

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

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Cover illustration by Jed Falby (story, p.8)



ACTING-CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

"May you live in interesting times" is an old Japanese curse and while I was not exactly hoping that my last few months as Vice Chairman would be boring, I was not anticipating them being quite as "interesting" as they have become. I would especially like to thank my fellow Officers, Clive Bowman and Martin Smith, for their help, advice and support in the transition since Belinda's resignation. I can promise that, as a team, we and the rest of the Executive will do our best to steward the OVA safely through to the AGM.

This brings me to my main concern: as Vice Chairman I will have served my full term and will be standing down at the AGM on May 7th. This means that the OVA needs to find a new Chairman and a new Vice Chairman. If you would be willing to be nominated, or know someone who you feel would be suitable for either of these posts, I need to hear from you as soon as possible.

On a lighter note; by the time you receive this Newsletter Christmas will be over but I would still like to wish you a very happy New Year. On your behalf I would also like to say "Thank you!" to Pat Quaife for whom this is her last appearance as Editor. Pat has guided the Newsletter through five years of evolution to the quality it has achieved today. She has done a wonderful job and I hope that I can maintain her standard when I take over as Editor after the AGM.

Nick Speare



From the Editor

As I write, early in December, it is three months to the day since my kidney operation in the R.D. & E. Hospital and I'm pleased to say that I've completely recovered and feel back to full strength. I

would like to thank OVA friends and colleagues very much for all their delightful cards and good wishes – very cheering when one is (temporarily) at a low ebb.

From the point of view of the Newsletter the operation could hardly have been worse timed. But Nick Speare, pen in hand, stepped into the breach and – as you know – produced a splendid October issue that was full of interest and illustrations (my weak point!).

I enjoyed the Portuguese ‘Poem of the Tree’, with its concept of humanity passing by while trees continue to provide us with ‘the bread of goodness’. In similar vein, Coleridge’s 1793 ‘Sonnet to the River Otter’ which appears in this issue (as it did in the very first OVA Newsletter) reminds us that the Otter has flowed through East Devon for centuries and will do so long after we have all passed on. However, despite our days being numbered, we can still keep a record of past events, publications and people, which is what Robin Holt does for the OVA in his capacity as archivist and which he writes about in subsequent pages. And, for those of us unable to attend the mid-November screening in Budleigh of Al Gore’s film *An Inconvenient Truth* and the evening talk, Norman Crossland’s masterly summary of those events draws our attention to the overwhelming importance of combating climate change.

It’s hard to believe, but with the publication of this Newsletter, I will have acted as editor for a full five years, a period which started with the April 2003 issue and when Alan Ford was OVA chairman. So it’s time to rest and reflect and pass on the editor’s pen to Nick Speare, who, I’m delighted to say, has accepted it with alacrity and enthusiasm. I have to thank Nick enormously for all the help and technical support which he has given me over the years and wish him and the Newsletter well in the future.

Pat Quaife

Message from Belinda Mountain

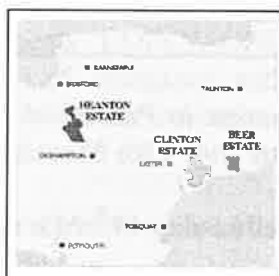
I should like to thank all those who have sent me kind messages, letters, 'phone calls and flowers for thinking of me recently when times were tough. I have not been able to reply to everybody, but I am sure the OVA will carry on going from strength to strength in the future under the very capable hands of Nick Speare and the remaining Executive Committee.

Forthcoming OVA Talks

Wednesday 30th January at 7:30 pm at the Budleigh Salterton Public Hall

**800 years of Clinton Devon Estates
(1299 to 2099)**

**John Varley – CEO, Clinton Devon
Estates**



Clinton Devon Estates, one of the oldest in Britain, was formed in 1299 after John de Clinton's 1297 victory over the Scots at Falkirk.

The speaker, John Varley, will reflect on the impact the Rolle and Clinton families, and their estates, have had on the management of land, society and politics from before the 16th Century to the present day. Focusing on the Lower Otter Valley but also considering impacts further afield, the talk will be wide ranging and as well as considering the past, will present the current approach to management and more importantly the strategy for the future – balancing the need to be responsible stewards of what has been inherited from previous generations whilst investing for the benefit of the next generation and beyond.

Come and hear about the influence of the Rolle and Clinton Estates, from before the 16th Century to the 21st and beyond, by the man in charge, John Varley.

Thursday 21st February at 7:30 pm at Otterton Village Hall

Illustrated History of Exeter

Tony Burges – Exeter Red-Coat Guide

Last year Tony gave us a very successful talk “Images of Dartmoor” and by popular request we have his follow-up talk on the history of Exeter.

Change to Published Programme – Re-arranged Talk and New Date (not 12th March, but now...)

Wednesday 19th March at 7:30 pm at East Budleigh Village Hall

The Sand Dunes of Braunton (Wild Garden)

Dr Tegwyn Harris

Dr Harris is a biologist at Exeter University and the author of books on sea life and the Mediterranean. In 2005 he gave us a very entertaining talk, in his own inimitable style, on the salt marshes of the Otter estuary.

Alan Huddart
Talks Secretary



Natural Environment

Annual Litter-Pick on Lower Otter Estuary Saturday 5 April 2008

The Spring 2008 OVA litter-pick will take place on Saturday 5 April at 10.00 a.m. All members, their guests and offspring (if accompanied) welcome. Sorry, no dogs, as this is a nature reserve.

We assemble in the Lime Kiln car-park at 10.00 a.m.; two hours should see the work completed if enough helpers turn up. The date has been chosen because a) low water is at mid-day and b) it is not Easter Saturday.

Please wear old clothing, bring wellies (fairly essential) and rubber or gardening gloves and your own refreshments. EDDC/AONB have kindly agreed, as usual, to provide lots of assistance with bags and bin liners and to organise the removal of the rubbish at the end of the morning.

Please put this date in your 2008 diary now, as the next issue of the Newsletter will only just reach you before the day.

I look forward to seeing a goodly number of member on the day! The litter-pick is something of real value that we can do for our area.

Robert Sellin

The Impacts of Climate Change in SW England

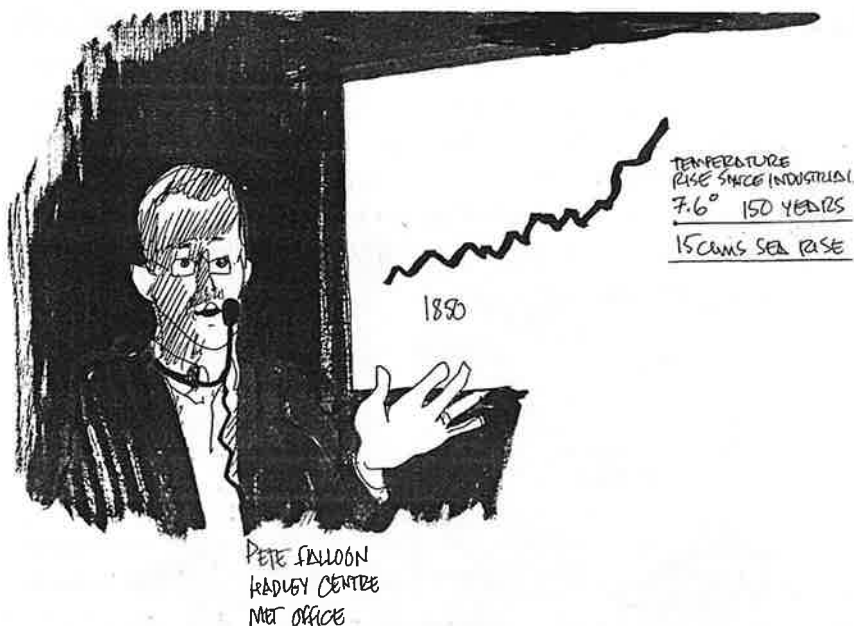
Dr. Pete Falloon, a climate impacts scientist from the Hadley Research Centre at the Met. Office in Exeter, gave a talk to OVA members and guests on the expected impacts of climate change in the 21st century, with special reference to SW England. His talk, in the B.S. Public Hall on 14th November, was attended by 160 people and was preceded by Al Gore's film on global warming *An Inconvenient Truth*. In the interval between these two events refreshments were provided by the OVA Social Committee.

An Inconvenient Truth won an Oscar as the best documentary of 2006 and most scientists agree that it conveyed the science correctly. Some of the main features of the film are:

- CO₂ concentrations measured at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii from 1958 until the present day show a steadily rising trend.
- Data from Antarctic ice cores show CO₂ concentrations are now higher than at any time in the last 650,000 years.
- The retreat of numerous glaciers world-wide.
- Temperature records show that the ten hottest years since 1880 have all occurred in the last 14 years

Since the film was made the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) has confirmed that most of global warming is attributable to man-made greenhouse gases. If man-made emissions are not curbed severe effects of climate change will be felt world-wide.

Dr Falloon described the work of The Hadley Research Centre (HRC) where a staff of 160 use 'supercomputers' to model the earth's climate and thus monitor changes, predict future changes and attribute these to natural and man-made influences. By 2080



in the SW of England there will be 30% more rainfall in winter but 55% less rainfall in summer and there will be more extreme effects of weather. There are 1000km of coastline in the SW that may be subject to coastal erosion as a result of climate change. Possible effects and problems were illustrated by reference to the National Trust site at Godfrey, St. Ives. Impacts of climate change may also affect agriculture, fisheries, tourism and leisure activities,

horticulture, trees and forestry, biodiversity and stream invertebrates. Some of these changes have already begun. Oak leaves are appearing earlier than ever, some species of birds are arriving earlier, while others are being displaced to more northern latitudes. Changes in the distribution and migration patterns of a wide range of animal and plant species have been observed and attributed to recent changes in climate.

At the end of Dr Falloon's talk there was a lively question and answer session. The subject is developing and changing almost as fast as the weather. Before this Newsletter is printed a new international programme on climate change will have been debated in Bali. Countries such as Australia, the U.S., India and China will be involved and their actions will be vital in efforts to ameliorate the effects of greenhouse gases on the world's climate.

Norman Crossland

The Sad Tale of Two Hornbeams

On a wild, windy and wet day in late November, two drivers were going far too fast towards Budleigh Salterton on the East Budleigh Road. The one in front attempted to turn off to Kersbrook and was hit by the car behind. The impact sent one car spinning towards Kersbrook (where there is space to spin) while the other ran off the left side where new crash barriers stop errant cars from plunging down the embankment.

Unfortunately, this car just hit the end of the barrier and then plunged on, now on the wrong side of the barrier. Alas, this is just where the OVA had planted and cared for its share of the Millennium Avenue trees. The car snapped one seven-year-old hornbeam completely off and flattened a second into the mud.

After the police and two-trucks had left, a neighbour phoned – Yes, the OVA! So on the wild, windy and wet morning after nameless OVA volunteers tidied up the site (nothing could be done for the snapped tree) and by dint of great effort and some cunning Naval rope-work the poor hornbeam was hauled back to the vertical and moored in place. Hopefully, with most of its roots intact it may yet survive. As you drive past, keep an eye on it and wish it well.



Photo: Mo Bowman

The Countryside Group at East Devon District Council is now trying to find a seven-year-old hornbeam to replace the other.

Jed Falby



Footpaths

For some time now parish footpaths representatives have been complaining that it was becoming increasingly difficult to get a grant for parish rights of way which was sufficient for the work needed. The culminating disaster was when Otterton applied to join P3 (Parish Paths Partnership). Otterton has a comparatively small mileage of paths, mostly not in too bad a state, but great lengths of UCRs (green lanes) needing a great deal of work. For years County had been trying to persuade Otterton to join. Then when the parish did apply it was offered a derisory grant. Or so it seemed.

At the Parish Paths Workshop in Musbury early this month Colin Campbell found an opportunity to ask why grants to parishes were being cut and whether this would continue. The answer was clear – well, fairly clear – but not welcome. The budget for the partnership had been reduced and would probably be reduced further.

The partnership has resulted in enormous improvements in our rights of way. In 2000 about one third of our paths were in a satisfactory condition. Now it is about three quarters. The grants do not simply put right problems already existing on our paths. New problems, especially new obstructions, arise continually. Such problems, together with normal growth of vegetation, mean that if funding continues to be reduced our paths will gradually fall back towards their earlier state.

This is particularly unfair in that the success of the Parish Paths Partnership won the county a prize of a million pounds of government funding. Of this only a couple of hundred thousand pounds was ploughed back into footpath work; most of the prize went to other budgets in the county.

(continued on page 15)

Dates for your Diary – January to March 2008



January 12th, Sat. – 10 am – MODERATE WALK, New Year's Lunch, Knowle Village Hall CP, SY052827. 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Commons and woods; may be muddy. Optional drink/lunch at the Dog & Donkey, Knowle. *Walk leader:* Steve Hagger, 01395-442631.



January 16th, Wed. – 10 am – MODERATE WALK. Newton Poppleford CP, SY086897. 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Southerton, Venn Ottery, Tipton St John. Woodland, green lanes, riverside. *Walk leader:* David Nangle, 01404-811752.



January 26th, Sat. – 10 am – ENERGETIC WALK. Joney's Cross, SY057898. 6 miles, 3 hours. East Devon Way. *Walk leader:* Jed Falby, 01395-445455.




January 30th, Wed. – 7.30 pm – TALK at Budleigh Salterton Public Hall: 'History of Clinton Devon Estates from 1299'. *Speaker:* John Varley, Clinton Devon Estates Director. With New Year welcome drink at 7.15 pm.





February 6th, Wed. – 10 am – MODERATE WALK. Squabmoor Reservoir CP, SY038843, 5 miles, 2.5 hours. Around commons and through the woods. May be muddy and stony. *Walk leader:* Brian Leveridge, 01395-443358.





February 13th, Wed. – 10 am – MODERATE WALK/Optional pub lunch. The Malsters Arms CP, Woodbury. SY010871. 4.75 miles, 2.5 hours. Hogsbrook, Woodbury Park, Rushmoor Wood (short section may be muddy). *Walk leader:* Bettina Wilson, 01395-578450.


 **February 21st, Thurs. - 7.30 pm – TALK at Otterton Village Hall: 'Illustrated History of Exeter'. *Speaker:* Tony Burges (Exeter Red-Coat Guide and OVA member)**

 **February 23rd, Sat. – 10 am – MODERATE WALK.** Kersbrook (under railway bridge). SY069830. 5.5 miles, 2.5 hours. Coast path, old railway track. *Walk leader:* Shane Badham, 01395- 567531

 **March 5th, Wed. 10 am – EASY WALK/Pub lunch.** East Budleigh CP. SY065849. 2.5 hours. Town walk. Optional lunch at the Sir Walter Raleigh. *Walk leader:* Stan Herbert, 01395-445648.


 **March 15th, Sat. 10 am – MODERATE WALK.** East Budleigh CP, SY065849. 5.5 miles, 2.75 hours. Attractive oval-shaped walk east of East Budleigh. *Walk leader:* Peter Hills, 01395-568576.


 **March 19th, Wed. 7.30 pm – TALK at East Budleigh Village Hall: 'The Sand Dunes of Braunton (Wild Garden). *Speaker:* Dr Tegwyn Harris.**


 **March 22nd, Sat. 10 am – ENERGETIC DAY WALK, bring lunch.** Lime Kiln CP (charges apply), SY073820. 10 miles, 6 hours. Colaton Raleigh by cliffs and common, return by the river. *Walk leader:* Brian Turnbull, 01395-567339.


April to June 2008

 **April 2, Wed - 10am - MODERATE**
Upahms Plantation small CP, SY 045859. 5 miles - 3 hours. Over the commons.
Walk leader: Jed Falby, 01395 445455

 **April 10, Thurs. – TALK at Newton Poppleford Church Hall:**
'Discover Bystock Nature Reserve'. *Speaker:* David Brock of Devon Wildlife Trust. (Also follow-up field-trip round Bystock Nature Reserve on 19 July. Full details later.)

 **April 19, Sat. - 10am - MODERATE**
Newton Poppleford CP, SY 086897. 4½ miles - 2¼ hours. A walk with beautiful views over the Otter Valley to Venn Ottery Church. Almost entirely on footpaths through woods, commons and farmland.
Walk leader: Steve Hagger, 01395 442631

 **April 26, Sat. - 10am - MODERATE / Pub lunch**
Peak Hill CP, SY 109872. 4 miles – 2 hours. Bulverton Hill and Mutter's Moor. May be muddy. Optional social lunch in Otterton.
Walk leaders: Phil and Chris Ashby, 01395 512339

 **May 7, Wed - 10am - ENERGETIC / Day walk, bring lunch**
Haldon Hills Picnic Site, SX 916814 (A38, A380 for approx. 1 mile, turn left at top of hill at new bridge, after approx. 1 mile picnic site on right just beyond junction to right).
8 miles - 4½ hours (can be reduced to 6 miles by returning to CP after lunch stop). Easy walking on level forest tracks with occasional road crossings, wild flowers, superb views across the Exe to Portland Bill. *Walk leader:* John Daly, 01395 279571.

May 7th Wednesday – 7.30pm - AGM

Peter Hall Budleigh Salterton



May 17, Sat. - 10am - MODERATE

Joney's Cross CP, SY 057898. 4 miles - 2 ½ hours. Around the RSPB Reserve on Aylesbeare common, looking out for birds and butterflies.

Walk leader: Ray Lovett, 01395 446074



May 31, Sat. - 10am - MODERATE

Crook Plantation, Stowford, SY 057866. 5 miles - 2 ½ hours. Yettington, Bicton and Woodbury commons. May be muddy.

Walk leader: Shane Badham, 01395 567531



June 7, Sat. - 10am - MODERATE

East Budleigh CP, SY 065849. 5 miles - 2 ½ hours. Hayes Lane, woods and commons.

Walk leader: Stan Herbert, 01395 445648



June 18, Wed. - 9.30am - ENERGETIC / Day walk, Pub or picnic lunch

Newton Poppleford CP, SY 086897. Share cars to West Bexington, SY 531864. 9 m - 4½ hours + lunch break in Abbotsbury. Walk along coast path and return by the Ridgeway.

Walk leader: Bettina Wilson, 01395 578450



June 24, Tuesday - 5pm - EASY / Midsummer picnic

Budleigh Salterton Free CP, SY 061821. 4 miles - 2 hours. One incline up to the old railway line, riverside, (optional) beach picnic.

Walk leader: Diane Gee, 01395 444388

Otterton may, however, not be such a hopeless case as it seems. In

conversations at the workshop I discovered that there may have been a misunderstanding about what Otterton was offered. In the view of County it was not an annual grant but a temporary grant to cover the end of the financial year. It did not include UCRs (green lanes) which had still to be negotiated. County may make a further offer towards the end of this financial year (February). The final grant would include amounts in respect of green lanes but this would depend on how much each lane contributes to the network as a whole. When I pointed out that much of the work not covered by the grant would have to be done directly by the county I was told that this had the advantage that the money would come out of another budget, so that it would not reduce the funding available for parishes already in the partnership.

Alan Jones

Note from Ed.: it's been good to see Alan pictured in the *Journal* recently (11 October and 22 November) above his articles on walks in the Otter Valley (and I think there are more to come). Let's hope they encourage people to get out and about on foot and perhaps buy our publication *Twelve Walks in the Lower Valley*.

The OVA Archivist

What seems a long time ago now, but in reality is only about six years, John Lee, who was then Chairman of the OVA, said to me that he thought it would be a good idea if the OVA had an archivist, and would I like to take on the position. On asking him what the task would entail, he assured me that it would just be holding on to any bits and pieces about the OVA that it seemed unwise to throw away. In a fit of keenness I said I would be happy to take on the role, and I have been the archivist ever since – though I have to say that I feel that the term is somewhat grandiose for what I actually do.

During this time several people have passed on to me items that they thought might be relevant – usually with the remark, “I can see absolutely no point in the OVA holding on to this but I would like someone else to make the decision about throwing it away.” To this end, I have kept anything that seemed to me to be either unique or to be of lasting interest, but confidentially destroyed anything that did not fit into those categories

So, what kind of things, have I kept? Well, apart from various odd bits and pieces not worth itemising here, obviously I have kept copies of all the Newsletters going back to the first one. This was called an Information Sheet and was published in October 1979 - it consisted of 12 pages, and on the back page is the ‘Sonnet to the River Otter’ by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

It was another two years before the Newsletter got back to up to 12 pages again, all the intervening Newsletters being of eight pages. I have created an index to all the items in the Newsletters so if anyone wants to find anything in particular, it should be possible. I also have spare copies of most of the Newsletters so if anyone would like to borrow them for any reason that would be fine.

Having read through all the past issues of the Newsletter I have produced what seemed to me to be relevant lists – so that I was able to pinpoint when the OVA was about to listen to its 200th lecture (May ‘05) and go on its 500th walk (March ‘07). I have also produced lists of all the OVA Officers and their roles back to the beginning of the Association.

Apart from the Newsletters, I have kept copies of the books, booklets, maps and pamphlets that the OVA has published – at least all that I know about – including several different editions of *Twelve Walks in the Lower Otter Valley*. For some of the maps I also have the proof copies prior to printing. I have also kept a

scrapbook of any OVA press cuttings / photographs that I have come across and this has been supplemented by various older items that have been passed on to me. In this arena Dr. Anita Jennings kindly allowed me access to her books of cuttings about the early days of the OVA and these I have transcribed so that they are also available.

Finally, if anyone has any item they feel should be kept in the OVA archive please do get in touch with me on 01395-567560.

Robin Holt

A New Lease of Life for Anchoring Hill

Clare James

(Assistant Land-Agent, Clinton Devon Estates)

Over the last year Clinton Devon Estates farm team has been hard at work restoring the grazing land at Anchoring Hill. This delightful spot wraps itself around Otterton, providing a stunning backdrop to the village and a beautiful place to walk. Now managed in-hand by Clinton Farms the area is primarily grazed for sheep, from the flock at Ashtree Farm.

As part of taking the land back in-hand radical work has been done to control weeds and rabbits as well as remove dead and unsafe trees. We would like to thank all the residents in Otterton for their consideration and tolerance during this time. This work has now been completed and the farm team are fencing parts of the hill and restocking the hedges with native species to stop gaps and restore the hedgerows to their former glory.

Many of you will remember the old orchard at Anchoring Hill; it is the Estate's intention to replant native fruit trees here to replace what has been lost over the years.

We hope you continue to enjoy using the footpaths that cross Anchoring Hill, but please remember to keep dogs on leads at all times when stock are present.

Sonnet to the River Otter

Dear native Brook! Wild Streamlet of the West!
How many various fated-years have past,
What happy and what mournful hours, since last
I skimmed the smooth thin stone along thy breast,
Numbering its light leaps! Yet so deep imprest
Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine eyes
I never shut amid the sunny ray,
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,
And beaded sand that veined with various dyes
Gleamed through thy bright transparence! On my way
Visions of Childhood oft have ye Beguiled
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs.
Ah! That once more I were a careless child!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (written c. 1793 at the age of 21)



Walks and Events – a Round-up

Totnes and Sharpham Visit, 7 September 2007

Those who missed the Totnes trip missed my inauguration as a tour guide. Thank you to the couples who shouted when the coach was leaving without two ladies. Not a good start. I look for my 'mike' but, silly me, I didn't get one. Once dropped off at the top of Totnes, everyone vanished. Where did they go? I chased down the High Street, running into shops after presents to find that I only had just enough time for a cheese butt down by the river.

Have you seen the road to Sharpham? It's a track, but what a view when you get there. We were quickly off to see the vines. Was it up to the guide to smack the hands of those scrumping or turn a blind eye? Guess which I did? Then it was skirts up and over the bunny fence down to the river, with a beautiful walk back. The men were now being very gallant helping the ladies over the stiles.

Hot and tired, we arrived back to start the wine-tasting. I was not sure which were best, the wines or the cheeses so I bought some of both, after being assured I could walk home with a box. So a happy crowd arrived back at Budleigh and off I walked, the box of wine in my hand. Half-way home: a smash, the balloon had opened and out fell two bottles. The mice were very happy by the Croquet Club that night. I arrived home saying, 'I've had a lovely day until a few minutes ago!'

This was not the end. I took a photograph of the smashed bottles and broken box and sent it to Sharpham. Much to my surprise, a week later a box arrived with an apology and two bottles of wine. Most unexpected.

So top marks for the trip and top marks, Sharpham. If you are good at reversing your car, I recommend you go – it's well worth it. And was I good guide? The group told me the power went to my head, so maybe not.

Mary Johnson



photo: Shirley Cambridge

Hawkerland Brakes, Canterbury Green, Stoneyford walk, Wednesday 19 September

Since most OVA walks take place in the morning, it was gratifying to see 15 walkers gather at Hawkerland Cross at the appointed hour of 2.30 pm for an afternoon walk in dry but overcast conditions.

The East Devon Way long-distance footpath passes Hawkerland Cross. We followed the Way westwards and upwards onto Colaton Raleigh Common for about a mile before turning north along Kingsell Lane to Canterbury Green. After a short stretch in single file along the busy B3180, a footpath soon appeared leading east through dense woodland. This opened out into a delightful clearing with unexpected glimpses of the sea. Emerging from the woods onto Hawkerland Common, we paused for refreshment near Joneys Cross to enjoy the fine view. Following the invisible boundary between the parishes of Newton Poppleford and Colaton Raleigh southwards brought us to the converted Mark Rolle cottages at Stoneyford. From there, a few minutes stroll returned us to our starting point.

Brian Turnbull

OVA Map and Compass Course, 6 November

The Map and Compass course was very successful with a total of 20 people attending. It was most ably run by Tony Burges, who managed to hit just about the right level for the expertise of participants. The course involved an evening getting to grips with map-reading and basic compass work, with a four-hour practical session near Aylesbeare Common putting the knowledge into practice. I am sure that everyone present, no matter the level of

their individual skills found the course informative and enjoyable, and thanks should go to Tony Burges for doing such a good job.

John Winson

Beacon Hill, an energetic walk, Saturday 27 October

It wasn't cold and it wasn't raining, so that made a good start. The day was heavy grey, with low clouds which didn't bode well for good visibility.

Eighteen hardy souls set out from the Bowd Inn, heading up the long sloping road towards Beacon Hill. I don't know about the others but I was already breathing hard before the climb up to join the East Devon Way. The path along East Hill is marked by the lines of very old beech trees with a carpet of autumn leaves underfoot. Our first stop was at White Cross which normally has spectacular views of all Devon, reaching to the tors of Dartmoor; today everyone took my word for it, since the mist almost hid Ottery St Mary just two (as the crow flies) miles away.

Following the East Devon Way along the ridge that branches off to the east, we deviated to enjoy one of my favourite spots, 'Old Baldy'. Almost every hill in this part of Devon wears a crown of trees, but Bald Hill is as bald (and wind-swept) as its name. The view is a 360-degree panorama of East Devon, from the golden colours of the turning oaks to the far-off silver sea, with Sidbury sitting down there on the Sid Valley floor. Downhill, turning back south past Filcombe Farm (no short cuts allowed!) and Burscombe Farm (dogs!) we then faced the last climb – oh, but it's steep and even the stiles have flights of steps up to them. But Core Hill is the promised summit of this walk, leading to glorious downhill grades all the way back to the Bowd Inn.



THE OVA AT THE SUMMIT
BALD-HILL 27 OCT 07



We had planned a 'social lunch' and our chairman Belinda was there to welcome new members. Not all my hearty crew stayed (perhaps worn out?) but those of us who did enjoyed a generous ploughman's and coffee. It was so good resting those weary limbs that I thoroughly recommend a 'social lunch' after an OVA walk.

Jed Falby

Weston and Coast Path walk, 17 November

A goodly number of holiday-makers or people on family visits augmented the OVA walkers today. They had seen the walk advertised on various noticeboards and decided to join us – an encouragement to those responsible for publicity.

I had lost my voice almost totally, but otherwise felt fine. I wrote my leader's preamble out on paper and found a volunteer to be my mouthpiece! We were very fortunate with the weather – bright initially and then after 30 minutes virtually non-stop sunshine. Going out by the coastal route, we had good views across to Torbay and of the remains of the *Napoli*. Returning inland, we enjoyed some wonderful autumn colours in the trees.

The party must have enjoyed the walk as they opted – purely voluntarily (or was I over-persuasive?) – to do a detour towards the end which added to the time, the hill-climbing and the mud.

Peter Hills

Ottertton and Dotton walk, 21 November

The sun shone brightly after torrential rain the day before, and 25 people had a lovely autumn walk along the Otter from Ottertton to Dotton, where the advance party saw a kingfisher. We all admired the Mark Rolle farms on the road back to the river. Fifteen of us ended the walk with a convivial meal at the King's Arms, the perfect way to finish the morning.

Nicky Daniel

Christmas Dinner

88 revellers gathered at Bicton on Saturday 15th December for the OVA Christmas Dinner. It may have been very cold outside but the atmosphere inside was warm and congenial. The starter was originally cold melon but the Chef had provided cock-a-leekie soup at the last minute to give a warming alternative for those who wanted it.



Photo: Mo Bowman

After a splendid festive meal, a fiendish quiz exercised our little grey cells to use up some of the calories we had taken on board. This was won by Ruth Lass with an impressively high score. Jed Falby then provided us with much amusement by doing a wonderful impression of of a bingo caller as he drew the raffle results.

Finally with tummy and brain well toned we completed our Christmas warm up with some deep breathing voice exercises as we lustily sang carols led by Haylor Lass and accompanied by Ruth Lass on the organ.

The evening had gone well and warmed by good food, good company and good entertainment we made our way home thus insulated against the cold night air.

Nick Speare

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICE HOLDERS

Executive Committee		01395-
Acting-Chairman	Nick Speare	443944
Hon. Secretary	Clive Bowman	446892
Hon. Treasurer	Martin Smith	442333

Representing the Parish of

Budleigh Salterton	Neville & Maureen Lister	444269
East Budleigh	Bill Ridgeway	442330
Colaton Raleigh	Alan Jones	568339
Newton Poppleford	Haylor Lass	568786
Otterton	Wendy & John Winson	568274

Committee Chairmen

Built Environment	Geoff Aplin	442951
Footpaths	Colin Campbell	568343
Natural Environment	Robert Sellin	443283
Programme & Publicity	Nicky Daniel	445960

Other Officers

Membership Secretary	Barrie Papworth	568176
Publicity Officer	Helen Tickle	443901
Talks Secretary	Alan Huddart	446761
Walks Organiser	Diane Gee	444388
Newsletter Distributor	Gill Speare	443944
Newsletter Editor:	this issue, Patricia Quaife	01392-873251
	from April 2008, Nick Speare	443944
	nspeare@btconnect.com	

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.