

OTTER VALLEY  
ASSOCIATION

WINTER

OVA  
PO Box 70  
Budleigh  
Salterton  
EX9 6WN  
[www.ova.org.uk](http://www.ova.org.uk)

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**Front cover image “Walking in a Winter Wonderland” photographed and produced by Mo Bowman**

## From the Editor

As I write this, I hear from the Membership Secretary that we now have over 100 members attending the Christmas Party on 17<sup>th</sup> December - a fantastic response. It is sure to be a great evening and I hope to have a report and images in the next issue.

I know that some of you don't read the newsletter from cover to cover as soon as you get it (I cannot think why!) so please may I draw your attention to an additional event taking place on 16<sup>th</sup> January. Penny Mills, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Director for Devon will present the findings of the CPRE's recent study into Devon's housing needs. If you have an interest in local development and planning issues this is a 'must attend'. Full details on page 10.

2019 is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inception of the OVA which is a good excuse for another celebration and also gives me a reason to re-print some items from our archive which I found when taking over the role of newsletter editor. Our Ruby Anniversary party will take place at East Devon Golf Club on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Full details in the next issue but put it in your diary now.

*Jacqui Baldwin*

## Membership Reminder

To those members who pay their subscription by cash or cheque each year, can I remind you that this is due by the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, which is the start of the next membership year. Please send by post to Membership, Otter Valley Association, PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN.

Should you wish to change to a Bank Standing Order Form, please contact me at [membership@ova.org.uk](mailto:membership@ova.org.uk), or via the phone number shown on the inside cover of this newsletter, or download the website application and complete just your name and the standing order form part and send to the address above.

*Clive Bowman*  
*Membership Secretary*

## Chairman's Report

By the time you read this, Christmas will be over. "Thank goodness", did I hear you say? Nevertheless I hope that you and yours enjoyed the festivities. It only remains to wish you all a Happy New Year. Also writing in the future/past tense, I hope that the Christmas party, which is still on the horizon, will have lived up to expectations. This year of 2019 is, of course, our Ruby Anniversary and you will find elsewhere how we plan to celebrate the occasion on the 19<sup>th</sup> June.

Your Executive Committee continue to burn the midnight oil agonising over our response to the Glover Landscape Review. This has been initiated by DEFRA, who have asked us and other such bodies, to turn our minds to the importance of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, such as the one in which we reside, over the establishment of National Parks. Those of you who are wired into the black art of emails will recall that we sent you details of this review, giving you the opportunity to respond in your own right. We have thought long and hard over this proposal and firmly believe that our 'area of benefit' and indeed the whole area under discussion would benefit from the creation of a Dorset and East Devon National Park.

Another event on the horizon is the long heralded visit to Stantyway Farm. We have agreed upon a date, Wednesday 3rd July at 6pm. The time is set so that children and those of us in gainful employment could be included. The farmer, Sam Walker, is very enthusiastic and has lots of subjects to cover. Perhaps the most important is that it is an organic farm, so we will find out exactly what that means. There will also be an intensive course in cattle, crops and wildlife - especially rare birds. We will finish with a self-supplied picnic at a beauty spot. Enter this date into your diary, more details in the next newsletter.

Nicola has, as always, been 'fighting the good fight' on our behalf over some of the local planning matters. More of this from herself. She and David have organised an additional talk from the Campaign to Protect Rural England on 16<sup>th</sup> January.

I am delighted to report to you, that at last count, our membership numbers have reached 809 persons. Don't forget that it is up to all of us to ensure that we are an effective organisation. In this issue, we are advertising three positions on the Executive Committee. Penny and Jon are shortly to complete their three years in office and, according to our constitution, they must now stand down. They have

done a wonderful job and we are looking for volunteers to replace them. Also Geoff Lake is stepping down from the role of Talks organiser after three years. Although this is not mandatory, Geoff believes the job needs new blood and new ideas. His innovative ideas have resulted in some really good and interesting talks. If anyone feels the slightest bit tempted to take on one of the positions they would be very welcome to attend one of our meetings as a 'taster'. As an added attraction, Haylor lays on tea/coffee/hot chocolate at no extra charge.

Don't forget the litter pick on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

***Bob Wiltshire, Chairman***

## **Talk Report - Wastewater Treatment in the Otter Valley**

### **29<sup>th</sup> November, Otterton Village Hall**

Tony Griffiths of South West Water began his presentation by suggesting that, if providing clean tap water is a science, then wastewater treatment is an art - possibly one of the black arts given the long list of confusing acronyms for the systems he later described!

An important starting point is the fact that the domestic and industrial sewage plus surface water drainage passing through treatment plants is 99.9% H<sub>2</sub>O (with dissolved salts, other chemicals and bacteria) and only 0.1% solids. This small solid fraction is composed mostly of dirt and grit, paper, plastic, wood, rags and just 30% excrement. The goal is to ensure that rivers and estuaries do not receive wastewater that will affect oxygen levels negatively nor ammonia levels positively to the detriment of river ecology and especially fish. Bacteria harmful to us must not be allowed to reach bathing beaches or shellfish beds.

Treatment plants work in stages of increasingly sophisticated mechanical processes to remove diminishing sizes of inert materials and organic debris. The organic sludge is reduced and sterilised by bacterial digestion and the residue returned to the land as fertiliser. Some smaller plants use the generated methane as a power source, but most vent produced gases to the atmosphere. Phosphorus, ammonia and nitrates are extracted chemically and the increasing levels of phosphorus and nitrates in rivers are largely the result of farming practices. Dangerous bacteria are neutralised by ultraviolet light. Addressing the

contentious issue of sewage overflow during flooding, the speaker pointed to the provision of floodwater storage tanks at modern works, but stated that adequate provision for major floods would be prohibitively expensive and rare occurrences of raw sewage discharge would continue.

Treatment works in the Otter Valley are characteristically small and receive mostly domestic waste owing to the absence of large towns and industrial complexes. The smallest caters for 24 people and the largest 13,800 (both Honiton and Fluxton). Interestingly, only those works in the upper Otter Valley discharge into the river, as the villages in the lower part feed their waste into the Otterton works and then Lyme Bay. Budleigh Salterton sewage is shipped by pipeline to Exmouth. Legislation regulating the industry is complex and revised every six years. Allowed concentrations of inert solids, biomass and ammonia are set and overseen by the Environment Agency (EA) with financial penalties for contravention. Some priority issues threatening the natural environment that require regulating are the rising levels in domestic sewage of drugs (hormones being the most dangerous), microplastics and nanoparticles.



A serious threat to the efficiency of the system can easily be solved by public awareness that fat poured down sinks and plastic-impregnated paper put in toilets leads to blockages in sewers and treatment works. As 23% of the general public admit putting more than just the three Ps (pee, paper and poo) down the toilet, SW Water have launched a publicity campaign called “LOVE your LOO”. The main culprits are various wipes, cleansing pads and sanitary products that are labelled ‘flushable’ but contain plastic gauze, or are ‘biodegradable’ but not rapidly enough to avoid causing blockages.

*Jon Roseway*

## 'Upstream Thinking' Update

Devon Wildlife Trust and West Country Rivers Trust are working together in the Otter catchment as part of the South West Water-funded Upstream Thinking approach to water resource management.

What does the Upstream Thinking project mean for the River Otter, its wildlife and the water abstracted in the catchment for homes and businesses?

As a previous OVA talk detailed, drinking water from the Otter is abstracted by South West Water (SWW) via a series of boreholes in the lower catchment, before treatment at one of three Water Treatment Works: Dotton, Ottery St Mary or Kersbrook. The catchment is an important water source for SWW - hence the Otter's selection as part of the Upstream Thinking project.

Upstream Thinking takes a land management approach to solving the problems affecting the quality of water in our rivers. Unwanted soil, silt, pesticides and animal waste in rivers increase the cost of water treatment. As ever it has been a really busy time with the Project staff offering free services to landowners in the Otter catchment, including advisory farm visits, soil tests, production of Integrated Farm Management Plans and assistance with applications for both Agri-environment funding and DWT's own UST grant fund. Lots of farms and landowners have taken up the offer of using the Soil Aerator for free to reduce compaction, enabling increased yields and reducing farmland run off.



*David Rolls providing entertainment for the local cattle*

A definite highlight of the year has been joining the OVA in removing the invasive Himalayan Balsam. Again, this has been a tremendous effort by Patrick Hamilton and the volunteer team and is making a real difference.

For more information please contact Devon Wildlife Trust's David Rolls on 07976 513132 / [drolls@devonwildlifetrust.org](mailto:drolls@devonwildlifetrust.org)

## Newton Poppleford's Secret History

The Newton Poppleford History Group hosted a very interesting talk on 12<sup>th</sup> November where we learned about the secret history of the village's 'resistance group' in the Second World War. These groups, known as Auxiliary Units, were set up across the country in 1940 with the support of Winston Churchill as a "last ditch defence" of the country. Ultimately more than 3,000 men were involved although little was known about them until the 1960's. There were 32 patrols in Devon – each containing 6-8 men. Newton Poppleford Patrol was part of No 6 Group and the Patrol Leader was Sgt Percy Retter under the command of Capt S. B. Woods. Each Patrol Leader hand-picked trusted men with local area knowledge and even their families were unaware of their activities as those participating had to sign the Official Secrets Act. To a large extent they were willing and able young men who were in 'reserved occupations' like farming which meant that they had a good knowledge of the local landscape.

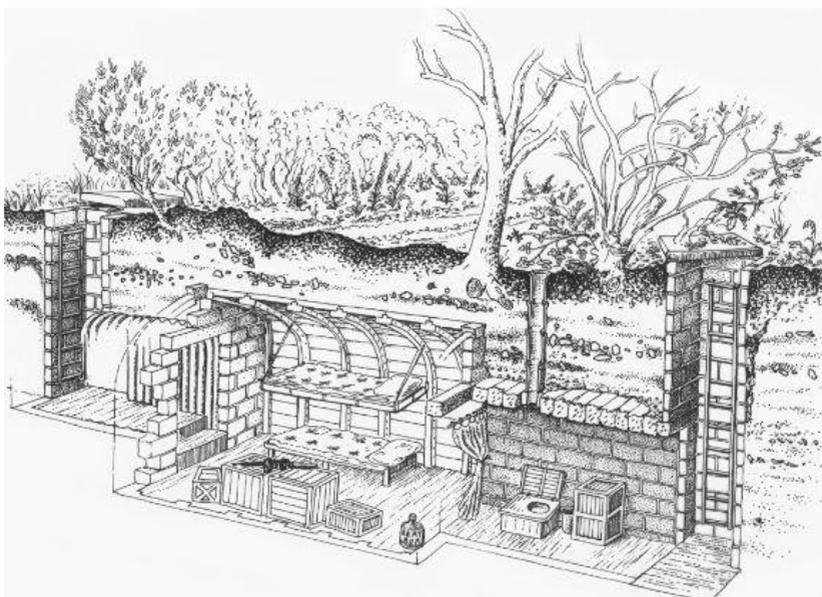
It is now known that the Auxiliary Units were armed before the Home Guard and, in some cases, were better equipped than the regular Army. Each patrol was provided with weapons, a large quantity of explosives and booby traps as well as two weeks food rations, an emergency rum ration and 'pills' to take in the event of injury or capture. Those involved clearly knew that, should the country be invaded and occupied, their life expectancy would be short.

The men were trained at Coleshill House near Swindon, learning a range of skills including close combat, silent killing and how to use explosives. These units of civilian saboteurs would be called into action in the event of an invasion and their role was to slow the German advance and cause chaos for the enemy. This would have included blowing up roads and bridges but could have extended to the assassination of high ranking German officials and British collaborators. Their local operational base was usually underground with a disguised entrance, a blast wall, living quarters, chemical toilet, escape tunnel and observation post as shown in the drawing at the end of this article. Initially these were dug by the men but later the Royal Engineers were employed. The Newton Poppleford base is on Aylesbeare Common, still intact but smaller than others that have been found and sadly used as a regular dumping ground. The strategic targets for this patrol would have been the main road, the railway line and the bridges over the Otter. There were also units at Sidbury, Beer, Branscombe, Seaton and Farringdon.

The Units were stood down in 1944 when it became clear that there would not be an invasion with personnel receiving a lapel badge and a letter of thanks (!) but it was only 50 years after the war ended that information was made publicly available. Similarly to those who had worked at Bletchley Park, few patrol members had ever discussed their role and the majority died without revealing their secrets. Sadly, some of the men were even sent white feathers by members of the public who could not know what they were doing. It was good to hear that the Auxiliaries are now being formally recognised for their service. Discoveries are still being made with operational bases being uncovered as the result of building or road widening schemes e.g. at Haldon Hill. The Coleshill Auxiliary Research Team is keen to hear from anyone who may have knowledge about these units or the 'Special Duties' Branch of wireless operators and spies who were part of M16's 'stay behind' network who were also operational in East Devon (most notably at the Hare and Hounds). For more information please visit [www.staybehinds.com](http://www.staybehinds.com) [www.coleshillhouse.com](http://www.coleshillhouse.com) or visit Coleshill village which now belongs to the National Trust.

The Newton Poppleford Auxiliaries under the command of Sgt Retter were Privates Pyle, Stone, Pring, Haslam, Cross and Gamsworthy. They may be unknown to most of us but at least their bravery can now be acknowledged.

### ***Editor***



## Winter Talks Programme

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7.30pm** – The Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton  
***Devon's future housing needs***

In October, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) held a symposium to present and discuss the independent study they had commissioned to assess Devon's future housing needs. CPRE undertook this unusual action so that they, and their members, are suitably prepared to comment on the next round of Local Plan reviews which will happen in the next couple of years. OVA subscribes to group membership of CPRE, and many of you may be individual members.

For the last few years East Devon District Council have achieved their own Local Plan agreed target of 950 dwellings per year. However, proposals to build at an even higher level of growth are under discussion. Exeter is unable to provide the housing land required to sustain the expected growth of the city, and the rural areas and towns in the neighbouring areas will be required to increase their housing requirements if they are to meet their aim. This could be achieved by what is called a "Growth Deal" with Central Government where a group of Councils agree to build more housing in return for the "carrot" of infrastructure investment from central funds. Such a proposed "Growth Deal" is currently being prepared by the Councils of East Devon, Exeter, Teignbridge and Mid Devon through the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan or "GESp".

The CPRE's independent study is the first to allow all Devon's Local Plans to be compared on a consistent basis. The key messages are these:

- Far too many homes are already being planned for Devon in the next 10 years. Only 4,300 a year are needed against 5,800 planned – that's a 35% uplift.
- Two thirds of these will be occupied by inward migration.
- Vacant and second homes are becoming a problem across the County.
- We in East Devon are taking a disproportionate share of development. Our Local Plan annual housing target is the highest in the Greater Exeter Area: 58% higher than Exeter, 53% higher than Teignbridge and nearly three times that of Mid Devon. Only Plymouth is building more houses than us.
- Whilst we are planning too many houses, we are failing to plan for enough homes of the right type in the right location, especially for locally generated households.

The study will have a wide distribution, it's free to 1,000 individual members and 45 group members, including Town and Parish councils. Sir Hugo Swire gave a positive summing up and has taken the evidence back to central Government and promised to make a noise about it. In his words: "Let's follow the facts and build the appropriate number of homes to meet the true need."

Public consultation, scheduled for Autumn 2018, has been delayed but could happen any time in the New Year. So we have hurriedly organised this additional OVA Winter Talk where Penny Mills, CPRE Director for Devon will present the study to us.

**Wednesday 30th January 2019 at 7:30pm** - The Peter Hall, St Peter's Church, Budleigh Salterton.

***The history of the RNLI in Exmouth***

The RNLI from Exmouth will present a talk focusing on the local history of the RNLI and lifesaving along our coastline.

**Wednesday 27th February 2019 at 7:30pm** - East Budleigh Village Hall

***Coastal change and coastal erosion risk management in East Devon***

Dave Turner from East Devon District Council and Harriet Googe from the Environment Agency will be explaining the roles of their respective organisations in managing the risk of flood and erosion from the sea, and how they work together to manage those risks through from high level strategy to local schemes.

**Tuesday 26th March 2019 at 7:30pm** - Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton.

***Electric power distribution in East Devon***

Paul Elsen, Western Power's Distribution Manager for Devon, will present a talk about power distribution in East Devon including the infrastructure, street architecture, the impact of new housing and industrial development, and an outline of future developments.

## Planning Report

I was going to be brief with my review of planning matters in this newsletter but events have overtaken me. I was also going to apologise again for the length and complexity of this article, but a member severely admonished me the last time I did so and said “keep going, keep us informed, some of us are very interested”.

It is with great disappointment that we find that a planning application has been approved by East Devon District Council to build in a mature garden of a beautiful 1920s house contrary to the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan. A complicated story, but the last planning application was refused on BSNP policies because the increase in density and pattern of development in comparison with neighbouring properties was entirely out of character with the surrounding area. This went to appeal and the Inspector thought that the new house would be acceptable, even though it was a much higher density than neighbours but turned the appeal down as a window overlooked one of the 5 houses it would impact on. Naturally, the developer has now submitted another plan with one window less! We cannot agree with the appeal Inspector's interpretation of policies and conclusions and the disregard for the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan as well as the wishes of residents. Since this comment, in July 2018, the government's new, revised Planning Policy has been adopted and states that a Neighbourhood Plan takes precedence over existing non-strategic policies. A government policy is in place, a Neighbourhood Plan is in place, the Budleigh Salterton Town Council objected, yet EDDC approved the latest application at complete variance with its original decision.

So what do we do? A developer can come back time and time again, as in this case. We have no redress except expensive legal action IF there is evidence of poor practice by the planning authority. A complaint to EDDC about another planning matter affecting East Budleigh's Conservation Area was decided by EDDC who are judge and jury and, unsurprisingly, deemed that the planning decision was acceptable. However, the National Trust, who are compiling a national dossier of poor planning decisions in Conservation Areas, thought differently and will include this case in East Budleigh.

My husband and I, as independent members, attended the Civic Voice Conference on Conservation and Regeneration in Birmingham. Civic Voice is the body which represents civic amenity associations.

We had a range of presentations from watchdogs of the historic environment and from the architects and planners who had successfully regenerated buildings. The consensus was that historic buildings could be regenerated if the views of the locals were seriously taken into consideration with the result that a viable, sustainable use would then be found. We talked to many representatives from all over the country and soon realised that this was only achieved with the sympathetic co-operation of the relevant local authority.

So when your chairman and I attended the East Devon District Council Strategy Committee meeting to hear the debate on the start of the process determining EDDC's Heritage Asset Strategy we were disappointed that our perception was that many councillors gave limited support to our local heritage. Fortunately, wiser voices prevailed and the Heritage Asset Strategy document was approved by the committee. This means that the long road to accessing the OVA's Local Heritage Assets List has finally begun. A sub-committee of the OVA is now in the process of responding to the consultation of this document.

The Strategy Committee also discussed EDDC's response to the Glover Review on National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There was only one voice disagreeing with the general consensus of the committee which was opposed to a National Park encompassing Dorset and East Devon AONBs. The arguments used were very questionable, for example there was not enough open space although the Pebblebed Heaths are 5% of the AONB and there is also, in addition, land to the west in the AONB. The OVA has set up a subcommittee with our experts on farming, the natural environment, recreation and planning to respond to this consultation. Our response is available on our website.

***Dr Nicola Daniel, Planning Committee Chair***

*If you are involved with a Scout, Guide, Brownie or similar group and have a requirement/use for a second-hand 3m x 3m gazebo with a green roof then the OVA would be happy to donate one to you. Please telephone the Chairman, Bob Wiltshire, on the number shown on the inside back cover of this magazine.*

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - SITUATIONS VACANT!

## **Honorary Treasurer**

My term as Treasurer ends in May and I'm now seeking a replacement who wants to help the OVA function as an organisation and also share in steering its broader activities and future direction by joining the Executive Committee. I'm confident that this role will appeal to someone out there among our members.

As Treasurers' jobs go, the OVA one is pretty simple as there are virtually no assets to manage and no employees. It's mostly a book-keeping function requiring only a moderate level of skill at manipulating an Excel spreadsheet. Each month I send a very brief written summary of the Association's finances to the committee and attend its meetings when I can. Modern banking practices mean that there is very little handling of cash and few visits to the bank. Only once a year does accounting experience come into play when preparing the Statement of Accounts, but this work is guided by the expert hand of the External Examiner, who also ensures that the results are correct.

Please contact me on the number listed at the back of this newsletter or at [marilyn\\_jon@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:marilyn_jon@tiscali.co.uk) if you have any questions.

***Jon Roseway***

## **Honorary Secretary**

My term as Honorary Secretary also ends in May, and I am hoping there is someone within our large membership who would like to take on this interesting role. I joined the committee straight into the role of Honorary Secretary when I had been living in the area for less than a year, so everything was new to me – the other committee members were very welcoming and helpful, so don't be shy in stepping forward! The job is fairly standard and what I do currently includes:

Making sure that what the OVA does fits with its constitution and rules

- Working with the Chairman to produce meeting agendas, and sending these, together with papers, to the committee before each meeting.
- Recording the minutes of all meetings.
- Dealing with correspondence, as required (currently very little of this).

Of course I go to as many committee meetings as I can (there are 10 per year) and welcome the opportunity to take part in the discussions, and help shape what the OVA does. The meetings are also great places to pick up information about what is happening locally.

Most business is carried out electronically, so no need to worry about stamps and post boxes, just to be handy with emails and electronic filing.

If you would like to find out more do get in touch at [pandp@kurowski.me.uk](mailto:pandp@kurowski.me.uk)

***Penny Kurowski***

# Ottery St Mary Heritage Society Museum

2018 will be remembered as a major milestone in the history of the Ottery St Mary Heritage Society, with the opening of the Heritage Museum in the Old Town Hall near the Parish Church.

Ottery St Mary is one of the oldest and most historic towns in Devon. There is well over 1,000 years of documented history – in fact the first mention of “Otheri” is in the 10th century. Exhibits cover Ottery’s extensive history from Bishop Grandisson’s Ecclesiastical College, founded in the 14th century. The museum describes its demise under Henry VIII’s dissolution of the monasteries, and the king’s subsequent bequeathing of the parish church and formation of the King’s Grammar School. Moving on, there are sections on Cromwell’s presence in Ottery during the civil war; the history of the town’s houses; literary connections with the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray, the poet Alexander Barclay and Ottery’s famous son, the Victorian poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. There are also displays about Ottery’s textile mill and the development of local industries; fires and floods of the town; the famous Tar Barrels Carnival on 5 November; the Anglo-French war and the barrack town; and Ottery at war, which covers both the first and second world wars.

The Museum will be open from April to September and admission is free although visitors are asked to make a donation. *Editor*

## Sir Walter Raleigh Anniversary Walk - 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018



400 years to the day since Sir Walter Raleigh was executed at the Tower of London, 22 of us joined Brian Turnbull to celebrate his life and, perhaps, walk in his very footsteps.

Think of him what you may – pirate, explorer, soldier, loyal subject, poet.... Sir Walter is almost certainly East Budleigh's most famous son.

We started with a stroll up East Budleigh High Street to admire his statue and discuss the controversy about his birth date – was it 1552 or 1554? The current view seems to be 1554, when the country

was under Catholic rule and, according to legend, the protestant Raleigh family had young Walter christened in a private chapel at Place Court in Colaton Raleigh.

Next we visited All Saints church to see the very pew in which Sir Walter and his family would have sat, decorated on the end with the Raleigh coat of arms. Walter Raleigh senior was a churchwarden at All Saints. The grave of Walter Raleigh senior's first wife (Sir Walter is the son of his second wife) is in the floor of the church, and the carpet was lifted so that we could see it. All the pews in this fine old church have decorated pew ends, many of them medieval.



The final stop in the village was outside Vicar's Mead (now a private residence), formerly the vicarage. Here Sir Walter went to lessons with the vicar. We could imagine him trudging along Hayes Lane with his school books. We too trudded up Hayes Lane for about a mile until we reached Hayes Barton, famed for being his birthplace. This beautiful Elizabethan manor house (again a private residence) was leased by Walter Raleigh senior from the Duke estate.

Brian now took us along paths, unfamiliar to many of us, to Yettington and then up onto Colaton Raleigh Common. A track following the stream took us to Stowford, and onward to Colaton Raleigh. Here a real treat was in store. The owners of Place Court, Mark and Lindsay Breese, opened their beautiful gardens to us so we could enjoy our picnic lunch. Place Court is a wonderful 13<sup>th</sup> Century manor house, possibly the oldest continuously inhabited building in the area. We could see the windows of the chapel, above the porch, where Sir Walter's baptism is said to have taken place.



Brian read us an excerpt from Sir Walter's will, written when he was in his forties, and it gives a flavour of the man himself:

“In the Name of god the Father the sonne & the holye ghoste. Three persons and one god. The eighth Daye of Julye Anno Domini 1597 I Walter Raleghe of Colliton Raleghe in the Countye of Devon knighte Captaine of her Majesties garde and Lord Warden of the Stanneryes in the Countyes of Devon & Cornewall acknowledginge that all fleshe ys grasse and that the Daye of our birthe ys the firste steppe to Death though the hower be uncertaine when the spirt shall retorne to the Lord that gave it doe ordeyne Declare & make this my laste will and Testament in manner & effecte followinge.”

From Place Court we walked along paths to the Otter, and onwards to Otterton. Bicton Church was the last point of interest. In 1850, on the orders of Lady Louisa Rolle the medieval church was made into a planned ruin, and part of it was reworked by Augustus Pugin into a mausoleum for the Rolle family. A new church, St Mary's, was built next to it. St Mary's is now deconsecrated, and both churches can only be accessed through Bicton Gardens. Dripstones on the window arches and south porch of St Mary's are carved to represent 50 English kings and queens and their spouses. Through the fields and back to East Budleigh. 8 miles completed on a glorious day, in good company. Thank you to Brian for all the information imparted along the way.

*Penny Kurowski*

## **Obituary**

We are sad to report the death of Derrick Langford Roland of Budleigh Salterton, who passed away on 2nd October at the age of 95 years after a brief illness.

Derrick had a long career in agriculture, most of which was spent developing and managing fruit farms - his last in Woodbury. He retired in 1988 and moved to Granary Lane and became very active in the local community. He was a regular winner at the Flower and Produce Show, was very involved with his church and the Devon Wildlife Trust.

He joined the OVA and was Chair from 1992-1994, then joining the 'unsung heroes' for many years and, until quite recently, delivering newsletters. Derrick was fiercely independent and cared for himself until he was 94 years old. We offer his family our deepest sympathy.

## Otter Estuary litter-pick - Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 11am to 1pm.

Please note that 2019's litter-pick will start at the later time of **11.00am**. This is in order to fit in with tides that have proved difficult during March and April. The pick enables litter to be collected across the estuary at low tide. As usual the meeting point is Lime Kiln car park in Budleigh Salterton where free parking tickets, plastic bags and tongs will be provided. Prizes will be awarded for the 'most unusual' finds at the end of the pick.

As this year's event is in mid-March, weather conditions could be cold and wet so volunteers must wear wellington boots and gloves and bring warm, waterproof clothing. Should the forecast look inclement, see the contact details right in case of last minute cancellation. All volunteers are welcome but children must be accompanied by an adult.



It is estimated that the 2018 litter-pick resulted in approximately 120kg of rubbish being collected from White Bridge to the pebble bank. The amount of waste deposited varies according to weather conditions both downriver and from the sea. Less rubbish collected this year would be a positive result.

As you are no doubt aware, the bank near Budleigh Cricket Ground was breached recently. Whilst the footpath should be open, low tide enables access to the estuary along the shoreline so either way this should not present a problem.

Whilst there have been no serious incidents on previous events, large areas of mud with slippery banks in exposed conditions presents hazards that must be taken seriously. Previously, volunteers have lost wellies in the mud so stay within calling distance of each other and ensure that children are properly supervised.

The litter-pick provides a unique opportunity to walk out onto the Estuary and see Budleigh from a new perspective so do please come along if you can.

***Geoff Porter, Natural Environment Committee***



## SPRING LITTER PICK

Where?

Lime Kilns car park

When?

23 March 2019 1100-1300

What?

Explore the Lower Otter Estuary at low tide and take part in this annual litter pick to improve this important wildlife site.

**Volunteers of all ages are most welcome, but children must be accompanied by adults. Wellington boots and gloves are essential!**



Join the **Otter Valley Association** with **EDDC** and **Clinton Devon Estates** to clear litter including plastic from the Otter Estuary SSSI below White Bridge.

Meet at 1045 where free parking tickets will be distributed along with bags and litter pickers. Bring your loaded bags back to the car park where at 1245 prizes will be awarded for the most unusual finds!

No booking required but for more information please contact: [info@ova.org.uk](mailto:info@ova.org.uk) or [kate.ponting@clintondevon.com](mailto:kate.ponting@clintondevon.com) 01395 466918

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Pebblebed Heaths  
CONSERVATION TRUST



## A good year for Butterflies

2018 was a year to remember. Following a very unsettled winter and spring the warm sunny summer resulted in increased numbers of most butterflies. Butterfly Conservations' 'Big Butterfly Count' showed a marked increase for most species. This was reflected locally. On the Commons, Silver-studded Blues, White Admirals, Small Heaths and Grayling all had a good year. Along the lower Otter several Small Tortoiseshells flew in early summer but none were seen later. This may be due to the parasitic *Sturmia bella* fly whose eggs, laid on nettles, are ingested by the caterpillar and consume it from within!

Around Otterton, early emerging Orange-tip and Green-veined Whites were greeted by changeable wet weather on Anchoring Hill. Small Coppers and Common Blues, often common on the Hill, were hard to find but did well in later summer as did Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers. In the village lanes Red Admirals, Peacocks, Gatekeepers, Speckled Woods and the White's all did well. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 13 different species were seen along half a mile of hedgerow near Ladram Bay in just 2 hours. Wall Browns, Ringlets and Large Skippers inhabited lanes around Stantyway Farm. By the Otter, hundreds of Large and Small White's



thrived on fields of Kale and in later summer Small Coppers, Commas, Common and Holly Blues became numerous. Highlights this summer were seeing the rare Wood White near Ladram Bay, a Clouded Yellow (pictured) near Stantyway and several Purple Hairstreaks on tansy flowers below Oaks along the riverside.

Many days of sunshine perhaps resulted in a shorter life-span for adults as it was easier to find a mate; most adult butterflies live only 2 weeks. Many wildflowers bloomed early reducing their food supply. Late flowering tansy, thistle, ragwort, burdock, blackberry and ivy became life-savers. The prolonged dry weather also stunted the growth of food-plants essential to caterpillars and, sadly, this could result in fewer butterflies next year.

**Geoff Porter**

## **A dip into the OVA Archive**

The OVA was formed as a 'Civic Society' under the auspices of the then Civic Trust (now Civic Voice) in 1979. The civic movement is based on a network of hundreds of local voluntary civic and amenity societies in the warp and weft of communities across England – it is one of the largest social movements in the country.

At the time, civic societies already existed in Exmouth, Ottery St Mary and the Sid Vale – and the OVA was formed to 'fill the gap' and cover Budleigh Salterton and the parishes of East Budleigh and Bicton, Otterton, Colaton Raleigh and Newton Poppleford. A 10-member steering committee was formed in March 1979 with the first meeting taking place in April (attended by over 120 people!). Mr Charles Snow was elected the first Chair and the annual subscription was set at £1.00 per person.

It would appear that some things never change – the first spring clean of the Otter Estuary took place in April 1980 and resulted in 120 cubic feet of rubbish being collected which comprised "mainly plastic offal but also a water cistern, the outer housing of a washing machine, several car tyres, a 70lb lump of tar (raised by means of a tow rope affixed to a mini) plus a pair of shoes."

My personal favourite from the archive comes from December 1980 and a report of the second annual social evening. The party, held in East Budleigh Village Hall, was attended by 90 members and first prize in the raffle was 4lb of sirloin with half a cwt of potatoes the second prize! It would seem that OVA members at the time were a talented bunch entertaining one another with songs, monologues, poetry and piano-playing.

The third AGM held in May 1982 reported a membership of 527 and a thriving programme of 'walks and talks' – a fantastic achievement in such a short time. Those of us who are now enjoying the benefits of membership are grateful to those early 'pioneers' for their foresight and tremendous hard work. We will celebrate them, and the achievements of the OVA, at our Ruby Anniversary party in June 2019. We will be celebrating at East Devon Golf Club with a strawberry afternoon tea and pink champagne. Cost per person will be £10.

***Editor***

# WALKING



## A Walk for Everyone

We aim to offer a selection of walks to suit all tastes and the new programme starts with some local short walks to encourage anyone who has decided to take up walking in the New Year.

In February, we branch out further afield, west to the Teign Gorge for a walk with Chris Gooding, east to Colyton with Stella and north to Escot with Graham. Mike is leading a revised old favourite; Templer Way in two stages. We have two coastal walks to offer, one from Branscombe with Rosemary & David, and another from Budleigh to Sidmouth with Jon. We also have the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Samuel Taylor Coleridge with Iain and Dee. Please peruse the programme to see what takes your fancy.

Two new walk leaders have joined us, Jane Kewley who is leading a walk from Weston and Sarah Westacott who is leading a walk on the Commons. Please support them both by participating in their walks and if you are willing to lead a walk yourself, please let one of the walk team know. If you particularly enjoy a walk and are willing to write your reflections for the website and newsletter, this would be most welcome.

Please ensure you are equipped and fit enough for the terrain for the walk planned and bring a packed lunch where indicated as there is not always the opportunity to buy food and drink en-route. We sometimes ask for notification if you intend to participate on a walk as this helps in planning. We try to be green by either using public transport or sharing cars, where possible. Please also make sure you check the website to ensure there have been no changes to the planned walk.

A Happy New Year from the walk team, Heather Fereday, Stella French, Paul and Penny Kurowski and Jon Roseway.

***Heather Fereday***

# Events Programme – January to April 2019

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, 5th January - 10.00am - WALK**

Start: Knowle Village Hall, CP (OS 115, SY 052 827) 6 miles, 3 hours

### **"A New Years' Revolution"**

A circular walk visiting Bystock ponds, heath and woodlands. Optional lunch afterwards at the Dog and Donkey.

Walk Leader: Steve Hagger, 01395 442631

## **Tuesday, 8th January - 10.00am - WALK**

Start: Crook Plantation (OS 115, SY 057 866), 5 miles, 2½ hours

### **"Woodbury Castle and Colaton Raleigh Common"**

An invigorating walk up to Woodbury Castle then along the East Devon Way to Hawkerland Cross before skirting the Common back to the start.

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

## **Saturday, 12th January - 10.00am - WALK**

Start: Joney's Cross CP (OS 115, SY 0574898) 5 miles, 2½ hours.

### **"Colaton Raleigh Common"**

A walk along paths, tracks and lanes across Colaton Raleigh Common and the Hawkerland Valley.

Walk Leader: Graham Knapton 01395 445872.

## **16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7.30pm – The Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton - TALK**

### **"Devon's future housing needs"**

Please see page 10 for full details of all talks.

## **Saturday, 19th January - 10.00am - WALK**

Start: Wheathills Plantation car park (OS 115, SY 040 848) 5½ miles, 3 hours

### **"Three Plantations"**

The walk takes in Shortwood Common, Dalditch, and Bystock Fishponds.

Walk Leader - Sarah Westacott, 01395 277644

### **Thursday 24th January – 10.30am – WALK**

Start at the Lime Kiln CP, Budleigh Salterton, (OS 115, SY 073 821) (Pay & Display, or 157 bus from Newton Poppleford 9.16am, Otterton 9.29am, East Budleigh 9.34am and alight at Granary Lane to walk a mile to the start)

#### **"The Lower Otter"**

Level, easy 6 mile walk alongside the river Otter from sea to Newton Poppleford Bridge. See things you didn't notice in the summer when the leaves hid so much. Return by the 1.15pm bus – arriving Otterton 1.29pm, East Budleigh 1.34pm, Granary Lane 1.39pm, Public Hall 1.44pm. Option to do only half the walk - either catch an earlier return bus at Otterton, or join the walk at 11.30am at Otterton.

Walk Leader: Haylor Lass 01395 568786

### **Wednesday, 30th January - 10.50am - WALK**

Start underneath Iron Bridge (OS 114, SX 915 928) at 10.50am, 6½miles, 4 hours

#### **"Exeter Green Circle – Part Two"**

This walk takes us from Exeter city centre out around Redhills and then skirts the western part of the city before crossing the canal and river to arrive back at Topsham Road. We can then travel back to Exmouth by the 57 bus, with connections to onward journeys. Please bring a picnic lunch – if the weather is awful we will find a pub instead. The start point of the walk can be reached by taking the 9.40am number 58 bus from Budleigh Salterton Public Hall (arrives Exeter city centre 10.35am), the 9.40am number 57 bus from Exmouth (arrives 10.23am) or the 9.49am number 9 bus from Newton Poppleford (arrives 10.24am), and then walking to Lower North Street, which is under the Iron Bridge.

Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski, 01395 742942 [pandp@kurowski.me.uk](mailto:pandp@kurowski.me.uk)

### **Wednesday, 30th January 2019 at 7:30pm - The Peter Hall, St Peter's Church, Budleigh Salterton - TALK**

#### **"The history of the RNLI in Exmouth"**

### **Thursday, 7th February - 10.30am - WALK**

Start: Fingle Bridge car park (OS 28, SX 743 900) 3½ miles, 2.5 hours.

Meet at Newton Poppleford recreation CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.30am to share cars or meet at the start point.

#### **"A Teign Gorge classic"**

A steady climb eastwards, up from the depths of the gorge, soon takes us to the gorgeous Hunters Path that runs along the rim of the steep defile that contains the youthful River Teign that can be heard hundreds of feet below, as it crashes

its way down from the high moorland up ahead. We eventually reach the flanks of Lutyens' Castle Drogo, where we begin our descent down to the river, first turning north before doubling back to reach a footbridge and pool above a salmon leap. Remaining on the north bank, we simply follow the torrent westwards as it tumbles its way down through the densely wooded valley bottom towards the inn where we started, where some may be in need of sustenance!

Walk Leader: Chris Gooding, 01395 265707/07852 630431

### **Monday, 11th February - 10.40am - WALK**

Start at East Budleigh CP (OS 115, SY 066 849) on bus route 157. 6 miles, about 4 hours, including stops for refreshments

#### ***"A Ramble with Temptations"***

Through East Budleigh village, then fields and tracks on a hilly back route to Budleigh Salterton, and perhaps a break for an ice-cream or a coffee, and a stroll along the beach. Returning up the "Little Otter" path, which should give good bird-spotting options, then along the Otter to Otterton and break for lunch at Otterton Mill. Finishing along back roads to East Budleigh.

Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski, 01395 742942/07792 619748

### **Friday 15th February, 10.30am - WALK**

Start: CP in Colyton Dolphin Street (OS 116, SY 246 940) 5 miles, 2½ hours

Meet: Newton Poppleford Rec CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 10.00am to share cars or meet at the start point.

#### ***"A winter's stroll around Colyton"***

Starting from the centre of Colyton we walk along the river Coly before heading inland on tracks and lanes to the north of Colyton returning along the Umborne Brook. Note it may be muddy after wet weather. Back in Colyton there is the opportunity for lunch in either a local tearoom or pub.

Walk leader: Stella French 01395 445724/07896 088858

### **Wednesday, 20th February, 10.00am - WALK**

Start: Escot Park(OS 115, SY 081 891) 5 miles, 2½ hours.

#### ***"A walk from Escot"***

A leisurely walk from Escort Park to Talaton and returning via Larkbeare. Some fairly long stretches of road. Optional lunch at the Coach House Restaurant afterwards.

Walk leader: Graham Knapton, 01395 445872

### **Wednesday 27th February, - 11.30am – WALK**

#### **“Revised Templer Way Stage 1”**

The Templer Way follows, as closely as possible, the historical export route of granite from the Haytor Quarries to the sea port at Teignmouth. It is now routed via Heathfield and the new (2016) footbridge bridge across the A38 and thus avoiding the Drum Bridge roundabout. The total length is 18 miles (29km) long and winds through a wide range of scenery from open moorland to estuary foreshore. The walk is ‘nearly’ downhill all the way! Please bring a picnic lunch.

The first stage is 8 miles between Haytor Information Centre (OS Explorer OL28 & 110, SY 766 772) and the 39 bus stop in Heathfield, just off the new Templer Way, where we will catch the 14:58/15:58 bus back to Exeter.

Travel to the start is by the 39 bus from Exeter Bus Station (Stand No 12), dep 10:30, arr Bovey Tracy 11:14 where we will collect prearranged taxis to Haytor. Provisional booking has been made at a maximum cost of £5.00 per head. **If you intend to come, please make a firm commitment to Mike by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February.** Nearer the time, please see the OVA website for the latest bus times and any other changes.

Walk Leader: Mike Paddison 01395 446550/07909 606660

### **Wednesday, 27th February 2019 at 7:30pm - East Budleigh Village Hall - TALK**

#### **“Coastal change and coastal erosion risk management in East Devon”**

### **Friday, 1st March - 10.00am - WALK**

Start: NT car park at Branscombe Mouth (charge applies) (OS 115, SY 207 882), 6½ miles, 3 hours.

Meet at Newton Poppleford recreation ground CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.15am to share cars or meet at the start point.

#### **“Branscombe to Beer”**

A popular coastal walk along the SWCP with fantastic cliff top views on the return journey. We'll take the Hooken Undercliff path eastwards, where a slump in the chalk cliffs in 1790 separated a ten acre piece of land, now a wooded and sheltered habitat with chalk pinnacles on the seaward side. A steep set of steps will bring us up to East Cliff, where we'll return to Branscombe on the cliff top path, passing the old Coastguard Lookout and down another set of steep steps.

Optional lunch/refreshments afterwards at the Sea Shanty café. Please be aware that the path is slippery and uneven in parts and may be muddy.

Walk Leaders: Rosemary & David Hatch, 01392 444290

**Thursday, 7th March, - 10.00am - WALK**

**"A Little Bit of Everything"**

Start: Colaton Raleigh Church (OS 115, SY 082 872) 6 miles, 3 hours  
Passaford Lane (stiff climb!), Mutters Moor, Coast Path, green lanes and return by the River Otter.

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

**Wednesday 13th March 11.30am – WALK**

Travel to the start is by the X38 bus from Exeter Bus Station (Stand No 12), dep 10:30, arr Heathfield, Battle Road (OS 110, SX 829 763) at 11:24.

**"Revised Templer Way Stage 2"**

The second stage is 9½ miles between Heathfield and Teignmouth via Newton Abbot Quay. A picnic lunch at Newton Abbot Quay will be followed by tea at Combe Cellars before catching the Shaldon ferry (50p) across the estuary to New Quay in Teignmouth. Definitely downhill all the way!

Return travel by train dep Teignmouth 16.38/17:22, arr Exmouth 17.51/18:27 respectively and onward to East Devon by bus 57/157/357 or alight at Exeter Central to catch the 9 bus from the bus station. Please see OVA website for any necessary changes to travel times.

Walk Leader: Mike Paddison, 01395 446550/07909 606660

**Monday, 18th March - 9.30am - WALK**

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

**"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 walk back along the river Otter.

Walk Leaders: Iain Ure & Dee Woods, 01395 568822

**Friday, 22nd March, - 10.00am - WALK**

Meet: Newton Poppleford Rec Ground (OS 115 SY 088 899) at 9.30am to share cars or meet at start point.

**"A springtime coast path and inland walk"**

Start: Small Car Park (off Grammar Lane) Weston (OS 115 SY 167 890) at 10am 6/7 miles 3.5 hours + optional stop for lunch at the end of the walk at the new café at the Donkey Sanctuary.

The walk will take us along the side of Weston Combe to join the coast path. We will follow the coast path westwards towards Sidmouth initially with a steep stepped descent to the beach at Weston Mouth before climbing up past the Weston Plats and walking along the path as it descends and ascends past

Salcombe Mouth and up Salcombe Hill Cliff. This section of path is steep in parts and can be muddy when wet, but weather permitting our efforts should be rewarded with stunning views along the coast. From the top of Salcombe Hill Cliff our route will take us inland for the return to Weston via Salcombe Regis. The walk finishes on paths through the Donkey Sanctuary where we will have the option of stopping at or returning to the new café for lunch.

Walk Leader: Jane Kewley, 01395 445598/07966 280147

**Tuesday 26th March 2019 at 7:30pm - Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton - TALK**  
**“Electric power distribution in East Devon”**

**Wednesday, 27th March, 10.30 - WALK**

Start: Budleigh Salterton Public Hall (OS 115, SY 062 860) at 10:30, 7 miles, 4 hrs.

**“Budleigh to Sidmouth – the coastal route”**

From Budleigh Salterton we follow the coast path all the way to Sidmouth and hope to get some wonderful views along the way. This walk is normally done in summer and the landscape will have a different feel to it in March. There’s only one stiff climb, but the path may be slippery in places at this time of year. We’ll break for lunch at Ladram Bay (bring a picnic or buy it there) and finish up at the bus triangle in Sidmouth. There’ll be time for relaxing or even shopping in Sidmouth before catching the hourly bus back to Budleigh Salterton.

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway 01395 488739/07887 936280

**Friday, 29th March, 10.00am - WALK**

Start at Kennford, (OS 110, SX 914 859), 6½miles with an optional extra 2 miles.

**“Do ya ken Kenn? – a journey into the past through rolling landscapes and woods and along ancient tracks with stunning views”**

Meet at Newton Poppleford Rec Ground to leave at 9.30am in shared cars to the outskirts of Kennford for a walk start of 10.00am. Parking in Kennford: travelling along the A38, just before the A38/A380 split there is a turn off to Kenn and Kennford. Having turned off, turn immediately left towards Kennford and then turn left before the sign for Kennford and the phone box to park in the road.

We leave the noise of the traffic behind as we follow country lanes and paths and pass through Kenn. Following the River Kenn and then a tributary, we ascend gradually to a tree-flanked lane climbing upwards with magnificent views (weather permitting!) to Exmouth, the estuary and Exeter. We follow a secret path to join St. Andrew’s Lane that dates back to the Iron Age and leads us back to Kenn where we break for lunch at The Ley Arms. After this we propose a visit to the interesting St Andrew's Church.

From here there is an easy 15 minute walk back to the cars. For those wanting the “add on” we will continue up the churchyard to get stunning views of Haldon and the Exe estuary before joining the Old Dawlish Road through the old village of Kennford and back to the cars.

It would help, although not essential, if you could let us know if you are interested in this walk so that we can advise The Ley Arms on potential numbers for lunch.

*Walk Leaders:* Penny & Paul Kurowski, 01395 742942/pandp@kurowski.me.uk

### **Wednesday, 3rd April - 10.30am - WALK**

Meet: Tipton St John Village CP (OS 115, SY 089 918), 8½ miles, 4½ hours

#### **“Totter around the Otter”**

A gentle start through the water meadows to the edge of Ottery St Mary. We then climb out of the valley via quiet lanes and footpaths to East Hill, where we stop for lunch and enjoy the views. We will return to Tipton via Fire Beacon Hill. Please bring a picnic lunch.

Walk leaders: David & Rosie Conner, 07831 406959

### **Friday, 5th April - 10.00am - WALK**

Meet: Newton Poppleford Rec CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 09.15am to share cars or meet at the start point.

#### **“A Town and Country Walk”**

Start: Parke National Trust Car Park (OL28 /OS110, SX 805 785 ) at 10.00am. 7-8 miles, around 4 hours. Bring NT card otherwise charge for CP.

The walk starts through the town of Bovey Tracey and continues through woodland and countryside before arriving in Lustleigh. There will be a picnic en route. After a look around this picturesque village we head back along lanes and the old railway line to Parke. Great cafe at the end!

Walk leader: Vivien Insull, 01404 811267

### **Wednesday, 10th April - 10.30am - WALK**

Start: Free CP on left at entrance to Belstone (OS 28, SX 622 938) 4 miles, 2½ hrs.

Meet at Newton Poppleford Rec CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.30am to share cars or meet at the start point.

#### **“A step into a beautiful gateway to the high moor”**

Strolling south through the ancient granite buildings of the hamlet of Belstone, we make our way south some way above the infant River Taw, soon emerge onto the open moor. Every step thereafter offers an ever-increasing sense of the majesty of the scene unfolding ahead. The vast bowl of Taw Marsh is flanked on all sides by moorland scenery of the highest order. We return by climbing steeply west to

gain the ridge that links Oke Tor with the tors above Belstone common and as we make our way back north along that ridge, it must be said that a walking pole or stick would be very useful as we cross the clutter fields that surround those tors. A simple track is soon found on the northern flank of Higher Tor and that leads us back down to Belstone and its inn, for those who might require refreshments. Please note: The majority of this walk is over rough grazing and therefore unsuitable for dogs.

Walk Leader: Chris Gooding, 01395 265707/07852 630431

### **Tuesday, 16th April - 10am - WALK**

Start: Church Street car park, Sidford (OS 115, SY 135 900), - Free street parking also available nearby. 6.5 miles, 3.5 hours.

#### **"A hop, skip and a jump around the Frog Stone"**

An immensely varied walk, initially north east to Knowle House before turning back to reach the beautiful churchyard at Salcombe Regis via Trow. After a short break, we take the track south which eventually steepens through woodland to emerge onto clifftop pastures, affording beautiful views across Lyme Bay. We soon pass the Frog Stone (your guess) before descending through bluebell woods (fingers crossed) and then a classic downland descent into Sidmouth.

Another short break for sustenance might be in order here before the gentle stroll up through the Byes and back to the start.

Walk Leader: Chris Gooding, 01395 265707/07852 630431

### **Wednesday, 24th April - 10.30am - WALK**

Start: Top of Steamer Steps, Budleigh Salterton (OS 115, SY 065 817) 8 miles, approx 4 hours.

#### **"A Springtime circular walk from Budleigh"**

Coast path to West Down Beacon, Castle Lane, old railway line, Bear Lane, Shortwood Common, East Budleigh. Picnic lunch at East Budleigh recreation ground. Frogmore, back along the River Otter to Budleigh. Hopefully Spring will have sprung and the woods should be beautiful. Possibility of mud in parts.

Walk leader: Jacqui Ruhlig, 01395 443763

## 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.*

### The Path Less Travelled – Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference*  
[From 'The Road not Taken' by Robert Frost]

Tansy and Buster – two Border Terriers – waited in the open car boot, listening attentively to Brian Turnbull's introductory briefing; they were to join the nine walkers assembled in Newton Poppleford on a mild breezy day for a five mile walk that was to be full of quirky curiosities.

Brian commenced with a reference to the nearby Newton Poppleford railway station, of which little remains since its demolition fifty years ago. Situated on the branch line from Tipton St. John to Budleigh Salterton (subsequently extended to Exmouth) the station was opened almost as an afterthought, over two years after services had commenced in 1897. From 1949 onwards it was equipped with two camping coaches for holiday use.



Heading north along the old track-bed, the walkers joined the East Devon Way westwards through the hamlet of Southerton where they encountered an unusual garden gate which incorporated a variety of garden tools – hoes, a banjo shovel and an assortment of trowels and dibbers.

Pausing to admire a plain-tile conical roof nearing completion, Brian drew our attention to a nearby dovecote of such magnificence that it could have been designed by Lutyens himself, before leading us by a circuitous route through green lanes to Venn Ottery and its parish church of St. Gregory. Tucked away discreetly behind an inappropriately suburban housing development, the nave had at one time been thatched before destruction

by fire, but the beautifully weathered Norman tower of Heavitree breccia stone survives intact.

Closing the circle on our return to the car park we passed a badger sett of magnificent proportions where the residents were airing their bedding – no doubt in anticipation of a visit by the Men from the Ministry...

***Tony Venning***

### **Walking with the Ancients – Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October**

A day out on Dartmoor, one of my favourite locations for a walk. Our starting point was the picturesque village of Widecombe in the Moor. The weather looked promising, cloudy and cold but with good visibility as we set off along lanes up to Bonehill Rocks. After refreshments we headed out onto the wonderful wilderness of the moor walking along footpaths beneath Chinkwell and Honeybag Tors.

We walked on through Natsworthy where one of our group, who used to live in the area, expanded on life as a child here with memories of being cut off in bad weather. Next we headed out towards Hamel Down with magnificent views in all directions, passing Highland cattle on our way. We paused at the RAF memorial stone erected in memory of 4 airmen who crashed into the hill during fog in 1941. Then we arrived at Grimspound with its impressive Bronze Age remains of an ancient settlement that had comprised of 24 stone roundhouses within a massive stone wall. Here we had lunch taking in the magnificent views, the grazing sheep and cattle and the large scale of the settlement. We then headed up to the trig point and cairn at Hamel Down Tor with more panoramic views.



From here it was easy walking slowly downhill passing Hamel Down Cross, Broad Barrow, Single Barrow, Two Barrows, boundary markers and various Cairns including what is thought to be a kistvaen (see photo) or burial tomb found in the centre of a cairn circle. Fairly soon we could see Widecombe Church tower below us and thoughts of tea and cake ensured a rapid descent.



It was a lovely walk encapsulating the wild and bleak nature of Dartmoor along with many historic relics. We did indeed feel like we were ‘walking with the ancients’. Thank you David and Rosie for taking us out on such an interesting walk.

### ***Stella French***

### **Castles, hills and autumnal colour along the River Teign – 2<sup>nd</sup> November**

It was a wonderful autumn day for a brisk walk – and this walk delivered exactly what it had promised in the programme – wonderful views and beautiful autumnal colours. Within a few minutes we were appreciating views of the Teign Gorge from the Hunter’s Path whilst descending slowly to Fingle Bridge where we saw a dipper in the river.



A coffee break with delicious home-made brownies preceded a steep uphill section on forestry tracks through woodland to the top of the hill where bracken-fringed tracks led to Cranbrook Castle Hillfort. We had lunch on the grassy ramparts with great views all round to Dartmoor’s north plateau, Drewsteignton, the Teign Valley and distant vistas towards the North Coast of Devon. Descending again through the woods we joined a pretty riverside path on the other side of the Teign and returned to Castle Drogo (and another steep climb!) for tea in the café. We were very lucky to have such a clear day for our walk. Thank you Stella for taking us on such an enjoyable walk.

### ***Rosemary Hatch***

## Guided Birdwatching Walk with Colin Randall - 13<sup>th</sup> November

Fourteen of us joined Colin on a glorious day. Apparently not the best day for spotting birds – a stormy day would have brought some interesting seabirds nearer the coast. However, we did see about 25 different species, and heard two more.

After a look at the birds on the estuary from the shingle bank, we made our way along the path up the “Little Otter” due to the path up the main river being closed following the embankment collapse. Here we heard the loud song of the Cetti's Warbler. We may have seen it briefly, but as it fairly nondescript in appearance, we couldn't be sure. A little later along the path we heard the sound of a squealing pig – and this, Colin told us, was a Water Rail. This shy bird is hard to see as it likes hiding in the reeds. My bird book suggests imitating its call to see if it ventures out to investigate!

We made our way down the Otter to the bird hide, and enjoyed the sight of teal (pictured) and widgeon in the water-filled “scrapes” in the field opposite.

Thank you Colin for most enjoyable and informative morning.

Birds we spotted included: Teal, Widgeon, Little Grebe, Redshank, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Crow, Blackbird, Robin, Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Curlew, Lapwing, Herring Gull, Black-headed Gull, Greater Black Back Gull, Rock Pipit, Pied Wagtail, Magpie, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Goldfinch, Wood pigeon and Moorhen.



***Penny Kurowski***

# The Otter Valley Association

## **Executive Committee (01395)**

Chairman	Bob Wiltshire	444395
Vice-chairman	Haylor Lass	568786
Hon Secretary	Penny Kurowski	742942
Hon Treasurer	Jon Roseway	488739

## **Committee Chairmen**

Natural Environment	David Hatch	01392 444290
Planning	Nicola Daniel	445960
History	David Daniel	445960
Events	<i>vacancy</i>	

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

Budleigh Salterton	George Maddaford	446077
East Budleigh	Jon Roseway	488739
Otterton	Pat & Geoff Porter	567055
Colaton Raleigh	<i>vacancy</i>	
Newton Poppleford	Haylor Lass	568786

## **Other Executive Committee Members**

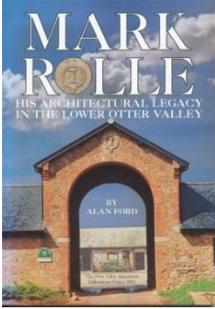
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Publicity Secretary	<i>vacancy</i>	

## **Other Contacts**

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**Publications:** Visit [www.ova.org.uk](http://www.ova.org.uk) or for book sales or email [booksales@ova.org.uk](mailto:booksales@ova.org.uk)

## 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 overview 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.

£3.00 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.