

Thursday 7th November “Hidden ways, river valleys and views around Dalwood” with Paul and Fran Dike

Mention Dalwood and most OVA members’ respond with “where’s that?”. Well it’s not far away at all, just north of the A35 between Honiton and Kilmington, at the southern edge of the Blackdown Hills AONB. Like so many East Devon villages, there’s a surprisingly large Medieval parish church and an olde-worlde pub, the Tuckers Arms.

Despite dire warnings about very steep muddy slopes, slippery stiles and yet more rain the night before, our small group negotiated the first hill out of the village without incident. We walked along the ridge appreciating the far-reaching views and then dropped down the other side into the Yarty Valley and followed the river downstream to Beckford Bridge. There are actually two bridges. One is a small but perfectly formed packhorse bridge, not much more than a metre wide at the crest of the single arch, probably 600+ years old in origin, and one of only a few still standing in the UK.



In contrast the parallel modern road bridge is utilitarian in the extreme and so low that the rain-swollen river was threatening to flow over it.



From there it was a hard slog back up to the ridge and then a gentle stroll down to Dalwood for a delicious pub lunch.



Well done to Paul and Fran, who had planned and checked the walk meticulously and even arranged for free bags of apples for us to take home!

Jon Roseway