

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

PO Box 70 Budleigh Salterton EX9 6WN
www.ova.org.uk



Members turn out to launch the Interpretation Panels

Summer Edition

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The cover photo, and many others in this edition, were supplied by Mo Bowman. Other photos, of walks and foraging, by Caroline Allen Rob Jerrard and Haylor Lass.

The editor welcomes photos from members, particularly of walks, preferably by email in jpg format.

**Late News:** Apple Harvest Day at Sunnyhay Fruit Farm, Sanctuary Lane, Woodbury, EX5 1EX on Bank Holiday Monday 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2012 from 2.00pm. Welcome family, friends and dogs. Teas and Apple Juice

# Chairman's Message

**T**HE BUDLEIGH SALTERTON Town Council's Jubilee project, the refurbishment of the shelter next to the Longboat cafe with the OVA inspired Interpretation Panels has been formally opened. Please go and look at it if you have not already done so. I think you will agree that for a modest sum of money, a lick of paint and some imagination a rundown building can be transformed. No need for demolition and the erection of an "iconic" building to regenerate an area.



The OVA would dearly love to undertake a project in one of the villages in our area. Your Executive Committee is aware that it is very much dominated by Budleigh Salterton residents and is anxious that more members from the villages join the committee. We need the local knowledge that one can only acquire from living in a place.

*Continued overleaf*

The new planning guidelines in the National Planning Policy Framework include an element of local input. This takes the form of a “Neighbourhood Plan” where inhabitants of an area can decide how they would like their neighbourhood to develop. This plan, when approved by the District Council, must then be consulted when making decisions on planning applications. The OVA think that this is a wonderful opportunity to influence our environment and have written to the four Parish Councils and the Town Council in the area offering to provide some volunteer input and also a modest financial input to the cost of producing the document. Please contact me if you feel strongly about your area, what you would like to see and also if you could help.

Following this, your committee would also like to set up a planning advisory group to advise it on planning applications. Once again, local knowledge is essential in accessing the many applications in the area. Please come forward to help. I know a lot of people join the OVA because of the walks and activities we run but a lot of you join for the guardianship the OVA undertakes for the lower Otter valley.

At our last AGM a member asked if the AGM minutes and the Executive Committee minutes could be made available on the website in addition to the Trustees Report. Your Executive Committee discussed this and the approved AGM minutes will be on the website. With regards to the Executive Committee minutes they looked at the charity commission guidance and I also contacted other local charity chairmen and it was decided not to make them available. Unlike the AGM, which is an open meeting, Executive Committee meetings are not. We endeavour, through the year, to make our business transparent in the newsletter and annually through the comprehensive Trustees Report, distributed to all. When appropriate, we have asked OVA members to address the committee prior to the meeting commencing.

**Nicola Daniel**

## **Walks, Talks and Events**

The next few pages have details of events for which a response is required, complete with a cut-off reply slip. The full calendar listing of all the walks, talks and events are in the pull-out centre section, starting on p. 13

# Events

After the successful joint showing with Fairlynch Museum of “The Great White Silence” film the two local charities have decided to get together for some talks. The first will be given by our local explorer, Dave Pearce on Outdoor Survival on 17<sup>th</sup> October. I am sure this will be of great interest to lots of our members.

The OVA has encouraged outdoor activities in the lower Otter valley since its inception over 30 years ago and we are pleased to contribute two walks to the Active Budleigh Festival in October on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, on a sad note, your Events Committee have decided that, as the numbers of members attending the annual Christmas Dinner have decreased, we will not be holding one, certainly for this year. We appreciate that there are a lot of activities around the Christmas period and thought we would try a summer buffet instead. Unfortunately, the numbers attending this event on 6<sup>th</sup> July were also not as many as we had anticipated. The price of food has increased and local venues have to charge commercial rates so we find it difficult to keep the prices low. If there are any members reading this who think they may be able solve our problems and arrange one for us, please do contact me. *Nicola*



-----  
Ticket application for **Compass and Map Reading Course**

**Lizzie Everett-Wright  
Sunbank,  
9 East Terrace,  
Budleigh Salterton,  
EX9 6PG**

and don't forget the **SAE**

# Compass and Map Reading Course -

Revisited & Continued!

East Budleigh Church Hall and Woodbury Common

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October

This time, we are setting up our own training course! Due to popular demand, we have asked Tony Burges to give us a revision course on land navigation, taking compass bearings, planning routes and recognizing land forms from maps. The morning will be spent in the classroom, followed by an early lunch. Then, sharing transport, we shall drive up to Woodbury Common, to practice our skills. This is where Tony will set us various challenges – and we will try to prove that we know exactly where we are! Each participant needs to bring their own Silva type compass and the Ordnance Survey Map Explorer 115. Please also bring a picnic lunch and have suitable clothing and sturdy shoes for the afternoon. We will start at 9.30am in the Church Hall at East Budleigh, where tea and coffee will be provided; the afternoon field trip will finish at about 4.00pm. The cost is £10 each. Application form is below, to be returned **by 24<sup>th</sup> September**, please.

Lizzie Everett-Wright



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**Compass and Map Reading Course**  
**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012 ~ 9.30am – 4.00pm**  
**East Budleigh Church Hall and Woodbury Common**

Please send me ..... tickets (*bring own picnic*)

Name(s) .....

Address .....

and postcode .....

tel: .....

email .....

I enclose a cheque for £ ..... (£10.00 per person) payable to OVA  
and a **Stamped Addressed Envelope**

# EaRTH

## Environmental and Renewable Technologies Hub

(Opposite Bicton Entrance)

10.30am on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Bicton College has invested a lot thought, time and effort into building EaRTH, a unique venue for demonstrating vocational skills and renewable technology training techniques via conferences, seminars, events and lectures bringing together education, employers and local communities. It threw its doors open to the public on 29<sup>th</sup> February.

The centre has been created through renovation of two redundant farm buildings which have been transformed by beautiful fresh cob walls, wooden shuttered windows and slate flooring from which to demonstrate EaRTH's kinaesthetic education strategies (that means 'hands on know-how' to you and me!)



-----  
Ticket application for **Earth Centre, Home Farm, Bicton College**

**Caroline Allen  
Pebbles Edge,  
2 Marine Parade,  
Budleigh Salterton,  
EX9 6NS**

Reply by 28<sup>th</sup> September and don't forget the **SAE**

If you hanker after learning more about sustainability, renewable resources and other such eco-friendlies, or if you are just plain fascinated with boilers, pumps, thermal panels and pipes, then Graham Waddell, the Head of the EaRTH Programme at Bicton, will be happy to tell us about them, as we gaze in awe at the glorious shiny new plumbing on public display.

Even if you don't know one end of a pipe from the other, and are just plain nosy and want to know 'what's new' in the Otter Valley, then come and have a cup of coffee and admire the cob walls as I did!

We meet at 10.30 when Graham will take us on a conducted tour of the building explaining EaRTH's projects, aims and sustainability credentials. Maximum numbers are 20 per visit and price per person is £3.00 to include coffee. There is a large car park adjacent to the building.

The booking form is below. Please indicate how many tickets and which date you prefer. If either date is convenient, tick both dates.

Because numbers are limited and I may need to sort alternative dates, please reply before 28<sup>th</sup> September

Caroline Allen



-----  
**Earth Centre, Home Farm, Bicton College**  
**Thursday/Friday 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> October 2012 ~ 10.30am**

Preferred Date    Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October    ....

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October    ....

Please send me ..... tickets

Name(s) .....

Address .....

.....

and postcode .....

tel: .....

email .....

I enclose a cheque for £ ..... (£3.00 per person) payable to OVA  
and a **Stamped Addressed Envelope**



# Editor's Jottings

My appeal in the last issue has produced a wealth of photos of OVA activities over the last three months, but not so many written reports – which start on page 17. So a further appeal for budding journalists (or old hands) to put in a short report of an event or walk they attend. Copy date for next issue, 9<sup>th</sup> September, please. And I'm still only **Interim** editor: job applications welcomed!

So a pictorial round-up of Spring 2012 in the Otter Valley:–



The final talk of the 'winter' season was from 'Owls-R-Us' at the Masonic Hall in Budleigh Salterton on 17<sup>th</sup> April. A fascinating evening with live participation from a number of owls and other birds of prey, with a most informative and interesting talk. The packed audience were thrilled by such a brilliant meeting, particularly when the 'flying stars' were encouraged among the members.

*See also poem on page 25*

The previous Saturday, Margaret Read had led a dozen of us on an interesting literary walk around Upton Pyne, following in the footsteps of Jane Austen. We looked at the church and the farm featured in her first novel 'Sense and Sensibility' and particularly the grand house, her inspiration for Barton Park, now being done up by new owners.



At the AGM in May, Patrick Hamilton, chairman of the OVA Natural Environment committee, gave us an illustrated talk on the scourge of foreign invasion by Himalayan balsam, including welcome news of the getting together of parish councils and local groups to work on systematic eradication over the next three years, starting at the head of the Otter's tributaries and working downstream. This work was planned for June/July, before the seed set, but I haven't heard anything since the recent storms and floods – so perhaps Patrick, the working parties, and the balsam have been swept out to sea along with the assorted fence posts, tree branches and debris last seen heading for France!



A little later in May a group went to explore 'The Perfect Game' at Budleigh Croquet Club. I have a couple of pictures from Caroline of one or two wielding the mallet ...

... but they seem more intent on enjoying a cup of tea! What could be more British, – including summer sunshine perhaps?



Around the Otter Valley woodlands, Clinton Devon Estates have been felling swathes of larch trees, to avoid the spread of disease. This has changed the scenery dramatically in some places, but also opened up some views from the hill tops which haven't been enjoyed for over 40 years.

Another demise, which the OVA tried to prevent through the planning process: the allotments at Budleigh have gone, to make way for housing.

Villages up and down the valley celebrated the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, from a Procession closing the main road in Newton Poppleford to a torchlight procession and a bonfire beacon on the beach at Budleigh.



Even the verges ditches and hedgebanks came out in red, white and blue for the colourful weekend.

The hot news (more exactly, cold and wet news) was the extreme rainfall of Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July, following an unseasonably wet period with saturated ground, leading to flooding down the River Otter and several other West-Country rivers. Sadly, a number of low-lying properties were flooded, just after they were getting over the last soaking, an OVA member floated his car in South Farm Road, and the Budleigh Cricket Clubhouse looked a sorry sight, again. *More from Mo over the page.*

The surprise news was the finding of a 28" salmon stranded in the fields between Newton Poppleford and Harpford. Although the scavengers had already been at it, (picture overleaf) its presence is good news for the fishermen and all who are interested in the health of the River Otter. I need to draw attention to the fact that there are **private** fishing rights in Webber's Meadow, Newton Poppleford and for much of the river's length.

## Haylor Lass

# Summer Storm down the Otter

A grim day all round, with the beach at Donkey Turn by Otter Head becoming even more sheer on its edges and losing about a foot depth of pebbles. Moorings that were washed up in the previous severe storm in May had subsequently become completely hidden with only a little yellow rope visible. Now the beach has been scoured again, and 3 of the 5 sit, all washed up again. And the Cricket Club is drowned yet again.



I kept running into people clutching pints of beer ! The 3 gentlemen in the picture waded into the torrent to reach the cricket club pavilion and rescue a barrel or two and some glasses to bring a little cheer.



Finally, on the earlier high water line, on the seaward facing beach, I found a toad. I gently picked up its limp body and cradled it, stunned by the sheer force of the torrent that must have torn it and many other creatures out from the estuary nature reserve and into the sea. In the warmth of my hand, I felt a slight movement, the toad was alive, trying to swallow, eyes flickering. Half an hour later I placed it in the shelter of our pond at home.

A couple of hours later, it was gone, what a miracle. **Mo Bowman**



The salmon found and photographed by Richard Swann about 8.00am Sunday 7 July, Webber's Meadow, N.P.

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate) / Pub Lunch**  
Otter Inn CP, SY078874. 6 miles, 3 hours. Circular walk through Back Lane, Stowford and on to the Commons including a visit to Woodbury Castle.

*Walk leader:* George Norman, 01395 442307

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July – 10.00am. TOWN WALK (Easy)**

Festival of Music Week Town Walk

Budleigh Salterton Methodist Church car park (donation to Lions).

Learn more about Budleigh's history through its people and places.

– donations OVA & Music Festival

*Walk leader:* David Daniel, 01395 445960

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

Colaton Raleigh church (roadside parking), SY082872. 4½ miles, 2½ hours. An introduction to Mark Rolle and his architectural heritage, visiting a selection of local “MR” buildings, led by local enthusiast.

*Walk leader:* Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> and Wed 29<sup>th</sup> August – 10.20am – Exe Estuary Explore**

**Tally-Ho Inn, Countess Wear** (*alight at stop by first traffic light after Countess Wear Roundabout*)– X53 Bus Newton Poppleford 9.52 or 157/57 buses Budleigh 9.29 via Exmouth.

Bus – Walk – Ferry – Walk – Lunch Powderham Castle restaurant – Walk

– Ferry to Exmouth – Bus, 157 home to Otter Valley or 57 back to start.

First part of the walk is tidal, so will probably be muddy.

£9 for ferries + money for lunch & bus (or bus pass).

**Limited to 16** – hence 2 dates – book with Haylor Lass 01395 568786

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> August - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

East Budleigh CP, SY065849. 5 miles, 2½ hours. Local walk up Hayes Lane, through the woods and over the commons returning via Yettington.

*Walk leader:* Stan Herbert, 01395 445113

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September - 10.00am. WALK (Energetic) / Packed Lunch**

Newton Poppleford CP, SY086897 7 miles, 4 hours. Circular walk on green lanes and commons. Visiting Venn Ottery, Metcombe and North Hill and returning via Venn Ottery Common and Benchams. There will be a stop for a sociable picnic lunch (bring your own packed lunch).

*Walk leader:* Jan Stuart, 01395 568235

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September - 10.00am. WALK (Energetic)**

Otter Inn CP SY078874, Colaton Raleigh. 8 miles, 4½ hours. Climbing up to cross High Peak, Peak Hill and Bulverton Hill and then down to return along the Otter's west bank. Mainly on tracks, also a minor road, includes some short energetic climbs. Bring a snack to keep you going!

*Walk leader:* Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September – 10.00am & 2.30pm “Walk with Words”**

from Fairlynch Museum, explore literary, artistic and scientific BS links – donations OVA and Fairlynch Museum

*Walk leader:* Michael Downes, Fairlynch Museum

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

Budleigh Salterton Free CP, SY061821. 4½ miles, 2½ hours. A walk over varied terrain visiting the Golf links, Knowle Hill Plantation, Dalditch Common and back down Shortwood Lane. Some muddy areas in the wet.

*Walk leader:* John Jones, 01395 443651

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October – 7.30pm TALK**

East Budleigh Village Hall. “Restoration of Castle Drogo”.

A detailed description, from the Clerk of Works, of the work involved in this important project to save the castle .

*Speaker:* Wesley Key, stonemason (*grandfather helped build the castle*)

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate) Opt. Pub Lunch**

East Budleigh CP, SY065849. 4 miles, 2½ hours. Very interesting town walk which includes a visit to the historic East Budleigh church. Stan will share his vast local knowledge of the people and places of bygone East Budleigh. Optional lunch at the Sir Walter Raleigh.

*Walk leader:* Stan Herbert, 01395 445113

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012 ~ 9.30am – 4.00pm Compass and Map**

**Reading Course** East Budleigh Church Hall and Woodbury Common

**Must be booked** – see page 6

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

White Bridge SY076830. 5 miles, 2½ hours. Coast and river walk; coast path to Crab Ledge, inland to Colliver Cross then via Clamour Bridge to finish along the river path. May be muddy in places and could be windy on the coast path. *In association with Active Budleigh Festival*

*Walk leader:* John Jones, 01395 443651

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October - 10.30am. TOWN WALK (Easy)**  
**(please note day and later start time)**

The Rolle car park, Fore Street, Budleigh Salterton.

With his expert local knowledge and interest in the town's history David Daniel will guide you round the town pointing out interesting features and significant buildings to give you a personal appreciation of Budleigh's history through its people and places. *In association with Active Budleigh Festival.* – donation OVA and Active Budleigh Festival.

*Walk leader:* David Daniel, 01395 445960

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October – 7.00 pm TALK**

Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton "Outdoor Survival"

Joint talk in conjunction with the Friends of Fairlynch Museum

*Speaker:* David Pearce

**Thursday/Friday 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> October – 10.30am VISIT** Earth Centre,  
Home Farm, Bicton College. **Must be booked** – see pages 7/8**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK (Easy)**

Newton Poppleford Sports Ground CP, SY087900. An easy walk looking for and identifying fungi including waxcaps. If you can bring along a magnifying glass to better see the detail of the samples spotted on the walk (there will be one available to share if not). If you come across any fungi before the walk you would like identified bring a sample for Marion to examine and share with the group, she is a member of the Devon Fungi Group and has an excellent knowledge of the subject.

*Walk leader:* Marion Nalder, 01395 442176

**Tuesday 13 November – 7.30pm TALK.**

Otterton Village Hall. "3000 Years of History from the Sea".

Divers from the South West Maritime Archaeological Group have discovered numerous shipwrecks off the south Devon coast including a Bronze Age trading vessel dated 1000BC. *Speaker:* Ron Howell

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK (Energetic)**

East Budleigh CP, SY065849. 9 miles, 4½ hours.

A varied walk using the coast path, local roads and tracks. Visiting Ladram Bay, High Peak and Windgate and then returning inland via Otterton and Bicton. Some hilly sections, could be muddy.

*Walk leader:* Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December – 10.00am. WALK (Easy)**

Wheathill Plantation SY041847. 3 miles, 2 hours.

A short and sociable walk on the commons to relieve those growing pre - Christmas pressures.

*Walk leader:* David Daniel, 01395 445960

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate) Opt. Pub lunch**

Colaton Raleigh Church, SY082872. 5 miles, 2½ hours.

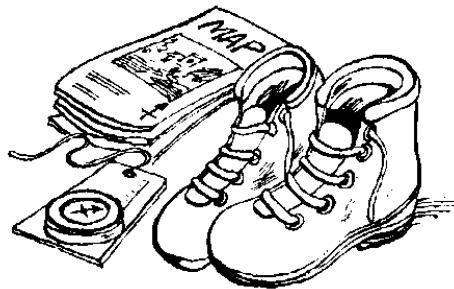
Down green lanes and over the commons, visiting Dotton, Hawkerland and Naps Lane. Optional lunch at the Otter Inn.

*Walk leader:* Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> December – 10.30am. WALK (Easy)/Pub Lunch**

East Budleigh CP SY065849. Gentle Boxing Day walk across the common with optional pub lunch at the Sir Walter Raleigh at this time of good cheer – **Please ring Walk Leader by 5 December to book lunch.**

*Walk Leader:* David Daniel, 01395 445960




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**Editor's footnote**

If I were to publish details of a 2½ hour OVA morning walk that was **all uphill**, some steep and some very steep, there wouldn't be howls of protest – just nobody would turn up! Even if I then added that, after a picnic lunch, it would be 2½ hours all downhill. I've just returned from island-hopping in Scotland and this is what it takes to go up Goat Fell on the Isle of Arran, and is just part of the first day of an exciting 6-day walk all round the island. The book says it's worth the climb for the view, but the day we were there, the clouds rolled in over the top, sogged the sandwiches, and limited visibility to about 10 metres!



# West Dorset Bus Walk

On the last Wednesday in May a baker's dozen of us gathered at the bus stop in Newton Poppleford for the X53 bus to Burton Bradstock. It may not be the fastest way to get to West Dorset, but the scenery from the top deck makes this a splendid and interesting ride.

A half-mile limb loosening walk took us to the cliff top to admire the world heritage Jurassic coast, which was being a bit shy – the haze hid both Golden Cap and Portland Bill, which should have framed our view. Then it was a gentle 10 minute stroll downhill, past some wonderful drifts of thrift, to our coffee stop, complete with those facilities essential after a two-hour bus ride.

The next stretch was a level, but botanically interesting mixture of beach hinterland, with specialist plants like sea-kale and sea-poppy struggling to survive in mobile and infertile shingle, alternating with silted lagoons of rushes and wetland plants, including a



lovely clump of marsh orchids. This took us to West Bexington and a warm long uphill stretch to our lunch stop on the Cretaceous ridgeway.

After our picnic, four miles of springy downland turf, past a scarp full of bluebells and the iron-age fort of Abbotsbury Castle, along the ridge of Weary Hill with its tumuli and a beacon being made ready for Jubilee. There should have been wonderful views all along here over the Fleet lagoon and Chesil beach to Portland and beyond, but the clouds rolled in limiting visibility to a couple of fields, until we got just above Abbotsbury when it cleared enough to see St Catherine's Chapel on its hill above the village, with the waters of the Swannery beyond.

We were down in the village in time for an ice-cream before the early bus home, having elected not to stay on and see the cygnets at the Swannery (though the £10 admission charge may have had some influence!).

# Foraging for Edible Wild Plants around Otterton

On 17<sup>th</sup> May 11 members gathered on the Village Green in Otterton for a 3-hour forage with Robin Harford. It was a fine day. After a quick chat about the object of the walk we were given a list of 63 plants that can be found in this location. I took 66 photos, of which 60 were of species found, including 2 very toxic plants, Hemlock and Water Dropwort. We think we can now identify these, but please don't ask us to identify them all; we were much relieved to find out there was not a test at the end! Only today I spotted a large Hemlock in Granary Lane opposite the entrance to the Cricket field. It is important to know what not to eat or even touch, Robin used a stick to touch Hemlock.

Before setting off we were told,

1. Never put any plant in your mouth that you cannot identify with 110% certainty!
2. Digging up roots is illegal without the landowner's permission.
3. The Theft Act 1968 is relevant:- Under the definition of "Property" it states:-
  - a. Section 4 (3) A person who picks mushrooms growing wild on any land, or who picks flowers, fruit or foliage from a plant growing wild on any land, does not (although not in possession of the land) steal what he picks, unless he does it for reward or for sale or other commercial purpose. For purposes of this subsection 'mushroom' includes any fungus, and 'plant' includes any shrub or tree.
  - b. *In plain simple terms, you can pick blackberries, but if you sell them for commercial purposes, you commit Theft.*
4. Harvest roots in Autumn & Spring.
5. Only take what you need for your family, and no more than 30% of a plant community.
6. Be aware of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 SCHEDULE 8 – PLANTS WHICH ARE PROTECTED

For a list of plant identification books, see...

<http://www.eatweeds.co.uk/edible-wild-plant-identification-books>



It is not proposed to list all edible plants we saw and tasted , suffice to say the list included cow parsley, dandelion, nettles, sweet violet, goosegrass and surprisingly the dreaded Himalayan balsam.

All in all a very interesting and informative morning. It was disappointing that so few members were able to attend, however it is hoped to run another session with Robin in the early



autumn when fruit and other plants will be in season.

**Rob Jerrard**

# Abbotsbury and Lyme Regis Adventure

## 'Looking for the Ladies'

After greetings, the usual banter and the comparison of nettle rashes by the Himalayan Balsam pullers the coach pulled out of Budleigh just after 8.00am, heading for Dorset on another OVA adventure to *they foreign parts*. The mood was sombre to match the grey clouds scudding above. People whispered, reverentially, perhaps anticipating the places we would visit with their legacy of life, death and history of a god-fearing age.

Fortunately, Tony Burges, our Guide for the day, was awake and, as we crossed the border, soon began to regale us with his stories, myths and legends. Our first stop, all too brief for some, was Bridport Bus Station and the start of the day's quest to find the best ladies loos on our journey. It was reported with gushing enthusiasm and no little relief that not only were these toilets clean, sweet smelling and equipped with all the requisite accessories, but were of sufficient quantity to preclude queueing. For one of our number they made a handsome bistro for an early picnic; energy she would need shortly, when we alighted at map ref. 558862 at 184 metres. A short, steep climb of another 31 metres took us to an iron age tumulus, the first of many we would encounter on this, the South Dorset Ridgeway. Unfortunately, there was little else visible as we started our high level walk of about two miles to the village of Abbotsbury, in grey mist and drizzle.



But it was not to last and the mist did lift sufficiently to reveal magnificent views of the coast, Portland (just) and the Fleet below, where Tony reminded us that it had been the location to test Barnes Wallace's "Bouncing Bomb" during the Second World War; indeed the whole area contained relics built to protect us from Hitler's anticipated invasion. Then there was a skylark, Hardy's monument, medieval strip lynchets, a kestrel or three, more tumuli, sight of the largest remaining Tithe Barn in the country, St Catherine's Chapel on a lonely hill some 100 metres below and half a mile away, and a pervasive feeling of remoteness enhanced by the eerie light; a phenomenon our photographers were enjoying. And so, avoiding stepping on a bronze age beetle we descended to Abbotsbury.



First disappointment of the day. In spite of encompassing baby changing facilities (there were none in the Gents, you have been warned), these loos did not bear favourable comparison with those our members had so wholeheartedly endorsed earlier at Bridport. "Substandard" was the verdict. A short walk through the village brought us within touching distance of the gable end, all that remains of the eleventh century Benedictine Abbey; we stood back from the impressive Tithe Barn, seen earlier from our lofty view point and now serving as a museum and interpretation centre, to watch the doves lined up on the wall before inspecting the interior of the late fourteenth century St Nicholas parish church. Then a steep climb to 80 metres and the top of an isolated hill, with extensive views overlooking the sea and the hinterland, on which proudly stands the simply preserved fourteenth century pilgrim's St Catherine's Chapel. Still used intermittently and containing evidence of contemporary prayers to St Catherine. The thick walls also provided welcome respite from the strong winds that had blown away the mist and enabled us to enjoy the view of Abbotsbury nestling in the undulations of the land below, while lunch was taken.



After lunch, Tony was on his feet first and we descended sharply to the Chesil beach and a short walk along the shingle to the car park and waiting coach. Some of our party were hopping about in anticipation of visiting the facilities provided by Natural England, only to be deeply disappointed that such an august organisation could fail so dismally. The toilets were not welcoming, there were no accessories and they were “smelly”. Only two cubicles necessitated a wait, with all the inconvenience that can be imagined. Comparisons were even provoked with the 'whole in the ground' experienced on an earlier OVA visit to Sharpham Estate.

Half an hour later and we alighted at Lyme Regis for the second part of our day. Those who had exchanged boots for flip-flops or stilettos grumbled about the steep muddy steps down to Monmouth beach, but revived as we took to the Cobb. Tony's challenge to walk on the top was soon aborted as waves were seen to be crashing over the wall. Then drama and an emotional experience as one of the group was seen striding ahead to what looked like her certain death, for surely this frail woman would have been no match for the power of the sea. She was called back, but to no avail as she moved ever closer to her destiny. The woman had to be stopped and brought back to safety. Fearful moments followed: suffice to say, readers, that I chaperoned her return. I think it was the power of my persuasion that she would have wasted her return coach fare had she been swept out to sea and perished. Not an affluent person, she saw good sense in these austere times.

Immediately after this terrifying ordeal she agreed to give me an interview, in confidence and strictly off the record, so I can reveal exclusively that this lovely lady, let's call her Gladys, who often visits with her grandchildren, had a life-time ambition to walk on top of the Cobb.

Now she had been denied that emotional home-coming by, yes you guessed it, Health & Safety regulations that are stopping pensioners like Gladys, who have worked hard for this country all their lives, such simple pleasures. So what if they are life-threatening. The OVA must stop this nonsense and let our Gladys have her walk!!!

We wondered why the sand was from France and the granite groynes from Norway as we dallied along the promenade, through the old town, past the Duke of Monmouth's House and a Post Office with its original wooden letterbox, before cramming into the Mill Cafe. There was a plethora of home-made cakes or for those incapable of making a decision there was a Cream Tea for which some are still waiting. So there was plenty of time for our ladies to investigate the Loos. "Poor". No paper towels, no loo roll, (unless you had been first to arrive, as one of our group pointed out gleefully), but there *was* a mirror. As one said "I could write a book about the loos I've used!" Her best advice was to "Use the gents, they're always empty!"

Some wanted to be chauffeured to the coach but were shamed into staggering up hill, past sixteenth century cottages, with slopping roofs, to stand on the battle line between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians who had relied on sustenance from the sea to help them repel their invaders. As our illustrious and highly respected Guide was in full delivery mode, the unthinkable occurred and he was upstaged by a celebrity rat who strutted brazenly across the Mill leat over which we stood. Tony was quite candid and admitted that he actually plays with the rats and knows all their names.

One more stroll along the sea front to arrive at the coach, where lots of sighing could be heard, and it started to rain, before we were whisked back to Budleigh at 6.15pm and the end of an enjoyable and informative day out. Thank you Mo and Tony.

## Chris Buckland

We had a great day, and thank you all so much for joining Tony on his latest adventure.

There were so many different and contrasting places, and, weather !!! Also for me, the flickering atmospheric light was wonderful. How sombre we all were when we began our walk, then lost in the landscape. We all came away with places to come back to and explore again in our own time, thanks to Tony for providing that incentive.

Mo Bowman

# Visit to Ottery St Mary for an evening spring lecture.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012 I waited for the 382 Whimble bus, in a shelter at Sidmouth's three cornered plot. Rain smudged down from a layered sky, grey on grey and suddenly stopped and as the 382 bus appeared so did the sunshine. We left the town at via Winslade Road past the old railway station, now an industrial hub.

Out to the Bowd and over another railway relic, the filled-in railway bridge. The railway, to and from Sidmouth, once passed through here, on through Harpford Woods to Tipton St John and Ottery St Mary. Beyond was Sidmouth Junction, now called Feniton station, gateway to the world. My bus travelled on past the East Devon Recycling centre and Woods Farm, now donkey heaven, and down towards Tipton St John. From the bus window I could see the glorious spread of the Otter valley before us as welcoming as out-stretched arms. My bus turned into Tipton St John, past the Golden Lion Pub, over the defunct level-crossing and over the river Otter bridge. We passed the village school slowly and safely, following the curving road out of the village. "Goodbye church" up high on the left and "So long" the secretive Angela Home, hidden from view. This was the road towards Fluxton.

I always liked this road, better than the main route through Wiggaton, a tortuous road that bends like a serpent. The Fluxton route is open, wide fields against the great sweep of East Hill behind them, with little ancient farmsteads and weathered barns. Further along is the Salston Manor, redbrick and gaunt, with its two chocolate-box lodges. Today the Salston, which had become a hotel, is closed and forlorn. My bus made its way into Ottery St Mary, past the King's School, my old grammar school, which is up on higher ground. The road sweeps down towards the old railway station and the river Otter. I remember the steam trains; I remember the diesel trains; I remember Dr Beeching! The low lying fields are now full of houses and the new Ottery St Mary hospital. The bus crossed over St Saviours Bridge and past the disused Otter switchgear factory. This factory was once a hive of activity but is now silent. The Georgian legacy of a vast serge mill still remains and its enigmatic tumbling weir. The bus climbed up past an ancient row of houses and past the elegant and restored Raleigh House and into the sweep of Canaan Way.



The bus moved into the Hind Street one-way system, where a new Sainsburys supermarket has appeared. It stands as incongruous as a grounded ocean liner. Behind and above the store and its car-park, are the redbrick walls from the ancient Coleridge estate. Whose forefather the great poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was born in Ottery St Mary and educated in the grammar school, that once stood near the parish church. I got off the bus in Broad Street and as the evening seemed sunny and bright, I bought a sandwich from Sainsburys and enjoyed it 'al-fresco' in the environs of the magnificent parish church. The church was locked but the view from the churchyard over the town was enchanting. At 19.00 as the church clock struck out the hour, I made my way to the Institute in Yonder Street for my evening lecture.

**Norma Cox**

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## Raptors

A packed, enthralled audience-  
in the Masonic Hall, were we.  
Engrossed with the stories of owls and raptors  
plus the pleasure of these birds to see.

Some rescued from unfortunate circumstances -  
often from neglect, injury or gross abuse,  
Nigel Palmer from the bird rescue centre -  
informed us that cruelty was no excuse.

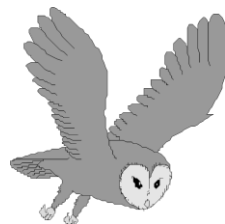
From DDT, gunshot wounds from pigeon racers,  
gamekeepers alike -  
the targeting, on the killing fields,  
no civilized person should like.

I say, thank goodness there are good people,  
who for raptors they really care,  
they foster true compassion.  
Remember - Birds of prey are now quite rare.

One last thought!!

If you ever come, face to face, with a raptor -  
whom I was informed hunts and kills with his feet,  
please remember he is descended from that Dinosaur,  
if, by chance, on Budleigh beach you should happen to meet.

**John Payne**



# Alan Kershaw Jones, 1925 - 2012

Alan Jones, who died on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, was an original and interesting man who made a great contribution to the local community.

Born in Liverpool, he had a difficult start to life. But he was very bright and worked hard and, in due course, won a scholarship to read engineering at Oxford. After graduating, he joined the Civil Service and worked in the Patent Office, subsequently moving to European Office in Munich, Germany where he and his wife Marjorie lived until Alan's retirement.

After moving to Colaton Raleigh in 1987, they were soon involved in local affairs. It was a great loss to Alan, and the village community, when Marjorie died just a few years later.

For twenty one years, from 1988 until 2009, Alan represented Colaton Raleigh on the executive committee of the Otter Valley Association. For much of that time, he was secretary, then a very active chairman of the footpath committee as well as the OVA's representative for Colaton Raleigh.

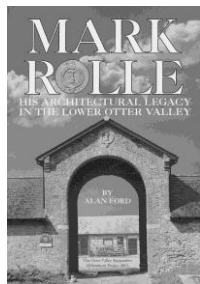
He was also the Parish Paths representative for the Parish Council for many years. In this role, he spent hours walking and attending to the maintenance of rights of way. His eye for detail could not be bettered, and he did an outstanding job. He wrote concise and informative reports on paths and bridleways every month for the Parish Magazine. They were always beautifully written, and a delight to read. He became a full member of the Parish Council in 2002, and continued to serve until the end of his life.

I have had the privilege of chairing the OVA committee of which Alan was a member. In my experience, Alan's contributions were always well expressed and to the point. Alan was equally industrious outside meetings, organising working parties, cajoling landlords and persuading Devon County Council. The state of the footpaths and bridle ways in the Otter Valley today is immensely better than it was even ten years ago. He contributed enormously to that improvement.

**Brian Turnbull**

Former OVA Chairman

# OVA Publications



## **Mark Rolle**

### **His Architectural Legacy in the Lower Otter Valley**

Ever wondered about the many improved farm buildings and cottages in this area? This lavishly illustrated book gives a very readable picture of how a large landed estate was managed in the last 40 years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

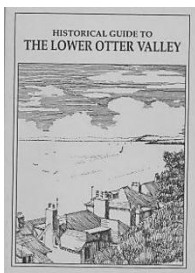
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £1.50 P&P)



## **Twelve Walks in the Otter Valley.**

The area of the Lower Otter Valley is covered by a network of footpaths, mostly waymarked and in good condition. OVA members have compiled these walks, each with clear directions and illustrated with a sketch map. They range from 4 mile easy walks to a more energetic 9½ miler. There are notes on places of interest to whet your appetite for further exploration.

£2.50 from your village rep (or plus £1.00 P&P)



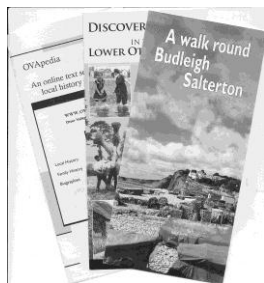
## **Historical Guide to the Lower Otter Valley**

Want to know more about the area you live in or are visiting? This book is packed with detailed information about the places, buildings, people and natural history of this beautiful area, from the very earliest times to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

£3.50 from your village rep (or plus £1.50 P&P)

See our website [ova.org.uk](http://ova.org.uk) or from

Booksales, OVA, PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN



## **Leaflets**

The OVA also publish a number of (free) leaflets about the history, flora & fauna and walking the villages of our area of interest in the lower Otter Valley. They can usually be found in the Tourist Information Centre and in other outlets around the valley.

# The Otter Valley Association

## Executive Committee (01395)

|                        |                |        |
|------------------------|----------------|--------|
| Chairman (acting)      | Nicola Daniel  | 445960 |
| Vice-chairman          | Haylor Lass    | 568786 |
| Hon Secretary (acting) | David Daniel   | 445960 |
| Treasurer              | Roger Saunders | 443248 |

### *Committee Chairmen*

|                     |                  |        |
|---------------------|------------------|--------|
| Natural Environment | Patrick Hamilton | 445351 |
| Events              | Nicola Daniel    | 445960 |
| History             | David Daniel     | 445960 |

### *Parish Representatives (to whom queries should be addressed initially)*

|                    |                  |        |
|--------------------|------------------|--------|
| Budleigh Salterton | John Jones       | 443651 |
|                    | George Maddaford | 446077 |
| East Budleigh      | Christine Hadley | 443607 |
| Otterton           | <i>Vacancy</i>   | 568274 |
| Colaton Raleigh    | <i>Vacancy</i>   |        |
| Newton Poppleford  | Haylor Lass      | 568786 |

### *Other EC Members*

|                             |                  |        |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------|
| Assistant Minutes Secretary | Robert Wiltshire | 444395 |
| Membership Secretary        | Clive Bowman     | 446892 |
| Publicity Secretary         | Lynne Wright     | 442703 |

### *Other contacts*

|                         |                |        |
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| Talks Organiser         | Graham Knapton | 445872 |
| Walks Organiser         | John Jones     | 443651 |
| Newsletter Distributors | Jenny Young    | 444090 |
|                         | Chris Hagger   | 442631 |

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