

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

SPRING Newsletter

Vol. 40/2 2019

OVA
PO Box 70
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EX9 6WN

Reg. Charity
No: 278266

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www.oVA.org.uk

**This issue's cover "A little Spring zing" was photographed and produced by
Mo Bowman**

From the Editor

A number of events have taken place since the last newsletter, not least our Christmas Party which was very well attended and thoroughly enjoyed, some very interesting talks and the Annual Litter Pick about which more in the next issue. Coming up we have, most importantly, the 40th AGM - notice of which is below. The full Trustees Report and Accounts will be available at the AGM and on the website and the Minutes of the last AGM are printed in this issue for your review.

For those interested in activities we have a fantastic Walks Programme, a guided tour of Stantyway Farm and don't miss our Ruby Anniversary celebration at East Devon Golf Club on 19th June. Details of how to apply for tickets for the farm tour and party are on pages 11 and 15. I look forward to seeing you there!

Jacqui Baldwin

Notice

The 40th Annual General Meeting of the Otter Valley Association will be held at 7.30pm on 9th May 2019 at Newton Poppleford Playing Fields Pavilion

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 8th May 2018
3. Matters Arising
4. Annual Report including the Trustees Report and Accounts
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Executive Committee Members
7. Appointment of an Independent Examiner
8. Any other business
9. Date of the next AGM

The formal business will be followed by refreshments and an illustrated presentation by David White of 'Countryfile Calendar' fame.

Chairman's Musings

We are into Spring now. The Christmas party attracted 103 revellers and was a great success. Already preparations are afoot for Christmas 2019 and our event will be held on 16th December. You can work out how many shopping days yourselves. Applications for the Ruby Anniversary party on the 19th June can be found in this edition as are applications for the farm visit on 3rd July. As we are having these special events this year we will postpone the new members party until 2020.

The Environment Sub-Committee are gearing themselves up for the start of the Himalayan Balsam plucking season. Interestingly, public awareness of the problem is increasing. Totally dissimilar organisations are starting to take part with desk wallahs leaving their work for one day to participate. Schools are also becoming involved. Regarding the litter picking world, it has become a little uncoordinated, with different groups acting independently and resulting in beach/estuary collections being too close together to be effective. We will, of course, continue with our River Otter litter pick, which we have been doing since 1980, and which is a deep clean of the estuary and yields each year a lorry load of assorted rubbish. We do this with the assistance of Clinton Devon Estates and the Streetscene arm of EDDC.

The walkers amongst us were delighted to see the footpath alongside the River Otter opened after repairs taking four and a half months. This was an expensive exercise carried out by the Environment Agency. Sticking plaster jobs are pricey and it reinforces our view that the collapse of the embankment is inevitable, as there is no reinforcement to the structure. It seems that the cricket club will be bowling the first over in 2022 at Janey's Field on the East Budleigh Road, at which time the flooding will have taken place on the present site.

The Committee has decided to create a new position of Archivist. Records of our Association are stored somewhat randomly and we felt that they should be digitally centralised. I am delighted to announce that Alan Huddart has agreed to take on this role. Alan has much experience in the black art of computerology.

East Devon District Council has declared open season on consultative projects. Having got over the Glover Report which I mentioned in the last edition we then had 'The East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment', which we have commented on and is due to be published in the near future. There

followed the 'East Devon Heritage Strategy 2018-2031 Consultation Draft', again we have responded. Finally there is the 'East Devon Local List Guide', formally the 'Local Heritage Assets List', which after our submission some years ago, is at last receiving attention. Our thanks to all those who have helped to produce the replies and compile our contributions.

Bob Wiltshire, Chairman

East Devon AONB Ambassador Event – 'Making Connections'

This was an informative and enjoyable event attended by over 50 people at Kennaway House on 20th February.

It opened with a presentation by Chris Woodruff, of AONB, about the organisation followed by a keynote presentation by Alistair Handyside of the Southwest Tourism Association. This was an interesting history of progress and the effect of advertising in the tourism industry.

Possibly the highlight was the 'lightning talks'. This involved 10 x 5 minute, strictly timed, presentations. Some were commercial plugs but the rest were concerned with cycling, Sidmouth Walking Festival, National Trust, countryside learning and the East Devon Way. The countryside learning presentation was given by Kate Ponting of Clinton Devon Estates and basically was about the interaction between CDE and the community. It struck me that most of these talks showed that we are all trying to achieve the same thing in our own little ways, as can be found in the objectives of our Constitution.

After our 'networking lunch', we then had a 30 minute presentation from Doug Rudge, the Chair of the Axe Vale and District Conservation Society. They seem to have spent their EDDC funding wisely on schemes that have been beneficial to their 'area of benefit'. I am sure that if we were to look for funds for similar projects, monies would become available.

Bob Wiltshire

RNLI - 'Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things'

On 30th January 34 brave souls ventured out on the coldest Wednesday evening of the year to the Peter Hall in Budleigh to hear about the even braver souls who are the volunteers of the RNLI. Pat Atkinson and George Hislop had come along from Exmouth RNLI to tell us a little of the history and current state of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute.

The first thing that Pat told us was that the RNLI is now focused as much on prevention of problems in and on the water as it is on saving lives. But first a little history: The RNLI was finally founded in 1824 as the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck after proposals in 1823 were rejected by the Admiralty. The RNLI was granted a Royal Charter in 1864 and as a charity operates in the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. The reason for it remaining a charity and not being funded by Government revolves around the desire to avoid interference in its operations and being subject the vagaries of Government funding.

Locally, Exmouth has had its own lifeboat station since 1803 but this ceased for a few years and was later re-established by the National Institution in 1858 and a new lifeboat house established, the entire cost being met by Lady Rolle. At this time the boats were all powered by rowing and it was not until 1933 that a motorised lifeboat arrived in Exmouth. Currently Exmouth has a Shannon class lifeboat 'R and J Welburn' (above) which cost approx £2.2million and is propelled by waterjets rather than propellers making it the most agile and manoeuvrable all-weather lifeboat yet. Alongside her is the D-class inshore lifeboat 'George Bearman II', a highly manoeuvrable rapid response craft. The Inshore Lifeboat is currently launched approximately 6 times as often as the all-weather boat. We saw videos of her in action and heard about a 'shout' where 3 people were rescued from a sinking speedboat which had 2 non-swimmers, a 13 year old boy and only one lifejacket among them. This emphasised the need for education and for trying to reach out to the public, and young people in particular. This is now a major focus of the RNLI with initiatives for schools and publicity and press coverage. The station will be holding an Open Day in August and Pat and George encouraged us to keep an eye on the press for the date to be announced and to visit them.



Pat and George also made a plea to dog owners - too many times an animal goes into the water and the owner goes in after them and then the RNLI has to be called

to rescue the owner. “Don’t do it!” is the plea! If the animal can’t get out call the RNLI rather than attempting rescue yourself. One statistic which was surprising was that 50% of the rescues that the RNLI undertake are of people who did not intend to go onto or into the water in the first place. People cut off by the tide and dog walkers are a high proportion of these.

As well as the frontline lifeboat crews we were reminded that the RNLI has an army of volunteers who do other important work such as the shore crew responsible for the launch, RNLI lifeguards who, since 2001, have been an integral part of this seamless rescue service and the fundraising team who keep the money rolling in to pay for all these ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Nick Speare

Coastal Change and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in East Devon

Programmed to take place in East Budleigh Village Hall on 27th February, the OVA's flexibility was tested by a double booking which required a speedy transfer to the Church Hall. A satisfactory venue, though perhaps not so appealing on bell-ringing practice night! Despite this challenge, Harriet Googe (Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Risk Management Officer) and Dave Turner (East Devon District Council Engineering Projects Manager) did their best to be heard at the back of the hall filled to capacity by the 66 attendees.



The talk began by screening an article from the Sidmouth Herald of May 2015 with the shock heading *Aerial images reveal how town's coast is vanishing*. The

photograph (reproduced on previous page) of the shoreline at Pennington Point produced by the Plymouth Coastal Observatory using a fixed wing drone clearly showed the extent of shoreline retreat over a period of 8 years from 2007. The article also introduced the term *Beach Management Plan*. Harriet explained the Environment Agency's (EA) strategic role in Coastal Erosion as defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Dave explained EDDC's role as taking the lead on Coastal Erosion risk management under the Coast Protection Act. This involved undertaking works on sea flooding and erosion, as advised by the EA, and producing Shore Management Plans and local policies for development of the coast. Timescales for planning were: short term (10 years), medium term (50 years), long term (100 years).

The plan for the Otter estuary was that of 'managed realignment' under the Lower Otter Restoration Project. The policy for Budleigh Salterton sea front was 'holding the line' because property would be threatened by flooding. The policy for the shoreline to the west of Budleigh Salterton was to leave it to natural erosion. Funding of works to reduce risk was then considered. There was a national capital investment programme and it was the EA's job to administer government grants. £12M funding had been allocated for the Exmouth Tidal Defence Scheme where 1,400 homes were at risk. It was predicted that sea levels would rise by 1 metre in the next 100 years and defences had to be built to adapt to change. Beach Management Plans (BMP) were then considered; a BMP being based on the premise that a beach provided both an amenity and a defence. Cost benefit assessments were made on a case by case basis, Seaton providing an example; the coast being both a SSSI and part of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. £4M economic loss had been forecast if nothing was done to prevent further cliff erosion. Erosion from the top due to rainfall weathering was allowed to continue but undermining of the cliff by the sea could be minimised by revetment structures such as groynes and breakwaters.

Based on Climate Change predictions, threats from flood and erosion would increase and some coastal communities would become unviable in their present form. By 2080 as many as 100,000 homes could be lost to the sea. Managing the coast in a changing climate would be a challenge!

Thankfully East Budleigh church has been built on high ground and the writer felt sure that the bells would continue to ring out for centuries to come.

Trevor Waddington

Safeguarding

Following Charities Commission recommendations, the OVA Executive Committee has developed and approved this Safeguarding Policy Statement which we believe is suitable for an organisation such as ours. We do take our responsibilities seriously, and so if you have any concerns about Safeguarding, please get in touch with our Safeguarding Representative, Paul Kurowski by phone on 01395 742942 or by emailing pandp@kurowski.me.uk

Otter Valley Association Safeguarding Policy Statement Statement of Safeguarding Principles

The Otter Valley Association (“OVA”) fully recognises and accepts The Charities Commission’s Guidance “Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees” and commits to complying with the current Charities Commission’s safeguarding guidance. In so doing we will comply with the multi-agency safeguarding procedures relating to children and young people and adults experiencing or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect. We are committed to:

- Promoting a safe environment and culture within the OVA by adhering to safe practices and policies and acknowledge the principle that safeguarding is everyone’s business.
- Supporting all those volunteers with any responsibilities related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the OVA.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation in accordance with the statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures. We will ensure that any complaint made regarding a vulnerable person, who may have been harmed or is in significant danger, will be reported immediately and we will fully cooperate with statutory agencies during any investigation into allegations concerning a member of the OVA or any other person.

Safeguarding representative

We will ensure that there will be an identified person to be the OVA’s Safeguarding Representative who will be suitably trained, and are aware of their role and responsibilities, and who will be the point of contact for any concerns. The OVA Executive Committee has appointed Paul Kurowski, as the OVA’s Safeguarding Representative.

Review

The OVA Executive Committee shall review this policy annually.

Date of Adoption

The OVA Executive Committee agreed and adopted the above Policy at its meeting on 22 January 2019

Pond Life

Since childhood I've loved messing about with water, so our gardens have always had a wildlife pond. After years of building water features and observing pond life I'm still learning how difficult it is to replicate and look after wildlife ponds.

Two years ago we inherited a fish pond in our Otterton garden. The pond had become very overgrown with water lilies and blanket weed and contained a few fish. I learnt a long time ago that fish and wildlife don't really go well together as fish tend to eat much of the smaller pond creatures. So the fish were re-homed. The pond had been well built and included waterfall, pump and filter box. Whilst providing a lovely feature, pumps can suck in and liquidise many small pond creatures, so ours has become redundant. Planting pond weed has hopefully provided the oxygen previously produced by the waterfall.



Two years on, the pond is already full of life. February's warm weather saw the arrival of some 20 toads. Torchlight revealed a cluster of over a dozen amorous croaking males around an invisible submerged female (left). The discovery of spawn thankfully showed that she had survived the encounter!

Multiple smooth newts, dragonflies and their larvae, large pond beetles and water boatmen also inhabit the pond but, alas, no frogs although locally there is spawn in the brooks. Perhaps one reason they're not in the pond is that most other residents, especially newts devour small bite-sized tadpoles.

How to help preserve the tadpoles is quite a dilemma but there may be a solution. I was informed recently that frogs and toads are quite happy to spawn in shallow water. Newts however prefer deeper water, so the addition of a separate shallow pond for the frogs and toads might just work. Time will tell.

Nothing's that straightforward of course; I've watched blackbirds feasting on tadpoles at the waters edge and we've had frog-loving herons visit the pond. Little wonder that both frogs and toads produce so much spawn. Who'd be a tadpole!

Geoff Porter, Natural Environment Committee

A guided tour of Stantyway Farm , Otterton, EX9 7JJ Hosted by farmer, Sam Walker, at 6pm on 3rd July

This tour will give us a wonderful opportunity to see this farm by covered trailer, kindly supplied by Clinton Devon Estates. On arrival we will perch ourselves on bales of hay in the grain store and view a video made for CDE. We will then have a briefing from Sam and also hear from a local ornithologist about the birds that we are likely to see, particularly and hopefully the very rare Cirl Bunting. We will hear about Organic Farming and exactly what that means. We will view the farm, the crops and the cattle and find out about the wildlife found on the farm. We anticipate that the tour will last around 2 hours.

Finally, we will finish the evening on the hill above Brandy Head overlooking the magnificent Lyme Bay where we shall consume our picnics and any liquid refreshments that we may have with us. Unfortunately no ice making facilities on board.

Spaces on this outing are limited and the cost is £5 per person. Should you wish participate please send your completed application form to me by 5th June, when applications will be opened. Please enclose a cheque made payable to the OVA and a stamped addressed envelope. Address details overleaf. The tour will go ahead rain or shine.



Guided Tour at Stantyway Farm - 6pm, 3rd July 2019

Please reservespaces

Name(s)

Address

..... postcode

Tel: email

Please don't forget to enclose a cheque and SAE

Planning Report

I would be a very rich lady if I was given £5.00 every time someone says “how come that was given planning permission”. This was one of the reasons that I and many others embraced Neighbourhood Plans (NP). We hoped that the community would be given a voice as to how they wanted their village or town to look. We were told that NPs would be given due weight when planning applications were considered and since July last year the government’s policy emphasised their importance. Many of us in East Budleigh (EB) and Budleigh Salterton (BS) spent a lot of volunteer hours consulting and writing to draw up the Neighbourhood Plans according to the wishes of the residents and some residents of Otterton and Newton Poppleford are still in the process.

So approximately a year and a half after EBNP and BSNP were adopted have they changed the way planning decisions are considered?

East Budleigh residents would say no. The houses being built behind the Sir Walter Raleigh pub and adjacent to thatched cob cottages are of timber and stone, with flat sedum-covered roofs and rectilinear in design. The inclusion of pebbles on a wall is said to make them in character to the neighbouring 10 listed buildings! How many buildings in EB have pebbles on the walls and flat sedum roofs? This is totally contrary to Policy B2 of the EBNP. Other NP policies were also breached. East Devon even ignored the advice of Historic England (watchdog of the historic environment). They knew better.



Guided Farm Tour
Otter Valley Association
PO Box 70
Budleigh Salterton
EX9 6WN

It is not just EDDC who has fallen in the interpretation of NPs. In BS an Appeals Inspector summed up the BSNP policies H2 and H3 that specifically set out that infill dwellings should reflect density, garden size etc. of an area of the town. "THIS IS A GENERAL OBJECTIVE RATHER THAN BEING SPECIFIC TO ANY STREET OR LOCALITY." This is contrary to the wishes of the town which were clearly set out in the NP policies.

Why has this happened?

There is a pressure to build more houses but EDDC has an adopted Local Plan with housing build-out rates on target. EB and BS have "made" NPs with local housing needs planned for. Therefore, there is no imperative that makes the need for more housing exceptional in these communities. And these infill houses in gardens are not the affordable housing that we need. They are usually 3-4 bedrooms with a hefty selling price. Also, EDDC appear to have adopted a policy of granting permission rather than risk a developer with a reasonable chance of winning on appeal, going to appeal, winning and leaving the EDDC to pay the costs.

What can the people of East Budleigh and Budleigh Salterton do?

The only way is through the democratic process. Express your disquiet to your elected councillors at the way our communities have had their NPs disregarded and hence are rapidly losing their character. They are your councillors and should represent your views. If you are unhappy with planning applications write to EDDC planning department.

Finally I finish with a very sad story. In 2007 the enlightened EDDC Conservation Officer realised that a small area of Budleigh Salterton was losing its special historic character as houses were being built in gardens. He extended the Conservation Area and then, unfortunately, left EDDC. In 2016 a planning application to convert a large villa into 3 apartments and build 3 dwellings in the garden was recommended for approval by Historic England, even though there was no mention of the specific character of the Conservation Area i.e. large villas, in large, mature gardens in a tranquil, walled lane. This time, EDDC took their advice and this is the result with an additional 2 more houses yet to be built. The majority of the trees gone along with the owls and bats.

Nicola Daniel, Planning Committee Chair

Riverside Footpath Re-opens

It was great to see the very popular footpath alongside the Otter re-opened on 28th January; the Environment Agency have done a great job. In September 2018, the path was washed away when the incoming spring tide breached the river bank surrounding the drainage culvert.

Devon County Council closed the path as it was unsafe for public use and so that the culvert could be rebuilt and the path reinstated. The Environment Agency, East Devon District Council (EDDC), Bridge Civil Engineering of Chudleigh, and Clinton Devon Estates have worked together to re-open the path.



Pictured with OVA Chairman Bob Wiltshire are the two engineers responsible: Bryn Williams, Environment Agency Project Manager and Simon Masterman from Bridge Civil Engineering, who carried out the works.

*Come and celebrate 40 years of the
OVA
at our Ruby Anniversary Party
Wednesday, 19th June
4pm to 6pm
East Devon Golf Club, Budleigh
Salterton*



*Enjoy Strawberries, Cream Tea and
Pink Prosecco with old friends and
meet some new ones.*

*Tickets are £10 per person (to include tea and two glasses of
Prosecco)*

*Numbers are limited so don't delay - send off your
application as soon as possible to the address overleaf
together with payment and a stamped, addressed envelope*



Ruby Anniversary Party – 19th June 2019

Please send me tickets

Name(s)

Address

..... postcode

Tel: email

Please don't forget to enclose a cheque and SAE

A Glimpse Underwater

If you have an interest in what is living in the sea just off our coast then you must visit the Fairlynch Museum in Budleigh Salterton when it re-opens at Easter. One of the new lightbox exhibits is a selection of underwater photographs and two short videos taken by local scuba-diver Steve Pease. It is amazing that such creatures are living just 100 yards or so off the beach and the photographs themselves (of which just a very small selection here) are stunning. **Editor**



Candy-striped flatworm



Compass Jellyfish



Pipefish



Moonsnail



Ruby Anniversary Party

Otter Valley Association

PO Box 70

Budleigh Salterton

EX9 6WN

Ancient Woodlands in Jeopardy

Ancient woodlands (any area that has been wooded continuously since 1600) across the UK are currently under threat from development according to the Woodland Trust, with revised planning laws still failing to protect these irreplaceable habitats.

The Ancient Woodland Inventory for England, produced in the 1980's excluded most ancient woodlands under 5 acres because the mapping technology of the time failed to identify them. Changes to the planning system in 2012 were supposed to help prevent ancient woodland from coming under threat but these smaller areas remain at risk because they are not on the register.



Ancient woodland is home to more threatened wildlife than any other land habitat in the UK. And ancient woods are rare in their own right - some may even be the last fragments of the wildwood that once cloaked the country after the last Ice Age. Just 2% of the UK is now covered by ancient woodland, making it crucial that what remains is properly protected.

The charity is renewing its call for better care and protection of ancient woods, which in many cases will be thousands of years old, and asking the public to help. It is looking for **'Threat Reporters'** to visit their website and identify cases of ancient woods under threat and has also launched a new guide to help communities and landowners identify areas of 'planted ancient woodland' which could be restored.

Spring is a great time of year to identify ancient woodland features, from native bluebells to wild garlic, wood anemones and lesser celandine. The new guide produced by the Trust identifies a number of ancient woodland features, which may help woodland owners consider a site for restoration.

If you are aware of a possible threat from development to an ancient wood or tree let the Woodland Trust know and they will follow up on it.

For more information visit woodlandtrust.org.uk

Editor

Minutes of the 39th Annual General Meeting of the OVA held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 8th May 2018 at Otterton Village Hall

1. **Apologies:** Nicola Daniel, David Daniel, Angela Symes, Rosemary Humphreys, Neville Humphreys, Alice Huddart, Alan Huddart, Paul Kurowski, Clive Bowman, Jean Quinn.

2. **Minutes** of the previous AGM held on 10th May 2017 were approved and signed as a true reflection of that meeting.

3. **Matters arising:** None

4. **Annual Report including Trustees Report and Accounts**

The Acting Chairman, Roger Saunders, thanked the Executive Committee for their support. He gave particular thanks to Patrick Hamilton, who was standing down as chair of the Natural Environment Committee (NEC) after 8 years. He welcomed David Hatch who is taking on the role. Patrick had overseen many activities, including the litter pick, a mink trapping project and the Himalayan Balsam project where good progress is being made, especially on the tributaries and in recruitment of new volunteers. Patrick thanked his committee and volunteers, and Tom Pyne for providing a meeting venue. He asked to the meeting to suggest new environment projects to the Executive Committee.

Roger thanked Andrew Beresford who has done book sales for 5 years, and asked for potential replacements to talk to him or Andrew.

Roger also thanked the others who keep the OVA ticking over: the Newsletter Editor and distributors, the Talks organiser, Walk team, Membership Secretary and website manager. He mentioned that a Colaton Raleigh representative is still needed, and the NEC needed new members.

During the last year both Budleigh Salterton and East Budleigh had their Neighbourhood Plans adopted. The OVA had a representative on the Lower Otter Restoration Project stakeholder and technical steering groups, and continues to attend meetings.

Looking at events, the Christmas party had gone well. A walk and talk on Woodbury Common has been arranged and places were still available. The walks programme was varied in location and length, and leaders had helped visually impaired groups on three walks. The Chairman recommended trying a walk, details of which are in the newsletter, website and Facebook page. The litter pick had been well attended and was featured on the front page of the Budleigh Journal.

A new project this year was to plant some replacement pine trees on a prominent hill (Three Pines Hill). With help from the farmer Tom Pyne, Clinton Devon Estates (CDE) and Year 3 from Otterton School some saplings have been planted.

The OVA has funded transport for schoolchildren to the Pebblebed Heaths. The talks programme was well attended and made a profit, some of which was donated to Devon Wildlife Trust.

The OVA has continued its collaborations with the Fairlynch Museum, where there is a touchscreen with information, with CDE and the Pebblebed Heaths, and continues connections with CPRE, East Devon District Council and the AONB, with local councils and so on.

Roger asked for ideas for events. He also launched a local grants programme for projects which fit the objectives of the OVA. He asked members with projects to get in touch with an Executive Committee member; for the right project there could be a grant of several hundred pounds.

Roger concluded that there was a strong Executive Committee which works hard to keep the OVA running, and which will continue to next year with a new Chairman.

A suggestion from the floor was to hold a farm tour. Another member recommended that the OVA should not provide donations to charities. Vice Chair, Haylor Lass confirmed that as the OVA is a charity this would be illegal.

The Honorary Treasurer summarised the accounts. There had been little change on income and expenditure since last year, the main difference was the surplus on talks. Extra expenditure was school transport, donations (especially to Fairlynch and DWT) and First Aid Training for walk leaders. There was an increase in cash in the bank due to successfully claimed Gift Aid. He thanked Brian Leveridge for his help in preparing the accounts.

5. Election of Officers and Executive Committee Members

There was only one candidate per post, and all had been nominated and seconded. Roger read out the list of nominations received for Officers and members of the Executive Committee; these were: Chairman – Bob Wiltshire, Vice Chairman – Haylor Lass; Honorary Treasurer – Jon Roseway; Honorary Secretary – Penny Kurowski; Planning Chairman – Nicola Daniel; History Chairman – David Daniel; Natural Environment Chairman – David Hatch; Membership Secretary – Clive Bowman; Budleigh Salterton Representative – George Maddaford; Otterton Representatives – Geoff Porter and Pat Porter; Talks – Geoff Lake; Newsletter Editor - Jacqui Baldwin. All these had been nominated and seconded. Jon Roseway will also act at East Budleigh Representative, and Haylor Lass as Newton Popleford Representative. The appointment of the Executive Committee was proposed by Chris Pound, seconded by Andrew Beresford, and carried unanimously.

Bob Wiltshire then took the chair. He thanked members for their vote of confidence, and thanked Roger for his 4 years as Chairman and then Acting Chairman.

Bob explained that with the Local Heritage Asset list and the Neighbourhood Plan completed, he was asking for other projects. One idea was the photographic record of all the OVA's areas of benefit. He asked the floor for thoughts on the Christmas Party, and for celebrations for the OVA's 40th anniversary in 2019 – both received good support. He would also like to increase membership, and suggested to the meeting that existing members are our ambassadors, and should try and encourage new members, and hence increase the influence of the OVA in the area.

6. Appointment of Independent Examiner.

The Honorary Treasurer asked members to agree to the reappointment of Mr Brian Leveridge as the Independent Auditor. This was proposed by Roger Saunders and seconded by Patrick Hamilton.

7. Any Other Business

It was suggested that the membership form should be augmented with a leaflet to make it more of an invitation pack that could be dropped into letterboxes.

A member asked why the area of benefit was restricted to the Lower Otter, suggesting that if it was extended further north it would increase membership. Haylor Lass was explained that at the time of establishing the OVA there was already a strong Ottery Heritage Society, and founder member Anita Jennings said that at that time our area of benefit had to be agreed with the Civic Trust. She said that whilst population in our area has increased, membership has dropped, and this has happened for other groups, such as the Sid Vale Association. Roger Saunders said that this issue had been discussed after the last AGM and the Executive Committee felt that 800 members in a relatively small area had more influence than might be the case if the area was expanded.

It was suggested that some funds could be used for publicity. Furthermore, the lack of articles in the local paper was mentioned. Bob Wiltshire called for a publicity officer and events officer who could help in these aspects.

A member emphasised the need to look after trees after they had been planted to ensure they were not trampled or strangled by brambles. Bob Wiltshire reassured him that this would be done. David Hatch introduced himself, and gave further reassurances.

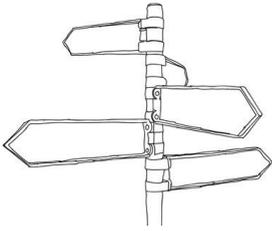
It was asked why OVA events were not held in Colaton Raleigh. The response was that this had been tried in the past but they were not well attended, and there is a problem with parking. Ideas for contacts in the area were suggested.

There was a suggestion to try involving young people, who are interested in environmental matters, and possibly have a youth group.

Bob Wiltshire thanked the audience for these contributions and said that the Executive Committee will discuss them.

8. Date of next AGM

Thursday 9th May 2019 at Newton Poppleford Playing Fields Pavilion.



A Walk for Everyone – Spring Programme 2019

Welcome to our programme of walks for Spring and early Summer. There are plenty of walks to entice you, with old favourites and some new places to explore.

Perhaps you fancy a town trail in Topsham, a tree trail in Sidmouth or to go further afield to Dartmoor, or maybe you would rather stay close to home and wander round the heaths or along the Otter. Have a good browse and see what appeals to you – if you haven't walked with us before why not take the plunge and join us, we are a friendly bunch! As always we have shorter walks of 4-6 miles, and more challenging whole day walks of 7+ miles.

This is a good place to say “thank you” to the walk leaders for their time and dedication. In addition to leading the walk on the day, they will have done their preparations, looking at maps and timetables, reconnoitred the walk at least once to check everything, and written it all up for the programme.

For our staged walk for 2019 we have picked, appropriately for the OVA's 40th year, the River Otter Source to Mouth. The river's source is in the Blackdown Hills, near Churchinford, and the walk follows its course, mostly on little lanes and tracks, occasionally alongside the river, through Upton, past Honiton, through Ottery St Mary to Newton Poppleford and more familiar ground down to the sea at Budleigh.

We have planned the walk in 4 stages, taking advantage of buses to minimise “car shuttling”. We were constrained for the first 2 stages as we are using a bus service which runs twice a week, on Monday and Thursday! The stages are:

Stage 1: Monday, 8th July –

Churchinford to Upton, taking in Otterhead Lakes, about 9.5 miles

Stage 2: Monday, 22nd July–

Upton to Honiton (Weston), about 9 miles

Stage 3: Saturday, 10th August –

Honiton (Weston) to Newton Poppleford, about 10 miles

Stage 4: Saturday, 31st August –

Newton Poppleford to Budleigh Salterton, about 6 miles

Please join us – whether for all the stages, some of them, or just the final stroll along the river to the sea – the details are given in the programme.

Our walks are free, open to everyone, and there is no need to book (unless the walk description says otherwise) – just turn up on the day at the appropriate time and place. Please read the walk descriptions carefully, so you arrive prepared – perhaps there is advice about footwear, or that a picnic is needed. If you have any questions the walk leaders are always happy to be contacted, and you can check our website for last minute changes, especially if public transport is involved.

We look forward to seeing you on a walk somewhere soon!

Penny Kurowski

Events Programme – April to July 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.**

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 Popleford Rec CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) at 9.15am to share cars or meet at the start point.

“A Town and Country Walk”

Start: Parke National Trust Car Park (OL 28 /OS 110, 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. 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 - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Church Street CP, Sidford (OS 115, SY 135 900), Free street parking also available nearby. 6½ miles, 3½ 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

Wednesday 1st May - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Colaton Raleigh, the Otter Inn (OS 115, SY 077 873), 6 miles, 3 hours

“Hawkerland before Lunch”

An ‘easy’ walk north, briefly by the River Otter turning west along green lanes, agricultural tracks and footpaths via Monkey Lane to cross the Hawkerland Valley, before returning to Colaton Raleigh and lunch at the Otter Inn.

Walk Leader: Mike Paddison 01395 446550.

Tuesday May 7th - 11.00am - WALK

“Sidmouth Tree Trail & Salcombe Regis Walking Trail”

Catch 157 Bus (Budleigh Salterton 10.13) arriving at Sidmouth Triangle for an 11am start, 7 miles

Gentle but undulating and sustained walk along these two trails spotting the many interesting trees. About 3 to 4 hrs with retail therapy opportunities at the end. Please bring packed lunch for cliff top stop, camera (bottle of wine for best photo!!) and your well-thumbed copy of the I-spy book of British trees or equivalent. There will probably be an extension up Peak Hill for keen walkers if the weather is fine.

Walk Leader: Iain Ure & Dee Woods, 01395 568822/07789 334469

Saturday, 11th May - WALK - 10.30am - WALK

Start: Wheathill Plantation car park on East Budleigh Common (OS 115, SY 040 848) 8 miles, 4 hours

“Down to the River Otter and back”

Taking in Hayes Lane, East Budleigh, River Otter, Kersbrook and Shortwood Common. We will stop for a picnic lunch.

Walk Leader: Sarah Westacott, 01395 277644

Thursday, 16th May 10.00am - WALK

Start: Fernworthy Reservoir CP (OL 28, SX 669 839), 6 miles, 3 hours.

“Butterfly Heaven and Horsefly Hell!”

For car-sharing, we will meet at Newton Poppleford Rec CP (OS 115, SY 088 899) leaving promptly at 9.00am. Lots of variety on this walk - woodland, open moor and delightful lakeside meadows, where the butterflies are abundant and the horse flies can be equally so. We walk past the dam and up onto moorland past Thornworthy Tor (424m) towards Shovel Down and turn to reach the North Teign

River, following it until entering Fernworthy Forest. We then stroll around the reservoir and have a picnic lunch beside the water. There will be an optional extension of 4 miles (weather permitting) in the afternoon that takes in a short section of the Two Moors Way.

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway, 01395 488739/ 07887 936280

Wednesday, 22nd May - 1.15pm - WALK

Meet at Darts Farm (OS SX 977 883) at 1.15pm, 4 hours including refreshments/tour of museum. 3 miles plus town tour.

Number 57 bus from Exmouth to Darts Farm, four buses an hour from the Parade or park considerately at Darts Farm.

“An afternoon tour of Topsham”

A short walk into Topsham from the starting point, followed by a 90 minute walking tour of this old port with a Topsham Society guide, taking in all the principal historical areas of the town and ending in the Strand. Afterwards, an optional visit/afternoon tea at Topsham Museum, before returning to Darts Farm by a different route.

Booking essential **by Wednesday 15th May** as numbers are limited. Small individual donations to Topsham Society are required. For more details/to book Tel: 01392 444290 or Email: David.hatch@terebellum.co.uk. Only assistance dogs permitted.

Saturday, 25th May - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Woodbury Castle main car park (OS 115, SY 032 874), 5 miles, 3 hours

“Colaton Raleigh Common”

Walk Leader: Heather Fereday, 01395 446796/07484 62731

Thursday, 30th May – 7.00pm – EVENING WALK

Start: Sidbury Village CP (OS 115, SY 139 918) - 5½ miles, 2½ hours

“A balmy spring evening walk”

Hills around Sidbury via Buckton and Lower Sweetcombe Farms. Then East Devon Way and a steep descent through Buckley Plantation to welcome refreshments at the conclusion.

Walk Leader, Ted Swan, 01395 567450

Monday, 3rd June - 10.30am - WALK

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

“Under the Viaduct”

Start: Okehampton YHA car park (OL 28, SX 593 944) 6.5 - 7miles, around 3½ hours
A stunning walk in clear weather. We start with a steep climb out of Okehampton which soon takes us up onto the rugged scenery of the fringes of Dartmoor with views of the 2 highest points Yes Tor and High Willhays. Descending around the Meldon Quarry we pass the remains of a Copper Mine and walk alongside a river where we have a picnic lunch. We then return to Okehampton passing underneath the striking Meldon Viaduct and along the West Devon Way with glimpses of the nearby Castle. We end the walk with a climb back out of Okehampton with the option of tea in the station tearooms.

Walk Leader: Stella French, 01395 445724 / 07896 088858

Friday, 7th June - 11.30am – RESCHEDULED WALK

Travel to the start by the No 39 bus from Exeter Bus Station (Stand No 3), dep 10.30am, arr Heathfield, Battle Road (OS 110, SX 828 763) at 11.24am

“Revised Templar Way Stage 2”

The second stage is 10 miles between Heathfield and Teignmouth via Newton Abbot Quay. A picnic lunch opportunity at Newton Abbot Quay will be followed by tea at Combe Cellars before catching the Shaldon ferry (£1.60) across the estuary to New Quay in Teignmouth. The route is relatively flat and definitely downhill all the way!

Return travel by train dep Teignmouth 17:22/17.57, arr Exmouth 18:27/18.54 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.

Alternatively the No2 bus dep Teignmouth Triangle (W H Smiths) 17:11/17:50, arr Exeter Bus Station at 18:21/18:54 respectively.

Please see OVA website for any updates to travel times.

Walk Leader: Mike Paddison, 01395 446550/07909 606660

Tuesday, 11th June - 10.00am - WALK

Start at Newton Poppleford Rec CP (OS SY 088 899) at 9.15am to car share or meet at the start point.

Start: at the Golden Hind Pub in Musbury (EX13 8AU),(OS 115, SY 272 946). Car parking here may be limited so car sharing is advised. 6 miles, 3 hours.

“Musbury Castle Walk”

Much of the walk is on the East Devon Way and has really spectacular views (on a clear day). There are 8 stiles and a couple of fairly stiff climbs, one right at the start. Optional lunch afterwards at the Golden Hind in Musbury.

Walk Leaders: Paul & Fran Dike, 01297 20695/07977 057546

Friday, 14th June - 10.30am - WALK

Meet: Newton Poppleford Rec CP (OS 115 SY 088 899) at 9.45am to share cars or meet at the start point.

“There and back by the Teign”

Start: Castle Drogo NT CP (OS OL28 725 904) at 10.30am, free for NT members, 9 miles, 4½ hours.

Starting at Castle Drogo, we walk down to the beautiful Teign Valley and proceed along the river passing several old mills and leats and over the ancient Chagford Bridge. We then walk up a quiet lane to the historic Stannary town of Chagford for our picnic lunch. We then retrace our steps to Castle Drogo. The bad news is there is a sharp climb at the end of the walk; the good news is that the Castle Drogo cafe does a fair cream tea!

Walk leaders: David and Rosie Conner, 07831 406959

Wednesday, 19th June - 10.15am - WALK

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

“A Mid Devon Walk”

Start: Uploman Cross (OS 128, ST 016 151). Roadside parking 5 miles, 2½ hours.

A walk on tracks, fields and quiet country lanes with views across Tiverton and the surrounding countryside. There are two fords to cross but not very deep, it can be muddy after heavy rain. Optional lunch at the Redwoods Inn afterwards.

Walk Leader: Graham Knapton, 01395 445872

Friday, 28th June- 10.00am - WALK

Start: Crook Plantation (OS 115, SY 057 866) 6 miles, 3 hours

“Canterbury Green, Stoneyford and Stowford”

Have you been on the pilgrimage to Canterbury Green? Can you tell Stoneyford from Stowford? A refreshing walk visiting parts of the Common other walks don't reach.

Walk Leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

Saturday, 6th July - WALK - details to follow by email at a later date

Walk to celebrate National Meadows Day, Charmouth & Hogchester

Walk Leader: Vivien Insull, 01404 811267

Monday, 8 July - 10.30am - WALK

Meet at the Sidmouth Arms, Upottery (OS 115 ST 203 076) to catch the **10.14am** No 387 bus to Churchinford, arriving 10.29am.

Start at Churchinford, (OS 128 ST 213 126), 9½ miles

“Otter Source to Mouth Stage 1 – Churchinford to Upottery”

From Churchinford we walk along a lane and through fields to Otterford, crossing the infant River Otter (the source is a mile or so further north, on private land). We then walk into Otterhead Estate past the lakes, and through unspoilt farmland and quiet lanes and tracks, along the Otter Valley to Upottery. The Sidmouth Arms should be open for post-walk refreshments. Please bring a picnic.

It would be helpful if you would let us know you are coming on the walk. We will then try to arrange car-sharing/lifts to Upottery so we don't take up too much room in the pub car park.

In any case, please check the OVA website in case the bus time changes!

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

Wednesday, 17th July - 10.00am - WALK

Start: Sidbury CP, (OS 115 SY 139 918), 400m ascent, 8 miles, 4 hours.

“Steep and Deep in the Sid Valley”

This walk starts and ends on some of the highest sections of the East Devon Way, promising good views on a clear day. We begin with a wander through the pretty village of Sidbury, followed by a gradual climb up to White Cross overlooking the Otter Valley. Then we go along the ridge to Fire Beacon Hill and down past Burscombe Farm to Sidford. A fairly steep ascent to the top of Buckton Hill is followed by a decidedly steep descent back into Sidbury, hopefully in time for a well-earned drink in the Red Lion. Bring a picnic lunch.

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway, 01395 488739/ 07887 936280

Monday, 22nd July - 10.15am - WALK

Meet at Heathpark, Honiton (park at Homebase, please use lower section of car park so as not to affect trade), (OS115 ST 149 000) to catch the **9.56am** No 387 bus to Upottery, arriving 10.14am.

Start at Sidmouth Arms, Upottery (OS 115 ST 203 076) 9 miles

“Otter Source to Mouth Stage 2– Upottery to Weston”

From Upottery we follow the road to Rawridge, cross the River Otter then walk along the hillside above the river, skirting Dumpsdon Hill and visiting small hamlets before finally arriving at Weston where we hope the Otter Inn, beside the River Otter, will be open for refreshments. It is then less than a mile back to our cars. Please bring a picnic.

It would be helpful if you let us know you are coming on the walk. We will

then try to arrange car-sharing/lifts to Honiton so we don't take up too much room in the Homebase car park.

In any case, please check the OVA website in case the bus time changes!

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

Tuesday, 30th July - 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.

“Walk around Uplyme”

Start: Uplyme village hall overflow CP, £2 donation to the village hall (SY 323 934), 5 miles, 2½ hours

The walk takes in the East Devon Way, Mill Lane, Rhode Hill, Hodder Corner, Carswell Bottom, Carswell Farm, leisurely but some hills.

Walk Leader: Carole Steen, 01392 873881

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.

A Teign Gorge Classic – 7th February

This proved to be a perfect walk for a winter morning, despite the wind and rain – and only 40 minutes drive away. The route-finding is easy so I can recommend it if you fancy a change from our local muddy walks.

We met near the Fingle Bridge Inn and walked up the river Teign on a dryish though rough path upstream, sheltered by the woods. The Teign was a lovely companion as it tumbled along, and the lush moss and lichens on the trees and rocks made up for the lack of leaves on the trees. We marvelled at the restored hydro turbine which was restored by the National Trust in 2017. Here is its story (with thanks to the National Trust website):

“The story of hydroelectric power at Castle Drogo began in 1916. At the same time as Castle Drogo was being built Julius Drewe wrote to Gilbert Gilkes and Co. (a well-established engineering company specialising in hydro-electricity generation) to enquire whether it was possible on the river Teign.

Work didn't actually start until 1927, Sir Edwin Lutyens designed the building

and Gilbert Gilkes and Co. installed 2 turbines. By March 1929 the turbines were producing electricity which supplied the castle. There were 332 electrical plug sockets installed throughout the castle to power all of the gadgets in Julius Drewe's thoroughly modern home.

The majority of the original infrastructure was found to be sound and reusable. The 2 Francis turbines were sensitively restored and the concrete pipe which takes the water from the weir to the turbine house was still in good condition. As well as restoration, the project also required the installation of new elements, including a state of the art intake screening system, which will ensure that fish and eels cannot enter the turbine system. A new cable was also installed to bring the power directly to the visitor centre.

The turbine house was commissioned in late October 2017 and has been generating electricity ever since, as long as there is sufficient water in the river Teign. The electricity is used by the visitor centre and any excess is used to heat one of the boilers in the biomass house so there is no waste."



From the turbine it was a short walk to the weir and footbridge where we saw a dipper, the only bird on the fast flowing river that morning. Then without crossing the river we headed away from the river, uphill, to the famous "Hunter's Path". It is a steep climb up, but worth it as the views from the path across the Teign Gorge are beautiful, as are those towards Chagford with Dartmoor beyond.

We followed the Hunters Path with Castle Drogo towering above us, and gradually descended back to the Fingle Bridge Inn for a well-earned lunch. Thanks to Chris and Erica for this gem of a walk!

Penny Kurowski

A winter's stroll around Colyton – 15th February

Today's promise of a fine dry day encouraged 16 of us to join Stella on a delightful walk along part of the River Coly and the Umborne Brook. We started in Colyton, a town once dubbed "the most rebellious town in Devon" owing to the town's

support of Parliament in the Civil War in 1643 and the number of inhabitants who joined the Monmouth rebellion in 1685.



Colyton still has its tannery which is the only oak bark tannery in the UK which we passed as we walked along the River Coly. This forms part of the East Devon Way and a little further along we were greeted by a colourful display of snowdrops, some crocus flowers, the first daffodils and some pretty catkins.

Stella promised us some mud on the walk but we all managed to stay upright. We had a lovely coffee stop after climbing a gentle hill with enticing views of the surrounding countryside and interesting historic town. The path along Watery Lane lived up to its watery name and the many meadows we crossed were soaking up the recent rain. The flat bottomed flood plain of the Coly and Umborne are subject to regular flooding and constant movement of the river course. The land has traditionally been used as meadows and pastures for dairy and beef cattle and sheep. On the return leg, we crossed the River Umborne several times via wooden bridges and caught glimpses of Shute House.



Thank you Stella for an enjoyable walk today in glorious sunshine in an area we should re-visit to explore further.

Heather Fereday

Templer Way Stage 1 – 27th February

When the leaders planned this walk months ago I suspect they imagined it might be cold or even snowing on Dartmoor in February. But it was the hottest February on record for the UK and a wonderful sunny, bright day for walking.

After alighting from taxis at Haytor Visitor Centre, we took a track in a north easterly direction to join the Granite Tramway. The tramway is impressive and was visible for most of our route. Constructed in 1820 to transport stone from Haytor to the Stover Canal (and thence to the coast at Teignmouth), it is shaped to guide the wheels of horse-drawn wagons and the “point tongues” were clearly visible.



Although there was high demand for Dartmoor granite for public buildings and bridges at that time, the tramway had to close in 1858 when they could no longer compete with the price of cheaper stone from Cornwall.

For your information, I found this description of the opening of the tramway, such a change from contemporary ones – *“On Saturday Mr. Templer, of Stover House, gave a grand fete champetre on Haytor Down, on the completion of the granite rail road. The company assembled at its foot on Bovey Heathfield, and in procession passed over it to the rock. A long string of carriages, filled with elegant and beautiful females, multitudes of horsemen, workmen on foot, the wagons covered with laurels and waving streamers, formed in their windings through the valley, an attractive scene to spectators on the adjacent hill. Old Haytor seemed alive: its sides were lined with groups of persons, and on its top a proud flag fluttered in the wind.”*

As we left Haytor behind the sky was clear blue and the only sound came from the song of the skylarks. A haze of smoke on the horizon turned out to be a controlled burning of gorse (swaying) but luckily the wind was in the opposite direction. Taking grassy footpaths and skirting Yarner Wood we saw several butterflies including yellow Brimstones. We descended towards Bovey Tracey, still following the tramway towards some ponds, where we stopped for a quick lunch. We were joined by two curious swans who obviously wanted to share our sandwiches! Our leaders had timed the walk perfectly to catch the bus back to Exeter and we emerged from the path at Heathfield with 15 minutes to spare.

This walk had been meticulously planned and was tremendously enjoyable and interesting. Thank you Mike and Paula.

Rosemary Hatch

Branscombe to Beer – 1st March

It was rather cloudy as we all met up in the car park at Branscombe Mouth. We were told we would be walking along the Hooken Undercliff path, an area where in 1790 a large portion of the chalk cliffs fell away separating a 10 acre piece of land, and to look out for a peregrine falcon as we walked east along the path.



We set off towards the small collection of mobile homes nestled close against the cliffs. Then it was into the undercliff area with its mix of exposed cliff faces and surrounding woodland. Birds were flying above us but no peregrine falcon. Then upwards towards an area where a chalk pinnacle could be seen and there it was, the peregrine falcon perched right on the top.

After enjoying this spectacle we continued climbing via a steep set of steps to the top of East Cliff. Here we enjoyed the spectacular views to the west and could see the sun breaking through over the cliffs of Peak Hill and beyond, hopefully heading our way. We wandered around the cliff top taking in the views in both directions before turning back past the old Coastguard Lookout. The sun came out as we stopped to admire the view as we started the descent back to Branscombe.

From Branscombe we took the coast path to the west climbing up West Cliff and stopping to peek at the sheer drop to the beach below. A footpath into the woods brought us back down into Branscombe by St Winifred's church. It is one of the oldest parish churches in Devon founded in 995 probably on Saxon foundations and with a 12th century square Norman tower. We then passed the The Forge and St Branoc's Well before taking the footpath through the valley back towards the beach and an enjoyable lunch in the Sea Shanty.

Thank you Rosemary and David for taking us on an invigorating walk with such beautiful views.

Stella French

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

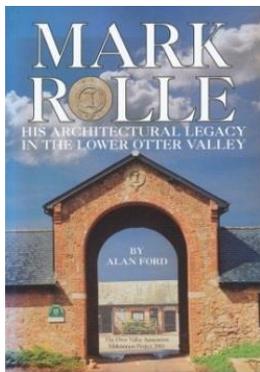
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Publicity Secretary	<i>vacancy</i>	

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Publications: Visit www.ova.org.uk or email info@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 19th century.

£4.95 from Budleigh Salterton Tourist Information Centre

Or visit www.ova.org.uk



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 Budleigh Salterton Tourist Information Centre

Or visit www.ova.org.uk

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.