

# OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity No. 278266

[www.ova.org.uk](http://www.ova.org.uk)



BULVERTON HILL  
4 JAN 2006

**VOLUME 27/2**

**APRIL 2006**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### WALKS, TALKS AND EVENTS

#### APRIL TO JULY



April 12th - Wednesday - 10.00a.m.  
Squabmoor Reservoir - GR 038843 - Moderate.  
5 Miles. - 2+ Hours. Commons Woodland Views.  
Can be Muddy. *Walk Leader.* Brian Leveridge 443358



April 25th – Tuesday 7.30p.m. – Otterton Village Hall  
“Bats Ecology and Conservation”  
*Speaker.* Mr David Appleton – English Nature



April 29<sup>th</sup> – Saturday - 10.00a.m.  
Newton Poppleford Car Park - GR 086897 – Energetic  
7 Miles. - All Day. Share cars to Ship Inn, Morcombelake..  
Coastal walk via Golden Cap to West Bay. Return to Morcombelake  
by bus or continue in bus to Newton Poppleford. Pub Lunch at  
Seatown or Eype. *Walk Leader.* Peter Hills 568576



**Annual General Meeting**  
**May 11<sup>th</sup> - Thursday 7.30p.m.**  
**Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton.**



May 13<sup>th</sup> – Saturday -10a.m.  
Broadhembury Village Square – GR 102047 - Moderate  
6 Miles – 2 ½ hours. One climb up, one down. Past gliding school.  
Fine Views – Can be Muddy. *Walk Leader.* Patricia Doran 445954



May 19<sup>th</sup> – Friday – 1.30p.m. **See Insert**  
Visit to Cadhay – Ottery St. Mary - £6.00  
*Organiser.* Diane Gee 444388



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

You won't find it mentioned in the Guinness Book, but there were record attendances at two recent OVA events. 130 people enjoyed the Christmas party at Bickton College in December, and 168 people heard an excellent talk given by Clare James of Clinton Devon Estates in February.

A good turnout is one measure of success, but quality is more important than quantity. I would like to thank all those who help to organise our walks, talks and events for the high standard they have achieved.

Our committees have been busy in many other ways as you can read on subsequent pages. In addition, a new OVA leaflet, "Guide to the Common Flowers of the Lower Otter Valley", is being published in time for Easter. We are grateful to the Community Project Fund of the East Devon AONB for funding 50% of the cost. The fourth re-print of our best-selling book "Twelve Walks in the Otter Valley" will go on sale at the same time. All the walks have been checked, and the text updated where necessary.

What do you, the members, think of the OVA? How could it be improved? Come and tell us at the Annual General Meeting on Thursday, 11 May at 7.30 pm in the Masonic Hall (not the Peter Hall), Budleigh Salterton. You will find the agenda on page 4 of this Newsletter together with details of how to nominate candidates for the Executive Committee. After the meeting, there will be light refreshments followed by an Otter Valley slideshow by Haylor Lass which is guaranteed to be entertaining.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to two OVA giants who have decided to take a well-earned rest. John Saul has served on the Built Environment Committee since 1990, first as Secretary and then as Chairman. He was Chairman of the OVA from 1996 to 1999, and more recently came back for a year as Secretary. Brian Hawkes was Publicity Secretary from 1994 to

1998. He was then Membership Secretary until 2005. He somehow managed to combine this with four years as Newsletter Editor, and was instrumental, with Jed Falby, in launching the OVA website. In different ways, both have made an immense contribution to the OVA. We are very grateful.

**Brian Turnbull**

\*\*\*\*\*



## **OVA SOCIAL REPORT SPRING 2006**

Included in this Newsletter are booking forms for two further outings this summer. If you wish to apply for tickets, please remember to add your telephone number and a stamped addressed envelope with your cheque and form.

A visit to Cadhay is being organised by Diane Gee (details are on the booking form) and is for the afternoon of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May. It is a lovely C16 and C17 house (with guided tour) and has magnificent gardens. Disabled access is limited. There is a tea room and you can park in a field in front of the house. There are only 40 tickets so if they get booked up quickly we have the option of a further visit on 26<sup>th</sup> May.

The Riverford farm visit is an all-day outing by coach from Budleigh Salterton on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July and is being organised by Alice Huddart (details on the booking form). It will include a morning visit to Otters and Butterflies at Buckfastleigh and Riverford organic farm in the afternoon, with the opportunity to buy lunch. Both visits will include a tour, and will be very interesting.

The visits to Sand sold out, and so too did the evening visit to the Norman Lockyer observatory. Our thanks go to Gill Speare and Belinda Mountain for organising those events. We are glad of such support, and regret that we can't always satisfy demand for tickets. The Christmas Party, for example,

was so oversubscribed (despite using the much bigger venue at Bicton College) that we squashed in 130 people. It was a great success and we will repeat it next December, with strictly only 120 tickets and a few other improvements.

Because of the growing popularity of OVA events, we have decided to limit them to OVA members in future. If you want to bring a friend who is not a member, you will have to persuade them to join the OVA first. It only costs £3 p.a.!

**Rowan Turnbull**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER 2006/07**

Members are reminded that their subscription for 2006/07 is due on **1<sup>st</sup> April 2006**. This is still £3 for individuals and £5 for households.

Payment may be made by cheque to the Hon. Treasurer at:

Luttrell House, Harpford, Sidmouth EX10 0NJ

A better way, which is used by over 80% of OVA members, is to pay by Banker's Order. This ensures that your subscription is paid regularly, and that you receive your Newsletter and programme card promptly. It also saves time for our hard-pressed volunteers! A Banker's Order may be obtained from the Hon. Treasurer (Tel: 01395 568501).

In case of any subscription queries by existing members, it would be helpful if you would quote your membership number where possible. This is shown on your programme card. Thank you.

# **OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION**

## **Annual General Meeting**

Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006 at 7.30 p.m.  
in the Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of AGM held on 12th May 2005  
(circulated in July 2005 Newsletter)
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Hon. Treasurer's Report
6. Adoption of Report and Accounts
7. Election of Officers
8. Election of Executive Committee
9. Appointment of Independent Examiner
10. Any other business
11. Date of next meeting

Refreshments

Slideshow "How well do you know the Otter Valley?" by Haylor Lass

### **Election procedures**

Officers and other members of the Executive Committee are elected annually at the AGM. Nominations should be made in writing to the Hon. Secretary (2 Clyst Hayes Court, Budleigh Salterton EX9 6AR) at least 14 days before the AGM. They must be supported by a seconder, and have the written consent of the nominee.



## WALKING THE OTTER

In the OVA Newsletter of October 2005 the Editor recommended: *Walking Devon's Rivers; The River Otter*, by Richard Easterbrook and Geoff Broadhurst. Easy to read, the book cried out for the walk to be attempted. I cast around for some companions and in mid December started the first leg.

We drove to Upottery, caught the bus to Churchinford and set out across fields where we had our first delightful encounter with the Otter, stepping over as it bickered down the valley. The river rises about half a mile upstream, on private land which I previously visited with the OVA several years ago. We wandered on through Otterford to Otterhead Lakes, now a nature reserve.

From the lower lake our route became a quiet rural lane. A cattle grid marked the Somerset/Devon boundary. This area is beautiful with wide views down the valley, tiny pockets of habitation and no visible busy roads. Meeting the river again where it was wider and more confident, we followed its banks before turning off to Upottery, some seven miles from the start.

A month later we tackled the next section. We parked in Old Elm Road, Honiton, and flagged down the bus in Hayne Lane travelling to Upottery. The original group of eight had become ten, some of us OVA walkers, some assorted extras.

In December the fields were crisp and frosty but in January the mud felt claggy and walking the field paths was quite hard work. At Upottery Bridge a welcoming bench greets those who have time to linger, but nine miles lay ahead for us. In Rawridge a charming footbridge led to Otterfalls, a well-kept leisure facility with fishing lakes, its smart chalets blending discreetly into the landscape.

Later we paused to admire Mohun's Ottery, a handsome house whose present building dates from the mid-nineteenth century but has the remains

of a sixteenth century gatehouse. For those who enjoy light historical fiction Patricia Beer's novel, "*Moon's Ottery*" paints a picture of this area in the year of the Spanish Armada.

Up the steep lane to the hamlet of Beacon with its attractive cottages, although one coloured strawberry pink met with censure, we continued to Dumpton Hill. The view from the top is panoramic, but we scrambled down to eat lunch out of the wind and gazed across the valley at Honiton, trying to identify its landmarks.

Through the tiny hamlet of Wick with its sign 'FREE RANGE CHILDREN', the metalled road became a roughly surfaced lane and we crossed the Luppit Stream gurgling its way to join the Otter. A wholesale nursery at Mill Cross had a fantastic display of colourful house plants. We popped into the Church of St Nicholas in Combe Raleigh, impressed by its ancient door and lovingly kept interior. The organ, long since electrified, still had its old hand pump and in the choir were some splendid kneelers.

We met the Otter again, now a brimming river, and came at last to Weston, passing its Otter Inn, and so over the Trafalgar Bridge; journey's end this time but starting point for the next. These two walks have been wonderful, although including some unexpectedly challenging uphill sections. This is an excellent guide book with instructions which proved helpful and easy to follow.

**Bettina Wilson.**

\*\*\*\*\*





## MORE ABOUT TREES

Although the sun was shining there was a bitter wind blowing as we arrived at Escot to join Kate Tobin – East Devon District Council’s resident dryad – and a small group of others to learn more of the trees at Escot from Simon Major the aborculturalist and tree surgeon responsible for their care. Escot has a wealth of trees both in quantity and species and some of the work being done to manage these is very interesting.

Simon is, however, a bit of a revolutionary. Have you ever seen anyone ripping limbs from a tree and just allowing them to lie where they fall? This is just one of the more radical treatments that Simon is pioneering at Escot. It is a process that attempts to imitate what happens to a tree naturally as it ages and, while it is not the neat clinical cut normally performed by a tree surgeon, it is less dangerous for the tree. The tree’s natural healing processes are triggered by the tear and, moreover, the wound and the debris provide a great habitat for wildlife.

Simon also shed some light on the often misunderstood and exaggerated danger of boughs which are frequently removed because they overhang.

We fear they may fall and injure someone or something. He demonstrated with a block and tackle and two able volunteers just how strong a relatively thin branch can be. If a branch is rooted deep in the heart of the tree then the danger of it falling is lessened but branches thrown out later in the trees growth are anchored more shallowly. The problem occurs when inexperienced tree surgeons or less scrupulous ones are called to give advice. They will inevitably recommend removal either because they are



unsure of the risk or want the money. Either way they may be damaging a healthy tree unnecessarily.

We also learnt about some of the fungi that can live on trees. We learnt that some of these are symbiotic and that heart rot (of the right sort) can be beneficial to a tree. An engineer will tell you that a tube is a stronger structure than a pillar; more able to withstand lateral pressure (wind) so when a fungus eats the heartwood of a tree it can be strengthening the tree not harming it. Again knowing which fungus is beneficial and which not is the province of the specialist.

Finally, wiser but with numb noses and toeses, we retired to the café for a well earned cup of tea and a kit-kat.

**Nick Speare**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **WANTED**

Thank you very much to all those who volunteered for the vacancies advertised in the January Newsletter including Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, parish rep for Budleigh, parish rep for Otterton, social secretary and talks secretary. It is encouraging when people step forward to fill vacancies, and we are very grateful.

We are still looking for:

A second parish rep for Budleigh Salterton

An assistant parish rep for Newton Poppleford.

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

Email: [bpt@bigfoot.com](mailto:bpt@bigfoot.com)

Nick Speare

Vice-chairman

Tel: 443944

Email: [nspeare@btconnect.com](mailto:nspeare@btconnect.com)





**COMING SOON**

## **OTTER VALLEY FLOWER LEAFLET**

A new leaflet will soon be available from the OVA about the flowers found along the River Otter.

It is largely the creation of Prof. Robert Sellin, Chairman of the OVA Natural Environment Committee. Over the past two years Robert has been photographing wild flowers along the Otter and now he has designed the leaflet using about 50 of his photographs.

It is meant to be an aid to the identification of the flowering plants commonly met along the riverside footpath and as a companion to the OVA wildlife leaflet "Lower Otter Riverside Walk - an introduction to its wildlife".

Identification is based on the photographs together with a text panel indicating the likely months of flowering and the favoured habitat.



The cost of producing the leaflet has been supported by a grant from East Devon District Council. The leaflet, which is free, will be ready in early April and will be available from Budleigh Salterton library, the Tourist Information Centre, Fairlynch Museum and from OVA representatives.

**Alan Huddart**  
**Secretary Natural Environment Committee**

## OVA WALKS LEADERS – HALL OF FAME

While updating my list of OVA Walks the other day to include the walks for 2005, I thought it would be interesting to compile a list of the OVA's most illustrious walks leaders. Without the efforts of all the walks leaders a very important part of the OVA's activities would be non-existent - so thank you very much to all walks leaders whether you have led just one walk or are included in the Hall of Fame below.

A word of caution about the figures - in the early days of the OVA some of the announcements of walks and the reporting of the walks in the newsletter did not include the names of the walks leaders. So some of the early walks leaders will undoubtedly have led more walks than shown, I am afraid there is nothing I can do to resolve this.

The first list shows those leaders who have led ten or more walks for the OVA up to the end of 2005. The clear winner can be seen to be Frank Burke with 44 walks led between 1988 and 2001. It is good to see that of the twelve names on the list seven led walks in 2005 so we may well see a change in the order by the end of 2006.

1 <sup>st</sup>	Frank Burke	44
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Stan Herbert	31
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Dorothy Stammers	29
4 <sup>th</sup>	Jed Falby	25
5 <sup>th</sup>	David Jannaway	20
6 <sup>th</sup>	George Walker	19
7 <sup>th</sup>	Glyn Whittle	17
8 <sup>th</sup>	Ken Watson	14
9 <sup>th</sup> =	Pat Turner	13
	Stuart Lovett	13
	Patricia Doran	13
12 <sup>th</sup>	Brian Leveridge	12

An honourable mention must also be given to our current Chairman, Brian Turnbull, who needs to lead just one more walk to be included in the list above. Brian follows his father Phipps (OVA Chairman 1983-92) who also led some walks in the early days of the OVA.

Another way of looking at the figures is to look at the longevity of walks leaders based on the spread of dates over which they led walks, and here the winner is Dorothy Stammers who led the very first OVA walk on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 1979. Catching up fast with her record can be seen Stan Herbert who led his latest walk in October 2005. Listed below are those people who have led walks for greater than a ten year period.

1 <sup>st</sup>	Dorothy Stammers	15 years 8 months
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Stan Herbert	14 years 2 months
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Frank Burke	12 years 11 months
4 <sup>th</sup>	George Walker	11 years 8 months
5 <sup>th</sup>	Stuart Lovett	11 years 0 months
6 <sup>th</sup>	Glyn Whittle	10 years 6 months

Again some honourable mentions are due to people very close to being included in the above list. Firstly to join the list Brian Leveridge just needs to lead his walk scheduled for April 10<sup>th</sup> 2006, and secondly Jed Falby will be mentioned among the elite if he leads one more walk at some date after 7<sup>th</sup> August 2006.

**Robin Holt**  
**(OVA Archivist)**



## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Built Environment Committee has continued to meet monthly under a variety of interim chairmen pending the appointment of a regular one. The important work of reviewing planning applications, making site visits and commenting to the planning authority where necessary goes on as usual.

John Saul and Helen Tickle have stood down from the Committee for personal reasons, and we thank them warmly for their contributions. It is a pleasure to welcome two new members, Colin Nex and Marilyn Neal-Fisher.

Frequently, our comments make reference to the relevant local Design Statements for Budleigh Salterton and Otterton. It is heartening, therefore, to see that the Design Statements have been recognised and quoted in a number of recent planning decisions both by EDDC and by government planning inspectors.

Another encouraging development will be of particular interest to OVA members who surf the net. EDDC have put a comprehensive database of planning applications onto the world-wide web. It is possible to search for planning applications by parish or postcode, to see details of these applications including plans, and to monitor their progress through to final decision. It is even possible to obtain a list of previous applications for a given property. Just go to <http://planning.eastdevon.gov.uk/publicaccess/>.

Finally, the developer has appealed against EDDC's refusal of planning permission to build 12 flats at 5 Westfield Road. We have consistently opposed this development. In EDDC's view, which we share, "the proposal, by virtue of its footprint, and the areas proposed for access, parking and turning, would constitute over-development of this site, and would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area, which is within the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty". A Public Inquiry will be held at 10 am on Tuesday, 18 July in the Public Hall,

Budleigh Salterton to consider the appeal. OVA members are encouraged to attend and make their views known.

**Brian Turnbull**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **GALA WEEK – TREASURE TRAIL**



Do you know your way around Budleigh Salterton?  
Then you might like to try the Treasure Trail during Gala Week.

*There is a place of worship in Budleigh with a link to a novel by Charles Dickens. What is the title of the novel?*

*Near the entrance to the cricket ground there is a plaque to the 1<sup>st</sup> president of the OVA. Who was he/she?*

A full trail will be available during Gala Week – forms from the OVA tent on the opening Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May or by application to Alan Huddart – (01395) 446761 – price £1.

You could be the winner of the Treasure.







We will organise a second visit if required, but will need to fill up 19 May first.  
If you wish to join us, please:

- 1) Carefully complete the slip below and return it to me enclosing:
- 2) Cheque for £6 per head made payable to the Otter Valley Association
- 3) Stamped self-addressed envelope PLEASE

Diane Gee, 7 Belgrave Court, Northview Road, B. Salterton, EX9 6BA (Tel: 01395 444388)

✂-----

To Diane Gee

From:

7 Belgrave Court

NAME: .....

Northview Road

ADDRESS:.....

Budleigh Salterton

.....

EX9 6BA

.....  
TEL NO: .....

No of tickets required for 19th May ..... @ £6 = Cheque enclosed for £.....  
PLUS STAMPED SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE FOR RETURN OF TICKETS

IF 19th MAY IS OVERSUBSCRIBED, CAN YOU COME ON THE 26TH?? YES/NO  
(Delete as appropriate please)



2.00pm Farm tour lasting around two hours – partly walking, partly by farm trailer.

**NB. Stout footwear is essential for uneven and perhaps muddy ground.**

5.30pm approximate estimated time of return to Budleigh Salterton Public Hall.

(Coach Driver's gratuity is included in the price.)

If you would like to join us, please

- Complete the slip below.
- Enclose a cheque for £15.50 **per person** payable to the OVA.
- Enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.
- Send to : Alice Huddart 5 Little Knowle Court 32 Little Knowle B. Salterton EX9 6QS Tel. 01395 446761) [alice@huddart.me.uk](mailto:alice@huddart.me.uk)

✂

To

From

Alice Huddart

NAME

5 Little Knowle Court

ADDRESS

32 Little Knowle

Budleigh Salterton

EX9 6QS

(Tel. 01395 446761)

TEL NO

[alice@huddart.me.uk](mailto:alice@huddart.me.uk)

E-MAIL

Please send \_\_\_\_ tickets at £15.50 each for the coach trip on Thursday 6 July 10.00am.

I enclose a cheque for £\_\_\_\_\_ and a stamped self-addressed envelope.



## A Coach Visit to



### **Dartmoor Otters, Buckfast Butterflies and Riverford Organic Farm**

***Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006 10.00a.m. - £ 15.50***

10.00a.m. Coach departs from Public Hall, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton.

We travel by coach to Buckfastleigh Otter Sanctuary, arriving in time to see the otters being fed at 11.30am. The keeper introduces them and is pleased to answer questions.

Afterwards there will be plenty of time to visit the adjacent Butterfly Farm and enjoy a riverside walk along the Dart. You can also do a bit of trainspotting as the site is shared with the South Devon Steam Railway at Buckfastleigh Station.

Lunch is not included in the price but there is a large café for hot and cold snacks at the station or you can bring a picnic to eat in the picnic area by the river.

1.30p.m. Departure for Riverford Organic Farm. With over 800 acres it is one of the largest independent growers in England.



A Visit to

**CADHAY**

Ottery St Mary

***Friday 19 May 2006, 1.30p.m. for 1.45p.m. start - £6***

(plus Friday 26 May ONLY if above date oversubscribed)

The main part of the present house was built c.1550. The original timber-roofed Great Hall was retained, and in the early 17th century the Elizabethan long gallery was added.

The lovely courtyard and magnificent gardens, with their statues, herbaceous borders, hedges and mediaeval fishponds are on the level, but there are cobbled and grassed paths, so appropriate footwear is required. We will be able to wander around the gardens after the tour and take refreshments in the tea-rooms in our own time. Two groups of 20 will each be guided around the house by a steward, starting at 1.45pm to avoid "the public"!!

The car park is in a field off the drive opposite the front of the house.

**Please note that disabled access is limited.**







## AN ARTISTIC ALTERNATIVE TO COMPOSTING?

### **Fairlynch Workshop, 13 February: A Brief History & Current Craft of Paper-Making.**

I was tidying up some Chusan palm-leaves when Dawn Wood told me that they would be good for paper-making. She had a long-standing interest in paper that led her to study the craft of home paper-making herself.

Any good hobby may seem obsessional to others, and I guess that not many OVA members would be prepared to gather fibrous, grassy type leaves, boil them for some hours in an alkaline solution (i.e. with a little caustic soda or a great deal of wood ash), drain them and rinse the resulting stew and dry it out ready to commence.

Fortunately for the safety of the Museum exhibits, Dawn had prepared thus far at home. She had used the leaves of New Zealand flax, yellow water iris and red-hot pokers and brought along a dry tangle of chopped fibres. She explained how this could be pulped down with a wooden mallet on an oak board, refined to varying degrees, coloured, stretched out over muslin frames, dried in the sun and peeled away as either coarse or remarkably fine 'tweedy-looking' fibrous paper.

Those of us who attended the Workshop were amazed and charmed by the craftsmanship, colours and originality of the cards she had produced, culminating in Valentines for the following day, which were made from the lawn mowings of the previous week. Maybe there were still some mowings for the compost heap after all.

**Jenefer Slater**



## FOOTPATHS.

It is notoriously difficult to navigate through a forest. Strangely it can be even more difficult when the trees are felled: if you know the path you have lost all the landmarks. Path 23 from Joney's Cross towards Canterbury Green didn't exactly go through a forest, but now that the sparse clumps of trees near Joney's Cross have been felled, the path can only be found with difficulty. Strangers to the area would only find it if they had a map and a compass, and many casual walkers rely instead on waymarking. We plan to put in more waymarks to pick out the route.

Most people walking eastwards along this path will not want to continue to the end. This is on the A3052 at a point where the verge is smothered in painful gorse. Instead most people continue along an obvious track to the car park. The track is part of the East Devon Way. Now Fiona Barnes, the county footpaths officer, insists we must put a waymark post pointing from the East Devon Way to this final stretch of footpath 23. This makes sense, since walkers may otherwise have difficulty in finding this bit of the path, so we will have a waymark post put in. Walkers with a map should be able to find the path, and those without a map will probably do better to miss it.

We cannot spend parish footpath money on waymarking this bit of the East Devon Way because it is not a right of way although you are entitled to walk it because it is on a statutory common. This shows how pernicious financial rules can be. The East Devon Way in our area frequently passes along routes which are not rights of way, where either the public has a right to walk, as on our commons, or where there is an agreement with the landowner. Mostly the route is well waymarked. There is indeed a waymark for the Way where it touches footpath 23, but this is rather ambiguous and might be understood as pointing along the very part of footpath 23 which walkers on the EDW would do better to miss. This is probably why a walker who wrote to Fiona had lost their way and landed on footpath 23 instead of on the East Devon Way. Fiona has promised that she will try to persuade her colleagues responsible for the Way to improve the waymarking.

The vehicles doing the forestry work have also damaged the surface of the path so that now you have to pick your way over mud and puddles. Not too bad for serious walkers but off-putting for holidaymakers who expect easy walks. Bungy Williams, the commons warden, has promised me he will see what can be done about this after the waymarks for the path are in.

**Alan Jones**

\*\*\*\*\*



## **STONE CIRCLES WALK**

**Wednesday, 4 January 2006**

With Christmas and New Year over for another year, 16 brave walkers showed up for this 'energetic' walk.

Starting at the Peak Hill car park we took the muddy trail to 'Seven Stones'. These historic stones were moved long ago to Bicton Park so we studied their remaining holes for lack of anything more solid.

Then on down the long slope of Mutters Moor's eastern side to cross the Golf Course (Fore!) to Mutters Moor Lane – the old packhorse (C15/16th) route between Exeter and Sidmouth.

The very muddy Moor Park Lane led us on down to Higher Greenway Lane which was the 'improved' coach route of the C17/18<sup>th</sup> (four days to London!).



Leaving John Macadam's new and busy modern road (1816) well below, we re-entered the muddy world of Bulverton Hill where we were able personally to thank the Devon County Council workers re-building the staircase that gave this walk its 'energetic' category.

With such a fit crowd of OVA walkers we arrived back at Peak Hill half-an-hour early!

**Jed Falby.**

\*\*\*\*\*



## **BIRDWATCHING STROLL ON THE RIVER OTTER**

Wednesday, 25 January 2006

A sunny morning with a biting cold wind but everyone wrapped up well for this walk which has become an annual event. We did the coldest bit first, bracing ourselves for the walk along the Donkey Turn to scan the sea. We saw a female eider duck, quickly followed by a good sighting of a male goosander looking resplendent in his black and white plumage and scarlet bill, both birds reasonably close to the shore. Further out we could see scoter, just visible as black dots appearing and disappearing as they dived. As we turned to look at the river we saw a number of gulls. This year has seen an increased number visiting the estuary. It is thought that the reason

for this is the closure of one or two landfill sites. Another reason could be that earlier in the month a lot of starfish were washed up on the shore which would have provided a rich food supply. Before leaving Donkey Turn we had good views of wigeon and teal in the river mouth channel.

A reed bunting was spotted in the scrub as we made our way towards White Bridge. A glance at the cricket pitch revealed meadow pipit and pied wagtail. Stopping at the first platform I was particularly keen to find a Mediterranean gull that had been around for some time; when you are scanning hundreds of gulls that all look alike and trying to find one that is a little different can be tricky but I was so lucky because I put the scope straight on to the Mediterranean gull. This bird looks very similar to all the other blackheaded gulls, the variation being that there is no black on the wings.

It was much more comfortable further up the river where we were sheltered by hedges and a male bullfinch was spotted, a very handsome bird. I had partially blocked the footpath with my scope so invited a couple who had been held up to have the first look – they were delighted. The new scrapes made by Clinton Devon Estates, although only created last autumn, are proving a success and are attracting many wading birds. The wigeon are finding these areas particularly attractive and 200-300 can be seen at a time together with a good number of teal. Above White Bridge a small flock of curlew were feeding in the water meadows.

Turning back the flash of a kingfisher darted ahead of us and we were fortunate to see it again this time on the bank opposite amongst overhanging willow. Again the scope gave us a clear view and for some this was the highlight of the morning. We were pleased to have seen over 30 species.

**David Jannaway**



## **WALK FROM PEAK HILL**

Saturday, 18 February.

At the start of this walk we did what so many others including Royalty, Bronze Age man, the Romans and tourists have done over thousands of years, we 'took the view'.

The weather was very overcast and murky so we were unable to see out to the tors of Dartmoor. We stood where once several Bronze Age barrows had stood and what an impressive site they must have been, standing like mini pyramids up to fifteen feet in height and glistening white. Most of the flints that made up the barrows were removed over the past 200 years, much of it going towards road making. From our vantage point we could see disused quarries that have left scars on the landscape. We traced the winding line of Otterton Brook down through the meadows and could see the track of the old coastal road that followed along Ladram Lane through Otterton and Yettington and onto Exeter.

Seven Stones Lane was our next port of call and here it was interesting to note that the original course of the road to Pinn actually entered the lane (thus avoiding the swamp) and passed over a bridge (Otterton Brook) went up the hill and onto the route of the old Seven Stones Lane which is above Pinn Farm.

Once on Mutters Moor it was time for a coffee break which was taken at the end of Otterton plantation overlooking High Peak and the sea. This spot, set as it is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, takes some beating. We walked across the moor heading north to Keble's Seat and here reflected on how many of his hymns and poems may have been inspired by the view. We could not leave the moor without looking at the site of a Druidic stone circle, and garden centre, the stones being removed in the nineteenth century by the Rolle family for use in their garden at Bicton and the turf cutter selling the turves to the wealthy inhabitants of Sidmouth to carpet their gardens

After walking for 4.27 miles and two hours of spouting, my voice gave up and the rain that had been threatening all morning began.

**Patricia Doran**



## **RALEIGH COUNTRY WALK**

### **Saturday, 11 March**

After a fairly wet few days, we were lucky enough to enjoy a beautiful Saturday morning on the commons above East Budleigh. At least two new prospective members (application forms handed out) and one new walker made up the group of 25 who set out from Hayes Lane car park in East Budleigh. The original intention was to complete walk no.5 in the OVA Twelve Walks booklet which I consider to be one of the most scenic walks in our area. Unfortunately, after several days wet weather, Shortwood Lane was impassable due to excessive mud; therefore we deviated by taking the western slope of Hayeswood Lane, then across the track to Boarden Barn and thence almost into Yettington. Thereafter we took the main footpath due south to Hayes Barton where those new to the area could view Sir Walter Raleigh's birthplace in lovely sunny conditions. We continued our walk up the lane through Hayes Wood, and retraced a few hundred yards of Hayeswood Lane in the opposite direction before seeing some of the best views in the Otter Valley overlooking East Budleigh, Otterton and Lyme Bay. We finished with a gentle descent across the fields back past Vicar's Mead to the cars at which point some of the walkers were directed to the new statue of Sir Walter Raleigh at the top of the High Street recently unveiled by the Duke of Kent.

**Ken Watson**



**CLINTON DEVON ESTATES:  
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**  
Talk By Clare James, 21 February 2006

Clare James, assistant Land Agent at Clinton Devon Estates (CDE) addressed nearly 170 members and friends of the OVA at Budleigh Salterton Public Hall on 21 February. She started with a rollicking canter through the 700 year history of the Clinton Barony and the 500 years of the Devon Estates, which have descended through the Rolle family to the present Fane Trefusis barons. Of particular interest to the OVA of course, is the Hon Mark Trefusis, who changed his name to Rolle on inheriting the estate and subsequently built a very large number of the distinctive farms and cottages which have been documented in our own publication *Mark Rolle – his Architectural Legacy* by Alan Ford.

Clare then went on to describe the present policies of the family and Trustees. They are determined to hold the estate together for “the next 500 years” while maintaining the outstanding landscape, conservation of the flora and fauna, successful sustainable farming on their own land and the tenanted farms, rural employment and affordable housing. The Estate has already diversified and will continue to do so in the future. Their policy, very clearly presented in handouts to everyone present, includes responsible stewardship, providing for future generations, and developing strong, long-term local partnerships.

The Estate includes considerable parts of the World Heritage Coast, the major portion of the East Devon pebbled heaths with their unique flora and fauna, areas of Special Scientific Interest and Specially Protected Areas. CDE aims to manage and conserve all of these on a sustainable basis with ample public access. Conversely, they believe that good farm practice entails limiting access to their own farms in the Otter Valley and cited the Foot and Mouth crisis when it was vitally important that they were able to move stock, staff and machinery on the old railway track without risk of contamination. There is therefore very little hope that the railway track will ever be opened to walkers as many of the OVA had hoped. Elsewhere the



Estate has a generous policy of encouraging public access to all the commons and many areas of woodland and farmland.

Another matter dear to the OVA is the management of the Otter estuary, which CDE has recently taken back from Devon Wildlife Trust. It has admirable plans to enhance the various habitats and to improve public access. This spring a special bird hide will be built on the west bank, which will be accessible to people in wheelchairs. The "scrapes" made last winter on the lower estuary are already attracting numbers of rare birds.

Clare James fielded a large number of questions, some of which were referred on to her colleagues present, and was thanked for a most informative evening by Belinda Mountain JP, who is very appreciative of the provision now made for wheelchair users.

**Christopher Briscoe**

\*\*\*\*\*



## **THE RAIN FOREST**

Talk by Rod Lawrence 7 March 2006

Stepping into the breach at short notice in the absence of the advertised speaker, Rod Lawrence gave a provocative talk to an appreciative audience of about seventy people in East Budleigh Hall. Rod has spent most of his life studying forests in Britain and throughout the world. He specialises in understanding the way that plants and animals interact to provide an environment suitable for human survival.

His theme was the challenge of climate change, which is accelerating at an alarming rate and already having serious effects on fragile environments in Africa, South America and the polar regions. He warned that its

consequences would increasingly be seen much closer to home, and urged his listeners to respond to the challenge before it was too late.

He explained the vital role of the tropical rain forest as a store of carbon. When the forest is destroyed, this carbon is released into the atmosphere in the form of greenhouse gases which contribute to global warming. He brought the rain forest vividly to life with magnificent photographs of Daintree rain forest in North Queensland, one of the most prolific and complex natural communities on earth.

This World Heritage Site harbours spectacular and incredible animal and plant life. Among many memorable examples, he showed us a turkey which builds a 5 ton nest, a fig with 200 foot long roots, and birds which live exclusively on the nectar from trees of one species which in turn depend exclusively on those birds for pollination. And he deplored the destruction of the forest for short term gain.

Many listeners were surprised to learn that a world climate change centre is planned for Exmouth if lottery funding can be secured. This will have links to our own World Heritage Coast and to the Met Office in Exeter.

Rod's passion and commitment stimulated a stream of questions from the audience. Definitely one of our livelier evenings!

**Brian Turnbull**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **WHAT A LOAD OF RUBBISH**

40 plus members of the OVA along with Clinton Devon, the AONB team and EDDC spent the morning of Saturday March 25<sup>th</sup> up to their knees in mud on the annual Otter Estuary Litter Pick.

If you can measure success by the number of sacks filled we did pretty well. Full report and photos in the next edition. Thanks to everyone who turned out.



## ASPECTS OF DARTMOOR

On Jan 17<sup>th</sup> some 70 members of the OVA were privileged to hear Tom Coleman's wide-ranging talk on "Aspects of Dartmoor". By the end we felt we had visited all 368 square miles over a period from 300 million years ago to the present day. The talk and the excellent accompanying photographs combined well to really bring the subject to life.

We learnt how the moor was formed by granite being uplifted from the earth's core then being exposed by erosion of the overlying rocks. We also heard of the ways in which the early inhabitants of the moor made use of the granite, both in erecting dwellings and in the creation of the stone circles and rows used in their spiritual worship.

These small communities needed to travel and by their walking across the high ground, so that they could keep dry, the first tracks were formed. Where these tracks needed to cross streams the first bridges were constructed, evolving over the years and many of the clapper bridges can still be seen today. These paths were still used in the Middle Ages when the monks erected granite crosses as direction markers, and in time have become the roads we are using to the present day.

Having spoken to the OVA at an earlier meeting on the evolution of the Devon Farmhouses Tom only briefly recapped this subject before moving on to the occupations of those who have lived on Dartmoor.

Agriculture has always been to the forefront, but over time those farmers on the high moor were defeated by the conditions and moved down to more favourable areas. An attempt at a major expansion of farming in the early 1800's looked as if it would quickly fail due to lack of manpower until it was decided to use French prisoners of war. These workers needed to be housed and so large barracks were built at a new location, called Princetown, these barracks becoming Dartmoor prison in 1850 after the initial P.O.W.'s had been repatriated. .

Other industries have included the production of granite with many large buildings in London being constructed of Dartmoor stone. The railway tracks used to transport the granite down to waiting canal barges can still be seen behind Haytor rocks. Mining, mainly for tin, but also for lead and copper was carried on from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a few mines lasting beyond that. It was the wealth produced by tin which accounts for the disproportionately large churches to be found at such places as Widecombe in the Moor.

The waste from copper mining allowed a trade in arsenic production to be built up and there was also a flourishing gunpowder industry in Powder Mills near Two Bridges. The only industry still in major production is the china clay production in the southern part of Dartmoor, the china clay being produced as a by-product of the decomposition of granite.

Tom finished by looking at the way Dartmoor has always been used to provide water for the area, particularly for Plymouth. He talked about Drake's Leat, a 17-mile water course constructed in 1590 and then finally came more up-to-date by discussing the Burrator reservoir which was opened in 1898. All in all a fascinating evening.

**Robin Holt**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **OVA COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **Built Environment**

Chairman  
Secretary

Vacant  
Martin Smith  
Tony Colmer, David Hart, Roy  
Henderson, Colin Nex, Marilyn  
Neal-Fisher, Alan Ross,

### **Natural Environment**

Chairman  
Secretary

Robert Sellin  
Alan Huddart  
Mo Bowman, Alan Bruford, Norman  
Crossland, Ruth Falby, Philip  
Greenhow, Jean Harmsworth, Andy  
Mack, Peter Parkinson, Tom Pyne

### **Footpaths**

Chairman  
Secretary

Alan Jones  
Robin Holt  
Colin Campbell, Brian Leveridge,  
Stuart Lovett, Andy Mack, Tony  
Pollard, Briony Sharp, Ken Watson

### **Programme and Publicity**

Chairman  
Secretary

Nick Speare  
Rowan Turnbull  
Mo Bowman, Diane Gee, Alice  
Huddart, Belinda Mountain, Pat  
Quaife, Margaret Sellin, Gill Speare

**Cover Illustration by Jed Falby**



May 24<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday – 10.00a.m.

Hayes Lane car park, East Budleigh - GR 065849 – Moderate

5 Miles – 2 ½ Hours - The five mills of East Budleigh

*Walk Leader.* David Jannaway 567159



May 27<sup>th</sup> – June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Budleigh Salterton Gala Week

See Treasure Hunt Announcement on page 14



June 7<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday – 10.00a.m.

Steppes Cross, Axmouth – GR 265903 – Energetic

4 ½ Miles – 2 ½ Hours – Undercliff path, part of S. Devon Coast Path.

Steep in parts and scrubby

*Walk Leader.* Philip Greenhow 567996



June 17<sup>th</sup> – Saturday – 10.00a.m.

Joney's Cross car park. GR 058898 – Moderate

7 Miles – All day – Ponds on the Commons – Special Interest (dragon and damsel flies). Bring packed Lunch

*Walk Leader.* Robert Sellin 443283



June 28<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday – 10.00a.m.

Otterton Green – GR 081852 – Easy

1 ½ Miles – Upriver to 1<sup>st</sup> bridge over Otter – ends Otterton Mill

*Walk leaders.* Nicki & David Daniel 445960




July 6<sup>th</sup> – Thursday - 10.00a.m. **See Insert**

Visit to Dartmoor Otters, Buckfast Butterflies and Riverford Organic Farm - £15.50

*Organiser.* Alice Huddart 446761



July 12<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday – 10.00a.m. 

Littleham Church path – GR 054820 – Easy

3 Miles – 3 Hours - Artists Walk – stops for sketching & tuition.

*Walk Leader.* Jed Falby

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICE-HOLDERS

(01395 unless stated)

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

### *Representing the Parish of:*

Budleigh Salterton	Clive Bowman	446892
- ditto -	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
Programme & Publicity	Nick Speare	443944
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 Distributor</b>	Gill Speare	443944
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Patricia Quaife, 1 North Street, Topsham, Exeter EX3 0AP.	01392-873251 <a href="mailto:pat@patfrancis.wanadoo.co.uk">pat@patfrancis.wanadoo.co.uk</a>

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

C01