

Wednesday 13th June 2018 – ‘The River Yarty and Castle Mound’ with Jon Roseway

A small group of 4 walkers set out from the layby beside Beckford Bridge over the River Yarty. The listed bridge is a pretty single span narrow packhorse bridge with a wide arch, reputed to be one of the oldest packhorse bridges in East Devon.



The walk set out across meadows beside the River Yarty before heading up away from the river to reach Yarty Farm and a track up hill to the west of Membury village and footpath to join the lane to Furley Cross.

In Margaret's absence, Jon Roseway had stepped in to lead the walk and spotted a bridleway on the map heading south to Membury from just beyond Furley Cross, which the group readily found. While not entirely clear which side of the hedge the slightly overgrown bridleway sign indicated, we followed the righthand side through a maize field and past a disused quarry clearly cut out in the profile of the field. So far so good, until the end of the field where the map showed the bridleway joining a track into the village. Jon and Graham valiantly investigated for the track from an extremely overgrown gateway at the corner of the maize field, only to uncover a very overgrown stream beyond and no evidence of any track or bridleway!!

Not being Jon's walk the group agreed by committee of 4 to adopt a plan B, returning back along part of the maize field to a gateway where there was no option but to follow the tram lines in a field of corn to the gateway of that field and escape through the yard of Newhouse Farm. This brought us neatly to the lane onto which the disappearing bridleway should have emerged a few hundred yards away.

The walk then continued through more meadows on the edge of Membury before climbing up to Membury Castle iron age fort for a coffee/lunch stop. Between the trees on the distinct former castle ramparts there were lovely views across the adjoining valleys.



From the castle we descended into Membury village and past the church with distinctive goats head gargoyles towards the top of the church tower.



The return route took us along a ridge path known as Goyle Acre Lane to emerge at Lea Hill Farm now a number of holiday cottages although previously a Quaker Meeting House. A footpath loop away from the road took down to a footbridge and a return path across the meadows to Beckford Bridge, and the end of an interesting walk.

Thanks to Margaret Read for suggesting the location/route and for Jon Roseway for leading the walk at short notice.

Jane Kewley