

**Report on Chelmsford U3A Travel Club walking holiday on Exmoor,  
22<sup>nd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> September 2017**



This was the third walking holiday that the club has booked with Bath & West Country walks. Yet again the walk leaders, Graham & Sue looked after our group of 18 Travel Group members with professional ease.

We all stayed at the Simonsbath Hotel in the centre of Exmoor famous for its Dark Skies. Dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century the hotel had an interesting history and offered impressive views of the moors and the River Barle.

We were the only guests, so it was just like a House Party. The owners Andy and Louise looked after us extremely well. The chef, who received much praise for his efforts, offered us a choice of three dishes for each evening meal plus individually cooked breakfasts.

On the first day the whole group walked together, setting off from the hotel, walking past moss-covered trees able to survive because of the pure air, up into the hills for stunning views and sightings of ponies, deer and birds of prey. After lunch we went back along the River Barle passing a disused copper mine and Cow Castle, an ancient hill fort.

For the second and third days we split into two groups. The first group walked from Lynton to the Valley Of the Rocks and beyond, and the next day went on a circular walk from Malmsmead following the River Bagworthy. The second group walked from Withypool to the rebuilt Tarr Steps, and the following day went from Malmsmead to Oare Church, the centre of the Lorna Doone story.

Many thanks to Philip who challenged the party each evening with a quiz. The group departed on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September for the return journey to Chelmsford after a lovely three days walking.

**Written by Clare Lyne**