

UERSA WALKING GROUP
October - December 2014

Dates: **Tues, 30 SEPTEMBER** **Fri, 17 Oct** **Mon, 27 Oct**
 Fri, 14 Nov **Tues, 25 Nov** **Tues, 9 Dec**



Meldon Walk led by John Boyle, 5 September

This is the October – December programme but hopefully the observant will notice that it commences on 30th SEPTEMBER with David Hobbs' walk which includes a number of local features.

I am grateful to him and to all the other leaders for their valuable contributions and once again to Patrick and Sue for yet another Autumn Cake walk (17 October).

This year I have located the Annual Lunch (25 November) within Exeter at the Port Royal on the Exe. It will be preceded with a gentle stroll up the Exe as far as the flood prevention barrier and then back. I hope that many walkers and some lapsed walkers will join what is essentially a social occasion.

40 years ago the Quay area was very quiet and the Port Royal had the reputation as the place where professors met their mistresses! (Sorry about the sexist tone but younger retirees may be surprised to learn that in former times female professors were a rare breed and 'toy boys' unheard of.) Although extensive research has failed to verify this rumour, do join us for lunch at this iconic watering hole.

Trevor September 2014

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- **10.30am Tues, 30th SEPTEMBER** **South Zeal** **8 miles (or shorter)**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

The walk takes us through four Dartmoor-edge villages. We go first to the site of Ramsley Mine (copper and arsenic) and then take a miners' path back down to South Zeal. We pass the Oxenham Arms and a chantry chapel and walk across fields and through a nature reserve to South Tawton where there is a fine church and an interesting Church House. We take the Tarka Trail to Sticklepath, stopping at Finch Foundry to note Tom Pearce's summer house and the Quaker Burial Ground. We follow the River Taw along a beautiful valley and then ascend to Belstone. The route back takes us down the stickle path to Sticklepath (with an optional extension to the White Rock from which John Wesley preached in 1744). We return on roads and fields to the car park at South Zeal.

Distance: about 8 miles. Anyone with an afternoon commitment could return to South Zeal from Finch Foundry.

David Hobbs

How to get to the free car park at South Zeal

Leave Exeter on the A30 going west. Turn off at the Whiddon Down junction, signed for Moretonhampstead. Proceed through Whiddon Down to a roundabout. Go straight across noting the sign 'South Zeal 3'. After about 2 miles turn right at a sign 'South Zeal ¾' (and a sign 'Post Office'). Follow this narrow road to descend into the village. With the main street visible ahead look out for a concealed road on the left between two houses, the one on the left named 'Stockland'. As you turn into this road you will see a parking sign on the wall on the left. The car park is about 100 metres further on the right and is signed. ***If you reach the Oxenham Arms you have missed the turning.*** Allow about 35 minutes from the Alphington junction on the A30.

- **10.45am Friday, 17 October** **Annual Cake Walk, Exmouth** **6 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Circular walk along the coast from Exmouth to West Down Beacon, returning by an inland route.

You are invited for cakes and tea at the end of the walk.

Start from Sue and Patrick's house, [6 Merrion Avenue, Exmouth EX8 2HX at 10.45 am.](#) The start is [6 minutes walk from the Elwyn Road stop of the number 57 bus](#) from Exeter (every 15 minutes). Stay on the bus through Exmouth town centre and get off in Salterton Road just after the Cranford Club. Cross Salterton Road and walk the full length of Elwyn Road, turn left at the 'T' junction with Cranford Avenue then first right into Merrion Avenue. Number 6 is the last house on the right, on the corner with Douglas Avenue. Telephone no. [01395 273344](tel:01395273344).

Sue and Patrick

- **10.30am Monday, 27 October** **Lapford** **7 miles**

PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

This is a circular walk from Lapford Cross. As there is no rail request stop at this time of day at Lapford station, the public transport option is Bus 5C, bay 3 at the bus station 9.45 (Imperial 9.48) arriving at Lapford Cross at 10.27. (Return buses at 2.16, 3.16 & 4.16.)

The walk starts very near where the bus stops. There is parking on the industrial estate which is a right turn from the Exeter to Barnstaple Road at Lapford Cross and you come to the industrial estate straight away on the left. It is OK to park there on the road into this very small industrial estate, although there is a warning about the industrial estate re flooding. So as long as it is not pouring with rain all will be well! The bus returning to Exeter again is close by. Good views from the bus when I went up recently.

Frankie

- **10.30am Friday, 14 November** **Sidford** **7.5 miles**

PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Start : 10.30 a.m. from **Knapp Copse Car Park**. From Exeter take the A3052 to Sidford, at traffic lights turn left on to A375 to pass through Sidbury and continue for 3 miles to the crossroads with the Hare and Hounds pub on the left. Turn right on to the Seaton Road for 1/2 mile to the car park on the right. Alternatively take the A30 to Honiton, coming off at the first exit for Honiton on to the old Exeter Road, turn right on to the A375 (Sidmouth Road) for 3 miles to the crossroads with the Hare and Hounds pub on the right, turn left on to Seaton Road for 2/3 mile to the car park on the right just past the footpath signs for the East Devon Way which crosses the road. It is not a very large car park so please share cars if you can.

Terrain : Woodland and field footpaths, bridleways, and lanes, including parts of the East Devon Way, with four steep climbs as we cross the valley of the Roncombe Stream. Bring a picnic lunch.

Mike and Suzanne

- **9.45am Tuesday, 25 November** **Annual Lunch Walk** **3 miles**

We will start from Piazza Terracina and walk up the valley as far as the flood prevention barrier and then return to the Port Royal for lunch. (See my introduction for an historical perspective.)

When I send out the reminder I will ask you to select your order from the website menu if you wish to lunch at the Port Royal.

Trevor

• **10.30am Tues, 9th December**

Broadclyst Circular Walk 7.2 miles

PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at Red Lion (SX 983973); park in car park on the other side of the main road behind Victory Hall.

Walk starts behind the Red Lion and approaches a footbridge over the M5 via Martinsfields, Mooredge Farm, and Reed's Cottages (2km). Level ground but can be boggy and/or muddy around the farms. Cross bridge and shortly turn left towards Francis Court Farm and the road to Killerton (1km).

Turn left into the grounds of Killerton, round the entrance stables and towards the Chapel – seats for coffee or lunch. North from the Chapel to Ellerhayes Bridge (1.25km). Round the perimeter of the volcano and continue towards the western end of Columbjohn Wood (1.5km).

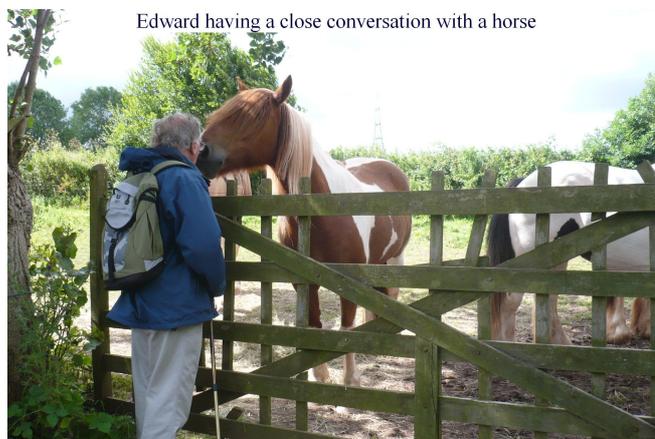
Footpath towards Columbjohn Farm, then road towards Stoke Canon. Just before Bussels Farm turn left up a little hill, and then right onto a bridlepath (can be very muddy) which takes you to the road at Ratsloe (3km).

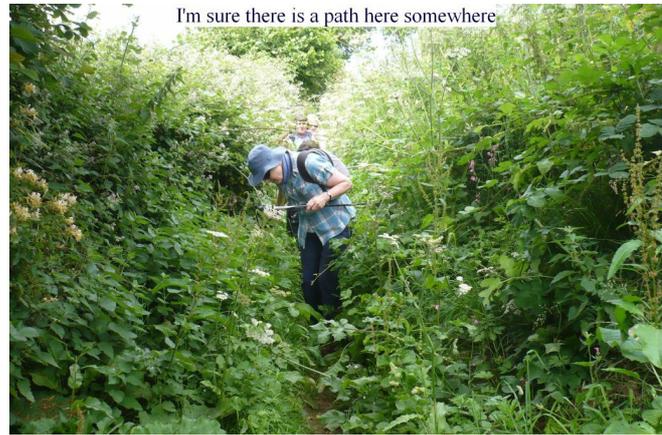
After a short stretch of road towards Exeter, turn left into a field footpath which leads to Poltimore via Bampfyld House (1km). Take the footpath eastwards towards Broadclyst, cross the M5 by another footbridge, and continue to Broadclyst via the church and the Red Lion (1.75km). The pub is open until 3pm for a well-earned drink.

Edward Maunder

RECENT WALKS 2014

Broadclyst Circular Walk, 4th July





On 4th July Edward Maunder led a small group of seven on a very enjoyable 7 mile walk from Broadclyst. Starting outside the Red lion we resisted finishing off the bottle of wine still on the picnic table from the evening before, and were quickly in fields making our way towards Killerton.

The path goes through two farms, Martinsfield and Mooredge. On the path just before Martinsfield we came across an information board providing details of the two Wellingtonia trees which dominated the skyline and were planted in this position during Queen Victoria's reign. On reaching the farm we found further information boards, showing the access paths around the farm and suggestions of what animals, birds and trees to look out for. A traditional orchard of apple and pear trees was planted in 2008, with 13 varieties, having delightful names such as Fair Maid of Devon and Dittisham Ploughman. Our attention was also drawn to an area of marshland just past the farm which is the last surviving part of Broadclyst Moor, which is now used for grazing Exmoor ponies and Devon cattle, which helps to encourage plants that attract insects and make an ideal habitat for Barbastelle bats. The rushes on the marshland are harvested in a five year cycle and are used to provide winter bedding for the cattle. Before leaving the farm Edward could not resist having a friendly nose to nose encounter with one of the horses in the field.

A coffee break at Killerton Chapel gave us the opportunity of seeing inside the chapel which was built in 1841 to replace the Acland's old chapel in Columb John. There was a very effective display commemorating the First World War, consisting of a wall of sandbags in the style of a trench in front of the altar and two war poems on stands at each end of the wall, the poems being *For the Missing in Action* by John Balaban and *End of a Campaign* by Hamish Henderson. We also took the opportunity to look at the two tulip trees to the south of the Chapel, one of which is claimed to be the largest tulip tree in Britain.

From the Chapel we made our way through the northern fields and woodland of the Killerton estate, to reach the Chapel at Columb John for a relaxing picnic lunch in the sun.

After lunch we continued on lanes and paths which were becoming jungle-like with the luxuriant spring growth, through Ratsloe and on to Poltimore, where we were able to support the community shop by buying some of their local produce. From there we crossed more fields, and a busy M5, but fortunately over a bridge, to arrive back at the

Red Lion just before it started raining and before the pub closed, as promised at the beginning of the walk by Edward.

It was a pity that not more members were able to join this walk and it was suggested by those that had enjoyed it so much that it would be worth repeating at some other time.

Mike

Quantocks Ridgeway, 14th July



Led by Roger Fieldhouse, a group of nine set off in fine style from Lydeard Hill on a still cloudy day in mid-July. Heading directly to Wyllys Neck, the highest point of the Quantocks at 1259 feet, we ran into a splendid group of around thirty horses and foals, not moor ponies it seemed, but originating perhaps from local stables. We saw further equine activity and riders later in the walk. For those who read Thomas Hardy, there is a ruminative poem by him called 'Wessex Heights' which mentions Wyllys Neck where we were. Going west along the path we were rewarded with good views of the Bristol Channel and the Brendon Hills over to our left.

The walk plunged steeply downhill towards Triscombe, which meant a correspondingly strenuous climb at a later point to regain the high ground. Setting off after a lunch break we were able to look down to Hinckley Point, with the South Wales coast visible across the channel. Purple heather was coming into bloom at many points along these uplands.

Some of those on the walk knew the ground well, but for those of us for whom this was an introduction to the Quantocks, this was an excellent 6.8mile panoramic walk.

Michael Hind

Ilington, 4th August

David and Lorna's rerun of last year's walk at Ilington was a delight not only because it was closer than Islington (editor's error). Eleven arrived at the village west of Newton Abbot on the edge of Dartmoor below Haytor.

We grouped near the pub which was convenient as a heavy storm arrived at 10.15 so we sat in the pub underneath the table umbrellas. Then Lorna and David led us off along a series of green lanes with, from time to time, striking views of Haytor in the distance. The rain had fortunately given up and it was a pleasant sunny day.

We lunched in the sunshine and the only low spot was 50 yards of muddy water on a track between high hedges. All survived and we returned to the pub for an afternoon drink. Thanks very much to Lorna and David.

Trevor

Broadhembury, 19th August



Sixteen of us met at the car park at Knowles Wood above Broadhembury. Christine led us along the edge of the ridge and then up onto the gliding club airfield. We glimpsed one glider in the sky but then turned down into the woods descending rapidly but picturesquely to the village where the Post Office served coffee and (later in the day) cream teas.

After a steep climb back towards the ridge we took a contour path to an open area for lunch watching a tractor making slow progress on harrowing a huge field. We then approached the gliding field from the business end seeing plenty of gliders and one powered take-off.

Many thanks, Christine, for a great walk and splendid weather.

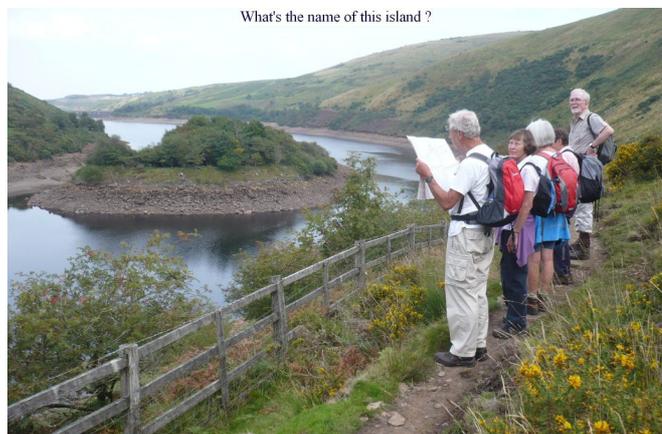
Trevor

Meldon, 5 September

Investigating a carefully worked stone in the valley between Sourton Tors and Corn Ridge and trying to guess its purpose and why it is in this position.



What's the name of this island ?



John Boyle led 8 of us on a very relaxing and informative walk starting from Meldon Reservoir car park. We left Exeter in a thick mist, but by the time we got to Meldon it was a bright day, although visibility was not as good as John had wished for in order to get the full effect of the extensive views all through this walk. We started by following the path to the North of the Reservoir which follows the field boundary on to the open moor. As we made our way to Sourton Tors, we stopped at the site of the ice works, whose function and history John explained. A very good detailed account of them can be seen at http://www.legendarydartmoor.co.uk/ice_fact.htm . They now look like the remains of the ditches of an iron age fort. We stopped for a coffee break on Sourton Tors, to relax and enjoy the views all around. Despite the temptation to spend the rest of the day relaxing on Sourton Tors we made our way down to the valley between Sourton Tors and Corn Ridge where we stopped to guess the origins and purpose of a fine example of worked stone in the shape of half a wheel. Various suggestions were made, including a wheel from Fred Flintstone's chariot or an ancient garden feature with gnomes seated on the edge fishing, but in Crossing's Guide to Dartmoor he suggests that "it is half of a trough, of the kind used for pounding apples in, evidently broken in the course of being cut". If it was broken when being cut, where is the other half ? Having exercised our imagination, we continued up and along Corn Ridge to Branscombe's Loaf and Cheese. When showing this feature to a visitor, a Sourton native told them "Us Sourton folks got monstrous appetites, you know" . From Corn Ridge we descended to Shelstone Tor, one of the most interesting tors, full of nooks and crannies, and amongst the jumble of rocks we had a very pleasant lunch in the sunshine. After lunch we continued our descent, to cross the West Okement River and make our way along the southern edge of Meldon Reservoir which was looking quite low, but still attractive with the bordering heather in bloom.

Mike