

## **Wednesday, 29th April 2015, A Circular Walk around Budleigh with Brian Turnbull**

### ***"So near yet so far - a spring walk"***

The BBC were correct, the threatening skies soon cleared but not before playing with us a little, jacket on, jacket off, jacket on, you know the drill. Seven evenly paced walkers met to enjoy Brian Turnbull's delightful 10 mile circular tour taking in the coast and golf course before turning north towards Dalditch Farm. We passed the memorial bench Brian had thoughtfully placed to give golfers a rest at the top of the incline. The bench is a memorial to Brian's parents who were leading lights at the golf club.

The walk soon turned out to be a nature ramble showing off the best that Devon in spring can offer. Late primroses were complemented by whitebells and bluebells. David Hatch, our resident butterfly expert, was able to identify all of these many colourful insects, telling us when to examine the amazing underwing colours when a butterfly settled down on a nearby twig.

After taking in the old Exmouth to Budleigh railway footpath, a coffee stop was taken alongside one of the old WW2 pistol firing range structures in Hayes Wood. The walk then proceeded to Yettington and Bicton Common for a well-deserved lunch. The ground was remarkably dry under foot despite the overnight rain.

We then proceeded to Stowford along Back Lane, giving the group the opportunity to see where Patrick Hamilton and his OVA Himalayan Balsam team have been attacking, over the past few years, this uninvited invasive species that has colonised the Otter Valley. Those in the know were visibly shaken as we passed the area know as the "swamp".

As we walked through Colaton Raleigh Brian pointed out the numerous solitary bees that were resident in the many holes of the cob wall to Place Court. So numerous that they hardly seemed solitary!

Arriving at the river we turned south for home. The river here is so beautiful and peaceful, only slightly spoiled by the huge quantities of Himalayan Balsam already shooting out of the ground. A short diversion was taken at Otterton to admire the new Community Shop and to sample some of their ice-creams.

One of the advantages of having Brian as a walk leader is his extensive knowledge of local features, Without him we would never have known when we were passing over the start of the leat that feeds the Lake at Bicton gardens or the old ford along the Otter, just south of CR.

A great walk appreciated by all.

***Iain Ure***  
***29 April 2015***