

Tuesday 21 August 2018, “A Monument to Wellington” with Iain Ure

Eight OVA members began the walk at the Wellington Monument car park on a bright but rather chilly late August morning. We didn't see the Monument at the start, as this treat was to be saved until our return! The first part of the walk was on a ridge on the Blackdowns and led us through lovely woodland and fields, with wonderful views over towards Haldon Hill, Dartmoor, the Brendon Hills and the Quantocks. We slowly descended on paths and lanes before eventually reaching the River Culm. The weather was improving all the time and the sun finally made an appearance.

A walk along the river bank brought us into Culmstock where some of us chose to have lunch in the pub whilst others picnicked by the water. Of course we knew that, having walked downhill for so long, the next part would be challenging, especially as we could see our target, the famous stone Beehive, on the ridge far above us.



After a steady, long uphill climb we reached the building, a unique beehive shaped beacon hut said to date from Armada times which was used as part of a chain of fire signals.



The remainder of the walk was through heathland, where the heather and gorse were in full bloom, then some woodland and field paths before coming upon the Wellington Monument itself. Planned after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the original design for a statue and plinth was pared down to an obelisk when the money ran out. At 175 feet, it is a striking landmark on the Blackdowns and is the tallest three sided monument in the world. Unfortunately it is still fenced off and closed to the public until enough funds have been raised to fully repair it.

Thanks to Iain Ure who led the walk and made it so interesting with the historical background and other fascinating information.

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