

# OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

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Volunteers to the fore! The Estuary Litter-Pick in April,  
with their haul of vanloads of rubbish.

## Summer Newsletter

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July 2013

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The cover photo, and most others in this edition,  
were supplied by Mo Bowman. Thank you, Mo.

The next issue will be published in October:  
copy needs to be with the editor by **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September**, please.

# Information Panels Unveiled

The OVA helped sponsor information panels at the Otter estuary, which were formally unveiled on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013. The panels are designed to stimulate interest in the nature reserve and provide a means of identifying wildlife that may be seen there – we are sure that they will help future children and adults alike to develop a lifelong interest in the natural environment through visiting the Otter Nature Reserve.

They are designed by the artist Mike Langman, and are the brainchild of Doug Cullen, the Volunteer Warden for the Reserve. Doug says “I wanted to provide some form of identification pictures, because so often I am asked, ‘What's that Bird’, particularly by visitors. The two pictures are the Birds of the Grazing Marsh, which will be placed along the path where I receive most questions, and the Estuary Birds which show those seen from the Donkey Turn. The artist Mike Langman has colour-marked the birds, giving details of when they are likely to be seen and whether they are resident.”

Doug added, “Pete Youngman of the AONB provided a substantial sum, the Otter Valley Association was very generous, and we received good donations from Devon Birds and the Pebblebed Heath Trust.” They all support the Reserve in conjunction with Clinton Devon Estates who own and manage it through the work of Dr Sam Bridgewater (Bungy Williams's successor).”



Doug and Mike with representatives from all those organisations involved.

Photo – Mo Bowman FRPS

# Chairman's Report

**A**T THE AGM in May I announced that there is a proposal for a National Park incorporating the Jurassic coast and the adjacent AONBs (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). This is the beginning of a long process. Your Executive Committee have discussed this and are unanimously in agreement. The proposals conform to our constitutional aims. We think it will give our area a more thoughtful approach to planning than the free-for-all that exists at the moment, even though we are entirely in an AONB and the coastline is in a World Heritage Site. There will be an efficiency saving as one planning authority will replace several. It will also promote sustainable tourism in the area – it is staggering that East Devon District Council (EDDC) has a champion councillor for design and one for the foreshore but none for tourism – where nearly half the workforce are employed. EDDC are not in favour of the idea as they will lose planning control of a large area of the district.

Also at the AGM I addressed the perennial problem of volunteering for the association. I am pleased to say that two people came forward, one to distribute our books and the other to represent Otterton village. I thank them and also the large number of you who volunteer in so many roles. However, we still need many more volunteers. The list contains many diverse roles so I am sure you could come forward to help.

We do need members for all our committees; the executive committee including a publicity officer and a representative for Colaton Raleigh; the natural history committee; the events committee and a new chairman. I have chaired this committee for many years. When I started I had many exciting projects I wished to organise but I have now run out of ideas. The committee needs new blood. We also need someone to set up a Planning committee, very important work at this time.

We need distributors for the newsletter. We have a large part of Exmouth which is not covered and we have to post to EX8 1XW, 2BR, 2HP, 3HS, 3JF, 3LF, 4AB, 4LS, 5BD, 5BJ, 5BP, 5BW, 5DT, 5EB, 5EG, 5QU, 5RL. Fairlynch Museum would like the OVA to upgrade its permanent display in the museum. We would like to get a team together to share ideas and carry out the display.

Finally a newsletter editor, Haylor has been “interim editor” for far too long.

*continued*

I am delighted that Sam Bridgewater from the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust has introduced so many of the children in the valley to the wonders of their local environment on the commons with the OVA paying for the transport. Patrick Hamilton has written a report. You will recall that a few years ago we asked John Wilding to explain the necessity of adopting an accelerated programme of felling larches. Similarly we have asked Sam to explain why an area of the local heaths needs fencing. Both impact on the scenic value but the Executive Committee sees the need for the longer term benefit.

Nicola Daniel

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## Litter Pick

There were about 80 of us foraging on a beautiful day, including volunteers from the Otter Valley Association, and work teams from Clinton Devon Estates and EDDC AONB, with even the odd passer-by joining in or shouting encouragement.

We accumulated a huge pile of rubbish, too much to fit into the two vans from Streetscene booked to take it all away. (*see cover picture*)

And, we found two really intriguing items ... a handbag complete with all the goodies you would expect a lady to carry, including her purse and driving licence, which we used to trace her. The address was local, and the licence says she is a doctor – medical or academic? It was found in the mud near White Bridge – how did it get there, was it dropped, or stolen perhaps from a parked car broken into while the lady took a stroll?

The second mysterious find was ... a wallet, complete with credit cards and sodden ten and five pound notes, plus, the driving licence again! George James from Frome in Somerset sealed his wallet into the yellow waterproof type bag that canoeists use, and then had a mishap, so overboard it went. It was found by Jack Crowhurst from Budleigh Salterton, who won the prize for best find.

It was great to have so many children helping us out this year. Amongst them, Megan Swain who won our other best find prize for her dinosaur (well, ok, sheep) skull, and Ollie Swain with his pal Toby Hart who found a beautiful piece of "amber", in reality a burnt and melted lump of insulation masquerading as a precious stone.

It's amazing what pleasure the Otter gives to us through tramping around in its mud, and the treasures that rise from their watery graves.

Mo Bowman

# Allotments to Leisure Gardens

My Allotment to Leisure Garden picture project began on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June when the new site officially opened. There was great enthusiasm, and a realisation that this really was a unique weekend, but also exasperation at the rock solid state of the ground.



I am following several families and some individual gardeners over the next few years' development of their plots. It feels like a real privilege.

**Mo Bowman**

# Tour of Poltimore House

**Thursday 26 September at 2.00pm**

Come and see what has happened to Poltimore House since 2003, when it was voted one of the finalists in Griff Rhys Jones' BBC TV series "Restoration".

Now, with a Trust set up, and help from English Heritage and the Lottery Fund, a group of enthusiastic volunteers have brought this remarkable building from the brink of disaster and are working towards its restoration, which will also require some highly qualified craftsmen in due course.

We shall be given a 10-minute introductory talk about Poltimore and a guided tour of the house and gardens, with information on its history and plans for its future. We shall all meet at the house at 2.00pm, and the visit will end with tea and homemade cakes at about 4.15pm, with departure at 5.00pm. The cost will be £6.50 per person.

For booking details see the application form below and send it with your cheque to Lizzie Everett-Wright (tel. 01395-446633) by the **1<sup>st</sup> September 2013**. Please indicate on the booking form if you have seats to offer in your car, or if you wish to be given a lift. *See map overleaf for directions.*



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**Poltimore House Tour**  
**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013 2.00pm**

Please send me ..... tickets

Name(s) .....

Address .....

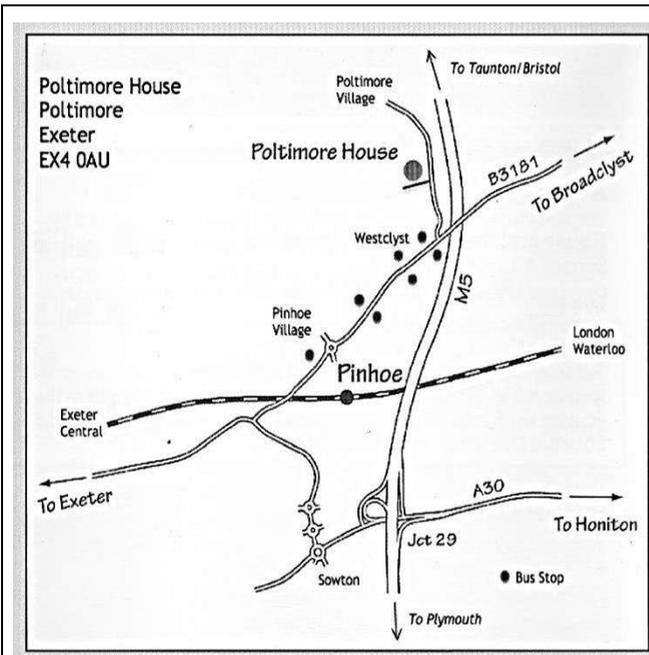
and postcode .....

tel: ....., email .....

I/we can offer ..... seats in our car / I/we would like a lift with others.....

I am willing to allow my email address/telephone number to be disclosed to other OVA members for the purposes of car sharing. *Tick box*

I enclose a cheque for £ ..... (£6.50 per person) payable to OVA and a **Stamped Addressed Envelope (reply address overleaf)**



Poltimore House is just off the B3181 northeast of Exeter, signposted Pinhoe and Broadclyst. There are signs to the house in Poltimore village.

By Bus: services 1, 1A & 1B from Exeter bus station. Alight at the Poltimore Village bus stop on the B3181 by the M5 bridge. A ten-minute walk towards Poltimore village brings you to the Poltimore House driveway on your left.



Ticket application for the **Poltimore House Tour**

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

and don't forget the **SAE**

# Otter in the Otter



The dog has taken to her morning walk along the banks of the Otter just recently. We walk up along the old track from White Bridge and if we don't have time to go all the way to Otterton then we cross over at Clamour Bridge and return to Budleigh Salterton along the newly refurbished lower path. Which was what we did the other day (29<sup>th</sup> May) and I am so glad we did, because just

after 8.00am we happened upon a delightful family of Otters cavorting in the river there.

They were just about half way between the two bridges leaping and diving and making such a splash that at first I mistook them for a couple of dogs. I was so excited when I realized that instead we were privileged to see a family of three otters making their morning ablutions! We crept nearer under cover of the foliage on the bank and when I stood up to take a picture two inquisitive little faces were staring right back at us from the river but alas dived out of sight before I focussed properly. Immediately afterwards mum popped up out of the water also to take a look, which was when I managed to snap her just as she too disappeared. It was the most delightful sight. I shall be walking with my camera in hand for the next few days!

Caroline Allen

Good news for the state of wildlife on the River Otter. Thank you, Caroline, and a reminder for all of us of the value of carrying a camera at all times.

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## Lyme Regis literary walk

Margaret Read apologises that she had to cancel the Lyme Regis Jane Austen walk listed for 13<sup>th</sup> April, but her husband had had a severe stroke. He's just now out of hospital, but Margaret is sorry that she won't be walking with us for a few months.

# Pebblebed Conservation Grazing

**O**NE OF THE BIG CHANGES that people will see on the Pebblebed Heaths in 2013/2014 is the expansion of conservation grazing using rare breed cattle such as Devon Reds, or ponies, with the introduction of permanent fencing around the periphery of Aylesbeare, Harpford, Bicton and Lymptstone Commons.

This is a joint project between the owners and managers, Clinton Devon Estates, Pebblebed Conservation Trust, Squabmoor Farm and RSPB. Under the consented plans, all existing 'right to roam' access within the Commons boundaries guaranteed by the 2000 CRoW Act will continue and there is provision for multiple access points. Although a long consultation was undertaken with local communities and authorities in 2009 prior to permission being sought and approved in 2012, there has been some recent press comment on fencing, and it is perhaps timely to highlight again the background to this project.



Plans to manage East Devon's Pebblebed Heaths sustainably have been evolving for the last three decades. For many years grazing has been used to good effect on a number of Commons to achieve conservation grazing objectives using seasonal temporary electric enclosures. However, the use of such fencing is limited by law on common land. The Pebblebed heaths are, and always have been a heavily managed cultural landscape. The most recent endeavour to try and secure a 'favourable conservation status' for the heaths started in 2009. The process began with the production of an 'Options Appraisal' of potential management practices, including grazing. Full consultation of the options was then undertaken. Responses from all consultees at the time were analysed, with strong general support for grazing, although concerns were expressed about the landscape impact of the erection of permanent fencing in specific areas, with fears also articulated about access restrictions. A number of recommendations arose from this consultation, including that a feasibility study should be undertaken of permanently enclosing and grazing some Commons areas. Conservation grazing replicates the practices of the Commoners of old and has been proven to be an extremely useful heathland management practice. Benefits include the inhibition of tree seedling growth, a reduction in the

cover of purple moor grass, maintenance of structural diversity of vegetation and an increase in herbaceous plant diversity. There is also currently substantial deposition of atmospheric nitrogen onto the heaths which encourages a change in the vegetation from heather dominance to grass. Grazing can help to redress the balance. Grazing is not, however, a silver bullet to heathland management and does not remove the requirement to undertake additional work such as mowing and scrub clearance. Grazing intensity must also be carefully controlled. Given these requirements, grazing is nevertheless widely regarded by heathland conservation managers as an important additional tool to maintain this rare habitat and has proven to be effective when undertaken correctly.

At the end of the initial consultation period further proposals were then developed, with Colaton Raleigh and Woodbury Common, the largest and most heavily visited areas of the Commons sites excluded from plans at this time. A background paper was prepared, and after meetings with the County Council Highways authority and the police, draft maps of fencing lines and cattle grids were proposed and mapped. A further full

consultation was then repeated, including interest groups such as horse riders.

Responses remained generally in favour of grazing and fencing, with only 5% expressing concerns and 2% objecting.



In 2011 an application was made to the Planning Inspectorate to erect permanent fencing to enclose 469ha of the core area of the Pebblebed Heaths. The proposal was approved by the Planning Inspectorate in 2012. Those of you who have been out and about on the Commons this spring will have noticed that the RSPB has already started fencing on Aylesbeare and Harpford Commons, with the owner and manager of Lympstone Common – Squabmoor Farm Ltd – undertaking fencing of Lympstone. In the last few months there has been some correspondence (in the Exmouth Journal, for example), expressing concern about fencing on Lympstone Common. Should the public feel that fencing on any Commons area does not comply with the plans consented they can complain to the local Authority, the Open Spaces Society or take action in the County Court.

The Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust has yet to begin any fencing. Although we have consent to fence Hawkerland, Bicton and East Budleigh Commons, we are keen to appropriately trial our permanent fencing plans as we recognise it is a major step change in how we manage the Commons. Thus, it is our intention only to fence the perimeter of Bicton Common at this time. There will be no permanent internal enclosures, so the full legal access currently enjoyed by tens of thousands will continue, and there will be 19 pedestrian/equestrian gates at all the points identified during the consultation phase as being used by the public. We will endeavour to hide the fences as far as is possible by setting them back from roads and running them behind banks and gorse lines to reduce any adverse landscape impact. Once on the Common, we anticipate that there will be very little observable difference, except, of course, for about 30 cattle grazing! When the original plans were put forward for fencing to the Planning Inspectorate, Bicton was considered as a single grazing unit with East Budleigh common, with two cattle grids on the road between these two Commons to reduce the need for fencing along the roadside. With a curtailment of plans and East Budleigh Common now excluded, there will be a requirement for an additional 300m of fencing on the southern-most portion of Bicton Common to ensure all fencing connects. This will require a minor planning amendment and additional public consultation.

**As part of this a drop-in day has been organised between 9.00am and 4.00pm at East Budleigh Community Hall on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August and between 9.00am and 4.00pm in Four Firs car park on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August.** We very much welcome engagement, feedback and comments on this matter, and encourage as many of you as possible to attend and officially record your views. We are legally obliged by European law to maintain the heathlands in a favourable conservation status and take this responsibility very seriously, as we do protecting the landscape beauty of East Devon and maintaining public access to this beautiful but threatened habitat. Consultations undertaken during the original planning process suggested that the majority of the users of the Commons agree with our approach. We do very much hope that those of you who use the heaths will continue to support this venture and to enjoy your time on the heaths. Should concerns or questions remain regarding plans, please do contact me by phone (01395 441143) or come to the forthcoming consultations. Thank you.

Sam Bridgewater,

Conservation Manager, Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

White Bridge, SY076830. 5 miles, 2½ hours. Pleasant walk covering both coast and river to Otterton and return. Coast path (exposed), Monks Wall, Otterton and Park Lane.

*Walk leader:* George Norman, 01395 442307

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July – 2.00pm. WALK (Moderate)****Take the Bus for a Walk\* ~ The East Devon Way**

Celebrate the AONB's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by walking it end to end in five weekly stages, using the bus to get to the start and home from the finish\*.

*Certificate from the AONB for all those who complete the whole length.*

**Stage 1 – Exmouth and the Estuary.** A gentle start with a two-hour 4 mile afternoon walk along the estuary to Lypstone then inland via A La Ronde to Brixington. Start Exmouth Bus Station at 2.00pm. Outward bus 157 dep 13.01 at Newton Poppleford, dep 13.29 from Budleigh Salterton. Walk to Brixington Dinan Way/Jubilee Drive, SY016835. Return bus 57 dep Brixington 16.16/16.37 and 157 dep Exmouth Parade 17.07, arrive back in Budleigh 17.25, and Newton Poppleford 17.49

*Walk leader:* Haylor Lass, 01395 568786

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July – 10.00am. (moderate/energetic)**

Start at the Otter Inn car park, SY078874. 6 miles, 3 hours. Circular walk through Back Lane, Stowford and on to the Commons including a visit to Woodbury Castle.

*Walk leader:* John Jones, 01395 443651

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August – 11.00am. WALK All Day (Energetic+picnic)****The East Devon Way\* ~ Stage 2 – Brixington to Newton Poppleford.**

Start at Brixington Dinan Way/Jubilee Drive, SY016835 at 11.00am. Outward bus 157 dep 10.01 Newton Poppleford, dep 10.29 Budleigh Salterton, arr Exmouth Parade 10.42, change to bus 57 dep Exmouth 10.46 to arrive Dinan Way/Jubilee Drive 11.01. Walk, 10 miles across the Pebblebed Heaths, with a picnic lunch stop, to the Playing Field at Newton Poppleford, SY089899. Return bus 157 departs Newton Poppleford 17.16 arrives back in Budleigh 17.44. Bring picnic lunch and plenty of liquid, particularly if hot.

*Walk leader:* Haylor Lass, 01395 568786

**\*NB** These are normal service buses and OVA cannot guarantee either that there will be space on the bus or that they will run to timetable

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August – 9.30am. WALK All Day (Energetic+picnic)  
The East Devon Way\* ~ Stage 3 – Newton Poppleford to Hare & Hounds (Putts Corner).**

Start walk at the Playing Field at Newton Poppleford, SY089899 at 9.30am. Outward bus 157 dep 09.00 from Budleigh Salterton arrives NP 9.25 (bus stop at the bottom of the village before the river bridge).

– *Sorry about being too early for bus pass users.*

Walk, 10 miles over Beacon Hill to Sidbury, lunch stop, then Buckton Hill and Roncombe to Hare & Hounds at Putts Corner, SY145962.

Return bus 52B dep 16.38 Hare & Hounds, arrives Newton Poppleford 17.24, change 17.00/17.05 Exeter Cross, Sidmouth to bus 157 to arrive back in Budleigh at 17.44. Bring picnic lunch and plenty of liquid.

*Walk leader:* Haylor Lass, 01395 568786

**Saturday 10<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

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> August – 10.12am. WALK All Day (Energetic+picnic)  
The East Devon Way\* ~ Stage 4 – Hare & Hounds to Colyford.**

Start at Hare & Hounds, SY145962 at 10.12 Outward by bus 52 from NP at 09.28. (Link bus 09.00 from Budleigh to N Poppleford Orange stop at 09.24). Walk, 9½ miles via Northleigh, Farway and Colyton to Colyford (Museum bus stop, 150yds west of the tramway level crossing) SY253926.

Return by bus X53, dep 17:23 Colyford museum, arr 18:12 Newton Poppleford. Onwards by bus 157, dep 18.26 Newton Poppleford, arr. 18.54 Budleigh Salterton. Please remember picnic and drinks!

*Walk Leader:* Haylor Lass 01395 568786.

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August – 10.20am. WALK All Day (Energetic+picnic)  
The East Devon Way\*, Stage 5 (final): Colyford to Lyme Regis**

Outward via bus X53, dep. 09.32 Newton Poppleford, arr. Colyford 10.20. (Link bus 09.00 from Budleigh to N Poppleford Orange stop at 09.24).

Start at the Colyford Museum bus stop, SY253926. Walk 8½ miles from Colyford, Musbury, Uplyme to Lyme Regis, with time for a celebratory ice cream or cuppa. Please bring picnic lunch and drinks!

Return via bus X53, dep 17.10 arr. Newton Poppleford 18.12, *as before.*

*Walk Leader:* Haylor Lass 01395 568786.

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

Start at Crook Plantation, Stowford, SY057866. 5½ miles 3 hours  
Walk takes in the Commons, Kingsell Lane, Canterbury Green Plantation and Hawkerland. An unusual route including some rewarding but rarely visited parts of the Commons. Can be muddy in places.

*Walk Leader:* Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September – 10.00am. WALK (Easy)**

Start at Colaton Raleigh, Otter Inn, SY078874. 5 miles  
An easy walk along the River Otter (north), Dotton Farm, Monkey Lane, Vennings Copse, Hawkerland Valley, Morish Cotley, Knapps Lane, Pound Lane, Old Sawmills and Colaton Raleigh.

*Walk Leader:* Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September – 10.00am. WALK (Energetic)**

East Budleigh car park, SY065849. 8 miles, 4 hours.  
A three lake walk at this season of mellow fruitfulness visiting the local beauty spots of Bystock Ponds, Squabmoor Reservoir and Black Hill Quarry. Please bring a picnic for a sociable lunch stop!

*Walk Leader:* Jan Stuart, 01395 568235

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

Four Firs car park, SY032864. 5 miles, 2 ½ hours  
A circular walk on the commons using local paths and tracks at this mellow (we hope!) time of year.

*Walk Leader:* John Jones, 01395 446513

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September – 2.00pm. TOUR of Poltimore House**

See details on page 6 of this newsletter *and application form on page 7*

**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September – 10.00am. WALK**

Start at Tipton St John car park, SY091918. 5 miles.  
An easy walk along River Otter (east side going North), Fluxton, Heathlands, Ottery Common, Venn Ottery, Bridge o'er the Otter, Tipton St John. Please bring your own 'elevenses'!

*Walk Leader:* Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October – 10.00am. Walk (Moderate) optional lunch**

Start at East Budleigh car park, SY066849. 4 miles

Very interesting town walk, including a visit to the historic parish church of All Saints', East Budleigh. 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 12<sup>th</sup> October – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)**

Start at the White Bridge, SY075830. 5 miles

Coastal path to Crab Ledge, inland to Colliver Cross, then via Clamour Bridge to finish along river path back to the White Bridge.

Maybe muddy in places and windy on the coast path.

*Walk Leader:* John Jones 01395 443651

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October– 7.30pm. TALK, 'Climate change'  
East Budleigh Village Hall.**

When studying climate change, scientists draw their evidence from many sources. Are humans contributing to the warming we are observing?

Or could it be natural causes and changes to the climate? Scientists, such as those at the Met Office Hadley Centre, are continuing to look at all the possible effects, both man-made and natural.

*Speaker:* Dr Chris Roberts – Met Office

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October – 10:00am. WALK**

Start at East Budleigh car park, SY066849. 8½ miles

Walk via Clamour Bridge, coastal path to Ladram Bay, High Peak (great climb, great views!), Barrs Lane, Anchoring Hill, Otterton, Old Bicton Church, East Budleigh. Please bring a picnic!

*Walk Leader:* Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October – 10.00am. WALK (Energetic)**

Start at Colaton Raleigh Church, SY082872. 7 miles

Passaford Lane (steep uphill!), Mutters Moor, coastal path, green lanes, River Otter, Colaton Raleigh Church.

*"A wonderful walk, well worth the effort!"*

*Walk Leader:* Brian Turnbull 01395 567339

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November – 2.30pm. TALK, ‘50 years of AONB’  
Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton.**

The East Devon AONB was designated in 1963. To mark its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Kimmo Evans – Community Development Officer, will tell us all about this special area.

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK (Easy)**

Start Newton Poppleford Playing Field car park, SY089899)

An easy walk looking for and identifying fungi including wax caps. Please bring along a magnifying glass if you can, (there will be one available to share), to better see the detail of the samples spotted. If you come across any fungi before the walk, that you would like be 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 12<sup>th</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK (Easy)**

Jubilee Field, Budleigh Salterton, SY060817.

Meandering around this delightful wild flower haven identifying aspects of nature.

*Walk Leader:* Marion Nalder 01395 442176

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK**

Start Newton Poppleford Playing Fields car park, SY 089899. 7½ miles Walk to Benchams, Venn Ottery Common, Tophayes Farm, Aylesbeare, Halfway Inn, Woolcombes, Harpford Common, Back Lane to Newton Poppleford. Please bring a picnic!

*Walk Leader:* Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November – 7.30pm. TALK, ‘Devon Mills’  
Knowle (Budleigh) Village Hall.**

An illustrated talk from millwright Martin Watts from Cullompton, who has been studying mills since the 1960s. His work covers many aspects of the repair, maintenance, conservation and interpretation of historic mills and their machinery.

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November – 10.00am. WALK (Easy)**

Start at Wheathill Plantation car park, SY041847. 3 miles

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

*Walk Leader:* David Daniel 01395 445960

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate) optional lunch**

Start at Colaton Raleigh Church, SY082872. 5 miles

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

*Walk Leader:* Brian Turnbull 01395 567339

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December – 10.00am. WALK**

Start Knowle Village Hall car park, SY052827. 7½ miles

A walk to West Down Beacon, coastal path, Sandy Bay, High Land of Orcombe, Maer Lane, Littleham Brook, Green Farm, disused railway track, Knowle Village. Optional request stops for seasonal refreshments as required, and/or bring your own!

*Walk Leader:* Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> December – 10.30am. WALK (Easy) optional lunch**

Start at East Budleigh Car Park, SY066849. 4 miles

Gentle Boxing Day walk across the commons at this time of good cheer  
Optional lunch at the Sir Walter Raleigh.

**NB** Please telephone walk leader by 6<sup>th</sup> December to book lunch.

*Walk Leader:* David Daniel 01395 445960

**AND a couple of DATES for your 2014 diary****Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January –7.30pm. TALK, ‘Curious Dartmoor’  
Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton.**

Looking at strange or unusual buildings, follies, stones etc.: items which often leave more questions than answers. The history of letterboxing will be explored as well as other crazy and wild things.

*Speaker:* Paul Rendell – Local historian.

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March – 7.30pm. TALK, ‘The green Lanes of Devon’.  
Otterton Village Hall.**

Valerie Belsey has been researching Devon’s green lanes for over 20 years. Learn about their history and purpose, some of the stories attached to them. She is accompanied by folk singer Jim Causley who will sing some appropriate songs for us.

# May Day Walk

A select group of seven set off to walk from Castle Lane to Littleham Church on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May. The views from West Down Beacon were spectacular but as we dropped down onto the South West Coastal Path it was sad to see the extent of the recent cliff falls. Further on some of the mobile homes at the Holiday Park are clinging to the edge. As the sun got warmer we reached Littleham Church and found the nautical graves of the Moresby family marked by four anchors. At Lady Nelson's grave we discussed why, having died in London, she chose to be buried in Littleham. The only explanation I came up with is that it is a lovely peaceful spot! At the church we were met by the vergger who had put on all the lights so that we could view the ceiling features (such as the two green men) properly and had also unlocked the loo! Our thanks go to Jan for this and for his help in pointing out things of interest in the church. Although the Turnerelli Monument to Lady Nelson is beautiful there are many other intriguing features including the Good Samaritan window which, despite Jan's explanation, I still think was put in in the wrong order. After a leisurely break we continued along the disused railway track seeing more than one swallow – so summer must be on its way. Hazel Harland

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## Green Circle Revisited

On a sunny day in May we began by following the Wynstream, from which Wonford derives its name. The astonishing variety of Exeter's housing stock, the open fields and playing spaces of the city with many extensive panoramas were admired on a walk which had its deviations, intentional and otherwise. Lunch in the garden of City Gate Hotel, complete with live music, concluded the first semi-circle.

Cemeteries played a noticeable role in the second semi-circle walk, seen through a June drizzle. Having crossed the Exe at Miller's Bridge we clambered up Exwick Lane with impressive views over the city centre and later tramped along Hambeer Lane, an ancient ridgeway. The quaintness of Alphington led to the curiously impersonal area of Marsh Barton before we rejoined the river and headed for our final destination, the 1963 built Crematorium in its 14 acres of grounds. Lunch in the garden of the Tally Ho was curtailed by a chilly wind. We moved inside and planned the next challenge for Green Circle aficionados ... to walk it in reverse

Bettina Wilson

# Optimism in the Environment

**J**UNE HAS BEEN AN EXCITING MONTH. Not only did the 2013 Himalayan Balsam campaign get off to a wonderful start on the 13<sup>th</sup> but we became involved in a new venture altogether and one that is so rewarding that it could become a permanent fixture: field “seminars” for Primary School children.

## Primary School Field “Seminars” on East Budleigh Common

These were the brainchild of Dr Sam Bridgewater, Conservation Officer of Clinton Devon Estates/Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust. He floated the idea with local schools and received such a positive response that he approached the OVA for help with funding, specifically the bus needed for each outing. This was agreed and in addition, my wife (Gill) and I helped in the field. The seminars were conceived and organised by Sam and led either by him or his trusty staff Paul Swain, Ed Lagdon and (sometimes) Tia. Five outings took place between late May and late June, involving pupils from Budleigh Salterton, Newton Poppleford and Otterton.

There were 20-30, with two or three teachers, on each occasion and they were usually divided into two groups on arrival at the common. For perhaps half an hour, they focussed on one particular topic before switching to the second.



**Heathland Management:** The children were taken to a location where Senior Warden Paul Swain introduced them to the management of heathland through burning (“swaling”) and scraping of heather. This produces bare ground wherein heather re-establishes itself and matures, later on with gorse and, eventually, woodland. The fauna associated with this sequence are rare and distinctive, including the silver-studded blue butterfly, of the “pioneer heather” zone, which lives symbiotically with ants of the “bare ground” zone. Adders and the Dartford warbler are natives of “mature heather” zones. Pupils entered this sequence onto charts once they had been observed, whether on the ground or on large display photographs, as with adders (thankfully). Plants were collected and displays produced. The problem of fly-tipping as a management problem was also explored.

**The Origins of the Heaths:** The Budleigh Salterton Pebblebeds, which underlie the commons were the starting point for a demonstration by warden Ed Lagdon of the water-bearing capacity of rock strata using a glass tank, pebbles and water. The lesson: aquifers supply our tap water. A walk then took us to an excellent viewpoint where the invasion of the heath by silver birch was obvious. Later a Triassic rhynchosaur (“Woodie”) was “discovered” wild upon the heath and he gave an opportunity to discuss the animals themselves, fossils and the enormity of geological time.



Otterton 10 year-olds meet “Woodie” the Triassic Rhynchosaur

Following each of these two “seminars”, pupils were given some light relief in the form of first hand experience of some of the equipment used by the heathland management team: for example, tractors (jump up and take the wheel!) and the “fogger” the intense spray gun used to control burning heather during swaling (*photo*). As can be imagined, they were hugely popular.



A supplementary theme in all this was provided by the former Royal Marine's Dalditch camp in the centre of which the field activities took place. Once a small town half as big again as Budleigh Salterton, all that now remains are scattered Nissen hut foundations and just two or three complete buildings. One of these provided the final touch for the children as it is now used as a bat sanctuary.

For us, a most impressive part of these seminars was the enthusiasm of the children. Hands were always shooting up for both questions and answers. By the end of the sessions they could quite happily chant "Woodie the Rhyncosaur", "Dartford Warbler" and "Silver-studded Blue" in

response to prompting! What also impressed was the rapport quickly established with the children by Sam, Paul and Ed as they took the children through these ecological ideas. There is a huge difference in the technique required for 5 year olds and 10 year olds and they handled it skilfully. A huge "thank you" is due to them for their efforts and especially to Sam for preparing the seminars so thoroughly and perceptively.

He even organised 5 days without rain.

Patrick  
Hamilton  
Natural  
Environment  
Committee.



# The Himalayan Balsam Project

**T**HE 2013 CAMPAIGN duly got underway on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June with expectations high as a result of Sam Bridgewater's success in persuading the Commandant at Lympstone to release 40 of his marines for the day and also because a dozen or so volunteers from Clinton Devon were joining a comparable number from the OVA. This meant the extraordinary number of 60+ would be in the field. In the event, the marines worked separately at Yettington and White Bridge while the CDE volunteers joined the OVA on the Colaton Raleigh Brook to tackle last year's obsession: Stowford Woods.



## OVA Volunteers Ready for Action; Lower Stowford Farm

In Stowford Woods the results were quite extraordinary. In a pincer movement in which CDE volunteers moved upstream to meet ours working downstream, the 20+ volunteers succeeded in clearing the whole woodland block by lunchtime! In 2012, this had taken our OVA volunteers (helped by the Probation team in June) 22 outings between 7<sup>th</sup> June and 31<sup>st</sup> July! Undoubtedly the large numbers helped but it is also the

case that last year's efforts had greatly reduced the task facing the teams this year. Not that that is the end of the matter. Two more sweeps through the woods will be needed before late October and of course it will all have to be repeated in subsequent years even if the task will diminish over time. Nonetheless, it is a great achievement and the volunteers are to be congratulated.

A further outing (2 volunteers) on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June tidied up the river stretch above Stowford Woods. Then on the 27<sup>th</sup> June four volunteers in the morning and another four in the afternoon nearly finished the tributary of the Colaton Raleigh brook that runs from Kingston Farm. This had not been completed last year and is badly infested.

The overall OVA strategy, working with CDE, remains to control Himalayan Balsam on all of the Otter tributaries in our patch. We can say that the Colaton Raleigh Brook is now under control but much work remains on the Back Brook into Newton Poppleford, Yettington on the (East) Budleigh Brook, Bicton Estate and, although technically not an Otter tributary, the Knowle Brook. So we still need volunteers and if any reading this piece would like to join us please get in touch.

Patrick Hamilton  
Natural Environment Committee

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## Local Voices ~ Exe Poets

I would like to say how much I enjoyed the evening at Church on the Green – Local Voices poetry and prose evening. The quality and content of the work was performed most professionally what wonderful talent we have in this area.

Well done to Sue Chapman for organising a great evening, to David Daniel a great host and the wonderful refreshments.

Jenny Young

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## Bathing Water Quality

Just a 'page-filler' note for those who read this far in time, that there is an event in Budleigh led by the Environment Agency on **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July** to which all the involved and concerned agencies, including the OVA, have been invited to introduce the changes to the Bathing Waters Directive and who is doing what. See local press and posters for details.

# The Alan Jones Bridge

**A** SMALL GATHERING at the footbridge over the River Otter on the footpath beyond the eastern end of Church Road, Colaton Raleigh was welcomed by David Forward on the afternoon of 13<sup>th</sup> May. He gave a special welcome to Charles Booth, the son of Alan's cousin; Christine Channon representing Devon County Council, parish councillors, and a number of local residents.



David continued, “Alan Jones, who died on 23 June 2012 was missed in a number of ways. His interesting and often pithy reports on parish paths appeared every month in the Parish magazine for many years. He was a distributor for the magazine. He was also a man who contributed much to the local community. He was always ready to provide give lifts to elderly villagers who wanted to visit neighbours in hospital and who had no independent transport.”

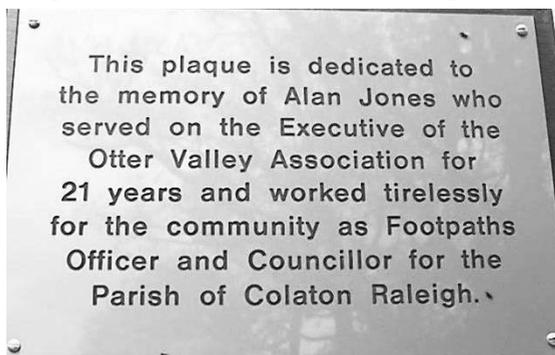
“He also spoke out in support of rural Broadband, against cuts to rural buses and was a great supporter of the village shop. Alan was an active member of the Parish Council from 2002 until the end of his life. I knew Alan mainly as a Councillor – he attended Parish Council meetings up to his death and although gasping for breath at his last meeting he contributed in his usual perceptive and direct manner having the ability to see clearly the real issues and also the unintended consequences of poor decisions.”

“On 27<sup>th</sup> September last year a new footbridge arrived courtesy of Devon County Council, to replace the 1947 which had been damaged by flood debris earlier in the year and it was a neighbour of mine who pointed out it would be a fitting monument to a man who had done so much for the footpaths of the Otter Valley. Devon CC kindly agreed and the Otter Valley Association agreed to pay half the cost of a plaque.”



Haylor Lass from the OVA added a few words remembering Alan’s encyclopaedic knowledge the local paths, and the years Alan had spent walking and clearing and campaigning to improve the footpaths in the lower Otter valley. David then cut the red ribbon and formally named the structure the Alan Jones Bridge, before all retired to the Village Hall for the traditional tea and cakes.

Haylor Lass



# AONB ~ 50 not out!

## The First Fifty Years of the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

by Donald Campbell

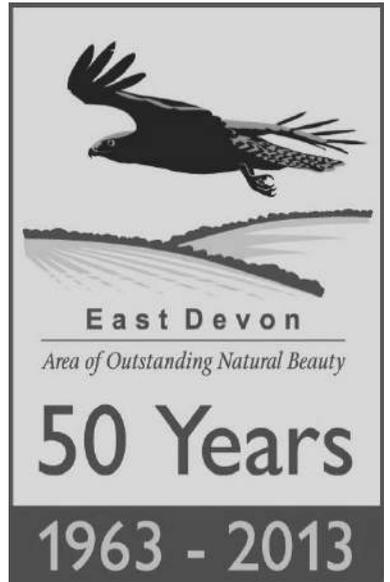
### Part Two - The AONB Partnership

THE 1993 report on the 'East Devon Landscape' described the AONB as 'being notable for its varied and dramatic coastal scenery – the grandeur of sheer, red sandstone cliffs, the steep intimate woodland coves, the stark, white, chalk outcrop that punctuates the coast at Beer Head and further east the wilderness of the Undercliffs'.

The report also pointed to socioeconomic and other problems as did the Management Plan (December 1998) based on co-operation, common sense and good will which sought to 'draw together the issues facing the area and to provide practical realistic policies and actions to help ensure the future well-being of the AONB.'

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act of 2000 consolidated earlier legislation concerning AONBs and created a statutory responsibility for local authorities and conservation boards (which only materialised in the large Cotswolds and Chilterns AONBs) to produce and regularly review Management Plans.

Following the CRoW Act a new AONB Partnership, led by Chris Woodruff, coming from the Forest of Bowland AONB, and supported by Nic Butler and Pete Youngman, was formed on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2003 and, in line with the Act, was hosted by the District Council, based in the Council's Offices in Sidmouth and under the Chairmanship of a Councillor, Tony Reed. On 12<sup>th</sup> June Tony and Sir John Cave, representing the Country, Land and Business Association on the Partnership, welcomed 132 guests to Sir John's home at Sidbury Manor. These guests included Stuart Mollinson who had been involved with the original designation, 45 Councillors and 14 members of the Partnership including me as Axe Vale and District Conservation Society (AVDCS) representative.



## Annual Report and Review

Tony's forward to the 2003-4 Annual Report wondered about the role of central government funding of AONBs. At that time the Countryside Agency, then the statutory champion for rural people and the countryside, provided three quarters of core costs, with the County and District Councils providing one eighth each while the £100,000 project costs were met by the Countryside Agency (c. 50%) and EDDC and DCC (c. 25% each). The Report gave summary details of the consultation process which had significantly influenced the Management Strategy. We were one of 26 organisations providing detailed comments on the draft. The statutory consultees, English Nature and the Countryside Agency wanted greater consistency in the presentation and greater emphasis on landscape. The main points emerging from evening workshops, where young people and family groups were conspicuously absent, was the need to cut out jargon and bureaucracy and to be practical in enhancing the AONB's character.



Among projects mentioned in the Report, and in even more detail in the Review, were an archaeological survey which recorded 3000 new items to add to the Devon Sites and Monument Review, and 12 out of 106 'unconfirmed' sites had been found worthy of designation as County Wildlife Sites.

A visitor survey found that only 37% were aware of the East Devon AONB; to increase awareness nine boundary markers, with the new Buzzard logo, were placed on major roads, and all footpath fingerposts on rights of way were also marked with the logo. Five years later a repeat of the survey showed that levels of awareness had increased to 71%, and the most recent survey, in 2013, showed levels of awareness at over 90%. Work started on a Biodiversity Action Plan on behalf of East Devon Countryside Service, and there were improvements to the East Devon Way and Southwest Coast Path where Dave Palmer of the Countryside Service worked as effectively as he does now.



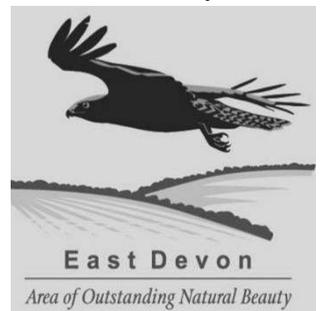
## Ongoing Reviews

The first Management Plan (Strategy) was adopted by County and District Councils in 2004 by which time Kimmo Evans had joined the team after Nic left for Scotland as mentioned in the 2004-5 Review. The Community Project Fund, preparing the way for the expanded Sustainable Development Fund, granted £8,590 to 19 projects, the first AONB Forum, now an annual event, was held in Branscombe and the website was set up. A review of partners' activities highlighted the 550 man-hours of conservation work carried out by AVDCS who had organised some 50 walks and talks, including a special 'Celebration of East Devon's Landscape and Wildlife'. The Society had provided voluntary wardens for local and national nature reserves as part of its co-operation with other conservation bodies including East Devon who had been awarded £50,000 for the three year initiative 'Great Trees of East Devon' led by Kate Tobin.

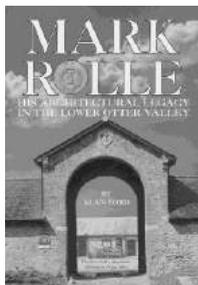
Councillor Margaret Rogers, who had previously chaired the Joint Advisory Group, replaced Tony Reed for the two-years 2005-7. She was impressed by the diversity of initiatives supported by the new sustainable Development Fund. Fifteen projects were awarded £95,550 in her first year, and £72,000 for 17 projects in her second. When combined with matched funding and 'in kind' costs this second year represented £221,000 of work which included a farm plastic recycling scheme and support for a 'hill hopper' bus from Sidmouth which improved access to Salcombe Hill and Mutters Moor. Automatic people-counters had been installed at ten key sites and at Beer Head, after the grounding of MSC Napoli in January 2007, a six fold leap in numbers to 1500 per day was recorded. In a normal year some 12-14,000 walkers pass this counter on the coast path.

Mike Ellingham, from the National Farmers' Union, succeeded Margaret, and was the first non-Local Authority chairman. The 2007-8 Review mentioned some highlights; a three year, lottery-funded historic landscapes project run by Phil Planel, a bat initiative linked with Beer Quarry Caves, and support for the installation of a 50kW woodchip boiler at Clinton Devon Estates showed again the diverse activities within the AONB. Next year, Mike reported on a revision of the Management Plan for 2001-2014 and after my two years as Chairman John Wilding MBE from Clinton Devon Estates will guide the Partnership towards the next revision due in 2014.

Among the many enjoyable aspects of my two years as Chairman was attendance at conferences run by the National Association. Just as Devon Wildlife Trust is one of 47 County Trusts, East Devon is one of 47 AONBs that make up the National Association. One field visit at the Ken conference included a look at the way chalk rubble from the Channel Tunnel had been turned into a spectacular Nature Reserve, while in Cornwall we were shown how boat transport around the Fal Estuary had been integrated with bus services: two very different aspects of AONB activities. To keep up to date with activities in East Devon go to the new website: [www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk](http://www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk), and for a new AONB leaflet follow the link to publications. You can follow the Buzzard on [Twitter@EastDevonAONB](https://twitter.com/EastDevonAONB) and for archive film go on the vimeo channel <http://vimeo.com/eastdevonaonb>.



# 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.

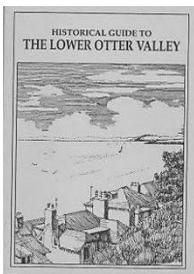
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



## **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 £2.00 P&P)



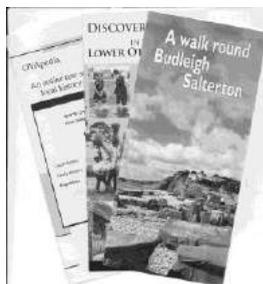
## **Historical Guide to the Lower Otter Valley**

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 £2.00 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 |
| Hon Treasurer          | Trevor Waddington | 443978 |

### *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 | George Maddaford | 446077 |
|                    | Roger Saunders   | 443248 |
| East Budleigh      | Christine Hadley | 443607 |
| Otterton           | Iain Ure         | 568158 |
| Colaton Raleigh    | <i>vacancy</i>   |        |
| Newton Poppleford  | Haylor Lass      | 568786 |

### *Other EC Members*

|                             |                       |        |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Assistant Minutes Secretary | Robert Wiltshire      | 444395 |
| Membership Secretary        | Clive Bowman          | 446892 |
|                             | membership@ova.org.uk |        |
| Publicity Secretary         | <i>vacancy</i>        |        |

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| Talks Organiser         | Graham Knapton | 445872 |
| Walks Organisers        | Chris Buckland | 444471 |
|                         | Mike Paddimore | 446550 |
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