

UERSA WALKING GROUP

April – June 2009

**Dates: Thursday, 2 April Thursday, 23 April (short) Wednesday, 13 May
Wednesday, 27 May (short), Monday, 15 June (short)
Thursday, 25 June (long & short), Friday 26 June (long & short)**

I was delighted to discover that you had all taken my suggestion that walking should be on your New Year Resolution list. Attendances for the five so far this year have averaged 20! This circulation has reports on these walks and those at the end of March will soon follow. It is nice to get participants' views of the walks so if you would like to write a report then please do so. It doesn't have to be a work of art as the last report included this time shows. It is written by the countryman – a rough fellow happier whittling than writing but with a heart of gold. Though painstakingly picked out on his grandma's old typewriter modern technology has allowed me to reproduce it for you in its original form. It may lack the veneer and polish that some expect but it gives a very evocative picture of our days away from it all. Thanks go to photographers also – David Oates for February and Keith for Shobrooke Church.

We have had two new volunteers to lead recently and this is particularly pleasing. If you have a favourite walk then don't be shy about sharing it with us. Walkers have different preferences in what makes a good walk and I certainly have enjoyed many walks in the past four years that I would not have planned on my own.

This 3 month programme ends with some walks in North Cornwall in June to allow the keen ones to have a walking mini-break or join one or both of the walks as a day event. June can be a very pleasant time to walk without the need for heavy gear (just a light waterproof) so both walks have a short option, including picnic lunch on the cliffs!

Do join us!

Trevor March 2009
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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- **10.30 am Thursday, 2 April Dulverton / Exmoor 8 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Car Park: on your left as you come into Dulverton over the bridge on the B3222 from the south. (GR 912271)
A circular walk on the edge of Exmoor starting at the car park at the bottom end of Dulverton. Approximately 8 miles – easy / moderate walking.

Roger & Roseanne

- **10.15 am Thursday, 23 April (St George's Day) Tipton St John & River Otter 4 miles**

Meet at 'The Golden Lion' car park, Tipton St John. GR 090917

Leave the village along Seaway Lane, which becomes a bridleway and then the route climbs steadily for about a mile, crossing two minor roads, to the top of Beacon hill.

A flat walk along the top gives spectacular views of the coast westwards from Sidmouth. Then we descend through woods and meadows (4 stiles) along the East Devon Way into Harpford Wood and a peaceful flat finish through the wood and the village, across the Otter river and back to Tipton along the river bank. Total distance a little over 4 miles or 2 hours.

There is an alternative route (3 miles) that does not involve the climb and can be walked on a self-guided basis. (Details will be provided.)

Alan Leadbetter

- **10.15 am Wednesday, 13 May** **River Otter, Budleigh** **7 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

We plan a walk of about 7 and a half miles, mostly on fairly good tracks, with short distances on country lanes. It would start in the Lime Kiln car park at Budleigh Salterton (GR 073820), head up the river Otter, veer off to East Budleigh, circle back through Ting Tong to West Down Beacon on the coastal path and from there back to the car park. Provisional meeting time about 10.15, but to be confirmed when the new bus time table arrives; the idea being that the car park is accessible by public transport.

Sue & Patrick

- **10.15 am Wednesday, 27 May** **Lympstone – Dawlish** **5 miles or shorter**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at St David's station (train 9.43) or Lympstone Village station (10.15).

This will be a linear walk to Dawlish via Exmouth, water taxi to Dawlish Warren (£2) and then on to Dawlish having a picnic on the Warren. Train back from Dawlish.

The walk can be shortened by

- Catching a later train from St David's (10.48) to Exmouth (11.18) where I will look out for you if you let me know that this is your plan (3.5 miles)
- Return from Dawlish Warren station rather than Dawlish (4 miles)

Trevor

- **10.30 am Monday, 15 June** **Tiverton – Bickleigh – more of the Exe Valley Way!** **4 miles**

Catch the 55 bus to Tiverton which leaves Exeter bus station at 9.45 arriving at Tiverton Bus Station at 10.22.

The walk starts from here.

An easy walk along part of the Exe Valley Way at a time when hopefully the mud is at its minimum. Lunch at Bickleigh in a hostelry of your choice.

Ruth

- **Midsummer Madness in North Cornwall** **June 25 / 26**

Following the success of the Lundy trip last year, this is an opportunity to walk (and stay) in North Cornwall enjoying some stunning coastal views.

- Thursday, June 25 Port Isaac to New Polzeath via Port Quin, Doyden Castle, The Rumps and Pentire Point - one of my favourite South West Coast Path walks. 8 miles or 5 miles (join at Point Quin)
- Friday, June 26 Bude – Crackington Haven. Another stunning scenic walk via Widemouth Bay (the start for the short walk) 9 miles or 5 miles.

Since both of these walks involve using local buses (parking at the finish and bussing to the start), details cannot be finalised until the summer timetables are available.

The intention is that this should be a group outing and either walk can be joined as a day-trip or combined as a mini-break. Each walk has a short option which will allow the more relaxed walkers to join us just before the extended lunch break on the cliffs.

The first walk finishes at 'The Doom Bar' at New Polzeath with excellent views over the Camel estuary.

Fuller details will follow in mid-May.

Trevor

RECENT WALKS 2009

Escot, 7th January

When I phoned the Preist household on a very chilly January morning to confirm that I was able to put in one of my rare appearances at a UERSA walk I was greeted by a relieved Ruth who said that 'Trevor will be delighted, if not ecstatic as we are not sure how many will be there, given the BBC TV prediction of low temperatures and a strict warning to the elderly not to go out!' Well, it just shows that you should not put all your faith in the BBC and the Met Office (even if the latter is based at Exeter) as the morning was not nearly as cold as predicted, probably due to the low cloud cover. So, if the weather was not quite as bad as predicted, how many would actually turn up? Slowly they arrive in the car park at Escot...and they kept on coming. Eventually 23 braved the cold. Which just goes to show that you **should** put your faith in the hardy clan that makes up the UERSA Walking Group!

The walk itself was around the flat countryside that surrounds Escot which is located some 6 kilometres west of Honiton (well positioned for the one member of the Group who lives in Somerset, and even better for those who live in Ottery!). As the ground was frozen solid the walking was easy and, even better, the few styles that we encountered were easy to get over! The only disappointment was that low cloud prevented us from seeing the far hills - so we will just have to return in the summer!

As usual, there was much good conversation along the way, and this was continued by the majority who stayed on for a nice lunch at the welcoming Escot restaurant. All in all it was an excellent antidote to all the excesses of Christmas and a very good start to the New Year. A number of us who were not aware of Escot have resolved to bring back the grandchildren to challenge the Maze, see the wetlands and the animals. On second thoughts, we might just visit on our own without the grandchildren!

Alan Hooper



JANUARY mists and wonderful tree silhouettes



There used to be a bridge that way!

Landscape, Woolston Green near Buckfastleigh, 19th January

Fifteen members of the group joined together for this 8 mile walk through the South Hams countryside; an area once famous for its colourful slate. The weather forecast was for heavy wintery showers during the day but in fact we were only caught in one shower for 5 minutes. The conditions underfoot however were very muddy and we had to take to higher ground on one or two occasions to pass flooded tracks. The walk took us from Landscope through Woolston Green and onto Wash and Well. We passed through many cultivated fields of salad greens and vegetables belonging to Riverford Organic Farm. We continued to Higher Beare, Lower Coombe, Baddaford, Bulland, Parkfield, and Gulliford before making our way back to Landscope. Snowdrops in the hedgerows gave us the feeling that Spring is just around the corner. We were in for a surprise on arriving back at the car park. Unknown to most of us this walk was quite significant in the life of the UERSA Walking Group as it contained the 1000th walker and Trevor organised a raffle draw to identify that walker. As co-leader of the walk that day it seemed appropriate that I drew the lucky ticket and was rewarded with a bottle of bubbly. The afternoon ended on a very happy note. Thank you Trevor for keeping such meticulous records of our walks and numbers. Thanks to everyone for joining John and I on this walk.

John and Barbara Philipson



Why is everyone heading for the bushes?



Ah! Lunch – but find a spot that has no rain coming through



A mystery lottery was held after the walk – the worthy winner, Barbara, was declared the 1000th walker!

Exe Valley Way, north of Thorverton, 5th February

What a difference a day makes. Looking out today at the snow covered scene makes me realise that maybe all those mental contingency plans (made for yesterday’s walk from Thorverton) weren’t signs of paranoia after all. A simple walk along a quiet country lane produced more angst than most what with weather uncertainty and bus time-table changes.

Enough of this neurotic rambling – all was well and 13 enjoyed a lively bus ride into Thorverton to greet 5 others on a misty but non-wet day. The mist hid the views that Ruth & I had enjoyed a few days before but, in the absence of any other interest, a buzzard lazily buzzed us at low level allowing us a superb view of its markings. (Oak-apples, snowdrops and a dead fox were also spotted and photographed by a keen camera-man!)

Walking on the quiet road was easy and the conversation flowed so that in no time we were passing Bickleigh Castle and forced to make a choice between the Fisherman’s Cot, the Trout and Bickleigh Mill for lunch. All but one stayed to lunch in two of the venues for a relaxing end to a very enjoyable walk.

Trevor



FEBRUARY mists and wonderful tree silhouettes



Hungry folk ready for lunch

Circular walk from Crediton, via Shobrooke, 26th February

A group of 26 assembled in the Crediton Leisure Centre car park with the weather cool but sunny and dry. The walk started across Lord’s Meadow to the western (lower) entrance to Shobrooke Park and then skirting the park for a short distance along the by-road to Newton St Cyres before turning left at Westacott Cottage to cross fields towards Shobrooke Mill, enjoying panoramic views to the south over the Quicke Estate (of cheese fame and covering 3000+ acres) and beyond, Whitestone. From Shobrooke Mill we followed the Shobrooke Lake (a stream) towards Little Silver before cutting across fields to Shobrooke Church.

We took a breather at the church (which was heavily “restored” during the Victorian period) and admired the buildings of the adjacent Shobrooke Barton, said to be amongst the finest vernacular farm buildings in Devon.

From the church it was a short distance to the eastern (higher) entrance to Shobrooke Park from where a commanding view of Crediton can be had, with Creedy Park (the ancestral home of the Coplestones) in the distance. Sadly the original Shobrooke House was burned down during the last war (it was used as a billet) and replaced by an ultra-modern single story residence, but the original terraces and magnificent parkland remain, complete with ornamental

lakes, boathouse and cricket field with a thatched pavilion. It remains in the ownership of the Shelley family, the present incumbent being Sir Jack Shelley Bt., a recently retired GP.

We left the park by the western entrance and retraced our steps across Lord's Meadow to arrive at the Leisure Centre about 3 hours after leaving.

Tom Davies

(N.B. For those who are keen statisticians, we can only count 25 of these because a 'new' lady told us at the end that she had just the wrong group – a second group known as 'Walkers and Talkers' had left from the car park at the same time!)



Shobrooke Church



Shobrooke Park

Moretonhampstead, 10th March

I have deliberated long and hard about the terminology of this report .

What a good turnout it was ,26 I believe , after getting Leslie to take a breath and let Mike explain about the walk IE. 2 steep ascents, mud up to your oxters, etc, etc, of we went looking at a wheelwrights mold en route .first ascent ok ,some mud , and a exceptional farm buildings conversion,people getting to know one or two new faces,as we progressed the mud did get a little more up your boots .It was a pity the dimpsy nature of the weather did not allow you to see what would have been quite stunning views. The farm bog was, to put it mildly,treacherous.IHowever we did not loose anybody. after passing through various pretty Hamlets we ascended hill no4 .I was infotrmed by one or two ladies that there was more than 2 steep ascents [Mike needs to take his gloves of to count next time].On that that note I believe Mike & Sue are viiang to see who can find the muddiest walk!!!!.

I did speak to the Gentleman who I thought was not equiped to traverse the atrocious conditions, his reply was, I ve seen enough mud for the rest of the year.Onwards to what was the most hillarious moment of the walk .In a corner of the last field we passed through was a heifer with her first calf,brandspanking new , still had the after birth hanging from the rear end.[Placenta].one lady thought it was from the rectum and couldn't understand why ,after a rather graphic physical demonstration she did understand .However, when lasked her to tell me where she thought it came from, she went down on all fours , indicated the procimty of the udders or as she said titties,and pointed approximately 6 ins above.WE were in hysterics!.and pulled her leg unmercifully. No, sorry, Lady, no deal on the Portobello fistle pottery bribe. All in All a good day was had by most. Regards to all.

John P.



A good walk needs a good lunch – sorry there is no photo of the new-born calf