

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

SUMMER

newsletter

Volume 38/3

July 2017

OVA
PO Box 70
Budleigh Salterton
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www.ova.org.uk
Registered Charity
No 278266
OVA 2017

HEATH WEEK

2017

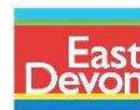
FESTIVAL DAY
FAMILY EVENTS
CRAFT ACTIVITIES

23–29 JULY

For the full programme
of exciting events visit
heathweek.org or  [/heathweek](https://www.facebook.com/heathweek)

A celebration of our heathland heritage

East Devon Heath Week is organised
by the following organisations:



This issue's cover "Otter Head Stack" was photographed and produced by
Mo Bowman

From the Editor

This issue seems to feature a number of 'welcomes' – to our new Otterton reps, Pat and Geoff Porter (page 7); the new Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Site manager, Kim Strawbridge (page 8) and the new DWT Field Officer working on the River Otter Beaver Trial, Jake Chant (page 15). The plea for Himalayan Balsam 'bashers' to assist with the 2017 campaign has produced eleven new volunteers which is a fantastic response and we have also been joined by a number of new members recently, so welcome to the 'OVA' – I hope you enjoy this Summer newsletter.

Jacqui Baldwin



Bat Detectors : See what is flying in your garden!

We have two bat detectors available for members to borrow. If you would like to use one please contact Roger Saunders by email (rsrbioventures@aol.com). When picking up the detector you will need to provide a £50 cheque as a security deposit and a form of ID. Initially the loan period is limited to one week/loan.

We will lend you the detector, with instructions for use and bat identification leaflets from the Bat Conservation Trust. The two detectors available are the Magenta Bat4.

For the Bat fans amongst you there are a number opportunities to see/hear them during the forthcoming Heath Week with a Night Walk on Mutters Moor on 26th July, an evening walk at Bystock with Sarah Butcher from the Devon Bat Group on 27th and, finally, on 28th July a dusk visit to Aylesbeare Common. See poster left for Website and Facebook details.

Acting Chairman's Report

"The estuary at Budleigh Salterton, where the River Otter winds through the salt marshes to the sea, is the most peaceful place I know. It's not peaceful in the sense of silent: there are gulls, geese and curlews, the high call of sandpipers and the roar of waves breaking on the other side of the shingle ridge. But the water here has a mercury stillness, so that surfacing fish make ripples and the cliff above is mirrored. What a cliff it is: glowing terracotta sandstone, the orange deepened by the green turf above, and standing tall on its ridge – rather oddly and exotically – a row of Scots pines".

Sometimes it is easy to forget how lucky we are to live in this area. The quotation above (*Alexandra Harris, The Guardian June 9th 2017*), is part of an article naming Budleigh Salterton as a favourite seaside location, one of ten in the UK. Inspired, I will devote most of this report to the OVA's involvement in our natural environment.

A lot is going on with the River Otter at the moment. The Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP) is looking at ways to manage the increased flood risk in the lower Otter estuary. If nothing is done the embankments along the estuary are likely to fail, resulting in uncontrolled flooding and loss of access along the river footpaths. The LORP list of options for managing the river has shrunk from ten or more to a preferred group of four, plus the baseline of doing nothing. All the "action" options involve the creation of at least 14.5 Ha of intertidal habitat, since that is a requirement for Environment Agency funding. This habitat would be created below South Farm Road (Southern Big Marsh) or, depending on the option, include the area to the north as well, reaching as far as Clamour Bridge (Big and Little Marshes). If you are interested in more information you can attend a public consultation on July 5th (12 noon – 7pm) at Temple Methodist Hall, Budleigh Salterton. Information is also available on the Lower Otter Restoration Website (<http://www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk>).

The OVA is involved with the LORP as a member of both the Stakeholder Group and the Technical Steering Group. We support the general goals of the project, and we think the addition of intertidal habitat would benefit the wildlife in the Otter Estuary, especially birds. We are concerned, however, that access needs to be maintained both to South Farm and along the heavily used footpath by the river. As the project progresses we will continue to monitor and comment on its potential impacts on OVA members and local residents.

The other major proposed project along the river is FAB-Link, the high capacity electricity cable from France/Alderney to Exeter, via Lyme Kiln Car Park and the River Otter. The timeline for this project has construction starting in 2018 and continuing until 2021. The benefit for the Otter Valley is that we are likely to see a more accessible, elevated footpath along the west edge of the estuary (with the cable underneath). More information about this project can be found at <http://www.fablink.net/reference> . The OVA was a consultee for this project.

If you walk along the river in the spring and summer it is very obvious that there is a huge amount of Himalayan Balsam growing. Balsam grows and spreads rapidly, successfully competing with native plant species and excluding other plant growth (through shading and smothering), thereby reducing native biodiversity. The OVA has a team tackling it in a targeted fashion. Our strategy is to clear the tributaries first. Once clear they won't be re-infected annually from upstream areas as the main river is. The OVA team has concentrated on the Colaton Raleigh brook area, and after 5 years effort has it mostly under control and is now considering new areas to work on. We work closely with Clinton Devon Estates and other volunteer groups. If you would like to be involved please contact Patrick Hamilton (email: pat@bishopdams.fs2.com).

The beavers are a very popular addition to the river. Our best attended talk over the last two years was given by the Devon Wildlife Trust about the River Otter beavers. They are classified as rodents, unsurprisingly making them Europe's largest rodent species - growing to a weight of 16-30 Kg (about border collie size). The Otter is a good habitat for them, with lots of willow to eat. They are also known to eat Himalayan Balsam! We think that the beavers are good for the area both from a tourism perspective and also improve the natural environment. While the OVA is not directly involved in the beaver management programme we supported the efforts to persuade Natural England to allow them to stay on the river.



Children from Feniton C of E Primary

Moving away from the river, the OVA also encourages our members and the public to visit our local area. We are collaborating with Clinton Devon Estates to help local school children visit the Pebblebed Heaths as part of their school curriculum. The OVA donates money to pay for transportation from school to heath and back.

Our walks programme, as well as covering a lot of the local area, has run various themed walks, including bird identification. We are hoping to do a fungi walk this autumn.

I hope you can see how the OVA can help you to connect with the natural environment. If you are interested in getting involved more deeply with the OVA's natural environment projects please contact Patrick Hamilton, the Natural Environment Committee leader (see above).

Following the OVA AGM on May 10th, the Executive Committee remains much the same, although we are pleased to welcome Pat and Geoff Porter as our new Otterton Village reps. It was not my plan to be writing this Chairman's Report, as my three-year tenure is completed. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find a replacement and so I have agreed to continue for one more year as Acting Chairman. Following the AGM, David White gave a talk illustrated with his amazing photos of the beavers and other local wildlife - examples of which you will see elsewhere in this issue.

Roger Saunders, Acting Chairman

Himalayan Balsam Campaign 2017: Update

Good News! My plea for volunteers received a lively response. Thank you so much to the eleven who signed up. We duly launched the annual assault on the Colaton Raleigh brook on 15th June with a party of 12 including 5 of the new volunteers. Given that the work of previous years is bearing fruit (not the greatest choice of words! Preventing "fruit" is the aim!), we made excellent progress and should be able to help attack other valleys during July before we return for the second sweep through the Colaton valley.

On 21st June, eight of us will join forces with the Clinton Devon team for the official "Opener" for 2017 starting work in the upper reaches of the (East) Budleigh brook near Yettington. We will hope to progress down to the flood plain during the course of the summer.



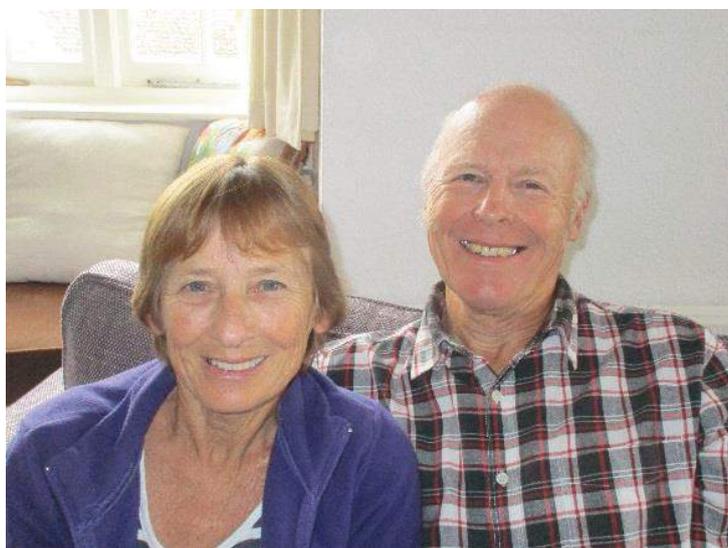
Balsam Bashers at leisure

If there are still folk out there who enjoy the fresh air and helping with a useful project, do please get in touch (see below). There is absolutely no binding commitment and you can do as little or as much as you like. We go out on Thursday and Saturday morning each week so if you could manage one or two mornings during the summer and autumn, that would be great.

Patrick Hamilton, Acting Chairman, Natural Environment Committee
Email: patrickhamilton35@outlook.com. Telephone: 01395-445351.

Introducing Geoff and Pat Porter – your new Otterton Reps

We first moved to Plymouth in 1978 before going on to Peter Tavy and then Exmouth. We've recently returned from living in South West France for 12 years where we renovated a water mill and created 15 acres of garden and wildlife habitat. We've lived in Otterton since February of this year to be closer to our family who live locally, choosing to live in a village where we can be involved in the community, make new friends and better explore the East Devon countryside.



Pat and Geoff Porter

We are both keen walkers and enjoy an outdoor lifestyle being keen gardeners and conservationists.

Geoff spent most of his career working in local government before attending Bicton College for 2 years studying horticulture. He then became a landscape gardener specialising in designing and building water features; he has always enjoyed playing around with water!

Pat's career was in teaching, firstly as a PE specialist then as a Primary School teacher. She has always participated in various sporting activities and now enjoys fitness classes and long walks.

We were pleased to find out about the OVA and that Otterton had a vacancy for a local rep. We hope to be able to represent our village fully and to get to know other members through joining in with various activities.



Pebblebed Heaths CONSERVATION TRUST

On the heaths, the first green shoots of recovery are already appearing on the recent burn site on Colaton Raleigh Common which covered 38 hectares. Heathland is well adapted to fire and we expect a full recovery of the impacted area in due course, although it will take many years. The first plant to have re-appeared is Purple Moor Grass. Gorse and Heather will re-sprout in future years. The site is now a study location for the University of Exeter's Earth System Science and Geography Departments who are investigating how heathland biomass and carbon stocks are affected by fire.



Our team is also pleased to welcome Kim Strawbridge as our new Site Manager. Kim joins us from the Eastern Moor Partnership in Derbyshire. Please do stop and say hello if you see Kim (pictured left) about and about.

Cattle are back grazing the loops on Colaton Raleigh common where the action of their hooves and browsing prevents the purple moor grass from dominating the site, and allows water in the runnels on the slopes to keep moving. This helps provide ideal conditions for one of our rarest species - the Southern Damselfly. Dartmoor Hill ponies and cattle have also returned to Bicton and Dalditch Commons. As part of their busy summer schedule, the wardens are undertaking daily welfare checks on the animals. Recent additional work on the Commons has included the installation of three new dog bins at Stowford, Wheathills and Estuary View car parks.

It has also been a busy time for education and public engagement too, with both small and large events taking place on the commons and the River Otter. The focus of recent primary school trips on the heaths has been on geology, habitat management, plant diversity and fire management.



The Pebblebed Heath Conservation Trust are incredibly grateful to the executive committee of the OVA for supporting local schools to access outdoor educational visits by helping them with transport costs. A-level students from local schools and colleges also undertake practical field work conducting transects and samples across different vegetation types. Heath Week which starts on 23rd July promises a packed and varied programme.

Last year we made a request for volunteers to help with butterfly and bird surveying. There was a fantastic response to this, and over thirty local people received training enabling them to head out and assist us with expanding our annual monitoring programme of Silver-studded Blues and Nightjars. In May, we presented the collated regional data for the 2016 Nightjar surveys to the volunteers, and those present were pleased to hear that population numbers remain healthy. Thank you to everyone who is helping again this season. Your support is really appreciated.

Our practical volunteers continue to meet fortnightly, and if you'd like to join us on a Wednesday for some active work, you'll receive a warm welcome and a caramel wafer at coffee time! Our focus will be on Himalayan balsam until August, as well as some joint work with the Ramblers on a section of the East Devon Way.

We remind all the users of the common at this time of the year to guard against fire, close gates to keep livestock safe and also be mindful to check yourselves and pets for ticks after walking in the countryside. Thank you!

**Kate Ponting, Countryside Learning Officer kate.ponting@clintondevon.com
01395 446918**

Vision Hotels visit to the Otter Valley

Earlier this year the OVA was contacted by Vision Hotels (a non-profit organisation and part of the charity Action for Blind People) based in Teignbridge to ask if we would provide a local guide for a walking group they were bringing to Otterton. So on Thursday 18th May, Dee Woods, Rosemary Hatch and myself went along and on Thursday, 8th June, Penny Kurowski and Geoff Porter held the fort. Neither day was a perfect walking day as there had been considerable rain which led to lots of surface water and mud. The visually impaired walkers and their guide dogs (also on holiday) had the opportunity to sample the route from Otterton Mill to Ladram via Rydon Lane and Bar's Lane and then then back along the river to the Mill. On the first visit, Dee had trimmed some of the vegetation to make it easier to walk two abreast, a walker with a guide. As it was too wet to go up Bar's Lane we took the walkers to the area where the beavers are active so they could feel the damage done to the felled trees. On the second visit again an alternative route



was taken into Budleigh Salterton along the coastal path and back along the river.

We found out during our walks that when guide dogs are on the lead, they behave like any other well-disciplined dog. Off the lead, they know they are on holiday and can enjoy themselves. However, when their harness is put on, they know they are working and adopt their professional persona.

One of the walkers, Donna Waring, sent us a lovely email afterwards: *“I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the walk we did with some of your members last Thursday. My favourite part was when we were up on the cliffs. Despite being totally blind from birth, I was still able to get a sense of how very open and high it was up there. It was my favourite part but I also enjoyed walking by the river and feeling some of the holes the beavers had made in the trees.”*

According to Brian Hall, the Vision Hotels walk organiser, their guests and volunteers had a good walk and enjoyed their visits to the Otter Valley. The content and knowledge imparted was exactly what they wanted, enabling them to continue walking whilst learning of the local history and flora and fauna.

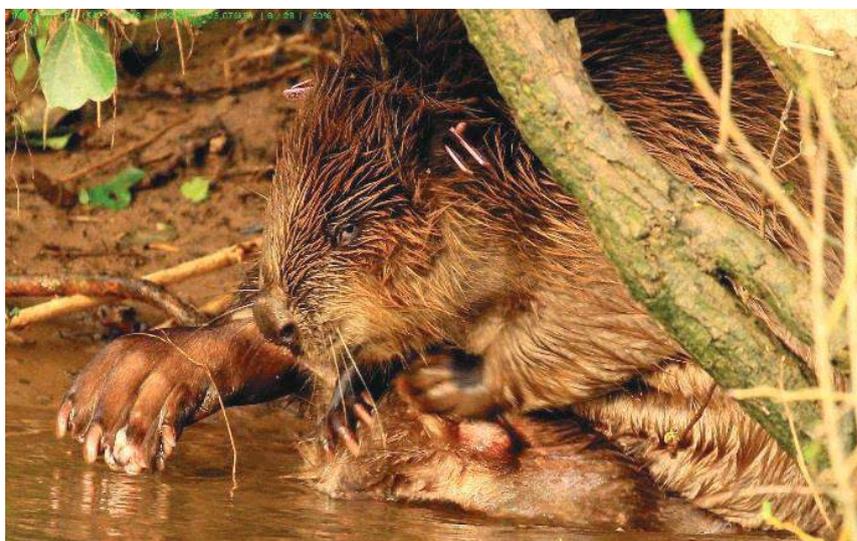
We very much hope that the third visit which is due to take place during the second half of September will be a drier affair and we get to complete the intended route. We look forward to continuing our association with Vision Hotels in the future. We were all full of admiration for the courage of the visually impaired walkers and the faith they put in their walk guides.

Heather Fereday

Otter Valley Wildlife

The 38th OVA AGM took place at East Budleigh village hall on 10th May 2017. It was attended by a recent record of 58 hardy souls. Were they there to hear the wise words of our Chairman? Was it to hear the details of our accounts painstakingly compiled by our Hon. Treasurer? Or perhaps it was the temptation of a cool glass of sauvignon blanc? No, it was more likely to listen to the talk given by David White, photographer extraordinaire, upon the wild mammals and birds found in the Otter Valley. This was accompanied by his amazing photographs. Why spend a fortune visiting Kruger Game Park or the distant Galapagos Islands when we have such a wealth of wildlife on our doorsteps?

We started off by hearing about the beavers. Last year 5 kits were born and raised by the same female. The presence of beavers is evidenced by the trees felled to ground level. Apparently this is no detriment, as it encourages growth. Weeping sap marks the territorial limits of these creatures.



All the beavers on the river have been ear tagged. Pink for a girl and, would you believe it, green for a boy. Many of the pictures showed the rodents enjoying a good scratch and grooming session. There is nothing quite like a good scratch! The female with the kits made her own problem as she only has 4 nipples for the 5

kits, so that inevitably there is a runt in the litter. David, estimates that he spends about 20 hours each week watching our new residents.



We then moved onto the otters, once the stars of our river. Five otters have been observed between Budleigh Salterton and Colaton Raleigh. Their areas are marked by their spraints (droppings to you and me). They feast on the large number of grey mullet which inhabit the river. However it is suspected that they are partial to the odd beaver kit.

Mink are found on the river and when swimming can be mistaken for a young otter. At one time, rafts were moored at the riverside with a tunnel and inside an area of muddy material. Mink cannot resist a good tunnel and, when passing through, leave their tell-tale footprints. Apparently there are not so many of these savage creatures on the river nowadays. We also saw pictures of stoats and roe deer. There are some red deer and they normally produce twins during the 2nd or 3rd week in May. Rabbits on the run can be identified by their white tails, which they raise, whilst the hare keeps his tail down. We were also introduced to rats, voles, woodmice and fieldmice.



Next the birds found in our 'Area of Benefit', as grandly described in our Constitution. I counted at least 23 species - and such wonderful pictures. We were kept enthralled by the variety and nature of the wildlife to be found in our midst. It only remains to dig out the binoculars and cameras and seek out some of these creatures.

Bob Wiltshire

With thanks to David White for the stunning photographs

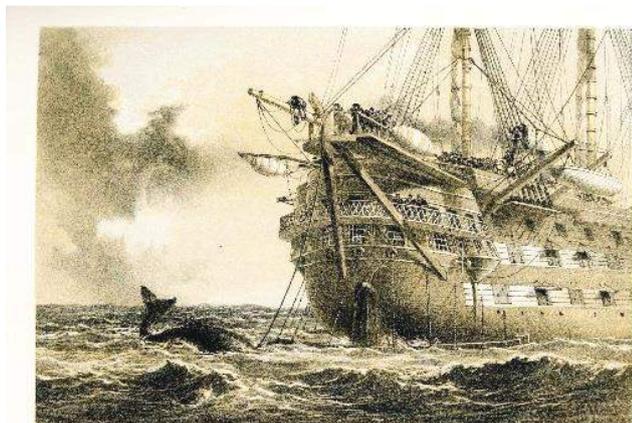
As promised in the Spring issue this is the second part of the story of **Admiral Preedy and the Victorian Internet**

2017 marks the bicentenary of Admiral Preedy's birth. Although born in Worcestershire he retired to Budleigh Salterton and his life will be celebrated in a Fairlynch Museum exhibition this year.

After several unsuccessful attempts to lay the Cable in the Spring of 1858 HMS *Agamemnon* and USS *Niagara* sailed from Queenstown, Ireland, into the Atlantic on 12 June for a final attempt. The plan was to sail to a mid-Atlantic rendezvous where both halves of the Cable would be spliced together. *Niagara* would then take half of the cable West to Newfoundland, while *Agamemnon* would take the other half of the cable East to Ireland.

As luck would have it, one of the worst Atlantic storms ever recorded raged for a whole week, *Agamemnon* coming close to foundering on several occasions. The temptation to jettison the cable and the coals on the upper deck to improve stability must have been very great, but that would have meant the end of the enterprise and the loss of national prestige. Captain Preedy courageously decided to weather the storm, putting his faith in God, his ship, and his sailors.

The storm eventually abated and on 26 June *Niagara's* cable was taken on board *Agamemnon* where the two halves of the Atlantic Cable were spliced together. As the cable ships proceeded East and West respectively, electrical continuity of the cable was monitored continuously in each ship so that a sudden break in the cable would be spotted immediately. Radio had yet to be invented, so *Agamemnon* and *Niagara* could not talk to each other. However, a procedure had been arranged whereby if the cable broke the ships would return to the mid-Atlantic rendezvous position and start again if sufficient spare cable remained. The need to do this occurred 3 times!



Disaster nearly occurred when a whale swam over *Agamemnon's* cable! Finally on 5 August *Agamemnon* anchored in Valentia Bay, Ireland, and preparations were made to join the ocean and shore ends of the cable. *Niagara* had arrived in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, on the same day.

On 11 August 1858 *The Times*, newspaper reported: “England and the New World has at last been connected by the electric chain.” Celebrations in London were low-key but wildly extravagant in New York and San Francisco.

The Victorian Internet had been born and on 16 August Queen Victoria and President James Buchanan exchanged greetings in telegraphic messages. The New York Chamber of Commerce commissioned Tiffany & Co of New York to produce commemorative gold medals which were awarded to the officers of *Agamemnon* and *Niagara*. Captain Preedy was appointed a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB) and rewarded with command of HMS Liffey, a new steam frigate.

In 1864, age 47, George William Preedy married 27 year-old Elizabeth Ann Webber. He retired from the navy in 1874, now a family man living in Tavistock. As was then customary for a senior Captain on retirement, he was promoted to Rear Admiral. Five years later he was further promoted to Vice Admiral on the Retired List.

The Preedys moved to Budleigh Salterton around 1878. The 1891 Census records them living in Park House, a fine Victorian villa in Little Knowle, with a son, three daughters, four servants and a governess.

The Admiral died in 1894, having enjoyed a distinguished naval career and a comfortable retirement. He is buried in a family grave in the churchyard of All Saints, East Budleigh. His achievement in laying the Atlantic Cable in 1858 might well have been forgotten had it not been for a very fine stained glass window in East Budleigh Church (right).

The image depicts the Gospel of St Mark’s account of Christ calming the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee. The inscription reads:

In memory of Vice Admiral George William Preedy CB who when Captain of HMS Agamemnon with the Captain of USS Niagara successfully laid the first Atlantic Cable uniting Europe and America in 1858

**Trevor Waddington,
Chair of Trustees at Fairlynch Museum**





Devon Wildlife Trust

New addition to River Otter Beaver Trial

As this edition of the newsletter was being compiled staff and volunteers on the Devon Wildlife Trust-led River Otter Beaver Trial were expecting news of more young beavers born on the river – perhaps to as many as five breeding pairs.

But the Trust is already able to announce one new arrival to the Otter valley – the project has a new part-time Field Officer, who will be working closely with local people over the coming year. Jake Chant started work alongside Project Lead Mark Elliott in mid-June. As well as keeping an eye on the various family groups of beavers living on the river, Jake will be working closely with farmers and landowners in areas of beaver activity.

He will also be assisting University of Exeter researchers in carrying out the annual survey of field signs, such as gnawed willow trees, that allow us to monitor where beavers are travelling and settling throughout the Otter catchment. There are also plans for Jake to host another Community and Education Forum in the autumn so that local volunteers can come together again and plan the work for the coming year.

Jake is very enthusiastic about working in East Devon, on England's first beaver re-introduction and monitoring project. He said: "I have worked for a number of conservation and ecological research organisations, which have taken me all over the UK – from the Shetland Islands to the Jurassic Coast, and from Pembrokeshire to fens of East Anglia. Most recently, I've worked with farmers and communities on the Mendip Hills on meadow restoration projects. I'm really excited to have started working for Devon Wildlife Trust on the River Otter Beaver Trial." Jake can be contacted via the project email address: beavers@devonwildlifetrust.org



One pair of beavers has set up a maternity lodge very close to a footpath on the River Otter. Kits have been heard with their parents inside the lodge. As the Newsletter went to press, everyone involved in the River Otter Beaver Trial was hoping that disturbance by people and dogs would be kept to a minimum so there was no negative impact on the beavers having chosen such a public location for their lodge. Signs have been put up by project partner Clinton Devon Estates to alert footpath users to the presence of breeding beavers.

The Butcher of Budleigh

On 23rd March 2017 at the Knowle Village Hall, we were treated to a talk entitled 'Working on Clinton Devon Estates'. It was presented by Tom Garner, Wildlife Ranger, who spoke about his work and life on the estates. Perhaps the title of the talk was to protect the more sensitive souls amongst us, as he could have called it 'the Butcher of Budleigh' but more of that later.

Tom's job is to monitor and control the number of deer on the estates – in total some 25,000 hectares. This involves the culling of deer as required, particularly any sick animals. He also manages any overpopulation of other animals such as foxes, grey squirrels and magpies. There is an optimum number of deer for each area and overpopulation is detrimental to the general health of the animals. They have no natural predators and culling prevents overpopulation and subsequent health issues.

One of the main problems caused by deer is the stripping of bark from young trees which results in the death of the tree. It seems that this action is not to attempt to satisfy an insatiable appetite but to mark territory. It is also as a result of rubbing off the velvet from newly grown antlers. The test of there being an overabundance of deer, as opposed to a good balance, is the quantity of young broad leaved trees regenerating the woodland areas.

The talk then turned to the method of culling and disposing of the carcasses. We were shown the rifle, bullets and binoculars used by Tom. To make his task as humane as possible a shot to the shoulder and hence the heart is preferable to a shot to the head. He takes trophy hunters out, as a source of income, when selected deer are shot. Poachers, who kill anything, are a continual problem but he has largely overcome this issue. Regrettably there are laws which prevent the culling of poachers!

Bob Wiltshire

WALKING



A Walk for Everyone – Summer Programme 2017

Now that Summer is here it's time to browse our Summer programme of walks which have been designed to tempt you out into our lovely countryside. The programme includes some perennial favourites and some new walks to entice you along.

Paul and Penny will be concluding their journey along the East Devon Way, which began on 6th May, on three dates in July finishing with a celebratory lunch in Exmouth. We visit our beautiful South West Coastal Path to walk some familiar sections using the local buses. There is the opportunity to polish up our Map reading skills with a day course provided by Iain and Chris. See details below and do remember to let me know if you wish to attend.

Both Brian Turnbull and Brian Gannon will be leading some familiar and well-loved local walks in our beautiful Otter Valley and Dee will give you the opportunity to learn all about the heritage and other historic features of Otterton. We venture further afield to Weston and Branscombe for some more strenuous climbs with David Buss, Rosemary and David and Jon. David Buss will be taking us Tor hopping on Dartmoor and Paula and Mike are leading two walks in the Dartmoor areas of Yarner Woods and Parke-Lustleigh. Peter will be leading us on a walk on Exmoor and the Quantock Hills.

This year, as a contribution to Pebblebed Heath Week, Mike and Chris are taking us on a "trio of Trigs" walk (see below). Vivien has a new walk in Dorset taking in Eggardon Hill and Powerstock. We have a themed Samuel Taylor Coleridge walk provided by Iain and Dee and a local Sidford Walk lead by Chris Gooding.

Lastly, we provide advance notice that Dr Mark Ramsdale is leading a 'Fungi Foray' on 7th October. Again, if you would like to attend this event, to which we are restricting numbers, please let me know.

Heather Fereday

What are Trig points and what are they for?

Trig points are the common name for "triangulation pillars". These are concrete pillars, about 4 feet tall, which were used by the Ordnance Survey in order to determine the exact shape of the country. They are generally located on the highest bit of ground in the area, so that there is a direct line of sight from one to the next. The image on the right is the trig point on High Peak taken on 12th April.



By sitting a theodolite (an accurate protractor built into a telescope) on the top of the pillar, accurate angles between pairs of nearby trig points could be measured by the "triangulation" process.

The first triangulation of the UK was undertaken during the period 1783 – 1853 using a single theodolite instrument made to the highest standards available at the time. The triangulation pillars determined the exact shape of the country; the scale of the mapping was determined in 1784 by laying a series of glass rods across Hounslow Heath. Using this single measurement, plus the network of triangulation pillars, the size and shape of the country was determined to within about 20m by 1853!

As tools and techniques developed, it was realised that a new primary triangulation was required. A project to repeat the primary triangulation began in 1936 and it was completed in 1962. The network of the familiar triangulation pillars, with accurately known positions, led to the excellent OS maps that we enjoy today.

Nowadays, most of the trig points described above have fallen into disuse. However a number of the old triangulation pillars, and other forms of trig points, now form the "Passive Station" network of around 1000 locations which have been accurately measured using GPS (Global Positioning System) technology. For further information see www.trigpointing.uk where you can find a wealth of information about trig points and wiki pages which extend the extracts given above. The Ordnance Survey also publishes a significant amount of historical and technical material on surveying and map making. On our Heath Week walk we intend to visit three triangulation pillars on 'Woodbury Common'.

Events Programme – July to October 2017

Please consult the OVA Website for late alterations or additional information
All OS references are to Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale Explorer maps.

Saturday 8th July, 11.15am - WALK

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS 115 SY 088 899) at 10.15am.

“East Devon Way Stage 3 - Hare and Hounds to Newton Poppleford”

Catch the 10.26am bus, number 9, from Newton Poppleford to arrive at the Hare and Hounds at 11.12am. Start at the Hare and Hounds (OL 115 SY 145 962) at 11.15am, 10 miles, 5 hours

Walk from the Hare and Hounds via Roncombe and Beckon Hill to Sudbury and then Fire Beacon Hill awaits before we descend to Newton Poppleford. Please bring a picnic lunch.

Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski, contact details as Stage 1

Tuesday 11th July, 10.00am - WALK

Start at Salcombe Hill car park (opposite Norman Lockyer Observatory) (OS 115, SY 139 881) at 10.00am.

“South West Coastal path and Donkey Sanctuary”

Approx 6.5 miles. 3.5 hours walk plus lunch break.

We join the coastal path at the Toposcope with great views over Sidmouth and beyond, then follow the undulating SW Coastal path to Weston Mouth for coffee stop on the beach. Inland return via the Donkey Sanctuary for lunch (or for your picnic) then on to historic Salcombe Regis and through woodland to return.

Walk leader: David Buss, 01395 442621

Monday, 17th July, 10.30am - WALK

Meet: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS 115 SY 088 899) 10 miles, 5 hours.

“East Devon Way Stage 4 - Newton Poppleford to Brixington”

Catch the 10am bus number 157 from the Public Hall, Budleigh Salterton to arrive at Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground at 10.24am.

Walk from Newton Poppleford across the Pebblebed Heaths, taking in the atmospheric Woodbury Castle, before finishing in Brixington where buses can be caught back to Budleigh Salterton or Exmouth. Please bring a picnic lunch.

Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski, contact details as Stage 1

Friday 21st July – 10.00am - WALK

Meet: Brixington, Jubilee Drive. (OS 115 SY 014 833)

“East Devon Way Stage 5 - Brixington to Exmouth”

Catch the 9.35am bus number 58 from the Public Hall, Budleigh Salterton to arrive at Jubilee Drive, Brixington at 9.56am. This stop can also be reached from Exmouth by bus number 57 (every 15 minutes).

Start: Brixington (Jubilee Drive) (OS 115 SY 014 833), 10am. 4 miles 2 hours

After the first 4 stages, this final stage will feel like a gentle stroll as we walk from Brixington past A La Ronde to Lympstone and along the estuary to Exmouth, where we plan to have a celebratory lunch!

Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski, contact details as Stage 1

Monday 24th July - 9.00am - Map Reading Workshop

To be held at Otterton Village Hall

3 hour course work, lunch at Kings Arms followed by 3 hour field work.

Course to cover map appreciation, map reading, compass route planning/finding. Attendees are requested to bring along a copy of either Explorer 115 (Exmouth and Sidmouth) or Landranger sheet 192 (Exeter and Sidmouth). This course is aimed at beginners, those less confident and a refresher for those with some skills. Fun guaranteed!

Course Leaders: Iain Ure, 01395 568822 and Chris Buckland, 01395 444471

If you wish to attend this workshop, please email Heather Fereday at feredayh@gmail.com by Monday, 17th July at the latest.

Wednesday 26th July - 10.00am - WALK

Start: CP 1km east of Four Firs Crossroads on the road to Yettington (OS 115, SY 041 861) 9 miles, 5 hours.

“A Trio of Trigs” - A contribution to Pebblebed Heath Week

Leaving the car park to the south, we follow the line of the old Army Rifle Range, climbing through woodlands to Frying Pans and from there continue alongside Blackhill Quarry to our first trig point ‘Lympstone Common’ @ SY 026 854 which lies to the west of Blackhill House.

The second trig point is ‘Woodbury Common’ @ SY 039 881 which entails a 4km walk northwards, skirting Castle Plantation and Woodbury Castle. The trig point is alongside the B3180. The final destination is the third trig point ‘Aylesbeare Common’ @ SY 055 900 which is located in the Aylesbeare Common Nature Reserve alongside the A3052. This is reached by walking across Woodbury Common and Hawkerland Valley via Canterbury Green, a distance of about 3.3km. The last leg of our walk takes us down the Hawkerland Valley, over Colaton Raleigh Common and around Uphams Plantation to finish at the car park.

Walking boots or sturdy shoes will be essential to cope with the occasional bits of rough terrain. There are no obvious refreshment points on the walk so please bring a picnic.

Walk Leaders: Chris Buckland, 01395 444471 and Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

Monday, 31st July, 10.00am – WALK

Start: Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899), 5 Miles, 2.5 hours

“The Path Less Travelled”

We walk down green lanes visiting Benchams, Venn Ottery, Southerton and back to Newton Poppleford.

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

Thursday 3rd August, 10.00am – WALK & PICNIC

Start at Haytor Visitor Centre CP, (OS OL28, SX 766 772) 9.5 miles, approx. 1,600 feet ascent. 5 hours.

“Ten Tors – the easy way”

Ten Easy Tors!, not the route of the famous challenge, but a mere 9.5 mile focussed walk across undulating Dartmoor with the prospect of magnificent views throughout. Tors visited are Haytor, Saddle Tor, Pil Tor, Top Tor, Bell Tor, Chinkwell Tor, Honeybag Tor, Hound Tor, Greater, and Holwell Tor.

No public transport available. Please contact walk leader if you want, or can offer, a car share. Please bring a packed lunch. Light refreshments available at the end of the walk at the Tin Pickle and Rhum Café near the car park.

Walk leader: David Buss 01395 442621

Tuesday 8th August, 10:30am - WALK

Start: The Green, Otterton, (OS 115, SY 080 852). 5½ miles, approx. 3 hours.

“Keep looking up!”

The walk is a mixture of riverside paths, green lanes and some tarmac road. Initially we head up the Otter, then turn eastwards to Sea View Farm and then Bars Lane to the short, steep climb up High Peak with wonderful views all around. The walk then descends steeply and briefly from the summit, and onwards to Ladram Bay where we can pause for coffee and/or a snack. We return via Monks Wall, Culliver Cross to Clamour Bridge and return to Otterton via the River Otter. Food is available at the Mill or the nearby Kings Arms.

If coming by car, park in the high street or up by the Church (1st right immediately past the Mill).

Walk Leader: Brian Gannon, 01395 443502

Tuesday, 15th August, 10.15.am - WALK

Start: Church Street car park, Sidford (OS 115, SY 134 900) 7 miles, 4 hours

“A Plod around the Snod”

Park in the Church Street car park, £2 all day after 10.00 am.

A varied walk north, up to and around the plateau that shelters this beautiful valley, through Harcombe, past Fire and Smoke Farm and around Higher Sweetcombe Farm. Return along the East Devon Way and then down through Buddle Wood and Buckton Farm to the start. Bring a picnic.

Walk Leader: Chris Gooding, 01395 265707/07852 630431

Tuesday 22nd August, 10.00am - WALK

Start: Newton Poppleford Re Ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) 10 miles, 5+ hours.

“In the Footsteps of Samuel Taylor Coleridge”

Challenging uphill start to Hollow Head Cross and the views from White Cross, then descending into Ottery St Mary, the home of Coleridge. Lunch at the Volunteer Inn, followed by Town walk and a gentle stroll back along the river.

Walk Leaders: Iain Ure and Dee Woods, 01395 568822

Thursday, 24th August, 6.30pm – EVENING WALK

Meet: The Playing Field CP in Tipton (OS 115, SY 091 917) at 6.30pm.

If you park in this private car park, then please make your contribution to the honesty box. Roadside parking nearby is also available.

“Join Peter for a walk around Tipton St John”

4-5 miles on footpaths, tracks and green lanes, and returning along the river Otter for a pint in the village pub.

Walk Leader: Peter Paine, 01404 815214/07812 772163

Wednesday, 30th August, 10.00am - WALK

Meet: Newton Poppleford Rec Ground (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.00am to share cars or meet at the start point.

“Parke(Bovey Tracy), Lustleigh and the Bovey River”

Start: Parke (NT) CP (OS 110, SX 808 782 (Parke Entrance) / TQ13 9JQ), 8 miles.

NT Membership cards will be required for free parking.

The walk commences with a ‘walk thru the park’ followed by a steady climb to Higher Knowle Wood and a coffee stop. A shortish downhill segment will then bring us to the pristine cottages of Lustleigh where refreshments at a tea shop or The Cleave will be available.

The next stage will take us past the May Queen’s Chair to Combe Edge and then up a short, but challenging, path to Hammerslake for lunch by the Hut Circle under the shadow of the Sharpitor Nut Crackers.

The homeward stretch to Parke is steady downhill through the length of Hisley Wood and ultimately alongside the River Bovey. On reaching Parke we join the old railway track for a short walk through the Grounds to Home Farm Café for tea and a bun!

Walk Leaders: Paula & Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

Wednesday 6th September, 11.00am - WALK

“Footpaths in the Sand”

Bus number 157 from the Public Hall, Budleigh Salterton at 10.29 to arrive at Exmouth Leisure Centre and walk to the Manhood Slipway at the Western end of the Exmouth esplanade next to the Rockfish Seafood restaurant.

Start: (OS 115, SX 994 806) at 11.00 am, 5.5 miles 2.5 hours + lunch.

We will walk along the promenade to Maer Rocks, then along the beach (low tide) around Orcombe Point to Sandy Bay where we will stop for lunch. Then we will walk along by the holiday park following the cliff path by the East Devon Golf club and arriving in Budleigh Salterton where buses can be taken back to your start point. This walk links with the walk on Monday, 11th September.

Walk Leader: Heather Fereday, 01395 446796

Saturday 9th September, 10.15am – WALK

“An Ancient Dorset Beauty”

Meet at Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.00am to share cars. **Parking at start point is limited.**

Start: Powerstock Common (OS 117, SY 547 974) at 10.15am, 8/9 miles, 5 hours.

The walk starts across Powerstock Common, a Dorset Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve, and then heads towards Eggardon Hill, an historic site with panoramic views. Eggardon Hill was a Bronze Age Burial Site, Iron Age Fort and seat of a Saxon council. After exploring the hill and enjoying a picnic lunch we head off to Nettlecombe and a welcome stop at the Marquis de Lorne pub for refreshments. The return walk takes an alternative route back over the Common.

Walk Leader: Vivien Insull, 01404 811267

Monday 11th September, 10:35am - WALK

Start at Budleigh Salterton Public Hall (OS 115, SY 062 860) at 10.35am, 7 miles, 4 hours.

“Budleigh to Sidmouth – and get the bus back”

A walk from Budleigh Salterton along the coast all the way to Sidmouth. This walk follows on from the one on 6th September. We will be following the South West Coast Path, which is steep in places, but offers spectacular views on a good day. We'll stop for a picnic lunch at Ladram Bay (toilets plus opportunity to buy

refreshments) and finish up on the promenade at Sidmouth (ice cream anyone?). Then spend some time enjoying Sidmouth before catching the bus back home; buses to Budleigh Salterton via Newton Poppleford, Otterton and East Budleigh run hourly - we will have a current timetable on the day.

Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski, 01395 742942 pandp@kurowski.me.uk

Friday, 15th September, 10:45am – WALK

Rendezvous: Newton Poppleford Rec Ground at 9.15am to share cars ready to depart at 9:30am. Journey time about 1¼ hours.

“Exmoor, the Quantocks and the Brendon Hills”

Start: Small hamlet of Monksilver (OS OL9, ST 073 376), 11 miles, 5½ hours.

Peter will be leading the walk in the beautiful and little walked countryside on the edge of Exmoor, the Quantocks and the Brendon Hills. The walk will start in the small hamlet of Monksilver and our route will take us via Sticklepath, the Roadwater valley, Nettlecombe and back to Monksilver along the Woodford valley. This is an ‘off the beaten track’ walk of about 11 miles on footpaths, bridleways and old tracks, a couple of steep climbs rewarded by some great views across the coast and rolling countryside of North Somerset.

Bring a packed lunch (our lunch stop will be near a pub so a drink will also be on offer). At the end of the walk we will stop at the village pub for well-deserved tea and cakes before heading for home.

Walk Leader: Peter Paine, 01404 815214 / 07812 772163

Wednesday, 20th September, 10.00am - WALK

Meet at Newton Poppleford Rec Ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.15am to share cars.

“East Devon Cliffs”

Start: Weston CP (OS 115, SY 167 890) at 10.00am. 7 miles, 4 hours + lunch

An energetic hilly walk along the coast path to Branscombe mouth with extensive views towards Portland on a clear day. Bring a picnic lunch or buy lunch at the Sea Shanty Cafe at Branscombe. The return route will be via the Branscombe valley and Ball Hill. Undulating cliffs, farmland, woodland and quiet lanes. No dogs please as cows in open fields.

Walk Leaders: Rosemary and David Hatch, 01392 444290

Saturday, 23rd September - 10:00am. WALK

Meet: Newton Poppleford Rec Ground (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.00am to share cars or meet at the start point.

“Yarner Wood, Trendlebere Down, Becky Falls and Houndtor Ridge”

Start: Yarner Wood CP (OS OL28, SX 785 789 / TQ13 9LJ) 6 miles

The walk commences with a steady climb through towering stands of ancient oak woodland; drenched with lichen and ferns and past bird hides which are famous for spotting pied flycatchers, lesser spotted woodpeckers and wood warblers to name but a few. We exit the wood at North Lodge, the most westerly point of the wood and commence a short walk over the western side of Trendlebere Down and drop down onto the road that leads to the entrance to Becky Falls. The next stage is a walk along the path below Houndtor Ridge to arrive at Holn Brake where we enter Yarner Wood again. After a short walk through the wood we reach the car park.

There are toilets at the car park, but no other facilities en route, so bring a picnic lunch.

Walk Leaders: Paula & Mike Paddison, 01395 446 550

Tuesday, 26th September - WALK

Start: Colaton Raleigh Church (OS 115 SY 082 872), 6 miles, 3 hours

“A little bit of Everything”

Passford Lane (stiff climb!), Mutters Moor, coastal path, green lanes, river Otter and return to Colaton Raleigh church.

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

Thursday, 28th September, 2.00pm – LOCAL HERITAGE WALK

Start: The Green, Otterton (OS 115, SY 081 852) 2 miles, 2 hours

A gentle stroll around the historic village of Otterton, looking at the exterior of the wealth of old buildings and other historic features that make up this attractive village.

Walk Leader: Dee Woods, 01395 568822

Saturday, 7th October, 10.00am - FUNGI FORAY

Start: Mutter's Moor CP, (OS 115, SY 109 873)



This is a follow up to the presentation about fungi given by Dr Mark Ramsdale from the University of Exeter on 22nd February. We will join Dr Ramsdale for 1.5 hours foraying and follow with 30 minutes for questions afterwards.

If you would like to attend, please email Heather Fereday at feredayh@gmail.com by Monday, 11th September. **Numbers will be limited for this event.**

Walk Reports

All walk reports and accompanying photographs can be found on the OVA website. Below is just an abridged selection. Many thanks to all contributors.

Ladram Bay, High Peak and Windgate – 12th April

Ideal walking weather; a high pressure centre not too far away, warm with light cloud cover and an ideal walking group of 12 with one new walker who was very familiar with the area and was able to fill in the missing details in the walk leader's blather.

The group set off at a cracking pace; target was Ladram Bay for coffee and a comfort stop. Suitably refuelled, High Peak was climbed by 2/3 of the group (photo on page 18). Magnificent views all the way around the coast to Portland Island - the sea was unusually quite and calm!

After crossing Windgate and circumnavigating the foot of Peak Hill we climbed 'Glass Hill' and walked around the edge of Mutters Moor to the lunch stop by a pile of logs. Where much to my surprise, walkers ignored the logs and sat down in a long line by the side of the track to catch the sun's warming rays.

Lunch over, the walk down Passaford Lane contained no surprises and we stopped for a group photo at the Colaton Raleigh footbridge.



The walk alongside the Otter was uneventful, no beavers or otters were to be seen. The remainder of the walk from Otterton to East Budleigh via Bicton was a well-trodden and loved path.

Mike Paddison

East Devon Way Stage 1 – 6th May Lyme Regis to Colyford



We didn't know how many people would join us on this leisurely version (when compared to last year) of the East Devon Way, and were pleased to find 10 people catching the bus with us at Newton Poppleford, with a further 4 getting on at Seaton.

So 16 of us set off from the seafront at Lyme Regis, walking up through the mill and along the river to Uplyme.

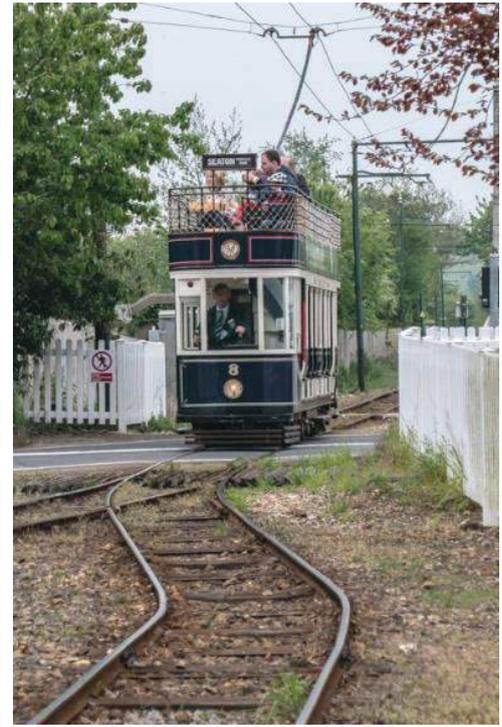
The walk to Colyford followed peaceful paths and roads, with plenty of time to chat to other members of the group on topics ranging from immigration in Costa Rica to EU subsidies for having olive trees on your land.

As we left Uplyme we spotted the splendid 600ft long Cannington viaduct. Research after the walk tells us that it was opened in 1903 to carry steam trains on the now dismantled branch line from Axminster to Lyme Regis, and was the first viaduct in the UK to be constructed in concrete (*see our Winter 2016 issue for full history – Ed*). Mike pointed out that due to subsidence one of the arches had been reinforced with an infill of bricks.

The hillside below Musbury Castle made a good lunch stop with a fallen tree trunk to sit on and wide ranging views. An intrepid few walked up to Musbury Castle itself (an iron age hill fort) for 360° views across the country and to the sea, somewhere to aim for on a really clear day.

Even though we were tackling the East Devon Way in the “wrong” direction, it was very well signposted, with plenty of reassuring pink arrows guiding the way. The only real problem was in Musbury, where signs took us into a very attractive private garden, but didn't sign us out of it - a map and common sense took us onto the correct route. We have informed the team at East Devon Council!

From Musbury the way was flat, if winding, through water meadows of the Axe to Colyford, where, as we had made good time, we diverted from our original plan and caught the tram to Seaton to enjoy ice creams on the beach before catching the trusty 9A bus back to Newton Poppleford.



Penny Kurowski

“A good walk not spoilt” in the Coly Valley – 9th May



Pond with island duck house - calling to mind MP's expense claims



Descent with fine views over the valley



**Dappled shade in Colwell
Wood where we had lunch**

Pictures and text – Heather Fereday

East Devon Way Stage 2 – 20th May Colyford to Hare and Hounds

“Northleigh – so good we visited it twice!”

We lost 6 and gained 2 since Stage 1, so 12 of us set off on the bus from Newton Poppleford, and descended at the request stop at Boshill Cross. A short walk through wet meadows brought us back to the East Devon Way at Colyford.

We had an enjoyable meander, through the outskirts of Colyton, along the River Coly and out into the quintessential English countryside that was the feature of this walk.

After some easy walking we arrived in Northleigh, with its 14th Century church. The church is worth a visit – the 15th century carved pew ends (shown right) are reminiscent of those at East Budleigh, but we thought a little more sophisticated, and less rustic. The tower of the church is rendered, as it had been early in its life. During renovations in the early 19th century the render was removed, the consequence of this was a wet tower, so later in the century the render was restored! For more information on this lovely old building see: <http://www.northleigh.net/st-giles-church.html>



We set off after lunch, faithfully following the pink East Devon Way waymarking. Rain meant we kept our heads down and maps safely tucked away. The rain dried up, we looked up – and heard “isn't that church like the one we had lunch at?”. Oh dear – we had walked round in a circle!!! We loved Northleigh and it had lured us back. We set off again, and saw where we had gone wrong. Important lesson – when following a path which is waymarked in both directions, be very careful, and check the map frequently!!!

The rest of the walk was uneventful, if more hilly. We kept a good pace, despite stops to put on and take off waterproofs as appropriate and arrived at the Hare and Hounds in plenty of time for our bus. The number 9 was on time and carried us back to Newton Poppleford.

Penny and Paul Kurowski

Exmoor and the Scenic Barle Valley - 31st May

The end of May was more like a rather warm April showery, dry, sunny, cloudy day - that can't make its mind up if it wants to be kind or not. For sure, the scenery was varied with moor, farmland, gentle river valleys and no two minutes the same.

Peter's 12 mile walk taking in the beautiful Barle Valley was a first for many of us and repaid the longish drive there. Tadpoles and small fish were observed as were the many singing birds and fading bluebells. Definitely worth another visit!

Iain Ure



The Otter Valley Association

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Otterton	Pat & Geoff Porter	567055
Colaton Raleigh	<i>vacancy</i>	
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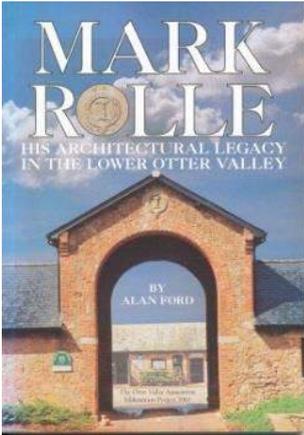
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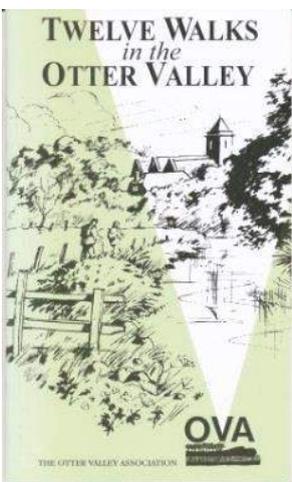


Mark Rolle

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 overview of how a large landed estate was managed in the last 40 years of the 19th century.

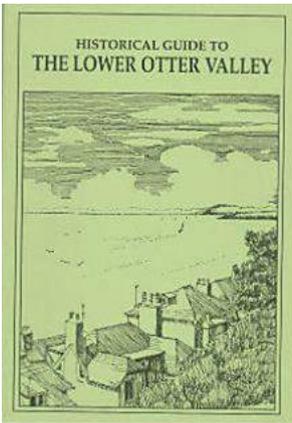
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



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.

£3.00 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 20th century.

£3.50 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)

Leaflets

The OVA also publish a number of leaflets about the history, flora & fauna and walking in the lower Otter Valley. They can usually be found in the Tourist Information Centres and in other outlets around the valley.