

January – March 2010

A new year, new decade and new programme with a gentle start after the festivities. Hope you have made a resolution to walk regularly – with the group or on your own, and do encourage former colleagues who might be interested to join us.

Sadly, as I mentioned last time, Barbara and John are resting from leading but fortunately Alan Leadbetter, Pete Cann and Christine Ahlheid with Jarka Sik have volunteered to contribute walks to the programme.

The group will have its fifth anniversary at the end of February and by that time we will have had 89 walks with over 1400 participants. Our first walk was around the Exeter Green Circle and we will do it again in the Charity Event on May 5th in aid of Exeter Hospice. This is a UERSA event, not just the walking group, so please encourage as many members and potential members as possible to join us.

Trevor **January 2010**
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- *2.15 pm Thursday, 14 January* *Topsham Tea Walk* *3 miles*

Meet at Topsham Station for an afternoon stroll followed by tea and cake in a local café.

- There are **trains** from Exeter St Davids (Central 3 minutes later) at 1.18 and 1.48, arriving 1.32 and 2.02.
- There are **buses** (No 57) from the Bus Station at 1.20, 1.35 and 1.50. The journey time is 17 minutes and there is a stop near the railway crossing.
- Parking in Holman Way car park.

This is a flat easy walk from the station northwards and initially inland towards the motorway passing through the (new) University cricket ground, reaching the river at the Retreat Boatyard. Then along the river to the Quay, the Strand, Goat Walk, Bowling Green Marsh and back to the car park. We should be back by 4pm in time for tea and cake in Fore Street. Although flat and easy, boots and poles are advised for part of the walk.

Trevor

- **10.15 am Wednesday, 27 January** **Okehampton** **8.5 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at Okehampton Station car park (GR 591942)

Okehampton Station – Fatherford Viaduct – West Cleave – Scarey Tor – Row Tor – Red-e-ven Brook – Meldon Viaduct – Okehampton Golf Course – Okehampton Station.

Pete Cann

- *10.00 am Monday, 8 February Maidencombe to Babbacombe 3 miles*

Meet at the car park above Maidencombe beach (GR 922674).

A gentle walk with a few undulations along the cliff tops finishing at the Angels Tea Room for coffee or lunch. Return by bus to Maidencombe.

Trevor

- **10.15 am Tuesday, 16 February** **South Zeal Circular Walk** **8 miles**

PUB LUNCH

Start at South Zeal on the old A30 at Owlsfoot Garage (loads of parking) GR 648932 [Marked Hillfield on the Dartmoor Explorer map.]

Track through fields to very interesting triple row of stones due east of Cosdon Beacon. Bridleway to Raybarrow Pool and then east to Shilstone Tor. Footpath to Lower Shilstone then quite lane to Wonson. Brilliant unspoiled pub at Wonson for lunch break.

Then part of the Dartmoor Way along Deave Lane to Throwleigh, then footpath to East Week, bridle path and lane to South Zeal, where there are tea facilities at the Oxenham Arms.

Pedometer said 8 miles, time was 4.5 hours including lunch stop.

Lovely mix of terrain and scenery. Should be ok after wet weather.

Tom Davies

- **10.30 am Wednesday, 10 March** **Castle Drogo to Chagford and return** **5.5 miles**
Pub lunch or own packed lunch

Start: NT Carpark at Castle Drogo Grid Ref: SX 725902

An easy pace walk: Castle Drogo to River Teign. Two Moors Way to Chagford Bridge, Dartmoor Way through to Chagford for lunch. Return along the river & up to Castle Drogo.

Christine Ahlheid

- **10.15 am Wednesday, 24 March** **North of Stoke Woods** **7 miles**

PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Start : Stoke Woods car park (SX924957)

Terrain : Footpaths and lanes

Route : Stoke Woods car park - Stoke Hill Farm - Stoke Post - Huxham - Stoke Cannon - Brampford Speke - Stafford

Bridge - Stoke Woods car park

Mike and Suzanne

RECENT WALKS 2009

Manaton, 24h September



A nicely balanced group of five ladies and five gents set out from Manaton Church on a beautifully fine clear day. We were expertly guided by Tom Davies on a well-chosen circular walk, enjoying distant views in all directions and passing a good selection of well-known landmarks, not least Bowerman's Nose, Houndtor and the Medieval Village, Haytor and the Quarry and the woods at the top end of Lustleigh Cleave.

As well as the Bowerman, those with good imaginations were able to spy out his stoney-faced henchmen hiding along our path. Tom's pedometer obeyed its usual version of special relativity - recording 5.5 miles for the 7.5 mile walk. Perhaps we should transfer it to someone with shorter legs.

David

Eggesford, 8th October



The rail trip to Eggesford saw a total of 20 people getting on the train at various stops and two more were waiting at the station.

We started up the hill to the church where we had a brief stop and then on along the Tarka trail through a beautiful rural setting with bright sunshine (unlike the previous VERY wet day). (When I told them that John had given two possible dates, today and the day before, but I had chosen the former, I was assumed to have mystical powers.) The walking was pleasant and in no time at all it seemed we were at the Lymington Arms for lunch. The executive group ate inside and the rest bought drinks and ate outside. Since the latter took considerably less time than the former, the group divided and an advance party set out on route B back to Eggesford (avoiding the mud in view of the dire warnings).

On approaching the station, another bifurcation took place with three going up the hill to the Garden Centre and the rest down the hill to the railway. At the railway, the barrier (now down) yet another schism occurred. The first two to arrive looked so forlorn that the driver of the train got out and opened the barriers for them. Unfortunately the remainder (including Beattie) were too far behind to avail themselves of this gallantry and so had to wait for those who had followed Plan A with John. This was claimed to be the most attractive part of the walk and with no mud at all!

Everyone enjoyed the walk and the train trip and eagerly await John and Frankie's promise to find another from Eggesford.

Trevor

Exmouth, 15 October



On a slightly cloudy October day with just a hint of Autumn in the air, twenty plus walkers and a four legged friend set out from Sue and Patrick's house for a mystery trip around Exmouth. In no time at all, we had left the house behind and were crossing High Land of Orcombe, as it is shown on the map, and heading towards the Coastal path from where we had a magnificent view out to sea and across to the mouth of the Exe.

Our route continued downwards on the coastal path until we reached the new lifeboat station on the seafront. Coffee, (for those sensible enough to make a flask) was taken on the conveniently placed tables at the barbecue area on the Maer, just behind the sand dunes. There was much talk of choirs and music in general. I wonder if singers like walking and vice versa?

Our walk continued inland along Madeira walk until we emerged once more onto the promenade by the yet to be completed Indoor bowling arena. The views this time were over to Dawlish Warren and the sun came out to spur us on. Many people hadn't walked around the Marina development before and it was pleasant to be able to get so close to the water (mud because the tide was out!) now that a walkway has been built between the houses and the estuary.

After lunch, taken on the Imperial recreation ground with the view now changed to one looking north, up the Exe, we continued on the path which eventually leads to Exeter. Most of the group turned off down a small twitchel into the Park on Carter Avenue but the trilling of a mobile phone alerted us to the fact that some of the party, including our four legged friend, were misplaced having passed the turning and were heading up the Exe valley to Lymptstone! Sue quickly put them on the right route.

The final part of the journey which completed this triangular walk took us through Phear Park, past the ancient fallen Luccombe Oak, on to the disused railway track and back to Sue and Patrick's for welcome mugs of tea and scrumptious cakes.

Thanks to Sue and Patrick for taking us on a walk with wonderful views and such varied scenery. Exmouth revealed in an altogether different light!

Note Twitchel – a small pathway or shortcut in the Midlands

Mary MacMullen

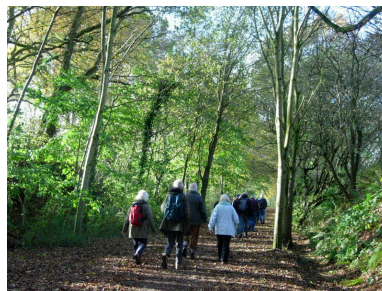
Bickleigh Mill, 3 November

This walk needs no report! Suffice to say that Mike's reminder warned that it 'could be muddy in places'. Many thanks to David Oates for the wonderful snaps. One member reported on the next walk that she imagined that David was just hoping someone would fall in. What a walking group we have – everyone had a wonderful time! Thanks, Mike, for yet another challenge!





Grand Western Canal, Tiverton, 20 November



After a wobble with a late bus, seventeen (with rumours of another) gathered at the Tiverton end of the canal on a stunningly bright and sunny day sandwiched between days of heavy rain and gales. (Such a propitious event that some were moved to speculate that the leader must have made a pact with the devil!) Some had seen a new face running off down the canal looking for this group but suggested that, because he could run, it couldn't be one of ours. Eventually he met us as he ran back and was relieved to discover that he was after all one of us!

It was a leisurely walk along the canal with beautiful autumn colours and a very relaxing ambiance. Just before the 'swan's neck' at Halberton we cut inland along a busy road and then turned down a lane to join the old railway line route – now a cycle path. This took us back into Tiverton at Cowley Moor and we headed for the Tea Shoppe which had been highly recommended by the leader. As 10 pressed into the Shoppe we were greeted by a sigh of 'Oh, No!' – they were busy and very short staffed!

When it became clear that lunch could be a little while, Ruth and I, who had an appointment, settled for a delicious ginger beer & lime and left leaving the more persistent hoping that their lunch would arrive in time for 'high tea'. As I left I noticed a cartoon pinned up: a customer was slumped over a table with three others looking at him. The punch-line was 'With the service in this place he could have been dead for three days!'.

Sorry about the lunch, folks, but the walk was fantastic.

Trevor

Escot, 1 December



On Tuesday 1st December, a grey, overcast and rather chilly day, some 30 intrepid members turned up at Escot House for the, by now traditional, walk round the estate and return for lunch in the Coach House restaurant, where early birds had ordered turkey. One person, fearing the worst, came in welly boots, which did come in handy at one point where the road was entirely flooded. Our eagle-eyed photographer spotted a well-camouflaged set of raised outdoor toilets, but no-one would pose for him in them! Fortunately there were no accidents, no stragglers, and nobody got lost. We took advantage of the newish footbridge over the river near the A30 which shortened the walk somewhat, and returned in good spirits after our two and a bit hour stroll to a slap-up meal

Alastair Logan

Widecombe, 15 December

5 people turned up. It was a pity that there were no views to be had, but the worst of the weather held off until we were back in the tea rooms in Widecombe at about 2.30. The moor was surprisingly dry and we only got lost once. My pedometer registered 9.2 m and Pete's GPS system registered 8.7 m.

Tom Davies