

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

PO Box 70 Budleigh Salterton EX9 6WN
www.ova.org.uk



Winter twilight on a stormy beach

New Year Edition

Volume 34/1

January 2013

Registered Charity No 278266

© Otter Valley Association 2013

Contents

	Page
Chairman's Message	3
Storms on the Beach	4
Events - and response slip	
Bronze Age Walk	5, 6
River Otter morning	7
Litter Pick	8
Members, past and present	9, 10
Activities Diary, January - March	11, 12
Activities Diary, April - June	13, 14
Reports	
Local Voices	15 -17
Castle Drogo	18
Budleigh Allotments	19
Visit to EaRTH	20
OVApedia	21, 22
Publications, inside back cover	23
Committee & Contacts	24

~~~~~

The cover photo, and others in this edition, were supplied by Mo Bowman.

The editor welcomes write-ups from members of the walks and events, including photos by email in jpg format, as this helps create the archive and public face of our active organisation.

The next issue will be published in April:  
copy needs to be with the editor **by Easter**, please.

# Chairman's Message

**T**HERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE to what the subject of the Chairman's Report should be in this edition. It is, of course, the River Otter, our beautiful river which shapes our landscape and contributes to the lower Otter valley being in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However, we have witnessed its powerful side, once again, in the last month with several floodings. The recent adverse water quality notification at the mouth is also disturbing as it is a major contributory factor in the bathing water quality at Budleigh Salterton.

Last year, in January, we had a very well attended morning session of talks on the history of the River Otter. This year Graham Knapton, our Talks Officer, and Patrick Hamilton, our Natural Environment Chairman, had arranged, a long time ago, to have a series of talks on the environmental work being undertaken by various agencies on the River Otter on Saturday morning, 16<sup>th</sup> February. They did not realise how topical this would be. Most of us are ignorant of the work being carried out on the river. Haylor Lass will chair talks on the project for monitoring water quality; the watervole project; the himalayan balsam project and also contribute himself on the issues of flooding. There will be a chance to ask questions of the speakers who will include representatives from the Environment Agency, East Devon Countryside Service Team and Clinton Devon Estates. There will be a coffee break and, like last year, I do hope members will bring their pictures and photos of the River Otter.

Last year at the River Otter talk I was asked if we could have a talk on the birds which migrate to the Otter. Graham has therefore arranged a RSPB talk on 23<sup>rd</sup> January in the Peter Hall. This will be followed by a RSPB cruise on 10<sup>th</sup> February – **only for those who have booked**, but there may be a few places left if you are quick!

Graham has arranged for the Jurassic Coast "Beach Care Project" team to give us a talk on 20<sup>th</sup> March before the annual Litterpick on 6<sup>th</sup> April.

**We will hear about the local, national and international impacts that marine and beach litter can have on our environment, economy and society and how important our annual litterpick is to the local environment.**

**Please come to the talk and also come along and help at the Litterpick.**

*Continued overleaf*

We have already had a very successful joint talk with the Friends of Fairlynch Museum. We will continue to do so for topics which will appeal to both our memberships. This will help both charities who have found the price of hiring halls and the cost of speakers have increased. Our next joint talk will be on 18<sup>th</sup> February at 2.30 in Peter Hall BS on the “Marine Treasures of Lyme Bay” and there will be another one on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013 7.30 pm. Nick Ricketts a retired Met. Officer will give a very topical talk on “World events and the Weather” in the same venue.

**Nicky Daniel**

---

## **Storm Damage on Budleigh Salterton Beach**

**Y**OU MAY HAVE READ the article in the Budleigh Salterton Journal about East Devon District Council’s wish to allow the beach huts to remain in situ all year.

Your Executive Committee discussed this at length and objected to the proposal on several grounds. Beach huts are visually intrusive particularly along the pavement under the War Memorial where they obscure the view of the Otter Head. This view during the winter distinguishes Budleigh Salterton from its neighbours. It is the town’s niche market offering and we believe the proposal would adversely affect tourism when the occasions for using beach huts are few. Another reason was the historic record of storm damage. It would not, in our opinion, be responsible for the council to allow or encourage beach huts to be put at risk for the sake of being able to charge more for a full year.

We have done some research into storm damage and think you may be interested in the results.

From 1950 to 2000 there were 10 episodes of storm damage of a sufficient degree of destruction to warrant photos and articles in the local press. Beach huts have been thrown around and damaged as recently as 2000; severe erosion has occurred along Donkey’s Turn; gabions have been inserted, exposed, replaced and then extended many times; finally many of you may have seen the video of waves flooding the Lime Kiln carpark.

# A Bronze Age Settlement Walk - Farway & Gittisham Common

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013 – 10.15 am – 1.00 pm approx**

Walk through the intriguing and overlooked Bronze Age landscape, including burial mounds and Farway Castle enclosure, first identified and mapped in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Orlando Hutchinson and recently cleared of vegetation by local landowners and project volunteers also across the latest excavation project at Gittisham Common .

The walk will be led by Phil Planel, Heritage Projects Officer for the East Devon AONB Partnership. It will last for approximately 2 hrs over a distance of about 2 kms, starting out from the Car Park on Farway Hill. Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear as it may be muddy and uneven in places and therefore not suitable for those with mobility problems. It promises to be a very interesting day.

*continued overleaf*



---

## **Bronze Age Walk – Farway & Gittisham Common Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 10.45 am – 1 pm**

Please send me ..... tickets

Name(s) .....

Address .....

.....

and postcode .....

tel: ....., email .....

I/we can offer ..... seats in our car / I/we would like a lift with others.....

I am willing to allow my email address/telephone number to be disclosed to other OVA members for the purposes of car sharing. *Tick box*

I enclose a cheque for £ ..... (£3.00 per person) payable to OVA and a **Stamped Addressed Envelope (reply address overleaf)**

# **A Bronze Age Settlement Walk - Farway & Gittisham Common**

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013 – 10.15 am – 1.00 pm approx**

**Meet at the Hare & Hounds, Putts Corner (A375 Sidford – Honiton road) at 10.15am for Coffee before setting off at 11.00am. Half of the cars will be left at the Public House Car Park and the others will ferry people to the Car Park at Farway Hill. The Hare & Hounds may be good for hungry walkers afterwards!**

**30 Maximum - so early booking is advisable. If over-subscribed a second Walk may be arranged later in the year.**

**Cost: £3 Please car-share if possible.**

Application form below, to be returned **as soon as possible**  
Please indicate car sharing offer/requirements.



Ticket application for the **Bronze Age Walk**

**Rosemary Jerrard  
20 Swains Road  
Budleigh Salterton  
EX9 6HT**

and don't forget the **SAE**

# The River Otter

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February 10.00am - 12.30pm**

The “Activities Diary” in the September Newsletter billed this event (p11). However, some important changes have been made. First, because of ill-health, David Jannaway has had to postpone his talk on the Otter as a wildlife sanctuary. This is most unfortunate as David is a great speaker and hugely knowledgeable on birds. We wish him a speedy recovery and hope that we can hear him in full flow in the not-too-distant future. Secondly I felt that, having addressed the OVA on the subject of the Himalayan Balsam problem at the AGM last May, it would be appropriate to invite experts, not only on that subject but on the others referred to in the last Newsletter: notably mink and water quality. In fact, the Executive felt that a fourth should be added: “Flooding”, given its topicality and the momentous long-term issues raised by the Haycock Report (eg flooding the lower valley and relocating the cricket club). To this end it has been decided that four speakers would each make 15 minute presentations from 10.00am until 11.00am; then, after a 30 minute refreshment break, there would be an open question and answer from 11.30 until 12.30pm. The four speakers have not finally been determined but will probably be (not necessarily in this order):

**Scott West**, who will speak on the challenge posed by the European Water Directive for the River Otter. Scott is in the middle of a 1 year project on this topic for the Devon Wildlife Trust under the aegis of the Environment Agency.

**Roland Stonex** of the charitable organization FWAG (The Farmers and Wildlife Advisory Group) has been leading the 2012 Otter Valley Himalayan Balsam Project and will speak on this project, its scope and hopes.

**Jim Hunter** (East Devon District Council Countryside Service) who has been supervising the Water Vole Project in the Otter Valley for several years now and will assess progress in the Otter and the Axe.

**The Environmental Agency** hope to provide a speaker on the flooding issue. John Wilding of Clinton Devon Estates will also comment briefly on the Haycock Report.

A stimulating morning is promised and we hope that the Peter Hall will cope with expected numbers so come early and ensure a seat!!

**Patrick Hamilton** – OVA natural environment Committee

# The Spring Litter-Pick; April 2013

Preparations are in hand for the annual Litter-Pick in the Otter Estuary. The date has recently been decided so please enter it on your new calendars that will no doubt be hanging on your walls by the time that you read this! It is **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2013**, as usual at 10.00am.

On this day, the tides are kinder than last year (24<sup>th</sup> March 2012) when we commenced the sweep some 2½ hours after high tide. This was not ideal as access to some parts of the salt marsh was impossible for the first hour or so. This year should be better as we start operations just 30 minutes after low tide at 09.29am so that water levels should be lower than last year throughout the duration of the sweep ... as long as the river itself is not in flood! Given that the water table is currently (mid-December) remarkably high after a sodden summer followed by an equally sodden autumn, and given that most of winter (probably also sodden!) lies ahead, it is highly probable that flood risk will continue to be very high until next spring. If there is indeed a problem in early April 2013 **please visit the OVA website** at [www.ova.org.uk](http://www.ova.org.uk) where last minute information will be posted. Readers will be well aware that litter, particularly plastic, constitutes a serious hazard for wild life, especially birds. It is essential that it be cleared each year.

For this to be done, the efforts of volunteers are crucial, so please come and join us. We will assemble for a briefing at 10.00am in the Lime Kiln Car Park, where litter pickers may park without charge for the 2-hour period. As last year, the OVA is offering a small prize for the most interesting piece of debris collected, so this gives an added interest. Clinton Devon Estates and the EDDC AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) will again be combining to organize the removal of the collected rubbish and provide plastic bags and suggestions as to where to operate. Both sides of the estuary will be scoured up to the White Bridge. Wellington boots are strongly advised and, since it is not difficult to get stuck in the mud, it is essential that children are accompanied by an adult. It is also a good idea to wear protective gloves. A health and safety briefing will be given at the start and all should wait for this before setting off. Dogs are not permitted in the salt marshes.

Participants enjoy this event every year, so why not come along and establish your green credentials for 2013?!

**Patrick Hamilton** – OVA natural environment Committee



# OVA Membership

By the time you are reading this, I will have used number 2000 for a new member, quite an achievement for a civic amenity society started in 1979. The number of active members at the end of 2012 will be 1099, give or take a new member or two.

Of the original 200 or so members who bravely formed the OVA in 1979, 30 of them are still with us, reading the quarterly newsletter, and sometimes popping up at Christmas Dinners or Mid Summer Buffets. I have had the honour of both knowing and working with some of these wonderful people, and have learnt a lot about our valley and how it has developed over the years, and the role the OVA has played in this.

Since 1979, the OVA has built on this strong base, keeping pace with the emerging world of computers, a website highly rated by search engines, membership records now maintained in a database, which means we can print the labels for the newsletters without having to type them all by hand (phew). We now deliver over 700 newsletters either by hand, with thanks to all our volunteer distributors, or by post to members both outside of our area and even outside Devon.

But we need to keep on recruiting new members, bringing new knowledge and enthusiasm into the OVA. If we just sit back, then the hard work of those original 200 or so members will start to fade. There is an application form on the website, in the library or with your local Village Reps, or even by post if you write to the post box. If you enjoy being a member of the OVA, then you might know others who would enjoy it for the same reasons.

I always look forward to opening our post-box and finding a new membership application there, it means more people agree with what the OVA is doing and achieving. Without you, there would be no OVA, there would be no civic amenity society representing over 10% of the population within the valley, no voice to support or object to the various changes going on in our valley. And I would have nothing to give my time and enthusiasm to, so thank you all for keeping your membership up to date.

**Clive Bowman**

Membership Secretary

OVA, PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN

# Dorothy Stammers

We note with regret that Dorothy Stammers has died at the age of 96. A former resident of Colaton Raleigh, she moved to Woking a few years ago to be near her daughter. Her funeral was held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012 at Woking Crematorium.

Dorothy Stammers was one of the original members of the OVA. She was secretary of the Footpaths committee from 1979 to 1987, and chairman of that committee from 1987 to 1994. She led the very first OVA walk on 26 September 1979.

She was made Vice-President of the OVA in 1997, an appointment for life. As far as Brian Turnbull (former chairman) knows, the only other person to have been honoured in this way is Barbara Primmer. Pat Tunmer and John Brenan, both now deceased, were Life Presidents.

~~~~~

Barbara Primmer

Barbara Primmer, an active member of the OVA in the eighties and nineties, died recently in May 2012 and has left the association £2,000 in her will. We are very pleased and honoured that she had such an affection for the OVA to think of the association in her will. Our archivist, Robin Holt, has written this contribution on her OVA activities.

Barbara was Vice chairman of the Executive Committee in 1991-1992. She was Chairman of the Environment Committee 1983-1999 + secretary of that committee in 1994. She sat on the Main Committee from 1983-1986 but without any specific role (which implies the Environment Committee chairman was not at that stage automatically on the Main Committee) and she did not represent her Parish.

She became one of only two ever Vice-presidents in 2001 – this appears to be a life-time appointment.

She illustrated the front page of the Newsletter with a picture of Birds and Animals for all four editions in 1993 and in October 1993 contributed an article on “Silver-studded butterflies”. In October 1997 she contributed a three page article on the recovery of Woodbury Common after the fire of August 3rd 1995. She and her sister obviously enjoyed Nature as her sister Jane gave two talks on Wild Flowers.

In October 2001 she invited me round to her house and presented me with a number of photos and cuttings from the early days of the Association, these have all been incorporated into the Archive.

Saturday 12th January – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate) / Pub lunch

Knowle Village Hall CP, SY052827. 5½ miles, 2½ hours. A circular undulating walk over the commons to Bystock Fishponds with varied topography including woodland and heathland. May be muddy.

Optional lunch at the Dog and Donkey.

Walk leader: Steve Hagger, 01395 442631

Wednesday 23rd January – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Kersbrook (under railway bridge), SY069830. 5½ miles, 2½ hours.

A pleasant walk at this time of year which will include part of the old railway track and some of the coast path between Budleigh and Exmouth.

Walk leader: Shane Badham, 01395 567531

Wednesday 23rd January – 7.30pm. TALK

“Migratory Birds on the Exe Estuary” Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton.

This talk gives an insight into identification and some of their general behaviour. Supported by superb pictures and bird song/calls.

Speakers: John Allan and Steve Henry of the RSPB.

Saturday 2nd February – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Peak Hill CP, SY109872 5-6 Miles, 2½ - 3 hours. A circular walk along the coast path to Ladram Bay, inland to Otterton, back along Bars Lane

Walk leader: Bettina Wilson, 01395 578450

Sunday 10th February – 12.30pm. Mini Avocet Cruise, Exe Estuary

A 1/1½ hour cruise from Trout’s Boatyard, Ferry Road, Topsham.

Full details in the Autumn edition of the News – **MUST BE BOOKED**

As we go to print there are just a few places left, so it may be advisable to ring first to check availability – Gill Spear 01395 443944

Wednesday 13th February – 10.00am. WALK, (Moderate)

Four Firs CP, SY032864 5 Miles, 2½ hours. A circular walk visiting Woodbury Castle then turning east to Woodbury and returning via the golf course. Includes tracks, paths and some wooded areas.

Walk leader: Graham Knapton, 01395 445872

Saturday 16th February 2013 – 10.00a.m – 12:30p.m. TALK.

“Environmental Aspects of the River Otter”, Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton. A series of talks and discussions on all aspects of the River Otter, including display of members pictures. Details are on page 7
£2.00 members, £2.50 non-members to include coffee.

Monday 18th February – 2.30pm Joint OVA/Fairlynch TALK

Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton. 'Marine Treasures of Lyme Bay'
Budleigh Salterton looks out on to Britain's largest inshore marine protected area (MPA). Marine Advocacy Officer Richard White has worked for Devon Wildlife Trust for over 17 years. Coming to marine conservation after learning to dive in Scotland he gained an MSc in Marine Resource Development and Protection from Heriot-Watt University in 1993. He sees the delivery of an effective MPA network as crucial for the future of marine ecosystems and all those that depend on them.

Speaker: R. White of the Devon Wildlife Trust

Wednesday 27th February – 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Knowle Village Hall CP, SY052827. 5 miles, 2½ hours
Shortwood Common, Hayes Barton and Squabmoor.

Walk leader: Brian Turnbull, 01395 567339

Wednesday 13th March – 10.00am. WALK (Energetic)

Otter Inn CP, SY078874 Colaton Raleigh. 7.3 miles, 3½ hours.

A flat circular walk mostly on local tracks. Crossing the commons to Canterbury Green and then returning via Stowford.

Walk leader: Mike Paddison 01395 446550

Monday 18th March – 2.30pm Joint OVA/Fairlynch TALK

Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton. '**World events and the Weather**'

The chances are that you will have read or heard the words "Met Office forecaster Nick Ricketts said ..." followed by announcements of floods, heatwaves, gales, snowstorms, and occasionally just settled weather.

Based with the Met Office at its original London site, Nick moved to Devon on retiring and now gives talks to clubs and groups on climate change effects. He has always had an interest in the past and his talk will give a fascinating slant to our understanding of many historical events.

Speaker: **Nick Ricketts** formerly Met Office

Wednesday 20th March - 10.00am WALK (Easy)/Pub Lunch

Otter Inn CP, SY078874 Colaton Raleigh. 3 miles, 2 hours.

If you don't walk much or want to start walking this gives you the perfect opportunity with a short mainly level walk along local lanes and banks of the Otter. Optional lunch at the Otter Inn.

Walk leader: George Norman 01395 442307

Wednesday 20th March 2013 – 7:30p.m. TALK. “BeachCare”.

Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton.

BeachCare is an exciting project to reduce marine and beach litter and to maintain and improve bathing water quality by involving local communities. Apart from looking unsightly and potentially deterring visitors, litter can be a health risk to beach users and local wildlife.

Speakers: Matilda Bark, Dorset BeachCare Officer and Neil Hembrow from Devon and Cornwall BeachCare. *OVA Litter Pick – see below*

Saturday 6th April – 10.00am. Annual Estuary Litter Pick

Lime Kiln car park, Budleigh Salterton (free parking for participants for 2 hours). Wear wellies and protective gloves. Turn up for briefing and then get stuck in to this vital job – details on page 8

Monday 15th April – 10.00am. WALK (Energetic)

East Budleigh CP, SY065849. 9 miles, 4½ hours. A varied walk giving an ever changing perspective using the coast path, local roads and tracks.

Visiting Ladram Bay, High Peak and Windgate then returning inland via Otterton and Bicton. Some hilly sections, could be muddy.

Walk leader: Mike Paddison, 01395 446550

Saturday 20th April - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Lyme Regis. An interesting literary walk in the lovely coastal town of Lyme Regis details to be confirmed.

Walk leader: Margaret Read 01392 759332

Wednesday 1st May - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Castle Lane (limited parking, share cars if possible), SY043823. 4½ miles, 2½ to 3 hours. Walk to Littleham church via the golf course and cliff path for a short conducted tour of the church and churchyard including a look at Lady Nelson’s grave. Return along disused railway track, may be muddy.

Walk leader: Hazel Harland, 01395 445665

Wednesday 15th May – 7.30pm. OVA AGM *details next time.*

Saturday 18th May - 10.00am. WALK (Energetic/Optional Lunch)

The Exeter Green Circle Revisited, meet at **Exeter Crematorium** on Topsham Road – two walks in May and June revisiting Exeter’s Green Circle followed by an optional pub lunch. See a side of the city that will surprise and delight, some rough paths and gradients.

Walk leader: Bettina Wilson 01395 578450

Saturday 25th May – 10.00am. WALK (Energetic)

Newton Poppleford CP, SY086897. 7 miles, 4 hours. Circular walk on green lanes and commons visiting Venn Ottery, Metcombe and North Hill, returning via Venn Ottery Common and Benchams. There will be a stop for a sociable picnic lunch (bring your own packed lunch).

Walk leader: Jan Stuart, 01395 568235

Wednesday 5th June - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Crookes Plantation, Stowford, SY 057866. 5 miles 2½ hours. This is a popular local walk over Woodbury and Bicton commons giving lovely views over surrounding countryside.

Walk leader: George Norman 01395 442307

Saturday 15th June - 9.45am. WALK (Energetic/Optional Lunch)

The Exeter Green Circle Revisited, meet at **Exeter Bus Station** – the second of two walks revisiting Exeter's Green Circle followed by an optional pub lunch. See a side of the city that will surprise and delight, some rough paths and gradients.

Walk leader: Bettina Wilson 01395 578450

Wednesday 26th June - 10.00am. WALK (Moderate)

Joney's Cross CP SY057898 off A3052. 5 miles, 2½ hours. Including Aylesbere and Hawkerland. Footpaths and tracks over Nature Reserve and through woodland, some gradients and rough ground.

Walk leader: John Jones 01395 443651

Notes for walkers:

2012 was the wettest year on record and the consequence is that some walks may remain very muddy in 2013. Where possible Walk Leaders will mitigate any problem areas by re-outing walks but appropriate clothing and good walking boots are highly recommended to cope with the conditions.

Short stops and any picnic lunches are included in the time given for a walk, but factors such as conditions underfoot, the weather, and the number of gates/stiles can all affect progress. Walks are graded –

EASY Up to 4 miles. Level ground or may be gentle gradients.

MODERATE Between 4 & 6 miles.

May be gradients, rough, stony or uneven ground.

ENERGETIC Over 6 miles. May be steep sections or very rough terrain.

Local Voices

THURSDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER was a landmark day for local writers, giving them a chance to air their work in front of appreciative audiences.

In consultation with the Budleigh Literary Festival, the Otter Valley Association sponsored Local Voices, where local writing groups were invited to read their poetry and prose in the delightful surroundings of the Church on the Green in Budleigh. Chaired



by the OVA's David Daniel, the afternoon highlighted the immense wealth of talent within the community with a diverse spread of genres.

Iris Jones Simantel kickstarted the afternoon, talking about her runaway best seller, 'Far From the East End', and this was followed by quality readings from the Exmouth Writers, the Salem Players, the East Devon Writers and the Budleigh Circle. A plethora of literary gems.

The morning session was a workshop, led by Sophie King, the well-known and well respected author from Sidmouth. Her advice on how to write a life story captured the imagination of the attendees who left feeling inspired and motivated.

A change of venue for the evening event which was held in the Temple Church and hosted by Jed Falby from the OVA and Tony Beard, the Wag from Widecombe, a well-loved regular on BBC Radio Devon. Members of the audience were offered their five minutes of fame to step up to the mic and read whatever they liked. There were lively renditions – poems, short stories, monologues – which brought an enthusiastic response from the audience.

It was a worthwhile day and one which, it is hoped, will be repeated on an annual basis.

Wendy Spicer

Local Voices (a brief Newsletter summary by Jed Falby)

We have our TV, we have our radio, but where are our local voices?

As an opener to the Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival the OVA hoped to tempt our local poets, writers and story tellers to come into the spotlight and share their work with all of us. So on Thursday 20th September we had the premiere of our first “Local Voices” in The-Church-on-the-Green.

Listen! That’s a lot of voices:



Exmouth Writers Group

There were the local poetry groups, the writers not yet published and some of the lucky few with real books out there. Iris Jones Simantel who was a GI Bride at 16 told us her amazing story while the Exmouth Writers Group acted out their mixture of the true stories with their fantasies.



Iris Jones Simantel

Our “Open Mike” then moved to the Temple Church where the BBC’s Radio Devon star Tony Beard opened the session with his wonderful Devon stories all told with his fine true Devon voice encouraging all of us to tell our local stories (“before they are lost”). Jed Falby then read two poems submitted by those who couldn’t be there. Then Tony passed the “open mike” to eight brave local creatives who, with five minutes each, gave us the whole gamut from serious thoughts to laugh-out-loud comic verse.

We don’t know if this new venture will lead our local talent on to fame and fortune, but it was a wonderful way for the OVA to join Budleigh’s Literary Festival

Castle Drogo- OVA talk Tuesday 2nd October 2012

If you were building a home to retire to, would you build a castle? This is what Julius Drew, the founder of Home and Colonial Stores, did when he retired from Surrey in his thirties and built his dream of an ancestral home overlooking the Teign valley with views out over Dartmoor.

Bryher Mason, House and Collections Manager for Castle Drogo gave us a very lively talk, packed with interesting facts, about how the house was built and how the National Trust is now making it watertight. The foundation stone was laid in 1911 on Julius' birthday and it was completed in 1931, the year of his death. About 100 workmen were employed on the site and hundreds more in the two local quarries that supplied the granite in two different shades. Many local farmhands, who were used to using granite, found it more profitable to re-train as stone masons which changed the work balance in the area, but there was an agreement that they should still help on the farms at harvest time.

The architect for Castle Drogo was Sir Edwin Lutyens and we were shown how some of his Drogo details were later used in his design for the Vice Regal Palace in New Delhi. Apparently ideas and plans for the house were changed frequently and in the end only one third of it was built; a photo showed a full scale model, made to help Julius visualise his building, with a battlemented curtain wall and impressive gatehouse!

Julius thought that a castle should not have cavity walls and had his filled in with hard-packed rubble. Lutyens realised that this would enable water to seep through and the walls and roof were covered in a coating of asphalt – “like an up-turned swimming pool” – to counteract this, but in time this layer deteriorated and the rain came through. A new type of coating has been developed to cover the granite which involves a bonding of two materials one very stretchy and one that is tough.

The work will cost millions of pounds and we are delighted that they have been awarded some Lottery money towards this.

Luckily the iron reinforcement bars in the ceilings were found – when some of the remedial concrete fell off – to be in good enough condition not to need replacement, which will save many more millions of pounds.

Another point of water leakage is around the bronze window frames where the old putty did not grip to the granite and the windows can – and do – blow out in bad weather.

The window frames will be cleaned (using walnut husks) and re-fitted using this time a recently-developed mastic which will grip and remain flexible.

This remedial work has been in the planning for 18 years and will begin in earnest next year. The house will not be closed and visitors will be able to see work in progress and even go onto the roof. We were urged to continue to visit and we wish them well in their endeavours to make this lovely castle watertight for the future.

Margaret Sellin

Budleigh Salterton Allotments



The transformation of the allotment gardens into a development site (with leisure gardens?) has been completed, leaving a sea of mud in places.



A former allotment holder thinks that the subsoil has been compacted so much by the trucks that it has set solid. They have scooped top soil over the top of it and it has acted just like a sponge. It will take ages to drain away, even when dry weather resumes. He recalls the time when you could go there half an hour after a thunderstorm and still be able to dig the ground.

Visit to EaRTH 25th / 26th October 2012

OUR EVER IMAGINATIVE Events Committee decided that a visit to the 'EaRTH' at Bicton College would be good for our continuing education process in the University of Life. So visits were arranged and escorted by Nicola Daniel and Caroline Allen and lead on the first day by Bicton Director of Enterprise Chris Lorimer and on the second day by Graham Waddell the Head of the EaRTH programme. 43 aspiring members signed up for a visit. What could this EaRTH be about? Perhaps that oblate spheroid planet making its annual trip around the sun? Could it be a reference to the material found after a mole has visited your lawn? But no, it is neither, it is an acronym for 'Environmental and Renewable Technology Hub.' Clever stuff.

Chris Lorimer introduced himself to us and advised us that he was an ex-banker. Not only that, but modestly revealed that he was responsible for the collapse of the whole western financial world. Now how's that for a way of getting attention? Bicton College runs courses ranging from a master's qualification to numerous leisure courses. Students number up to 2,500 at any one time. They concentrate on land based careers including a Rugby Academy, a proposed Cricket Academy, and a new concept is a Military Academy. It seems that recruits for the Marines suffer from a high dropout rate due to lack of maturity and confidence.

We then turned to the project EaRTH and began to familiarize ourselves with the whole subject of renewable energy and sustainable farming, or to give it it's full title 'sustainable development for renewable energy and sustainable farming.' Yes, that title again. It was noticed that by this time the eyes of some of the ladies had developed a certain glazed effect. However the men soldiered on. We were introduced to a wealth of technical names, some of which were old friends – e.g. heat pump, biomass boilers, under floor heating, thermal panels, building maintenance systems and sedum roof covering. Keep practicing and after a while they just roll off the tongue. We were even advised that PV (that is photo voltaics to you or me) is 30% efficient. We also learned that sheep wool was not recommended for insulation due to the presence of maggots. The ladies in particular found this useful information.

The main purpose of the visit was to see or have explained the methods and equipment available to save materials for building, and the intelligent use of heating/cooling systems and associated insulations.

The college was advocating the use of all manner of heating sources, even the heat from the milk of the cows was utilized to heat water. It was a most thought-provoking visit, which was enjoyed by all.

Our thanks to the organizers.

Bob Wiltshire



OVApedia

I LAST WROTE about OVApedia when it reached the 125 article milestone. It has now reached 150. As ever these new articles cover an extraordinary range of fascinating subjects and OVApedia is now becoming a serious research archive. Here is a flavour of what is new.

We have an account through newspaper articles of a celebratory meal held in 1858 at the Cannon Inn, Newton Poppleford, by the Conservative electors of Harpford and Venn Ottery. Some fifty people attended but they were concerned this might provoke a disturbance or demonstration from the “Radicals” of the silk mill. However this was avoided by inviting the mill hands into the room, giving them some food after which they sang to all those assembled. They were duly thanked and offered a forthcoming treat of their own. Riot averted!

We have a poignant example of how transportation for minor offences such as stealing a pair of shoes can breakup families, effectively creating “widows” and, in this case, lead to later discovery of the existence of a second “secret” Australian branch of the family.

Continued overleaf

On buildings there is a comprehensive article on local building materials, their sources and distribution, linked to the local geology. Other articles on buildings, by Gerald Millington, include: the Otterton Brickyard that supplied so many of the bricks to build the Mark Rolle buildings; an extensively illustrated description, in two parts, of the historic buildings of East Budleigh; and a discussion of the complexity of the 3,000 year lease. Also did you know that secret passages in Otterton really do exist?

On the biographical front Roger Lendon has discovered a niece of Nelson resident once in Budleigh Salterton and another resident, a Captain Vincent Beatty, who inherited from his brother, surgeon to Nelson on HMS Victory, the “ball, with the particles of the coat and epaulette that were forced into the body by the stroke” that killed him. This was eventually presented to Queen Victoria “neatly and elegantly set within a crystal case, which is appropriately mounted with a double cable of gold around its circumference, and opens like a watch”.

Roger has also continued with a series of researches into people who have occupied the same building over a period of time. This series now includes: the history of the Feathers in Budleigh Salterton and some of its early licensees; biographies of owners and occupants of Lee Ford from 1800 to 1934; and a list and biographies of all owners and occupants of Primrose Cottage (now Fairlynch Museum) from when it was built in 1812 until it became a museum in 1966.

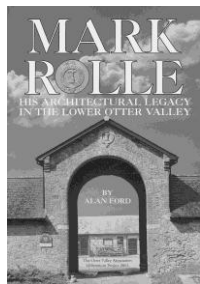
Other biographies from other contributors include: Murray Levick, featured in the 2011 Fairlynch Exhibition, a Naval Doctor on Scott’s Antarctic expedition who became an expert on survival techniques and William Frederick Green, vicar of East Budleigh 1884 to 1928, who is recognised as being the first recorded holder of the record for running the mile (4 mins 42 secs in 1853)*. And did you know that James Agar, award winning animator and director of such Disney classics as Snow White and Bambi, is descended from an Otterton family?

Many thanks to: Michael Barr, Michael Downs, Richard Green, Roz Hickman, Gerald Millington, Roger Lendon and Anne Speight, who between them have contributed these latest articles. Please keep them coming.

David Daniel

* obviously, the original ‘quicker vicar’. – *ed.*

OVA Publications

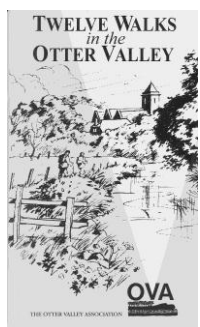


Mark Rolle

His Architectural Legacy in the Lower Otter Valley

Ever wondered about the many improved farm buildings and cottages in this area? This lavishly illustrated book gives a very readable picture of how a large landed estate was managed in the last 40 years of the 19th century.

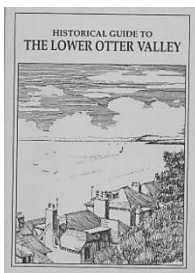
£4.95 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



Twelve Walks in the Otter Valley.

The area of the Lower Otter Valley is covered by a network of footpaths, mostly waymarked and in good condition. OVA members have compiled these walks, each with clear directions and illustrated with a sketch map. They range from 4 mile easy walks to a more energetic 9½ miler. There are notes on places of interest to whet your appetite for further exploration.

£2.50 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)



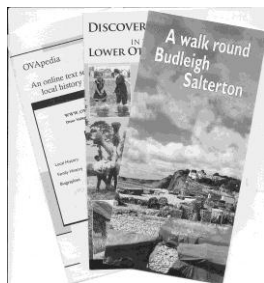
Historical Guide to the Lower Otter Valley

Want to know more about the area you live in or are visiting? This book is packed with detailed information about the places, buildings, people and natural history of this beautiful area, from the very earliest times to the end of the 20th century.

£3.50 from your village rep (or plus £2.00 P&P)

See our website ova.org.uk or from

Booksales, OVA, PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN



Leaflets

The OVA also publish a number of (free) leaflets about the history, flora & fauna and walking the villages of our area of interest in the lower Otter Valley. They can usually be found in the Tourist Information Centre and in other outlets around the valley.

The Otter Valley Association

Executive Committee (01395)

Chairman (acting)	Nicola Daniel	445960
Vice-chairman	Haylor Lass	568786
Hon Secretary (acting)	David Daniel	445960
Treasurer	Roger Saunders	443248

Committee Chairmen

Natural Environment	Patrick Hamilton	445351
Events	Nicola Daniel	445960
History	David Daniel	445960

Parish Representatives (to whom queries should be addressed initially)

Budleigh Salterton	John Jones	443651
	George Maddaford	446077
East Budleigh	Christine Hadley	443607
Otterton	<i>Vacancy</i>	568274
Colaton Raleigh	<i>Vacancy</i>	
Newton Popleford	Haylor Lass	568786

Other EC Members

Assistant Minutes Secretary	Robert Wiltshire	444395
Membership Secretary	Clive Bowman	446892
Publicity Secretary	Lynne Wright	442703

Other contacts

Webmaster	Alan Huddart	446761
Talks Organiser	Graham Knapton	445872
Walks Organiser	John Jones	443651
Newsletter Distributors	Jenny Young	444090
	Chris Hagger	442631

Interim Newsletter Editor

Haylor Lass, tel 568786

haylor@lasses.me.uk