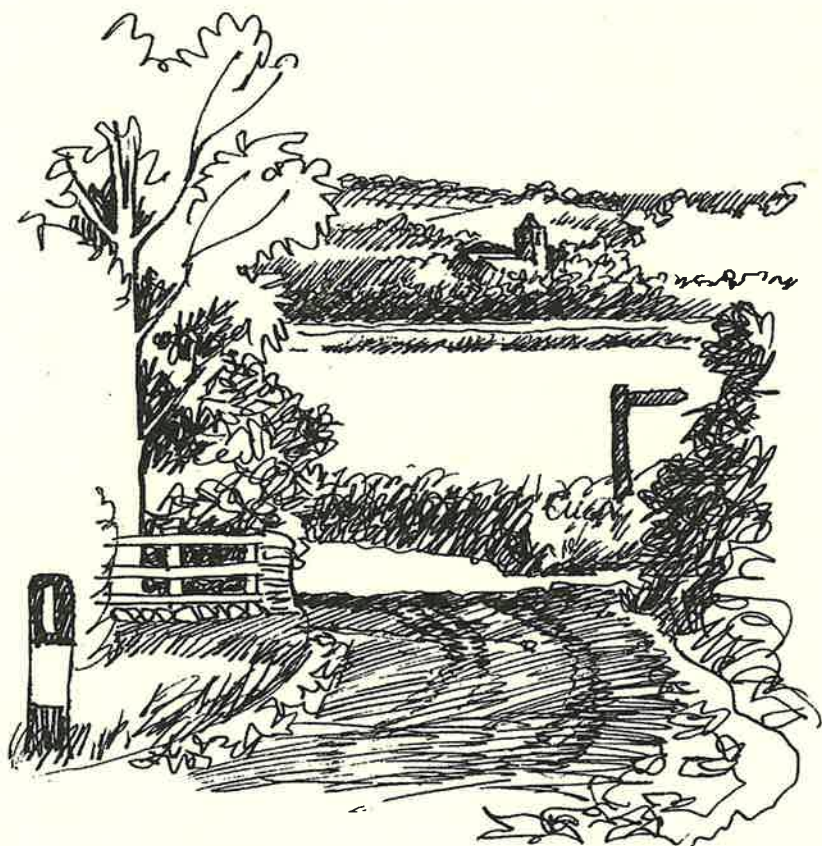


OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION



FLOOD! FROGMORE LANE
31 OCT 2000

VOLUME 22/1 JANUARY 2001

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Jan 6th From Lime Kiln CP (GR 073820)
 Sat 10am "Birds of the Estuary" A bird watching stroll
Walk Leader David Jannaway (Tel: 567159)

January 17th "The History of Firemarks"
 Wednesday 7.30. Otterton Village Hall
Speaker R.J.M. Willoughby: The Firemark Circle

Jan 20th From Budleigh Salterton Public Hall (GR 061820)
 Sat, 10 am 4½ miles along Bear Lane and Cycle Track.
Walk Leader Glynn Whittle (Tel: 445601)

Feb. 3rd From Otterton Green (GR 081852)
 Sat. 10am 6 miles around Ladram and Otterton.
Walk Leader Brian Tumbull (Tel: 567339)

February 20th "Working Heavy Horses"
 Tuesday 7.30. Newton Popleford Village Hall
Speaker Jonathon Waterer: Heavy Horse Trainer

Feb 21st From Knowle Post Office (GR 046824)
 Wed. 10 am 4½ miles. Squabmoor. Muddy in places.
Walk Leader David Huggett (Tel. 446075)

March 3rd From Col. Raleigh Church (GR 082872)
 Sat. 10 am 5½ miles undulating pastoral scenery and common
Walk Leader Frank Burke (Tel: 568864)

March 21st From East Budleigh Hayes Lane CP (GR 066849)
 Wed 10 am 5 miles Hayes Wood, Yettington and common.
Walk Leader Stan Herbert (Tel: 445648)

March 21st "The Roman Army in Devon"
 Wednesday 7.30. East Budleigh Village Hall
Speaker John Allan: Royal Albert Memorial Museum Exeter

April 4th From Hangmans Stone (GR 208904) On B3174.
 Wed 10 am Parking on verges of Southleigh Road. All Day walk, Bring picnic
Walk Leader John Daly (Tel: 01297-22173)

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

WINTER IN THE OTTER VALLEY

One could be excused for thinking that as winter is the time of little or no growth in the fields and hedgerows that everything is in hibernation. Certainly it is not so with the OVA

There have been two extremely good talks so far this winter. Both Richard Coates FRICS (Mark Rolle Buildings) and Allan Knights (Otterton Fish Pass) attracted a great deal of interest and numbers of those attending were the highest for a long time

On January 6th David Jannaway will be leading a "Bird Watching" walk in the Otter Estuary. If you brave the weather you will find that there are lots of birds to be seen. I am down there several times each week and it always seems that something new has arrived. If you are not a bird watcher go along and this may prove to be the beginning of a very rewarding hobby: if you are already an enthusiast you will still see something of interest.

It is a shame that the valley has suffered so much with flooding just lately. Jed Falby and I were discussing the flooding of a few weeks ago, when the water stretched from the cricket field to beyond White Bridge. Jed passed the remark that we were probably seeing the valley as Walter Raleigh must have done when of course it was a natural harbour

I am glad to say that the walks generally are very well supported despite the adverse conditions. Good attendances at walks and talks is the best way of thanking the hard working people (Stuart Lovett and his committee, and Maggie Morgan) who put the events on.

Christmas falls more or less in the middle of winter. This is time of families, especially children and grandchildren. Remembering friends who are away from us. Getting those cards off and looking forward to the postman's daily call. There is a long round of coffee mornings and mince pies, and it all gets under way with the OVA Christmas Party, on December 13th at East Budleigh. It looks like another sell out, so 90 or so of us can look forward an evening of Turkey, Plum Pudding, Carols and general good fun. This is our biggest event of the year when we see so many of you at one time

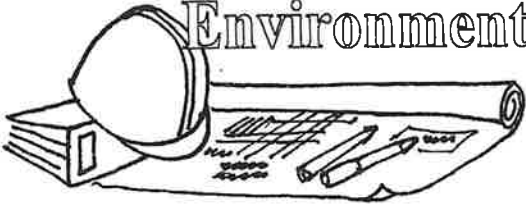
Over this winter the OVA have organised 12 walks and 5 talks, so although the Hedgehogs may hibernate the OVA certainly does not

The next newsletter (March) will be the last one before the AGM – doesn't time fly

Finally it remains for me to wish every one a very happy Christmas and New Year. May the Festive season bring you a store of memories to last you through the rest of the winter

Build

Environment



A further 51 planning applications, in a never-ending stream, passed before us during the last quarter. None was of great significance, but all have to be considered, and where necessary commented upon.

In the last Newsletter I referred to our opposition to the application to demolish Links Pinewood House in Vic-

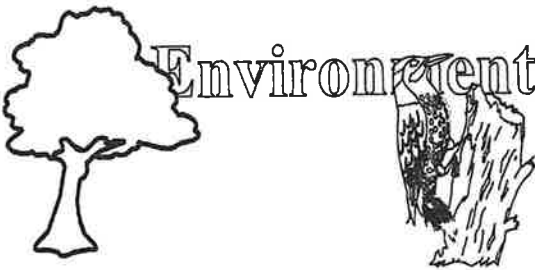
toria Place, Budleigh Salterton and to build 18 flats on the site. I commented on the unsatisfactory way in which the EDDC officers have dealt with the application. The application is due to go before the EDDC Coastal Area Planning Committee on 12th. December, so, by the time you receive this Newsletter, a decision should have been reached.

We have been fortunate in obtaining a lottery grant towards the cost of the survey of Mark Rolle buildings. The grant comes to us through the Local Heritage Initiative, which was developed by the Countryside Agency and is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Nationwide Building Society. We can now make plans to further the work, and we hope to stage an exhibition of selected photographs next autumn, to coincide with the publication of an illustrated book.

Alan Ford

Natural

Environment



The weather has been the major factor causing concern recently. Over 10½" of rain was recorded in Colaton Raleigh in October and November, and at the time of writing I am expecting yet another major flood. The normal average annual rainfall in this area is 32"

After the last flood I found a Sea Trout 31" long and weighing 10

lb. Washed up in my orchard. This is a very large Sea Trout for the River Otter. The Environment Agency will collect it, when they have time, to do a scale reading, which

should tell us its age.

Barn Owls. A meeting was held at Popham's Farm, Colaton Raleigh recently to promote the East Devon Barn Owl Scheme. This was led by the Barn Owl Trust and supported by EDDC. Barn Owls are getting rarer, and it is hoped to help them increase. Forty nesting boxes have been erected locally, and a detailed 3-year monitoring and management scheme set up. The present weather will not help Barn Owls – prolonged wet weather makes it difficult for them to feed – so they need all the help they can get. If you would like to put up a box the Barn Owl Trust can provide information on designing and siting. They would also like details of sightings. Their telephone number is (01364) 653626

Philip Greenhow



I hope the Royal Marines don't take it amiss that a party of volunteers from OVA has lowered the level of one of their exercise pools on the common. The water in it had got so high that it was overflowing onto the permissive bridleway below. Those who know the commons well will have recog-

nised from the clues so far that this was near Boarden Barn. We lowered the dam confining the pool and built a new dam to keep water off the bridleway. We also dug new drains from the bridleway. This route will never be dry, but it's now much better than it was. Bungy Williams, the commons warden, is talking of providing a timber walkway here, as he has on other parts of the commons.

The Clinton Devon shepherd, Graham Hill, has told me two horrible stories about dogs chasing sheep. Last winter near Dotton a ewe trying to escape from a dog got caught by the neck in the fork of a tree. By the time she was found she had choked to death. A few years back travellers' dogs chased a flock on the slope up to Mutter's Moor. A ewe trapped in a fence was trampled by the rest of the panicking flock and killed. Your dog doesn't need to catch a sheep to injure or kill it. For a dog chasing a sheep it may be a game, but to the sheep it is a matter of life and death. Sheep chased by a dog probably experience the same traumatic terror as a deer chased by hounds. If you have the slightest doubt about your ability to control your dog it should be on a lead where there are farm animals.

Dogs' mess is obviously an unhygienic nuisance. When it is ingested by cattle it can infect the meat. It is unpleasant for anyone handling straw or crops which it has contaminated. You may worm your dog, but the next day it can be reinfected from another dog. Some people think, bizarrely, that it is all right on a footpath. Anyone who has strimmed a fouled path experiences it differently: from head to foot! A half-way practice has grown recently of scooping dog dirt into a plastic bag, but then throwing it in a hedge instead of taking it home. The plastic bag prevents beetles scavenging the excrement so that it lasts much longer. Some much frequented spots are being made unsightly by the plastic bags.

Dogs are welcome on OVA walks. The leader and the tail-end charlie try to watch for misbehaviour by dogs but it is impossible for them to watch all the dogs all the time. The responsibility for the dogs remains with their owners.

I hope this doesn't sound as if I am anti-dog. I know from experience what a delightful companion a dog can be. Pets are said to be therapeutic, especially for the elderly, and they do encourage their owners to go out when the weather might otherwise keep them in. But if you share the advantages of having a dog you should make sure they don't make life unpleasant for others and for farm animals.

At the P3 workshop in November we learnt that we will not be able to file our reports on paths this year in electronic form, as I had hoped. Next year is possible, but not certain.

The new coloured "definitive" maps showing the positions of our rights of way are very popular. The County Council is not however keen to send copies out at the moment because this would take up time which would be better spent extending the mapping to the whole of the county. The ink is not waterproof: experiments are being carried out with alternative inks. The definitive map will be put on the web, but not for some years.

Alan Jones.

Wanted!

Unwanted tools that could be used by working parties for footpath clearance (pruning saws, loppers, billhooks &c.) Please contact David Jannaway, 16, Badger Close, Newton Poppleford. Tel. 567159

LITTER PICK ON THE OTTER ESTUARY

May I ask for OVA members' help with the Annual Litter Pick on the Otter Estuary? The date is **Saturday March 24th. 2001, 10 a.m.** At Lime Kiln car park. The Heritage Coast Office will provide black bags for us to use. Wear strong boots or shoes and gloves to protect your hands. Please spare an hour to make the Estuary litter-free.

Dorothy Friend (Warden)

THE JOHN BRENNAN MEMORIAL

You may have seen a report in the press a few months ago, that the Association had purchased a Flow Meter for the use of the schools in the area when studying aspects of the Valley and in particular the River

The Committee had earlier decided to provide an item of 'scientific' equipment for school use in Memoriam of the late John Brennan. John was always interested in finding ways of getting local children to take an active interest in the Valley and the River. We asked the local schools if there was anything in particular which they would find useful, and they came up with the idea of the Flow Meter.

Class 1C of Newton Poppleford C.P School recently used the meter, and they have sent us a copy of a really first class report and study. Their findings tell us that at the time of the study-

Rate of flow, method 1..... 3.032 km/hr
Method 2..... 2.880 km/hr

Their Environmental Assessment of the River on a score out of 5 is that it is-

Interesting	4
Beautiful	4
Quiet	5
Clean	4
Natural	5
Calm	3

They also investigated the effect of the River on bank erosion

When the Committee received this study they were all very genuinely impressed, hence this report

There is no doubt that the future of the Otter Valley is better in the hands of caring youngsters than it is in the hands of Government. We should all do anything that we can to encourage youngsters to appreciate the Valley and River which they will grow to love and cherish.

Some of the work which the children produced is on the next two pages.

A Kingfisher On The Otter

On the bank of the river,
The beauty makes me shiver,
I dive down to the water and back to the banks,
As I return to the proud ranks,
A bird's eye view of the sky,
I see the river from my eye.
I spot the ongoing path of the river faraway,
Which continues to flow day by day,
I stare at the course the river takes,
Sometimes gushing into smooth lakes,
I steadily glide into the water trying to find a fish,
I come back up with a tasty dish,
And bring it up to the land,
Showing it off as if I am grand.
I pick it up with my dainty beak,
Leaving the others looking meek,
Our vibrant colours we love to be seen,
We look so glamorous in blue and green.
By this river my home will always be
Here in the peaceful Otter Valley.

By Lydia Clatworthy
Class 1C

A report on the River Otter

Our class visited the River Otter as part of our class work on rivers. We now know that the source of the River Otter is in the Blackdown Hills, Somerset, and its mouth is at Budleigh Salterton.

Along the river there were a few gentle meanders, which we sketched. We could see where erosion had occurred and the river banks had been worn away. In places large boulders had been put down to strengthen the banks and reduce erosion. It was interesting to see that on one side of the river the water was eroding the bank, whereas on the opposite bank cattle were the cause of erosion. Further down the river sandmartins were flying in and out of the right bank, creating holes in the bank as they made their nests.

The river is home to a wide variety of animals and plants. The river Otter got its name due to the otters that used to live there, it is a clean river. If it is not kept clean and starts getting dirty the animals will either die or leave. So please help to keep our river clean.

Class 1C

The Peaceful River

Sand martins darting,
Water riffling slowly, calmly,
The swan gently glides.

Class 1C



Walks Programme 2001.

Please note that the walk on Wednesday February 21st. will be led by David Huggett (Tel. 446075)

Walk from Stowford: Saturday 14th. October 2000

Notwithstanding that many parts of Southern England had suffered recent floods it was pleasing to find fourteen of us gather at Stowford as scheduled. We had some new faces to OVA walks and one very well-controlled and well-behaved dog!

In light rain our route took us across the ford and along the lanes past Kingston Farm (much of the mud seemed washed away!) and then we climbed the narrow path towards Stoneyford before turning east, with views towards Mutters Moor. The rain had by now almost stopped and we chatted our way down Monkey Lane to Dotton Farm, mill and weir for a ten-minute break, having had a sneak preview of some Mark Rolle buildings which will doubtless be featured in the OVA's new web-site.

We then turned south parallel to the River Otter to reach Colaton Raleigh village via a muddy Wrinkly Lane, then detoured behind the church and across the ford on to a path giving good views of the village, including Place Court with its Chapel and cob wall. After crossing the main road we then headed up Back Lane to the ford (where boots were cleaned) and returned to Stowford - five miles and relatively dry albeit above the knees!

Ken Watson

"5 Mills and a Church": October 25th 2000

The weather forecast predicted a 70% chance of rain but 18 stalwarts gathered at Hayes Lane car park for a walk of discovery - 7 miles, 5 mills and a church. We learn that we are standing on the site of mill No. 1. Higher Budley or the town mill in the manor of Budley Polslo. Now a tarmac car park, all that can be seen is the line of the old leat and a millstone in front of the church hall. Some older locals remember the mill runs and the tythe barn that stood on the site. With nothing to look at but plenty to see, we set off down the lane past what was possibly an old cider house on to Vicars Mead, a house which we are told was built in the late fifteenth century. The first recorded occupancy of a vicar was 1510. Here we hear tales of smugglers, secret passages, and intriguing ghost stories. We learn that during the second half of the 1800s the house was let out

to summer visitors., it was then called Brooklands and it housed the public reading room. Further down the lane a turn to the right takes us to a house called Hayes Mill and in particular we look at the ruins attached to the rear of the house but we are informed that for Hayes Mill in the manor of Hayes we should look opposite but there is nothing to be seen, just a small brook and modern farm buildings. This was none the less the site of mill No. 2. Hayes Saw Mill. Back uphill and we head for Hayes Barton, spotting on the lawn in front of the house a millstone. We are told that the house was built in 1484, or possibly earlier, and although the farmhouse is E shaped its design owes nothing to Elizabeth 1 (she was born fifty years later). The chimney at the west end bears the date 1627 and initials R.D. (Richard Duke). The solid oak king beam within the house is at least a foot square and eighty feet in length. If we want to see the inside of this house we should book the tour arranged for American visitors with the opportunity to sleep in a four poster bed in the very room where Sir Walter Raleigh was born. (Who are they kidding!). The tour costs \$420 per night.

Moving on down through Hayes Wood, the same path we are told that young Walter took on his way down to the sea, and then on to the manor of Dalditch, mill No. 3. We look first at the site of the mill ponds, nothing apparent except some old stonework at the right hand side of the small bridge which looks suspiciously like the end of some sort of water overflow. Past the farm where a medieval painting of St. Leonard was discovered until we reach an old cobblestone wall where we think we have discovered the site of the mill. We are wrong, the mill is opposite. Pushing our way through nettles and brambles we cluster around the ruins, still uncertain that this is the mill until, drawing back a curtain of ivy, a perfect brick arch is revealed. Clear evidence of a water passage.

On again towards Shortwood Common and then down to Tidwell House. With the kind permission of Peter Wastenage, we pass though the farmyard and so avoid the dangerous stretch of road at this point. We take the lane leading to Kersbrook, stopping where we can see the springs that fed water to Tidwell, mill No. 4, in the manor of Tudwel-cum-Budleigh. The mill was 400 yards on, the site now occupied by the pumping station at Kersbrook. Following the river path towards Otterton we break away from the river heading towards the old Otterton Road (now Frogmore Road) and it is here that we find the site of mill No. 5, Thorn Mill in the manor of Budleigh Syon. In the back garden of Thorn Mill Farm under the cliff once stood an overshot water mill that dated back to 1202. Now there are well kept flower beds and some newly erected steps going up the cliff edge to the very point where the water flowed through to feed the wheel.

We return to Hayes Lane car park where those of us who are going to visit All Saints church take a break for lunch. Did you know that until 120 years ago the exterior of the church was rendered? That on the left hand side of the gate was a small building called

The Shambles where market stalls were stored? That the gate at the north east corner was once a stile? It was because the number of interments increased the height of the churchyard that steps had to be put in. That elm trees were planted in the churchyard and when they were felled they were sold off for sixteen shillings except one that was sold to the vicar for the sum of two shillings and sixpence? These questions were just some to which answers were found. This was an enjoyable walk that exercised our minds as well as our bodies.

David Jannaway.

Fire Beacon Hill and East Hill: Nov.11th 2000

It rained. Seven stalwart strollers started out from the White Cross car park. Attractive views over the Otter valley were left to the imagination as a grey mist hovered. Driven by the rain we made a speedy passage. Briefly we paused at a turning on "East Devon Way" to observe the Armistice Day silence. Up on Fire Beacon Hill, lashed by icy fingers, a planned coffee stop was abandoned and we hurried on, glad to regain the shelter of the woods. A carpet of golden leaves underfoot gave protection from the mud. The panoramic view from White Cross picnic site was lost under the mist and still it rained

B.J.Wilson

Walking in Winter: Nov. 22nd. 2000

You do have to be a little bit crazy to go walking in Devon in winter. But on this bright November morning there are fourteen "crazy" ones on the OVA's bi-monthly walk .

Leaving the flooded valley, we head up-river on Park Lane – once a busy road, now closed to all but walkers, bicycles and horses. Nature is slowly taking back the road but the fallen leaves (late this year) chestnut, oak and beech, make a glorious carpet of autumn colours.

I have always liked the Duke family, even though I have never met them, for in 1785 they built the brick gateposts and planted noble trees in a great avenue leading up to their planned great house –



and then didn't build the house! So now, two hundred years later, we can admire these ancient trees leading uphill to nowhere. Less magnificent, but more useful to our path, Colliver Lane is a green tunnel of trees now with a healthy stream sharing the path. Lea Lane, Stantyway, Piscombe Lane and Monks' Path are a series of green lanes that lead to the high ground above the mud, where we could look across Lyme Bay to Portland Bill forty miles away – or we could have done if the season's sea mists hadn't hidden it from sight.



So down through the caravan park – deserted now – to lovely Ladram Bay. The sea here eternally attacking the offshore stacks that once were arches connected to the shore and once, before even that, they were solid cliffs. The red Devon earth stains the sea red as the waves slowly but inevitably dissolve these not-so-solid cliffs. Winter's fuller streams cascade out from the cliff tops onto the deserted beach where we are the only observers of the cormorants' successful fishing.

After this welcome rest we turn South along the Coast Path, skirting the new slips where the path moves inland several feet – just to be on the safe side. It is now just a 45 minute walk along the cliff tops back to the start, with views from Portland Bill to Start Point if the weather allows. Today it didn't — but it was a wonderful walk anyway.

Jed Falby

Saturday 2 December 2000 - Kettle Plantation and Hawkerland

The appalling weather on the previous day lingered on into the early hours. However, the sixteen walkers and two dogs gathered at Colaton Raleigh Church at 10 o'clock were bathed in sparkling sunshine. The air was crystal clear, but good footwear was important because, as they say in the racing papers, the going was heavy in places.

Crossing over the Colaton Raleigh Stream at Brooklyn, we shook off any vestigial torpor with a short climb past the semi-detached cottages built by Mark Rolle in 1875. With few leaves on the trees at this time of year, the permissive path towards Drupe Farm gave an excellent view of 13th century Place Court with its fine cob and thatch surrounding wall. Continuing over the B3178 to Institute Hill, named after the village hall which used to stand there, we headed westwards and uphill along Back Lane to Stowford Farm. Despite the recent rain, the ford was passed without difficulty, and we continued onwards and upwards towards Kettle Plantation on the fringe of Woodbury Common.

After a well-earned break for refreshments, the route turned north along a delightful path just above the limit of cultivation. Winding between the trees, with spectacular views across the Otter valley on our right, we speculated about the mediaeval or even Iron Age folk who might have passed that way. After negotiating a sleeper bridge over some boggy ground, we paused to admire a recently created pond. We looked in vain for waterfowl or insect life, but keen eyes spotted a goldcrest and a kestrel.

Our path joined the East Devon Way briefly to head down towards Hawkerland Cross, where the Victorian chapel has been converted into a private house. Heading east, we noticed distinctive brick corbels added to the much earlier building at Stoneyford Farm, and the unexpected outcrop of sandstone cliff by the stream. Along Nap's Lane, a butterfly was risking all in the December sun. After crossing the B3178 again, we headed south along Shepherd's Lane and the curiously-named Wrinkly Lane to arrive back at Colaton Raleigh Church at a quarter to one.

Brian Turnbull

WWW.OVA.ORG.UK

★ You will have read in the Built Environment report that we now have a definite promise of a grant for the Mark Rolle Buildings project, and this includes a sum of money for establishing a web site. The outline design has been produced and the Domain name registered, so we hope that the site will be established in the near future. Watch this space!

Brian Hawkes

A REQUEST FROM A MEMBER

I have recently moved into Budleigh Salterton, and am researching (1) the Duke family of Otterton and (2) the "Lost village" of Dotton. I would like to make contact with any OVA members who have done any similar research with a view to comparing thoughts.

Harry Lane (01395 445061) 25, Moormead, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6PZ

NEWS FROM COLATON RALEIGH.

The Parish Council has decided that the old notice boards cannot be put back in our bus shelter now that this has been so nicely done up. Some of the boards even had wood worm. The owners of the existing notice boards will be allowed to provide new ones.

We now have the figures for the speeds of vehicles through the village, measured by tubes across the road. The figures are said to be "normal for a 30mph speed limit". It hoped to improve the toilets in the village hall by taking some of the space allotted to the doctors' surgery. It is not clear whether rural aid will be available for this or for the replacement ceiling in the hall, which is likely to cost £2000. Fortunately the village hall account holds over £6,000.

It seems strange that after repeated flooding the path along the river is better than ever. Several spots which had been muddy are now dry. The floods levelled out low spots, and deposited sand on some of the muddiest places. I hope the further floods which are undoubtedly to come as I write this do not undo all the good!

I have talked to Pete Youngman of Heritage Coast (as I still call it) about the growth of the willows along this path. He comments that the end of grazing on the river bank, and the new willow hedges and spiling, have completely changed the character of this path. Cutting these and the riverside growth which is no longer kept under by grazing, would have effects on the wildlife. Other amenity organisations will have opinions on whether cutting would be desirable, as also will the fishermen. Pete does however appreciate the loss to the walker, and, although it is not directly a Heritage Coast responsibility, will consider whether something can be done.

Alan Jones.



OFFICIALS 2000/2001

Vice-President: Mrs Dorothy Stammers

Officers

Chairman	Mr. John Lee	445696
Vice-Chairman	Mr. Alan Ford	445230
Honorary Secretary	Mr. David Leonard	445942
Assistant Secretary	Mr Alan Jones	568339
Honorary Treasurer	Mr Brian Turnbull	567339

Executive Committee

Representing the Parish of:

Budleigh Salterton	Mr Jed Falby	445455
Budleigh Salterton	Mr. Mike Harland	445665
East Budleigh	Mr Graham Cook	446523
Colaton Raleigh	Mr Alan Jones	568339
Newton Poppleford	<i>Vacant</i>	
Otterton	Mr Philip Greenhow	567996

Membership Secretary	Mr Brian Hawkes	442017
Publicity Secretary	Mrs Lin Ford	445230
Social Secretary	Mrs. Maggie Morgan	442872

Sub-Committee Chairmen

Footpaths	Mr Stuart Lovett	443141
Natural Environment	Mr Philip Greenhow	567996
Built Environment	Mr. Alan Ford	445230

Newsletter Editor	Mr. Brian Hawkes	442017
Newsletter Distributors	Major Mike Oakley	443791

The Association was founded in 1979 is registered with the Civic Trust and the Charity Commissioners and is a member of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV): it is also affiliated to CPRE. It cares for the environment and any queries should be addressed to your Parish Representative.

Our thanks to Jed Falby for the cover illustration,

Contributions for the next issue by 13th. March

Miss F Matty
Sunrise
Shepherds Lane
Colaton Raleigh
Sidmouth
EX10 0LP