

Sunday 3rd April 2016, Clovelly to Hartland Point with Dee Woods & Iain Ure

Eight of us left West Woolley at 9.15 on a misty drizzly morning, taking some cars to the end of this linear walk, near Hartland Point.

We regrouped for the start of the walk in the car park, high above Clovelly Village.

Setting off at 10:30 with Ian and Dee at the helm, we headed west on the coastal footpath, pausing for a few moments to watch the Inshore Lifeboat, with helicopter above, on a training exercise out at sea.

A short distance along the path we gathered for a photo at the Angels Wings, an unusual shelter tucked away in the woods, with carved wooden supports and oriental style roof. It was built in 1826, and restored to its former glory in 1934.

Following the path on a steady climb through the woods we came across a slate roofed summerhouse, the plaque informing us that it had been built for Dame Diana Hamlyn in 1820. On the Historic England Website it is described as “an unusual building, part of the romantic landscape created in a lovely wooded valley on the edge of the sea, and part of the landscaped park around Clovelly Court.”

Today, Clovelly Village, the estate, and Clovelly Court are currently in the ownership of John Rous, a descendant of the Hamlyn family who have owned Clovelly since 1738.

We then took a detour from the path to a viewpoint on the cliff edge where we looked back on the striking and aptly named Blackchurch Rock, rising out of the sea at the foot of the cliffs. Returning to the main path, our route then tumbled steeply down to Mouthmill beach where we stopped for coffee and a snack in warm sunshine.

Coffee over we climbed up from the beach where the next stretch of footpath was a series of steep ups and downs through Brownsham Woods, with pretty paths and full of spring flowers, leading up to Windberry Head and Brownsham Cliff. There was some disappointment that we were just too late to take part in the Easter Rabbit Competition, advertised on posters in the woods!

We stopped for lunch on Fatacott Cliff. The weather had changed and it was now chilly and damp so we sought out the best hedge shelter we could find and kept the lunch stop brief. A misty Lundy Island could be seen out to sea.

The section of the walk after Brownsham Cliff was a notable contrast to the morning, following flat grassy topped cliffs, with some very wet and slippery sections.

The weather kindly cleared for the final stretch of coastal footpath to Hartland Point, where Chris treated us all to a very welcome cup of tea in the sunshine at the Cafe Kiosk. This was followed by a short walk back to the car park at East Titchbury and the end of another good day of walking.

Peter Paine

21st April 2016