

UERSA WALKING GROUP

July – August 2015

Dates:

Thurs, 9 July

Wed, 22 July

Friday, 7 August

Thurs, 20 August

This programme is only for two months which reflects the occasional problem of getting enough offers from leaders and I hope that the next programme will contain the four months September – December. This time there is a new leader Jan Smith (who having taken the obverse of the 'King's shilling' from the VC) hopes to devote more time to walking and (I hope) to leading. I do hope you will support her leisurely stroll from Otterton as well as the walks by Tom and Edward (Maunder).

Any offers for occasional walks from new leaders will be very welcome.

The mini-break at Salcombe has been and gone with fine dry weather but misty on one day. Others must vouch for its success or otherwise but I was given a hint about peoples' reaction when I was asked by at least three people during the walks

– 'Where are we going next year?!'

Trevor June 2015

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- **10.30am Thurs, 9th July** **Otterton** **5 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

"The North Face of the Otter" (!) Up the Otter round and back starting from Otterton Mill. The meeting point would be the village green in Otterton. Bring a packed lunch and coffee at the Mill afterwards is an option.

Jan Smith

- **10.23am Wed, 22nd July** **Brunel Manor to Teignmouth** **6 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Getting there: Train 9.48 St Davids, Teignmouth 10.25
 then No 11 bus 10.40, Seaview Diner, Esplanade (STOP A)
 Arrive Brunel Manor 10.55

Route: From Brunel Manor we will take the John Musgrave Heritage Trail to Higher Roccombe Barton. The Ridge Road takes us to Stokeinteignhead for a packed lunch. We will then drop down to Teignharvey on the estuary and walk down to Shaldon for the ferry to Teignmouth.

Tom

Editor's notes: Tom has made this very user friendly with a walk along a ridge, a descent and then a stroll along the river – ideal for a summer's day out with a Tea for Twenty in Teignmouth. Do join him!

- **10.30am Friday, 7th August Above Steps Bridge 7 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at the Car Park at Steps Bridge. (Car share where possible as car park is medium sized.)

The walk will go up and across to Mardon Down, and then return via Dunsford wood with possible refreshment at the Walled Tea Garden in Dunsford.

Edward

- **14.00 Thursday, 20th August Afternoon Tea Stroll 2 or 4 miles**

Meet at the car park adjacent to the University Boat House on the north side of the swing bridge at Countess Wear. Note that access is only possible when approaching from the Countess Wear Roundabout; after you have crossed the (old) river bridge and immediately before you reach the swing bridge there is a wide (but not obvious) opening on the left to the car park.

We will cross the swing bridge to the other side of the canal and stroll along the path as far as the Topsham Ferry, crossing to the Passage Inn (about 2 miles). Tea or coffee is available at a café of your choice and we will reconvene at the Passage Inn 45 min later. At this time it will be near low tide and it is possible to take the path on the Topsham side of the river passing the Retreat Boatyard walking through the Reed Beds (covered at high tide) and on to the swing bridge via Glasshouse Lane (another 2 miles).

There is a bailout option for those replete with afternoon tea to take the bus back to Countess Wear roundabout!

This is a flat non-life-threatening walk and I do hope that occasional walkers will think about participating.

See you?!

Trevor

RECENT WALKS 2015

Belstone & Taw Valley, 9th March

Unfortunately only five joined Judy for her walk from Belstone to Cosdon Hill. Disappointing for Judy but the small very select group enjoyed the walk.

Many thanks, Judy

Trevor

Bickleigh Circular Walk, 24th March

Fourteen joined Roger at the Fisherman's Cot for his walk. During the initial pep talk he warned us that this would end as an initiative test since a knee problem (particularly going downhill) meant that he had strategically positioned his car at the top of the final descent and from that point we would be – ON OUR OWN.

Setting off we took a delightful green lane next to the River Dart. (Yes, it is called that and it joins the Exe at Bickleigh!) Reaching Little Silver we climbed up to the ridge and on to Kingdom's Corner and Well Town. We lunched there before making a steep descent into a wooded valley, then across fields to Cadleigh.

Roger bid us farewell saying 'Good Luck!' and disappeared in his car. A collective decision favoured 'going downhill' which proved right and we were soon back at Bickleigh where drinks were enjoyed at the Fisherman's Cot.

Many thanks, Roger, for leading us despite the discomfort.

Trevor

Heddon Valley, 28th April

Ten joined John B at Heddon Valley on a beautiful day, but with a bitterly cold wind. This had the effect of galvanizing the 'elite' core and the leader had trouble keeping up with them.

Pete's stunning photos tell it all. Thanks John for a greatly enjoyed walk. Trevor



**Valley of East Okement,
19th May**



Thirteen gathered at Okehampton Station having driven through heavy downpours so morale was not good. This was not improved by the prospect of three leaders. David (with a swollen ankle) had opted for the role of itinerant 'pop-up' guide (see later) with John and Trevor boring everyone with tales of how wonderful the recce had been a week earlier. David saw us off saying that he would be teleported to various locations en-route to greet us and explain aspects of his favourite walk.

When the deputy leaders started DOWN a precipitous path (did they make a mistake?) the group had its doubts but soon we were at Simmons Park and then along the stream to

Fatherford viaduct where David magically appeared. He reassured us that we didn't have to wade across the ford since after a tragic accident a footbridge had been built.

We then crossed and followed the track below Ball Hill, crossed the lane and entered the East Okement Valley. It was wide and rising gently at first with (miraculously) beautiful sunshine. Gradually it got steeper and narrower, the river faster with the track eroded in places. We passed waterfalls at the top emerging onto a moorland area where we paused for a break.

Refreshed we climbed to West Cleave Tor, one of the few non-granite tors on the Moor where suddenly David popped up to tell us about it – metamorphic rock (formed below ground and then pushed up) rather than igneous (formed from magma or molten lava). We then backtracked climbing even further onto Belstone Common. We stopped at the 'nine stone' circle, allegedly maidens turned into stone for dancing on the Sabbath. There were more than a dozen visible so maybe some of the maidens were pregnant.

Moving on we crossed the ridge below the 'Irishman's Wall' into Belstone where David greeted us near a row of convenient seats for lunch. This break ended somewhat in disarray when one subleader discovered that the other subleader had gone off with half the party leaving the other half behind. Undeterred we regrouped and waved our pop-up guide off in his car.

Then it was through Belstone, across the fields and back again to Fatherford Viaduct where (guess who) David popped up once more. Yes, we had to cross the bridge again and (to avoid the prospect of yet another circuit) turn right, not left onto a contour walk to Okehampton Station for yet another glimpse of our pop-up guide. Wondering how we would get rid of him, we thought up a cunning plan. A whip-round produced a substantial sum which was converted into a cheque for the Exeter Leukaemia Fund which incredibly was enough to pay him off.

Enough of this banter – thank you David for a superb walk and for your care and attention and now we can see why it is one of your favourites. Thanks too to John B for his role as 'notional' leader.

Trevor

Fingle Bridge, 3rd June



Five of us met at Fingle Bridge for the walk led by Pete, the numbers possibly depleted by advertised length of walk and the warning of steep ascents!

The sun shone all day which, combined with a pleasant cool breeze, provided ideal walking conditions. Most of the ascent was only moderate in steepness and the final ascent just past Drewsteignton was avoided by three of us as we skirted the hill and gently strolled back to the car park leaving Pete and Steve to make the final climb! The final distance came out at 8.5 miles of pleasant walking and lovely scenery.

On the way we had to cross a field of oil seed rape where the footpath had been overplanted - the two attached pictures give an idea of how high it was, in the second picture the little white blob in the distance is Pete's head!

Ed MacM

Salcombe, 17/18 June

Seventeen participated in this event based in Salcombe in very pleasant weather.

Marlborough – Inner Hope Cove – SWCP to South Sands

It was a bright greyish day as we arrived by bus at Marlborough to greet Brenda M who was staying at Bantham. 14 set out along a route which followed the ridge leading to the coast at Inner Hope Cove. It was pleasant easy walking and the leader explained that care was necessary at all times since the mist off the sea would prevent the helicopter from rescuing any injured. It was a late start so that we had an early lunch on the jetty at Inner Hope before setting out on the 'five miles to South Sands'. This is a quote from the leader who apparently spoke with forked tongue because David B immediately found a waymark saying 7.5. That set the tone for some convivial conversation as we followed the SWCP (you can't go wrong – keep sea on right) but with the mist it was difficult to see any views at all! It was nonetheless pleasant, warm and not damp at all. The only downside was that the

leader or deputy seemed to push on rather too quickly. Inevitably disaster struck-at a left turn, the leader overcooked it and after 10 minutes it was clear that we weren't anywhere near the cliff edge (and hence the sea). [Cue collective head-scratching in photo gallery.]



Eventually an executive decision was taken to go for an unlikely tortuous descending path followed by an uphill slog (will the leader never learn) which by luck proved right and we were soon at South Sands where the Elegant Edwardian Water Taxi took us out to meet the ferry on a low tide.

The relaxed voyage and the prospect of a good supper at The Galley cheered everyone up no-end.

Circular walk around East Portlemouth via Gammon Head and Gara Rock

We crossed on the ferry at 10.30 and gathered for a stroll 'up the creek' passing some rather splendid properties new, old and overly revamped to Goodshelter Creek where the ford (tidal) was low (good planning leader!). After a snack break we took a narrow very overgrown lane which climbed steeply up to below the ridge where in open fields we climbed gradually across contours to the highest point, Newtown (very new-only one very old property).

Compared with the previous day the weather was bright, sunny and warming up and we had reached a fairly extensive flat area so again (for different reasons) there was, like the day before, not a lot to see. However some road walking brought us to a broad rough track leading seawards and soon we had striking views of Prawle Point and Gammon Head where we had a long relaxing well-earned lunch.

Refreshed we then set out for the promised tea-break at the Gara Rock Restaurant perched on the cliffs. The cliff path was narrow but smooth and the views stunning including Bolt Head majestic in the distance. Soon the restaurant was in sight and we made the steep climb up discovering (for the relief of the leader) that it was open. Closure hadn't crossed his mind but a prominent notice said it would be closed the next day for a special function! After a leisurely drink the party split into two with 7 heading along an inland route to the ferry while the other 7 continued on along the Coast Path.



Eating and Socialising

Five dined on the first evening at a local restaurant and 8 met at a recommended pub on the third. On the second evening the walkers and those participating for a good time (without the inconvenience of walking) gathered at The Galley, a local restaurant overlooking the harbour.

A mole in the group had discovered that the leader had recently celebrated a birthday with a zero on the end so thanks again for 'la carte et le champagne anglais'.

It was an excellent meal with everyone remembering what they had ordered so no fighting ensued.

Postscript: On the third evening at the pub we were all listening to one of Pete's spellbinding stories which was so gripping that he was spellbound himself. At one point (we knew not why) he moved his crumpled serviette to the left & by chance onto a lighted flame. It burst into flames in microseconds and our leader, moving it quickly onto his plate hopefully but uselessly pinned it down with a knife. Fortunately Frankie, obviously experienced in these matters put another plate on top extinguishing the flames but producing much smoke. On cue the barman appeared from around the corner to take it away without comment, clearly a regular occurrence.

Trevor