

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

PO Box 70 Budleigh Salterton EX9 6WN
www.ova.org.uk



Walking the East Devon Way

Autumn Newsletter

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The next issue will be published in January 2014:  
copy needs to be with the editor by **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December**, please.

# Chairman's Message

**T**HESE PAST FEW MONTHS your Executive Committee have been concerned with the rush for development planning applications in our neck of the woods. It is not long ago that we all had great optimism that “localism” would mean that local communities would have a say in the development of their communities. This has sadly not proved to be the case. Communities in the lower Otter valley, and, indeed, in the whole of East Devon District, have been dismayed at the decisions made on their behalf.

Sean Keywood has kindly allowed us to quote the following article from the Budleigh Salterton Journal which explains very succinctly why so many planning permissions are granted. For Green Wedges you could replace equally well AONB, Conservation Areas and areas outside the town and village boundaries. (once all considered having a high level of protection)

“Plans to build 154 homes at Courtlands Cross were previously rejected in 2010 and 2012, on the latter occasion by a planning inspector at appeal. Now developer Strategic Land Partnerships (SLP) has returned with a slimmed down scheme, with only 33 homes proposed.

Despite this, it is still likely to face strong opposition from Lympstone, with villagers fearing the erosion of the ‘green wedge’ between it and Exmouth, and the last plan receiving more than 600 public objections.

*However, SLP believes it now has a better chance of success, arguing in its planning application that the district's old East Devon Local Plan, which included the green wedge classification, has expired, and the new East Devon Local Plan, which also includes the green wedge, has yet to come into force.*

*It argues that its plan should therefore be approved, as it meets the National Planning Policy Framework, used in the absence of a local plan, which calls for ‘a presumption in favour of sustainable development’, as East Devon District Council (EDDC) does not currently have an agreed five-year land supply for housing.”*

Of course, one may ask why EDDC does not have the local plan finalised but that is the situation we are in. We must remember that the whole of the OVA's area is in the East Devon AONB and this should theoretically give as much protection as a National Park but we find it does not.

In the proposed EDDC plan Newton Poppleford has been allocated 42 new houses of which 18 should be affordable as a result of their housing needs survey. These could be found within the village where there are a number of brown field sites. As I write 42 houses with 16 affordable homes have been approved outside the village boundary in good agricultural land, in spite of 13 people speaking against the plan at the planning meeting and numerous letters against including one from the OVA.

There is now another planning application for 46 more houses, again outside the village boundary in good agricultural land. The above journal article explains the arguments why EDDC are in a weak position to oppose such an application, but it is a weakness of their own making. It looks as if Newton Poppleford could possibly end up with 80 houses outside the village and 40 inside. Your committee sends reasoned arguments to EDDC after looking at the relevant national and local policies but along with other amenity societies across the country are in despair at the way things are going.

Your committee is also deeply concerned at the treatment of our Conservation Areas. There are policies to protect these. The new EDDC local plan states –

*"We conserve and enhance the Conservation Areas by requiring new developments and redevelopments to be of a high standard that is appropriate to its location and surroundings".*

Imagine the Executive Committee's surprise when EDDC's Conservation Officer recommended approval of a prospective house that is a deliberate departure acting as a COUNTERPOINT to the characteristics of the existing buildings in Victoria Place, Budleigh Salterton. Surely this will destroy the nature of the heritage asset that the conservation area represents and is supposed to protect. If the approval to build new houses, at variance to the characteristics of the conservation areas continues, Budleigh Salterton could lose a number of its conservation areas, placing its special status as the only town within the AONB at risk. It is interesting that the draft local EDDC plan was rejected by a central government planning inspector as it placed insufficient emphasis on the protection of heritage assets.

The OVA has also been made aware by Clinton Devon Estates that there is a proposal to make the bridleways on Mutters Moor open to all vehicles. CDE, Sid Vale Association, rambling organisations and of course the OVA have written to oppose this. I quote –

*“.....The OVA incorporates many of their locally renowned walks in this area. We do so because it is a beautiful walk, wonderful views and particularly off the road so it is safe for a group of walkers. Families, dog walkers and horse riders do so for the same reason. This area is a lung for not only the Sid Vale Community but for the Otter Valley community as well. It takes the pressures off the special protected area of the Pebblebeds Heath. With the new houses being built in the vicinity, areas such as Mutters Moor are essential for recreation. Vehicle access would destroy this. The OVA is concerned that the bridleways are very close to important archaeological remains which should be protected at all costs.”*

I end with more positive notes. In the past some of the renovation work at Hayes Barton had been completed without listed building consent and did not reach the required standard for a grade II star listed building. As a result of representations made by the OVA and East Budleigh members this has now been rectified and approved by the EDDC conservation officer in consultation with English Heritage.

The OVA was contacted by Bath University to give an hour lecture to students visiting Bicton College. We asked CDE to provide the input on the landscape aspects. The money generated – £300 – will go towards the transport costs for our schoolchildren to visit the Pebblebed Heaths. This talk will also be repeated, with modifications, to our membership on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

Nicola Daniel

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## Editor's Notes

Thanks again to all the contributors to this edition – you're the ones who make this publication worthwhile. The Newsletter's aim is to show what the OVA is doing, what we're planning for the next few months and the longer-term concerns discussed by the committee – so read all about it here! If you attend a talk or join a walk, or are just out and about in our lovely countryside, and find something interesting and worth sharing with others – let me know, and include pictures where possible.

A lot of this edition concerns walks – what else would you expect after one of the driest and hottest summers for years? But, of course, the walks don't stop in the winter, and the talks season begins – so read on!

**Haylor Lass** – Contact details on the back cover.

# Events Committee

You will note that the only event offered to the membership this autumn is a workshop devoted to Walks Leaders, run by our new Walks Officers Chris Buckland and Mike Paddison. Graham Knapton, our Talks Officer, has kindly offered to arrange a visit to the Norman Lockyer Observatory for the New Year. I am really grateful as he is doing so much for the OVA already. If we are to have any visits and events we need people to come forward to help and join the Events Committee. I have been Chairman for more years than I can count so will not be standing again in May. It is a very enjoyable committee so please volunteer to keep this part of the association running.

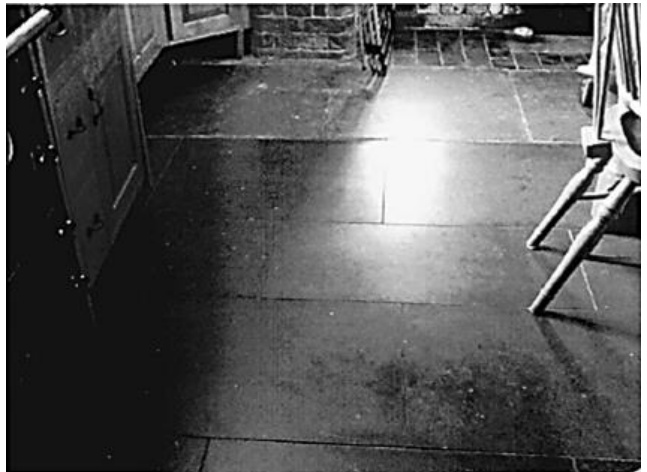
Nicola Daniel

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## Hayes Barton

“The kitchen is magnificent. The floor is slabbed, and the tremendous open hearth large enough to take half a tree, with its little oven under the seat of the fire and bread oven on the side, the oak settle in front – all is a lesson in comfort and convenience, that we may well ponder on in these modern days. In the kitchen also is a large oak table, some fifteen feet in length, with a top board three inches thick. The corner alone is more than one man can lift.”

*From Eric Delderfield's description of Hayes Barton in “the Raleigh Country” published in 1949. (Eric and Ron Delderfield were the sons of William Delderfield, editor of the Exmouth Chronicle. Eric was the historian and Ron the author and playwright.)*



The restored and approved kitchen floor – see Chairman's note on the previous page.

# Walking with the Otter Valley Association

**W**ALKING allows us to immerse ourselves in the Great Outdoors, and enjoy one of life's best experiences. The physical benefits are well known and often, literally, heartfelt, but this form of exercise can also help us cope with psychological issues or simply distract us and lighten our mood.

For some, it is the company they keep that enhances their walking experience; indeed some prefer to talk rather than look where they are going! If you are one of those people for whom the company supersedes the countryside, or the need to find your way home, then you have probably had cause to be grateful that someone else is leading the way!

Whether you are one of our intrepid members who never miss an OVA walk or are more selective, then you will have been pleased to receive your Programme of OVA Walks that appear, like clock-work, in every Newsletter. For the last four and a half years that responsibility has fallen on the broad shoulders of John Jones, who has decided that, after such sterling service, he wants his life back! Thank you John. The good news is that JJ will continue to lead walks as you can see from the current programme.

One would never choose to follow a headline act, but with no regard for our own safety, we have agreed to organise the Programme of Walks for our members. Our mission is simple: to plan, deliver and evaluate an annual programme of walks to meet the needs of OVA Members. Although we may walk in a group, each of us has our own perspective on our reasons for participation, so we would like the Programme to contain a variety of walks to suit everyone's tastes.

**What will tempt you?** Is it the distance walked, its duration or the terrain? Do you like hills or loathe them? Does a stunning view humble, inspire or just take your breath away? Can you only walk on certain days or at specific times? Do you like to follow in the footsteps of our ancestors on some historic trail? Do you prefer to remain close to home or are you adventurous? Is the countryside the setting that allows you to pursue your interest in, perhaps, birds, flowers or fungi? Do you like to leave the car behind and use public transport to take you further afield?

Is there a special place you always seem to gravitate towards, or is there a location on your wish list that you've never got round to walking? Linear or circular? Or doesn't it matter? If it's in the programme, you'll turn up and walk! But if it's not, please let us know what you would like.

OVA walkers will be familiar with the experience and enthusiasm of our current Walk Leaders, but if we are to achieve our ambitions, then we will need some of you to join the group and enjoy the satisfaction of sharing your passion with others, by leading a walk! Got any ideas or would you like some help with planning or protocol? We would love to hear from you, or better still, whatever your level of expertise, and even if you have never led a walk, come and meet people like you and ENROL ON OUR FREE WALK LEADERS COURSE (See next page). No obligation, just come and enjoy the experience!

We look forward to meeting you.

**Mike Paddison** (01395 446550 / 07909 606660  
mike.paddison@me.com)

**Chris Buckland** (01395 444471 / 07855 635173;  
chris.buckland4@btinternet.com)

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## People and the evolving landscape in the lower Otter Valley

Dr Sam Bridgewater (Conservation Manager Pebblebed Heaths) and David Daniel (OVA) will talk about the way human settlement and economic activity interact with the underlying geology and ecology of the Lower Otter Valley, to produce the landscape we see today. They will also indicate how this has evolved historically and how we might expect the landscape to change in the future.

Their talks will be based on presentations they were asked to give to a group of landscape and engineering third year students from Bath University as background to a project being conducted in collaboration with Bicton College.

**Joint OVA/Fairlynch talk 15<sup>th</sup> February 2014,  
10.00am - 12.30pm Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton.  
coffee at interval**



# An introduction to Walk Leading

East Budleigh Church Hall and Woodbury Common

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013 9.30am – 4.30pm**

If we are to fulfill our aim to increase the range and popularity of our walks, we will need to add to the number of you that like to share your enthusiasm and expertise by leading a walk. To achieve this, we are pleased to have merged our ideas with those of Tony Burges (Professional walk leader and Dartmoor guide), who will be known to many of you for leading our adventures to *they foreign parts* in the past. We have designed a training day for aspiring walk leaders and also for those current walk leaders who feel that they may benefit from a refresher course (and that includes us by the way!)

We will start at 9.30am in the Church Hall at East Budleigh, where tea and coffee will be served before a session in the classroom looking at:

- Responsibilities of walk leaders
- Preparations by walk leaders
- Map & compass skills
- Practical leading
- Overview of potential further training.



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## An Introduction to Walk Leading

Saturday 16th November 2013 ~ 9.30am – 4.30pm

East Budleigh Church Hall and Woodbury Common

Please save me ..... places

Name(s) .....

Address .....

.....

and postcode .....

tel: ....., email .....

**please enclose a Stamped Addressed Envelope  
(reply address overleaf)**

Don't forget your packed lunch, which we will eat at 12.30pm, before we make our way to Woodbury Common to undertake some practical work, building on what we learned in the morning.

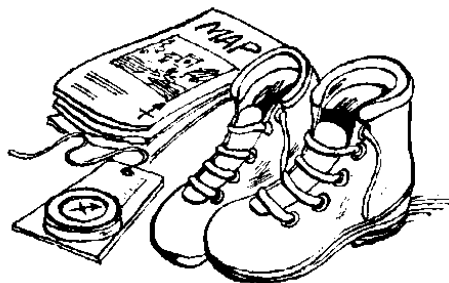
Please bring a Silva type compass and the Ordnance Survey Map Explorer 115 (We will have a few spares to share if you haven't got yours yet!) and outdoor clothing, including boots or sturdy shoes and waterproofs. The afternoon field trip will finish at about 4.30pm

Please return the Enrolment form below to Chris **by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013**. The cost of the day will be borne by the OVA.

Further sessions are planned to give us the opportunity to practice leading a walk, night walks and a trip to Dartmoor!

But first of all we look forward to meeting you on the 16<sup>th</sup> November

**Chris Buckland  
& Mike Paddison**



An Introduction to Walk Leading

**C/o Chris Buckland  
4 Coplestone Gardens  
Budleigh Salterton  
Devon  
EX9 6QN**

and don't forget the **SAE**

# Taking the Bus for a Walk

## East Devon Way July/August 2013

It's 50 years since East Devon was granted ANOB status. To celebrate this the OVA decided to walk the entire length of the East Devon Way in five stages on a weekly basis in July and August. The long distance path of forty-two miles begins at Exmouth and slices across this part of Devon, finishing at Lyme Regis which is just into Dorset.

Rather than take cars we were going to walk the entire route using buses to ferry us to and from start points. This meant that each section was not quite the same length. This was only really noticeable on the first leg when Haylor and Ruth Lass and twelve others set out to walk from Exmouth Bus Station the four miles along the Exe estuary to the village of Lymington and then inland. After a quick refreshment stop at the quirky National Trust property A La Ronde we finished the first section in the maze of estates that is Brixington.



The next section was more challenging and saw us leaving behind the environs of Exmouth to walk across the pebbled heaths of Woodbury Common. The weather was very warm and the ground dry underfoot. We passed the oddly named Fryingpans then Four Firs (nobody counted them!) and reached Woodbury Castle for lunch. The visibility was good and towards the end of this section we had pleasing views of Newton Poppleford. As we approached the end of this ten mile stretch we crossed a field that is often rather boggy and one of our number stepped in a large cowpat. He made a bit of a song and dance about it and we all joined in the humour. At the end of a long hot walk it can get you like that!



We were beginning to get the hang of this long distance path now. The third section for me was the most strenuous. The morning walk took us up to Fire Beacon Hill for one of the most spectacular views in East Devon. In fine weather it makes a great spot to have a break. When we had our breath back we descended to the ancient village of Sidbury, full of thatched houses and a Parish Church with an Anglo-Saxon crypt. Before lunch we then did the stiff climb up Buckton Hill for picnic lunch: then the Roncombe Valley before eventually reaching a layby on the A375 near Putts Corner, halfway between Sidbury and Honiton. The sun shone as hot as ever and we had clocked up another 10 miles.

The penultimate stage travels through some remote and almost unchanging landscape of farms, ancient tumuli and quiet villages such as Farway and Northleigh. Later we walked beside the River Coly (and deep between the tall maize and taller Himalayan balsam) before reaching the small town of Colyton. Because we had plenty of time before catching our bus we enjoyed a break in a teashop before ending that section of the walk at nearby Colyford.

The weather for the last stage was perfect as we walked from Colyford to Musbury. We lunched on Musbury Castle, not a castle at all but an ancient hill fort. It has stunning views of the coastline at Beer and for me was the highpoint of the whole long distance trail. We then descended to Uplyme, with glimpses of the



iconic railway viaduct near Lyme Regis before the final section walking into the town. To celebrate we trooped into the Bell Cliff Teashop for a well-deserved cream tea.

Many thanks to Haylor for guiding us through one of the most beautiful parts of Devon in this half century year.

**Sheridan Brenchley**



**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October – 10.00am. WALK**

Start at the White Bridge, SY075830. 5 miles Coastal path to Crab Ledge, inland to Colliver Cross, then via Clamour Bridge to finish along river path to White Bridge. Maybe muddy in places and windy on the coast path.

*Walk Leader:* John Jones 01395 443651

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October– 7.30pm. TALK, ‘Climate change’  
East Budleigh Village Hall.**

When studying climate change, scientists draw their evidence from many sources. Are humans contributing to the warming we are observing? Or could it be natural causes and changes to the climate? Scientists, such as those at the Met Office Hadley Centre, are continuing to look at all the possible effects, both man-made and natural.

*Speaker:* Dr Chris Roberts – Met Office

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October – 10:00am. WALK +Picnic**

Start at East Budleigh car park, SY066849. 8½ miles

Walk via Clamour Bridge, coastal path to Ladram Bay, High Peak (great climb, great views!), Bar’s Lane, Anchoring Hill, Otterton, Old Bicton Church, East Budleigh. Please bring a picnic!

*Walk Leader:* Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October – 10.00am. WALK**

Start at Colaton Raleigh Church, SY082872. 7 miles

Passaford Lane (steep uphill!), Mutters Moor, coastal path, green lanes, River Otter, Colaton Raleigh *“A wonderful walk, well worth the effort!”*

*Walk Leader:* Brian Turnbull 01395 567339

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November– 2.30pm. TALK, ‘50 years of AONB’  
Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton.**

The East Devon AONB was designated in 1963. To mark its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Kimmo Evans – Community Development Officer, will tell us all about this special area.

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK**

Start Newton Poppleford Playing Field car park, SY089899)

An easy walk looking for and identifying fungi including wax caps. Please bring along a magnifying glass if you can, and a sample of any fungi spotted before the walk that you’d like identified. Marion is a member of the Devon Fungi Group and has an excellent knowledge of the subject.

*Walk Leader:* Marion Nalder 01395 442176

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK**

Jubilee Field, Budleigh Salterton, SY060817. (on the Coast Path to the west of and overlooking the town) Meandering around this delightful wild flower haven identifying aspects of nature.

*Walk Leader:* Marion Nalder 01395 442176

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK +Picnic**

Start Newton Poppleford Playing Fields car park, SY 089899. 7½ miles Walk to Benchams, Venn Ottery Common, Tophayes Farm, Aylesbeare, Halfway Inn, Woolcombes, Harpford Common, Back Lane to Newton Poppleford. Please bring a picnic!

*Walk Leader:* Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November – 10.30am WALK**

Start at the car park opp. Norman Lockyer Observatory, SY139881. 6 miles/3hours. Some strenuous sections.

SW Coastal Path, Weston Mouth, Weston, Donkey Sanctuary and Salcombe Regis. Refreshments available at the Donkey Sanctuary.

*Walk Leader:* David Buss 01395 442 621.

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November – 7.30pm. TALK, ‘Devon Mills’  
Knowle (Budleigh) Village Hall.**

An illustrated talk from millwright Martin Watts from Cullompton, who has been studying mills since the 1960s. His work covers many aspects of the repair, maintenance, conservation and interpretation of historic mills and their machinery.

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK**

Start at Wheathill Plantation car park, SY041847. 3 miles

A short and sociable walk on the commons to relieve those growing pre-Christmas pressures.

*Walk Leader:* David Daniel 01395 445960

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December – 10.00am. WALK +optional lunch**

Start at Colaton Raleigh Church, SY082872. 5 miles

Down green lanes and over the commons, visiting Dotton, Hawkerland and Knapps lane. Optional lunch at the Otter Inn.

*Walk Leader:* Brian Turnbull 01395 567339

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December – 10.00am. WALK**

Start Knowle Village Hall car park, SY052827. 7½ miles

A walk to West Down Beacon, coastal path, Sandy Bay, High Land of Orcombe, Maer Lane, Littleham Brook, Green Farm, disused railway track, Knowle Village. Optional request stops for seasonal refreshments as required, and/or bring your own!

*Walk Leader:* Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> December – 10.30am. WALK +optional lunch**

Start at East Budleigh Car Park, SY066849. 4 miles

Gentle Boxing Day walk across the commons at this time of good cheer. Optional lunch at the Sir Walter Raleigh.

**NB** Please telephone walk leader **by 6<sup>th</sup> December** to book lunch.

*Walk Leader:* David Daniel 01395 445960

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January – 10.00am. WALK**

Start at Knowle Village Hall car park, SY052827. 5.5 miles, 2.5 hours.

A circular undulating walk over the commons to Bystock Fishponds with varied topography including woodland and heathland. May be muddy. Optional lunch at the Dog and Donkey (Brittania Inn).

*Walk leader:* Steve Hagger, 01395 442631 (Walk leader may change)

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January – 7.30pm. TALK, ‘Curious Dartmoor’**

**Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton.** *Speaker:* Paul Rendell – historian.

Looking at strange or unusual buildings, follies, stones etc.: items which often leave more questions than answers. The history of letterboxing will be explored as well as other crazy and wild things.

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January – 10.00am. WALK +Picnic**

Start at Trinity Hill car park SY304955. 7.5 miles.

Route via Woodhouse Hill, East Devon Way, Musbury and Great Trill (using the permissive path network in Trill farm). Please bring a picnic.

*Walk leader:* Ted Swann 01395 567450.

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January – 10.00am. WALK**

**Shane Badham’s Legacy Walk** *Walk leader:* To be announced.

Start at Kersbrook (under railway bridge), SY 069 830. 5 miles, 2.5 hours.

A pleasant walk at this time of year which will include part of the old railway track and some of the coast path between Budleigh and Exmouth.

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February – 10.00am. WALK +Picnic****Exeter's Green Circle 12.5 miles**

Start at the bus stop opposite the Crematorium in Topsham Road, Exeter and proceed around the Green Circle route in a clockwise direction.

Generally flat, but hilly in some parts. A different view of Devon's capital city. Please bring a picnic.

*Walk leader:* Bettina Wilson, 01395 578450

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February – 10.00am. WALK**

Start at the Four Firs car park, SY032864. 5 Miles, 2.5 hours.

A circular walk visiting Woodbury Castle then turning east to Woodbury and returning via the golf course. Includes tracks, paths & wooded areas.

*Walk leader:* Graham Knapton, 01395 445872

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February – 10.00am Joint OVA/Fairlynch TALK**

**Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton – see details page 8**

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February – 10.00am. WALK**

Start at Knowle Village Hall car park, SY052827. 5 miles, 2.5 hours

Walk encompasses Shortwood Common, Hayes Barton and Squabmoor.

*Walk leader:* Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March – 10.00am. WALK**

Start at the Otter Inn car park, Colaton Raleigh SY078874. 7.3 miles 3 hrs.

A flat circular walk mostly on local tracks. Crossing the commons to Canterbury Green and then returning via Stowford.

*Walk leader:* Mike Paddison 01395 446550

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March – 10.00am WALK**

Start at the Otter Inn car park, Colaton Raleigh SY078874. 3 miles, 2 hrs.

If you don't walk much or want to start walking this gives you the perfect opportunity with a short mainly level walk along local lanes and banks of the Otter. Optional lunch at the Otter Inn.

*Walk leader:* George Norman 01395 442307

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March – 7.30pm. TALK, 'The green Lanes of Devon'.  
Otterton Village Hall.**

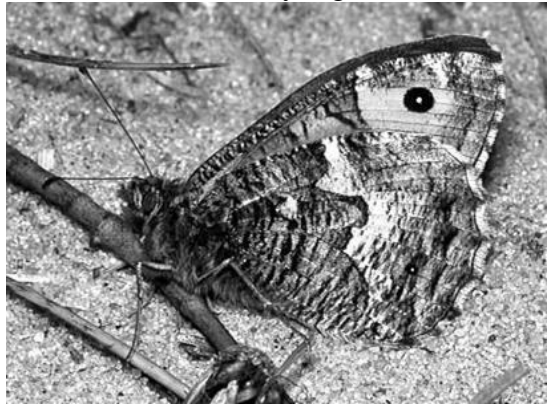
Valerie Belsey has been researching Devon's green lanes for over 20 years. Learn about their history and purpose, some of the stories attached to them. She is accompanied by folk singer Jim Causley who will sing some appropriate songs for us.



# Blue skies and butterflies

**A**N UNUSUAL ROUTE was promised for the walk on 28<sup>th</sup> August lead by Brian Turnbull and the group of 11 walkers were not disappointed. The weather was perfect: clear skies and only the slightest breeze – ideal weather to look for the butterflies that have eluded us for most of this summer. We saw members of the Pieridae family of white butterflies which includes the so-called ‘cabbage whites’ (both Large and Small) and the Green-Veined White, all in good numbers, along with some Browns (Satyridae), viz. Gatekeepers (also called Hedge Browns) and Meadow Browns. More colourful species were in short supply, but two Small Tortoiseshells were spotted, along with the relatively uncommon Clouded Yellow which would have made the long journey over from the continent, carried on southerly winds to spend summer in the UK.

As we emerged onto Woodbury Common, approaching the Castle, we looked out for some typical heathland species, such as the Small Heath (two were eventually observed) and, of course, the Grayling. This well-camouflaged insect blends in perfectly with pebbly paths and completes its disguise by ‘leaning over’ to avoid casting a shadow and/or to maximise the absorption of the sun’s rays. Like the Small Heath, both species briefly flash the bright eye spot on their forewings as a ruse to insect-eating birds to deflect any attack to their less vulnerable parts, away from the head and body. In this way, though maybe somewhat ‘tattered’ they can live to fly another day!



Once we had trained our eyes, we were able to spot a few specimens, but as we joined the East Devon Way at the edge of the Hawkerland Valley, we saw lots more Graylings on the wing. The walk back through woodland revealed plenty of Speckled Wood butterflies and the heady perfume from the red clover growing in the Clinton Devon Estate’s organic fields was appreciated and completed this perfect late-summer’s walk.

**David Hatch** (OVA, Natural Environment Committee member)

# Natural Environment

## Heath Week

On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July an OVA presence was duly registered from 11.00am to 3.30pm at the Pebblebed Heath Conservation Trust's opening event by Woodbury Castle. As with the display the day before for the Environment Agency morning on the Budleigh Salterton promenade, it consisted of the photographic display and the poster stand, together with leaflets (History; Flowers) and booklets. No booklets were sold but the leaflets were popular. It was good that the web address features on the leaflets because several wanted to follow up discussion by finding out more about OVA activities. The interest shown by visitors fully justified the effort and it is recommended that participation continue in future years.

## Himalayan Balsam

***Project Progress*** There have been a dozen or so outings in August and early September. The aim has been to complete a third sweep in the middle and upper Colaton Raleigh Brook and its two tributaries. This has now been achieved (8<sup>th</sup> September) and all is clear down to Kitt Hayes House. Various sections have been cleared lower down in the village and the complete clearance of the Colaton Raleigh valley right down to the floodplain will be a priority next year. The good progress this year has allowed us to help Ted Swan and the Newton Poppleford team working on the badly infested area at Goosemoor Farm.

***In East Budleigh*** an important development in July was the emergence of Dr Nick Ward who has roused locals to form a group to tackle Himalayan Balsam. This is exactly the development that we need because the aim has always been to try to reach a state where every tributary throughout the catchment has its own small team monitoring Himalayan Balsam and organizing the necessary action.

### ***Barbecue Seminar at The Otter Inn, Colaton Raleigh***

This was a hugely successful (outdoor) event. There were over 30 present, including seven of our team, along with those from the Back Brook (Hawkerland and Newton Poppleford), the new team under Dr Nick Ward in East Budleigh, as well as field staff from Clinton Devon Estates. Sam Bridgewater brought detailed base maps on which we were asked to record the location of Himalayan Balsam and progress in clearance. This will be

digitised in due course. Both before and after the meal there was a lively discussion on topics such as the effectiveness of strimming compared with pulling, field techniques such as stacking Himalayan Balsam and trimming seed trusses, the long term prospects for the main river banks, and the potential value of a demonstration site on the main river.

## Fencing the Commons

The OVA has continued to have discussions with Sam Bridgewater of Clinton Devon Estates concerning fencing – the OVA not being enthusiastic about enclosure but accepting the ecological management argument for fencing. CDE have responded with a pledge, “*that we do our best to ensure that the impact on landscape aesthetics are minimised and that we will make sure that we will abide both by the letter and spirit of the proposal, with maintaining public access an absolute priority. We will be using Bicton as a trial and will make sure that we put in place a scientific methodology to ensure that five years down the line we are in a position to say categorically what the impact of grazing has been. If we cannot prove it, we should be thinking about reversing the plans.*”

The OVA will continue to watch over this as the baseline wildlife data is gathered next summer and the scheme develops.

### Patrick Hamilton

Himalayan Balsam is not the only invasive species you may encounter locally. Two nasties are Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum* and Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*. Both are difficult to control.

Giant Hogweed is a huge perennial umbellifer (cow-parsley), that produces flower heads more than a foot across and abundant seed. Its hairy stems can produce an unpleasant rash on the skin of anyone who handles it. This rash may fade with time but return if the affected area is exposed to strong sunlight (*for months, if not years, afterwards*).

Japanese Knotweed is a perennial with very strong and vigorous underground rhizomes that spread extensively and are extremely difficult to kill. It is notorious for emerging through concrete! Luckily it does not produce seed in this country, but any fragment of the rhizome in dumped soil may start a new colony. Rhizomes when dug up must not be dumped or composted but treated as toxic waste in an approved site.

The control of both these species is a job for the specialist. There is plenty of information available from the Devon Knotweed Forum which has a website that is part of the Devon County Council website.

# Ocean of Life: How Our Seas Are Changing

## Professor Callum Roberts

Callum Roberts gave a very interesting and thought provoking talk at the Budleigh Literary Festival on 21<sup>st</sup> September based on his excellent recent book. One measure of the popularity of the talk is the number of people wanting to ask questions, which were considerable. Unfortunately there was limited time for these questions.

Callum's expertise is the World's Oceans and his book discusses how they are mysterious and largely unexplored. Although they are vast, they are also a finite resource and man's effect on them is now threatening to permanently degrade them.

The main threats are;

1. Global warming – rising sea levels, need for fish species to adapt, move or die
2. Increased acidification – shell building animals inability to produce calcium
3. Fish resources being depleted - excessive catches, collateral damage to sea bed (loss of habitat including loss of nurseries), wasteful bi catch
4. Limit of seas ability to disperse and neutralise toxins, dead zones increasing, more harmful algal blooms, oxygen depletion.

His book is quite detailed and a few of the issues that interested me were;

1. The plastic waste we are all familiar with is only part of the problem, there are far more microscopic/small particles that we cannot see. These float on an unseen thin surface layer and attract toxins. Did you know that many moisturisers and other beauty products incorporate small plastic beads to increase the experience and cannot be filtered out at sewage works?
2. The world has constantly changed but it is the pace of change that is unprecedented. Increased stress means animals are less likely to deal with viruses etc. Some animals like jellyfish will thrive but at the cost of a loss of biodiversity.
3. Fish farming is not as sustainable as one might think – most of these

farmed fish are fed on wild fish resources, more than the weight of the farmed product.

Callum claims he is an optimist. He thinks the situation can be stabilised but getting government to collectively agree is challenging. Marine protection areas are a way forward but they have to be on a large scale. In parallel the phasing out of the most damaging fishing methods is needed. (Offshore wind farms need protection for underwater gear from fishing equipment, thus acting as a marine protection).

### **How is this relevant to OVA?**

1. We are already active in cleaning up the estuary via the annual litter pick
2. The Marine Treasures of Lyme Bay (a marine protection area) was presented to OVA 18<sup>th</sup> February by Richard White.
3. Our ANOB interacts directly with the Lyme bay marine protection area
4. We are concerned with water quality.
5. Small scale fishing at BS is an important historical, landscape and social link
6. Marine preservation is integral to the four principal aims of the OVA
7. We can make a difference if we all contribute to the debate

Callum suggests eating only sustainable fish (Marine Stewardship Council in particular), avoid big predators (slowest to repopulate and higher in food chain (more pollutants)), try herring, anchovy, pilchards, tilapia and mussels.

*Reported by Ian Ure*

*Callum is a marine conservation biologist in the Environment Department at the University of York. A prolific author and researcher, he has advised British, U.S and Caribbean governments on the creation of marine reserves. His first book the Unnatural History of the Sea won the Rachel Carson Environment Book Prize and was named one of the Best 10 Books of the Year by The Washington Post.*

*'Those of us who worry about the future of our oceans could do a lot worse than take up this single refrain, "Listen to Callum Roberts!" Shouted in the ears of the world's leaders, it might just make a difference. Meanwhile we should all read Ocean of Life, a thrilling narrative of oceanic natural history and a vital call to action.' Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.*

# Footpaths, Bridleways, BOATS, RUPPs and Unmetalled Roads

*Below is a reply from Devon County Council to Nicola Daniel's letter of objection on behalf of the OVA to proposals to re-classify some public rights of way on Mutters Moor. I have included it in full so that readers can understand some of the complications of the review of the Definitive Map, and the driving force behind wanting these tracks to be available (legally) to motor vehicles. – Editor.*

Dr Daniel – your e-mail to our Customer Relations mailbox has been forwarded to me for reply, as I deal with the procedures involved in the review of the Definitive Map, the legal record of public rights of way, in East Devon. I have responded recently to County Councillor Stuart Hughes and Richard Thurlow of 'Save Our Sidmouth' on this issue, to provide similar information on what aspects of the procedures are involved for this issue.

It is one of the things that I am investigating as part of the wider Definitive Map Review process for the whole of the parish of Sidmouth. I started a big consultation a few weeks ago and sent details of all the individual routes involved to a wide range of people and organisations locally. The consultation was for proposals involving 13 routes, including a claimed footpath and a claimed bridleway based on user evidence submitted, with several unrecorded routes in Sidmouth town identified by the Town Council and claimed upgrades of the recorded bridleways on Mutters Moor to Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs), which is the specific subject of your e-mail.

The claimed upgrades of the bridleways are based on formal applications by the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) made in 2005, ahead of the legislation that stopped the recording of routes as BOATs for mechanically-propelled (motor) vehicles to use legally – the Natural Environment and Rural Community (NERC) Act of 2006. The TRF made more than 200 applications in Devon that year to try and get the routes recorded for vehicular use, before those rights were extinguished. Since then, routes can only be recorded as BOATs if they meet specific exceptions relating to evidence supporting higher status for public vehicular use. They could only be recorded otherwise as Restricted Byways, for use up to horse-drawn vehicles but not motor vehicles.

In this case, the consultation is procedural to say that there have been applications and we are investigating them as part of the wider review, particularly the evidence for the claimed BOAT status. It does not mean that any decision has already been made for the routes to be recorded as BOATs for public motor vehicles to be able to use the routes legally, or even that they might be recorded as restricted byways, but the applications could be turned down on the basis of the evidence with the routes remaining as bridleways. I will be investigating the evidence for them, with all of the other routes involved in the parish and reporting to the Public Rights of Way Committee with recommendations.

More detail for all of the routes in the consultation have been sent to the Town Council, where the public can see them with maps and also to the Sid Vale Association and they can be seen on the internet here:

[http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/public\\_rights\\_of\\_way/definitive\\_map\\_review/sidmouth-dmr.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/public_rights_of_way/definitive_map_review/sidmouth-dmr.htm).

I have sent details of the claimed upgrade of the bridleways on Mutters Moor to the landowners involved, as well as to Otterton Parish Council who have sent in their response. I have also spoken to the Estates Surveyor at Clinton Devon to explain details of the background, who has responded on behalf of the estate. Details of responses to the consultations will be included in the report to the Committee, with consideration of the evidence relating to the claimed upgrade of the bridleways.

I hope this helps to explain what is happening with these routes in the consultation, but please contact me if you have any other queries.

## Nick Steenman-Clark

Public Rights of Way Officer, Definitive Map Review  
Devon County Council 01392 382856 7 Fax: 01392 381459

**Public footpath** – A right of way for walkers. A walker includes a person who uses manual or powered mobility aids (such as a wheelchair or scooter).

**Public bridleway** – A right of way for; walkers, horseriders (or leading a horse) and bicyclists – who must give way to other users.

**Restricted byway** – A right of way for: walkers, horseriders, bicyclists and horse-drawn vehicles. Restricted byways are a new category of Right of Way created by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000.

**Byway open to all traffic (BOAT)** – A byway open to all traffic is mainly used for the purposes that footpaths and bridleways are used, but it may also be used by horse-drawn vehicles and motorised vehicles (e.g. cars, motorbikes)

# Visit to Poltimore House

On the 26<sup>th</sup> September, on a gloomy and dank afternoon, 24 of us descended upon Poltimore House, built about 1550, a huge country mansion shrouded in scaffolding and corrugated iron, to keep out the elements. The building has been plagued by fire, tempest, pestilence, vandalism and bare faced robbery. In fact it has been dealt a very bad hand. But to start again. We were met by the volunteers, some of whom were trustees. 10 of them administer the charity which is for the preservation and restoration of the building, which is owned by East Devon District Council.

We were taken around the gardens which boasted several specimen trees and numerous tree lined avenues of lime and poplar. Much work is being carried out to fell oversize trees and replant. We heard about the ghost of a jilted lady who haunts the grounds, but evidently it was her day off. Regrettably most of the estate has been sold off, but despite this, what remains is of a significant size.

We then entered the house, which has seen many uses. From private residence to the scene of the signing of the Exeter Treaty during the Civil War, to more than one school, to a hospital, to a nursing home and now alas abandoned. What eye-popping grandeur which has been sadly so neglected. The huge restoration programme has commenced. Not all the house was available to view, but some of the ceilings and wall mouldings that we saw, were still in superb condition.

We heard about yet another ghost, once again a lady, who floats down the grand staircase. Yes floats, she has no legs below the knees. Think of the savings on the footwear bill. Eat your heart out Mrs Marcos.

As we came to the back of the house and entered a courtyard we were confronted with the original house of Tudor vintage. The dilemma of the restorer is that to restore the house, part of the newer house (1720) has to be demolished. A conservationist's nightmare.

After tea and cake in the old school chapel, we left for home. Pondering on the enormity of the task being undertaken by such a small army of volunteers. Regrettably funds are short, but will enthusiasm be a substitute? This house is well worth a visit as in its hay-day it must have been one of the grandest in the district.

Our thanks to Lizzie Everett Wright who organised the outing.

**Robert Wiltshire**



## POLTIMORE HOUSE EXETER

### A BRIEF GUIDE TO ONE OF DEVON'S HISTORIC HOUSES

The Bampfylde family acquired the land on which Poltimore House and village is built in 1298, although it was a Domesday manor in 1086. They built the church of St Mary and may have lived in the parish, but there is no trace of any manor house until Richard Bampfylde began to build the present mansion in about 1550.



It was of a typical Tudor E-shaped construction, gabled all round and with the main entrance facing north. The house was built of locally quarried purplish-red stone, dressed with lighter coloured Beer stone, the whole giving a stunning appearance. Plaster rendering was a later addition. The principal rooms were the Great Hall, the dining room with its once-fine plaster ceiling, and the Solar and other bedchambers over. Access to the upper rooms was by a stone stair in the tower, the former replaced later by the Jacobean timber structure seen today. Of interest are the third floor Tudor attics which survive almost unchanged. The house was finished by the time Richard Bampfylde died in 1594.



The OVA's stand at the Environment Agency-sponsored Bathing Water Event at Budleigh Salterton on 27<sup>th</sup> July. The event was well viewed by passers-by and the OVA received a fair amount of interest. A dozen or so membership forms were given out; we hope to see some in new members.

## Tailpieces

### New members' Party –

The food was so good; the wine good and of course the company good. People lingered – a sure sign of enthusiasm for and interest in what we do and people enjoying themselves. We were pleased to share several important messages.



**Beach Huts** – EDDC has accepted that planning permission will be needed for year-round beach huts, particularly for privately-owned ones, though the Council has told officers to make application for **all** the huts.

# Budleigh Salterton

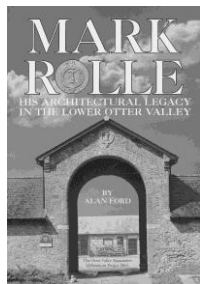
On Budleigh Salterton heights, timber benches repose.  
Loving memorials to devotees of that horizon.  
After rain, a scarf of scoured, red soil hugs the coastal breast.  
Today, no one challenges the surf. Under a spring sun,  
sturdy swimmers, shod against shingle, submerge.  
Enthusiastic plongeurs applauded by custodians of the cliff.  
An aged gent, dog snuffling nearby, observes with binoculars  
A lady seats herself, apology in manner. They dally.  
Politely the conversation builds. Weather. Life past.  
Hear him laugh and put aside his walking stick.  
A mother strolls, baby bundled to plump chin, eyes merry.  
Tattooed motorcyclists cluster, raucous as gulls.  
Pale elders watch youngsters lick Devon's own ice cream.  
Two shoppers amble, hungry for scones and jam and thick yellow cream.  
Herring gulls, in acrobatic competition, squabble,  
hovering above the pirate flag of a fishing boat  
that splashes through a silvery mackerel shoal.

The coast curves east to seduce brick red cliffs and signature pinus.  
To the west, hidden from voyeurs, "Clothing is Optional." It is official.  
Ant people dawdle, toss pebbles. And dream.  
Tourists queue for crisp cod and chips,  
relished to the clatter of tide churned pebbles.  
On tentative days of watery sun, ramblers and retirees emerge.  
Faces upturned to the warmth like sunflowers in a French field.

Ripple, ruffle, splash, shimmer, heave, undulate, flow, flutter.  
Countless inadequate descriptions of Lyme Bay.  
Painters struggle with the view, daub every colour of the palette.  
Add glitter and rhythm, only to return every dawn to start anew.  
Today, it is mine, tomorrow yours. A picture untitled. A gift unpossessed.  
Wisdom and gentility snooze in our town. Grit in the mussel lingers.  
Grief and joys pass. Inevitable as the tide ebbs over Otterton Ledge.  
How mere we all are in the presence of La Mer.

**Sue Chapman**

# OVA Publications

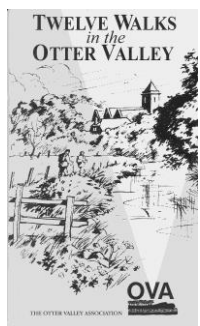


## **Mark Rolle**

### **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 picture of how a large landed estate was managed in the last 40 years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

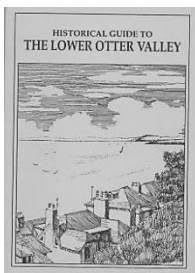
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



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

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

£2.50 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



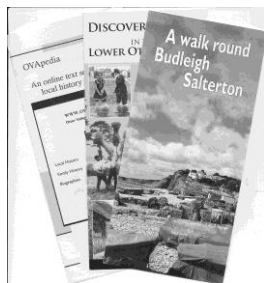
## **Historical Guide to the Lower Otter Valley**

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

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

See our website [ova.org.uk](http://ova.org.uk) or from

Booksales, OVA, PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN



## **Leaflets**

The OVA also publish a number of (free) leaflets about the history, flora & fauna and walking the villages of our area of interest in the lower Otter Valley. They can usually be found in the Tourist Information Centre and in other outlets around the valley.

# The Otter Valley Association

## Executive Committee (01395)

|                        |                   |        |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Chairman (acting)      | Nicola Daniel     | 445960 |
| Vice-chairman          | Haylor Lass       | 568786 |
| Hon Secretary (acting) | David Daniel      | 445960 |
| Hon Treasurer          | Trevor Waddington | 443978 |

### *Committee Chairmen*

|                     |                  |        |
|---------------------|------------------|--------|
| Natural Environment | Patrick Hamilton | 445351 |
| Events              | Nicola Daniel    | 445960 |
| History             | David Daniel     | 445960 |

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

|                    |                  |        |
|--------------------|------------------|--------|
| Budleigh Salterton | George Maddaford | 446077 |
|                    | Roger Saunders   | 443248 |
| East Budleigh      | Christine Hadley | 443607 |
| Otterton           | Iain Ure         | 568158 |
| Colaton Raleigh    | <i>vacancy</i>   |        |
| Newton Poppleford  | Haylor Lass      | 568786 |

### *Other EC Members*

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

### *Other contacts*

|                         |                     |        |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Webmaster               | Alan Huddart        | 446761 |
| Talks Organiser         | Graham Knaption     | 445872 |
| Walks Organisers        | Chris Buckland      | 444471 |
|                         | Mike Paddimore      | 446550 |
| Newsletter Distributors | Pam and Tony Harber | 445392 |

Interim Newsletter Editor  
Haylor Lass, tel 568786

**haylor@lasses.me.uk**