

Wednesday, 26th and Friday 28th August 2015, In the Steps of Samuel Coleridge Taylor with Haylor Lass

“Wettest Walk of the Week”

Four well wrapped up walkers led by Haylor left the Bowd layby in pouring rain to trace Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s walk to Ottery St Mary (OSM). On Fire Beacon Lane we scared a young horse with our umbrellas, before turning into the muddy plantation track to White Cross. A quick drink stop under dripping trees, visibility poor with low cloud, then steep descent to Waxway. Now out in the open across soggy fields, over slippery stiles, through a colourful landscaped garden estate (no obvious country mansion - who does it belong to?) to the highlight of the day - an 8 foot tall ‘amaizing’ crop!

Meeting up successfully after this adventure, we crossed over the lane and onwards past Knowstone Lake (green and reedy) to Pixie’s Parlour beside the River Otter. The rain eased, but we didn’t stop for poetry, the ‘drowned rats’ reached the Volunteer Inn in OSM for a warm and welcome lunch. The sun appeared, decision made to walk rather than bus back, so we followed a very brown and swollen Otter.



The Archimedes screw at Tipton Mill in full turn and the weir impressive, before we ascended the old railway track to the start, now more-or-less dried out.

Ruth Lass
3rd September 2015

"A Grand Day Out."

The consensus verdict of the following day, 26th August, on the Quantock Hills. An early start from home took nine of us to Bishop's Lydeard railway station for the 9.40 am bus to Red Post. A half mile walk on a gently rising lane got the legs moving, before a steep climb in sunshine up rough track and across common to the top of the ridge. What a reward - a beech-tree lined drove-way with glimpses between the trees of extensive views, west to the Brendon Hills and Exmoor and eastwards over the Somerset Levels and the Parrett estuary.



After a welcome coffee stop, we emerged onto open moorland with splendidly colourful heather and gorse, and unfolding views northwards across the Bristol Channel, Flatholm and Steepholm, to South Wales - Barry, Port Talbot and Swansea readily identifiable.



And company from many sheep, two buzzards and a kestrel, with a glimpse of a swooping peregrine. After five miles of ridge walking, we dropped down a little path through the trees and bracken to the Windmill Inn for a welcome lunch stop. Suitably refreshed, good food, good company and plenty of liquid, it was a gentle, mostly downhill walk on lanes and around field edges to Williton Station - preserved in 1940's livery, milk churns and handcarts on the platforms - and a traditional station buffet with tea and home-made fruit cake. The evocative sound of a whistle and a wisp of steam disturbed our snooze on the station bench, resting our feet, and we enjoyed more of the countryside on the half-hour train ride back to our cars.

Haylor Lass
3rd September 2015