

UERSA WALKING GROUP

January – March 2012

Dates: **Wed, January 4 (short)** **Thurs, January 19** **Thurs, February 2**
 Wed, February 22 **Monday, March 5** **Tuesday, March 20**



'Pete n' Doug' Car Repairs
No location too remote!

There are no bounds to the multi-tasking skills of the walking group as the above photo shows.

Another successful year of happy walking collectively clocking up another 2500 miles. For the first time we had to cancel a walk due to a leg injury of the leader but I am pleased to report that Tom is recovering and walking again but with less ambition at the moment.

The new programme begins with the 'traditional' easy start ending with the option of homemade soup at Victoria Park Tennis Club.

There are 5 other walks of gradually increasing length in the period (a New Year training programme?) and I hope you will find something to interest you.

Happy New Year!

Trevor December 2011
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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- **10.30 am Wednesday, 4th January Exeter River Country Park 4 miles**

Meet at 10.30 at Piazza Terracina, Exeter Quay.

A nice, flat gentle stroll to ease you into the New Year with the offer of delicious homemade soup afterwards at Victoria Park Tennis Club (proceeds in aid of Home-Start, Exeter).

Trevor

- **11.15 Thursday, 19th January Eggesford circular walk 6 miles**
Packed lunch for those not wanting to eat (late) at the garden centre.

Walk time about 3 hrs, distance 5.8 miles.

Get the 09.53 from Exmouth, 10.23 from Exeter St Davids, 10.38 from Crediton to Eggesford, 11.08. We walk over the Level Crossing up the road through the Fishdown plantation towards Wembworthy. We may then turn right onto the footpath past the hunt kennels, over a footbridge and up towards Bransgrove. (Alternatively, if conditions are very wet, we will continue up the lane towards Wembworthy.) Beyond Bransgrove we turn left towards Wembworthy, passing to Larma

Cross and Eggesford Fourways where we join the footpath which forms the Tarka Trail. Back down past Eggesford Church.

At Eggesford Garden Centre there is the possibility of coffee or a late lunch.

Trains leave Eggesford Station at 14.07, 15.07 and 16.07.

John B

10.30 am Thursday 2nd February Compton and Dainton 6 miles
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at 10.30 at the Bickley Mill Inn, Stoneycombe. (OS202 / Explorer 110: 864665)

Take the A380 to the Pen Inn roundabout. Continue towards Torquay and turn right after 1 mile. The Bickley Mill Inn is signposted from this point. Park in the car park at the end away from the buildings.

This walk takes us along footpaths and sunken lanes past Compton Castle and through Dainton village to Stoneycombe Quarry. The Bickley Mill will be open on our return.

David and Lorna

• **10.30 am Wednesday, 22nd February Bennett's Cross 9 miles**
PICNIC LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at the car park on the road to Postbridge just west of Bennett's Cross (OL29: 680817). The walk is easy and a shortcut which reduces the 9 miles to 7.5 miles is possible.

Pete

• **10.30 am Monday, 5th March Coleridge Way, Holford 9 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

"Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs..."

Wordsworth's words neatly capture the atmosphere of this walk.

9 miles, great views and all on good tracks.

Turn off the A39 by the Plough Inn, signed Combe House Hotel, to Holford, past the church, bear right at the signpost to Hodder's Combe and the large car park is on the left. (OS140: GR 155410). There is a long but gentle climb south through woods to Great Bear then much of the rest of the walk is along ridges, Macmillan Way West joining the Coleridge way at Bicknoller Post from where there is a gentle descent back to Holford skirting Alfoxton Park.

Tom

• **10.30 am Tuesday, 20th March Cothelstone, Quantocks 8 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at Cothelstone (OS Landranger map 181, ref: 183319) 10.30.

The route starts at Cothelstone Manor - Cothelstone Park - West Bagborough - Lydeard Hill - Aisholt - Luxborough farm - Birches corner - Park End - Cothelstone Hill and back to Cothelstone

Roger

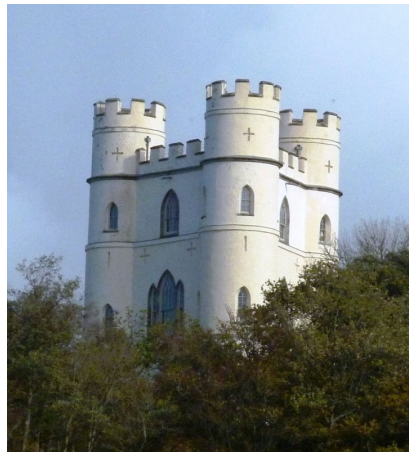
RECENT WALKS 2011

Exmouth, 6th October



Patrick and Sue's cake walk took place on a fine autumn day. Overnight rain had produced some greasy spots but it was easy walking along lanes, cycle routes and the coastal path. Twelve of us lunched on the cliffs and then disturbed the golfers as we made our way back for the afternoon treat. Thank you very much to Pat and Sue for another splendid occasion.

Haldon Gate, 18th October



We gathered at Haldon Belvedere on a bright but cold morning, particularly so in the parking area which was in shade. A steady stream of cars distributed themselves but then a lady arrived to ask us to double up as a funeral group was expected at noon.

Mike and Suzanne led the way through the Belvedere estate and then a long open downward section with superb views to the south-east. We passed by Haldon Grange, Willhayes Cross, Windy Cross and Morley's Brake on terrain that was undulating but not demanding, in glorious sunshine.

We arrived back at the car park to be reminded that a puncture had been noticed on one of our cars. There was an immediate competition among the technically minded to resolve this problem and in no time the car was jacked up, wheel off and replacement fitted.

Great. A funeral and a puncture with a walk in between – it's all part of life's rich pattern as an old Scottish friend used to say.

Thanks to Sue and Mike on behalf of the participants.

Trevor

Postbridge, 1st November

11 of us gathered at Postbridge on a bright November morning. The wet and muddy ground conditions at the start became the norm for the day. Arriving at the East Dart waterfall it soon became evident that the planned route was in doubt. We walked on to Sandy Hole Pass without finding any river crossing options. At this point, an alternative route was implemented. Unfortunately the ground conditions became quite difficult. We had lunch at Lower White Tor which coincided with the only shower of the day, heavy lasting about half an hour. Not only were we getting wet from the feet up but also from the head down. Walking on towards Powdermills, we were confronted with a particularly soggy area, so soggy in fact that only a few of us got through it with dry feet. The rest of the walk through Bellever Forest was gratefully dry. Along the path back we were entertained by Tom practising his surf board technique on a wobbly kist topping stone. At the finish, the walk was described as being “a memorable walk”, “an unforgettable walk” and “a walk that will always be remembered”. To compound the challenging aspect of the walk it was also a mile and a half further than advertised. Maybe not one of the all-time greats.

Pete

And now an alternative review from one of the clients:

A Dartmoor Challenge with Pete

On Tuesday 1st November, Pete Cann led 10 of us on a walk from Postbridge. The forecast was for a mild day with sunny spells and the possibility of a shower. During the week there had been heavy rain, so we were prepared for it to be wet under foot, as we made our way North to the waterfall on the East Dart River. As we looked down into the valley we could see that the water was flowing very fast and although this created an impressive waterfall, it also meant that the water was just too high to be able to cross on stones, even in the narrow Sandy Hole Pass. Our excellent leader had foreseen this situation and had already planned an alternative route, making our way South to Brown's House and on to Lower White Tor and lunch at Higher White Tor. On the way we had a perfect view of a flock of Golden Plover which were perched on the top of mounds, rather like Meerkats, watching us closely but not disturbed by us walking within a few yards of them. On the way up to the waterfall there were hundreds of large brown caterpillars on the path which would have been a very welcome source of food at this time of year. It had been a beautiful morning, mostly sunny but with clouds racing across from the West, including dark rain clouds which fortunately had missed us and we were able to enjoy the contrasting colours of black clouds, bright green grass and bright blue sky. However, as we arrived at our lunch stop we felt a few raindrops which we thought would quickly pass over, but then became heavy rain which did not stop until we were starting our descent after lunch. At the same time the temperature had plummeted and reminded us how quickly conditions can change on Dartmoor and how important it is to be prepared for all eventualities. For this short period some of us wished we had put in some gloves. From Higher White Tor we made our way down to the Powder Mills, and although the route to Brown's House had involved crossing tussocky grass and skirting pools of water, approaching the mills we found ourselves crossing very uneven ground, leaping from tussock to tussock. Eventually we all made it across, some of us with boots full of water, but amazingly some with dry feet. After looking at the remains of the mills we made our way back to Postbridge via Bellever Forest, on the way looking at the stone circles and stone rows, one of which we discovered had a cap stone on the kist which made a perfect Logan stone that could easily be rocked by one person. This was one of the group's more challenging walks, but I am sure everybody had a sense of satisfaction in coping with the challenging conditions and had a very enjoyable day.

Mike

Kentisbeare and Blackborough, 17th November





A beautiful day with superb views of rural Devon. Fifteen of us did a circle to the north of Kentisbeare enjoying the balmy November sunshine. In addition we encountered some unusual features: a derelict country house, surrounded by wrecked cars, reputed to be for sale at £1M; this was followed by a disappearing church with only the font remaining (see photo). David Smith confessed – he gave the last sermon there in the nineties and they decided to demolish the church (unsafe apparently).

Thanks to David Oates for a great day which ended with a drink at the local pub.

Trevor

Exmouth – Topsham Quay, 28th November



Twenty did various lengths of the walk from Exmouth to Topsham along the cycle path in pleasant weather with the estuary near high tide. It looked so superb that Alan L lead a splinter group to have a closer look along the old path. Fortunately the dire warnings of mud up to your armpits proved to be wrong and we eventually found them relaxing on a seat enjoying the view. Another five joined the group at the Globe in Topsham for the end of season lunch which everyone enjoyed.

Trevor

POST SCRIPT:

Most of those on the Topsham lunch walk on November 28th knew that we were off to Toulouse on the 30th but they don't know that they were, in retrospect, lucky to see us at all. Arriving at the check-in in Bristol on the 30th, the lady politely pointed out that we were scheduled to fly on 28th!!! After a few moments of panic, my flexible friend helped me to take the strain out of the pain and we proceeded to the departure lounge. Then it was plain sailing (flying) to Toulouse making our quickest transit (less than six hours door-to-door). It just shows that paying that little bit extra can sometimes make all the difference!

How did I make the mistake? I don't know as we never had any plans to travel on 28th. Maybe it just illustrates that as you move the cursor over the screen you are just a click away from disaster!