

Friday 24th April 2015, Lower Ashton and Trusham with Chris Buckland

'An Important Announcement'

I have reflected before, in a walk report, how the world order is changing, and that members are increasingly confident to challenge the status quo? I reported that anarchy was narrowly avoided on a walk to Orcombe Point last December, but on this occasion, it finally happened: on the twenty-fourth day of the month of April in the year twenty fifteen, an OVA walk was completed without a coffee break!

So we can't blame a caffeine rush on the aggressive behaviour exhibited by some of the group on what had been planned as a leisurely 5 mile walk in mid-Devon.

From the tranquil village of Lower Ashcombe, we strode the 1 in 5 hill to its big brother at Higher Ashcombe, with mediaeval church and screen, then across high fields with views to Dartmoor, down to the picturesque village of Trusham, before returning alongside the River Teign. But so much anger!

For example, no sooner had our resident photographer got off her knees having framed a Common Spotted Orchid than her partner narrowly failed to stamp on it, and then tried to barge his way through an electrified fence! Mind you this same photographer, posing as a highly educated botanist, and no doubt thinking that the rest of us were completely ignorant, called every wild flower Heather, when even we knew they were *Silene dioica*, or *Myosotis arvensis*, or *Primula vulgaris*, or *Stellaria holostea*, or *Smyrniolum olusatrum*, or *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. I think she realised she had blown her cover, when climbing a steeply stepped path out of Trusham, and in a blatant attempt to retrieve our sympathy, she threw herself to the ground.

But one of our walkers still harboured pent up angst and resentment that just had to be relieved. Fortunately he was able to attack an election advertising hoarding, after which he was calm and felt much better, and so did the rest of us. However, he still retained sufficient public spiritedness to deliver an impromptu lesson on the rules of the road to a horse rider with a riderless horse in tow. This time, he again felt better, but the rider didn't and the rest of us weren't sure.

Finally, never let it be said that our walks do not deliver all that they promise. We had been promised "views of Canonteign Falls" and sure enough, as we traversed some high ground approaching Rydon, a cry went up to "look to the west!" Several minutes later, the ground was strewn with people dizzily trying to orientate themselves. The rest formed a human pyramid and sent our lightest member to the top, with the most powerful pair of binoculars we possessed, and indeed, a distant sighting was confirmed.

It is said that water has a calming effect on the human condition, just to be within its sights and sounds can have a therapeutic affect, so fortunately our final meander alongside the River Teign brought us to lunch at the Manor Arms in a contemplative and relaxed state of mind.....and then the Landlord, in a blatant example of social stereotyping, welcomed us by directing the men to the "list of real ales on the board". It was the boots 'what done it', since there was not a beard or a pair of sandals between us

Chris Buckland
28 April 2015