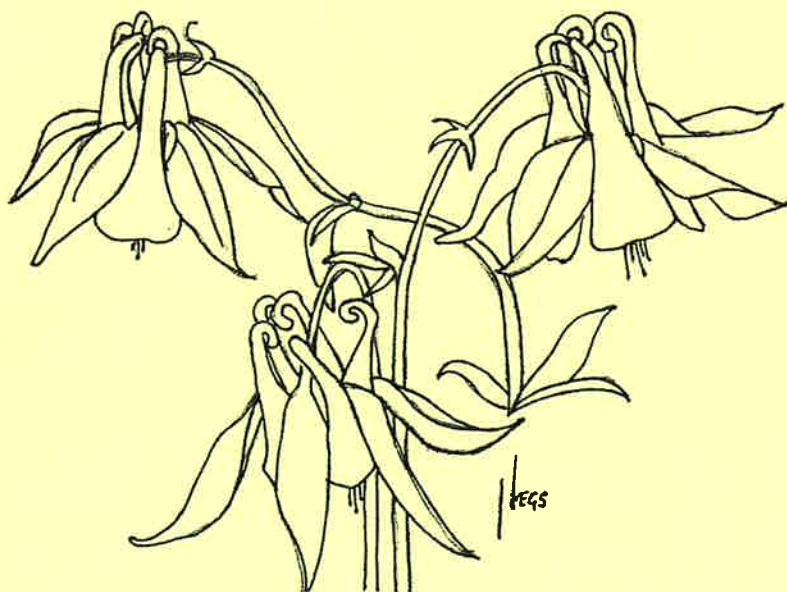


OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity No.278266

www.oval.org.uk



VOLUME 27/3

JULY 2006

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: OVA WALKS AND TALKS JULY TO EARLY OCTOBER 2006



8 July, Saturday afternoon, 2.30 p.m. Four Firs carpark, SY031864. Moderate, 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Heathland, woodland, views. *Walk leader:* John Daly, 279571.



12 July, Wednesday, 10 a.m. Littleham Church path, SY054820. Easy, 3 miles, 3 hours. Artists' walk; stops for sketching and/or tuition. *Walk leader:* Jed Falby, 445455



22 July, Saturday, 10 a.m. Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground, SY087900. Moderate, 4 miles, 2 hours. Riverside, Tipton St John, Venn Ottery, Southerton. *Walk leader:* Brian Turnbull, 567339.



26 July, Wednesday, 7.30 p.m. Salem Chapel, East Budleigh. Talk on 'The Work of the Historic Chapels Trust', by Dr Jennifer Freeman, Trust Director.
(See also notice on p.12.)



12 August, Saturday, 10 a.m. Crook Plantation (Stowford), SY057866. Moderate, 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Circular walk via Colaton Raleigh and Commons. Diverse terrain, may be muddy. *Walk leader:* Ken Watson, 445859.



19 August, Saturday, 10 a.m. Salcombe Hill Car Park, SY139881. Energetic, 5 miles, 3 hours. Coast Path to Weston, steep steps, return inland. *Walk leader:* Brian Leveridge, 443358.

(Continued on inside back cover)



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Programme Card included with this Newsletter gives details of our walks, talks and events for 2006/07. It is a varied and exciting programme, blending tried and trusted activities with some interesting new departures. For example, the first talk of the season on 26 July will be given in the newly restored Salem Chapel in East Budleigh. We shall also be experimenting with a couple of afternoon walks on 8 July and 21 October.

A lot of people have worked hard to put the year's programme together. Two people however deserve special thanks. Belinda Mountain has organised an unusually interesting programme of talks. And Patricia Doran has arranged no less than 29 walks - surely a record - to get you out and about.

If your Programme Card was not included with this Newsletter, this may be because your annual subscription for 2006/07 has not been received. It was due on 1 April. A cheque payable to the OVA sent to the Membership Secretary, Pheasant's Cry, Church Road, Colaton Raleigh, Sidmouth EX10 0LH will put matters right. Our subscription rates are unchanged - £3 for individuals, £5 for households. A bargain if ever there was one!

The Newsletter and Programme Card are not the only ways to find out about OVA activities. David Jannaway produces monthly posters which appear on noticeboards in all our parishes. And there is the OVA website www.ova.org.uk which is regularly updated to give the most recent programme information.

The OVA has had a website since 2002. Over the last few months, it has been comprehensively revised and upgraded, with spectacular new photographs. As well as describing the OVA and what it does, the website includes details of each of the parishes and the facilities they offer. Copies of our free leaflets can be downloaded directly from the site. It also includes illustrated descriptions of all OVA publications and details of how to obtain them. Last but not least, potential new members can download an application form and banker's order. If you haven't visited our website recently, take a look at www.oval.org.uk .

Finally, four members retired from the Executive Committee at the recent AGM – Christopher Briscoe, Brian Ludlow, Alan Huddart and Philip Greenhow. Philip had been on the Committee since 1990. Their contributions to the OVA have been invaluable, and we are very grateful to them all. We warmly welcome the new members of the Executive Committee: Belinda Mountain and Diane Gee (Budleigh Salterton reps), John and Wendy Winson (Otterton reps), Martin Smith (Hon Treasurer) and Geoff Aplin (Built Environment).

Brian Turnbull



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

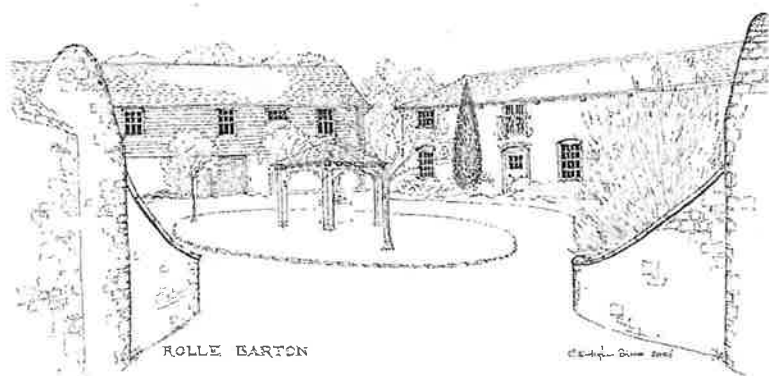
OVA Design Award 2006 Report of the first OVA Award Panel

The panel of three architects and two lay members of the Built Environment Committee met on 20 April to consider possible candidates for the first ever OVA Design Award. We were all disappointed at the small number of projects submitted for consideration. A number of those that had been nominated were either incomplete or not even started and therefore could not be considered this year under our terms of reference. Only one of the remaining submissions could be described as good contemporary design, which we would want to encourage wherever it respects the scale, texture, forms and materials of older neighbours. We visited possible candidate buildings in Newton Poppleford, Colaton Raleigh, Otterton, East Budleigh and Budleigh Salterton.

We spent some time discussing one project which we did feel to be an honest expression of its own period (just as the buildings we all love from the past were honest expressions of their own time), but still manages to sit comfortably with its neighbours and use sympathetic forms and materials. That is Marine Court on Marine Parade, Budleigh Salterton, which raised some controversy when it was proposed, but is now settled into its surroundings very happily. However, it could not be considered for the Award as it was built in the early Nineties.

Of the remaining eligible projects, one stood out as being head and shoulders above the others. That is Rolle Barton behind the church at Otterton. It was one of the Mark Rolle farm- yards,

which had become wholly redundant for agricultural purposes. A number of good stone buildings with brick dressings have been sympathetically converted to provide linked houses. Some other original buildings have been replaced on the original footprint with new construction, but this follows the general forms and uses the same materials as the old, without being a slavish copy. The panel was not able to determine quite where old stops and new starts, and on reflection we all agreed that in itself is a considerable virtue.



The new buildings incorporate raking parapets to echo the old ones, brick corbels to the gables (the classic Mark Rolle signature) and some splendid carved stone heraldic birds have been salvaged and incorporated on the roofs themselves and also at ground level. The fenestration respects the existing openings with neat, regular glazing bars.

One feature that we thought was quite outstanding about this scheme was the hard and soft landscaping. Natural stone walls invite you into the entrance and well-selected man-made setts form a very practical, but attractive roadway within the courtyard.

The planting has matured very well in the five years or so since completion and helps to tie the whole scheme into the rural surrounding on the very edge of Otterton and overlooking the river below. The garaging and parking are mostly tucked discreetly away in a separate courtyard.

There are many cases of traditional buildings becoming impossible to adapt to modern conditions, particularly in the once dominant agricultural sector. We are glad to make the first OVA Design Award a salute to a particularly successful and imaginative response to this problem, which constantly arises in our area as farms are reduced in number and farmers have to adopt modern plant, machinery and methods to survive. Should anyone question this, just compare the size of any modern tractor with that of the openings in any Mark Rolle building or the size of a modern dairy herd with his milking parlours. Never the twain shall meet!

Christopher Briscoe



From the Editor

I'm sure you don't want to read any more about my computer problems, so I shall desist. But I must thank Alan Huddart who successfully fixed the troublesome e-mail settings, and Nick Speare who, with his scanner, ensured that we can enjoy the visual content supplied by Jed Falby, Megs Rimmer and Christopher Briscoe. Not many walk reports were received for this issue, so I'm hoping for more for October. I really enjoy reading them and think members do too. My thanks to all July contributors for their interesting and varied pieces.

PQ



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Willow Spiling on the River Otter

The riverside footpath is now open again all the way from the White Bridge to Otterton Bridge. It had been closed for three months above Clamour Bridge (a footbridge) because the river, in one of its winter tantrums, had torn out some 20 metres of the right (west) bank, as well as a shorter length, and about half the footpath had been lost there. The repair has been made using an old-established 'green engineering' method known as Willow Spiling.

Freshly cut willow branches are held against the soil of the riverbank by an arrangement of wooden posts and wires, and the free-rooting nature of willow will normally result in root development into the bank wherever the live willow is in contact with the soil. This will penetrate and develop in the riverbank as the exposed willow branches shoot and come into leaf. This time of year is therefore ideal for carrying out this work. The recent repair on the Otter has the willow branches held vertically, but it is also possible to arrange them horizontally weaving them around the posts in a basketwork fashion.

If it is intended to establish the river bank in the position it occupied before the erosion took place, it is possible to construct the spiling on this line and fill the intervening space with soil. Once this new willow is established it will need to be kept cut to a reasonable height to prevent the increasing weight of the new growth destabilising the bank. The object is to encourage *root growth* rather than to plant a *willow hedge*.



WILLOW WORK ON
THE OTTERS
APRIL 2006

About 1.5 metres is a good height at which to keep the willow because it screens walkers, and their dogs, from the wild life on the river. Lower 'windows' can be cut at intervals to provide viewing points.

At other places along the riverbank you can see large rocks in the river at varying distances from the present bank line. These are remnants of earlier bank defences which have failed, because large rocks in the river result in intense turbulence in the water. This can wash out the soil from between and behind the rock 'armour' and progressively erode the bank. Hence the preference now is for the spiling method which protects and strengthens the bank by vigorous root growth. Only time will tell how well this will succeed, but an earlier use of willow spiling to repair the bank a short distance above Otterton weir has worked well so far.

Robert Sellin



Salmon in the River Otter?

Some years ago the OVA contributed to the construction of a fish pass on Otterton Weir. The purpose of the fish pass was to facilitate the passage upriver of migratory fish, such as salmon and sea-trout, so they could spawn at the top of the river.

Sea-trout have made good use of the fish pass, and numbers have been seen and caught upriver since. But there have been very few salmon in the river for a long time, although there used to be many. There even used to be a salmon trap in the mill leat below Otterton Mill – the remains are still there.

The River Otter Association (the fishermen) has now started a small scheme to see if salmon can be reintroduced. This involves

putting a box, filled with gravel of suitable size, beside the river near its source and feeding water into it from the river. Fertilised salmon ova are then (when they can be obtained) put into this box. Due to the favourable conditions in it, and the protection from predators (such as brown trout), the eggs hatch and survive in greater numbers than they would if laid direct into the river, and in due course they are released into it, to eventually migrate downstream and, it is hoped, to return later as fully matured fish, to spawn naturally.

Philip Greenhow



FOOTPATHS

Terrible weather for footpaths. First it rains for several weeks, then the sun shines and the undergrowth sets out to become climax vegetation. You look at a path one week and it's in order. A fortnight later and walkers are complaining the path is overgrown. All we footpath wallahs are doing our bit but it's difficult to keep up, especially as the contractors all have more work than they can manage.

In Newton Poppleford, Colin Campbell does not rely on contractors for strimming. He does his own. But he's thinking of giving it up. The problem is dog mess. When a strimmer hits it the result is deeply disgusting for the person holding the strimmer. If dog-walkers want footpaths kept open they should clean up after their dogs.

Dave Pratt in East Budleigh has now retired from looking after paths in the area (among his other jobs). He will be missed. He

Register has over 200 pages describing each of more than 200 trees in the village's open spaces. Colourful photographs illustrate several of the open spaces that provide tree habitats. Each tree is identified with both common and scientific names and their stories and characteristics are described. This impressive Tree Register was launched at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday 20th June at the village hall with a tree walk by botanist, Marion Nalder. The wildflower plot and the wild woodland area are marked by two plaques illustrating their biodiversity. These were unveiled in the churchyard at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 28th June.

Norman Crossland



STOP PRESS - An additional OVA talk:

'The Work of the Historic Chapels Trust'
an illustrated talk by Dr Jennifer Freeman, Director



Salem Chapel, East Budleigh
Wednesday 26th July 2006 at
7:30 pm

- ▶ See the newly restored chapel
- ▶ How does the HCT work?
- ▶ Learn about chapel restoration
- ▶ Interesting finds

Salem Chapel stands on the northern edge of East Budleigh where the village road meets the Budleigh Salterton to Newton Poppleford road.

***N.B. There is no parking at Salem Chapel. Please park in East Budleigh (Hayes Lane or village hall car parks).
Please share cars if possible.***

Alan Huddart

Gala Week – Budleigh Salterton Treasure Trail

The final answer to the quiz was **Thomas Trollope** who lived in Cliff Road and was the brother of novelist, Anthony Trollope. The winner of the book token for the first correct answer drawn was the Pester family of Budleigh Salterton.

Thanks to everyone who took part.

Alan Huddart

Gala Week – OVA Tree Quiz Answers and Winner

The answers to the 22 questions tackled by the participants are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) English oaks | 2) Horse chestnut |
| 3) Eucalyptus | 4) Dutch elm disease |
| 5) Rowan | 6) Yew, 2000 years old |
| 7) Hawthorn | 8) Blackthorn; sloe is the fruit |
| 9) Copper beech | 10) Poplars |
| 11) Black poplar | 12) Aylesbeare Common |
| 13) Willow | 14) The Upton Pyne Great Oak – |
| 15) Holly | approx. 800 years old |

Five sentences had to be completed as follows:

16) An acre of trees cleans up the carbon dioxide made by **two** average cars in a year.

17) An acre of trees produces enough oxygen for **18** people every day.

18) To clean up all the pollution our cars and houses produce in Britain we would need to plant trees on **150 per cent** of the whole country!

19) **Six per cent** of all Britain's mini-beasts need dead wood to survive, which adds up to about **1800** species.

20) The oldest living thing in Britain is a **yew tree** in Scotland which is around **5000 years old**, ie older than Stonehenge.

And finally, two brain-teasers:

21) The National Collection of Monkey Puzzle Trees is kept at **Bicton College**, along the main drive.

22) The alder, sometimes known as greenheart, was used underwater for **bridge-building**.

The quiz winner was Rosemary Whiting, with 16.5 points out of a possible 25, to win the £5 book-token prize. Runners-up were Will Crompton (16 points), Ben Murrell (15.5) and Margaret and Robert Sellin with 15. Many thanks to all who participated in this and those who entered the Town Quiz.

**Mo Bowman,
Publicity Secretary**

Walks, Talks and Events



Energetic East Devon Way Walk, 1 April 2006

After a week of wintry winds and dreary drizzle, this first Saturday in April beamed at us, with beautiful blue skies and brilliant sun. So 16 of us set out from the Bowd Inn, climbing, climbing (I told you this one was 'energetic'!) to the top of Fire Beacon Hill, where the views were breathtaking. The air was so clear that we could see Portland Bill out to sea (37 miles away) and Haytor on Dartmoor (24 miles away).

After a short coffee break, we wended our way downhill and through the woods to Harpford to return on the old railway track to the Bowd Inn, where the pile of muddy boots abandoned at the door showed what thirsty work an 'energetic' walk is.

Jed Falby

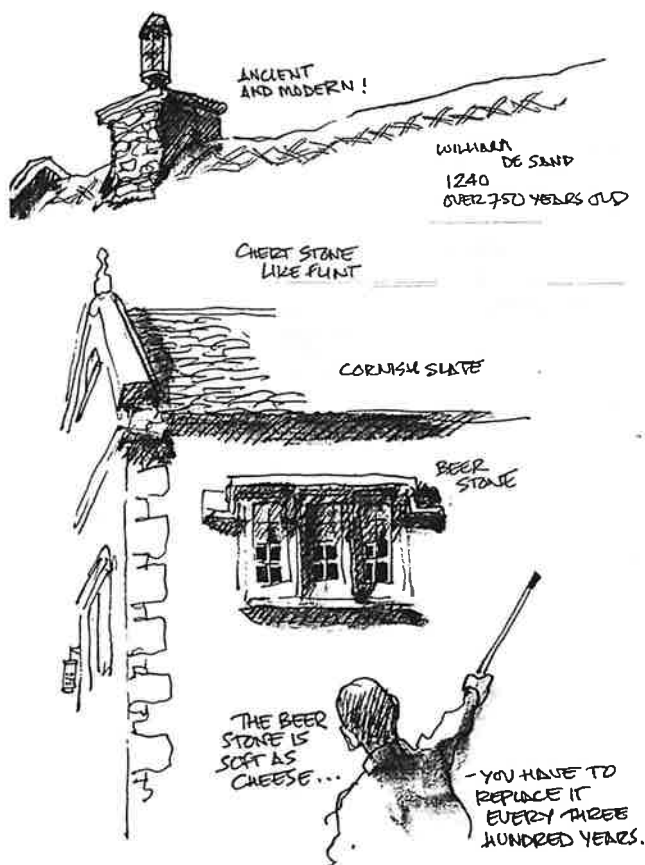


CORE WOODS
EAST DEVON WLY

HORSE-FRIENDLY GATE
OLA 15 APRIL 2006

Visit to Sand, 5 April 2006

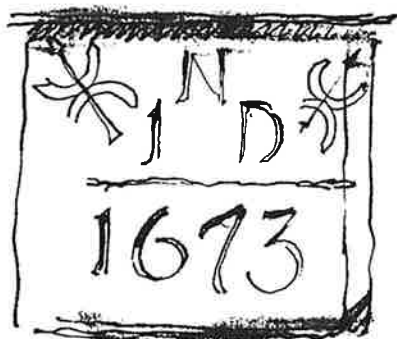
The 2006 visit to the historic house of Sand, near Sidbury, took place on 5 April. Last year, Francis Davey described the house and its history in an article which appeared in the April 2005 Newsletter. This year Jed Falby was one of the OVA visitors and has drawn some of the people and things he saw at Sand. Again the group was led by Stella and Stephen Huyshe-Shires and we are grateful to them for their hospitality to the OVA.



SAND
Wed 5 April 06

OUTSIDE THEATRE —

JULY 20THURS
630 PICNIC BYO CHAMP
'HAMLET'



HUYSHE-SHRES
(HEWISH)

- IT'S A SEVEN!



STEPHEN & STELLA



BATS – ECOLOGY AND PRESERVATION

Talk by David Appleton of English Nature, 25 April 2006

Ottertton village hall was the venue for a fascinating talk by bat expert David Appleton. David works during the day for English Nature and at night during the summer he researches into bats.

David told us that there are known to be nearly 1000 species of bats in the world; however, just 17 of these occur in Britain. They are remarkable animals; the only true flying mammals and like us they are warm-blooded, give birth and suckle their young. Although they are not blind, as some people believe, bats use echo location to find their way about.

David explained that they “shout” very loudly and then close their ears to avoid being deafened before listening for an echo from an insect or an obstruction. And that’s a lot of shouting because a tiny Common Pipistrelle (thumb sized) can consume up to 3000 insects and increase its weight from 4 to 8 grams in one evening. We heard a recording of bat noises and David convinced us that the squeaks, chirrups, clucks etc. came from five different species.

Most of our bat species are in decline because of intensive agricultural practices causing habitat loss, farm and garden pesticides and human disturbance. But here in Devon we have a large population of one of Britain’s biggest and rarest bats, the Greater Horseshoe, which has a wingspan of 35-40 cm. English Nature has run a six-year project in Devon to educate and work with farmers to manage the landscape to improve the food chain for bats. This has resulted in a 25% increase in the population of Greater Horseshoes.

GREATER HORSESHOE BAT



David explained that bats and their roost sites are fully protected by law, even if bats are not present all the time. If you have bats in your roof they must not be disturbed or their access impeded. If any problems are encountered with bats, or if any repair work to the roof is necessary, advice must be sought from English Nature about their conservation.

This legal protection for bats was of great interest to listeners and resulted in several questions, along with others about bat behaviour including their use of the Doppler effect. As well as English Nature (www.english-nature.org.uk) David also mentioned the Bat Conservation Trust (www.bats.org.uk) and the Devon Bat Group (www.dbg.me.uk) as sources of more information. At the end of a very interesting evening we all had the chance to examine a bat box and discuss how to site them to encourage bats to take up residence.

Alan Huddart

Broadhembury Walk, 13 May

Saturday 13 May was a huge improvement on last year for our Broadhembury walk. Last year the weather was so awful that we judged it would be not only unpleasant but dangerous. Ten and a half of us set out – the half being Alistair Papworth who energetically swished and cleared the nettles. For those who may not know Broadhembury, it is a delightful cob-and-thatch village with an historic church and a lovely pub – sadly now rather

expensive. We climbed up a fairly gentle hill and after crossing an old wood with bog mercury we braved a field full of cows who became rather inquisitive and bunched together, but I was assured that if Alistair waved his stick sufficiently energetically we would not be mown down.

From ancient woodland we passed along by the gliding club, but with no thermals there was no gliding. However the views are pretty nice. Down past a farm, across another field (no cows here) and along a delightful path bordered by bluebells and by a wood, again with lovely views. To descend into the village we had to walk down a tarmac road but not for long.

My thanks to those who supported the walk.

Patricia Doran

Visit to Cadhay, 19 & 26 May 2006

On a cold, wet afternoon, 38 members arrived at Cadhay for the first of our two visits. We were extremely grateful for the blazing wood-burning stove which greeted us in the tea-rooms! The 20 on the second date luckily had better weather, which enabled them to explore more fully and to linger in the gardens, before making their way back to the tea-rooms for drinks and delicious home-made cakes, and perhaps to purchase the very interesting booklet on Cadhay as a souvenir.

Our guides were knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and after detailing the history of the house and the families who had lived there and shaped its future, we had a brief look at some of the features of the East facade, the old fishponds, and the interesting courtyard with its chequered walls and statues of Tudor monarchs, before entering the house.

The first record of Cadhay appears in the reign of Edward I, as a sub-manor of the manor of Ottery St Mary, held by a "de Cadehay". The house was passed down through family until 1736 when it was sold and has changed hands several times since. There is a variety of architectural styles and characteristics due to alterations, decay and renovations at various times over the centuries.

There is an impressive avenue of trees leading up to the house, and lawns with a huge cedar and a tulip tree merge with the meadow beyond over the unseen ha-ha. There are climbers, beds of mixed shrubs and plants, a pretty well-stocked herbaceous border, and lily ponds bordered by azaleas, rhododendrons and perfect-leaved hostas (this is apparently achieved by feeding the ducks with grain in return for them eating the slugs and snails - so says the gardener!).

It is possible to hire the whole house for a special occasion or holiday, and also to "tie the knot" in the room that still has the amazing timber roof of the original Great Hall!

Diane Gee



30 August, Wednesday, 9.30 a.m. (NB) Newton Poppleford car park, SY086897. Energetic Dartmoor walk. Share cars to Two Bridges, Dartmoor. 7 miles, 5 hours. A mini 10 tors. Bring lunch.
Walk leader: Peter Hills, 568576



13 September, Wednesday, 10 a.m. Newton Poppleford car park, SY086897. Moderate, 7-mile, all-day walk. Share cars to Otter Head Estate, Otterford, Somerset. Fine views of Upper Otter Valley. Bring lunch.

Walk leader: Bettina Wilson, 578450.



30 September, Saturday, 10 a.m. Lay-by on old A30 west of Fairmile, SY084971. Moderate, 5.5 miles, 2.5 hours. Fairmile, Talewater, Escot Park. Woodland, parkland and waterside meadows.
Walk leader: David Jannaway, 567159.



11 October, Wednesday, 10 a.m. Newton Poppleford car park, SY086897. Moderate, 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Southerton, Venn Ottery, Tipton St John. Woods, green lanes, riverside. *Walk leader:* David Nangle, 01404-811752.



19 October, Thursday, 7.30 p.m. Talk on 'The Met Office' (speaker not yet known). Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton.



21 October, Saturday, 2.30pm. Crook Plantation, SY057866. Moderate afternoon walk, 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Woodbury Castle and Common, Hawkerland Cross. *Walk leader:* Brian Turnbull, 567339.

Further talks on 14 November and 16 January 2007,
further walks on 25 October, 7 and 18 November.

OVA Christmas Party: Mon. 18 December.

(Full details at www.ova.org.uk/diary.asp , in your programme card and October Newsletter)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICE-HOLDERS

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Vice-Chairman	Nick Speare	443944
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Hon. Treasurer	Martin Smith	442333

Representing the Parish of

Budleigh Salterton	Belinda Mountain	446042
	Diane Gee	444388
East Budleigh	Norman Crossland	445129
Colaton Raleigh	Alan Jones	568339
Newton Poppleford	Haylor Lass	568786
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Newsletter Distributor	Gill Speare	443944
Newsletter Editor	Patricia Quaife	01392-873251
	1 North St, Topsham, Exeter EX3 0AP	
	pat@patfrancis.wanadoo.co.uk	

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. Queries should be put to your Parish Representative.