

**UERSA WALKING GROUP**  
**January – February 2015**

**Dates:**      **Wed, 7 January**      **Thurs, 15 Jan**      **Tues, 3 Feb**      **Wed, 25 Feb**



***David Batty's first speech in his role as Chair sporting the beard of Gloucester  
(King Lear in the offing) December 2014***

***This is a short two-month programme reflecting the current difficulty in planning too far ahead. I hope that the next will cover the four months March – June and I have two offers for the eight walks needed to keep up our two per month pace!  
Any more offers?***

***The mini-break in June is likely to be in the Prawle Point area. I will give more information when I have completed some exploration.***

***On a more up-beat note, the short programme will finish with a bang to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our first walk (25<sup>th</sup> February, 2006). This will be a short walk in the Exe Valley (details as yet unclear) ending at The Ruffwell for a lunch and a drink to lubricate the nostalgia.  
Do join us.***

***Trevor January 2015  
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## **FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

- **10.30am Wed, 7<sup>th</sup> January      Exe Estuary Cycleway      3 miles**

I will lead my traditional 'LET'S GET RID OF THAT FESTIVE FEELING'

It will start from Lymington Station at 10.20 am & we will walk back into Topsham with the opportunity for lunch if you wish.

The appropriate train leaves Crediton (9.37), St David's (9.49), Central (9.53) , Digby (9.59) and Topsham (10.05) reaching Lymington at 10.11.

Hope it's an easy starter for more than 10!

Trevor

- **10.23am Thurs, 15<sup>th</sup> January      River Teign      6 miles**  
**PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED**

This will start at Teignmouth railway station at 10.23am and involve taking the Shaldon ferry, walking up the estuary to Teignharvey, up Teignharvey Road to Stokeinteighhead. for a packed lunch. From there along Ridge Road to Higher Rocombe Barton joining the John Musgrave Heritage Trail to Brunel Manor and then catching the bus back to Teignmouth railway station. About 6 miles with good going underfoot with a couple of long climbs.

There are numerous trains back to Exeter and I plan to start from St Davids at 9.48 (arriving Teignmouth at 10.23) aiming to get back to Exeter about 4pm.

***If the forecast the day before is for rain then it is automatically cancelled. A decision about this will be taken on the evening of Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> Jan.***

Tom

- **10.30am Tues, 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb      Circular walk from Joney's Cross      7 miles**  
**PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED**

**Start** : Joney's Cross Car Park ( SY058898 ) adjacent to Aylesbeare Common Nature Reserve on the A3052 to Newton Poppleford.

**Distance** : 7 miles      **Lunch** : Picnic

**Route** : Joney's Cross ~ East Devon Way to Southerton ~ Venn Ottery ~ Tipton St. John ~ Harpford Bridge ~ Newton Poppleford ~ Hawkerland Valley ~ Joney's Cross

**Terrain** : Paths and lanes, with no major climbs, but could be muddy.

Mike and Suzanne

- **10.30am Wed, 25<sup>th</sup> Feb      Exe Valley (10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary walk)      3 / 4 miles**

This will be an easy walk in the Exe Valley ending at The Ruffwell at the junction to Thorverton on the road to Tiverton. Details of the start time and location with public transport details will be circulated later.

Trevor

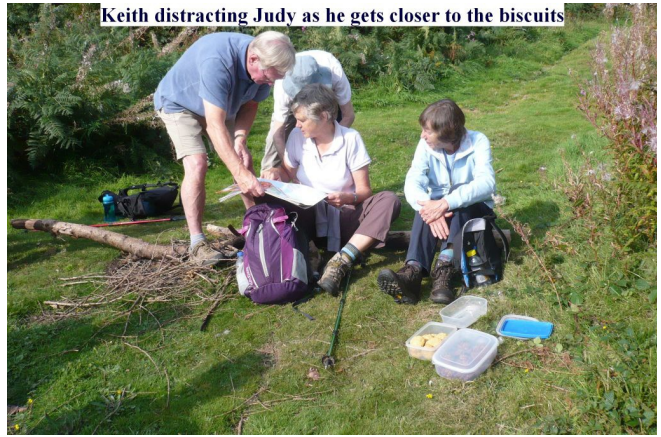


## **RECENT WALKS 2014**

### **Woodbury, 22<sup>nd</sup> September**



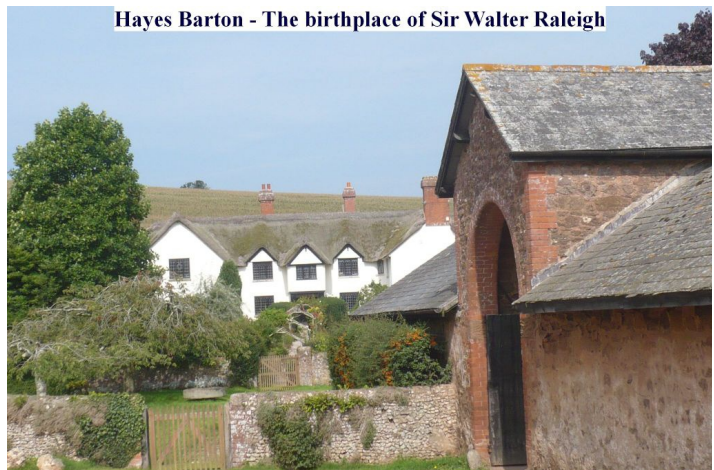
As this was the 200th walk of the UERSA Walking Group, Judy and her mother baked some delicious ginger and chocolate biscuits, which were enjoyed by all.



Keith distracting Judy as he gets closer to the biscuits

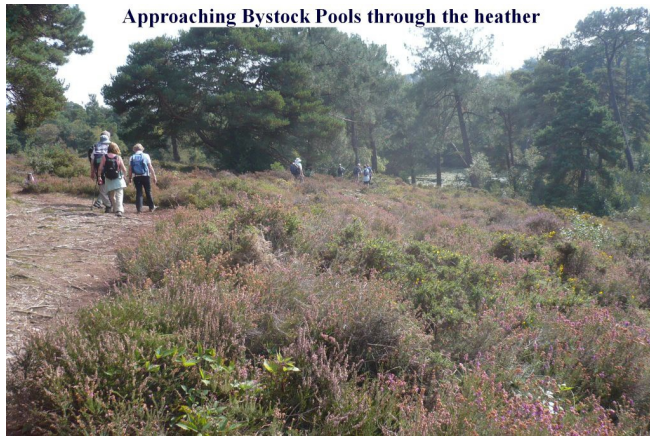


Descending through Hayes Wood

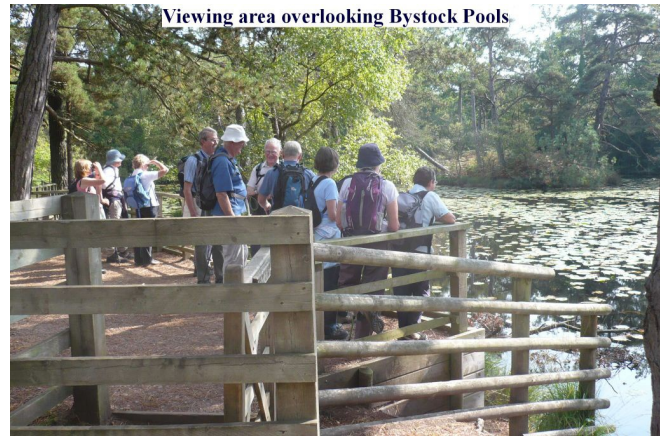


Hayes Barton - The birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh

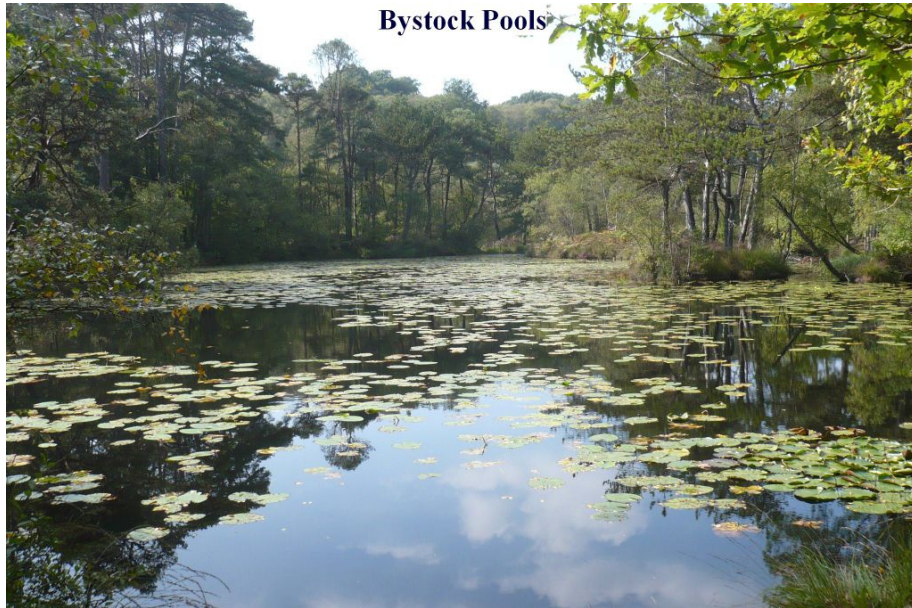




Approaching Bystock Pools through the heather



Viewing area overlooking Bystock Pools



Bystock Pools

Judy led 13 of us on a 5 ½ mile walk starting from a car park ¼ mile East of Bystock Ponds on a perfect late summer sunny day. We started by descending to Squabmoor Reservoir, trying not to cause too much disturbance to the fishermen, some of whom appeared to be setting up enough gear for the whole weekend. We paused briefly to enjoy this beautiful spot before continuing to the end of the Reservoir and across the common, past Dalditch Farm and up Shortwood Lane, admiring the modernistic drainpipe system on the side of one of the cottages in the lane. On reaching Shortwood Common we stopped for a refreshment break and were pleasantly surprised to be told by Judy that as this was the 200th walk of the UERSA Walking Group, she had made some ginger biscuits and her mother had made some chocolate biscuits which we all enjoyed. We then descended to Hayeswood Lane, a classic ancient Devon lane, which we followed until turning north to cross Hayes Wood. We descended through the wood to Hayes Lane, turning West to pass Hayes Barton, the birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh, and then joining the East Devon Way at Fryingpans. We followed the Way along the edge of the quarries for ¾ mile before turning South to enter the Bystock Nature Reserve where we were able to enjoy a relaxing picnic lunch in the warm sunshine. After lunch we descended through the Nature Reserve to Bystock Pools. This is a spot which many of us had never been to before, but which is so beautiful and peaceful that I am sure will result in many return visits. The Devon Wildlife Trust leases the property



from the Pennon Group who have also assisted in the funding and development of the site, including the erection of walkways and seats to enable easy access around the pools. A detailed description of the site is available on the following web page:

<http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/reserve/Bystock+Pools/more-info/>

Judy informed us that in addition to the natural Devon fauna there was also a terrapin in the Pool but despite the 14 pairs of eyes we were unable to spot it.

A short stroll along the lane brought us back to the cars after a most enjoyable walk.

Mike

### ***South Zeal, 30<sup>th</sup> September***



David Hobbs led 17 of us on a beautiful and interesting 8 mile walk starting from South Zeal on a perfect autumn day. From the car park we made our way to the Ramsley Copper Mine workings which we skirted after learning their history from David. At the high point we were able to look North across the valley to the White Stone above Sticklepath which we would be climbing later in the day. Using an old miner's track we descended steeply back into South Zeal, passing the building which used to be the miner's pub. Back in South Zeal we were able to look at the wide variety of historic buildings, including the Oxenham Arms which was the site of a monastery in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, later converted into a manor house and still retaining a Tudor front. Charles Dickens stayed here while writing The Pickwick Papers. We were only able to view the exterior of St. Mary's Chapel, a medieval chantry chapel, as there was a meeting taking

place . As we made our way along the High Street we were able to see the medieval burgage tenements, with the strips of enclosed land stretching behind the buildings on the High Street. As we left the High Street to make our way towards South Tawton we passed the 19<sup>th</sup> century Primary School building which boasts one of the oldest working school bells in Devon. We followed lanes to South Tawton, where we stopped for a drink and had a chance to look at St. Andrew's Church, dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and the medieval Church House. We followed the Tarka Trail along lanes into Sticklepath, and after a brief stop behind the Finch Foundry we crossed the River Taw and followed the path beside the river to Belstone. The conditions were perfect, with sunlight filtering through the trees and reflecting on the cascading water, with a clearing by a ford providing an ideal spot for a peaceful and relaxing lunch. After lunch we climbed out of the valley and up to Belstone which we passed through to take an old sunken lane through Belstone Cleave towards Sticklepath. Just before descending to Sticklepath some of the group climbed up to the White Rock we had seen previously from Ramsley Hill, and which marks the place from which John Wesley preached when he visited Sticklepath. After descending to Sticklepath, we had time to look at the Finch Foundry, the Quakers Burial Ground and the Summer House built by Tom Pearse (who lent his grey mare to Tom Cobleigh and all), before returning through fields to South Zeal, completing a perfect day's walk.

Mike

### ***Annual Cake Walk, Exmouth, 17<sup>th</sup> October***



Eighteen gathered at Patrick and Sue's house in Exmouth on a day that promised to be fine with some sunshine. We set off along the road arriving at the beach close to the new boat station. The route next took us up the path behind the beach road to the Geoneedle at Orcombe Point where the path was squeezed between the golf course and the cliff edge; here we perched for an enjoyable lunch looking over the sea which was sunlit and like a mill pond. Refreshed, we set off across the public way through the golf course where divisions in the Kalaugher household occurred. Patrick urged us to be silent so as not to upset the men carrying clubs but Sue was more rebellious in nature encouraging those at the back to speak loudly. Fortunately the opposition was otherwise intently engaged.



The path along the old railway brought us quickly to Merrion Avenue where as always a display of cakes – wondrous to behold – was in evidence. Choice of five, I believe, with most trying three and a few, no doubt, going for the full house.

Thank you very much, Pat and Sue, for yet another superb cake walk.

Trevor

### ***Lapford, 27<sup>th</sup> October***

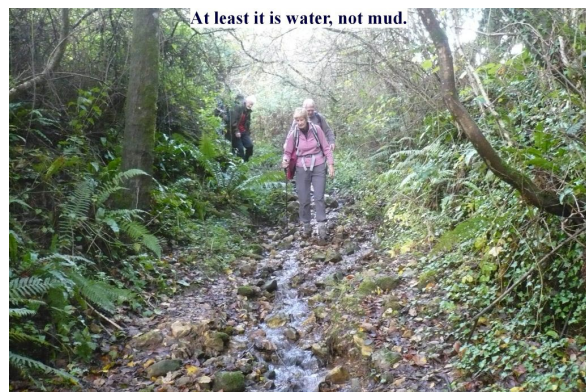


The bus driver in Exeter carefully scrutinised every pass to make sure that we were who we claimed to be; he had very little else to do, as we walkers were the majority of the passengers to Lapford station, where the nine from the bus were joined by another seven who had driven. The walk was led by Frankie, who used a route from "Tarka Line Walks", though rail travellers would be hard put to follow the path as trains rarely stop at Lapford in 2014. We started at Lapford's past commercial glory, the Ambrosia creamery, now used for furniture storage. From there we climbed to the west along a road to Nymet Rowland. Just outside the village, the first footpath took us along the line of a hedge, with views of rolling farmland to the south, and then past a fleece-covered field of swedes. After crossing the Coldridge Brook we climbed to Coldridge itself, dignified by a beacon tower beside the footpath. From the village we crossed further fields, with views to the north across the Taw valley. Coldridge Bridge marked the furthest west and the Tarka Trail led us back along the northern side of the valley passing one prominent ruined farm, and finding a second ruin for our picnic spot. The afternoon's walk led through several areas of woodland and there was a little road walking to take us into Nymet Rowland village. The church was locked - an incentive to return. From that hilltop site, we took a footpath on the slope to the valley, with Lapford village opposite; there was enough time to look at the unusual layout of the tracks at Lapford station, before the hourly bus service to Exeter arrived. It was the same driver, and he was just as assiduous in checking the bus passes as he had been earlier.

David Smith



## **Sidbury, 14<sup>th</sup> November**



Ten gathered at the little known Knapps Copse car park adjacent to an area that was formerly a landfill site. Mike drew our attention to the luxuriant vegetation noting that in the end nature wins if left to its own devices and the archaeologists of 3014 will no doubt have a wonderful time looking at the entrails.

Mike immediately lifted the heart by announcing that after his appraisal of the route he had made a modification that cut out the steepest hill. We set off up the hill rather than down then very much up and soon reached the ridge which we followed for over 30 minutes. As we approached a farm he warned that this was the first difficult section. It looked alright to me – a bit rough and wet near to the gate but then a smooth tarmac area glistening in the sun. How wrong can you be – the tarmac was about 2 inches of slurry which fortunately everyone (except the sensible one who



remembered a forgotten urgent mission and turned back) negotiated safely. After a couple of very soggy field sections we were over the worst dropping into a valley with beautiful views and then climbing gradually and easily onto another ridge where we lunched in sunshine.

After lunch we descended into the valley passing through a rather elegant 'bond-properties' complex before climbing the hill we should have descended at the start. Seven miles in all and a great walk for the ever-decreasing band of 'hardier' types.

Many thanks to Mike.

Trevor

### ***Annual Lunch Walk, 21<sup>st</sup> November***



Start of Walk, with umbrellas down.



Trevor showing the improvements being made to the flood prevention scheme



Millers Crossing Bridge



Edward discussing the weather with a swan, approaching Exeter Quay



The expansion of the flood basin downstream of Trews Weir



With an inauspicious forecast about 25 intrepid walkers (or perhaps lunchers) set out from Exeter Quay in fine drizzle. We walked up river initially along the concrete path, and at various points Trevor pointed out and explained the flood relief schemes that we passed, and in some cases recounted his experiences of flooding prior to, and during, these improvements. We were filled with wonder at the bridge that had been designed to float rather than collapse in a severe flood – fortunately it has not yet been put to the test. We walked as far as the [bridge?] , turning at that point and crossing the river. Here our sturdy boots came into their own when the way became treacherous and we were forced to descend the steep muddy bank to terra firma. Luckily we all arrived upright and continued, hoods and umbrellas raised, crossing the river by the Mill on the Exe where we marvelled at canoeists displaying their white water rafting expertise in the weir. Joined by Ray and Norma at this point we continued to our destination.

Our slightly premature arrival to find the Port Royal still closed caused a few of the group to continue to see the extensive work on flood defences downstream. Luckily the landlord took pity on the rest of us and we were seated at our lunch tables before midday. However an early lunch was not on the cards for some of us as service was somewhat tardy and confused! The jolly atmosphere, lively conversation and friendly staff made up for this and being present at David Batty's first speech in his role of chair and sporting the beard of Gloucester (King Lear in the offing) was not to be missed. We all echoed his thanks to Trevor for the organisation and informative commentary on the walk.

Cathie

### ***Broadclyst Circular Walk, 9<sup>th</sup> December***



We had a splendid turnout considering the cold greyness of the day - 20 people! And they seemed to enjoy the route. Started at 10.30, returned to the Red Lion at 3pm. Too late for the pub, but enjoyably tired.



