

UERSA WALKING GROUP

January – March 2011

Dates: Mon, January 10 (short) Wed, January 19 Tues, February 1
Thurs, 17 February Wed, 9 March Thurs, 24 March

The year past saw a very successful Charity Walk, the 1500th participant for the Walking Group, our 100th walk and recently the UERSA walking mileometer registered its 10,000th total mileage walked.

I'm sure that the recent prolonged snow over the festive season must have generated lack of activity (Tom excepted) and undoubted over-indulgence (especially you-know-who) so the time is ripe for you all to get out and WALK! There are lots of opportunities and I hope you will renew all those kept or lapsed resolutions from previous New Years to keep walking and active.

Best wishes for 2011 – may it be an enjoyable year for you all.

Trevor January 2011
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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- **10.30 am Monday, 10th Jan Exe Valley Way, north of Thorverton 5 miles**

A quiet road walk in early January with lovely views across the Exe Valley, starting at The Ruffwell Inn. Catch the 55 bus at 10.00 from the Exeter Bus Station (or along its route via Stoke Canon) alighting at The Ruffwell (10.17).

The walk is then one mile along the level road into Thorverton before climbing via a rarely used road to Bidwell Cross and on towards Pitt Farm with excellent views across the valley. The road then drops to reach Bickleigh Castle, the Fisherman's Cot and Bickleigh Mill i.e. FOOD! (Return buses from Fisherman's Cot are at 20 and 50 minutes past the hour.)

Trevor

- **10.30 am Wednesday, 19th Jan Meldon 7 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at Meldon carpark at 10.30

The route takes us up past the iceworks to Sourton Tor. From there across to Shelstone Tor and down to cross the West Okement at the weir at Vellake corner. We will then follow the path along the South east side of the reservoir and cross the dam back to the car park. I will have to run a planimeter over the map to get the precise distance, but I think we should be back at the car park after about 3 hours.

John B

- **10.30 am Tuesday, 1st February Chagford 10 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Chagford (park in swimming pool car-park GR 707885), Rushford Bridge, Westcott Farm, Little Weeke, Week Down, Thorn, Bovey Castle, Hele, Lettaford, Yellands, Meldon Common, Chagford.

10 miles, 4.5 hours, on dry tracks and quiet lanes (one very steep climb on a lane up to Meldon Common), tea in Chagford.
Tom

- **10.30 am Thursday, 17th February Raddon Hills 8 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Start : Thorverton Car Park (Grid Reference SS 923021)

Time : 10.30 a.m.

Distance : 8 miles

Route : Thorverton ~ Berrysbridge ~ Heathfield ~ Yendacott Manor ~ Efford ~ Raddon Hills ~ Chapel Farm ~ Thorverton.
Mostly on lanes, but some footpaths and a climb of 186 metres up to Raddon Hills. Bring picnic lunch.

Mike and Suzanne

- **10.30 am Wednesday, 9th March** **Cox Tor** **approx 7.5 miles**

PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet Cox Tor Car Park (OL28 SX 531 751)

Cox Tor (car park) – Cox Tor - Combe Tors – Stephen’s Grave – White Tor – Langmoor Standing Stone and Stone Circle – Roos Tor – Staple Tors – Cox Tor (car park).

A couple of steady climbs on this walk but an easy return leg from White Tor.

Pete

- **10.30 am Thursday, 24th March** **Haddon Hill, Haddeo Valley and Wimbleball Lake**

8.75 miles with shorter option, 6.25 miles

PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Start at Haddon Hill car park (SS969285) five miles north of Bampton.

Directions: Take the main road to Tiverton and Bampton. From Bampton take the B3190 for five miles to the Haddon Hill car park.

From Haddon Hill the route runs westwards down an ancient sunken track to the hamlet of Bury followed by a relaxing riverside stroll along an 18th century carriage drive in the wonderful setting of the Haddeo Valley. A short stiff climb brings us to the Wimbleball Lake reservoir. A splendid lakeside walk includes crossing the dam, returning up the heath-covered slopes of Haddon Hill.

Roger

RECENT WALKS 2010

Exmouth, 13th October - The Cake Walk

Seventeen gathered at Merrion Avenue on a bright morning looking forward to a brisk and hopefully brief walk leaving more time for the cake treat!

Patrick led the way along leafy lanes (now reasonably familiar to the cake aficionados) and up to the coast path where we enjoyed stunning views of the bay – in complete silence as there were golfers teeing off nearby!

We tarried there for lunch and then it was back along the golf course to the former railway-line via Littleham where many were pleased to view Lady Nelson’s grave in Littleham Churchyard. We then returned to Patrick and Sue’s for the main event. Even though it had clouded over, it brightened up and we were able to enjoy their garden and the delicious selection of cakes – with a range so wide that even the most voracious failed to complete the course!

Many thanks to Patrick and Sue for their generous hospitality yet again.

Trevor

Woodbury, 28th October

A beautiful day for the seventeen on Woodbury and the optimists felt that Mike would be hard pressed to find any mud. He was more confident but, in the event, conditions though muddy were not as bad as he had hoped. David Oates’ photos capture the spirit of the day and the enjoyment felt by all.





As we began our walk we saw some marines in the distance – sitting, for once, and presumably being harangued. When we stopped for lunch all was tranquil and the Chairman and I went into the woods for a comfort stop. To our surprise there seemed to be a (silent) marine behind every tree! We quickly retreated and, like perfect gentlemen, warned the ladies!
 Thanks, Mike and Sue for another great walk. Trevor

Exeter Country Park, 8th November

After a stormy night, fifteen of us gathered on the Quay in sunshine and with blue skies for that gentle stroll I had promised. And so it was – dead flat, little mud, and only one puddle to negotiate. We eased our way through the Country Park to the by-pass, crossed the canal and returned on its western bank – now closed to cycles. The sunshine was bright, the canal like a mill-pond and the autumn colours startling. At the Double Locks, just open and empty, they were pleased to see us for a half-hour coffee stop and conversation. Then it was a leisurely stroll back to the Quay, still in bright sunshine. When Ruth and I got home, the barometer showed a reading of 955 mbars (28.35 inches), a sign of bad weather imminent. Lucky again! Trevor

North Bovey / Manaton, 24th November



Ten intrepid walkers joined Tom on a rather overcast day for a walk from North Bovey. The beginning of the route took us through some beautiful autumnal green-lanes that perhaps were more suited to wellington boots than walking boots. The rivers and brooks were flowing well which made the prospect of crossing of the River Bovey quite daunting. The scramble over the large granite boulders was just a warm-up for the more energetic climb out of Lustleigh Cleave. The standard of lunch venue has reached a new level when we were presented with the luxury of padded bench seats. The walk restarted with another short shower and a walk through a field with a “friendly” (I’m being polite – it became a nuisance) horse and two ponies. After walking along a few more country lanes, we took to the hills again (Easdon Tor). It was at this point while admiring the extensive panorama, that Tom voiced a proposal for another walk which, in character, included at least half a dozen hills. It was then downhill all the way back to North Bovey where nine of us headed for the local hostelry and availed ourselves of some very enjoyable and reasonably priced refreshment. Thanks Tom for a very pleasurable and varied walk.

Stoke Canon – Thorverton, 30th November



On Tuesday 30th November we awoke to below freezing temperatures with most of the UK covered in snow. We in Devon however were lucky, although cold we had no snow, yet! We had received Trevor's third update email, the walk would be on, albeit part of the route revised to take account of ground conditions.

The walk rendezvous was at Stoke Canon Post Office at 10.30am. This created much amusement as we all converged, some by car some by bus from Exeter and some by bus from Silverton direction, suddenly this quiet village was overwhelmed by 30 UERSA walkers. Our group split into two: a small contingent following lanes and roads to avoid mud and larger group which headed off across the fields to brave the elements and whatever nature planned. The light sleet lifted and the sky brightened. The ground underfoot was solid, all muddy patches frozen. Our walk took us beside the River Exe which looked cold and uninviting, cows stared at us bewildered at this ragtag of walkers. A farm tractor passed laden with sheep huddled together to keep warm. Alan, our leader set a rapid pace to exercise the muscles and warm the blood. The going was flat and easy with only a few gates and stiles to break our step. All too soon we found ourselves into the last mile to see the rear guard (Frankie and Bob) of the smaller walking group only a few hundred yards ahead. Much as our larger group tried, we failed to overtake the team ahead, a point which Bob delighted in rubbing in when we finally all met together at journey's end, The Ruffwell Inn. Pre-booked tables were ready on our arrival, much welcome ale warmed us up and Trevor distributed blank pieces of paper much to our bewilderment. All was revealed when a lucky draw gave Nick the winning ticket - A bottle of champagne in honour of the 10,000th UERSA mile just completed that day.

Nick

Whiteworks, Dartmoor, 14th December



Eleven of us met at Princetown on a clear frosty morning from whence we set off in a convoy of cars down the narrow lanes to the small car park above Whiteworks.

The visibility was excellent and, although a cold frosty day, it was firm underfoot resulting in ideal walking conditions. The decision was made to extend the planned route to see Drizzle Coombe, a first for most of us, and the magnificent Stone Row with a tall menhir at each end made the detour well worthwhile.

The whole area is a mass of disused tin workings, stone crosses and stone circles; our route took us to Nun's Cross, Excalibur's Sword, Drizzle Coombe, Ditsworthy Warren and then on to lunch at Combshead Tor with wonderful 360° views. Most of us sat in the warm sheltered south side of the Tor but Pete and Tom settled for the windier side to benefit from the lovely views across to Sheep Tor and Burrator reservoir.

Our lunch over, we headed downhill to Norsworthy Bridge and along the river Meavy to Leather Tor Bridge, originally built for the grand sum of 12s 6d! Up onto the moor again to see a frozen Crazy Well Pool, where one of our number couldn't resist skimming a small rock across the ice! Then, as the sun got lower in the sky, a flat stroll along the Devonport Leat and a last little bit of up hill walking, brought us back to our cars. A walk of 9 miles – Thanks Pete

Mary