

# OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

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**VOLUME 27/1    JANUARY 2006**

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: OVA WALKS AND TALKS  
JANUARY TO EARLY APRIL 2006**

4 JANUARY, WEDNESDAY, 10 a.m. PEAK HILL CAR PARK, G.R.109872. ENERGETIC, 3 HOURS; STONE CIRCLES, OLD SIDMOUTH COACH ROAD. Walk leader: JED FALBY, 01395-445455.

17 JANUARY, TUESDAY, 7.30 p.m. OTTERTON VILLAGE HALL. TALK BY TOM COLEMAN ON 'ASPECTS OF DARTMOOR'.

18 JANUARY, WEDNESDAY, 10 a.m. CANAAN WAY PAYING CAR PARK, OTTERY ST MARY, G.R.096955. MODERATE, 5+ MILES, 2+ HOURS. OTTERY ST MARY, KNIGHTSTONE, WIGGATON, RIVERSIDE. Walk leader: DAVID NANGLE, 01404-811752.

25 JANUARY, WEDNESDAY, 10 a.m. BUDLEIGH SALTERTON LIMEKILN CAR PARK, G.R.073820. EASY BIRDWATCHING STROLL ALONG THE OTTER, LOOKING AT WINTER VISITORS. Walk leader: DAVID JANNAWAY, 01395-567159.

4 FEBRUARY, SATURDAY, 10 a.m. WHEATHILL PLANTATION, G.R.041847. MODERATE, 5 MILES, 2+ HOURS, COMMONS AND WOODLAND. DISCOVERING HOW MILITARY CAMPS, WATERWORKS AND RAILWAYS HAVE SHAPED LANDSCAPE. CAN BE MUDDY, DOGS WELCOME. Walk leaders: DAVID AND NICKI DANIEL, 01395-445960.

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Without the energy and enthusiasm of its members, the OVA is only a name.

Thank you to all those who have done good work for the OVA in the past year. As one example among many, I would like to single out the small army of members who distribute our Newsletter locally. Without them, it would be impossible to send you four Newsletters a year without increasing our modest annual subscription.

A great deal of work goes into producing our Newsletters and publications, and organising our programmes of walks, talks and social events. I am very grateful to those who make these things happen.

I am particularly grateful to our parish reps, and those who generously give their time and expertise as members of OVA committees – Executive, Built Environment, Natural Environment, Footpaths and now Programme and Publicity. You will find their names at the back of this Newsletter.

The OVA will only be able to achieve its aims if people are willing to play an active part in its activities. Perhaps you could lead a walk, plant a tree, write an article for the Newsletter or join one of our committees.

Right now, we urgently need someone to chair our Built Environment committee (see next item). Several other vacancies need to be filled over the next few months. You will find details on the “Wanted” page elsewhere in this Newsletter. If you would like to discuss any of these opportunities without obligation, please contact me or any member of the Executive committee. Our phone numbers are on the back cover.

We have an excellent programme for 2006. Clare James’s talk on “Clinton Devon Estates – Past, Present and Future” on Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February is sure to be popular. It will take place in Budleigh Salterton Public Hall so there should be room for everyone.

Thank you for your support in 2005, and best wishes for a happy and fulfilling 2006.

**Brian Turnbull**

## **BUILT ENVIRONMENT EMERGENCY**

The OVA has always worked hard to encourage high standards of architecture and planning in the Otter Valley, and to protect important buildings and their setting. We do this by reviewing local planning applications. Where we think it necessary, we express our opinion to the planning authority. And because we have over 1,000 members, they take note. They may not always do what we suggest, but we have our fair share of success - and they know we are watching!

We now have an emergency. The eight members of our Built Environment committee who share this work between them do a first-class job but, for sound personal reasons, none of them feels able to take on the chairmanship of this important committee. No committee can function properly without a good chairman.

**We urgently need a new chairman for the OVA Built Environment committee to ensure that this vital work continues.**

This is a worthwhile and fascinating rôle for someone who cares about the appearance of Budleigh Salterton and the surrounding villages. Working with the committee, the chairman can play an important part in protecting the best of the old buildings whilst encouraging high standards in new developments.

He or she need not be an architect, planner or surveyor, but should have experience of running a team effectively. As well as chairing the monthly meetings, they will approve and sign letters on any contentious applications to ensure that the OVA's interventions are well aimed and clearly expressed.

If you are prepared to take on a little responsibility in exchange for a great deal of interest and satisfaction, please contact either of us without obligation for more information. Alternatively, if you know of someone who might be able to help, please let us know. Thank you.

Brian Turnbull

Chairman

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Nick Speare

Vice-chairman

Tel: 443944

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## **Why Have We Re-formed the Programme and Publicity Committee?**

The work of creating and managing our programme of events as well as maintaining communications has increased dramatically, in proportion with our membership. We are now an organisation with over 1000 members and the tasks of managing the social calendar, the talks programme, this Newsletter and the OVA publicity have each become more complex as we have grown.

Because all these activities have been reporting directly to the Chairman, he has had less time to concentrate on the main work of the OVA – built environment, natural environment and footpaths. In addition, each activity has grown significantly but in isolation, without a mutual support network.

We have been extremely fortunate that volunteers have stepped up and taken on each of those functions so well. However, there comes a point at which a role taken on voluntarily becomes onerous. We are, after all, volunteers.

Fortunately, the solution was at hand. The OVA's rules already provided for a Programme and Publicity Committee to handle these matters. This Committee, which was dormant, has therefore been re-formed.

### **What are its aims?**

The aims of the Committee are exactly as stated in Rule 14 which I have paraphrased below:

- To prepare and manage an annual programme of lectures and social events
- To produce membership cards
- To publicise and seek media coverage of all our activities
- To publish and distribute a periodic Newsletter
- To assist in any form of printed (or nowadays web-based) publications

### **Who are its members and what changes can you expect?**

We already had the people in place, although they did not operate as a committee. Their names are listed on the back cover of the Newsletter.

One of the first improvements you will see is the introduction of booking slips for events. These are enclosed with this Newsletter for forthcoming OVA events.

More improvements will follow as the committee begins to work together.

### **What can you do?**

There are a couple of areas where the new committee does need your help.

Two of the key members of the committee will have completed three years service in 2006 and wish to be replaced as head of their particular part of the committee, although they still want to stay involved. They are firstly, Belinda Mountain, who, as Talks Secretary, has done a super job of sourcing and managing a programme of varied and interesting talks;

and secondly Rowan Turnbull, who has been magnificent as the OVA's Social Secretary developing our social calendar and managing the events. If you feel you would like to contribute to the OVA and can help in either of these areas then please contact me or any member of the committee.

The second area where we need your help is in you exercising your brains. We try to be as creative as we possibly can in producing an array of talks and events but we are always looking for ideas for the future and feedback from you of events and talks you have attended. Basically we would like to know what you would like us to do that we haven't done before; what you would like us to do more of and what less. We want you to help us be creative for you. Again, please get in touch with any member of the committee or me to discuss past and/or future events.

**Nick Speare**  
**Vice-Chairman**

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## Social Report

The **Christmas party at Bicton College** clashes with the Newsletter deadline, so we can't report on it. We just hope everyone had a good time! Our thanks go to all who participated, 130 diners, Haylor and Ruth Lass our carol providers, Jed and Ruth Falby who ran the raffle, Alan Ford the quizmaster, Michael and his team at the college and all the OVA helpers. We were overwhelmed by the take-up of tickets. We could accommodate almost twice as many people as last year, but we still had a waiting list.

**Ticket Sales** for OVA events are being made more efficient by introducing booking forms. Please fill in the relevant slip and send it to the address given, enclosing your cheque made out to the OVA and a self-addressed stamped envelope. All events have limited places so please apply early.

**Events this Spring** include:

The **Norman Lockyer Observatory on Monday 27 February**, tickets £4-00 (see booking form enclosed). The visit will start at 7.30 pm with a lecture and then a tour. We hope for a clear fine night. Please dress for the weather.

**Sand house and gardens on Wednesday 5 April** (see booking form enclosed). The visit starts at 1.45 for 2pm Tickets £5-00. Be warned, there are difficult stairs and some standing around outside in the cold, so again dress appropriately. Teas are available at £2.50 payable at the tea room.

Note a visit to **Cadhay** in May and a visit to **Riverford organic farm** in June (booking forms in the next edition).

All visits have limited places, so first come first served.

The Austings of The Temple Methodist Church in Budleigh Salterton organised a wonderful **Christmas tree festival** with over 40 trees. The OVA were delighted to decorate one to represent our activities.

**Rowan Turnbull**



## **Lyme Disease – A Warning**

### **Stella Huyshe-Shires**

How many times have you been bitten by a tick? Would you recognise the symptoms of Lyme disease? Your doctor probably wouldn't unless you were lucky enough to have the characteristic circular, expanding rash, clearing from the centre. But would you bother the doctor with a rash that didn't itch much? Would you even notice it on the back of your thigh, say?

Lyme disease is the most commonly reported tick-borne infection in Europe and North America. The disease is a multi-system disorder that can affect a range of tissues including the skin, heart, nervous system, joints and muscles and to a lesser extent the eyes, kidneys and liver.

The illness is caused by a spiral-shaped bacterium, which is transmitted to humans by the sheep tick, which also feeds on deer, mice and birds.

It has been estimated that about 100 people in East Devon contract Lyme every year, and at a guess I would say perhaps 10 of those are diagnosed and treated. What has happened to the others? Mr A. developed a 'flu like illness in the summer, but not worth bothering a doctor with. He didn't notice a rash. Six months later his knee became sore and swollen. Other joints started to ache and he seemed always tired. He had a spell of being wide awake in the middle of the night, his hearing became sensitive for a while, and he found himself using the wrong words when talking. He hadn't expected to feel so old just because he'd reached 50. These fluctuating symptoms are typical of chronic Lyme.

Acute Lyme can stop your heart, stop your breathing, or cause an unexplained meningitis, and when you are taken in to A&E, is (perhaps) more likely to be recognised than the chronic form.

Although named after the town of Old Lyme, Connecticut, USA, in the mid 1970s, the disease has been known in Europe under a variety of names since the 1880s. Lyme disease is prevalent across the UK and I

know people who have contracted it in Dorset, Somerset and Cornwall as well as Devon. Doctors have little experience of it, and do not have the time to research it, and this makes it difficult for them to diagnose, particularly as most patients do not think to mention they may have been exposed to ticks.

The good news is that there is a blood test for it and antibiotics can cure it. The bad news is that the blood test is difficult to interpret and a large proportion of doctors believe the disease can be cured by a single short course. The blood test measures antibodies. If you are older, or if you had some antibiotics or steroids for something else at the time of infection, then the antibody response (which develops slowly) may not have developed sufficiently to be rated positive. Lyme is primarily a clinical diagnosis: a negative test does not preclude the disease, neither does a positive test mean you have it. About 10% of the population have antibodies, having been exposed to the bacteria at some point without developing the disease.

Over the last few years research has shown that this complex organism can evade the immune system by forming cysts which are unaffected by the traditionally used antibiotics. Conventional wisdom says you must surely be cured by the hefty dose of antibiotics, but the cyst form lies dormant for a while, and then reappears causing another flare of symptoms. A different form of antibiotic is needed to kill the cyst form. If you visited the doctor at the rash stage, or you developed acute Lyme soon after infection, the conventional course of antibiotics is likely to cure you: it is mainly the delay in diagnosis that leads to persistent and recurrent Lyme. This is now being recognised, and additional treatment being made available.

The lesson from this is to avoid being bitten by tucking socks into trousers when walking or working in long grass or undergrowth. Check yourself and your family for ticks and be aware of mild illnesses in the summer and autumn. Prevention is far, far better than cure.

As a starting point for further information, visit the website [www.LymeDiseaseAction.org.uk](http://www.LymeDiseaseAction.org.uk) or phone me or my husband, Stephen, on 01395-597230.

# **Clinton Devon Estates**

**Clare James**

As another calendar year draws to an end, the Estate is looking back at achievements and work carried out.

The Estate recently celebrated receiving the Queen's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development. The ceremony was held at Bicton Arena and the Lord Lieutenant of Devon made a presentation to Lord Clinton. The award was given 'for the radical business integration of resources to deliver unique capabilities for managing a very complex countryside business on their 500-year-old Estate in Devon'. We are very proud of this recognition.

## **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths**

The day-to-day work of the Estate continues, and nowhere better than on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths. Our conservation team has taken the Red Devon cattle off the wet mire areas. The cattle are used as a management tool: by grazing in the wet areas they break up the *Molinia* tussocks and also feed on the willow and other scrub. This year they have certainly done well, opening up the rare Southern Damselfly sites. We had the best counts of these very important damselflies since we started to manage and monitor them. Our thanks go to Lesley Kerry and Peter Gotham who conduct the counts for us.

The winter work has started with the clearance of areas of scrub. We will do a small path on Muttersmoor, then some more work at Dalditch Plantation that was turned into Heathland nearly 10 years ago. We will finish our winter scrub clearance on East Budleigh Common, an area that has rapid scrub and tree growth, mainly due to the area being a Royal Marine camp during World War II.

Why do all this? Because, by clearing the ground we are trying to replicate the work that the commoners did many years ago. We need a

mosaic of vibrant Heathland, and without proper management this whole area would be lost to scrub and we would lose the rare species that rely on our special Heathland.

### **Woodland**

In the woodlands, thinning work at Uphams Plantation continues. For details on where forestry operations are taking place, please visit our website (address below). In working areas, please follow signs and directions and keep clear of stacked timber and machines.

Summer weeding at Fordwater Plantation in Woodbury continues, the young trees now visible as you drive past.

### **Farms**

Clinton Farms had a good harvest this year and have now finished the maize. The annual programmed hedge-cutting has started and next year's crops have been drilled. Look out for the signs on the field gates telling you what's growing and what it will be used for. In this changing time for agriculture our home farm, as well as our tenant farms, are adjusting to new environmental schemes, which place an even greater emphasis on managing for landscape and biodiversity benefits.

### **Otter Estuary**

In July, the Estate took back the management of the Otter Estuary, and since then, with the help of the farmer Robbie Pyne, we have introduced bird scrapes on the meadows adjoining Granary Lane. We are working closely with the East Devon AONB team, the OVA and the Devon Bird-Watching and Preservation Society to develop the interpretation and bird-watching facilities for the Estuary. So watch this space.

### **Website**

The Estates' website is now fully functional, giving updates on news and events, access and dates for the diary. Please visit us on [www.clintondevon.com](http://www.clintondevon.com).

(And if there is a subject you would like us to cover in a little more detail, please contact me, Clare James, on 01395-443881.)



# Natural Environment

## Great Trees

Until I attended the "Great Trees of East Devon" conference organised by EDDC at Bickton College I had always liked trees. I bought my present home as much for the magnificent pine in the garden as for the house; I have even hugged a few in my time. However, I came away from this conference not just liking trees but passionate about them. The spark that lit my fire was the closing presentation of the day by Jon Stokes, author of *Heritage Trees of Britain and Northern Ireland*.

His basic message was this: as a nation, we are very good at preserving our heritage when it is man-made (e.g. through the National Trust and English Heritage etc.) but sadly we do very little, in comparison, to preserve the heritage we have in our Great Trees.

Great Trees are a unique and vital natural heritage and an important link to our past. We are fortunate in Britain in having the majority of ancient trees surviving in north-west Europe. Many of the currently known examples of Great Trees predate much of the built heritage we so earnestly protect, but the trees themselves often have no protection.

Trees such as those in Windsor Forest, Borrowdale in Cumbria, Dunscombe Park in Yorkshire and Horner Woods in Somerset are all now recognised as part of our heritage but their protection, if any, is scant. Organisations like the Tree Council, the Woodland Trust and the Ancient Tree Forum are all working to change this but they need root and branch (sorry for the pun) support.

One of the most telling examples of our neglect of our tree heritage is the original Bramley apple tree. Not a Great Tree in age but a very important one for British commerce - where would we be without Bramley apple pies?

Many of you will know that varieties of apple arise from the seeds of a different parent and this was the case with the Bramley. It originated in a garden in Southwell, Nottinghamshire, somewhere between 1809 and 1815. Planted by Mary Ann Brailsford, the tree was owned by a Mr Bramley some 40 years later when its qualities were recognised. All subsequent Bramley apple trees have come from cuttings from that first tree.

The original tree still exists and, despite it having given rise to an industry that accounts for some £50 million in trade and exports for this country, it is tended by one lady, now in her 80s, who has looked after it for most of her life. She estimates that she has spent a considerable amount of her own money in caring for that tree yet she has received nothing for preserving this important part of our national heritage. Mr Kipling should be ashamed!

We can do something to rectify the balance. One of the major initiatives that is taking place at the moment is the "Great Tree Hunt" to locate and record the most important trees in East Devon. If you know of an unusual or very old tree in your area, now would be a good time to nominate it to become one of the Great Trees of East Devon. You can do so on the EDDC website – [www.eastdevon.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/countryside) , through your village's Tree Warden or if you contact me then I will pass on your nomination.

**Nick Speare**

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## Footpaths

The path along the river from Otterton to Clamour Bridge has been closed because erosion has made it dangerous. This path is extremely popular and forms an important link in our network of paths. Briony Sharp, the footpaths officer for Otterton, who had the path closed on a Sunday as an emergency, has been complaining for some time that the path needed attention to prevent just such an emergency. At least the complaints she has made in the past had resulted in consideration being given to the work now needed on the path, so that it will be repaired more quickly. That doesn't mean soon however. The plan is to install willow spiling of the sort that has been so successful elsewhere on the river. The willow needs reasonably warm weather for planting, so work will not start until next February or March.

As if to underline the importance of the path, a run along it had been organised by Graham Hill, the Clinton Devon shepherd, for less than a week after its closure. Fortunately the runners were able to use the adjacent field. Please note however that you are not entitled to divert into this field without permission from Clinton Devon.

Recently the County put in a new flight of steps where this path comes out on Otterton Bridge. The new access is much more convenient than the old. The absence of a gate between the path and the road however is worrying. The County does not like gates at such entry points to our paths because they make it more difficult to escape from the road onto the path. Here however there is a danger that young children and dogs might run from the path onto the road. The path is much used by holidaymakers, who may not be aware that there is a busy road at the end of the path with no pavement. We have asked the County to put in a gate at the bottom of the steps where it would not restrict escape from the road.

What do you do with a 30-ton pile of tarry scrapings from road repairs which has been dumped in the wrong place? This is a problem in Colaton Raleigh. Our contractor ordered the scrapings from the County, to be spread in Hill Lane leading to the common, so that he could raise a section of the lane which frequently has hedge-to-hedge water. The lorry driver dumped the scrapings at the end of the lane nearly a quarter of a mile from where they were supposed to go. He said the surface of the lane was too soft for him to drive along. This is just not true. The lane is not asphalted - that's why we need the scrapings - but it has a firm stony surface. I have driven my saloon to the spot where the scrapings were supposed to go without any anxiety. In any case you don't dump stuff like that just anywhere.

Clinton Devon say they may be able to move the scrapings, but not immediately. However, when left, this stuff sets so hard that it can only be dug up with pneumatic picks, so let's hope it doesn't stay too long blocking half the lane. We can't be too critical of the County because they deliver it free of charge. But they will have a problem disposing of it.

**Alan Jones**

### **Litter Pick on the Otter Estuary**

We would like to ask for OVA members' help with the Annual Litter Pick on the Otter Estuary. The date is **Saturday 25 March 2006** between 10 a.m. and 12 noon at Lime Kiln Car Park.

The AONB team, along with East Devon District Council, will provide black dustbin bags for our use.

Wear strong boots or shoes, and gloves to protect your hands.

Dorothy Friend, our voluntary warden, has now retired and we would like to thank her for all her hard work on the Estuary. We hope this litter pick will be as successful as in previous years.

**Bungy Williams (Estuary and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Warden)**





## Talks and Walks

### **Mark Rolle – His Architectural Legacy in the Lower Otter Valley**

One of the characteristic features of our valley is the fine collection of Victorian agricultural buildings built for Mark Rolle. Alan Ford has made a detailed study of these farms and cottages, culminating in a fascinating book on the subject, available from the OVA. His talk in the Peter Hall on 24<sup>th</sup> October explained how they came to be built.

OVA walkers frequently see these buildings, often identified by a carved stone plaque bearing the initials “M.R.”, scattered throughout the five parishes of the Lower Otter Valley. After Alan’s talk, we shall look at them with new eyes.

The sheer quantity is remarkable. Between 1863 and 1905, Mark Rolle was responsible for almost 100 new or converted buildings in our area alone. There was no question of mass production, however. Alan’s excellent photographs showed that a wide variety of building materials had been used, including stone, brick and flint. Even cottages built almost simultaneously were clearly distinguished by original features and decorations. Good workmanship, generous facilities and practicality were a constant theme.

Mark Rolle was only six years old when he inherited his estates on the death of his uncle. The terms of the Will were very restrictive, and capital projects had to be approved by the notoriously slow Court of Chancery. Fortunately, he appointed an energetic steward, Robert Hartley Lipscomb. Most of the building was done under his stewardship using the estate’s own work force under the Clerk of Works, Robert Kingdom.

Thousands of Lipscomb’s letters survive in the Rolle Estate Archive, and Alan seems to have read most of them. In a wide-ranging talk, he gave us a vivid insight into the personalities, life and times of these

remarkable men. He highlighted Mark Rolle's heroic determination to improve the estate during a period of agricultural depression, Lipscomb's shrewd judgement, professionalism and sheer hard work and, not least, the craftsmanship of Kingdom and his workforce.

I cannot improve on the conclusion in Alan's excellent book. "On the Rolle Estate, an architectural legacy was left to us that merits our admiration and protection. Indeed, the legacy might well serve as an example to us. The use of local materials, the inventiveness, the variety and the element of fun, which stops short of whimsicality; these are qualities well worth striving to emulate in the buildings of today."

**Brian Turnbull**

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### **Water, Water Everywhere**

The advertised speaker from South West Water was not available on 24 November, but we were treated to a talk with slides given by Mr Stephen Driver, an Investment Planning Manager, covering all aspects of the Company's work since privatisation in 1989.

The information provided went a long way to explaining why our water bills have soared over the last 16 years – an inheritance of crumbling sewers, ageing pipework and a system which allowed 50 per cent of waste water to be discharged, untreated, into our sea and rivers.

Next year should see the last untreated outfall, which will enable all our beaches to reach clean water standards set by the European Union.

As far as our local water is concerned, it is drawn from boreholes and needs very little purification treatment (definitely no fluoride).

An informative evening, full of facts and figures, appreciated by the relatively small audience which had braved the bitterly cold weather.

**Stuart Lovett**

## Branscombe and Coast Path , 5 October 2005

Twelve 'energetic' walkers set off from Branscombe Public Hall on a morning that was muggy, but dry. Any path out of Branscombe is steep up or down. Steep up to start with, sharing the narrow road with the local Post van that passed us so often we felt we knew him. Then down to cross Branscombe Brook – and disaster!

Leader, Jed Falby, trying to skirt the ever-widening mud, took a nose dive and after sampling the rich Devon mud, suggested a drier path for the wiser walkers.



Up again to Hole House, down to the mill, up to the Bickham Woods, then (at last) a coffee stop to trade stories and discuss fungi finds with Marion Nalder; the 'orange peel' beside the path wasn't litter but was *Aleuria Aurantia*, which looks just like discarded orange peel.

So, on down (mostly) towards the sea where a welcome awaited us at Branscombe Brewery. If you were on the walk, you know where it is; if not you should be aware that the brewery removed all their exterior signs since other thirsty walkers took them too often as an invitation to visit – an invitation saved for the OVA!

**Jed Falby**

## **River and Coastal, 2 November**

It was a dark and stormy night before the walk and the 11 of us who set off from White Bridge on that grey and damp morning had walked no more than 20 yards before we met another walker who said: 'no use going down there, the path's flooded', as he pointed to our intended route along the west side of the River Otter. The order was given to about turn and plan B was put into operation.

We set off along the old disused road to Otterton on the east side of the river and when we reached the culvert from East Budleigh and saw the extent of the flooding we were pleased to have had the early warning. We rejoined our intended route near Clamour Bridge and proceeded along Colliver Lane. There we met the fallen holly tree – another result of the stormy night. Considerable agility was demonstrated in climbing over the tree and we turned right at Colliver Cross to head towards the coast. Fortunately, the storm had not caused the large puddles along the path to turn into large lakes as I had feared.

We stopped at the derelict lookout building for refreshment before continuing along the coast path past Otter Head to White Bridge. Unfortunately, we did not get the wonderful views of Budleigh Salterton that one has on a good day, but in spite of the grey skies and strong wind there was very little rain. We kept up a good steady pace, and as the change in route had slightly shortened the walk we were back at White Bridge just before midday.

**David Huggett**

## **Across Three Commons, 16 November**

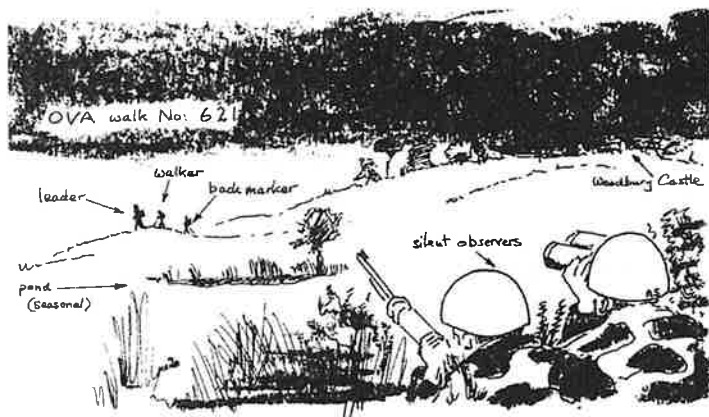
Eighteen people enjoyed a five-and-a-half-mile inland walk through Knowle Hill Plantations to Squabmoor Reservoir, along ancient ways across East Budleigh and Shortwood Commons, then back along the disused railway line. There were lots of new faces, so it was suggested that everyone introduce themselves at the start of the walk, a practice which other walks might like to copy. Throughout the walk the autumn colours were at their best and we spotted some interesting fungi (but

where was Marion?). It was good to welcome some new members and we hope that they enjoy many more sunny walks in the future.

**Mike and Hazel Harland**

### **Circular Walk Around Woodbury**

I arrived at the Otter Inn in pouring rain with that deep sense of commitment and duty that the honour of being an OVA Walk Leader demands. I admit to half hoping that no-one else would be stoical enough to turn up. But along came Robert and Margaret Sellin, keenly anticipating the prospect of ploughing through the mud. In their excellent company I really enjoyed the walk that took us on to Woodbury Common, nearly to the Castle, and then in roughly an oval circuit back to Colaton Raleigh.



We returned wet but exhilarated and wondered whether any previous official OVA walk had gone ahead with as few as three people.

**Peter Hills**

## **Black Hill Quarry and Hayes Wood, 3 December**

A dozen walkers set out from Crook Plantation above Yettington for a six-mile walk across the Commons, skirting Woodbury Castle and Black Hill Quarry, returning via Hayes Wood.

The weather was bright to start with, but we had our share of the showers which were forecast. Human interest along the way was provided by well-camouflaged soldiers crouching in the undergrowth, and a party of strangely dressed individuals who said they were preparing to participate in a role-playing game, re-enacting what appeared from their clothes to be an Arthurian legend or something similar. 'There's nowt so queer as folk!'

**Stuart Lovett**

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### **From the Editor**

Here it is, the first (long-promised) Newsletter prepared on my laptop computer through e-mails (in part); Nick Speare's patient help has been invaluable, and mistakes and inadequacies are entirely due to my inexperience (despite attending classes).

In case you think 1 North Street, Topsham has become a high-tech headquarters, you might like to know that the laptop sits on an eighteenth-century oak refectory table (c.1721) while I sit on a nineteenth-century spindle-back dining chair, well padded with cushions to support my back. From time to time, the visiting cat appears and sits on the table where the computer blows out warm air; or she makes herself comfortable on the papers on which I am working. It's handy to have a scapecat...

PQ

## WANTED

The OVA needs volunteers for the following positions which will shortly become vacant:

Hon. Treasurer  
Hon. Secretary  
Parish rep for Budleigh Salterton (one of two)  
Parish rep for Otterton  
Social secretary  
Talks secretary

If you are prepared to take on a little responsibility in exchange for a great deal of interest and satisfaction, please contact either of us without obligation for more information. Alternatively, if you know of someone who might be able to help, please let us know. Thank you.

Brian Turnbull  
Chairman  
Tel: 567339  
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Nick Speare  
Vice-chairman  
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## **OVA COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **Built Environment**

Chairman

Vacant

Secretary

Helen Tickle

Tony Colmer, David Hart, Roy Henderson  
Alan Ross, John Saul, Martin Smith

### **Natural Environment**

Chairman

Robert Sellin

Secretary

Alan Huddart

Mo Bowman, Alan Bruford, Norman  
Crossland, Ruth Falby, Philip Greenhow,  
Jean Harmsworth Andy Mack, Tom Pyne

### **Footpaths**

Chairman

Alan Jones

Secretary

Robin Holt

Colin Campbell, Brian Leveridge, Stuart  
Lovett, Tony Pollard, Briony Sharp, Ken  
Watson

### **Programme and Publicity**

Chairman

Nick Speare

Secretary

Rowan Turnbull

Mo Bowman, Nicki Daniel, Diane Gee  
Alice Huddart, Belinda Mountain, Pat  
Quaife, Margaret Sellin, Gill Speare



## STOP PRESS

Future contributions to the Newsletter can be sent to the Editor at: the e-mail address: [pat@patfrancis.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:pat@patfrancis.wanadoo.co.uk) , preferably in the form of a Word attachment. (But she can still cope with typed or hand-written pieces sent by post.) The deadline for the next (April 2006) issue is 10 March 2006.

### **Change of venue for 2006 OVA AGM**

Please note that the venue for the AGM on 11 May 2006 is now the **Masonic Hall in Budleigh Salterton**, the Peter Hall having been double-booked on that date. There will be a further reminder in the April Newsletter.

### **Fairlynch Workshops**

OVA members and others are invited to participate in adult education workshops at Fairlynch Museum. The first, highly successful programme of four sessions, focused on costume from the eighteenth century to the 1920s and enabled participants to view items from the collection at close quarters and also to learn about their historical context. Group size is deliberately kept at nine or ten to foster informality and involvement.

Plans are well in hand for a diverse February programme which will include focus on the development of Devon's seaside resorts, the local railways and fishing communities. Monday sessions from 4.30 to 5.45 p.m. cost £5 per person, with all proceeds going to Fairlynch. Booking forms will be available after Christmas in Budleigh Salterton Library.

\* \* \* \* \*

18 FEBRUARY, SATURDAY, 10 a.m. PEAK HILL CAR PARK, G.R.109872. MODERATE, 4 MILES, 2 HOURS. MUTTERS MOOR, BULVERTON HILL. CAN BE MUDDY. Walk leader: PATRICIA DORAN, 01395-445954.

21 FEBRUARY, TUESDAY, 7.30 p.m. PUBLIC HALL, BUDLEIGH SALTERTON. TALK BY CLARE JAMES ON 'CLINTON DEVON ESTATES, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE'

7 MARCH, TUESDAY, 7.30 p.m. EAST BUDLEIGH VILLAGE HALL. TALK BY DONALD CAMPBELL ON 'THE UNDERCLIFFS NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE, AXMINSTER TO LYME'

11 MARCH, SATURDAY, 10 a.m., HAYES LANE CAR PARK, EAST BUDLEIGH, G.R.065849. MODERATE. LOCAL COMMONS AND WOODLAND. 4+ MILES, 2+ HOURS. SOME HILLS, CAN BE MUDDY. Walk leader: KEN WATSON, 01395-445859.

1 APRIL, SATURDAY, 10 a.m. BOWD INN REAR CAR PARK, G.R.107900. ENERGETIC, 3 HOURS, OLD RAILWAY LINE, EAST DEVON WAY, TIPTON ST JOHN. Walk leader: JED FALBY, 01395-445455.

12 APRIL, WEDNESDAY, 10 a.m. SQUABMOOR RESERVOIR, G.R.038843. MODERATE, 5 MILES, 2+ HOURS. COMMONS, WOODLAND, VIEWS. CAN BE MUDDY. Walk leader: BRIAN LEVERIDGE, 443358.

**Cover illustration by Megs Rimmer.  
Other illustrations by Jed Falby (page 17)  
and Robert Sellin (page 19)**

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICE-HOLDERS

<b>Chairman</b>	Brian Turnbull	567339
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Nick Speare	443944
	& Chairman of Programme & Publicity Committee	
<b>Hon.Secretary</b>	Christopher Briscoe	444381
<b>Hon.Treasurer</b>	Brian Ludlow	568501

### *Representing the Parish of*

Budleigh Salterton	Clive Bowman	446892
	Alan Huddart	446761
East Budleigh	Norman Crossland	445129
Colaton Raleigh	Alan Jones	568339
Newton Poppleford	Haylor Lass	568786
Otterton	Philip Greenhow	567996

### **Committee Chairmen**

Built Environment	(vacant)	
Footpaths	Alan Jones	568339
Natural Environment	Robert Sellin	443283
History	Alan Ford	01404-812375
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Barrie Papworth	568176
<b>Publicity Secretary</b>	Maureen Bowman	446892
<b>Social Secretary</b>	Rowan Turnbull	567339
<b>Talks Secretary</b>	Belinda Mountain	446042
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Patricia Quaife, 1 North Street, Topsham, Exeter EX3 0AP.	01392-873251
<b>Newsletter Distributor</b>	Gill Speare	443944

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. It is also affiliated to the CPRE. It cares for the environment, and queries should be put to your Parish Representative.

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