

UERSA WALKING GROUP

April - June 2010

Dates: Mon, 12th April (Long)
Wed, 26th May (Medium)

Fri, 23rd April (Medium)
Tues, 8th June (Medium)

Wed, 5th May CHARITY EVENT
Wed / Thurs, 16/17 June (Long)

The next three months include a couple of special events.

On May 5th, UERSA organises a Charity Event including a walk around the Exeter Green Circle. Please respond positively when the call comes!

Last Year's Midsummer Madness has been eased to Midsummer Meander in the Fowey area on 16 / 17 June. Our last two 'specials' have had very good weather and we hope our luck holds for walks along a beautiful part of the South Cornwall coast.

Hope to see you on one of the events.

Trevor March 2010

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- 10.00 am Monday, 12 April** **Newbridge, Dartmoor** **9 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at the car park at Newbridge (SX 711 708)

Newbridge (River Dart) – Spitchwick – Spitchwick Manor – Lower Town – Ponsworthy – Jordon – East Shallowford – Corndon Tor – Cave Penny Memorial – Mel Tor – Dr Blackall's Drive – Newbridge. (approx 9.25 miles)

An easy first half mile but the route has a couple of steep hills (one very steep climb) Lower Town - Leusdon Church. Easy walking until East Shallowford then another climb to Corndon Tor, then downhill for the rest of the walk.

Beautiful views from Mel Tor of the Dart valley.

Pete

- 10.30 am Friday, 23 April** **Two Bridges** **4.5 miles**
Pub lunch

Start: quarry car park opposite Two Bridges Hotel (Grid 609751)

In the middle of wild Dartmoor but a relatively gentle walk in the valley of the West Dart River. Good path rising gently to Wistman's Wood, the most famous ancient wood of stunted oak on the moor. After exploring the wood the walk continues on rougher terrain above the wood to the weir across the river where the Devonport leat, built in the 1790's to provide water for the docks, starts its journey.

The return follows the leat, where you will be convinced that the apparent upward slope of the leat as seen from across the valley is an optical illusion! The route crosses the leat from right hand bank to left about halfway to the pine woods, which it traverses, then follows the marked pathway back to the main road near the Hotel.

For the energetic, the return route detouring over Beardown Tors is well worth the climb with magnificent views from the top.

The whole walk takes 2-2.5 hours even going over the Tors, which leads to the chance of a pub lunch for those who wish. If the Two Bridges Hotel doesn't appeal, there is the East Dart Hotel at Postbridge or the Warren Inn further along the road home.

- 10.00 am Wednesday, 5 May** **Exeter Green Circle** **CHARITY EVENT**

This is a Charity Event starting from Piazza Terracina, Exeter Canal Basin, for the whole of UERSA. I hope as many members as possible from the Walking Group will participate – a chance for the less frequent walkers to get moving. The event is based upon the Exeter Green Circle route with the option of a 1, 2, 3 or 4 mile walk on a flat section or more (up to 12 miles).

Full details will be circulated separately by UERSA.

- **10.15 am Wednesday, 26 May** **Eggesford** **6 miles** **PACKED (OR PUB) LUNCH**

Assemble at Eggesford Station at 10.15.

From the station we go up towards the garden centre, past the church then down towards the river Taw which we cross and pass under the railway line. Then we cross the A377 on the edge of the forest, using footpaths to Southcott Cross and quiet lanes to Chawleigh. We will probably stop for lunch here, either bring a packed lunch or divert into a pub. Then back by lanes, paths and muddy fields to the A377 with a final track up through an attractive valley towards Nethercott and on lanes back to Eggesford. Catching either the 15.07 or 16.07 back towards Exeter. About 6.3 miles with some ups and downs.

(The 08.53 from Exmouth passes through Topsham at 09.05, Exeter Central at 09.20 and St Davids at 09.27, Crediton at 09.38 and reaches Eggesford at 10.08. These times may change as the present timetable period ends May22)

John B

- **10.30 am Tuesday, 8 June** **EXMOOR: Withypool - Tarr Steps - Withypool.** **Approx 7 miles**
PACKED LUNCH OPTIONAL – GOOD CAFÉ THERE!

This will be a repeat of a 2007 walk possibly in the reverse direction

Directions: take A396 up the Exe Valley to Tiverton and Bampton; B3222 to Dulverton; B3223 (a sharp left turn out of the main square) from Dulverton over Winsford Hill to the cross roads at Comer's Gate. Turn left into Withypool. The car park is on the far side of the village. (Approx 1 hour 15 minutes from Exeter.)

The walk will start at the car park at Withypool (OS Landranger 181/Outdoor Leisure Map 9, GR 845354) and follows the winding path along the lovely River Barle through meadows and woodland to Tarr Steps. There is a small climb to begin with but otherwise the path is pretty flat although quite rocky and uneven in places. There is a good café/restaurant at Tarr Steps that serves lunches, snacks, drinks, etc, but also plenty of very pleasant spaces for a picnic. After lunch we cross the Barle over the ancient clapper bridge (Tarr Steps) and climb steadily (for approx 15 minutes) to Parsonage Farm where we turn north along the Two Moors Way which follows the ridge above the river back to Withypool, with splendid views over Exmoor. The last half hour is along a pleasant moorland lane that skirts Withypool Hill (which involves one more easy climb) before descending to the car park.

For anyone not wishing to undertake the climb after lunch there is the alternative option of returning the way we came along the river. Packed lunch optional.

Roger and Roseanne

- **Wednesday, 16 June / Thursday, 17 June** **SW Coast Path at Fowey**

This is two days of walking along the South West Coast Path centred on Fowey.

Wednesday, 16 th June	Charlestown to Fowey	10 miles
Thursday, 17 th June	Fowey to Polperro	7 miles

The shorter day is more demanding in terms of the climbs experienced but considerably less than last year!

The walks can be made as a mini-break in the Fowey area or alternatively participation is possible on a day basis using the train from Exeter.

Full details will be circulated in May to those who express interest. A small number have expressed possible interest.

I would be grateful if all members could confirm their interest indicating whether it will be as a mini-break or on a day basis.

Trevor

RECENT WALKS 2010

Topsham Tea Walk – changed to Stroll along the Exe, 14 January



This is what the Flood Prevention Channel was like exactly a week before the walk!

The prospect of more snow caused a change of venue involving a stroll along the Exe. Fortunately the snow had blown itself out on Haldon in the previous days (remember the chaos?!) and we walked in pleasant if misty conditions. There was still plenty of ice on the flood prevention channel as we strolled along over Miller's Crossing and on to the Quay. Here the leader misguidedly introduced an extension to Trew's Weir and Belle Isle Park. Too late he discovered that two of the sixteen had gone AWOL or had been deserted depending on your point of view. Returning to the 'Jolly Roger' for a pleasant afternoon tea, we still failed to make contact but fortunately later reports indicated that they had found a safe haven in another café. My apologies to those forsaken and I promise to be more careful next time (if they are prepared to risk it again).

Trevor

Okehampton, 27 January



The evening weather on TV described Okehampton as the coldest place in the UK (minus 1°C at noon) on the day that thirteen started from Okehampton Station (in pristine 1940's-50's condition). Since the car park was full of young mothers loading pre-school children onto bikes for a bracing cycle ride along the Tarka Trail wimping out wasn't an option.

There was no wind, firm (frozen) ground and a gentle climb up a beautiful valley (West Cleave) to Row Tor was our reward. It was Pete Cann's first lead for us but his experience on Dartmoor was re-assuring – as was the large rucksack full, no doubt, with items for every eventuality (or misfortune). We lunched just below Row Tor in a sheltered valley but after 20 minutes began to realise how cold it was. Then it was downhill to Red-e-ven Brook to Meldon Viaduct, over the A30 and across the golf course with beautiful views in spite of mist over distant hills.

Trevor

Maidencombe to Babbacombe, 8 February



Who would have thought it would be so difficult to get to the start at 'the car park above the beach at Maidencombe'? Via Newton Abbot and St Marychurch certainly was not the way, but nor was the coast road via Dawlish and Shaldon which, according to the very late arrivals, was littered with road works and diversions. However when 13 walkers finally set off it was in brilliant sunshine and for much of the walk we were shielded from the bitter East wind by a thin cover of trees allowing just enough glimpses of the sparkling sea. It proved to be a superb walk – if not quite as level as Trevor had advertised. We were informed later that there was an alternative for part of the walk that would have avoided some ups and downs, but it seems we were judged hardy enough to cope, and cope we did! Although the walk was only 3 miles long, the vision of the Angel Tea Rooms at St Marychurch was more than welcome and we all piled in to this splendid tea room, ordering what turned out to be, enormous portions of delicious food, from breakfasts to scones and sponge cakes. Fortified by this splendid repast half the party decided to walk back rather than catch the bus - to work off some of those calories no doubt. The rest of us enjoyed a scenic bus ride back to Maidencombe and luckily Trevor was with us, managing to prevent some of the over-enthusiastic walkers accidentally alighting from the bus several stops too early!

Cathy

South Zeal Circular Walk, 16 February



Some 11 of us who brushed aside the ambiguous weather forecast, found our way, eventually, to the free Village Car Park in South Zeal and set off towards Cosdon Beacon where we were rewarded for our climb by an impressive view of the snow-line above us and the coast-line below us. Negotiating with relative ease some of Dartmoor's run-off streams, we came upon the triple row of stones which in the good light with which we approached them did not present us with the spectral mystery sometimes reported by walkers in more misty conditions. Here we paused for physical and well as spiritual refreshment. Afterwards we managed the somewhat indistinct bridleway towards Ray Barrow Pool, without losing too much order in our ranks, to reach Shilstone Tor and then by footpath to Lower Shilstone. Strides quickened along the quiet lane to Wonson in anticipation of a fortifying lunch at the Northmore Arms. Such it proved to be, so much so that some at our table had to be reprimanded by the landlady for endangering the integrity of her chip-bearing baskets by their over-generous application of the tomato ketchup! ('Don't put ketchup on the chips when they're still in the basket!')

Our luck with the weather did not hold entirely on the return section along Deave Lane to Throwleigh and then the footpath to East Week where the terrain also conspired to restore Tom's reputation for walks which include a degree of challenge, which in this case involved hopping from tuft to tuft in the hope of not sinking too deeply in the boggy mire. From East Week we took an easier route towards Dishcombe, returning to South Zeal by Shelly Path (?). Thus ended a most enjoyable eight-mile walk which took us some five and a half hours (including our lunch break).

Our thanks to Tom were heartfelt and no doubts were to be heard regarding the accuracy or not of the calibration of his famous pedometer!

Doug and Pam Sedge

Castle Drogo to Chagford and return, 10 March



Twenty-one gathered at Castle Drogo on a beautiful Spring morning with clear views across Dartmoor which was looking its scenic best.

The walk along the Hunters' path and then along the river was firm underfoot and surprisingly dry. The pace was leisurely and the conversation flowed, faltering slightly as we made the climb up to Chagford.

We lunched in an excellent pub and gathered in the Square for the return. A head count showed we were several short – sucked into the Aladdin's cave of Webbers, the old-time hardware store.

Eventually all were accounted for and we returned by a shorter route to Castle Drogo.

Thanks to Christine and Jarka for an excellent walk. The turn out suggested that the extended lunch break could prove popular.

Trevor