

## **Monday 17th July 2017, East Devon Way Stage 4 – Newton Popleford to Brixington with Penny and Paul Kurowski**

Early in the morning a solitary walker with the uniform of rucksack, boots and walking poles cut a lonely figure on the 157 bus as it left Exmouth. She was happy to be joined by a handful of similarly clad walkers in Budleigh Salterton, with others expanding the group in East Budleigh and Otterton. By the time the bus reached Newton Popleford nearly an hour later a full dozen enthusiastic and excited 'East Devon Way'farers were ready for the day ahead. As has become the norm with each stage of this route, the weather was glorious and jackets were soon relegated to the backpacks and hats donned.



This ten mile section of the East Devon Way started (after the traditional 'class' photo) with a gentle climb through meadows and orchards up to Harpford Common.

We passed through Aylesbeare Nature Reserve where we inspected a prospective winner of 'Gate of the Year' award.



Glorious views of the countryside and beyond to the sea and as far as Portland awaited as we walked over the heathland, appropriately close to Heath Week, across Hawkerland, Colaton Raleigh Common and Woodbury Common.



We found a shady spot beneath Woodbury Castle for lunch where lively discussions included the subjects of future walks, the joys of bus travel and ..... Christmas! What could be more appropriate on a warm and sunny July day?

Under the guidance of our esteemed leaders Paul and Penny Kurowski, and with the pressures of bus schedules, we kept up our steady pace over the afternoon as we crossed Lymstone Common passing by quarries and plantations and walking on pebblebeds. The open moorland suddenly disappeared as we headed downhill to the contrast of the suburbs of Exmouth. Continuing to lose height, we eventually came to our bus stop with plenty of time in hand. Weary, hot, sticky but very happy with our day's exertions we boarded the bus home.

Because of circumstance, two of the group decided to complete the remaining four miles of the Way. The rest of us can hardly wait for the end of this week for the final section of this varied and attractive 40 mile walk. By reaching Brixington on the outskirts of Exmouth we are within touching distance of the end. Bring it on!

Anne Underwood