

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity no. 278266

www.oval.org.uk



VOLUME 23/2 APRIL 2002

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Apr. 10th. From Mincombe Wood: roadside parking (GR 161934)

Wed. 10 a.m. 5 mi/2½ hrs. **Energetic:** Roncombe Valley, green pastures, bluebell woods, great views, two testing climbs.

Walk Leader: David Jannaway (Tel. 567159)

Apr. 25th. "The Effects of Changes in Planning Policy"

Thur. 7.30 p.m. Peter Hall

Speaker: Philip Watts: Chairman Devon Conservation Forum

Apr. 27th. From Squabmoor Reservoir (GR 068850)

Sat. 10 a.m. 5 mi/2½ hrs. **Moderate:** commons, woodland, far-reaching views, could be muddy, stony underfoot.

Walk Leader: Brian Leveridge (Tel. 443358)

May 8th. From White Bridge (GR 076830)

Wed 10 a.m. 6 mi/3 hrs. **Energetic:** Spring on Devon farms and woods

Walk Leader: Jed Falby (Tel. 445455)

May 16th. **Annual General Meeting**

Thur 7.30 p.m. Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton

May 18th. From Budleigh Salterton Public Hall (GR 061820)

Sat. 10 a.m. 5 mi/2½ hrs. **Easy:** coastal path to Sandy Bay, great views, return along cycle path.

Walk Leader: Edward Dix (Tel. 442326)

June 5th. From Hayes Lane c.p. (GR 066849)

Wed. 10 a.m. 5 mi/2½ hrs. **Easy:** country lanes, riverside, Bicton Church, ideal late spring walk.

Walk Leader: Stan Herbert (Tel. 445648)

June 22nd. From Otterton Green (GR 081852)

Sat. 10 a.m. 6 mi/3 hrs. **Energetic:** riverside, pack horse track, Muttters Moor, Peak Hill, spectacular coastal views.

Walk Leader: Patricia Doran (Tel. 445954)

July 6th. From Colaton Raleigh Church (GR 082872)

Sat. 10 a.m. 6 mi/3 hrs. **Moderate:** Riverside, Harpford Woods, Muttters Moor: Good views, one climb

Walk Leader: Stan Herbert (445648)

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find notice of the 2002 AGM. I sincerely hope that many of you will be able to get along. You will be electing a new Chairman, vice Chairman, Treasurer and hopefully a Secretary. As I will have completed my three years as your Chairman I cannot seek re-election. This year, as in other years we are looking for people to come forward to fill vacancies which we know will arise. At present there are no nominations for the post of Secretary, so if there is anyone amongst you, who is prepared to stand please get in touch with either myself(445696) or Brian Turnbull (567339). Also at the AGM you will hear reports about the past year, and you will have the opportunity of questioning officers.

The evening will conclude with a small informal wine and cheese party. Hopefully there will also be a short slide presentation, but as yet nothing has been finalised

So my term of office is drawing to it's close. I must say that I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Executive Committee. Very many times I have been genuinely impressed with their enthusiasm, professionalism and their obvious concern for the River and the Valley. I feel privileged to have been in a position of being able to serve the OVA.

John Lee

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Subscriptions for 2002/03 are due at the beginning of April. Minimum subscription rates are £3 p.a. for individuals, and £5 p.a. for families or households. If you have not already done so, please pay your subscription now to:

The Hon. Treasurer, OVA, Hayes, Church Road, Colaton Raleigh, Sidmouth EX10 0LH. This will ensure that you receive your copy of the next Newsletter.

Cheques should be made payable to Otter Valley Association. Alternatively, you may like to consider using a Banker's Order to ensure that your subscription is paid regularly each year. 83% of OVA members already pay by Bankers' Order. If you would like a Bankers' Order form to complete, please contact the Treasurer at the above address, or by phone (567339), or by e-mail brianturnbull@ova.org.uk.

WANTED - SECRETARY FOR OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

The Otter Valley Association urgently needs an Hon. Secretary to replace David Leonard when he stands down at the May AGM after serving the maximum permitted three year term.

The OVA aims to interest residents and visitors in the history, geography, wildlife and architecture of the area. It is registered with the Civic Trust and the Charity Commission.

The Hon. Secretary is ex officio a member of the Executive Committee, which is responsible for the management and administration of the Association. The Executive committee is supported by three sub-committees - Built Environment, Natural Environment and Footpaths - each of which has its own Secretary. The duties include taking minutes at monthly Executive Committee meetings, and assisting the Chairman with correspondence.

The position would suit someone with a professional, secretarial or administrative background, and basic computer skills. No previous experience of civic or amenity issues is required, although this is an outstanding opportunity to develop an interest.

AGENDA FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY MAY 16TH. AT 7.30 P.M. PETER HALL, BUDLEIGH SALTERTON

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 17th. May 2001 (circulated in July 2001 Newsletter)
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Adoption of Accounts
7. Consideration of an amendment to the Constitution (see below)
8. Election of:
 - Chairman: A Ford; proposed J Falby, seconded J Lee.

- Vice Chairman: R Sellin; proposed D Leonard, seconded B Hawkes.
- Hon. Secretary: term expired - vacancy;
- Hon. Treasurer: B Turnbull; proposed A Ford, seconded B Hawkes.

9. Election of Executive Committee (up to 12 members)

10. Appointment of Hon. Auditor

11. Nominee for Vice-President - Barbara Primmer

12. Any other business

13. Date of AGM 2003- Thursday 15th May 2003.

Interval - there will be a short break for complimentary light refreshments.

Slide Show Presentation - surprise Speaker

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Nominations (which must be in writing) for Officers and members of the Executive Committee must reach the Secretary at least two weeks before the AGM. They should be seconded by a member of the OVA and must be signed by the nominee as willing to stand (Constitution clause 6).

RESOLUTIONS: Members wishing to put resolutions to the meeting should submit them in writing, duly seconded, to the Secretary at least two weeks before the AGM. It would be appreciated if members wishing to raise questions at the AGM would inform the Secretary by the same date to enable adequate answers to be provided.

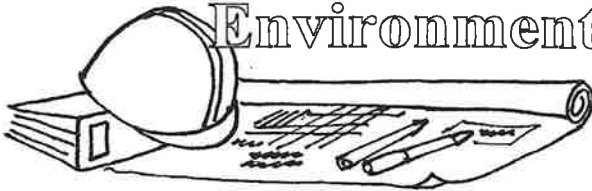
PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION: Due to the continued expansion of your association and the preference for active participation from all the postholders on the Executive Committee we shall be proposing at the AGM to amend the Constitution as follows;

Object number 7 and the second sentence to read - "The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers and not less than six and not more than twelve members, all of whom are Charity Trustees as defined in Section 97 of the Charities Act 1993".

(At present, membership of the Executive Committee is limited to the Officers and not less than six and not more than eight other members. It is proposed to increase the maximum permitted size of the Executive Committee by four. This will allow, for example, the Membership Secretary, Social Secretary and Publicity Secretary who play a vital role in the management and administration of the Association, and who regularly attend Executive Committee meetings in a non-voting capacity, to join the Executive Committee.)

Built

Environment



The time for commenting on the First Deposit Version of the Local Plan has come and gone. The District Council will now consider these comments before producing the Revised Deposit Plan. It will be interesting to see what, if any, changes are made as a result of our representations.

It was very pleasing to learn through the Budleigh Journal that a great number of people submitted comments; far more, I suspect, than has ever been the case with previous Local Plans. This is very healthy. The District Council can be in no doubt that the people of our five parishes are very much concerned about the planning policies which affect them and their environment.

On behalf of the Association, the Built Environment Sub-committee submitted a number of observations to the Council, principally concerned with the proposals for Budleigh Salterton. Briefly these were as follows:-

- 1 Plymco site to be designated Residential and Retail (not Residential only).
- 2 The allotments adjoining the Plymco site to be designated "Land of local amenity importance".
- 3 The field between Clysthayes farmhouse and Dark Lane to be excluded from the built-up area.
- 4 The Conservation Area to be extended eastward to include the whole of Marine Parade and Saltings Hill, and southward to include Links Pinewood and Victoria Place.
- 5 Consideration to be given to defining a small conservation area in Knowle Village.
- 6 The proposed Residential Area of Special Character north of Coastguard Road to be extended to include Coastguard Cottages and The Chance on the south side of the Road.
- 7 An additional Residential Area of Special Character to be designated covering the area around Upper Stoneborough Lane
- 8 The policy for Residential Areas of Special Character to be strengthened to say that developments of a density inconsistent with that of the area as a whole will not be acceptable.

- 9 There should be a policy to encourage the re-routing underground of existing power lines in conservation areas.
- 10 The eastern part of Colaton Raleigh Parish to be excluded from the Exeter Area of Economic Activity.

Taking the First Deposit Version as a whole, it has to be said that much of it is good, much is admirable. Why then does one have a certain feeling of unease? Is it because, however good the intentions, what is essential in the end is the will and constancy to apply the planning policies consistently.

Alan Ford



HOW CLINTON DEVON WORKS.

At the end of last month John Varley, the CEO of Clinton Devon Estates, and Bungy Williams, the senior commons warden, described the conservation work of the estate

to a meeting of representatives of local parishes. The work is supported by a large number of grants from public bodies, but these fall far short of the full costs. The shortfall is made up by cross funding from the commercial activities of the estate. In future the costs would rise considerably. Paradoxically the new proposals for environmental support of farming will, at least in the short term, result in less funding for the estate's conservation work. The shortfall will become unsustainable.

The estate does not however intend to restrict its conservation work for which it has recently received an award from English Nature, in addition to an individual award to Bungy Williams. Instead it will maximise its income from commercial activities, while avoiding the facile solution of running down assets. Indeed the estate is already employing a second warden, Paul Swain.

The presentation was candid and refreshingly free from spin. When I challenged John Varley on the recent closures of car parks he freely admitted that all but 8 of the existing car parks were likely to be closed. Car parks are very expensive to keep up, especially as the most durable surfacing - tarmac - is ruled out on environmental grounds.

The cost of upkeep of car parks is however not the only reason for closing them. There is also pressure on the estate to close car parks because they sometimes result in damage to ancient monuments such as tumuli. The Woodbury Castle north car park, for example, remained closed after F&M because of excessive damage.

Car parks are often used for purposes which have nothing to do with access to the commons, for example as parks for commercial vehicles. Charges, at least for commercial vehicles, are under consideration, but if charges are imposed there will probably be a concession to locals, for example an annual permit for, say, £10. Other issues include the security of any ticket machines, and agreeing what improvements the public would like to see in the remaining car parks.

Abuse of the commons, for example use of cross country vehicles, is becoming more common. Opinions of what is abuse varies of course, Some would regard horse riding as an abuse. John Varley is unlikely to share this view since he is a keen rider. However he recognises that it may be advisable to licence uses such as this. Some commercial organisations are even charging the public for use of the commons, for example for mountain biking events, without any of the proceeds going to the estate.

The introduction of the CROW act (sometimes known as the "Right to Roam" act) presents the estate with the dilemma of either revoking the deed which makes the commons available to the public, so that the commons fall under the new legislation, or leaving things as they are. The end result is about the same, but the mechanisms for managing access are very different. For example licensing access to horseriders under the present arrangements would necessitate seeking a dispensation from the government to end the present free access. The new legislation would ban horseriders ab initio, but it would be possible to seek a dispensation allowing them under conditions. There is no possibility that walkers will be charged for using the commons or that the estate would ever wish this.

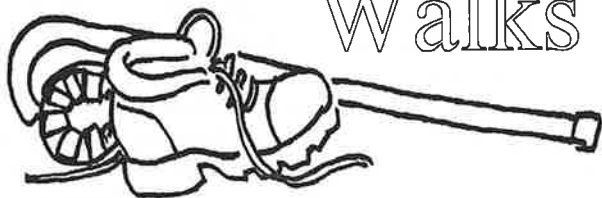
The presentation was part of an effort by the estate to make local people more aware of the changes in the offing, and to seek their support. To the same end the estate publishes "Counterside Matters", which some of you will have seen. It is also looking for other ways to explain what it is doing, and now employs its own PR expert. A telephone questionnaire revealed that most people have little idea what the estate does.

John Lee, the chairman of the Otter Valley Association, offered space in the OVA magazine and the possibility of devoting one of the evening talks to the work of the estate.

The cottage at Woodbury, destroyed by fire, may be replaced, or the site may be left clear. Another possibility is that refreshment rooms may be built there.

Alan Jones.

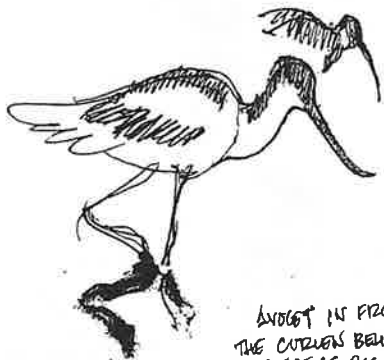
Walks



Wednesday 16th January. Bird Watching Stroll, Topsham: Global warming certainly has its upside. After all, most OVA winter walks actually take place in reasonable weather conditions and if you are looking for unusual species of birds the warmer weather just might help. Eighteen of us set out from Holman Way car park to look out over the Bowling Green Marshes. We were greeted by the whistling calls of the Widgeon Duck, of which there were quite a number, together with Teal, Black-Tailed Godwits, Greylag Geese, Barnacle Geese and a good number of Canada Geese. When we reached the hide we already had a good idea that there was something special to see - two Spoonbills. In the last five years we have seen the Little



Egret move from being an uncommon bird to one that is now frequently seen, particularly in the South West. Now it is the turn of the Spoonbill and although it is still quite rare, this winter has seen twenty of these birds taking up residency in this country. Spoonbills were breeding here until the 17th century but human impact on their feeding habitats ended all that. We do not know exactly where these birds originated from but there are small numbers breeding in France and Spain. Most probably they have come from Eastern Europe but we welcome them at any time as they are a delight to watch.



We moved onto the new platform constructed by the RSPB, overlooking the river Clyst at the point where it meets the river Exe. By this time the early chill had gone

and we were enjoying one of those perfect, sunny, bright blue skies, winter mom. A row of deck-chairs along the platform would have enabled us to sunbathe and birdwatch! Here was another treat, this time from Eastern England, Avocets. We were presented with wonderful close-up views of these strikingly elegant black and white birds with their long legs and long upcurved bills which they sweep from side to side when feeding. These birds became extinct in this country during the 19th century but during the last hundred years, due to habitat changes and protection, there has been a good recovery (well done RSPB, and others no doubt). Plenty of other birds were seen including Dunlin, Curlew, Common Sandpiper, Pintail Duck, Shoveler, Shelduck and many others but the ones that will stick in the memory will be the Spoonbills.

A relaxing morning watching nature in action and marvelling at the incredible distances these winter visitors have travelled to get here. I look forward to seeing what global warming will bring us next year.

Footnote: The walk that should have taken place on the 2nd February was called off owing to flooding and severe winds. (Ah well, that's global warming for you!).

David Jannaway.

Wednesday, 13th February 2002 - Canterbury Green and Hawkerland: At the northern end of Woodbury Common, Budleigh folk are normally as scarce as Dartford Warblers. Not today, however, as 18 OVA members from all the parishes (and Sidmouth) set off northwest from Crook Plantation to explore the parts that other walks seldom reach.

The footbridge over the Colaton Raleigh stream provided a convenient census point before heading up on to the Common. Just past the Royal Marine range, an early skylark was in full song. They call it "easing the Spring". Sure enough, the clouds soon rolled away, and the sea shone silver in the sunshine. We crossed the East Devon Way and headed down past Hawkerland Brakes to Kingsell Lane.

A few yards along the road at Canterbury Green led to a little-used but rewarding footpath through mixed woodland. No doubt surprised by the throng, the resident Muntjac deer kept a low profile. Emerging into the sunshine in Hawkerland Valley, we walked



up with Joneys Cross on the left, pausing at the top to enjoy the sensational views and abundant bird life. Keen-eyed walkers spotted a kestrel, a robin, a great tit and, yes, a pair of Dartford warblers. The broad track down to Stoneyford was sheltered from the breeze and bathed in unexpectedly warm sunshine. Is this one of the reasons why Woodbury Common supports a rare population of this essentially Mediterranean little bird?



Two very much larger birds, buzzards, soared serenely overhead as we walked back from Hawkerland Cross. The delightful wooded path back to Stowford, running between the Common and the fields, provided a succession of fine panoramas across the Otter valley. For the last half mile, we re-traced our outward route. Just before Stowford, it crossed the leat built to bring fresh water from the Common to Bickton Lake. Thirsty but content, we enjoyed our own supplies of fresh water and refreshments back at the car park.

Brian Turnbull

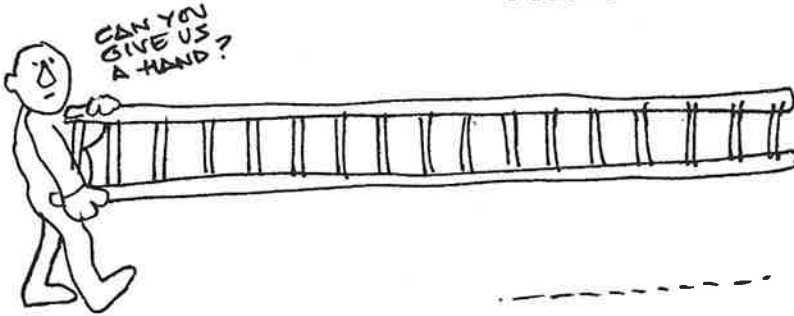
Saturday 2nd. March 2002: It was a gorgeous day when 11 of us met at Broadhembury, a delightful cob and thatch village much beloved of artists. The village takes its name from Hembury Fort which is on a spur of the Blackdown Hills, and according to Hoskins is the finest earthwork in Devon.

After some creative navigation we made the 1400 feet climb up to the Devon and Somerset gliding school, where we were disappointed not to see any gliding activity; however we had seen masses of primroses and snowdrops. and the views down to the valley were lovely. Then we walked past fields of sheep, through a badly cattle-churned sea of mud, onto a bridlepath which is going to be a riot of bluebells later. After that, once we joined the tarmac road it was an easy stroll into the village, past the 14th century church where Rev Augustus Toplady (author of Rock of Ages whilst in Somerset) ended his days. Some of us then repaired to the splendid, if pricey Drewe Arms.

It took us about 2½ hours, and parts were very muddy, probably better to do the walk later in the year.

Patricia Doran.

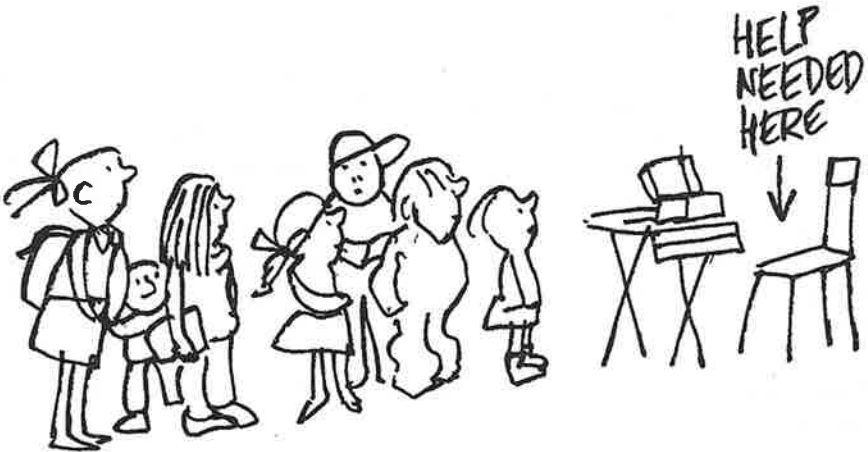
HELP!



Budleigh Salterton Gala Week is rushing up on us and the OVA is planning to put on a good show to support the Lions and the town.

But this year our two key members are unavoidably away on Saturday 1st June (sorry about that!). There is the new OVA tent to put up, there are the OVA books to be sold, there are children to be helped to win our easy contests. If you can help (yes! You know you can!) please call Alan Ford on 445230. **WE NEED YOU!**

Jed Falby

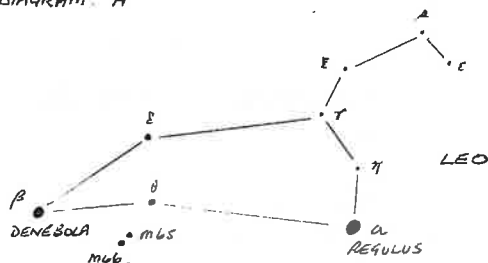


THE SKY AT NIGHT

Whilst most people are rejoicing in the first signs of spring, happily pointing out the snowdrops and crocuses, Astronomers greet the arrival of spring with feelings tinged slightly with regret. Those super black skies, so perfect for stargazing are giving way to lighter nights, when the stars are not so prominent and the interesting objects are thus a little harder to find. Orion now stands high in the early evening and is tilting over as it sets. Over the winter the area around Orion- Gemini, Taurus, Canis Major and Minor and Auriga - has given us plenty to look at. This is an area packed with Astro-

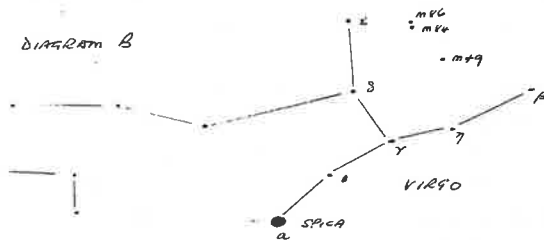
nomical heavyweights. The spring skies will be dominated by Leo and Virgo and as summer approaches by Scorpio. Leo is a nicely shaped constellation, at it's right hand side there is a distinct sickle, with a triangle of stars to the left. Its principal star alpha Leonis at the base of the sickle is Regulus. Beta Leonis at the extreme left is Denebola. There are two nebulae visible with a medium binocular, M65 and M66.

DIAGRAM A



Virgo is a little harder to recognise. Having easily found Leo, Virgo is right alongside to the left. The only obvious part of the constellation is a slightly lopsided 'Y' formed by seven stars, which you will easily find. The brightest star is alpha Virginis, Spica which is at the lowest part of the 'Y'. There is a nice group of nebulae centred around M49,

DIAGRAM B



M84 and M86. All are visible with a medium binocular. There is not a lot more to commend Virgo to you, although if you have a telescope you can certainly increase your pleasure when viewing this group. The prominent red star above and to the left of Virgo is probably Arcturus. A star which we will come to when we look at the circumpolar stars later on in the series.

The planets

For the next 3 months we will have a real treat. Venus will be a magnificent evening object in the NW. She will be at magnitude -3.9 in April increasing to -4.0 in June. No other star or planet comes anywhere near Venus in brightness. Something to look forward to

You may catch Mercury, elusive as ever, towards to end of April. From the 21st to the 30th it should be visible, as an evening object low down in the NW. You will have about an hour to spot it, immediately after the Sun has gone below the horizon. It should be fairly bright, although not as bright as Venus. You will need to look carefully for it

LESSONS OF THE WAR BY HENRY REED

To Alan Mitchell

Vixi duellis nuper idoneus
Et militavi non sine gloria

Naming of Parts

Today we have naming of parts. Yesterday
We had daily cleaning. And tomorrow morning,
We shall have what to do after firing. But today,
Today we have naming of parts. Japonica
Glistens like coral in all of the neighbouring gardens,
And today we have naming of parts.

This is the lower sling swivel. And this
Is the upper sling swivel, whose use you will see,
When you are given your slings. And this is the piling swivel,
Which in your case you have not got. The branches
Hold in the gardens their silent, eloquent gestures,
Which in our case we have not got.

This is the safety-catch, which is always released
With an easy flick of the thumb. And please do not let me
See anyone using his finger. You can do it quite easy
If you have any strength in your thumb. The blossoms
Are fragile and motionless, never letting anyone see
Any of them using their finger.

And this you can see is the bolt. The purpose of this
Is to open the breech, as you see. We can slide it
Rapidly backwards and forwards; we call this
Easing the spring. And rapidly backwards and forwards
The early bees are assaulting and fumbling the flowers:
They call it easing the Spring.
They call it easing the Spring. It is perfectly easy
If you have any strength in your thumb; like the bolt,
And the breech, and the cocking piece, and the point of balance,
Which in our case we have not got; and the almond-blossom
Silent in all of the gardens and the bees going backwards and forwards,
For today we have naming of parts.

This poem was sent from 'vers libre', a poetry archive at <http://www.nth-dimension.co.uk/vl/>



THE OVA WEB SITE: (WWW.OVA.ORG.UK)

It may be of interest to some members to know that in the first six months of its existence (i.e. Up to mid-January), the site had rather over 300 visitors from many places. In the first part of January, for instance, we had 15 visitors from UK hosts, 15 from (mostly) US hosts, 3 from Australia, 1 each from Canada, Saudi Arabia, Ireland and South Africa. The most frequently requested page in January was Newton Poppleford (are strangers intrigued by the name?)

If you have not had a look at it yet, it is worth doing so. Even if you don't have web access yourself, it is available (free for 20 minutes) at the public library, and the librarians will be happy to assist you if needed. Among other things, it gives a list of our programme of walks and talks, a list of officers and a means of sending them emails, besides information about our area.

Brian Hawkes

OFFICIALS 2001/2002

Vice-Presidents: Mrs Dorothy Stammers
Mrs. Barbara Primmer

Officers

		telephone (01395)
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. Stan Murrell	446079
East Budleigh	Mr Graham Cook	446523
Colaton Raleigh	Mr Alan Jones	568339
Newton Poppleford	Mr. Haylor Lass	568786
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 Alan Jones	568339
Natural Environment	Mr Robert Sellin	443283
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.

Miss F Matty

Sunrise

Our thanks to Jed Falby for the cover illustration

Shepherds Lane

Contributions for the next issue by 13th. June

Colaton Raleigh

Sidmouth

16 EX10 0LP