways. We sponsor transport to the Pebblebed Heaths. We invited the children from a class at Otterton Primary School to take part in the Three Pines Project where they planted five new replacement pine trees. We always get a good turnout at our annual litter pick on the river. A great opportunity to get really mucky. There are also the opportunities to take part in our walks during school holidays and weekends. The Committee felt that a lot of the subjects tackled by the OVA may not be of interest to children. However we are mindful that one of our key objectives is to educate the public in local geography, history, natural history and architecture in the area and to this end will always look to find suitable opportunities to include children in our activities.

Increasing our membership by enlarging our Area of Benefit

This suggestion followed on my stated ambition to restore the membership numbers to those previously enjoyed. The proposal to include Tipton St John and Ottery St Mary into our area has already been discussed on several occasions. The idea does have a certain logic and would involve rewriting the Constitution and dealing with the Charities Commission. This is not insurmountable. However, our influence over a larger area would result in a dilution of our efforts, rather than a tightly knit group which already exists. Current membership stands at a little under 800 persons. The amount of work to be carried out by the Executive Committee and other volunteers would be greatly increased, particularly by the Planning Committee. Recruiting new volunteers is always a challenge. We have not had a Village Rep for Colaton Raleigh since January 2011. No Events Secretary since July 2012 and no Publicity Secretary since July 2013. Each of these roles plays an important part in our being able to operate like a well-oiled machine. Additionally there is already an Historic Society and a walking group in Ottery so a degree of overlap would inevitably result.

Holding more events in Colaton Raleigh

The majority of our members reside in Budleigh Salterton and East Budleigh, thus there is a tendency for our talks to take place at these places. Poorly attended talks reflect badly on our Association both for the speaker and the organiser. The possibility of holding an event in this village is under review.

Publicity

Nobody to this day has come forward to volunteer for this position. Although we have a well-used method of advertising our walks, no such system exists for our talks and even our existence. We are considering ways of advertising the OVA e.g. Local press, local radio and attending local events.

Projects

A proposal was made to create a photographic record of our area of benefit both past and present. Many pictures are held by organisations such as the Fairlynch Museum and also by countless private individuals. These need to be collated, probably on a professional basis. This project is currently being discussed.

Farm Tour

A previous event was heavily oversubscribed. We are presently trying to arrange such a tour or possibly two! (see page 5)

Bob Wiltshire, Chairman



A good time was had by all at the Skittles Night at the Maltsters Arms, Woodbury on 14th June. The overall winners on the night were Peter Baldwin and Pat Porter who really humiliated the rest of us! Many thanks to Iain Ure and Dee Woods for organising and enforcing the rules on the night.

Art on the East Devon Way

The Thelma Hulbert Gallery in Honiton has partnered with the East Devon AONB to help people of all ages engage with the landscape in new and creative ways to celebrate 25 years of the East Devon Way (EDW).

There will be a programme of nature-based art opportunities and workshops in the landscape and at the gallery. These will culminate in an exhibition showcasing the work created throughout East Devon from 8 Sept – 27 Oct at THG and a celebratory community party on Sat 27th October.

The *Art on the East Devon Way* project will take place at locations along the 40 mile EDW footpath between Lyme Regis and Exmouth. It will include a range of free and subsidised workshops for families and adults, artist-led workshops at 9 schools, activities with community groups and three new commissions for local artists. In our immediate area there will be events at Woodbury Castle on 4th and 8th August and in Harpford Woods on 15th and 22nd September. For the full programme of events visit www.thelmahulbert.com



A Walk for Everyone – Summer Programme 2018

“Britain’s bout of warm summer weather could come to an end today as storm Hector arrives”. This is a quote from one of today’s broadsheet newspapers. Fortunately, it is the more northerly areas of the country which are braced for storms as I write. We had our fair share of storms over the winter months and, when we put the walk programme together, we have no inkling of what the weather has in store for us on any particular day. Hopefully, all is well for our summer programme of walks.

We are continuing with our long distance staged walk along the Devon Heartland way visiting some very small villages and hamlets along the lesser known areas of mid Devon. Do come and join us even if you can’t make all of the sections.

We have some short local walks in the programme of 5-6 miles and under visiting Clyst St Mary with Penny and Paul, Mutter’s Moor with Chris Gooding, Venn

Otter with Brian Turnbull and Harpford Common with Rosemary and David. We have walks along the river Otter with Brian Gannon, Jacqui Ruhlig and Jon, not forgetting an evening extravaganza with Ted Swan. We have included two Raleigh themed walks, one led by Haylor to celebrate Heath Week at the end of July and a longer walk led by Brian Turnbull to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Sir Walter Raleigh's death at the end of October.

Further afield, we visit the Culm valley with Iain, the Trinity Nature Reserve with Vivien, Widecombe in the Moor with David and Rosie Connor and Yarnar Wood with Mike and Paula Paddison. Finally, we will be walking parts of our local coastal path with Heather, Penny and Paul and Jon.

Please contact the walk leader if you want to ask a question about any particular walk. They will be happy to help you. Please also check our website for any last minute changes to the programme.

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

Devonshire Heartland Way - Overview



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

- 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

Walks Programme – July to October 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 July - 10.30am - WALK

Start in Sampford Courtenay (OS 113, SS 632 011) alongside The New Inn, 8 miles, 4-5 hours approx.

We will drive to North Tawton and catch the number 5A bus at 10.12am parking in either the first car park (bus stop by the car park) or in the town where there is another car park on the left and the bus stop is opposite the town square. The bus only takes 6 minutes to travel to Sampford Courtenay. It is possible to catch the same bus from Exeter bus station (Bay 3) at 9.15am, if preferred.

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

From Sampford Courtenay, we take very old parish tracks to the hamlet of Honeychurch and the church of St Mary’s where we stop for our packed lunch. The route then follows minor country roads and footpaths to the market town of North Tawton.

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

Walk Leader - Heather Fereday (contact details as page 16)

Monday, 16th July - 10.40am - WALK

Meet at Exmouth Railway Station at 10.15am. Outward dep. 10.23am, arrives Newcourt 10.40am.

Start at Newcourt Railway 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 fleetingly 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 & Paul Kurowski, 01395 742942 pandp@kurowski.me.uk

Thursday, 19th July - 6.30pm - WALK

Start at Otterton Village Green (OS 115, SY 081 853) 5.5 miles, 2.5 hours

“Evening Extravaganza”

Lanes and paths to the coast, then Clamour Bridge and East Budleigh. Returning by Bicton Church. Optional pub visit after the walk.

Walk Leader: Ted Swan, 01395 567450

Wednesday, 25th July - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Mutter's Moor CP (OS 115 SY 109 873) 4.5 miles, around 2.5 hours

“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

Tuesday 31st July - 10.00am - WALK

Start from East Budleigh (Hayes Lane) CP, (OS 115, SY 066 848) 5 miles, 2.5 hours

“Raleigh Country”

Walking on minor roads, rough tracks and footpaths, woods and heaths, some hills, two stiles to climb. Hayes Wood and Shortwood Common, including Raleigh’s birthplace and optional lunch in Sir Walter Raleigh pub at the end. Reasonable fitness and stout footwear needed - dogs only if on short leads - not wheelchair suitable. No booking required, but I may need to alert the pub at the start if there is a large number for lunch.

Walk Leader: Haylor Lass, 01395 568786

Saturday, 4th August - 10.30am - WALK

Start in North Tawton (OS 113,SS 664 017), 9 miles, 5 hours approx.

We will drive to Bow and catch bus number 5A at 10.00am. The bus takes 12 minutes to travel to North Tawton. Please contact me for car parking in Bow.

It is possible to catch the same bus from Exeter bus station (Bay 3) at 9.15am, if preferred.

“Devon Heartland Way - Part 3 - North Tawton - Bow”

From North Tawton, we walk on quiet roads, tracks and fields to the village of Zeal Monachorum. Then across fields and footpaths, crossing the main road at Clannaborough Cross and alongside a bridleway and back to Bow.

Please email me by Monday, 31st July if you want to join this walk so that we can arrange car shares. We can stop for lunch and a drink at the Waie Inn, or have a picnic lunch at Zeal Monachorum.

Walk leader: Heather Fereday, contact details as above

Wednesday, 8th August - 10.35am - WALK

Start at Budleigh Salterton Public Hall (OS 115, SY 062 860) at 10.35am, 7 miles, 4 hours.

“Budleigh to Sidmouth – and get the bus back”

This walk follows on from the one on 6th September. We will be following the South West Coast Path, which is steep in places, but offers spectacular views on a good day. We'll stop for a picnic lunch at Ladram Bay (toilets plus opportunity to buy refreshments) and finish up on the promenade at Sidmouth (ice cream anyone?) before catching the bus back home; buses to Budleigh Salterton via Newton Poppleford, Otterton and East Budleigh run hourly - we will have a current timetable on the day.

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

Wednesday, 15th August - 10.15am - WALK

Meet at the green by the Public Hall at 10.00 am, buses from Exmouth and Sidmouth directions arrive about this time so we will wait for them and start at 10.15am. 4.6 miles 2 hours.

“Budleigh to Clamour Bridge and Down the River”

We walk to the clamour bridge via the old railway track and footpaths then down the river to the sea, looking out for the kingfisher near White Bridge. Maybe a coffee at the East End kiosk before walking back along the seafront. No hills or stiles but some paths may be muddy in the event of rain beforehand.

Walk Leader: Brian Gannon, 01395 443502

Tuesday, 21st August, 10:00am – WALK

Meet at Newton Poppleford Rec Ground at 8:45am to share cars.

Start at Wellington Monument car park (OS 128, ST 143 167), 10 miles, 5 hours.

“A Monument to Wellington”

Outstanding views from the monument, followed by a delightful walk down into the Culm Valley for lunch at one of the two pubs in Culmstock. Return via a ridge walk overlooking Clements Common.

Walk Leader: Iain Ure 01395 568822

Wednesday, 29th August - 10.30am - WALK

Start: White Bridge, Budleigh Salterton (OS 115, SY 075 830) 5.5 miles, 2½ hours

“The Otter Head Classic”

A bit of everything on this walk - coast path and cliffs around Otter Head, open countryside, riverside calm and estuary salt marsh.

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway 01395 488739/ 07887936280

Saturday, 1st September - 10.00am - WALK

Meet at Joneys Cross RSPB car park (OS 115, SY 058 897), 5.5 miles, 2.5-3 hours

“Old Favourite”

A lovely local walk for a late summer’s morning. Taking in Harpford Common, a part of the East Devon Way and returning via Goosemoor.

Walk Leaders: Rosemary and David Hatch, 01392 444290

Saturday, 8th September - 10.00am - WALK

Start in Bow (OS 113, SS 720 016) 9.5 miles, 5 hours

We can either catch the train from Exmouth at 8.52am arriving in Crediton at 9.37am and then we catch the 5A bus to Bow at 9.42am arriving at 10.00am. Alternatively, the 5A bus can be caught from Exeter bus station (Bay 3) at 9.15am arriving at Crediton station at 9.42am.

“Devon Heartland Way - Part 4 - Bow to Crediton”

From Bow, we rejoin the Heartland Way where we finished last time and pass through the village of Colebrook, the hamlet of Penstone and then the village of Yeoford, which is approximately the half way point in the length of the Devon Heartland Way. Then on to Gunstone Mill, Fosbury, Uton and Fordton where we catch the train back to Exeter/Exmouth.

Walk Leader - Heather Fereday, details as above

Tuesday, 11th September - 10.45am - WALK

Start at Crediton station, (OS 114, SX 839 994), 7 miles, 3.5 hours.

We can either catch the train from Exmouth at 9.52am arriving at Crediton at 10.37am or alternatively, the 5A bus (Bay 3) can be caught from Exeter at 10.15am arriving at Crediton station at 10.42am.

“Devon Heartland Way - Stage 5 - Crediton to Newton St Cyres”

We walk through the town of Crediton and on to the nature reserve of Shobrooke. Then we walk to the village of Shobrooke, Shobrooke Mill, Lake Farm and the hamlet of Sweetham where Newton St Cyres railway station is situated. We visit the famous Beer Engine Pub for a late lunch/drink.

Walk Leader - Heather Fereday, details as above

Tuesday, 18th September - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Newton Poppleford Rec Ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 900) 5 miles, 2.5 hours.

“The path less travelled”

Benchams, Venn Ottery Common, and Venn Ottery Church (probably the oldest building in the lower Otter Valley still in regular use)

Walk leader: Brian Turnbull 01395 567339

Friday, 21st September - 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: Trinity Nature Reserve CP (OS 116, SY 308 959) approx 7 miles, 3/4 hours.

Please note the car park at Trinity is gated so please wait for the Walk Leader for access.

“Trees and Trails around Trinity”

This walk starts through the tree plantation at Trinity, descends down Hoyton Hill to Yawl Bottom and along to Yawl Cross. The route then goes up to Carswell Bottom and follows this down to Uplyme giving great views down the valley. The East Devon Way is picked up briefly on leaving Uplyme before branching off to take another route back through Trinity. Please bring refreshments.

Walk Leader: Vivien Insull, 01404 811267

Monday, 24th September - 11.00am - WALK

Start: Exmouth (OS 115, SX 994 806) at 11.00am, 5.5 miles 2.5 hours

Catch bus number 157 from the Public Hall, Budleigh Salterton at 10.29am to Exmouth Leisure Centre (last stop) and walk to the Mamhead Slipway at the Western end of the Exmouth esplanade next to the Rockfish Seafood restaurant.

“Footpaths in the Sand”

We will walk along the promenade to Maer Rocks, then along the beach (low tide) around Orcombe Point to Sandy Bay where we will stop for lunch. Then we will walk along by the holiday park following the cliff path past East Devon Golf Club to arrive in Budleigh Salterton where buses can be taken back to your start point.

Walk Leader: Heather Fereday, 01395 446796, 07484 627312

Friday, 28th September - 11.15am - WALK

Start at Stoke Canon (OS 114, SX 938 979), 5 miles, 2.5 hours

“Devon Heartland Way - Stage 6 - Stoke Cannon to Newton St Cyres”

We will catch the 55 bus from Exeter bus station (Stand 4) at 11.00am arriving at Stoke Canon at 11.11am (possibly having caught the 58 bus from Budleigh Salterton arriving in Exeter at 10.35am). This time we walk in a westerly direction

taking the dismantled railway line to Brampford Speke, on to Upton Pyne along by the river Creedy to Newton St Cyres for another stop at the Beer Engine Pub.

Walk Leader - Heather Fereday, 01395 446796, 07484 627312

Wednesday, 3rd October - 10.00am - WALK

Start from the Jubilee Pavilion Budleigh sea front (OS 115, SY 067 818), 6 miles, 2.5 hours.

“River and Lanes Walk”

We walk to White Bridge, take the lane to Otterton Green, up to Anchoring Hill across fields to 'Rickety Bridge' (due to be repaired in August). Back along River Otter path, to South Farm Road and then along the West side narrow path back to Lime Kiln and then along Promenade to start point.

Walk Leader: Jacqui Ruhlig, 01395 443763

Monday, 8th October - 10.30am - WALK

Start: Car park at Widecombe in the Moor (OL28, SX 720 768). 8 miles, 4 hours

“Walking with the ancients”

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

A moderate 8 mile circuit with spectacular views and much evidence of ancient dwellings and final resting places. We walk up from Widecombe in the Moor to Bonehill and pass beneath Chinkwell and Honeybag Tors to Natsworthy. Via Heathercombe we proceed to the abandoned settlement of Grimspound. We then follow the Two Moors Way to Hamel Down Tor (529m) and along the ridge of Hamel Down passing a number of barrows to regain Widecombe and enjoy a welcome cup of tea. Quiet lanes and moorland tracks. Bring a picnic.

Walk leaders: David and Rosie Conner, 07831 406959

Saturday, 13th October - 10.00am - WALK

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

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

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

The walk commences with a steady climb through towering stands of ancient oak woodland drenched with lichen and ferns and past bird hides which are famous for spotting pied flycatchers, lesser spotted woodpeckers and wood warblers to name but a few. We exit the wood at North Lodge, the most westerly point of the wood and commence a short walk over the western side of Trendlebere Down and drop down onto the road that leads to the entrance to Becky Falls. The next stage is a walk along the path below Houndtor Ridge to arrive at Holn Brake where we

enter Yarner Wood again. There are toilets at the car park, but no other facilities en route, so bring a picnic lunch.

Walk Leaders: Paula & Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

Wednesday, 17th October - 10.30am - WALK

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

"Squabmoor and Bystock"

A walk up to the commons, taking in Squabmoor Reservoir and Bystock Ponds. Steep in places, but promising great views if the weather is good, and perhaps some interesting wildlife.

Optional lunch in the Sir Walter Raleigh pub afterwards.

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

Saturday, 20th October - 10.30am - WALK

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

"Bootiful Branscombe!"

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

Monday, 29th October - 10.00am - WALK

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

"Sir Walter Raleigh Anniversary Walk"

To mark the 400th anniversary of the death of Sir Walter Raleigh, this walk links places associated with his life: East Budleigh, Hayes Barton (below), Bicton Common, Colaton Raleigh, along the River Otter back to East Budleigh (For those preferring a shorter walk, buses run from Colaton Raleigh to East Budleigh at 6 minutes past the hour)

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

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.

Wednesday 21st March

'Through the Hole and over the Edge'

Starting out from Branscombe Forge on a cold, but sunny day, I was glad that almost all of the weekend's snow had melted and would not make conditions difficult (little did I know!).



We walked out of the village on the steep lane past the schoolhouse and soon reached Hole House, one of the three Medieval manors that made up the village at that time (left). The current building looks old, but is a combination of relatively recent renovation and 16thC remodelling.

A gradual climb for the next mile or so took us past Edge Barton, another of the three original manor houses, and onto the flat(ish) plateau that extends westwards as far as Salcombe Hill. Here we unexpectedly encountered snow that had banked up behind a hedge, which was protecting it from the sun. A bit of a trudge to walk through, but nowhere more than a foot deep, so not too challenging. In fact, the mud and puddles left by thawing snow were more of a problem.

Weston combe was clear of snow, but we met a couple who had turned back owing to snow drifts covering the coast path. Undaunted, we decided to push on and hit serious snow that extended for several hundreds of metres just as we joined the coast path. Fortunately, we weren't the first to plough through it and

although as much as two feet deep, there were neatly spaced boot holes. It was tiring work, but at least we didn't get our boots filled with the white stuff.



The remainder of the coast path along to Branscombe Mouth was easy-peasy, but we did meet an interesting character along the way.

Peter Mears is currently trekking 14,000 miles of mainland UK and Ireland coastline, whilst sleeping outdoors for the entire duration to raise funds and awareness for three charities; the RSPB, Renewable World and National Trust. When we met him he was four months (hence the hairstyle?) into the two-year expedition and had completed the section from northernmost Scotland down the East Coast and along the South Coast of England. He has since made good progress further into the Southwest and as the map shows, hasn't been taking any short cuts. I calculate that he has to average 19 miles a day without rest days or 20.5 miles a day if he takes a day off every fortnight!





You can follow Peter Mears' progress and/or make a donation at <https://www.facebook.com/petes1challenge/> or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1904845906449611/?fref=mentions>

Jon Roseway

Wednesday 4th April

'Keble's Seat'

There must be something about Brian Turnbull that attracted a group of six women to join him for an energetic walk up to Mutters Moor from Colaton Raleigh, especially as the weather forecast was not at all encouraging. He led us across the soggy valley floor, after crossing the river, and up Passaford Lane, having warned us that it would be wet and muddy, and he did not lie.

Glad to arrive at the top of the hill we headed north to find Keble's Seat, where we stopped for coffee. As the mist had cleared we had a superb view over the Otter Valley and beyond. Brian told us a lot about Keble, who had been very famous in his day, but is sadly now almost forgotten. He had come to Sidmouth for holidays, and was inspired to write poetry at this spot, and one can see why.

The seat had been replaced in 2014 with much ceremony, and thankfully now the view point is mostly clear of trees.



We set off down Back Lane to Northmostown, and Brian pointed out the old coach road to Sidmouth. We stopped to look at some barn conversions, and some unaltered Mark Rolle barns and outbuildings up a side road. At Ashtree Farm we headed back across the valley to return to our starting point via Shepherd's Lane. Sadly we got caught in a heavy downpour shortly before we got back, but it had been a very enjoyable and informative morning, as one expects when out walking with Brian.

Dee Woods

Friday, 25th May

"If the Cap Fits" some reflections.....

Golden Cap is a popular location in the much sought after area of West Dorset. It is the highest point on the south coast at 191 metres, and with its unusual table-top topography, is an iconic landmark on the Jurassic Coast, where its brooding presence is visible for many miles. From the summit, views of Lyme Bay are

unsurpassed. But the 14 OVA Walkers who climbed Golden Cap on the 25th May don't need an 'estate agent' to sell it to them!

Today there was a hint of sea-mist that made identification of some distant places more difficult, as if The Cap was deliberately withholding some of its delights. We knew where Portland 'should' be, but were we seeing images from our past experiences, and is that Lambert's Castle, and where is Colmer's Hill? Nearby, Seatown, West Bay and the Chesil Beach snaked off to the east, and Charmouth and Lyme Regis were within touching distance to the west.

But we had to get there first, so our expectant group set off from sea level at the Charmouth Heritage Centre for the first cliff climb of the day, the 148 metre high Cain's Folly. From the top, the circularity of our largely high level 7.5 mile walk that lay ahead, could be viewed. Still more climbing to do as we took the "Smuggler's Path" through a tunnel of scrub, to emerge on the chalk downland of Stonebarrow Hill and the ridge walk to the top of Chardown Hill.

Half a mile below was the sea where a familiar pleasure boat was plying its trade between Exmouth and West Bay, while above us was the not very Golden Cap, imperiously awaiting our assault. At our feet were a plethora of wild flowers including an abundance of Bluebells, Greater Stichwort, Red Campion, Speedwell, Thistle, Vetch and more besides. Butterflies and the occasional moth flitted among us. One unresolved query was posed by the presence of a multitude of tadpoles in the water trough that served as an impromptu seat for some of us. Can frogs jump three feet into the trough to lay their spawn? And how did they jump out with nothing to jump off? Are all those young frogs due for an inescapable drowning because they cannot get out?

We headed toward the sea keeping a safe distance from some magnificent grazing horses, silhouetted against the blue sea, as we approached them from above. Next, through a field swathed in buttercups that painted our boots in bright yellow pollen. Before our final ascent we lingered in the mediaeval hamlet of Stanton St Gabriel, dated at 1087 and consisting of the roofless remains of a 13th Century church, an 18th Century Manor House, now preserved by the National Trust as holiday flats, and a 19th Century once restored, but now sadly neglected again, sheep dip.

So, with a skip and a leap we reached our destination. Cameras and binoculars to the fore, and then we dropped off the summit to eat our lunch, some sat on the benches provided, others with their legs down the hill, but everyone could enjoy

seeing the Coast Path that would be our return route and a reminder of the first half of our journey, all laid out in front of our eyes.



It turned out to be a good spot to watch others toiling up the foothills of The Cap, who were often glad to stop for a word, before their last push for the top. Some were on holiday, making their first visit, for others who lived locally, this was their playground.

By now the early cloud cover had dispersed and we enjoyed hot sunshine and 23 degrees for the 3 miles of undulating, but never very steep, path to Charmouth. A feature was the cliff top fields that had all been left to seed with carpets of buttercups, daisies and, hiding away, purple orchids that were a delight. Much evidence of cliff erosion and land slips, although none seemed very recent, and were probably a legacy of the 2014/15 and 2015/16 winters that were so damaging. In some places it was obvious that a slip was waiting to happen.

The less than two hours went quickly and at 3 o'clock we reached Charmouth. Time for tea and cake and an opportunity to reflect on how it is that such an individualist human activity as walking, whose solitude, when carried out alone, can allow one to be totally absorbed with oneself, but when carried out with a group of like-minded, compatible people can be so sociable and such a positive force for good mental health, for which, I for one, am grateful.

Chris Buckland

Wednesday, 30th May

'Four Squelch Around the Beacon'

Three of us joined leader Graham Knapton to walk "Around the Beacon". It had been raining heavily, which must have deterred some people – they missed a most enjoyable walk.

Graham expertly guided us through fields and along a variety of paths and tracks, turning this way and that, and all from memory, most impressive. Due to the heavy rain the already lush vegetation brushed against us and made us very wet. Too late we realised the correct wear would have been waterproof trousers, NOT gaiters! Even Jacqui got wet knees despite being well equipped with wellies. But we squelched on, thankful that the rain mostly held off. We ate lunch sheltered by trees – only to be deluged by a heavy downpour, which stopped once we started walking again!



En route we spotted some strange rubbery fungi which I now think are “Auricularia auricula-judae”, known as the Jew's ear, wood ear, jelly ear or by a number of other common names (thanks Wikipedia). There was a promise of glorious views.....if only the mist wasn't shrouding them. As for sounds, the strange braying of donkeys echoed around us as we completed our circle of the Beacon.

We finally descended past Harpford Woods into lovely Harpford and were soon back at the cars in Newton Poppleford. 9.5 miles in 4.5 hours, thank you Graham.

Penny Kurowski

Wednesday 13th June 'The River Yarty and Castle Mound'



A small group of walkers set out from the layby beside Beckford Bridge over the River Yarty. The listed bridge (left) is a pretty single span narrow packhorse bridge with a wide arch, reputed to be one of the oldest packhorse bridges in East Devon.

We set out across meadows beside the River Yarty before heading up away from the river to reach Yarty Farm and a track uphill to the west of Membury village and footpath to join the lane to Furley Cross.

In Margaret's absence, Jon Roseway had stepped in to lead the walk and spotted a bridleway on the map heading south to Membury from just beyond Furley Cross, which the group readily found. While not entirely clear which side of the hedge the slightly overgrown bridleway sign indicated, we followed the right hand side through a maize field and past a disused quarry clearly cut out in the profile of the field. So far so good, until the end of the field where the map showed the bridleway joining a track into the village. Jon and Graham valiantly investigated from an extremely overgrown gateway at the corner of the maize field, only to uncover a very overgrown stream beyond and no evidence of any track or bridleway!! This not being Jon's walk the group agreed by committee to adopt a plan B, returning back along part of the maize field to a gateway where there was no option but to follow the tram lines in a field of corn to the gateway of that field and escape through the yard of Newhouse Farm. This brought us neatly to the lane onto which the disappearing bridleway should have emerged a few hundred yards away.



The walk then continued through more meadows on the edge of Membury before climbing up to Membury Castle Iron Age fort for a coffee/lunch stop. Between the trees on the distinct former castle ramparts there were lovely views across the adjoining valleys. From the castle we descended into Membury village and past the church with distinctive goats head gargoyles towards the top of the church tower.

The return route took us along a ridge path known as Goyle Acre Lane to emerge at Lea Hill Farm now a number of holiday cottages although previously a Quaker Meeting House. A footpath loop away from the road took us down to a footbridge and a return path across the meadows to Beckford Bridge, and the end of an interesting walk.

Thanks to Margaret Read for suggesting the location/route and for Jon Roseway for leading the walk at short notice.

Jane Kewley

The Otter Valley Association

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Vice-chairman	Haylor Lass	568786
Hon Secretary	Penny Kurowski	742942
Hon Treasurer	Jon Roseway	488739

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History	David Daniel	445960
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Otterton	Pat & Geoff Porter	567055
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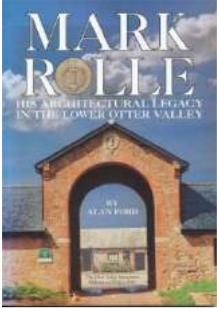
Membership Secretary	Clive Bowman	446892
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Other Contacts

Webmasters	David Daniel	445960
	Martin Smith	442333
Talks Organiser	Geoff Lake	446828
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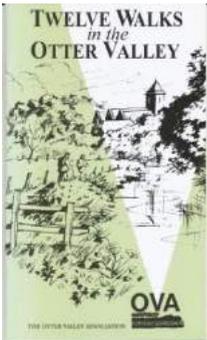
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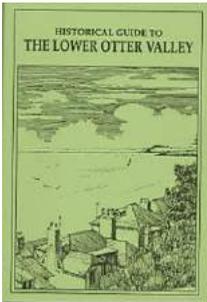
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Leaflets

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.