

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION



VOLUME 12/4 OCTOBER 1991

OTTER VALLEY
ASSOCIATION



VOLUME 104 - OCTOBER 1991

OFFICERS UP TO MAY 1992.

Chairman:	Mr P. Turnbull
Vice Chairman:	Miss B. P. R. Primmer
Hon Secretary:	Mrs A. F. Horrell, 22, Fore Street (B.S. 3334)
Hon Treasurer:	Mr R. Howell, National Westminster Bank, Budleigh Salterton,

Executive Committee

Representing the Parish of

Mr J. Brenan	East Budleigh
Mr F. Burke	Newton Poppleford
Mr R. Cox	Budleigh Salterton
Mr P. Greenhow	Otterton
Mr A. Jones	Colaton Raleigh
Mr E. Skingsley	
Mrs L. Wilberforce	
Mr D. Rowland	

Membership Secretary	Mrs P. Sigsworth, 13, Dukes Road (B.S. 3621)
Social Secretary	Mrs L. Wilberforce, 5, East Terrace (B.S. 5738)
Press Secretary	Miss M. Goodhart, Bayfield, Copp Hill Lane (B.S. 3470)
Editors: (Newsletter)	Mrs E. Hardy, 6, West Terrace (B.S. 2746)
Publications Secretaries	Mr R. J. Raw, Lawden House, 18, Northview Road, (B.S. 5967) Mr B. Horrell 22, Fore Street, (B.S. 3334)

Sub-Committees

Chairman

Secretary

1. Built Environment	Mr G. Whittle Mr N. Wood (Vice-Chairman)	Mr J. J. B. Saul
2. Natural Environment	Mr D. Rowland	Miss B.P.R. Primmer
3. Footpaths	Mrs D. Stammers	Mr A. Jones



The annual subscription, payable in advance by 1st April, of £1 single and £1.50 for married couples covers four Newsletters distributed in January, April, July and October. The Association organises a programme of lectures and walks each year and a social evening. It monitors development in the area and in selected cases passes comments to the Planning Authority. It undertakes conservation projects and produces publications on matters of local interest.

REPORT FROM FOOTPATHS SUB-COMMITTEE

A major job of path improvement has just been done on the bridleway and the path which both start from Canterbury Green and go across Hawkerland. The work was done by volunteers from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, at the request of the County Council. They have taken the bridleway back to its original route, which meant some very heavy clearance work through the woods. This also made it necessary to build a new bridge. They laid down hardcore (mostly gravel swept from roads) on the wettest parts of the footpath.

Although they spent a week on this, further work is still needed. This will have to include considerable light clearance and further drainage of parts where we have already improved the drainage in the past. We will tackle this gradually over a lengthy period, when other calls on our time allow. It will also be necessary to lay down further hardcore (the County Council has left us a supply) but we must first wait to find out where this is needed: in the present dry conditions this is difficult to see.

I was especially pleased that the workers showed discretion in not clearing too many of overhanging branches which contribute to the romantic character of the path (the bridleway has been cleared sufficiently for riding, even through the woods).

It will help to keep the path and bridleway clear if walkers and riders use them. They are both well worth visiting. Walkers should wear good boots, especially for the bridleway which includes very muddy sections.

We are very grateful to the volunteers from the Trust for this work.

Other paths throughout the area are suffering from a very strong late growth. Earlier in the year, when we usually arrange clearances, there was much less growth than usual. Now we are rather overcome by growth at a time when many of those who help to clear paths are on holiday. We will just have to take our time to catch up. One difficulty is that clearing bracken is now taboo during the later months when there are spores on the bracken.

Geoffrey Jones of East Devon Council tells me that work to prepare the East Devon long-distance amenity walk, and the local walks including the one over our Commons, will be done towards the end of the year. This will include clearing some of the paths which are at the moment made difficult by the late growth. It will also include waymarking, and the laying of duckboards in areas which might otherwise be damaged by an increase in the number of walkers.

Earlier in the year the footpath committee seriously considered discontinuing our guided walks because of poor attendances. Many people have since told us they want the walks, and the attendances have improved markedly. We have therefore decided to continue with a full walks programme. An innovation will be a walk around the grounds of Bickton College, with a commentary by Jim Wyatt, in May 1992.

Other organisations also organise walks, some of which are in our area. Those arranged by the Ramblers' Association are mostly on Sundays. Walks arranged by the East Devon Naturalist Group are described in leaflets available in local libraries.

COUNSELLOR BURKE, member of the executive committee, and Parish Committee writes:- WALKERS WORLD.

GEORGE BERESFORD WALKER born 13 February 1904 in Millbank Barracks London to an Army family, spending his early years in Hong Kong. Later, in England, a keen cyclist partaking in road racing time trials, a trouble shooting engineer in the motor trade, active socially, making and still retaining many good friends.

From 70 plus an active member of the Otter Valley Association reconnoitering and clearing footpaths, leading walks and helping to rewrite the "12 Walks in the Otter Valley" book.

Jointly, from 1984 (he was then 80) we cleared and reported on paths for Newton Poppleford Parish Council and Devon County as Adoptapathers.

By 1988 (George was 84) we were walking Dartmoor, Dorset and locally, often struggling through obstructed and overgrown paths and over broken bridged ditches.

1989 and 1990 were vintage day walking - Pilton Pen, Golden Cap, Nuns Cross, Butterdon Hill, Musbury Castle, Culmstock Beacon and other remoter places, usually hilly often overgrown. George is a master of planning, extrication from difficult situations (often my navigation), unruffled, knowing when to retreat and with a grand sense of much needed humour.

Now at 87 George is still eager for a testing walk or an hours vigorous path clearing.

George, Walker Extraordinary, I look forward confidently to your 90th. anniversary walk in 1994.

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We cannot all be Georges, but adopt a path if you can, or, if you walk, please thrash some nettles or clip a few brambles and briars. They are going strongly overnight this year.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I must thank those who have recently adopted paths - John Atfield, Laurence Brady, Maureen & Tony Brooks, Stuart Greenwood, Jack Ingham.

FAIRLYNCH MUSEUM is most encouraged by the results to date of its Fundraising Year and is grateful to everyone for their support and especially to OVA for their promise of moneys to pay for the replacement of the ground floor windows, as announced in the last newsletter. Fairlynch anticipates that the work will be completed before the Museum opens at Easter.

Fairlynch has had a busy summer and the late season exhibition of embroidery pictures and straw work was particularly well-received. The Museum is now closed to prepare for the Christmas exhibitions: "A Tribute to Joyce Dennys" and a display of "Miniature Shops, Houses and Garden Railway Trains." It will also be the last chance to see the exhibition of material about Schools in Salterton since 1800. As usual the Museum will be open every afternoon from Boxing Day for three weeks.

REPORT FROM NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

What do you think of the quality of our river and sea?

The National Rivers Authority have recently provided us with up-to-date details of their weekly analysis of sea water. It shows that this is very good, apart from one occasion in June when it was very bad. So far they are unable to give a reason for this. For those who are interested there are display boards at 3 different sites along the front, these having been erected by EDDC. Fuller details are available from the Chairman of this committee. There has been a further visit to the Bystock Nature Reserve, mainly to see dragonflies. A final visit of the year is due at the time of writing, when we are hoping there will still be some butterflies around.

We supported Ian Cann, Chairman of the Exmouth Society, who finally persuaded South West Water to plant trees and shrubs to conceal a recently chain-link fence on the road across the Common. Sadly they have died as they were planted at a time of drought, so will need replacing.

Jim Wyatt, of Bickton College, who is also an OVA member, is to direct the planting of trees around the electricity sub-station at Hayes Lane, East Budleigh. SWEB have drawn up the plan and are providing the trees. This committee first approached SWEB about this matter some 7 years ago. So finally our patience is rewarded.

There have been 4 planning applications to fell or lop trees recently. They are all in the West Hill area - at Rosehill, The Firs and Woodlands. In every case the committee felt that the application was fully justified.

Several OVA members have now received the results of the survey of their homes by the National Radiological Protection Board. So far there seems to be no cause for concern in this area.

Waste paper, neatly bundled, is still welcome at the garage in Queen Street, but please do not take any more to East Terrace. The Association Treasurer has been delighted to receive another cheque from the County Council for the additional tonnage of glass collected at the bottle bank in Lime Kiln car park.

Many people will have noticed the new roadway being made into the woodland on the right hand side, just past Castle Lane. This is for the controversial recycling centre, which will however be screened by the trees.

A large dead moth was found in Mackerel Square, and was identified as a *Convolvulus Hawk Moth* - a rare find.

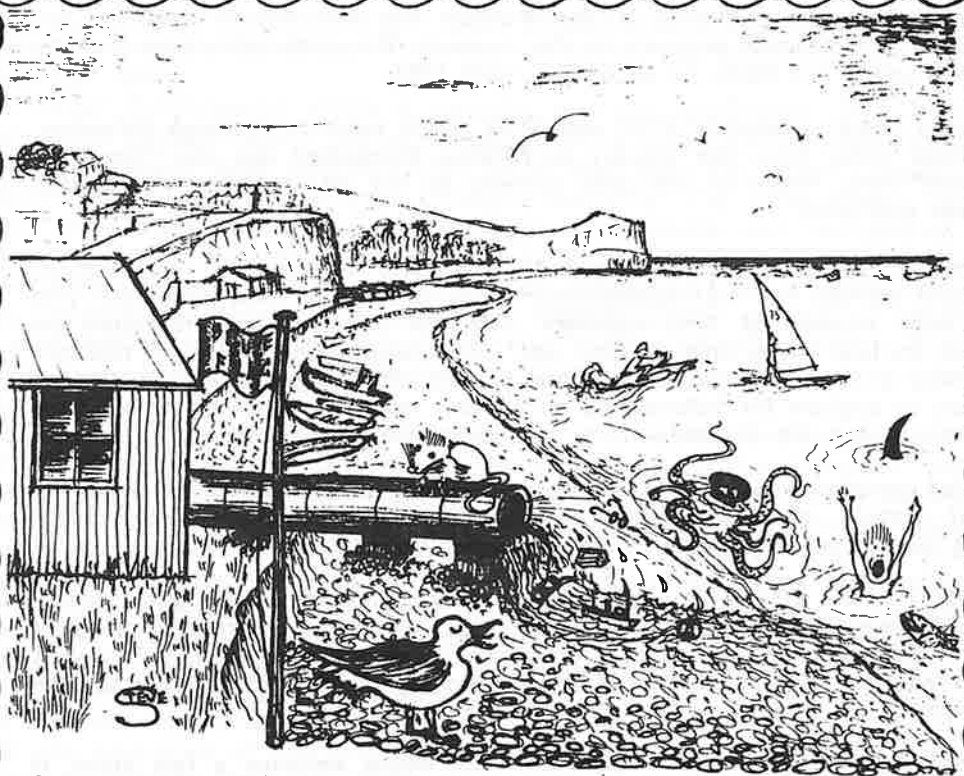
The exhibition "Introducing Otters" at Otterton Mill has been well attended. It supplied information about the life and needs of Otters, and the lengthy video filmed in the Shetlands was delightful.

In September Bob O'Brien, the County Forester, led a Heritage Coast Walk on Salcombe Hill. Two members attended and were able to learn about different species, forest management and care. As a result we have had to rethink our plans for caring for the estuary pine trees.



Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a path through the woods.

Rudyard Kipling 1865 - 1936
"The way through the woods"



Improvements to our drainage system somehow seem to lag
 In spite of being honoured by a very nice blue flag.
 And though there's still a total ban on any new connections,
 An Engineer was heard to say "there are some small exceptions."

WATCH THOSE PLANNING APPLICATIONS.
 (don't let this happen!)

THE BUDLEIGH SALTERTON BEACH SWEEP.

Will take place again this winter when quantities of plastic rubbish are washed up on the beach. Help with telephoning would be appreciated as this is very time-consuming for one person. Please ring Ann Hack (6429).

"A LOCAL BIRD HISTORY"

Members may be interested to know that I am currently engaged in producing a "History" of the local bird life for Fairlynch Museum. This document is not intended to be published in the ordinary way but will be available for reference and research purposes at the museum. The completion date is some way off and is not likely to be before April 1993.

The area being covered is SY07 and SY08 which takes in Budleigh Salterton, the River Otter from the estuary to Newton Poppleford and the "Woodbury Common" area. Much of the area covered by the Otter Valley Association overlaps this area.

At the present time I am engaged on extracting information from various published sources but will subsequently want to consult local observers who have kept records of bird sightings over the years. I will therefore be pleased to hear from anyone who may have information which is relevant especially if it is unlikely to be found in any other suggest possible further avenues to explore for information which may not be generally known as I am anxious that the document is as comprehensive as possible.

By Kind permission of the Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society I am at present working through their Annual Reports back to the 1930s having already scrutinised various books about the birds of Devon.

Arising from my efforts to date has come the realisation of the great variety of different bird habitats within the area. To try to record something of these I am planning to include photographs taken especially for the project within each of the 26 tetrads, (squares 2km by 2km), which make up the total area.

I already have a number of "volunteers" but would welcome a few more. If therefore you are a competent photographer with an interest in photographing bird habitats (not birds) I will be pleased to hear from you and to send you a copy of some Guidelines which I have prepared.

Finally I would be very pleased to hear from anyone living in the Woodbury or Woodbury Salterton area who has a good knowledge of the local birdlife of those areas preferably extending over several years. I need to consult with somebody with good local knowledge to make sure that records of sightings etc are put into proper perspective. In this context I am not thinking of the Woodbury Common area but of the villages themselves and the immediately adjacent areas.



How do you know but ev'ry bird that cuts the alry way is an immense world
of delight, clos'd by your-senses five?

William Blake 1757-1827.

" The marriage of Heaven and Hell"

REPORT FROM THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMITTEE.

During the past four months the Built Environment Sub-committee has met on three occasions and it has made over a dozen site inspections throughout the O.V.A. area.

A major development which it opposed was the application for 12 "low cost social houses" and 8 private residences on the land at East Budleigh between Vicarage Road and the A376 main road near the Salem Chapel. The Association objects on several grounds, including the unfortunate impact which the development would have on such a prominent site overlooking the Otter Valley. It was thought that the scale of development would be an unwarranted extension of the village and by completely out of character with East Budleigh "as a typical west country village". Other grounds of objection covered traffic and pedestrian safety. It is perhaps significant to note that the application was withdrawn before the L.P.A. (East Devon District Council) made a decision on it.

It will be recalled that the Association made strong representations in January 1991 in respect of fresh planning application for Otterton Barton farm buildings. The application was subsequently refused by the L.P.A. in April and the Association supported the grounds of the refusal in the appeal to the Department of Environment. A matter of particular concern to the Association was the car parking arrangements. The Inspector supported the Association's contention that their siting was far too conspicuous and he concluded by saying that the "ad hoc garages would prove the visual ruination of the scheme". Another matter of grave concern to the Association was the bulk of one of the two proposed new residential blocks. The Inspector said that the bulk of both blocks was "overdominant" and these would detract from the amenities of the area. The appeal was dismissed.

The Association has also been mentioned in another recent appeal. The P.A. refused in February 1991 an application for a dwelling house and garage in Dalditch Lane, Budleigh Salterton close to the old Railway Bridge. The Association had objected to this development on the grounds that it would be undesirable in an area of great natural beauty. The Inspectorate supported this view and said in its report of August 1991 that it represented an intrusion into the open countryside and a consolidation of built development along Dalditch lane. The appeal therefore was dismissed. Reference was made in the Inspectorate's report to the adopted Budleigh Salterton Local Plan which identifies built up areas. It is hoped to discuss aspects of this in the next newsletter.



In the elder days of art, builders wrought with greatest care each minute and unseen part for the Gods see everywhere.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow 1807 - 1882 "The Builders"

BUILT ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMITTEE NOTE BY O.V.A. CHAIRMAN.

The practice of The Sub-Committee is to obtain the printout of all planning applications in our five parishes and then the plans of those that seem to be of concern to be examined, either at the District Office at Knowle, Sidmouth or in the case of Budleigh Salterton at the Town Council Office. Where the Sub-Committee come to a view, a copy of the sketch of the proposal has to be made. Three or four members inspect some of the sites and the Sub-Committee then decides its attitude from the information thus obtained.

The Sub-Committee Chairman has to ensure that the information is obtained on the proposals that matter, that the Sub-Committee reach a view on them and that it is conveyed in time to the Planning Authority, keeping the Parish or Town Council informed.

This practice has only been possible because several members, with the ability to do so, have given their time to this task. It is however now proving impossible to continue this beyond the current year ending in May 1992. Neither the present Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee can any longer give the time, nor does the Sub-Committee have enough members, who can share in obtaining the information from Sidmouth and completing the present routine. The Sub-Committee has however a very efficient Secretary.

Unless other members outside the present Sub-committee are willing to take on these tasks, - in particular the role of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, - to continue this monitoring of proposals for change; the O.V.A. must give up its "Watch Dog" role from next May. In this event, the O.V.A. will have to revert to considering cases to which attention is drawn by others and only when this is done in sufficient time to enable the relevant information to be collected and a view to be reached before the Planning Authority reach a decision.

Whether or not we have to make this change will be announced at the A.G.M. in May.



" We are none of us infallible - not even the youngest of us ".

W. H. Thompson 1810 - 1886



