

Saturday, 5th December 2015, Dotton, Goosemoor and Naps Lane with Brian Turnbull

"An Ideal Walk For A Short Winter's Day"

It was an unusually windy day. Meteorologists talk about the Daily Wind Run - the average wind speed (in mph) for the day multiplied by 24. According to <http://www.newton-poppleford-weather.co.uk>, the Daily Wind Run on Saturday, 5 December was 337.4 miles, the highest of the year so far.

The stiff sou'wester brought a healthy glow to the cheeks of nine OVA walkers gathering in the lee of the 800 year old yew tree in Colaton Raleigh churchyard. It also meant that the green lanes and footpaths leading up the River Otter to Dotton were dry for the time of year. As we passed the Environment Agency measuring station, Haylor Lass explained how the volume of water in the river is constantly monitored both for flood warnings and, in dry periods, to prevent excessive water extraction. At Dotton Farm, the old farmyard was well sheltered from the prevailing wind by farm buildings which had been carefully positioned, thoughtfully designed and attractively built - a good example of a Victorian model farm.

After climbing via Monkey Lane and Goosemoor, we emerged into an exhilarating gale on the Common above Hawkerland. No one blew away, but the contrast made one appreciate how effectively Devon banks and thick hedges keep the weather at bay. It is always a delight to walk along Naps Lane - easy walking in peaceful surroundings - and the conversation flowed free. In no time at all, the group were swinging down Shepherds Lane, with its eclectic mix of bungalows and striking modern houses taking full advantage of the view across to High Peak, to complete the circuit. There was plenty time for a well-earned lunch at the Otter Inn.

Brian Turnbull

13th December 2015