

**Wednesday 21st January 2015, Urban Byeways of Budleigh Salterton
with Chris Buckland**

Two Canine Encounters

Heather politely pulled her dog aside as the nineteen walkers headed purposefully in single file up the Coast Path from Budleigh towards West Down Beacon with its promise of stupendous views and a mid-walk breather when vacuum flasks and snack boxes could emerge from day-sacks. Behind them, fleetingly the wan winter sunshine pierced a gap in the sombre clouded sky and illuminated the chalky white cliffs of Beer Head.

A shaggy figure, bearing more than a passing resemblance to his two Border Terriers, followed in their wake, hurrying to catch up after a brief pit stop. 'Ere, are you all walkers with the OVA?' Heather enquired of him, as the three dogs exchanged olfactory greetings. She explained that she had only recently joined the OVA and was looking forward to participating in future guided walks. The hirsute straggler assured her of a warm welcome and with a valedictory handshake pressed on to join his companions.

Described as a devious figure of eight route, Chris Buckland's chosen walk explored an eclectic mix of beach promenade and coast path, golf course and lesser known urban byeways, such that Tim, who had lived in Budleigh for most of his life, confessed that he had viewed aspects of the town he had not seen before.

Through it all wound the severed thread of the old railway track formation, but the walkers who joined the trackbed at the line's summit 300 feet above sea level arrived 48 years too late to catch the last train towards Tipton St. John; they descended the 1 in 50 ruling gradient through a deep cutting hewn through Triassic sandstone towards Knowle. [A visit to the Salterton Arms in Budleigh will reward you with many photographs of the line and its stations as they once were]

Descending from the line at Dalditch Lane to pass under the 50 foot high brick bridge, the party encountered none other than our august Chairman of the OVA exercising his two Schnauzers; the two Border Terriers, by now in the vanguard, were delighted to take the opportunity for further olfactory exchanges.

After an opportunity for boot washing at a ford it only remained to rejoin the track formation via the town centre and return to the starting point at Kersbrook, beneath the skilfully constructed, but now sadly redundant, oblique brick bridge, 170 miles and 6 1/2 chains from Waterloo.

Gruff

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