

UERSA WALKING GROUP

July - September 2011

Dates: **Tuesday, July 5** **Friday, July 22** **Mon, August 8 (short)**
Thurs, August 25 **Wed, September 7** **Friday, September 23**

*The fine weather has resulted in some excellent walks
and the seventeen who made the trip to Dorset thoroughly enjoyed the delights
of what proved to be a very happy occasion with only one or two challenging moments.
Once again, many thanks to David O. for his excellent photos and
Pete's photos are available on Facebook if you wish to see them.*

(<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150186187552714.301554.683782713&l=0e2b99e664>)



The new programme has six walks of varying difficulty. The keen-eyed will note that two leaders are doubling up in this quarter. My thanks to them and my encouragement to others to try leading occasionally – it helps sustain the programme.

Trevor June 2011
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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- **10.30 am Tuesday, 5th July** **Bleak House, Lydford** **8 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at 10.30 at the moor car park (OS28: 526854)

Take the A30, A386 to Tavistock and turn off to the left on a lane immediately before the Dartmoor Inn which is at the junction with the road down into Lydford Village.

From the car park we will take the old railway track around the back of Great Links Tor to the remote Bleak House returning via Brat Tor and Widgery Cross (5 hours total).

John B

- **10.30 am Friday, 22nd July** **Branscombe** **7.5 miles**
PACKED LUNCH OPTIONAL

Meet at Street (OS sheet 192, map ref. SY188889) 10.30 a.m.

Parking at Street is limited. Turn right just beyond the Fountain Head and park either next to the pub if space available or up the lane towards Weston.

The walk will start along the lane towards Weston for 1.5 miles then turn south to Weston Cliff, east along the coast path, then down through the old potato patches to the beach and along the shingle beach to Branscombe Mouth where we will have lunch (either a packed lunch or at the beach café). After lunch we will return along the cliff top and through the woods to Street.

Roger

• **2.00 pm Monday, 8th August**

Tiverton Canal

5 miles

PICNIC LUNCH OPTIONAL

Options:

1. Lunch at the Tiverton Canal Basin before the walk.
Catch the 55 bus at 12.00 from Exeter bus station (or New North Road), arrive Tiverton bus station 12.37.
2. Walk 2.00 start.
Catch 55 bus from Exeter bus station at 1.00 to arrive Tiverton bus station at 1.37.

I will meet both buses and lead walkers to Canal Basin

OR

3. Parking is available at the Canal Basin for those driving. Arrive at 1.00 for lunch or 2.00 for walk.

The walk will take us along the canal to the outskirts of Halberton, back towards Tiverton along the cycle path (old railway line) and then onto the canal. The complete route is about 5.5 miles (2.5 hours) with a shorter option of 3.5 miles. Bring a picnic if you wish to lunch beforehand.

Trevor

• **10.30 am Thursday, 25th August**

Lustleigh

9 miles

PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Start by church. Through playing field then up past Sharpitor and along ridge to Hunter's Tor. Down to Foxworthy Bridge and up to Manaton Rocks. Manaton (lunch) to Horsham and Water and into Houndtor Wood. Up to Gradner Rocks then Rudge and back to Lustleigh (tea). 9 miles with some steep climbs but mainly on footpaths and bridleways.

Tom

• **10.30 am Wednesday, 7th September**

Newton St. Cyres

7 miles

PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet 10.30 in the car park adjacent to the Community Hall. This is a short circular walk from Newton St. Cyres in the direction of Sherwood taking about 4 hours with stops.

John B

• **10.30 am Friday, 23rd September**

Fingle Bridge

9 miles

Start at Angler's Rest, then along river eastwards to Houndsmoor Wood. Steep climb up to Willingstone Cottages and Butterdon Hill then down into Moretonhampstead via Combe Court. Leave Moreton on the A382 northwards taking lane on right to Holcombe and then footpath to Cranbrook Castle then down through Charles Wood to Fingle Bridge (tea). 9 miles mainly on footpaths. Cafe and loo stop in Moreton. Superb walk.

Tom

RECENT WALKS 2011

Haddon Hill, Haddeo Valley and Wimbleball Lake, 24th March



On what 'Wallace' would describe as a 'cracking day', 15 of us converged on a large car park north of Bampton. We were all pretty early which was just as well because soon large horseboxes kept rolling in for a hunt meeting at 11.00. Foregoing the offers of 'port' at that time, we set off at 10.30.

Roger, fighting fit after an Australian Safari, briskly led the way across the moor in glorious, if hazy, weather. We soon reached Roger's 'difficult stretch', a sunken track covered in leaves and mud leading down into the Haddeo valley. It was tricky with some flat slippery rocks underneath but we coped although I wouldn't have fancied it in wet weather.

The terrain was very attractive with ancient coppices and the little hamlet of Bury was quite beautiful with an old stone footbridge and ford among a group of attractive houses.

We then had a gentle long climb up the Haddeo valley towards the Wimbleball dam passing a large trout farm but little else other than the occasional holiday home.

Below the dam, Roger pointed out the quick but very uphill route back to the car park but most chose the alternative longer but still very uphill route via Wimbleball Lake where we enjoyed an executive lunch sitting at picnic benches. The final section was back along the lake, over the dam where another choice resulted in our avoiding Lady Harriet's (concrete) carriage drive preferring an amble through the open coppiced woodland.

When we got back, the car park was full of cars and horseboxes but empty of people – the hunt was still on – the quarry's lucky day?

Thanks, Roger, for a beautiful, interesting and most enjoyable walk.

Trevor

Okehampton Castle, 4th April



This event was far more talking than walking. On a cold Monday morning the English Heritage office at Okehampton Castle was obviously pleased to see the sizeable turn-out (36 of us!) for the visit and tour Trevor had organized. The guide was our own Bob Higham, mediaeval archaeologist and historian, an expert on castles and particularly this one. He conducted us around the site and its building remains, including the keep perched on the towering motte. The climb challenged our hill-walking credentials and the jagged, leaning tooth of the staircase turret towering above tested our courage. As Bob took us around the more domestic quarters, he explained how a Norman castle built to overawe conquered Anglo-Saxons evolved into the Courtenay dynasty's summer pleasure-palace with adjacent hunting park. The garderobes (aka mediaeval loos) attracted particular interest, but the biting wind off the eastern edge of Dartmoor explained why the family retreated to more sheltered residences in winter. An absorbing morning suggested that our hardy walkers are appreciative of intellectual and historical as well as physical stimulation.

Bruce

Crediton and Shobrooke, 12th April



The last time we did this walk we managed to acquire a walker from another local group. On this occasion we managed to leave two of ours at an adjacent car park but fortunately they were able to use their initiative and catch us up making 18 in all.

It was yet another beautiful day as we followed the path along the Creedy and then along the line of the Tue Mill leat. It's probably wet and muddy in the normal spring but on this occasion it was bone dry.

We paused at the Norman church at Shobrooke with its beautifully manicured churchyard and then onto the Park where we lunched in a relaxed fashion (apart from one who was searching for sheep's wool for his tits' nest box). As we passed the lakes we saw some grebes cruising along. It was a very enjoyable leisurely walk. Thanks, John.

Trevor

Cheriton Bishop, 28th April

Bluebell Walk



Eleven gathered at Cheriton Bishop for Tom's bluebell walk. It was an idyllic day – warm and sunny with the countryside looking its best with cattle and sheep visible grazing in many fields. We followed bridleways and lanes, crossed fields with wonderful vistas and passed through three bluebell woods, one of which was especially striking with extensive drifts of flowers.

I took a number of photographs but felt that David Oates, our 'star' photographer would have done so much better. Why did he miss it – or did he? Now read on.....

Cheriton Fitzpaine, 28th April

Bluebell Walk



Having found just a "no parking" sign at the village hall, we set off from the car park of Thorne's Farm Shop at Strangaton Farm on a delightful walk through lanes and fields in perfect weather.

Spring flowers - even including orchids - adorned the hedgerows and the local livestock greeted us with varying degrees of warmth. We trod paths lined with the white of ransoms and the yellow of oil-seed rape.

Our route took us for 7 most pleasant miles past Lower North Coombe, Chilton, Cheriton Cross, Trew Woods, Westwood Farm and then back, going to the south of Stockleigh Wood and past Stockleigh Pomeroy Church.

Lunch was enjoyed in the beautiful setting of a woodland clearing in the midst of a sea of bluebells.

We found the company on the walk excellent, but commented from time to time on the surprising dearth of other walkers.

Lorna and David

Newton Abbot Circular Walk, 3rd May



Many of us were not familiar with walks around Newton Abbot so it was good to visit a new area. The walk turned out to be an eventful and enjoyable occasion. The plan was to set off from Newton Abbot at 10.45am but by then there were only two of us. When we thought the trip might have been abandoned three more turned up from the train including the walk leaders. Now we were five. Next stop the car park, where we found four more patient souls and all nine set off into the woods alongside the river Lemon. An initial steep climb was promised through the woods but faced with three public footpaths we went slightly awry and stayed close to the river. Here some of the group heard a cuckoo. Our new route took

us past Ogwell Mill and into the village of East Ogwell. Much to our surprise we met up with six more of the walking group. They had arrived on a delayed bus from Exeter and swiftly made their way on the intended path to East Ogwell, even having time to look in the church to see if we were there! The full complement made their way up past Channings Wood Prison where they were caught on camera. We stopped in the lovely village of Denbury to visit the church. One of our group had been evacuated there during the Second World War and took a nostalgic look at where he lived and at the village school he attended. There were more beautiful hillside views as we left Denbury and in the distance we could see Hay Tor. Next stop was West Ogwell, consisting of a church (sadly now redundant) and a large house (now used as a meditation centre). Our way back took us on the other side of the Lemon and past the far side of Ogwell Mill. Our thanks to David Oates and Lorna for introducing us to the attractive scenery around the Lemon valley.

Frankie and David

Ludwell Valley, 7th June

On yet another fine day, 8 gathered at the Tally-Ho for the Ludwell Valley surprise. The Green Circle walk follows the brook and is flat, easy but not exactly scenic. Trish's route has a long slow but undemanding climb up to the ridge where you can look back at a wide-angle view of Exeter or move through to an adjacent field and look out over the estuary. Those present were suitably impressed, noting it for a future afternoon stroll.

Then it was a leisurely circular downhill return to the Tally-Ho where half the party enjoyed lunch.

Anon

Dorset Delights, 14th / 15th June

DAY 1 CORFE CASTLE TO BALLARD DOWN AND OLD HARRY



A clear set of instructions, including rail and bus times, ensured that we were ready and waiting in the late morning for the start of our walk from Corfe Castle, a number of us travelling earlier enough to having already visited the impressive castle ruins. Some had made the transport connection from Swanage by bus, while others ventured onto the Swanage Railway which brought back the memories and smell of the steam engine, in this case (for railway buffs) a restored BR Standard Class 4 no. 80104.



With weather perfect for walking – bright sunshine, a gentle breeze and dry underfoot – we made our way out of the village up onto Brenscombe Hill and headed east. To the sound of sky larks, wonderful views started opening out in all directions, north over Poole Harbour, south over the Isle of Purbeck and back towards Corfe Castle itself. Lunch was spent in a sunny field on the top of the ridge and then it was downhill temporarily before climbing back upwards onto Ballard Down. A hovering Coastguard Rescue helicopter suggested that not all was well ahead and we discovered that an injured lady was lying blocking the main path while being attended to by a medical team. We were therefore forced to take a rather scrubby detour at the end of which a few of our number returned to Swanage for an early tea. The remainder of us climbed to the top of the Down (passing a paraglider on the way) and then walked along to the coast with its spectacular chalk cliffs,

arches and stacks including Old Harry himself. (Note: His wife does still exist but is now just a small stump out of sight from where we walked.) A short rest while we admired the extensive views towards Bournemouth and the Isle of Wight and then it was back along the coastal path and down to the beach at Swanage for the end of 10 miles of most enjoyable walking.

David B

DAY 2 PURBECK WAY TO CHAPMAN'S POOL & COAST PATH TO SWANAGE



After the beautifully sunny first day we woke to grey skies. Nevertheless, everyone arrived dutifully at the bus stop, bus passes clutched in hand, for the second day of our immaculately planned Dorset walk. After a short bus ride we alighted at the junction with the Purbeck Way which proved to be a rather overgrown path meandering down through a narrow valley. Following a gaggle of ragged sheep we came to a steepish climb up onto the South West Coastal Path. Far below us was Chapman's Pool, a small bay cut out from the cliffs during the last ice age, some 10,000 years ago. Turning south towards St. Aldhelm's Head, we were assured that this stretch of the coastal path was merely 'modulating', as indeed it was until we approached the headland and found ourselves staring down a flight of hundreds of steps and an equal number rising seemingly even more steeply up the other side of the valley. Why is it that whoever cuts out the steps on the coastal path always makes them the wrong size - too tall or too broad or both? Eventually (and eventually) we all staggered to the top of the steps on the far side of the valley where we collapsed in a huddle for a welcome lunch break after which the more inquisitive peered in at the coastguards keeping an eye on a small sailing boat struggling past the headland where the white-capped breakers from the west clashed with the smoother, more sheltered waters to the east. There was also an opportunity to look inside a tiny twelfth-century chapel with interesting seventeenth-century graffiti carved into the stonework. The next place marked on the map was 'Winspit' - suitably named as we now found ourselves struggling against a strong wind. And then, as the rain that had long been threatening finally caught up with us, we plodded on bravely to Dancing Ledge where a few took the option of walking into Langton Matravers and catching a bus back to Swanage. The majority walked on to the lighthouse and Durlston Country Park and down into Swanage for a welcome cup of tea. Whilst most of the group returned home that evening, a small rump remained to enjoy an excellent dinner at a restaurant that Trevor had identified as the best value in Swanage. Once again, many thanks to him for organising an excellent trip.

Roseanne and Roger

East Devon, 28th June

The weather looked uncertain but the distant view of the coast from the heights of Exwick was more promising and so it proved to be – another cracking day.

Alan was delighted to see a crowd of over 30 waiting for him but half melted away heading off in our planned direction (a visiting group). 16 remained as we set off along the level banks of the Otter. We soon overhauled the other (slower) group and Alan was comforted by the thought that leading them would have delayed our ETA at the pub!

The path along the coast was rather more up and down with excellent views of kittiwakes and fulmars nesting. Eventually we reached our high point noting that the pig field had moved inland (land-slips imminent?). Soon we turned inland onto

the road into Otterton arriving in bright sunshine. Most stayed for lunch at Otterton to round off a very pleasant and enjoyable walk. Thanks Alan.

Trevor