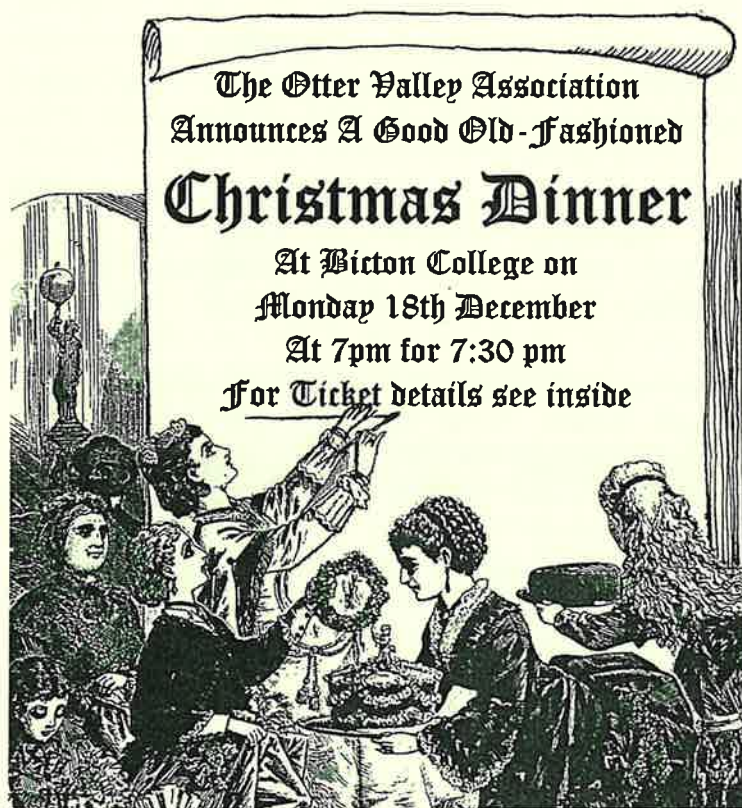


OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

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www.ova.org.uk



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: OVA WALKS, TALKS AND EVENTS, OCTOBER 2006 TO JANUARY '07

11 October, Wednesday, 10 a.m. WALK (moderate)

Newton Poppleford car par, SY086897. 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Southerton, Venn Ottery, Tipton St John. Woods, green lanes, riverside. *Walk leader:* David Nangle, tel. 01404-811752

19 October, Thursday, 7.30 p.m. TALK

'The MET Office' by Karen Dutton, at Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton.

21 October, Saturday, 2.30 p.m. WALK (moderate)

Crook Plantation, SY057866. 6 miles, 2.5 hours. Woodbury Castle and Common, Hawkerland Cross. *Walk leader:* Brian Turnbull, 01395-567339

25 October, Wednesday, 10 a.m. WALK (easy)

Car park behind Bowd Inn., SY108900. 2.5 hours. Harpford commons by old railway line. Colours of autumn. *Walk leader:* Jed Falby, 01395-445455

7 November, Tuesday, 10 am. WALK (easy)

Newton Poppleford Sports Ground car park, SY087900. 2.5 hours. Fungi and wax caps. *Walk leader:* Marion Nalder, 01395-442176

14 November, Tuesday, 7.30 p.m. TALK

'Devon Air Ambulance' by Mike Saffin of the Devon Air Ambulance Trust, at Colaton Raleigh Village Hall.

Cover drawing by Jed Falby

(continued on inside back cover)



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Our membership continues to grow at a healthy pace.

Over 150 people have joined the OVA since the last New Members' Party in April 2005. The new joiners (membership numbers 1556 upwards) should by now all have received invitations to the next New Members' Party which will be held on Tuesday, 17 October at Bickton College. I look forward to welcoming as many of them as possible on that occasion.

All OVA members, both new and old, are of course invited to our Christmas Party on Monday, 18 December. This will also be held at Bickton College, and you will find full details elsewhere in this Newsletter.

It is of course good to be recruiting new members, but it is also important to thank long-standing members for outstanding service to the OVA. Derrick Rowland was chairman of the Natural Environment Committee from 1989 to 1991 and Chairman of the OVA from 1992 to 1994. Since then, he has continued his active support for the Association, not least as "wholesale distributor" of the Newsletter; thank you, Derrick, for all you have done for the OVA. And now, over to the Editor

Brian Turnbull

A note from the Editor ...

This issue of the Newsletter seems to me to be a particularly interesting and varied one. An innovation,

which will be continued in future issues, is a profile of a prominent OVA member – in this case the Chairman himself, together with a photograph to make for easy identification by new members. I am grateful to Belinda Mountain and Mo Bowman for getting the series off the ground. Who will be next? Look out in the January 2007 Newsletter for more frank revelations.

We also have an increasing number of photos, thanks to new technology, to enhance the different articles. But even they are not substitutes for the delightful drawings done by OVA artist members, especially Jed Falby and more recently Megs Rimmer.

As for me, well, I feel more comfortable with the computer these days, but am still very thankful to have the help of Vice-chairman Nick Speare, who always knows what to do in an emergency.

Pat Quaife

PROFILE OF THE OVA CHAIRMAN

Brian started our interview by saying 'As you know I am very shy', but I managed to wheedle some personal details from him before we got on to the subject of how he sees his role as OVA Chairman.

He was born in Edinburgh, graduated from Clare College Cambridge and qualified as a chartered accountant. His parents moved to Budleigh Salterton in 1958 to Lindenwood, West Hill Lane, so he has been toing and froing ever since. He is married to Rowan. They now live in Colaton Raleigh where they moved in 1999 after he retired as a finance director, and they have three grown-

up children. His father Phipps Turnbull chaired the OVA from 1983-1992. There is a tree planted in his memory on the piece of grass outside the Cricket Club entrance, marked by an OVA plaque. However, the chairmanship is not hereditary. Brian was elected at the 2004 AGM after being proposed by the then chairman Alan Ford.

‘I feel my job is to encourage people to understand and appreciate the Lower Otter Valley. If they value it, they are more likely to want to protect and conserve it. Our members have many talents, abilities and enthusiasm which we try to harness so that the things that the OVA is already doing are done better. By listening to new ideas, I can also use my position to support and encourage new OVA activities.

Nothing could be done without the help, support and hard work of the committees, officers and volunteers. We hold an executive meeting on a monthly basis at which each of our committees, and the town and village representatives give reports.

There are many good things about the current OVA, where we have been able to build on the work of our predecessors. Thanks to the new Programme and Publicity Committee we have been getting record attendances at the social events and talks. The Newsletter and website have just been upgraded. You will see more photos in the newsletter and you can log on to our website www.ova.org.uk for news updates and to contact OVA representatives.

Relations with the East Devon AONB team, Clinton Devon Estates and the *Journal* are good. We have an

excellent walks programme that benefits from the hard work of the Footpaths Committee. I don't ever remember the footpaths being as well maintained as they are today. The Natural Environment Committee is very active, and has recently produced two colourful leaflets on the Riverside Walk and Wildflowers (available in the library, the Budleigh Salterton T.I.C., from your reps or from the website).



Photo: Mo Bowman

The Built Environment Committee is having considerable success with its comments on planning applications, and always tries to take a constructive view. This year we awarded the first ever OVA Design Award: it was given to Rolle Barton, a farm conversion located behind the church at Otterton. You can read about this in our last (July) Newsletter.

But there is more work to do! I am keen to get the History section going again. Is there anybody out there who might be interested? And I would like to see our

membership, currently 1100 (approximately 10% of the population of the Valley), climb to 1200 and beyond.

There are three things that I particularly appreciate about the OVA.

First: we have a very broad brief with lots of scope. In addition to walks, talks, publishing books - all the things we do now - we can also be creative, and come up with new ways of interesting and educating people in the area in which we live. It's quite a challenge.

Second: you meet such interesting people! There are experts on badgers and birds, architecture and planning, rights-of-way and rivers, books and publishing: there are film-makers, conservationists, ramblers, you name it! Many of them do good work for the OVA, organising programmes, helping on working parties, distributing the Newsletter, and recruiting new members.

And third: we have a three-year rule in our Constitution. This means that after three years in post, OVA officers must stand down. This brings in new blood, which is good for any organisation, and avoids the danger of becoming stale if one stays too long.

I have only one dislike – people who don't pay their subscriptions on time!

Finally, I think we should support conservation but recognise the need for sustainable development. We cannot prevent change, but we can influence it. After all, gentle pressure consistently applied can move mountains.' ('Even me', from Belinda)!

Interview by Belinda Mountain

OVA CHRISTMAS PARTY TIME AGAIN

The OVA Christmas Party will be held on **Monday 18th December** at Bickton College at 7pm. It is a most enjoyable evening in a lovely setting and there is ample parking.

The evening will start with a drinks party in the Main Entrance foyer and downstairs room. You will be able to meet everyone and get your tickets for the OVA bumper raffle.

We shall then go through to the old dining room for a three-course dinner (a melon gondola, a traditional turkey main course or vegetarian option and Christmas pudding or satsumas, then coffee). This will be accompanied by the quiz, the raffle draw and carols.

Our numbers are limited to 120, so strictly members only, please. If you want to bring friends and partners they must be members too! Tickets cost £15.50 each and will be available from 1st November from Rowan Turnbull via the slip in the centrefold.

RT

STOP PRESS: THEMED SPECIAL EVENT

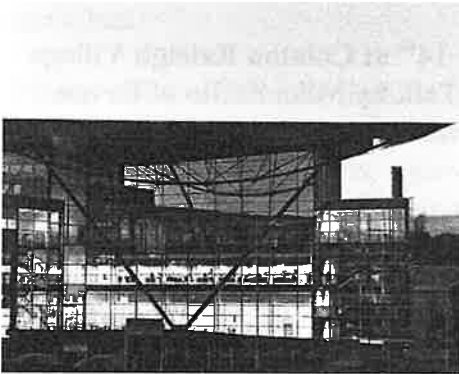
Exploring East Budleigh Church and its Surrounds:
a morning with David Jannaway (tel. 01395-567159)
on Wednesday 18 October. Meet at Hayes Lane Car
Park, East Budleigh at 10 a.m.

AUTUMN TALKS

'The Meteorological Office'

by Karen Dutton

**Thursday October 19th at 7:30pm
at the Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton**



The Met. Office was founded in 1854 as a small department of the Board of Trade to provide information on the weather and marine currents to the marine community. It is now based in Exeter and employs more than 1000 people.

Karen will tell us about its history, products and services, customers, international role, research and work on climate change and about the relocation to Exeter.

What can do all this?

- Reach 50% of Devon within 5 minutes and the remainder within 15 minutes
- Fly over congested roads and traffic jams



- Increase chances of a patient's recovery by faster transfer to hospital (The Golden Hour)
- Has twin engines for safety and can land almost anywhere
- Can care for patients in flight with full range of high tech medical equipment

Answer (no prizes) – **Devon Air Ambulance**

**Tuesday November 14th at Colaton Raleigh Village
Hall at 7:30 p.m. Talk by Mike Saffin of Devon
Air Ambulance Trust**

NEW YEAR BIRD-WATCHING CRUISE ON THE EXE ESTUARY

Friday 19 January 2007, 1pm

Something to look forward to just before the evenings start to draw out and spring hints at its arrival! We will be using Stuart Line Cruises for our three- hour round trip from Exmouth to Topsham on the sheltered Exe estuary.

Expert ornithologist Rod Lawrence will help us to identify the hundreds of thousands of overwintering waders, geese, divers, ducks and gulls that will be present. This site is nationally important for migrant birds, especially for the thousands of Brent Geese and the lovely black and white avocet.

More good news: the boat will have an enclosed centrally heated lower deck, a covered upper deck, a bar with hot drinks and (limited) toilet facilities. Why not have a snack in Exmouth, before making your way to the quay which is situated by the small Pay & Display car park at the end of the esplanade, just past the Stuart Line Cruises Booking and Information office. There will also be some free parking along the esplanade - or perhaps use a bus.

Please allow sufficient time to arrive at the quay by 12.45pm, with adequate warm, wet-weather and windproof clothing, hats, gloves, scarves, etc as appropriate - especially if you intend to go upstairs! Bring binoculars, cameras, bird identification books, sunglasses (hopefully!), thermos flasks, hip flasks, snacks etc as required.

These winter trips are very popular - some were fully booked by the middle of the summer! If necessary, it might be possible to increase our reservation, but we would need to know soon, so please book now if you are interested. Please return the booking slip, which you will find on in the centrefold, your cheque for £8-50 per person payable to the Otter Valley Association and your s.a.e. for return of tickets as soon as possible. Tickets will be issued in November.

Diane Gee



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Planning for a new Built Environment Project

The principal work of the Built Environment Committee is to review all the Lower Otter Valley planning applications. We focus on three main topics: 1) the protection and preservation of all important buildings large and small; 2) sensitive design and the use of suitable materials both in new buildings and in modifications to existing buildings; and 3) the care of townscapes and landscapes where we seek to preserve views and vistas and promote harmony between buildings and the natural environment. Any concerns arising from applications are passed directly to East Devon District Council whom we find increasingly responsive.

In addition to this review work we participate in the OVA Design Award for the best new design in our area, and we also undertake projects from time to time. We are now looking into the possibility of what we call our Communityscape project. The aim will be to encourage local residents, in particular local children, to look searchingly at their community and to work together to identify the buildings, streetscapes and vistas, as well as architectural and other features, which they consider special and in need of preservation. The information gathered would be compiled into a picture/photographic exhibition to heighten awareness and concern, and

hopefully it will lead to a new guide for visitors exploring that community.

It is early days. There is much to do to prepare the ground. First we must select the community in which this project will take place. This will then allow us to draw together a small working group, mainly from outside the Committee's current membership, to share in the planning and execution of the project. We will report progress in the next Newsletter.

Geoff Aplin



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Ponds on the Commons

A party of 17 set out on 17 June from Joneys Cross car park on a circular walk covering parts of Aylesbeare, Harpford and Colaton Raleigh Commons, not forgetting a chunk of Hawkerland Valley on the way. Our object was to visit as many ponds on the commons as was practical in an eight-mile walk, and to explore some of their wildlife. It proved a good time for Damselflies and Dragonflies, and when we used a pond net numerous newts and tadpoles were drawn up from the murky depths of one pool.

For those interested in visiting these ponds in the future their OS co-ordinates are as follows.

Ponds on Aylesbeare Common, two close together at 057904 and near the corner of the plantation, proved to be the richest in flying insects. The newt pond was the most southerly on our route at 045868, close to

the edge of Uphams plantation. A well-hidden pond not far from Kingston Farm at 057880 is a beautiful spot for a picnic with lots of insects. The final ponds on Harpford Hill, lacking tree cover, showed less sign of insect life but were still being visited by dragonflies. These are at 060902 and 060904.

Finally, it must be said that few, if any, of these ponds can be spotted from a distance and some poking around in their vicinity is required to find what is often a clear but narrow track to the water's edge. For those with the patience and a map the effort is well worth making.

Robert Sellin



FOOTPATHS

Last month I inspected the willow spilings protecting the bank of the Otter between Colaton Raleigh and Otterton with Martin Banks, who put most of them in, and Paul McFadden who is the officer at County responsible for our paths.

It cannot be denied that the spilings have been neglected recently. They are now over six metres high in places. This means that they catch the wind and may be pulled out of the bank. If this happens they will damage the banks they are supposed to protect, so they must be trimmed. Apparently the best treatment is to cut them down almost to bank level. If this is done my requests that windows should be cut to give the walker occasional views of the river will be overtaken.

Severe treatment like this encourages growth. But what do you do with the cuttings? My suggestion that they might be shredded and spread as mulch on the adjacent fields would apparently meet with criticism from both the Environment Agency and Clinton Devon. They will probably have to be burnt or taken away. I passed on a suggestion from Pete Youngman of the Coast and Countryside Service that some could be retained as a valuable resource for planting elsewhere as protection for river banks. I suggested that some could also be used to extend the spiling put in recently below Otterton Bridge, where critics have complained, rightly in my opinion, that the spiling has not been carried far enough beyond the parts of the bank which were actually washed away.

There are several different sorts of spiling along the river, most of them put in by Martin. Some of the newer types, with the benefit of experience, are less labour intensive than earlier ones, but spiling of all sorts is costly because of the labour involved. According to Martin, the essential is that the willow is rooted in the river bed rather than in the bank. This way it grows better and protects the bank rather than pulling it into the river. I asked whether some of the large willow trees developed from the spiling would be cut down. The answer is that they can be left if they are rooted in the river, but they must be removed if they are on the edge of the bank where they might pull the bank down if they fell. The spiling is now so thick that it is impossible to judge this until it is cut.

Now the work must be discussed with Clinton Devon and other organisations, but since it is urgent you may see it being done soon.

Alan Jones

Seeing the wood and the trees

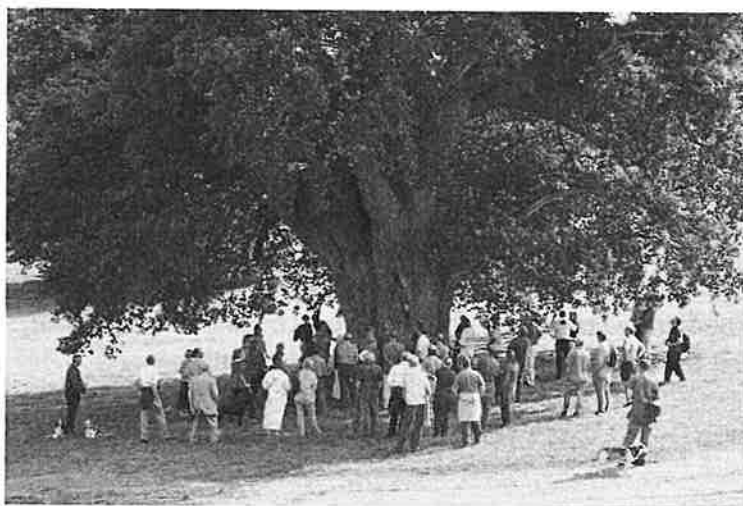
At the invitation of Kate Tobin of EDDC, Mo and I attended the reception to announce the Great Trees of East Devon on Wednesday 30th August at Escot House. Kate is the Project Co-ordinator for Great Trees of East Devon, and today was the culmination of her project to get local people to nominate the trees, with the production of a CD showing the nominated trees and the stories behind them.

Councillor Geoffrey Chamberlain, vice-Chair of EDDC, opened the morning session by describing the importance of this type of project to EDDC, in identifying trees which people feel merit special consideration. Although trees can be protected by preservation orders, not all of the Great Trees are. However, this project will create a register of such trees which will eventually become part of the National Tree Register.

A presentation was given by Jon Stokes, The Tree Council's Director of Rural Projects UK, explaining the work of council and its involvement and support for this type of project. Kate's 'Great Trees' is the first of its type to cover both town and countryside, and its success is due to Kate's enthusiasm, with the continuing support of EDDC and other similar bodies.

Kate finished the indoor session by explaining that the project is still ongoing, and provided details of other schemes involving local schools and groups which will continue for about the next 18 months. The morning ended with a guided walk around Escot's parkland with the Devon Ancient Tree Forum, hosted by John-Michael

and Lucy Kennaway, and led by Simon Major of Major Tree Services.



After lunch and several departures and arrivals, members of the Devon Ancient Tree Forum and representatives from other organisations spent the next three hours in a workshop looking at elderly trees around the estate. Included in the group of fifty five were Jill Butler of the Woodland Trust, Chris Knapman of Plymouth City Council and Brian Muelaner from the National Trust at Lanhydrock, who all contributed to leader Simon Major's analysis.

We were shown damaged trees and fungal infections, and the various methods employed to protect and prolong a tree's life. Besides assessing the risks from dead wood, the group saw examples of Ganodermas, Driad Saddle and Eifel Tower fungi, and how sap leakage from a Lucombe Oak provided food for hornets and butterflies.

Simon, who is in charge of Escot's trees, explained how he managed them and assessed their risk to and from the general public, especially during open air festivals.

Mo and I thoroughly enjoyed our day out, accompanied in the afternoon by our two dogs as well. We both learnt a lot listening to the various professionals, so we now see the wood and the trees!

If you would like more details about the Great Tree project, then please visit EDDC's website www.eastdevon.gov.uk. For more details on the Woodland Trust and the Devon Ancient Tree Forum, visit the website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk.

Clive Bowman, OVA Tree Warden

TIME TEAM AT DOTTON

Anyone interested in archaeology will know the Time Team TV programme, which has been going for 14 years. Indeed, its larger-than-life characters, led by Tony Robinson, are almost like familiar old friends.

So there was much local excitement when Time Team came to the Otter Valley in July, specifically to the hamlet of Dotton, to investigate the site of Dotton Mill. We went along to watch progress on a couple of days and while there met Laura Whittock (26) whose preliminary research work had been brought to the notice of Time Team. Their researchers found the site of the missing mill so intriguing that they instigated a dig. Laura lives literally next door to the site, in a house appropriately

The following pages contain booking forms for the OVA
Christmas Dinner and the Bird Watching Trip.

Time Team at Dotton continues beyond the centrefold.

OVA CHRISTMAS PARTY
Monday 18th December at Bicton College at 7pm
(main entrance).

Strictly limited to 120 members only.

Tickets £15.50 each available from 1st November from:
Rowan Turnbull, Hayes, Church Road, Colaton Raleigh
Sidmouth, Devon EX10 0LH

Please send me ----- tickets at £15.50 each

Name/s of those I am applying for-----

My Telephone number -----

I enclose a cheque for £ ----- made out
to the OVA.

I also enclose a stamped addressed envelope so my
tickets can be mailed to me.

I/We require ----- vegetarian meal/s.

Applications will be opened from 1st November

**BIRD WATCHING CRUISE,
Friday 19 January 2007**

To: Diane Gee
7 Belgrave Court
Northview Road
Budleigh Salterton
EX9 6BA

Tel: 01395 444388

From:

(Name).....

(Address).....

.....

.....

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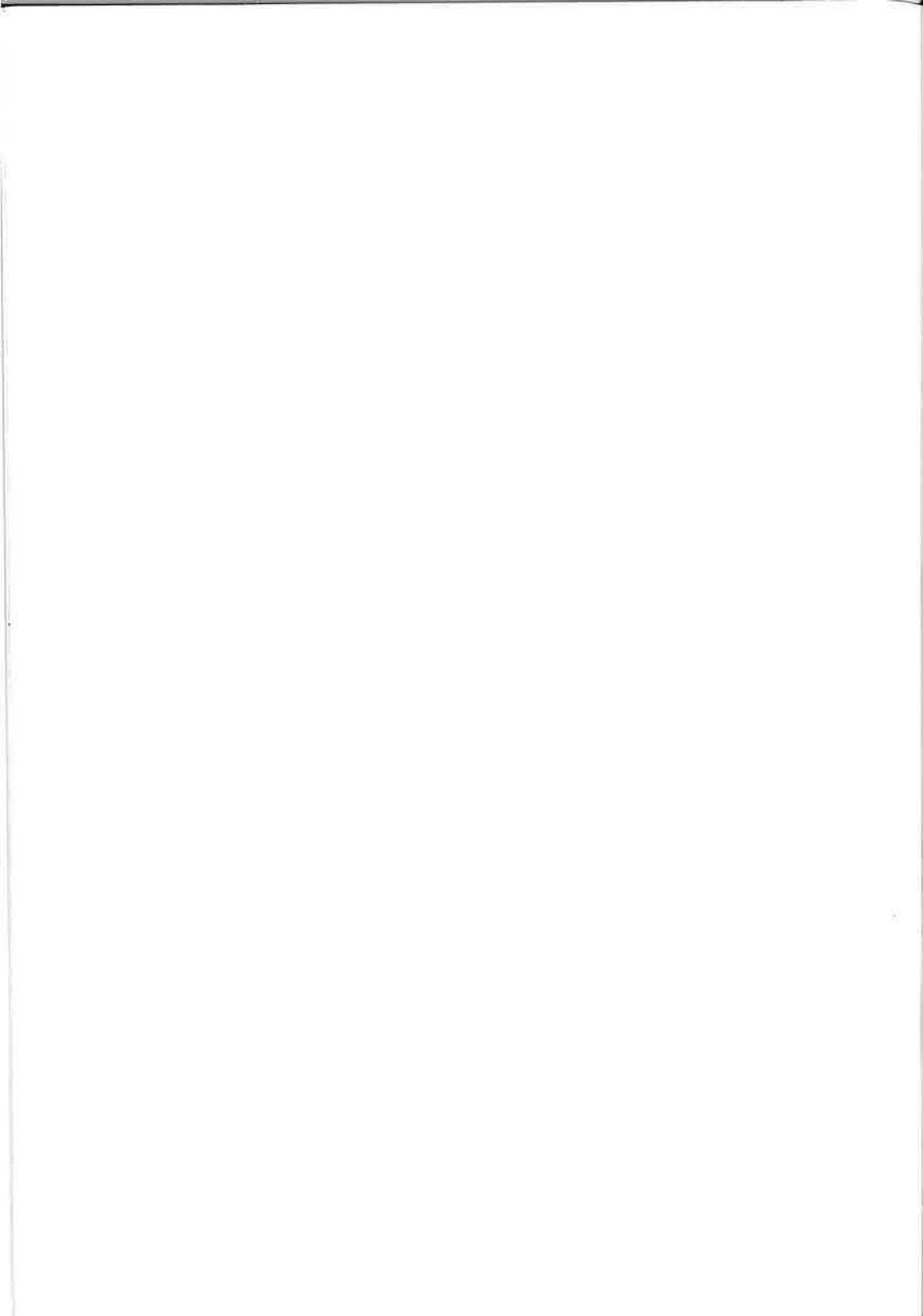
Tel:.....

Please reserveplaces @ £8.50 per person -

Total £.....

I have enclosed cheque payable to the Otter Valley
Association

I have enclosed a Self-addressed stamped envelope for
return of tickets



called Dotton Mill. She has provided some interesting information about the Time Team exploration.

Despite the Team's wide range of subject matter and locations, it had never investigated a water mill. Documentary evidence shows the existence of mills dating back to Domesday, but the most recent mill was built in the 1790s and demolished in 1968. Appetites whetted, Tony, Mick, Phil and the rest of the team arrived to try to trace the story of Dotton Mill.



Map and landscape studies suggest that the most probable location for a Domesday mill in Dotton was within an area 30 metres from the known mill site. While working there Phil was able to find structural evidence of the mill dating back to the 1600s, which was also reflected in the pottery finds. Below the brick and concrete lining of the wheel pit, evidence of a possible medieval watercourse was also found. Excavation in an adjacent field confirmed the course and structure of the

leat, and identified a possible Elizabethan structure, with steps leading to the leat.

The Dotton programme will be shown early in 2007, so watch out for this demonstration of really local Otter Valley history.

Mo and Clive Bowman

Parishscapes - bringing together community and landscape in Beer and Branscombe

Kimmo Evans

'Parishscapes' was a six-month project funded by English Nature and East Devon AONB working in the parishes of Beer and Branscombe, in the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The project delivered a multi-layered environmental record of the biodiversity, landscape and historic environment for each parish using tithe (Victorian land-use maps) maps, Phase 1 habitat information, biodiversity records and the recently produced historic landscape character maps for Devon. The work also formed part of the Devon landscape character assessment being co-ordinated through Devon County Council.

Philippe Planel, the Parishscapes officer based in the AONB team, also worked with local communities in this mapping exercise through existing local interest groups such as the Branscombe Project and Beer Village

Heritage group through local walks, talks and video recording. "One of the benefits of the walk'n'workshop approach, led by Councillor Mike Green, was that the collaboration between the two parishes has fostered a sense of increased community development between the two areas for future work", explains Philippe. He has also resourced national curriculum units at Branscombe and Beer primary schools. Year 6 pupils at Branscombe are using print-outs of digitised 1840 land use maps in their unit on the Victorians; revealing, for example, that their school was still an orchard in 1840. In science, the changes of state theme focused in on the lime industry in the 2 parishes demonstrating how geology underpins both land use and buildings.



Chris Woodruff, AONB Manager, is currently exploring further funding streams in order to make the digitised tithe map information available to communities via the

internet and look to roll out this approach across the other 27 parishes making up the East Devon AONB. This work would complement the work of the OVA members, currently made widely available through the excellent range of publications, and provide opportunities for the sharing of information. Philippe Planel has recently become the Heritage Outreach Officer at Devon County Council's Local Records Office - well done Phil!

For more information on Parishscapes and its outputs contact the East Devon AONB team on 01404 46663 or visit www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk

VALLEY SNAP COMP SCOOP

What on earth is that about? Well if you read it as a tabloid headline it ought to become clear. We have managed a scoop and the OVA along with the *Budleigh Journal* have agreed to co-sponsor a Photo Competition, on the theme **Seasons in the Lower Otter Valley**

Each quarter, the person who submits the best photograph depicting the Lower Otter Valley in that season will receive a prize and their photograph specially framed. The photographer and their picture will be featured in the *Budleigh Journal* and the photo will appear in the OVA Newsletter. The winning photo and the runners up will all be featured on the OVA website. Mo Bowman, the OVA's Publicity Secretary and herself a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, will be one of the panel of judges.

The first of these competitions will be announced in the *Budleigh Journal* during October. Watch for that and you may also want to pay special attention to the walks in our October and November programme. Jed Falby will be leading a walk on October 25th looking at the colours of autumn and Marion Nalder is leading her popular Fungi walk on November 7th. Both of these along with our other walks will provide excellent opportunities for any hopeful David Baileys or Jane Bowns amongst us.

Nick Speare

The New OVA Website

ova.org.uk

The new website is up and running. It's a complete re-working with many new features designed to make more use of the Internet.

- Home
- About Us
- Join
- Contacts



- Diary
- Events
- Leaflets
- Books



You can contact various committee members and your local representative by email from the website.

There is the diary of events that the OVA is planning – walks, talks, outings and other events.



You can download the OVA leaflets and buy OVA books.

There is also good background information about the OVA and the villages of the lower Otter valley with some fine new photographs by Mo Bowman FRPS.

Alan Huddart

Special Note re Walk on 2 December

As the old Knowle Post Office site has been taken over by Total Eden Plants, the walk will now start at Hillfields, 1 Moorlands Road, Budleigh Salterton (to be signposted on the day).

Stuart Lovell



WALKS, TALKS AND EVENTS

The Undercliff, 14 June 2006

A small group met at Steppes Cross to walk the coastal path through the Undercliff, beyond Seaton.

At the top of the cliff we made a stop to look back to the white cliffs at Beer, and the thick scrub of the Undercliff beneath us. We then set off down the steep cliff path, pausing for the leader to be educated on the identification of the

Guelder Rose. (He could previously only identify it from its red berries in the autumn.)

The next stop was at the information board below Goat Island. Goat Island is now but a thickly covered hump in the overgrowth covering the Great Chasm – the area of the huge subsidence which occurred in 1839 and which it is now very difficult to imagine as once having been pasture and a wheat field.

Further on the path becomes easier, and more shaded, the trees having had time to grow to maturity. Our final stop was at the large stone-walled former sheep wash, with the ruins of an old cottage adjoining it. The stone wall makes a pleasant place to sit.

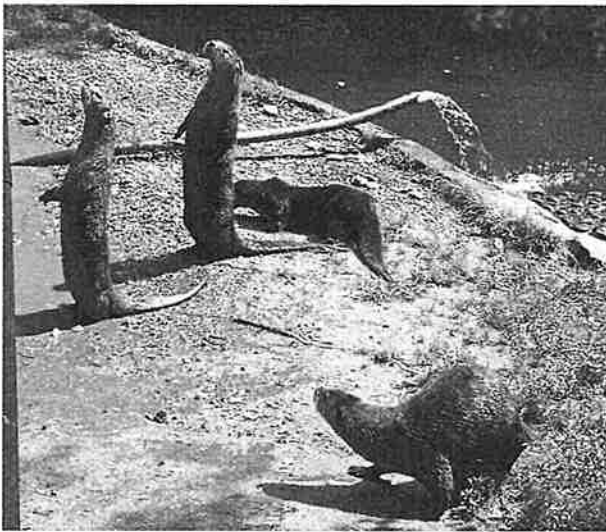


We returned to our starting point, with Jed stopping at strategic points to record our progress through this fascinating wilderness area.

Philip Greenhow

Butterflies, Otters and Riverford Visit, 6 July

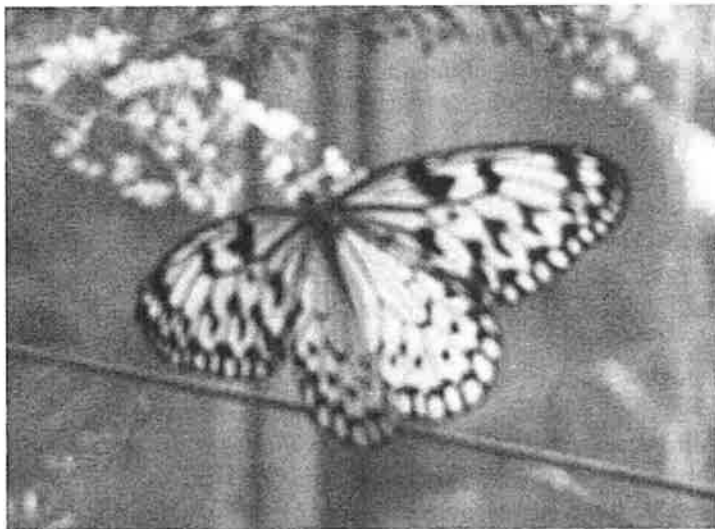
The Otter Valley Association, or, more strictly, three dozen of us, took off for the day on Thursday 6th July. We went first to Buckfastleigh for the Buckfast butterflies and the Dartmoor Otters. Our coach arrived in good time for us to see the otters being fed, or at least the Asian, North American and other foreign species responded to the keeper's call – the pair of native British Otters remained resolutely asleep. The keeper, who told us lots of interesting things about the otters as we went to each enclosure, explained that they were nocturnal and naturally would sleep in the middle of the day, but I thought that (like some of the visitors) they'd been up too late watching the World Cup football.



One gets to the otters by walking through the butterfly enclosure, where there are dozens of exotic species flying around. Although you can get close enough to have swallowtails in your hair and large blues at your fingertips, I found them difficult to photograph as most didn't stay still for more than a second and the few that settled folded their brightly-coloured wings and looked quite drab.

It was a warm, sunny day, so I was glad to escape from the heat and humidity of the greenhouse and take our picnic lunch on the grass alongside the river and listen to the steam trains.

After lunch we went on to Riverford, where we had a fascinating tour of this organic far and the philosophy behind their very successful vegetable-box scheme. We walked through the fruit fields adjacent to their smart new River Café



building, asking questions about tayberries, gooseberries, blackbirds, sawflies and mildew. Then on to the tractor and trailer to the wider fields around and a stop at the poly-tunnels to look at tomatoes, with biological pest control, basil and cucumbers – tastes all round. A fascinating tour, enhanced by our enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide. Our grateful thanks to Alice Huddart for arranging a splendid day.

Haylor Lass

First Afternoon Walk, 8 July

On Saturday 8 July (having forgotten about Wimbledon) we set off on our first afternoon walk, led by 'new boy' John Daly. The weather was most pleasant for walking and there were nine of us, despite the tennis. We met at Four Firs car park, then roamed across Woodbury Common through heathland and woodland, past the delightful Bystock reservoir and enjoyed lovely views. How John remembered the way was a source of admiration. We also passed the 'art gallery' – bet you didn't know about the really quite artistic graffiti in the middle of the woods? It's actually a concrete hut used now by the Marines.

Patricia Doran

Any comments on afternoon walks to the Walks Organiser, Patricia Doran at 'Bramleigh', 8 Raleigh Road, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6HX.

E-mail: budleigh@birdie8.freemove.co.uk

Special Note from Patricia Doran

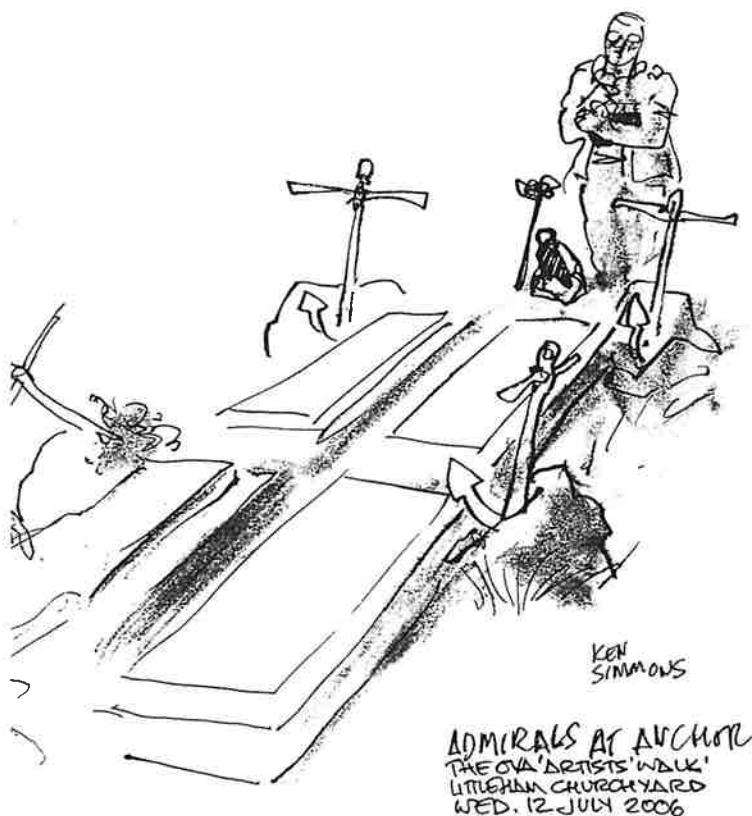
Yellow reflector safety belts for walkers: please would the person who has forgotten that he/she has the belts return them to me as soon as possible. Many thanks.

Annual Artists' Walk, 12 July

First, my apologies to the Budleigh Salterton Art Club! In my enthusiastic announcement of the walk I gave the rendezvous (from last year's membership card) as 'White Bridge'. Second, my thanks to Ken Simmons who stood watch at White Bridge to steer any artist-walkers to the real starting point: the Littleham Church Path. Thank you, Ken.

Like many of us, I have driven past the 'Church Path' sign at the top of West Hill in Budleigh, but I had never walked it.

Before Budleigh had its own church, you family, dressed in 'Sunday best', would walk to either Littleham or East Budleigh, so our ten OVA walkers, dressed in 'summer best',



followed their traces all the way to Littleham Church.

Sitting between Lady Nelson's tomb and the four Admirals finally at anchor, Jed gave a demonstration of quick colour sketching with his beloved watercolour pencils, and most of the walkers did their own sketches too.

Then, across the fields to the old railway line and home by the little-known Knowle footpath, with a rest stop at the 'Preey Corner' entrance to Knowle, admiring the healthy tree there, thanks to last year's OVA efforts to save it.

A good day.

Jed Falby

Tipton St John, Venn Ottery and Southerton, 22 July

On a hot July day, 21 stalwarts met by Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground to explore some of the lesser-known delights of the Otter Valley. It was good to be able to welcome several newcomers, even one from Sweden. Setting off between the track of the old railway and the River Otter, we soon passed Harpford with its fine church and peaceful riverside camp-site. Nearing Tipton St John, a cormorant roosting on an improbably high branch kept us under observation. There must be good fishing in the Otter to tempt cormorants so far from the sea. On the river bank, a tough-looking plant with ragged pale blue flowers was identified as chicory.

Crossing the river and the old level-crossing at Tipton, we followed the east side of the valley to Tipton Mill, and gazed in wonder at the enormous mill wheel. The mill is dilapidated now but must have been an important place in its heyday. A splendid new footbridge led us back to the west bank, where we found the weir a little further upstream. Like Otterton weir, it now has a fish pass.

Soon after leaving the river, we slaked our parched throats at Fluxton before following green lanes south to Metcombe. A shady climb, then more green lanes, busy with insects, brought us to Venn Ottery and the little church of St Gregory. He was the pope who, on being told that some prisoners he saw at a Roman slave market were English (Angles), said "Not Angles, but Angels", and promptly dispatched St Augustine to convert England to Christianity.

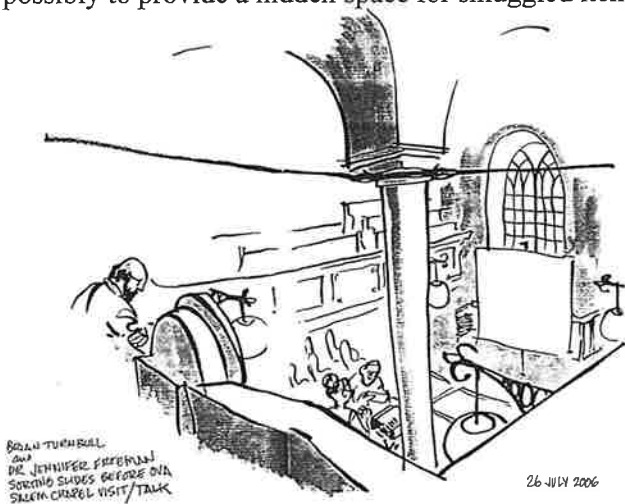
The green lanes grew narrower as we approached the hamlet of Southerton and, by a devious route, joined the East Devon Way. Descending through apple orchards to a shady track, we emerged blinking into the sunlight to find ourselves (surprise, surprise) back at the starting point.

Brian Turnbull

Salem Chapel Restoration, 26 July

About 120 OVA members and Friends of Salem Chapel were present at Salem Chapel on Wednesday evening (26 July) to hear a talk by Dr. Jennifer Freeman about the work of the Historic Chapels Trust (HCT). Dr Freeman is the Director of the Trust which is based at a restored Lutheran church in London. The HCT restores redundant chapels and other places of worship in England which are of outstanding architectural and historic interest.

Dr Freeman told us about the restoration of Salem Chapel which began in October 2004 after a campaign by local East Budleigh people and which has cost about £700,000. The chapel dates from 1719 and has a very unusual roof design, possibly to provide a hidden space for smuggled items.



For most this was the first opportunity to see inside this remarkable and historic building and view the restoration work. Dr Freeman showed many slides of "before" and "after"

restoration, not just for Salem Chapel, but for a number of other chapels and churches up and down the country that have been rescued by the HCT.

It was a fascinating evening for everyone and following a number of interesting questions Councillor Jed Falby thanked Dr Freeman for coming to East Budleigh to present the talk.

Alan Huddart

Dartmoor Walk, 30 August

The telephone kept on ringing, with apologies. 'Would love to come, but ...!', so much so that I began to wonder if there would be any takers for this '7-mile, mini Ten Tors, energetic walk', especially as rain was forecast.

But in the event 11 people appeared at Newton Poppleford to share transport. Not really the usual crowd, but people wanting the challenge. As one of them said, 'It seemed more exciting than the usual soft options'.

We had an excellent day. The threatened rain held off until 15 minutes after getting back into the cars. There were splendid views throughout, and we traversed Crockern Tor, Littaford Tor, Longaford Tor, Higher White Tor, Lower White Tor (lunch stop), Rough Tor, Devil's Tor, Lydford Tor and the two Bearsdon Tors. A path of sorts can be followed for the first five tors, then it gets more boggy and with longer grass, but we did it all quite comfortably and felt exhilarated.

Maybe fewer people come on the all-day walks than on the half-day ones, but there is a definite place for them in the programme.

Peter Hills

Upper Otter Valley, 13 September

A group of eight explored the wooded pathways of the Otterhead Estate and the tranquil lanes of the Upper Otter Valley. Marion Nalder enriched our appreciation of fungi and flora with her erudite observations. We passed the time of day with engineers repairing a River Otter crossing on the Devon/Somerset border, with an elderly lady, walking her dog, who had lived for 30 years in a remote location miles from a bus service or shopping facilities, and with a couple of holiday-makers rambling in the opposite direction, both groups so astonished to encounter others laughing that it was like Piccadilly Circus. We lunched in a field with the wide sweep of the valley falling away, scattered with farms, only a distant horizon with traffic like Dinky cars rushing endlessly to remind us that this was not 1950.

Bettina Wilson

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18 November, Saturday, 10 a.m. WALK (easy to moderate) White Bridge, SY076830, 5 miles, 2.5 hours. River and Coastal, one climb. *Walk leader:* David Huggett, 01395-446075.

2 December, Saturday, 10 a.m. WALK (moderate)
NB meet at Hillfields, 1 Moorlands Road, Budleigh Salterton (signposted on day). 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Dalditch, Squabmoor Reservoir, Shortwood. May be muddy. *Walk leader:* Stuart Lovell, 01395-443141.

16 December, Saturday, 10 a.m. WALK (moderate)
Otter Inn, Colaton Raleigh, SY077873. 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Circular walk round Woodbury. *Walk leader:* Peter Hills, 01395-568576.

18 December, Monday, OVA CHRISTMAS DINNER,
Bicton College, 7 for 7.30 (for details, see page 6).

10 January 2007, Wednesday, 10 a.m. WALK (easy)
Lime Kiln car park, Budleigh Salterton, SY073820. Bird-watching stroll along the Otter, looking for winter visitors. *Walk leader:* David Jannaway, 01395-567159.

16 January, Tuesday, 7.30 p.m. TALK by Tom Coleman on 'Peru, land of the Incas' at Otterton Village Hall.

20 January, Saturday, 10 a.m. WALK (energetic)
White Cross car park, East Hill, SY118933. 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Waxway, Coombe, Hollow Head, woods, fields, bridleways, steep in places. *Walk leader:* David Nangle, 01404-811752.

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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 Con-
servation Volunteers. It is also affil-
iated to the CPRE. Queries should be
put to your Parish Representative.

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