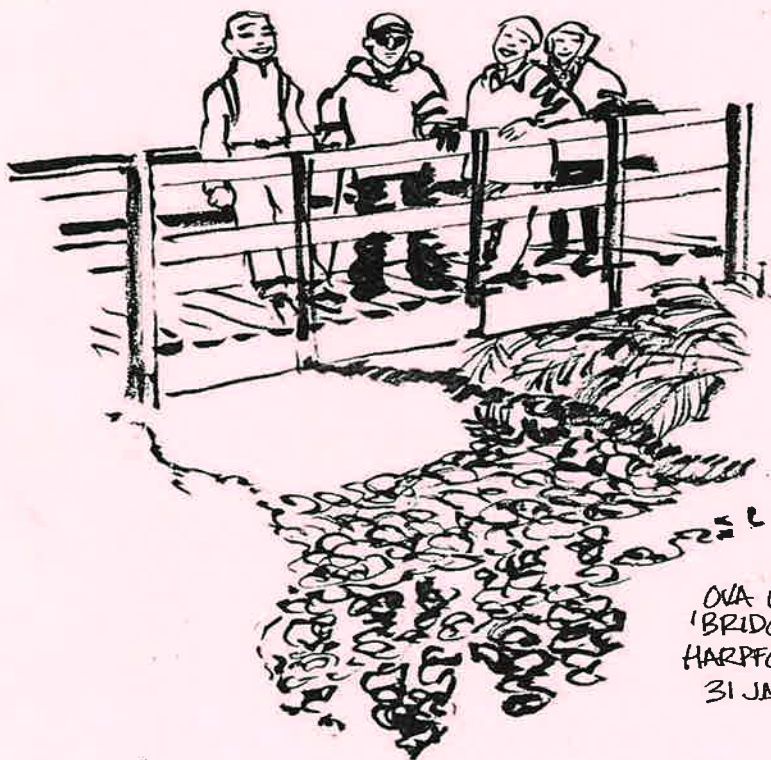


# OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity No.278266

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OVA WALK  
'BRIDGE REST'  
HARFORD COMMON  
31 JAN '07

**VOLUME 28/2**

**APRIL 2007**

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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: OVA WALKS, TALKS AND EVENTS, APRIL TO JULY 2007**

### **4 April, Wednesday, 10 a.m. WALK (energetic)**

Yettington/Uphams, SY 048859. 5 miles, 2.5 hours.  
Yettington, the Commons. *Walk leader:* Jed Falby,  
01395-445455.

### **18 April, Wed., 10 a.m. AONB WALK (energetic)**

Colaton Raleigh church, SY 082872. 6 miles, 3 hours.  
Riverside, green lanes, coastal path, Mutters Moor,  
Passaford Lane (steep hill). *Walk leaders:* Brian  
Turnbull, 01395-567339 and Kimmo Evans.

**18 April, Wednesday, 7.30 p.m. TALK** by Donald  
Campbell on 'The Undercliff: Axmouth to Lyme Regis',  
at East Budleigh Village Hall. (NB: change of speaker)

**19 April, Thursday, 9.30 a.m. VISIT** to Willows and  
Wetlands Visitor Centre, near Taunton (see Jan. Newsl.)

### **2 May, Wednesday, 10 a.m. WALK (easy)**

East Budleigh car park, SY 065849. East Budleigh to  
Clamour Bridge, South Farm, Kersbrook. *Walk leader:*  
Stan Herbert, 01395-445684

**10 May, Thursday, 7.30 p.m., AGM**, Masonic Hall,  
Budleigh Salterton. (See page 3 for details)

### **16 May, Wednesday, WALK (moderate)**

Kersbrook (under railway bridge). SY 069830. 5.5 miles,  
2.5 hours. Around Budleigh, old railway track, coastal  
path. *Walk leader:* Shane Badham, 01395-567531.

*Cover drawing by Jed Falby*

*(Walks continued on inside back cover)*



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

In years to come, the beginning of 2007 will no doubt be remembered for the grounding of the container ship “MSC Napoli” off Branscombe. Although “our” stretch of coast has been less touched than coastline further east, oil-affected birds and oily debris have sadly been a common sight on Budleigh beach in recent weeks.

At the East Devon AONB Partnership meeting on 14 March in Branscombe, we heard a presentation by the County Emergency Officer on the “Napoli” clean-up before going on to the beach to meet the salvage contractors. They were still raising sunken containers by attaching airbags and floating them ashore. After weeks of painstaking work, with more debris washed up by every storm, they hope to re-open the whole of Branscombe beach by Easter.

James Chubb of EDDC is organising a series of beach cleaning events to remove Napoli's legacy from East Devon's beaches. If you would like to help, look out for his articles in the *Journal*, or contact him on [napoli@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:napoli@eastdevon.gov.uk).

On a happier note, I am delighted that David Daniel has agreed to join the OVA Executive Committee to head up our History section. If you share his interest in local history, don't miss his contribution elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Hundreds of OVA members signed and returned the Gift Aid declaration enclosed with the last Newsletter. In fact, the response rate exceeded our wildest expectations. Thank you very much indeed to all those who responded. If you haven't yet done so (and are a taxpayer), please do so now using the Gift Aid declaration form included on page 28. Special thanks are due to Martin Smith, our Hon. Treasurer, for his initiative and for his efficient handling of our Gift Aid claims.

Finally, this is my last Chairman's message. By the time of the AGM in May, I shall have served the maximum term permitted by the Constitution. I am very grateful for the tremendous support and encouragement of the Committees and the membership at large.

It has been a busy three years with some exciting new initiatives, and the OVA is in good shape. However, you don't have to take my word for it. Come to the AGM on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30 pm in the Masonic Hall (note change of venue) West Hill, Budleigh Salterton, and see and hear for yourself. I look forward to welcoming you.

**Brian Turnbull**

## **STOP PRESS – CHANGE OF TALK**

### **The Undercliff – Axmouth to Lyme Regis**

April's talk has been changed due to the unavailability of the speaker. The date and time remain the same, **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April at East Budleigh Village Hall**, but we now have Donald Campbell, Chairman of the Axe Vale and District Conservation Society, talking about 'The Undercliff: Axmouth to Lyme Regis.' Donald is a well-known naturalist and bird expert.

# **OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION**

## **Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007 at 7.30 p.m in the  
Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton  
(100 yards uphill from the traffic lights)**

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of AGM held on 11 May 2006
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**, followed by a short talk on  
'Rivers of the World' by Professor Robert Sellin.

### **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 (Hayeside, 9 Hayes Close, Budleigh Salterton EX9 6SR) at least 14 days before the AGM. They must be supported by a seconder and have the written consent of the nominee.

## **SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER 2007/8**

Members are reminded that their subscriptions for 2007/8 were due on 1 April. They are still £3 for individuals and £5 for households.

Payment may be made by cheque in favour of the Otter Valley Association and sent to the Membership Secretary at: Pheasants Cry, Church Road, Colaton Raleigh, Sidmouth EX10 0LH.

A much more convenient method of payment for all concerned is by standing order. This is used by well over 80% of our members and ensures that you receive your newsletter and programme card promptly. It also saves a considerable amount of time for our hard-pressed volunteers! Standing order forms can be downloaded from our website at [www.ova.org.uk](http://www.ova.org.uk) or obtained from the Membership Secretary on 01395-568176.

If your subscription has not been received by the time the July newsletter is published you will not receive your programme card with your copy. This should act as a reminder if you do wish to continue your membership.

When you make contact or leave a message please quote your membership number which is shown on your programme card. Thank you.

**Barrie Papworth**  
**Membership Secretary**

# GREAT TREE DAY

The OVA Great Tree Day will be held at Bicton College from 1 - 5pm on Saturday 9th June. Here is an opportunity to learn more about trees in a lovely setting!

**Kate Tobin, coordinator of the Great Trees of East Devon project**, has very kindly set up a fascinating programme for everyone interested in our local trees. It will increase our enjoyment of the countryside to know more about the trees in our landscape, their history and the part they play.

## The Programme

Kate will give us an introductory talk at 1pm in our room in the College. This will be followed by an outdoor study walk of over an hour in the College grounds where you will join a group to look at trees in their environment.

The choice of topics will be:-

- Woodland Ecology & Tree ID (leader **Geoff Jones**);
- Trees and Birds (leader **David Jannaway**);
- Ancient Trees (leader **Kate Tobin**)

Then the groups will return for cakes, tea and biscuits, after which there will be a closing talk and discussion on 'Forestry and Woodland in the Otter Valley' with **John Wilding**. John is the Forest Manager for Clinton Devon Estates and is responsible for all their forestry and woodland in both North and East Devon.

**Tickets cost £5 each and are available via the booking form at the end of this Newsletter. Applications will be opened from 12 April.**

The event is being organised in conjunction with the Great Trees of East Devon project. This Heritage Lottery funded project is hosted by East Devon District Council and is intended to provide training for tree wardens and community volunteers, as well as raising awareness of our wonderful natural heritage of trees. We are very grateful for the financial support of the EDDC East Devon Great Trees project in mounting this exciting afternoon.

### **Practical Details**

**Meet at the front door of Bicton College by 1pm on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June. Please bring suitable clothing and footwear for the walk (approx. 1 hour 15 minutes) with some standing around. Please allow for possible sun, rain and rough terrain.**

To apply to join us for the afternoon please fill in the form at the end of the Newsletter and send it, with your cheque for £5.00 per person made out to the OVA and a stamped addressed envelope, to Rowan Turnbull (01395 567339) at the address given on the form.

### **Future events – May and August**

You have just (I hope) read details of the Great Tree Day organised for the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, which looks like a very interesting event. We are also looking forward to our visit to the Willows and Wetlands Centre on 19<sup>th</sup> April. Don't forget to be at Budleigh Salterton Public Hall for a 9.30 departure.

Two other events for noting in your diary:



### **1) Budleigh Salterton Gala Week. (26<sup>th</sup> May-2<sup>nd</sup> June)**

We will be having our usual stand on the Green on Gala Day where you will be able to enter our 'Where was this taken?' competition – photos of local places, things and maybe one or two unusual views of otherwise familiar objects to identify. Entries cost 50p, with a £10 book token to the winner. Competition entries have to be in by the end of that week so you will have time to explore Budleigh's highways and byways to find the answers.

Sunday morning (27 May) and 'Heigh-ho me Hearties!' for the **Young Pirates' Treasure Hunt** starting from Lime Kiln car park at 10.00. At 50p a head under-12s can search for, and hopefully find, a Golden Pebble (one per pirate) and win a prize. There are plenty of pebbles on the beach but on Sunday this will include a number of golden ones (in fact there are a couple still there from earlier years that even the organisers couldn't find).

Tuesday (29 May) and Thursday (31 May) see David Daniel leading **'Discover Budleigh' walks**. These are hugely interesting and easy walks of around 1 ½ hours where David will bring Budleigh's history to life. Walks start at the TIC at 10.00 a.m.

### **2) Quiz Trail – advance notice**

Advance warning of an event that will exercise your legs and your little grey cells: from 25<sup>th</sup> August to 2<sup>nd</sup> September you will have the chance to win a substantial prize by visiting all the villages in our area, from Harpford to Budleigh, and answering questions in and about each village. The quiz is being set by quizmasters Haylor Lass and David Jannaway whose encyclopedic knowledge of our valley is legendary, so don't expect all

the questions to be easy. However, it is intended to be a family quiz so there will be plenty for the younger members to get their teeth into as well. If you have visitors over the Bank Holiday this will be the ideal way to show them the beautiful area we live in as well as maybe learn something new yourself.

**Nick Speare**



## **Reviving OVA History Activities**

Encouraging the interest of residents and visitors in the history of the area is one of the major purposes of the OVA. As with all things, there have been periods of great activity: in compiling and publishing the original sketches on local history, in 1984, and the Mark Rolle architectural legacy booklet, in 2001. There have also been periods of relatively little formal OVA activity.

People's interest in conducting their own historical researches, either from a family or a local perspective, has never been greater. I have been asked to try to reinvigorate the OVA's active involvement. What I intend to do first is to try to find out just who has an interest in researching, or compiling and collecting, historical information, what particular topic they are interested in and whether they are prepared to share their knowledge. This "directory" of local expertise and interest would be enormously useful in its own right to everyone.

My longer-term objectives are then to encourage dissemination of this knowledge through talks and

publications and to see if collectively we can identify and then begin to fill in any missing gaps. If you are interested, or have any comments on my ideas, please contact me on 01395-445960 or e-mail me at [david@danielhighbury.plus.com](mailto:david@danielhighbury.plus.com)

**David Daniel**

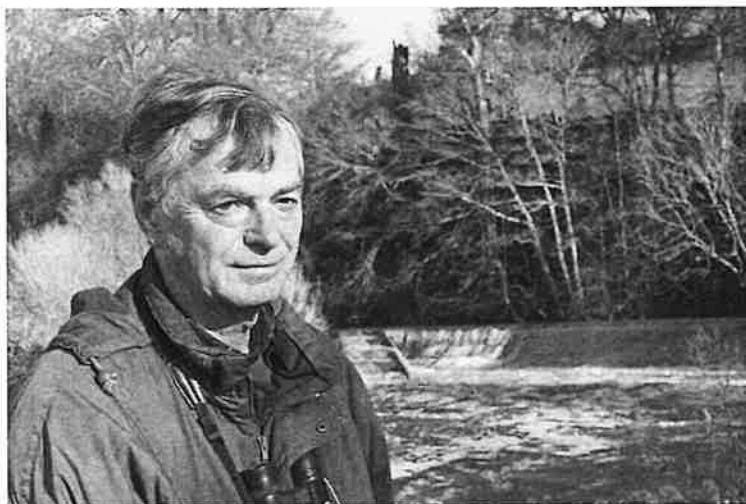
## **Profile of Robert Sellin, Natural Environment Chairman**

I was born and brought up in Bristol, and my mother told me a story that when I was a toddler, on a trip into Gloucestershire, I was exploring a stream and inadvertently sat down in it, much to my surprise. I haven't been able to resist all sizes of waterways since! I also had an uncle, a keen fisherman, who used to take me coarse fishing on the Bristol Avon, which of course gave me further exposure to river life.

In my school days I used to go off with a friend on our bicycles, plus jam jars and nets, to fish streams and ponds. We caught a variety of small freshwater fish including Millers Thumbs and Loaches, which are getting much rarer these days. These were not for eating (too small and bony) but for my bedroom aquarium, where they joined newts, caught in the nearby ponds.

My student days were spent at the University of Bristol reading Civil Engineering, and I enjoyed the hydraulic engineering course so much that I later specialised in this area, mainly carrying out research on the behaviour of rivers in flood. However my main job was teaching

hydraulics and hydrology to, I estimate, more than 1000 undergraduate and postgraduate students. This was first at the Queen's University of Belfast and then in Bristol again; 35 years in all. More recently, as Head of Department at Bristol, I spent much of my time on admin matters, especially the appointment of new academic staff.



*Photo: Mo Bowman*

My research work on river flood plains involved close collaboration with the National River Authority, and later the Environment Agency. My most recent contact with the latter was to carry out a survey of fish passes on rivers throughout the U.K.

Of course we have our own River Otter fish pass at Otterton, constructed a few years ago to allow migratory fish, such as salmon and sea trout, to swim upstream past the weir to reach their spawning grounds in the upper river. My study for the agency covered 45 of these passes of all shapes and sizes throughout England and Wales.

They all had different operational problems related to blocking with floating debris.

Like Nick Speare, Margaret and I also discovered Budleigh Salterton while on a coastal walk, looking from Otter Head across the estuary to the town. We moved here soon afterwards in 1997.

**Interview by Belinda Mountain**

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## **FOOTPATHS**

When the willow spiling was put in on the path going south from Otterton Bridge many of us complained that it had not been carried far enough. It seems County now agrees. The spiling is to be extended. This will involve closure of the path for several weeks on safety grounds. Work on the spiling further north above Ricketty Bridge seems to have stopped. I intend to enquire when it is to be continued.

Discussions on new agreements on permissive paths in the valley seem to be going well. County is now looking at all these paths, and a similar path near Seaton, to check that the new agreements will not involve them in unexpectedly large expenditure.

Diane Gee has taken over organizing the walks programme from me. I am grateful to her, not only for taking it on, but also for doing it so quickly. My overload

was becoming a major embarrassment. Diane is clearly the right sort of person to do this job. She is a keen walker and knows most of the walks leaders. She also has experience as editor of a science journal, which involved much careful checking, something which does not come naturally to me. I have done as much as I could towards preparing the programme but there is an enormous amount of work left to do.

The path along the 'little Otter', on the west side of the river, from Pinehayes Farm south, is notorious for its mud, and has been the subject of many complaints. Andy Mack is now going to see what can be done to improve it. I think he will have difficulty in finding a remedy, but I hope he can come up with some bright ideas.

**Alan Jones**

### **From the Editor**

Members may recall that when I was preparing the Newsletter in the past our small, grey, visiting cat used to enjoy sitting on the oak table next to the computer. Sadly, she passed away on 11 February just three months short of her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Now I sit alone in the dining-room, a bit forlorn but perhaps concentrating more easily on the task in hand.

For this issue I have been much helped by the many contributions that have come as a Word attachment to an e-mail rather than as a straight e-mail. This makes copying easier and quicker for someone who is not a computer 'natural'. At the end of this newsletter you will find a paragraph on this and various other small things that can be done to ease the lot of a (sometimes) harassed editor.

**PQ**



## **Built Environment Communityscape Update**

Phase One, our introductory phase, was successfully completed before Christmas. During this time the senior children in Drake's School explored selected parts of East Budleigh, identifying 'village treasure', that is: those whole buildings, features of buildings, gardens, stands of trees, streetscapes and views into and out of the village which they believe must be preserved and cared for.

Now Phase Two is upon us. This involves a search for 'village treasure' covering the whole village. To this end, East Budleigh has been divided into four areas, each being allocated to a team of children, supervised by a staff member. Some of the children have invited parents or other relatives to support the search. The children work in pairs, completing a simple questionnaire on each item of treasure they have chosen and photographing it. They are very ably supported in their camera work by Mo Bowman.

It is fascinating to follow the children's and their parents'/supporters' progress as they try to decide what qualifies as 'village treasure'. This is not at all difficult in the conservation area which mainly embraces the High Street and its surrounding area. Once the children had begun to acquire the ability to look at their surroundings with enquiring minds – the thatched roofs, low doors, misshapen and varied windows, curious chimneys, historic walls and antique street furniture – all became

readily apparent to the great majority. At the outset, searching in this part of the village involved brief glances only, usually prompted by adults. Now different features hold the children's attention for minutes at a time.



*Out searching for village treasure*

*Photo: Mo Bowman*

The difficulty arises when they begin to look at more modern buildings. Here we find that the children are very thoughtful. A frequent, slightly dismissive observation has been 'It's pretending to be old'. Where whole buildings are concerned it seemed that the children only considered them to be worthy of care and preservation if they are genuinely old, like the buildings in the conservation area.

Now they are looking at them with fresh eyes, and even these modern buildings are stimulating detailed discussion. Unprompted, they are looking for variety and for thoughtful design. So, for example, a modern terrace of houses is valued because they climb the hill, each roof-line slightly higher than the last. Windows are scrutinised for their design, the materials they are made from and the proportions in relation to the whole building. Porches and garden layout receive particular attention. By contrast, we have yet to hear a good word about the design of garages.

There is no doubt that the children are responding positively to the project. They have moved beyond



simply becoming aware of features of buildings and their surroundings to a stage where they are beginning to formulate opinions about good design, whether it applies to buildings, gardens, streetscapes or open spaces. They are thinking creatively about the old and the new in their community. And we, the adults, are learning a great deal about community treasure from them.

The school is busy drawing up plans for Phase Three of the project, the Communityscape Exhibition which will take place at the school in early July. Judging by the enthusiasm and thoughtfulness of the children it should be well worth a visit.

**Geoff Aplin**

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## **Our climate is changing . . .**

You all know this – but did you know about the South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SWCCIP)? It was formed in 2001 to build upon previous climate-change initiatives and is a partnership of regional organisations including



Devon County Council, the National Trust, South West Water and the Met Office.

A recent study by SWCCIP, “Warming to the Idea”, assesses the impacts of climate change in the South West on the natural environment, our society and

infrastructure, our economy and local authorities. You can download the study from the website, [www.oursouthwest.com](http://www.oursouthwest.com) and learn more about the work of SWCCIP.

**Alan Huddart**

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## **Walking in the Blackdown Hills**

The Blackdown Hills A.O.N.B. Partnership has planned a series of walks throughout the year so that people can enjoy the beauty of the Blackdowns – and perhaps follow the higher reaches of the Otter occasionally. Ranging from three to eight miles in length, the walks take place both midweek and at weekends; some will be easy, others more challenging. For details of 2007 walks either contact Tim Pitcher, chairman of the Blackdown Hills Walking Group, on 07715-490229 or go to their website at [www.blackdown-hills.net](http://www.blackdown-hills.net) which contains a diary of the walks, information about each one and a membership form that can be downloaded.



## Talks, Walks and Events – a Round-up

### Christmas Party, 18 December 2006

Bicton House resounded to the conversation and laughter of 130 OVA members who had gathered to celebrate early at the annual party on the Monday before Christmas. Master-minded by Nick Speare, who ensured that his P & P Committee members knew exactly what they had to do, the evening was an enormous success, from all points of view.



*Belinda Mountain with Christmas raffle prizes*

*Photo: Mo Bowman*

Everyone enjoyed their meal – including the vegetarians (for whom Christmas is not the easiest time of the year) – the raffle prizes went on and on, while the quiz devised by Alan Huddart really taxed our brains. Then came a surprise ('who or what are the Jurassics?', whispered my neighbour); the answer soon revealed itself in the shape of four (local?) gentlemen who entertained us with

several tuneful songs until it was time for the traditional OVA carols. These, led by Haylor and Ruth Lass, filled the hall to the rafters and beyond. Finally, at 10 p.m. sharp, after a round of applause for the excellent Bicton staff, we reluctantly emerged into the cold winter air feeling that Christmas could not have started better.

PQ

**'Peru, land of the Incas' – talk by Tom Coleman,  
16 January 2007**

Tom Coleman gave us a very entertaining and informative account of his trip to Peru. He chose to do a lot of it the hard way, traipsing up and down Andean slopes at tremendous altitudes and camping out in tents or in primitive bunk-houses. He started with a brief summary of Peruvian history, with the astonishing Incas gaining mastery only around 1400 and slowly controlling the whole west coast until they were overcome by the Conquistadors under Pizzaro in 1532. The Incas never discovered the wheel (there was not much incentive for that on their vertiginous terrain) or bronze or writing. But they were amazingly sophisticated in other ways and their architecture is superbly built using methods that still baffle experts today.

On arrival at Lima airport he reported being faced by 'a group of hard-faced women toting sub-machine guns'. He started on the coast, visiting the islands where guano used to lie 10 feet thick. After years of over-exploitation we were glad to hear that the collection of guano is now strictly controlled and the unique fauna protected. He then visited a canyon over a mile deep and was lucky enough to see one of the rare condors that roost there.

Up on the Altiplano he visited Lake Titicaca, the highest lake in the world at 11,000 feet and some of the incredible man-made floating islands where some Indian tribes still live and fish. It was here that the party slept in Indian huts that, as he said, had no electricity, furniture, water or sanitation. But the ever-intrepid Tom loved it all and seems to thrive on a touch of discomfort. This was followed by a five-day trek through the high Andes, with Indian porters carrying tables and chairs and preparing hot meals at every stop. Your elderly correspondent still felt weak at the knees and starved of oxygen just seeing the passes that had to be crossed and the precipices climbed, despite such incidental luxuries.

The highlight was, of course, Machu Picchu, the former Inca city high up in the Andes, that was never discovered by the Spanish and only eventually reached early in the last century. Today it is almost accessible by narrow-gauge mountain railway, but only by the expedient of changing the points manually and reversing at frequent Y junction up the mountainside, and with a final precipitous bus ride! We could by now understand Tom's disdain for so wimpish a method of travel. The slides he showed of views across the high Andes from Machu Picchu, which sits on an immensely high and narrow ridge of rock, were truly awe inspiring.

Altogether a fascinating evening, with some ecological and environmental lessons even relevant to our tamer Triassic Coast.

**Christopher Briscoe**

### **Bird-Watching Cruise, Exe Estuary, 19 January**

Eighty members of the OVA set off at mid-day on the 'Pride of Exmouth', together with Rod Lawrence who shared some of his wealth of knowledge and experience of wildlife. Winds of up to 100 miles an hour had been felt across the country the day before, so Diane Gee had made a wise choice when she organised the cruise on the River Exe for the Friday. It was still cold and the skies were grey but at least the water was calm and – more important – the birds were out in force.

Rod estimated that we would see some 40 to 50 species of birds and he was probably right. Not only did he know where to find the birds and was able to identify them for us but he gave much information on their way of life.

We started with a look at the sea birds, then headed past Dawlish Warren where Rod explained its importance in protecting the towns and villages along the Exe from flooding. The varieties of birds changed as we travelled up the river, according to the type of food available and the fresh-water sources entering the estuary. After two hours, we reached Topsham where we turned around and headed back to Exmouth at a faster pace, but we did stop to see the oyster-catchers flying home to roost and a number of ducks who had not been there on the way up. We disembarked at Exmouth shortly after 4 p.m. having enjoyed a most informative cruise.

I finish with a reminder for members to accept Rod's recommendations to visit the bird hide at Bowling Green Marsh in Topsham (at high tide) and the bird hide at Dawlish Warren.

**David Huggett**

**‘Walk off Christmas pudding walk’, 31 January**  
Sixteen brave walkers met at Joney’s Cross (which I still refer to as Hawkerland Cross no matter how many times Alan Jones corrects me!). It was cold but bright, a good day for walking.

Striking out northwards across Harpford Common we slowly descended into the mud below, which made the dry road at Benchams doubly welcome, and on by green lanes to Venn Otter church with its beautiful Norman tower. Back down to the river at Harpford, and back on to the East Devon Way. On the crest of the hill the supple poplars still stood in their neat line, but the lovely old beech, battered by the gale-force winds of this winter, had crashed to the ground.



FALLEN BEECH  
AT NEWTON POPPLEFORD  
ON EAST DEVON WAY  
OUR WALK 31 JAN 07

Now the long, long climb took us back towards our starting point, with a short rest on the repaired footbridge at Harpford Hill Plantation. (Thank you, Devon County – and the Parish Paths Partnership!) With a good crowd making good time we arrived back at Joney's Cross ahead of schedule (rare that!).

**Jed Falby**

**'Some Aspects and Gems from our Parish Churches',  
talk by Clive Austing, 13 February**

On a rainy Tuesday night, with deep standing water on the roads, about 35 people turned out for Clive Austing's talk and slide show.

Clive was introduced by Alan Huddart, who explained that his background was in the motor industry. Clive started by explaining that the talk would be on the history, architecture and general interest of churches. Most of the churches featured were in the Home Counties and the north of England.

We were told that there are 16,151 parish churches in the country with 80% being of historic interest, and Clive's photographs certainly proved that they are beautiful buildings. Also almost all were bathed in sunshine so I think the sun must follow him around the country.

A number of the churches had the graves of literary figures in their churchyards, including Lawrence of Arabia, Thomas Hardy and James Bond – unfortunately not Ian Fleming's hero as this Bond died in 1848. Another one of interest was James Silver who was apparently a friend of Robert Louis Stevenson, thus prompting the pirate in *Treasure Island*. A further piece



of history can be found at Bosham church in Sussex where King Canute's daughter is reputed to be buried.

Clive had also photographed a Doom painting. It was in very poor condition, but he explained that with Christ in the centre, the Devil on his left and his followers on the right the parishioners knew what was in store for them if they strayed from the straight and narrow.

Clive knew his subject well and the slides gave us the best possible views of the interior and exterior of the churches. We all had a very enjoyable evening.

**Andy Mack**

**'Images of Dartmoor' – a talk by Tony Burgess,  
6 March 2007**

When the scheduled speaker was stranded in Madagascar after a typhoon forced his cruise ship to take refuge in a remote port, he had the presence of mind to contact our Talks Organiser, Alan Huddart, via the OVA website to present his excuses. Fortunately, it takes more than a typhoon to faze Alan. At very short notice, he was able to find a new speaker, Tony Burgess, who gave an enthralling, if unscheduled, talk. We are very grateful to Alan for his quick thinking, and to Tony for stepping into the breach.

Tony is an experienced Dartmoor National Park guide (and OVA member). His wide-ranging and fascinating talk on 'Images of Dartmoor' included geology, archaeology, natural history and folklore, as well as aspects of life on the moor today. His collection of slides was outstanding showing the moor in all weathers and

moods. Stone circles and beehive huts, adders and dodders (a gorse parasite), leats and cleaves, bogs and quarries – even a pixie – he had photographed them all!

Tony's knowledge of Dartmoor, gleaned over many years roaming the moor, was certainly comprehensive. We learned about remote and unfamiliar places, as well as many new things about familiar places. For those tempted to see for themselves, he explained the ease of access (or lack of it) to places of special interest. He was able humorously to convey a great deal of interesting and useful information interspersed with some wonderful yarns. His enthusiasm was infectious and will surely have inspired many of his listeners explore this unique and fascinating area almost on our doorstep.

**Brian Turnbull**

**Woodbury and Bicton Commons, and Yettington  
Walk, 10 March 2007**

Twenty-eight walkers met at Crooks Plantation. The car park was a bit crowded, but we managed to fit everyone in. The weather was excellent! There had been a frost over night and the breeze was initially cool. It soon warmed up and several of our walkers began to remove layers of clothing.

After a brief description of the route and an announcement of the litter gathering party by Robert Sellin, we ventured up towards Four Firs. The pace was moderate, but after a short steep bit the party split into two separate groups, several yards apart. At the 'Airfield' car park we paused to let the rearmost group catch up.

Shortly after that we turned left towards the main road and crossed it.

We stopped for a coffee break at about 10.50 at a cross of tracks. The ground was dry here and rucksacks could be placed on the ground. Overall the terrain was dryer than on Thursday when I did my test walk. The views as we walked down the valley were clear and we had glimpses of the sea.

We walked on down a pebble track to the stream and crossed it where there is a concrete placement lined with fibre-glass. We then toiled upwards out of the valley to the Exmouth road from Yettington, where a new culvert under the road now drains what use to be a large puddle.

Just a short stretch of muddy track, across Hayes Lane and we joined the lane to Hayes Barton. Here we stopped to admire the house. (There is an interesting little book in the Westcountry Studies Library in Exeter that contains Sir Walter's family tree. It was researched about 1863 at the College of Arms. It is not on the open shelves, so you have to request it. Sir Walter was the second son by his father's second wife, Catherine, daughter of Sir Philip Champernon of Modbury and relict of Otto Gilbert of Compton. A son by her previous marriage was Sir Humphrey Gilbert, half-brother to Walter, who introduced the young Walter to the court of Elizabeth I.)

We continued along Hayes Lane and turned down to Hayes Mill, crossed the same stream again, and went up the road beside Bicton Arena and thus back to Crook's Plantation. A very pleasant morning walk.

**Shane Badham**

### **\*\*\*Note on Newsletter Contributions\*\*\***

Contributions from members are very welcome and should be sent to me (see below) by the 10th of the month preceding publication, i.e. 10 June for the July issue, 10 September for the October issue, 10 December for the January issue and 10 March for the April issue.

The most convenient format for receiving items is as a Word attachment to an e-mail, but typed or hand-written pieces are also perfectly acceptable. When inserting the 'subject' for an e-mail it helps if you can be very precise and put, e.g.: 'OVA Newsletter, report of ..., article on' ... etc. It also helps if the copy, preferably in Times Roman, is kept plain, without too much bold or underlining, as this will be dealt with at the editing stage.

Reports of walks and talks should not normally exceed 400 words.

Many thanks.

Pat Quaife, (pat@patfrancis.wanadoo.co.uk)  
1 North Street, Topsham, Exeter EX3 0AP  
Tel. (01392)-873251

*(please cut this form carefully – the reverse is the Gift Aid Declaration)*

**OVA GREAT TREE DAY**  
**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007 at Bicton College at 1pm**  
**(main entrance).**

**Tickets £5.00 each available from 12<sup>th</sup> April from:**

Rowan Turnbull

Hayes

Church Road

Colaton Raleigh

Sidmouth

Devon EX10 0LH (tel. 01395 567339)

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at £5.00 each ( including tea).

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.

**(If completing both this form and the Gift Aid Declaration overleaf please send to Rowan Turnbull first.)**

**Gift Aid Declaration**  
**Otter Valley Association**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

I would like the Otter Valley Association to reclaim tax on all my subscriptions and donations since 6 April 2000, and any future subscriptions and donations until further notice.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Note**

You must pay UK income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount the OVA will reclaim (currently 28p for each £1 donated).  
You may cancel this Declaration at any time.

Registered Charity Number 278266

**If only completing the Gift Aid Declaration please return it to:**  
**Hon, Treasurer, 8 Swains Road**  
**Budleigh Salterton**  
**Devon**  
**EX9 6HZ**

**June 2 Sat - 10am - MODERATE**

Broadhembury village square. ST 102 047. 6 miles - 2½ h. One climb up, one down. May be muddy.

*Walk leader:* Patricia Doran 445954.

**June 16 Sat - 10am - ENERGETIC, day walk, bring lunch**

East Budleigh CP. SY 065 849. 9 miles - 5 h. Otterton, Colaton Raleigh, Woodbury Common, Hayes Wood.

*Walk leader:* Stan Herbert 445684

**June 30 Sat - 10am - MODERATE**

Peak Hill CP. SY 109 872. 4 miles - 2 h. Mutter's Moor, Bulverton Hill. May be muddy.

*Walk leader:* Patricia Doran 445954.

**July 4 Wed - 10am - MODERATE**

Joney's Cross CP, SY 057 898. 4½ miles - 2½ h.

Commons' ponds for insects (esp. damsel and dragon flies).

Exposed, bring sun protection if necessary.

*Walk leader:* Robert Sellin 443283.

**July 18 Wed - 10am - EASY. Artists' walk / pub lunch**

Bicton Home Farm SY 075 857. 4 miles - 2½ h. Old roads, green lanes, riverside. Short stops for sketching/demos. Optional social lunch at the King's Arms, Otterton.

*Walk leader:* Jed Falby 445455.

**July 28 Sat - 10am - ENERGETIC, day walk, bring lunch**

Budleigh Salterton free CP, SY 061 821. 9½ miles - 6 h. Coast path to Exmouth, return via old railway line.

*Walk leader:* Shane Badham 567531.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & OFFICE HOLDERS

|                       |                |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Chairman</b>       | Brian Turnbull | (01395)-567339 |
| <b>Vice-Chairman</b>  | Nick Speare    | 443944         |
| <b>Hon. Secretary</b> | Clive Bowman   | 446892         |
| <b>Hon. Treasurer</b> | 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 |
| Otterton           | Wendy & John Winson | 568274 |

### **Committee Chairmen**

|                       |               |        |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------|
| Built Environment     | Geoff Aplin   | 442951 |
| Footpaths             | Alan Jones    | 568339 |
| Natural Environment   | Robert Sellin | 443283 |
| Programme & Publicity | Nick Speare   | 443944 |

|                               |                                     |              |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Membership Secretary</b>   | Barrie Papworth                     | 568176       |
| <b>Publicity Secretary</b>    | Mo Bowman                           | 446892       |
| <b>Social Secretary</b>       | Rowan Turnbull                      | 567339       |
| <b>Talks Secretary</b>        | Alan Huddart                        | 446761       |
| <b>Newsletter Distributor</b> | Gill Speare                         | 443944       |
| <b>Newsletter Editor</b>      | 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

111

**Miss F Matty**

**Sunrise Shepherds Lane Colaton Raleigh**

**Sidmouth**

**EX10 0LP**