

Saturday, 1st August 2015, Exe Valley Way(V) with Chris and Mike

"Stage 5, Bampton to Dulverton, - A stylish walk"

Having discovered that the bus connections on the return journey looked very iffy, most of us decided that the best solution was to share a car to Bampton, do the walk and take the bus back to Bampton. After a little confusion as to the correct bus stop for the start of the walk, 14 of us plus Kim, the dog set off up the first hill from the village of Bampton. Five stiles were negotiated very quickly together with the main part of the day's inclines.



over the hill and now down the dale

There were lots of sheep and the views were delightful. Ominous dark clouds loomed ahead and we were soon putting on our wet weather gear as a quick shower passed our way. A short steep drop was negotiated as we reached the road. We passed an unusually shaped toll house.



the Exe at Exebridge

We then entered Exebridge and this is where we said goodbye to the Exe river which disappeared north and wouldn't be seen again until we reached our destination on Exmoor on a later stage.



"I'm sure there was a path here last time!" **pix by stella**

There followed a debate as to which way to negotiate Hulverton Hill and it was decided we would follow a sheep's path which initially was quite steep and then took a diagonal route across a field.

We crossed the railway bridge and soon reached the village of Brushford. Looking up the history of the village, it was named as Brigeford in the Domesday book survey of 1086. In the 19th and 20th Centuries, Bampton, Brushford and Dulverton enjoyed the contact of the Barnstaple to Taunton and Tiverton Railway but sadly no more.

We had a quick look at the weir as we were passing. It has recently been established that the historic water-power system was once a far more important and industrially busy place than previously believed. The ancient history of the weir and leat date back to 1331 and was in use up to the 20th century. The leat was the medieval equivalent of a modern power plant. This lasted until it was discovered that coal was the cheaper option. In 1791 the local residents were chiefly employed in the manufacture of coarse woollens and blankets. This was all uncovered when renovation and research was recently carried out after the flood damage of 2013/14.

A lunch stop on a river bridge over the River Barle at last arrived in time for us to refresh and complete the last 1.5 easy miles into Dulverton, a pretty little town where some chose to explore and some went to get a quick cup of tea. As luck would have it, the first bus was late so we chose right in taking the car option.

Our thanks to Chris and Mike for their organisation skills in making this delightful stage of about 6 miles such a pleasure.

Heather Fereday
3rd August 2015