

## **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2018 “Devonshire Heartland Way - Part 2: Sampford Courtenay to North Tawton with Heather Fereday**

We all met in one of the two car parks in North Tawton, there was not much shade as we waited for the bus – it was going to be another scorcher.

The parish of Sampford Courtenay comprises a pretty conservation village surrounded by more than 8,000 acres of beautiful Devon countryside. It is most famous for being the place where the Western Rebellion, otherwise known as the Prayer Book rebellion, first started, and where the rebels made their final stand. In 1549 the rising in the west of England against the new English Prayer Book and the then new fangled religious policies of Edward VI, ended. Well there was another small stand at Launceston, but it was more or less over. A plaque remembers William Helyons who was killed on the steps of the Church House. The village has a station on the Dartmoor Railway.



Starting by The New Inn in Sampford Courtenay, we walked up to the Church taking in the various plaques commemorating the Prayer Book rebellion and the war memorial, before backtracking to take the path past the village hall towards Bullards Cross and then into green lanes.



As the sun continued to warm us, we took very old parish tracks and crossed fields to Frankland Ford Bridge and into the hamlet of Honeychurch. We stopped for an early packed lunch at the church of St. Mary's. Lunch finished it was time to go into the church.

This church is notable for its unusually small size and its age. A Saxon church, Huna's Church, stood on this site, but was completely replaced in the 12th century by a Norman church, much of which still stands today. The church was altered and improved in the late 15th century, giving it its present perpendicular style aspect, but has been little altered since. The parish was very small, and remains so to this day. Interesting features inside include a wall painting, seemingly of the Royal Coat of Arms from the Elizabethan period, some very old oak pews, and the wagon-style nave ceiling with carved wooden bosses/corbels in the shape of beasts' and lions' heads, all different.



The slightly asymmetrical font is Monolithic, square at the top, tapering slightly, becoming round at the bottom and supported on a crude, roughly square base. The bowl is decorated with two thick rows of carving between rolls.

The Churchyard cross 4m south of Honeychurch church is a listed monument; see: <https://historicensland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1013739>.

The route followed minor country roads and footpaths through fields to meet the Tarka trail beside the River Taw. Having crossed the Yeo Bridge. The hedgerows provided the opportunity to spot butterflies – David proved an expert in identification. We followed tracks and footpaths through more sun-baked fields to get to North Tawton, a small market town. Walking up the High Street knowing that the end was close inspired a slight acceleration in pace. We continued up the High Street to the car park for another section completed by 14.00.

North Tawton was the home of: Ted Hughes, the poet; the TV series “Jam & Jerusalem”; and William Budd who discovered that typhoid was spread in contaminated water. In “Jam & Jerusalem”, North Tawton was Clatterford St Mary in a sitcom about a Women's Guild by Jennifer Saunders. Scenes from the town can be spotted and some of the local folk were extras.

Paul Kurowski