

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the March email update to all OVA members. This email comprises two parts – a quick one-page overview, and then more detailed information on each point for reading at your leisure. We appreciate that a lot of information is being shared, and you may not read every item in detail, but we hope that this shows the growing momentum of activities and programs that the OVA is undertaking. If you would like to help and volunteer for any of these it would be lovely to speak with you. Do let us know.



This email update contains the following items:

#### **Bequest from the estate of Anita Jennings**

- The OVA has received a significant bequest from the estate of the late Anita Jennings – founder of the OVA. The trustees are reviewing this and will be sharing more information over time.

#### **Expanding the OVA into Ottery St Mary**

- The OVA is delighted to announce the formation of a new town group for Ottery St Mary.

#### **Help: Looking for volunteers - Village Reps and Events**

- We are still looking for additional volunteers to help the OVA. Specifically, two village reps (Budleigh Salterton & Tipton St. John) plus a natural environment coordinator plus an event's organizer. Can you help?

#### **OVA Talks:**

- We hosted our last talk of the season earlier this week - local naturalist David R. White talking about local wildlife. We are now busy planning our next season. If you have any suggestions – please do let us know!

#### **OVA Walks:**

- We have a great line-up of weekly walks scheduled through to the end of April. Details below – everyone is welcome.
- The new "Otter Valley Walking Companion" walks book is nearer completion. We hope to have it ready by the AGM in June. Jam-packed full of maps, commentary & pictures for 14 brilliant walks chosen by our amazing walks team.

#### **OVA Built Environment:**

- The OVA provided a detailed update into the East Devon Local Plan. This is available on the OVA web. The deadline for submissions is March 31<sup>st</sup>. Please do so if you can – your voice is important. Feel free to re-use any aspects of this for your own input.

#### **OVA Water Quality Group:**

- We were delighted to accept a donation from Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust to cover the cost of our initial investment in multiple function testing kits. We have now purchased these and have the first of our testing sessions happening on Saturday. Read more below.

#### **OVA Flora, Fauna & Fungi Group:**

- We are continuing to document the local flora, fauna and fungi of the Otter Valley on the OVA web. Check it out! We are looking to build out a new children's section on the web and working with local schools to showcase the variety of wildlife on our doorstep. Read more about this important initiative below.

#### **Pet Flea Products**

- Pet flea products continue to be a major concern for bees and aquatic life. Please read why below, and consider what you can do to help protect our wildlife

#### **OVA History Update:**

- Two Blue Plaque ceremonies happened recently in our valley - Robert Warrington, founder of the Chemistry Association setup 185 years ago, and Margaret Joan Bannister, teacher. Read more about these below.

#### **OVA Website & Social media update:**

- We continue to update the OVA website with new sections and additions. Please do keep it bookmarked ([www.oval.org.uk](http://www.oval.org.uk)).
- We now have 898 members on our Facebook group. Here you will find regular updates from the OVA, as well as amazing photographs, village updates and community programs across the valley. Please do login to Facebook and engage, or simply view what is going on.
- We have also created an Instagram page for pictures.

#### **Dates for your diaries**

- The Otter Valley Association AGM will be taking place on 17<sup>th</sup> June. Budleigh Salterton have a street party to celebrate VE day, while the famous Scarecrow festival is returning to East Budleigh. Check them out now!

==== End of Email Summary (March 2025) ====

## 1. Bequest from the estate of Anita Jennings

The OVA has recently received a substantial bequest from the estate of Anita Jennings. This sum of money is roughly equivalent to all of the membership subscriptions the OVA has received in its existence over the past 46 years.

Many of you will know that Anita Jennings was the founding force behind the creation of the OVA in 1979. She had discussed a planning application that would replace the Church Institute behind the Public Hall with new flats, with other like-minded people. This group then arranged a public meeting to 'lay the foundation for a civic society'. The result was the Otter Valley Association. Anita Jennings held various roles within the OVA for many years and always maintained a great interest in planning matters, as some of the files in the Fairlynch Museum testify.

The OVA trustees have decided to place this legacy in a Charity Aid Foundation Bank investment fund that will provide income and capital growth. As we start to receive income, we will look for opportunities to use this money for our aim of protecting and supporting the lower Otter valley and in a manner that is a fitting tribute to the memory of Anita Jennings. The growth of the capital invested will provide for the long-term future of the association.

## 2. Expanding the OVA into Ottery St Mary

We are delighted to announce the expansion of the OVA into Ottery St Mary. This has come about as a result of being approached by a very dynamic group of volunteers who are interested in helping drive the water quality of the river Otter, but are also interested in many other ways of enhancing and supporting the environment in and around Ottery St Mary. You will hear more from this group over time – especially on Facebook, and in Ottery St Mary itself. Please join us all in welcoming this group to the OVA.

If you know of friends or family living in Ottery St Mary – please do let them know and invite them to join the OVA.

## 3. Looking for Volunteers - Village Reps & Events

We are still looking for additional volunteers to help the OVA. Specifically, two village reps, an Events organizer, and a Natural Environment co-ordinator. Can you help?


Here are our current village representatives:

- Budleigh Salterton: **(position open for a new volunteer)**
- East Budleigh: Olly Watts (07837 861354)
- Colaton Raleigh: Michaela Manning (07718 287480)
- Otterton: Dee Woods (01395 568822 ) and Geoff Porter (01395 567055)
- Ottery St. Mary: Denise Melhuish (07874 656806)
- Newton Poppleford: Ted Swan (07848 852463)
- Tipton St John: **(position open for a new volunteer)**

## 4. OVA Talks:

We have now completed all of our winter talks. Thankyou everyone for being so supportive – we have enjoyed full houses regularly! Our last talk was earlier this week when we hosted David R. White, local naturalist. Here is a brief write-up for those who were unable to attend.

**Otter Valley Association Talk**



### Wildlife

### Across the Otter Valley

(by)  
**David R. White**  
(when)  
**7pm on 26<sup>th</sup> March**  
(where)  
**Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton**

David presented to a packed full house on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March. His presentation provided an incredible glimpse into the wild life that one can see when enjoying the Pebblebed heaths, rivers or new Nature reserve.

My big takeaway is that there is an amazing variety of wildlife to be seen - but one has to observe - and that's the difficult part!

He started by looking at the water coming in and out of the nature reserve by the Elizabeth bridge – varying from low tides to high spring tide flooding. The volume of water moving in

and out of the reserve is incredible and as David highlighted “the wildlife had no idea that this was about to happen”. Clearly the channels are deepening and widening, while the nature reserve is receiving large amount of salt water. This means that the wildlife is changing and adapting.











David shared stories and insights about animal behaviour – explaining, for example, why observing the Ospreys is probably easier in the autumn than the spring (because they are at the start of their winter migration as opposed to almost at the end of their spring migration).

His stories of the beavers and their kits were delightful – particularly when talking about the five kits one year being fed by a mother with just four teats ... one ending up as the runt of the litter and then continuing to be fed the following year. Incredible stories supported by incredible pictures.

The fish stock in the river and nature reserve clearly supports a growing population of birdlife. I for one had no idea that crows would feed so voraciously on small fish, or that the Curlews & gulls take crabs, or that the kingfisher takes shrimps. I was also

surprised to hear that eels are thriving in the river – witnessed by a cormorant catching and swallowing an eel that must have been 2 or 3 feet long!

Another surprise was to hear that our area is one of the best places to view butterflies. David shared some of the butterflies that are already beginning to be observed across the heaths. So do keep a keen eye out for them - and please do share what you see with us on Facebook or by emailing us.

			
<i>Erosion of the banks leading up to Elizabeth bridge</i>	<i>Crow with a mouthful of fish!</i>	<i>Cormorant grappling with a large eel</i>	<i>Beaver with two kits – large and very small</i>
			
<i>Oh no! A dog chasing a swan across the Nature reserve</i>	<i>Two symmetrical common blue butterflies on a seed-head</i>	<i>Poisonous noble false widow spider – resident of East Budleigh</i>	<i>Male beautiful demoiselle displaying – our largest damselfly</i>

David also talked a little about the growth in visitors to the nature reserve. While nature is there for all to see, he drew gasps of astonishment from the audience when he showed a couple of pictures of dogs chasing a swan – which he observed just last week. As David mentioned, while this did no specific harm last week, we are entering the breeding season and there will be ground-breeding birds, cygnets and many other young all around the reserve – so please do keep your dogs on leads and don't let them run loose.

David's talk was of wildlife that he has observed in our valley - wildlife that we all have the opportunity to see. But it requires great patience and observation to spot those Otters in the bushes, or those butterflies in the brush. As an example of patience, David showed an incredible picture of two butterflies facing each other on a single flower stem – and mentioned it had taken over an hour watching them to get that perfect picture. Now THAT is professionalism!

It was very sad to have to stop the presentation after 75 minutes – one story we did miss is about the most poisonous UK spider that happens to live in East Budleigh – so do watch out !

It was a fitting end to our season of talks, and we look forward to sharing the schedule for next year – which is already well developed and almost full.

You can see many of the photographs that David has taken, as well as many others from other locals, on the OVA website. Here we are trying to build an amazing showcase of the wildlife that you can see when walking the villages, towns, heathlands, rivers and nature reserve here in the Otter valley. Please do use it, share it, and let us know what you think.

Thankyou David for a wonderful and well received talk.

## 5. OVA Walks Update: Weekly walks

We have some incredible walks scheduled through to the end of April. Why not come out and enjoy the scenery, meet friends and learn about our local surroundings? Everyone is welcome.

Please always check the OVA website for last minute updates, cancellations or changes – one can never be sure what weather awaits us next week, let alone next month!

- **Tue 08 April: 'Otterton - Colaton - Yettington Circuit' – 10.00am – 9 miles. 5 hrs.**
- **Thu 10 April: 'A historical stroll around Newton Poppleford' – 10.00am – 1.5 miles. 2 hrs.**
- **Tue 15 April: 'A Walk Around Commons and Plantations' – 10.00am – 8.5 miles. 4.5 hrs.**
- **Tue 22 April: 'Otter to Sea' – 10.00am – 5.5 miles. 3 hrs.**
- **Tue 29 April: 'Belstone Cleave and some moor' – 10.00am – 8 miles. 5 hrs (Booking required)**
- **Sat 03 May: 'Bystock Discovered' - 10:00am – 5 miles.**

We have been approached by a number of people asking if we do shorter walks, or more nature walks. To cater for this, we have been talking to the team at Seachange who offer regular shorter walks. You can find out more information about Seachange walks on their web [ [here](#) ].

We also work very closely with the team over at Pebblebed Heaths. They also do regular ranger walks. Again, you can find more information about their walks on their web [ [here](#) ].

## 6. OVA Built Environment

The constitution of the Otter Valley Association is to help support and protect the Lower Otter Valley. One of the focus areas we use to contribute to this is what is called “the Built Environment”. This relates to contributing to both strategic as well as local plans across the parishes within the Otter Valley area. You can find a copy of all comments made by the OVA towards both strategic and local planning applications on the OVA web [ [here](#) ].

There are some very significant plans out for consultation at the moment and we would encourage everyone to spend a few minutes to review these and determine if you want to make comment:

### East Devon Local Plan:

EDDC have advised that consultation on the East Devon Local Plan: Publication Plan (Regulation 19) is now live. Consultation closes at 9:00am on Monday 31 March 2025 and comments should be submitted by the date/time. East Devon District Council is intending to submit the East Devon Local Plan to the Secretary of State in Autumn 2025 for examination.

The East Devon Local Plan is the local plan for land within the East Devon District Council administrative boundary for the period to 2042, though noting policy reference is made to development beyond this date. The Local Plan allocates sites for development for new homes, employment and other uses and contains policies for the determination of planning applications.

- For more information on this current stage of plan making and to find out how to make comments or submit representations see: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/.../regulation-19-local-plan.../>
- EDDC particularly encourage representations to be submitted through their online consultation portal: <https://eastdevonlocalplanreg19.commonplace.is>
- You can find out more about the new local plan in general by visiting this page: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/.../emerging-local-plan-2020-2042/>

Here, amongst other matters, you will find links to background report and evidence papers and links to past stages of plan making.



## OVA Submission to the East Devon Plan:

The OVA has submitted a document to the Plan. You can see the full submission on the OVA web [ [here](#) ]. Two high level issues that the OVA is very concerned about:

1. The current dire sewage situation in the River Otter catchment. Building an additional 1,642 homes will only make the situation much worse. It is our understanding that:
  - In 2024 SWW discharged untreated sewage of Otter Head over 10,000 times (average 30 times a day) - main sewer remains unrepaired
  - 1,320 discharges recorded in January 2025 alone
  - In 2024 SWW discharged almost 10,000 hours of untreated sewage into the River Otter (3 x total sewage pumped into Exmouth Bay)
  - SWW solution is to increase pumping capacity throughout the Exmouth/Budleigh system so more sewage is transported to Maer Lane SWT when it rains

This is the reason why the Middle and Lower River Otter is in the worst 20% ecologically of all the UK's river systems, according to the EA, with significant impacts on plants, wildlife and fish.

We are very concerned that the lack of capacity of sewage treatment works along the Otter has not been adequately taken in consideration in respect of the housing allocations for the Otter catchment area. Is the council aware of the sewage facilities that are currently exceeding their capacity and breaching their over flow limits? Is the Council liaising with SWW to ensure that steps are being taken to upgrade these inadequate facilities before new household are added to the system? How many more households' waste can each of the current facilities safely process? It is our view that no new development should be approved without this crucial aspect being fully considered and adequately addressed. All the relevant assessments should be made available to the public.

We also believe that the nutrient neutrality requirement of the river Axe should be extended to encompass all of East Devon's rivers and water bodies.

2. In relation to the very large housing allocations on the western side of Exmouth, (Exmo 17 and 20) the OVA are very concerned about the lack of infrastructure and necessary support facilities, such as medical, dental, social, educational and highway capacity to accommodate the large increase in population arising from 1,110 new homes in this area. These developments will be closer to Budleigh Salterton than Exmouth town centre, so full consideration to the potential and likely significant impacts on this small settlement must be undertaken, with full public discussion and consultation.

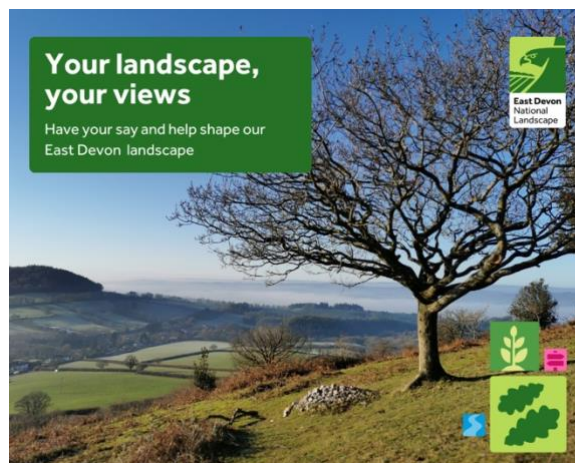
## East Devon National Landscape (EDNL):

### **Consultation closes on April 18<sup>th</sup>**

The Former AONB (which most people were familiar with) last year became the EDNL with mostly new staff. They have spent the time since preparing their Management Plan, in consultation with those in the partnership, which includes the OVA, and have now produced their draft for publication.

This plan is designed to help protect nature, tackle climate change, improve public access, and celebrate our heritage.

Everyone has the opportunity to comment on these plans, to share what you love about this landscape, what you think needs protecting, and how we can continue to support nature, heritage, and access for everyone. To do so, use this [ [link](#) ].



## **7. OVA Water Quality Group Update**

We were delighted to receive a grant from Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust to cover the cost of our first set of testing equipment. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the trustees for their kind generosity in helping us drive this important initiative forwards.

The water quality group has now been meeting since July 2024, and we have been focussing on how we can improve the poor quality of the river Otter. Our overall aim is that the middle and lower areas of the Otter move from poor ecological status to moderate or good.

Our focus covers several areas:

- We are pleased to be launching our systematic water testing programme. We have recruited 40 volunteers and will be sampling at 12 locations on the river every 2 weeks. We are testing temperature, total dissolved solids, dissolved oxygen, phosphate, ammonia and turbidity. Results will be posted on the water quality group pages of the website. Our volunteer training sessions are on March 29th and April 19th. The first tests will be done in April 2025. Many thanks to all those who have signed up.
- We hope to expand our testing to include invertebrate sampling and continuous water quality measurements using Sonde devices in due course.
- Alongside the testing we continue to discuss water quality with local MPs and councillors. We are liaising with environment groups working further up the catchment and looking at strategies to reduce river pollution.
- Recently we have discussed dog flea treatments, especially imidacloprid and fipronil. These are extremely toxic to river life in very small quantities. Insect larvae such as mayflies and dragonflies are particularly vulnerable, and these are crucial to the ecology of the whole river. If you own a dog, please consider if you can reduce the use of these chemicals and not let your dog into the river for 3-4 days after applying flea treatments.

You can find all the latest information about this, including published articles, on the OVA Web [ [here](#) ].

## 8. OVA Flora, Fauna & Fungi Group Update

We had a great meeting at the Kings Arms in Otterton. Having reviewed the minutes from our last meeting, a round-robin discussion highlighted a few interesting topics (OVA awareness, web progressing nicely, cross-over with the water quality group, engagement in events). We agreed the following:

### 1. Our Audience:

- General Public (local people AND visitors to the area). We would like the web to be a resource for anyone to learn more about the local ecology of the Otter Valley.
- Anyone involved in the role of conservation near the river Otter.
- School, teachers and their importance in helping children learn about ecology.
- Naturalists who may know a lot about specific species.

### 2. Awareness:

- We are looking at ways to raise the awareness of the OVA across the valley. Please do share information with your friends, neighbours and others.
- We are looking at participating in more events to showcase the work that the OVA is doing across its different working groups. If you know of any events that you think we could attend, please do let us know. Please also let us know if you are able to help volunteer for us at such events alongside others.

### 3. Website & Social Media:

- We will continue to update the web with photographs gathered from Facebook and members. Of particular interest is to arrange things according to themes – have you seen, for example, the pictures of “Raptor on the Otter Valley”, or “Birds near water”?
- We are looking at how to build out a section for younger people. We have some members who are keen to help in this area – let us know if you have children or family members who would be interested in helping us.
- We are also looking at how to make the web more interactive. For example:
  - ⇒ Focus on themes such as Rivers, Birds, Climate change.
  - ⇒ Identify simple competitions to add ideas and see if we can gain traction with them.

### 4. Climate Change:

- Can we implement an audit of nature and the biodiversity along the catchment?
- Can we be a “showcase for dealing with the impact of climate change”?
- Can we focus on “Nature Change Management” instead of “Nature Conservation”?

### 5. School Engagement

- We want to engage with our local schools to investigate ways in which we can assist teachers in furthering ecology within the National curriculum.
- We are working with Pebblebed Heaths to fund transport from local schools up onto the commons for ecology visits.

## 9. Pet Flea Products

It has often been highlighted that there is growing concern and awareness of the harm that pet flea, worm and tick medications can pose to the aquatic environment. A number of these products contain chemicals that are very toxic to invertebrates. This includes, fipronil and imidacloprid, infamous for their toxicity to bees. This toxicity has led them to them being banned for agricultural use, which to me at least makes their continued use in widely used pet medication crazy. A study by imperial college found that there was enough imidacloprid in a monthly treatment for one large dog to kill 25 million bees. Other insects' species such as mayflies and caddis flies and their aquatic larva are equally susceptible.

Since Dec 23, concern has continued to grow and there have now been a number of recent papers published in scientific journals highlighting not only their acute toxicity to bees, other terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates, but also songbirds with residues being found in every bird nest tested in one recent study by Sussex. These residues were in turn found to be re-sulting in chick deaths. Given the growing concern and evidence, I have become confident that these products will be better regulated at some point in the future. A view supported in a letter that Defra sent to Alistair Rogers my predecessor in response to a letter he sent to his MP on the subject. This stated that Defra were now actively looking at the impacts and con-trols around these products.

Until appropriate regulatory controls are implemented the most effective way of mitigating the impacts of these products is likely to be raising awareness (something that is starting from a very low base) amongst pet owner of both the products impacts, but also how some simple steps can be taken to reduce the impacts on the environment from their own pets. One such measure being keeping dog that have just been treated with spot-on type products out of rivers for at least two to three days after treatment. If any members have dogs I hope they can keep this in mind and also tell any friends or family members that have pets to spread this message too. The article which can be found [here](#) in the Guardian might help you with that process.

(thankyou to Bruce McGlashan, secretary of the River Otter Fisheries Association, for this update).

## 10. History: Blue Plaque Ceremonies

The Otter Valley Association has been working with Michael Downes, local historian, and the Fairlynch museum to investigate and arrange for new blue plaques to be installed in celebration of local historial figures in the valley. You can find a map of current blue plaques on the OVA website [ [here](#) ].

We were delighted to see a great turnout for the two ceremonies that took place in March;

- **Robert Warington FRS, Sunday 16 March at Poplar Cottage on Fore Street Hill.**



There was an excellent attendance at the unveiling ceremony for Robert Warington in Poplar Cottage. Robert was the founder of the Chemistry Association - setup 185 years ago. This was the predecessor of the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC).

These photos, taken by Peter Bowler, were shared with us by Trevor Waddington (chair of the Fairlynch Museum). The lady on the right in front of Poplar Cottage is Prof Gill Reid, past president of the Royal Society of Chemistry, and the other lady is Sheila Salmon, the great great granddaughter of Robert Warington. Both gave a short address.

It was a very pleasant occasion. Thankyou to Trevor for all the hard work behind the scenes in planning, organising and liaising to bring this to fruition.

The ceremony was also covered in Chemistry World [ click on link [here](#) ].

- **Joan Bannister, Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March at Green Mews near the Public Hall**  
This article was contributed by Michael Downes.



'A fabulous teacher.' 'An amazing woman.' 'A legend!' 'Taught us everything from writing, good manners to how to play cricket.'

Just some of the memories that former pupils have of a Budleigh teacher who taught in the town for sixty years. This included a period from 1979 when the Linhay became a schoolroom, a move described by Priscilla Hull as 'of great assistance financially' to the Museum.

And now Miss Bannister has a blue plaque to honour her at Green Mews near the Public Hall, the former site of the Church Institute where she set up her school.

Funded by a Devon County Council Locality Budget, the plaque was unveiled on Thursday 20 March 2025 by Councillor Christine Channon who held this Budleigh teacher in high regard.

Also at the unveiling was ex-pupil Andy MacMullen: 'All six MacMullen brothers had the benefit of being taught by Miss Bannister,' he wrote. 'As well as reading, writing and arithmetic I have very clear memories of being taught to tie my shoe-laces correctly, and of making baskets with long strips of cane which were softened by soaking in water and the whole finished off by being wrapped in coloured raffia.'

Actress Belinda Lee and composer Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, both brought up in Budleigh, were among Miss Bannister's pupils but it was for the love of books that many of them remember her with gratitude.

'An absolutely terrific teacher and a wonderful woman,' is how Sarah Harrison remembers Miss Bannister. The best-selling novelist's passion for writing goes back to her schooldays in Budleigh as a 'daydreaming, scribbling child'.

At the unveiling, reference was made to the forthcoming film 'Mr Burton' which was released in UK cinemas a fortnight later. The film, starring BAFTA winner Toby Jones, tells the story of the teacher from Glamorgan who took a young Welshman called Richard Walter Jenkins under his wing, having spotted the future actor's talent for drama. Better known as Richard Burton, the young Welshman received numerous accolades and became one of the highest-paid actors in the world.

Many of Miss Bannister's former pupils view her as a similarly inspirational teacher who encouraged them in a love of learning. A good teacher can make all the difference, it is said. Yet today, there are many voices claiming that the teaching profession is failing to attract in sufficient numbers, that few in Britain appear to want to be a teacher any more.

A recent article published by the Royal Society suggested that reforming education should start with boosting the status of teachers. It is hoped that the latest blue plaque in Budleigh Salterton represents a tiny step towards that aim.

## 11. OVA Website & Social Media

We are continuing to update the website. Please do check it out and bookmark it for quick access. Here are a few updates you may not be aware of:

- We have a new home page – check it out [ [here](#) ]
- We continue to update the Blue Plaques map in our history section [ [here](#) ].
- We have overhauled the "old walks" section to allow easier viewing of past walks [ [here](#) ].
- We add all strategic responses to Built Environment areas – such as the East Devon Plan [ [here](#) ].
- We add photos gathered from members of our beautiful landscapes [ [here](#) ]
- Our river quality program (ORCA) maintain updates and published articles of interest [ [here](#) ]
- Our Flora, Fauna & Fungi group gather photos and updates from members and share them [ [here](#) ]
- We have updated our newsletter section – check out all the past issues. Amazing history [ [here](#) ]

Our Facebook group of supports is continuing to grow. We now have 898 members – if you have not seen it, please do check it out. Please also add your own articles, comments and like anything ... we'd love to hear from you!

We are averaging a couple of posts a day over the last month, with about 100 different people contributing articles. Here are a few popular articles that you may have missed on our Facebook group:

- Update to BBC on SWW pollution statistics (Peter Williams): 5,500 views



- Slow motion video of a spotted redshank (Tom Wallis): 1,392 views
- Lime Kiln Sewage discharges (Peter Williams): 1,018 views
- Heaths to Sea consultation dates (Chris Boorman): 552 views
- View of a Hoopoe bird (Heather Coulls): 511 views
- BBC Countryfile update on the river Otter (Chris Boorman): 456 views
- Thankyou to OVA for donating bird boxes to CDE (Kate Ponting): 484 views
- Recent wildlife sightings (David White): 376 views
- Blue Plaque unveiling for Rober Warrington (Chris Boorman): 367 views
- Update on Insect observations (Geoff Porter): 206 views.

## 12. Dates for your diaries

We are entering a busy season for local events. A few that we wanted to share two specific ones that caught our attention (checkout more on local web and facebook groups) are:



Our AGM will be taking place on the 17<sup>th</sup> June. Please do mark your diaries and come along. We will be publishing the agenda soon and providing more information. However, one exciting element is that we will have a talk from the "Upstream thinking" expert at South West Water.

Details on the AGM can be found on the OVA web – click [ [here](#) ]



Budleigh Salterton street party on 4th May 1230-1700 to mark VE Day. Seating £6 or £36 per table. Details can be found online or click [ [here](#) ]



East Budleigh's 2025 Scarecrow Festival takes place on 7-8 June, raising funds for the village's ancient and beautiful church of All Saints. Among other events the festival will again include the Conant Duck Race, sponsored by East Budleigh's Roger Conant Club in memory of the founder of Salem, Massachusetts. Roger Conant, who crossed the Atlantic in around 1623 was from a well-known East Budleigh family with strong links to the church. His father was a village churchwarden, and his nephews included a vicar of All Saints as well as the theologian and Vice Chancellor of Oxford Dr John Conant.

[Copy provided by Michael Downes]

==== End of Email Update (March 2025) ====