

Saturday 16th April 2016, Holcombe and Coly Valleys with Jon Roseway
“Over the Hills and Far(a)way”

Jon, the walk leader thoughtfully put out an “OVA” sign so that we didn’t miss the start of the walk at Knapp Copse Nature reserve. Jon told the 8 of us who had chosen to walk the route that the site was a former rubbish tip. Devon County Council had taken on responsibility for an old landfill site at the head of the Valley. Tipping had ended in the early 1980s since when the site had been restored subject to ongoing remedial measures to address potential pollution issues.

The walk started out on level ground and then we walked through woods covered with bluebells. We then walked down a steep slope and the beautiful countryside views unfolded before us.



There was an abundance of various spring flowers growing along the banks. We passed a very smart Bed and Breakfast at Rancombe Hill right on the East Devon way footpath. More fantastic countryside views appeared and then we passed some beautiful wooded Coombes. We passed by a field of sheep with their young lambs and no sooner had we sat down for our lunch, then we had a quick hailstorm to add flavour to our offerings.



There was a minor incident getting off the logs where we were perched by the walker who had decided to climb to the highest point.

We walked by more bluebell woods and mixed Spring flower banks.

Joyce was in familiar territory now as she used to ride in the area so she was able to show us a detour which avoided a very wet area. We passed Sallicombe farm and then yet more fantastic views. A little donkey took my eye as we passed the riding stables and then we spotted our first orchid, the early Purple orchid, *Orchis Masalla* and a few anemones.



We also found withered looking cone like fruiting structured of the Horsetail Equisetum. We then reached the hamlet of Church Green with it's 14C church where there is a yew tree rumoured to be over 1000 years old.

As we climbed out of the village, Joyce told us to turn around to see the best views in East Devon in her opinion.



The sun came out as we reached the end of the 8.8 mile walk, one I would like to repeat again when there is less mud to negotiate. Thanks to Jon for leading us on such an interesting walk.

Heather Fereday
2nd May 2016