

OTTER  
VALLEY  
ASSOCIATION  
WINTER

Newsletter  
January 2022

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Reg. Charity No. 278266

OVA  
PO Box 70  
Budleigh Salterton

**The front cover entitled “Goodbye to all that” showing East Budleigh Leat and landmark Poplars was photographed and produced by Mo Sandford**

## **.. and finally from the Editor**

How lovely that we have finally able to hold some 'events' during the past few months with both Talks and our Christmas Party taking place, albeit with some restrictions in place. It was a great pity that, due to a family bereavement, the speaker due to deliver the November talk was unable to attend but we look forward to the event which has been re-scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> February.

As this is my last issue as Editor I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mo Sandford for supporting me over the past 6 years or so by producing the front covers. Mo's photographs have reflected so well the beauty of this area and the changing seasons and in many cases (as in this issue) have been thought-provoking. I am also grateful to the members and external agencies who have contributed such interesting content and photographs over the years.

It is disappointing that, to date, no-one has appeared willing to take over this role but I hope that someone will decide to do so in the near future. I will certainly support them in any way I can. It was suggested to me recently that OVA stood for "Otter Valley Apathy" – harsh but, in our current circumstances where a lack of engagement and involvement by members is seriously threatening the future of the association, perhaps justified.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Healthy 2022.

*Jacqui Baldwin*

**Can you spot the  
Brimstone so  
superbly  
camouflaged in Ivy?**

The article by Geoff Porter  
on page 7 refers



## The Acting Chairman's Musings

In this winter edition I am able to report on the Christmas Dinner (under Plan B, we were not able to hold a 'party'.) 44 members and their guests came together at the East Devon Golf Club and, being determined to enjoy themselves, they succeeded. The association took all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of all attendees including a total ban on snogging. We were serenaded with live music. The event was organised by Claire Brown and members assisted with the entertainment which included games of Irish Bingo, a fiendish quiz and the obligatory raffle. The catering was excellent and I hope that this event will mark a resumption of our normal association events.



'Enjoy' is thankfully a word that is going out of fashion. It is usually used, I find annoyingly, as a single command when your meal is placed before you in a restaurant. The word 'absolutely', which is an upmarket way of saying 'yes', is also gradually disappearing. Now the buzz word is 'sadly', which I find myself using more and more. So I will be using it in its present form. Sadly, this is the last edition edited by Jacqui Baldwin. It may well be the last edition entirely unless somebody

is prepared to take on the role. Jacqui's name first appeared in the Summer 2015 edition when she took over from Haylor Lass, who himself had come to the rescue. Previous editors did a brilliant job, but Jacqui has surpassed them all and produced a most professional publication. Once again I use 'sad' to tell you that Mo Sandford is stepping down from her role in sharing some of her wonderful pictures and producing the front cover of the Newsletter. Although her name has appeared on the credits for the front cover since 2016, she contributed to the newsletter for many years beforehand. This publication is our front door to members and prospective members. People look at it, to decide whether or not we are worthy of their patronage. It gives an account of what we do and illustrates our ethos. It contains many interesting and informative articles of broad and local interest. Are we to lose it?

I last reported that there had been an encouraging response to my call for recruits to help run the association. I have to tell you that only one of them has felt able to join the Executive Committee and we look forward to welcoming her at the next meeting. Looking back through many editions of the newsletter, I note that this situation has been going on for a long time. Once it was an honour to be asked to sit on a committee, but 'sadly', it seems to now be looked upon as a punishment.

The talks programme has resumed, with a most interesting selection of future talks. However 'sadly' the last talk was cancelled due to illness, but it has been rescheduled for February next year.

Many of you will recall that two years ago, the Natural Environment group planted 15 Scots Pine trees on the mound in Otterton Park, as prospective replacements for the existing pines which have a limited lifespan. Unfortunately (sadly as well) only one survived. This was due to a lack of sufficient protection and water. Quite honestly the location is also not the best, but somebody else chose that. Farmer Jim Pyne, installed a water supply and built robust fencing around the area and gave us permission to replant. So, last year, we planted a further 15 young trees. Loving care was bestowed upon them by Geoff Porter and seven have survived. Ever the perfectionist, Geoff is planning on planting a few more to create a more balanced clump. For any who are eager to view the trees as they grow, I have to remind you that they are on private land. However all is not lost. Just hang around for another fifty years and you will be able to see them from Park Lane.

Mo's beautiful picture on the front cover of this edition shows the leat and nearby Poplar trees which will cease to exist with the flooding of the valley. The OVA is supportive of the Lower Otter Restoration Project. Unfortunately, these are the

consequences which are inevitable in order to achieve the aims of this project.

It only remains for me to wish you all a happy, and possibly more importantly, a healthy new year.

***Bob Wiltshire, Acting Chairman***



## **The Hayman Family of Bowd and Harpford**

We have received a request from an OVA member living in Cardiff who is researching her family history. Her paternal grandfather, Tom Hayman, lived in Pinn Cottage, Bowd and the family farmed locally. Her great grandfather, William Hayman, is buried at Harpford. If you have any information about this family please contact the Editor and we will pass on to the lady concerned.

## The Natural Environment Committee

This Committee has not met for about 2 years now, mainly because of Covid. During this time several of the committee members have moved away or have retired and so we are looking for people with a keen interest in their local environment who would like to join us. The main areas of interest for the Committee are natural history, wildlife and the environment. At the moment, we are involved in:

- a. *Creation of wildflower areas* within local villages and on road margins.
- b. *Estuary litter pick*. This is done most years.
- c. *Himalayan Balsam eradication*. Currently organised by the Clinton Devon Estates.
- d. *Climate change*. Surveys and monitoring the long-term effects of climate change in our area, perhaps particularly on the Estuary and local heaths.
- e. *Monitoring issues of concern regarding land usage*.

However, we would like to hear from anyone who has a keen interest in these or other areas - perhaps surveying for Water voles or the production of leaflets about local wildlife or making suggestions for sites to plant trees (perhaps to replace the lost ash) or extending litter picking over a wider area. So, we very much hope that some of you are interested in these aspects of the Otter Valley Association's remit and would wish to join us.

The committee used to meet about every two months to discuss matters that had arisen since the previous meeting. If you think this is for you, please contact either **Dr. Chris Hodgson** or **Geoff Porter**. Contact details on the inside back cover of this newsletter.

## The Holly and the Ivy

Holly and ivy have long been associated with mid-winter celebration. The Romans and Greeks celebrated ivy. Bacchus, the Roman god of agriculture and wine was often depicted with a wreath of ivy and grapevine around his head. Winners of poetry contests were also presented with a crown of ivy and the ancient Greeks awarded winning athletes with ivy wreaths. Later, Jesus was sometimes depicted

with a holly crown, the prickly leaves representing thorns and the berries drops of blood.

Long before being adopted by Christianity, the two plants evergreen leaves and red berries were a welcome sign of continuing life when most other plants had become dormant, brightening Yuletide. Later, the holly was seen to ward off evil spirits. Witches were believed to fly along hedges, so hollies were allowed to grow in order to block their path; the trees were left to grow when hedges were cut.

As a child a good friend of my fathers was a member of 'Friends of the Trees', established to both protect existing trees and to plant new ones. He always carried a sharp pocket knife and relished enthusiastically cutting through the stems of climbing ivy. It had long been believed that ivy was parasitic and therefore killed trees. This is not the case. Unlike mistletoe, ivy has its own root system whilst also using specialised roots/hairs to secularly anchor itself to trunk or wall. Thick ivy growth does however make inspection of trees difficult covering tree damage that might otherwise be seen.



Ivy does not produce flowers when growing on the ground. Only when the plant has climbed and matured will it bear flower and then berries. The plant is late to flower, September to November and therefore also late to fruit. Its flowers are now recognised an important late food source for bees, wasps and butterflies and the berries important food for birds whilst thick growth provides shelter for



insects, birds and bats. Comma, peacock and small tortoiseshell butterflies feed on its nectar but it is particularly loved by red admirals that feed up prior to hibernation. Another butterfly that is common in this area, which utilises both plants, is the holly blue (pictured on previous page). In the spring, emerging adults lay their eggs on the underside of holly flower buds whilst the second brood lay theirs on ivy. Ivy berries have a high fat content and are a favourite of blackbirds, thrushes, blackcaps and wood pigeons.

Finally, I cannot resist referring to an old friend, Culpeper, who wrote his 'The British Herbal' in 1653. It should be noted that in quantity, holly berries are now known to be toxic to dogs, cats and humans and ivy berries become increasingly toxic as they mature, both containing saponins. These can cause vomiting and diarrhoea. Ivy leaves are also mildly poisonous.

It would appear that a number of Mr Culpeper's remedies are based on legend passed on by both the Greeks and Romans. Plants are categorised by star signs. In his introduction to both plants he puts aside the need for description as both plants are so well known.

Firstly, the holly, which is classed as 'Saturnine'. Perhaps not surprisingly, based on the above, the berries were seen to have 'a strong faculty', used to 'expel wind', 'very profitable in the cholic', (which suggests they were given to infants), to 'purge the body of gross and clammy phlegm', to 'bind the body' to 'stop fluxes, bloody-fluxes (dysentery) and the terms in women' (terminate pregnancy?). The bark and leaves 'are excellent good being used in fomentations, (a poultice) for broken bones' and 'members out of joint'. He closes with reference to the belief, from Pliny, that the 'branches defend houses from lightening and men from witchcraft'.

Regarding ivy, Culpeper begins by stating that it does not flower until July with berries ripe until Christmas frosts. The plant again also falls under 'the dominion of Saturn'. Interestingly, many of his remedies state that it should be used in/with red wine. He also refers to Cato, also Roman, who 'saith that wine put into the cup, will soak through it (ivy) by reason of the antipathy there is between them'. A mixture of the two could also cure hangovers, - 'if one hath got a surfeit by drinking wine, his speedieth cure is to drink a draft of the same wine' with 'a handful of ivy leaves being first bruised, have been boiled'. This suggests that the connection between ivy and vines relates back to Bacchus.

A 'pugil, (small pinch), of the flowers – drank twice a day in red wine, helpeth the lask, (diarrhea) and bloody-flux'. 'it is an enemy of the nerves and sinews – taken inwardly and helpful unto them outwardly applied'. Referring again to Pliny 'yellow berries are good against the jaundice', (perhaps connected by colour)? It is also seen to prevent drunkenness if taken 'before one be set to drink hard'. White berries 'killeth worms in the belly' and are 'a remedy to prevent plague' and curing it 'if drinking thereof made into powder for two or three days together', and so he goes on with remedies that 'easeth the headache', healing 'green wounds' – 'burnings, scaldings' and 'ulcerations' and the 'stench therein'.

It does seem incredible now that so many of these 17<sup>th</sup> century remedies were still based on the folklore of 2,000 years ago. One wonders how many of these 'potions' made any positive difference or in fact made things worse, rather like blood letting? The cure for the plague certainly didn't seem to make the slightest difference.

I do hope you look upon ivy especially in a positive light as it is an important part of nurturing wildlife in your garden.

***Geoff Porter, Natural Environment Committee member***

## **'Birds of Conservation Concern 5' 2021**

The birds of the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man are assessed every few years and placed into one of three categories of increasing conservation importance – Green, Amber or Red.

More birds than ever before were placed on the Red list of greatest conservation concern in the latest report, published in 2021. At 70 species long, the Red list is nearly double the length of the one in the first report in 1996, showing that even more of our birds are in trouble.



The swift, house martin and greenfinch all moved onto the Red list because of population declines, joining other well-known birds such as puffins and cuckoos. In the case of the greenfinch, large declines are a result of a severe outbreak of a disease called trichomonosis. You can help limit the spread by **keeping your bird feeders clean**. Birds that migrate to Africa for the winter seem to be faring less well, while there has been no improvement in the status of farmland or upland birds; indeed, more such species have been Red listed. Waterbirds that spend the winter in the UK have declined in numbers, resulting in the goldeneye, smew, Bewick's swan and dunlin all moving to the Red list.

But it's not all bad news: dedicated conservation action has helped the white-tailed eagle move from Red to Amber.

The RSPB use the Red List to focus their conservation efforts "We use the Red list to identify which species need help immediately and to take action," says Andrew Stanbury, Conservation Scientist for the RSPB. "Prioritising is vital, as we don't have money and resources to work on everything. Even within the Red list, we can't prioritise action for all 70 species. In some cases we have to just keep a watch on a species until we have more resource to take action."

The RSPB can't do it alone, either. They work with many partners in the UK and around the world to improve the fortunes of birds and other wildlife, and everyone can play their part.

“The first step is considering what to do in your own outdoor spaces to create better habitats for wildlife,” says Andrew. “Those who have a garden could consider wildlife-friendly gardening - you could help by putting up a swift or house martin nestbox, creating a pond or planting pollen-rich flowers.”

“Most of the data we use is collected by volunteers – if you know a little bit about birds, you could get involved in data gathering with monitoring schemes, such as those run by the BTO in partnership with the RSPB.”

You can help the RSPB to find out how our garden birds are faring by taking part in the Big Garden Birdwatch and counting the birds that land in your garden for an hour between 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January. Find out more at [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

## Devon Countryside Access Forum

The importance of public rights of way, recreational trails and green spaces to health and well-being has been clearly demonstrated during the pandemic. For many people being able to get out and about and meet friends outside has been a lifeline.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a statutory forum with a specific remit to give independent advice on the improvement of public access to land and the enjoyment of such spaces. Each local authority is required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to establish a local access forum and the Devon forum has fifteen members, appointed by Devon County Council. The Forum covers all of Devon with the exception of the National Parks and Unitary authorities.

Members represent access users, land owners/managers and those with many other relevant interests such as conservation, tourism and planning.

Devon County Council is currently recruiting for members. Details about the work of the Forum and an application form are on [www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf) **The closing date is 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022.**

## Winter Talks Programme

The events below will commence at 7.30pm - doors will open at 7.00pm.

**The Building of Exeter Cathedral, Part 2: Bishop Grandisson and Beyond.**

**7.30pm Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January at The Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton**

**Speaker :- Mr John P. Allan - Exeter Cathedral Archaeologist**

**\*RESCHEDULED\***

**The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site - Lessons from The Past - 'Every rock has a history, every fossil tells a story'**

**7.30pm on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February at the Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton**

In 2001 UNESCO officially designated the land stretching from Orcombe Point at Exmouth, Devon, to Studland Bay in Dorset as a World Heritage Site. This means it has been globally recognised as having ***Outstanding Universal Value*** in relation to ***The Natural History of the Earth and its Processes***.

The rocks that make up this extensive stretch of coastline and the fossils contained within, when interpreted correctly, offer us a high-definition narrative of the events and processes that have taken place over a period of some 186 million years of geological time. Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (published between 1830-1833) introduced the famous maxim, ***'The present is the key to the past'***. Today, with the insight we now have in relation to the geology of the Jurassic Coast, perhaps it is highly appropriate that we now ask the question ***'Is the past the key to both the present and future?'***

The intention of this illustrated talk by Chris Woodward, Jurassic Coast Ambassador, is to put this immense stretch of time in to something that is, at least in part comprehensible, as well as highlighting key elements from each of the geological periods that distinguish them from each other. Accompanying the above will be a selection of rock and fossil specimens that are material examples from across this expanse of time.

It is important to state that this talk is most certainly ***not*** aimed at a specialist audience level but more specifically at individuals with a general interest in the World Heritage Site who also wish to find out a little more about the what's, why's,

when's and how's of its past and the probable relevance of this to the future of life on this planet.....and all within an hour!

### 'An Evening with David White'

**7.30pm Monday 21st March at The Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton**

To brighten up our winter evenings OVA member David White will talk us through a selection of his wonderful local wildlife photography

*Please note that to comply with current social distancing recommendations seating will be suitably spaced, the hall will be ventilated and, to avoid close contact, no refreshments will be served. We would request that you wear a mask to enter the hall and have the correct entry fee available (£2.00 for members, £3.00 for non-members).*

Those of you who attended the **Mapping the Otter Valley** talk by Brian Carpenter in October may be interested in some additional information and resources he has provided:

*"I mentioned a couple of websites which can be used to access maps online, but the main one which members may wish to explore is 'Know Your Place' [www.kypwest.org.uk](http://www.kypwest.org.uk) which has tithe and Ordnance Survey maps for Devon, as well as some other maps and aerial photographs. Devon tithe maps are also on the Devon Historic Environment Record website <https://www.devon.gov.uk/historicenvironment/the-devon-historic-environment-record/>.*

*It's also worth knowing about another one which I didn't mention, which is the National Library of Scotland website, which has a vast collection of Ordnance Survey maps for the whole country <https://maps.nls.uk/>.*

Brian has also suggested that he would be happy to host a 'field trip' – perhaps next Autumn – hopefully we will be able to take him up on his offer.

## Nature Reserve car park improvements agreed and work set to start in 2022

Over the past couple of years there has been an initiative planned to revamp the parking across the Pebblebed Heaths. At the end of October, EDDC's Planning Committee approved the first phase of improvements for Joney's Cross Car Park, Four Firs Car Park and the roadside parking at Stowford and Frying Pans.

The improvements have been designed to improve access for visitors whilst protecting the rare and vulnerable habitats and wildlife found on the heaths. Redesigned layouts and improved surfacing will enable visitors to drive and park more safely, encouraging people to make use of the parking areas rather than parking at the roadside or blocking passing places. Measures are also being put in place to reduce antisocial behaviour. New signs will also help visitors explore the heaths and help promote what a special place it is and how people can help care for it during their visit.

The parking areas across the heaths are owned by *Clinton Devon Estates* and managed by the *Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust* but this improvement work is being funded by *South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership*. As Councillor Martin Wrigley, Chair of the South East Devon Habitat Regulation Executive Committee explains: "The improvements to the surfacing, layout, drainage and visibility of the existing car parking are much-needed due to increased use from people enjoying the Heath. These changes will help people to park appropriately and so will also protect the internationally important wildlife and heritage sites for the future."

The Pebblebed Heaths team are thrilled to get the go-ahead to start this crucial work which was put on hold during 2020 due to the pandemic. We have been looking forward to delivering these improvements since the design work started in 2019. The Pebblebed Heaths National Nature Reserve forms an iconic part of the East Devon landscape and is incredibly important for both wildlife and local people. Most visitors arrive by car so having entrance points to the nature reserve that are welcoming and do this unique place justice will make it clear to people that they have arrived somewhere special and worthy of care.

Contractors are being appointed to carry out the work at these four locations. This is planned to start early in 2022. We are also finalising the designs for the improvements at the Warren, Woodbury Castle and Estuary View, the works to

these three locations will happen later in 2022 and the remainder of the car park improvements after that. The work will be staged to minimise disruption to visitors, so that there are other parking options nearby whilst the ones undergoing work are closed. Prior warning of all car park closures to enable this work will be publicised on our social media pages, through our Friends of the Commons email newsletter and notices on site.

**Kim Strawbridge, Reserves Manager *Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust***  
[kim.strawbridge@clintondevon.com](mailto:kim.strawbridge@clintondevon.com)

## **Northern creek network at Lower Otter site nearly complete**

Work to create creeks to the northern end of the Lower Otter Restoration Project site is now nearly complete.





Excavation of the network at the northern end of the site – north of South Farm Road – is now largely completed. Next spring, creeks will be excavated in the south of the site, connecting to the north under the new South Farm Road bridge.

Together, the total excavated length of the creek network already exceeds 3km. These will evolve naturally over time once connected to the Otter. One of the islands on the floodplain is also nearing completion, this will act as a refuge for birds at high tide.

Dan Boswell, Environment Agency project manager for the site, said: “When the creeks are all complete we will have a network that will reconnect the estuary to its historic floodplain.

“The creeks will be the ‘veins’ of the estuary, bringing new life to the valley floor, attracting a wide variety of wildlife to the wetland habitat and enabling floodwater to drain down more quickly.”

The Lower Otter Restoration Project is part of the €26 million Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts project, which also has a similar scheme underway in the Saône Valley in Normandy, France. In Devon, it will see current grassland created during historic reclamation work replaced with 55 hectares of intertidal mudflat and saltmarsh, plus almost three hectares of broadleaved woodland and 1.5km of hedgerow.

***Karen Baxter | Communications & Engagement Manager – Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (PACCo): Lower Otter Restoration Project***

## **The Queen’s Green Canopy**

The Queen’s Green Canopy (QGC) is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to “**Plant a Tree for the Jubilee**”.

Everyone from individuals to Scout and Girlguiding groups, villages, cities, counties, schools and corporates will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environment by planting trees during the official planting season between

October to March. Tree planting will commence again in October 2022, through to the end of the Jubilee year.

With a focus on planting sustainably, the QGC will encourage planting of trees to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, which will benefit future generations. As well as inviting the planting of new trees, *The Queen's Green Canopy* will dedicate a network of 70 Ancient Woodlands across the United Kingdom and identify 70 Ancient Trees to celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years of service.

Tree planting is a key tool in action against the climate emergency we face. Planting mindfully is key to ensuring the biodiversity and special qualities of Devon are not lost by a drive to plant 'as many trees as possible'. To help guide this action the new Devon Local Nature Partnership guidelines, to help promote the conservation and enhancement of the character of the county, have been developed:

### ***'The Right Place for the Right Tree'***

It is important to make sure that the right tree is established in the right place, using the right method, for the right reasons, and with the right aftercare. This means increasing tree cover whilst protecting what is special and valued in the landscape and keeping the environmental benefits already being delivered.

While most new tree cover is a positive thing, new trees in the wrong locations could result in unintended negative consequences. For example, establishing trees in wildflower-rich grasslands, heathlands or peatlands, could actually reduce biodiversity in these areas or even release more carbon than will be stored by the planted trees. Poorly designed monoculture plantations across swathes of land can change the diversity and special qualities of our beautiful Devon landscapes, including wide open spaces and views.

There are lots of things to think about when planning a tree planting or woodland creation scheme. This can seem overwhelming, but guidance and support is available – whether you're a farmer, landowner, community group, business, agent or an individual planning a tree planting or woodland creation scheme. The DLNP guide will provide something for everyone, helping you avoid any unintended negative impacts and design an environmentally sensitive scheme. For more information visit [www.devonlnp.org.uk](http://www.devonlnp.org.uk)



Welcome to our **Walk Programme** for January, February and March 2022.

We start 2022 with Jon Roseway leading a gentle stroll starting in Budleigh and covering an assortment of paths including coast, railway and quiet lanes.

Our Walk Leaders have offered a great collection of walks, some new and some old favourites as we try to balance out a programme which includes both local walks and further afield over the next three months

Please check the website for any updates or alterations, even if you know where you are going, as we are all encountering a changing situation week by week. As a precaution we are asking our Walk Leaders to keep a log at the start of the walk with names and contact details and would ask for your co-operation with this. If a walk requires booking it is indicated on the individual walk.

Enjoy your walking and a Happy New Year from the Walk Team:  
***Penny and Paul Kurowski, Jon Roseway and Jane Connick.***

# Walks Programme – January to March 2022

Please consult the OVA Website for late alterations or additional information.

All OS references are to Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale Explorer maps

Monday 3 January - 10.00am - 6 miles - 3.5 hours.

## ***'Around the town'***

Meet: Budleigh Salterton Public Hall CP (OS 115, SY 061 820)

Let's start the New Year as we mean to carry on ... with a gentle walk skirting around Budleigh Salterton on as few roads as possible. There will be plenty of coast path, the old railway line, footpaths and quiet lanes.

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway 01395 488739 / 0788 7936280

Tuesday 11 January - 10.00 am - 5.3 miles - 3 hours.

## ***'A different Salterton?'***

Meet: Woodbury Village CP (OS 115, SY 012 872)

The walk will use footpaths, tracks and lanes from Woodbury to Woodbury Salterton with a stop for coffee.

Walk Leader: Sarah Westacott 01395 277644 / 0770 6078143

Tuesday 25 January - 10.00am - 5 miles - 2.5 hours.

## ***'Orcombe Circular'***

Meet: (OS 115, SY 018 808) Footpath sign on Douglas Avenue, Exmouth, near house number 64, opposite Dunsford Close. There is plenty of on-road parking here.

Through the countryside to Exmouth Seafront (possibility of toilets and refreshments). Then up to Orcombe Point and along the coast path to Devon Cliffs Holiday Park. From there we visit Littleham before returning to our start point.

Lots of paved paths but also some off-road muddy bits – wear suitable footwear and bring a walking pole or two if you have them.

Walk Leaders: Penny and Paul Kurowski 01395 742942 / 07792 619748

Wednesday 2 February - 10.00am - 5.5 miles - 3 hours.

***'Coast and Common'***

Meet: Budleigh Salterton Public Hall CP (OS 115, SY 060 821)

The walk will start from the Public Hall and head to the coast path and then inland to Dalditch and Knowle. Stop for coffee.

Walk Leader: Sarah Westacott 01395 277644 / 0770 6078143

Wednesday 9 February - 10.00am - 6 miles - 3 hours.

***'The Hunter's Path and Teign Gorge'***

Meet: Fingle Bridge roadside parking (OL 28, SX 7375 8980)

Contact the walk leader if you wish to car share.

We walk the classic Hunter's path from Fingle Bridge with fine views towards Chagford and Dartmoor beyond. Passing just below Castle Drogo we descend to the River Teign and follow it upstream to Dogmarsh Bridge before looping back to the gorge where we walk downstream along the riverside path to the start. Optional lunch at the pub.

Walk Leader: Jon Roseway 01395 488739 / 0788 7936280

Tuesday 15 February - 10.00am - 5.5 miles - 3 hours.

***'Railway Reminisce'***

Meet: Newton Poppleford Playing Field CP (OS 115, SY 089 899)

The railway may have been gone for over 50 years but it is still possible to follow much of the route. We will look at the station site in Newton Poppleford and then follow the track up the River Otter to Tipton St John, where there was a junction, station and level crossing. Up river to the 5-arch bridge and Tipton Mill, then return along the route of the Sidmouth branch to Harpford. Return over the Red Bridge to the start, or optional extension to continue on the railway track through Harpford Woods to the Bowd for a pub lunch and back to the start by bus.

Walk Leader: Haylor Lass 01395 568786

Thursday 24 February - 10.00am - 8.5 miles - 5 hours.

***'Shute Hill and River Yarty'***

Meet: Shute Hill CP (OS 116, SY 258 973)

A walk-through Shute Hill Woods before crossing the busy A35 and making our way up to Danes Hill with views over the countryside. We then drop down to Beckford Bridge and follow the river Yarty to Higher Water and back to the start point. Bring a picnic lunch.

Walk Leader: Graham Knapton 01395 445872

Wednesday 2 March - 10.30am – 9 miles - 5 hours.

***'Early Spring walk on Dartmoor'***

Meet: Bennett's Cross CP (OS 28, SX 679 816) (near Warren House Inn with nearest town Mortonhampstead)

The walk will head towards Water Hill, Chagford Common, Lettaford, Hookney Tor and Vitifer Tin Mines. Stop for coffee and lunch.

Walk Leader: Sarah Westacott 01395 277644 / 0770 6078143

Tuesday 8 March - 10.00am - 5 miles - 3 hours.

***'Ottery and Spring Gardens'***

Meet: Canaan Way car park, Ottery St Mary, (OS 115, SY 095 955) charge £2 with East Devon's Winter Shoppers' Special. What3words [///hill.unspoiled.lofts](https://www.what3words.com/#!/hill.unspoiled.lofts).

From Ottery, we'll head south along the Otter, then eastwards through Wiggaton to explore an interesting woodland garden, hopefully with spring bulbs and other colour. Return to Ottery will be via the grand entrance of Knightstone.

***Booking required via the leader (details below) opens 7 days in advance.***

Walk Leader: Ross Hussey

Bookings: [rdandamhussey@hotmail.com](mailto:rdandamhussey@hotmail.com) or 01395 227991.

Mobile number for contact on the day only is 07902 255915.

Thursday 17 March - 10.00am - 8.5 miles

### ***'Patteson's Way'***

Meet: Feniton Church (OS 115, SY 109 994) parking in the village hall car park opposite the entrance drive to the church.

(Note: this is best approached by car from the old A30 at Fenny Bridges, and not the Feniton signposted route off the new A30).

This is a newly developed route to celebrate the 150th anniversary of John Patteson, who came from Feniton, went to school in Ottery, served curacy at Alphington, and became the first Bishop of Melanesia, where he was martyred. Field paths to Alphington, some roads and tracks to Ottery St Mary, where we'll stop for lunch (pub or picnic), back by minor roads and riverside path to the Patteson Cross on the old A30. Short stretch alongside the main road, then field paths and minor roads back to start.

Leaflets about the route available at Feniton Church, or downloadable from [www.mmuk.net](http://www.mmuk.net).

Walk Leader: Haylor Lass 01395 568786 / 07966 885049

Thursday 24 March - 10.00am - 7 miles - 3 hours.

### ***'A walk from Broadhembury and a glide back'***

Meet: Broadhembury Village centre opposite the Drewe Arms Pub (OS 115, ST 101 048)

Walk clockwise from Broadhembury village to Kerswell, Orway and via Saint Hill to Rhododendron Wood and then on to North Hill passing the gliding club before returning to Broadhembury. The walk should afford magnificent views and is on quiet lanes and footpaths that may be muddy in places when wet.

We will stop for coffee, please bring your own drink.

There should be an opportunity to have a drink and /or lunch at the Drewe Arms in Broadhembury after the walk.

Walk Leader: Jane Kewley 01395 445598 / 07966 280147

Tuesday 29 March - 10.00am - about 8 miles - further details to follow.

### ***'Up, up, up into the hills'***

An energetic walk up into the hills above Bradninch and Silverton – not for the faint hearted!

Walk Leader: Fran Dike 01297 20695 / 07977 057546

*The following walks took place in accordance with the guidelines and restrictions in place at the time. All Walk Reports appear on the website - many thanks to contributors.*

### **Wednesday, 29th September 'Avon Dam and Redlake Tramway – a Dartmoor walk' with Penny and Paul Kurowski**

Our group of fourteen walkers arrived at the Shipley Bridge starting point in just four cars - possibly an OVA record. The leaders had sorted this out to avoid our cars filling what is a fairly small and popular parking area. This turned out to be a good call as we arrived to find a substantial chunk cordoned off for resurfacing work, though plenty of room was left for us. Then the bad news dawned on us - a Pay and Display machine has been installed!

During the preamble Paul promised us plenty of interesting historical information and true to his word he started right there by telling us that the parking area and 20ft retaining brick wall were the remains of a naphtha distillery from the mid-1800s. Peat was transported by horse-drawn trucks from the Red Lake area using the Zeal Tramway, which we were to walk along later in the day. Naphtha distilled from the peat was probably made into candles, but the venture only lasted for four years. In the 1880s the same infrastructure was re-used to ship china clay down from Brent Moor, but again, for only a few years.





We set off in glorious sunshine, thankful for the marked change in the weather from the torrential rain of the preceding days. The River Avon was in spate and an impressive sight where it was squeezed between rock walls into a rushing torrent. The access road up to the dam follows the river and the narrow valley is filled with trees and rhododendron bushes in stark contrast to the surrounding moorland. We stopped at a rectangular walled enclosure that turned out to be the ruins of a mansion built for the Victorian owner of the estate. It later served as a Youth Hostel but when the dam was built it was deemed too dangerous for occupation were the dam to burst and was demolished by the army in 1957.



Further upstream, the dam itself is a rather plain and functional design. On this occasion there was an impressive flow of water over the spillway. The reservoir is not very extensive and we soon rounded the head of it and crossed the upper Avon river by a clapper bridge. We started climbing the side of the valley and had good views of the imprint of Man's hand on the landscape, be it Bronze Age to Medieval field enclosures, granite crosses marking the estate boundaries of the Petre family (who had profited greatly from the dissolution of the monasteries in the mid-1500s), mounds and pits from tin workings, or modern-looking pipework used to transport china clay slurry in the 20th century. Another industrial relic, a well-preserved pumping station on the brow of the hill made a good spot for lunch sitting on the low walls of two small clay settling ponds. This was part of the Red Lake China Clay works transport system by pipeline from the quarry a few miles

away (marked by a distinctive conical spoil heap) and in the other direction to a factory in Ivybridge. The quarry was operating sporadically from 1910 until 1932.



The rest of our route followed the Zeal Tramway back to the carpark. Its wooden rails are long gone, but the granite sleepers, some of them still showing iron bolts, are preserved and make an easy track to follow across the moor. Back at the cars a mobile refreshments van had appeared and provided us with a refreshing cup of tea. Paul and Penny received our thanks for the meticulous planning and research that made the walk so enjoyable.

***Jon Roseway***

## Tuesday, 2nd November 'Beautiful Escot' with Ted Swan

On a beautiful sunny morning in November, 15 walkers left Ottery St Mary car park to follow two rivers, the Tale and the Otter, one of which is very familiar the other less so.

Our route passed in front of the Tudor mansion, Cadhay House, and we were surprised to learn that two of our group had been married there a few years ago. We then walked down a lovely avenue of Lime trees and eventually reached the River Tale.



All would normally be fine, but unfortunately the sheep had got to the bridge first and blocked it completely. A few of the walkers attempted to become shepherds - without any success - the sheep would not budge. We can only assume they had accessed the bridge from either side, met in the middle, and did not know how to reverse back down the steps!

A few intrepid walkers managed to cross the bridge by negotiating the rails but the majority of the group consulted their maps and found a simpler route via a lane.



Once we managed to get past the sheep, we crossed a field only to be met with a huge puddle which stretched right across the gateway - there was no other choice than boots off and wade through amidst much laughter - those who were wearing wellies laughed the most.

We re-joined the diverted group and continued on our way through Escot past the original railway line which used to run to Exmouth.

We stopped for lunch on a lovely sunny bank and it was so warm we could have stayed all afternoon, but onwards to follow the River Otter which was lovely but uneventful.

Many thanks to Ted for a great walk which had lots of laughter and sunshine.

***Jane Connick (photos by Heather Fereday and Iain Ure)***

## **Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> November "Castle Neroche Iron-Age Hillfort" with Iain Ure & Dee Woods**

We'd never heard of Castle Neroche, even though we pass within a couple of miles of this impressive iron-age hill fort every time we travel along the A303!

The walk started in a car park at the top of the hill, and we passed through the edge of the hillfort and steeply down through glorious woods which just hung onto the last of their Autumn colour. Our walk continued past isolated farms and cottages to our coffee break in a little hamlet. Onwards to Staple Fitzpaine, a tiny village of 189 inhabitants (thank you Wikipedia). Here, at the cross-roads, there were some sandstone boulders which according to legend had been thrown there from Castle Neroche!

We visited the Grade 1 listed church of St Peter - well worth a visit, the crenelated tower is quite unusual, and there are several other notable features.



From here it was a gradual undulating climb through woods, muddy fields and Mount Fancy Farm nature reserve. The nature reserve is managed for butterflies, and would be glorious in summer! All we saw were lots of anthills, and two lovely Exmoor ponies who decided to follow our party for a while.

Eventually, after a final steep climb, during which we encountered dragons (someone had got creative with their carving of a fallen tree) we were back at the hillfort, which commands some amazing distant views.



It is also the site of a Norman Motte and Bailey castle. There would have been scope to explore more, but the weather was deteriorating, so after the final treat of seeing a couple of passing deer, we returned to our cars.

A super November walk, thank you Dee and Iain.

***Penny and Paul Kurowski***

## The Otter Valley Association

### Executive Officers (01395)

President	Haylor Lass	568786
Acting Chairman	Bob Wiltshire	444395
Hon Secretary	Roger Saunders	443248
Hon Treasurer	Martin Smith	442333

### Executive Committee Members

Natural Environment Chair	Chris Hodgson	01404 815604
Planning Chair	<b><i>vacancy</i></b>	
Membership Secretary	Clive Bowman	446892
	<a href="mailto:membership@ova.org.uk">membership@ova.org.uk</a>	
	George Maddaford	446077
	Jon Roseway	488739
Talks Organiser	Peter Baldwin	567599
Events Organiser	<b><i>vacancy</i></b>	
Minutes Secretary	Rosemary Jerrard	442050
Newsletter Editor	Jacqui Baldwin	567599
	<a href="mailto:jacquibaldwin@btinternet.com">jacquibaldwin@btinternet.com</a>	
Natural Environment	Chris Hodgson	01404 815604
	Geoff Porter	567055

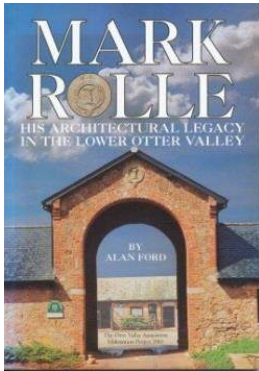
### Parish Representatives (to whom concerns should be addressed initially)

Budleigh Salterton	George Maddaford	as above
East Budleigh	Jon Roseway	as above
Otterton	Pat & Geoff Porter	as above
Newton Poppleford	Haylor Lass	as above
Colaton Raleigh	<i>vacancy</i>	

### Other Contacts

Webmaster	Martin Smith	as above
History Advisor	David Daniel	445960
Walks Organisers	Jane Connick	233614
	Jon Roseway	as above
Publications	Jon Roseway	as above

## 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 overview of how a large landed estate was managed in the last 40 years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

£4.95 from Budleigh Salterton Tourist Information Centre

Or visit [www.ova.org.uk](http://www.ova.org.uk)



#### **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.

£3.00 from Budleigh Salterton Tourist Information Centre

Or visit [www.ova.org.uk](http://www.ova.org.uk)

### **Leaflets**

The OVA also publish a number of leaflets about the history, flora & fauna and walking in the lower Otter Valley. They can usually be found in the Tourist Information Centres and in other outlets around the valley.