

## Friday 15th February, “A winter’s stroll around Colyton” with Stella French

Today’s promise of a fine dry day encouraged 16 of us to join Stella on a delightful walk along part of the River Coly and the Umborne Brook. We started in Colyton, a town once dubbed “the most rebellious town in Devon” owing to the town’s support of Parliament in the Civil War in 1643 and the number of inhabitants who joined the Monmouth rebellion in 1685.

Colyton still has it’s tannery which is the only oak bark tannery in the U.K. which we passed as we walked along the River Coly.



This forms part of the East Devon Way and a little further along we were greeted by a colourful display of snowdrops, some crocus flowers, the first daffodils and some pretty catkins.



Stella promised us some mud on the walk but we all managed to stay upright and not fall or slip in the muddy patches. We had a lovely coffee stop after climbing a gentle hill with enticing views of the surrounding countryside and the interesting historic town.



The path along Watery Lane lived up to its watery name and the many meadows we crossed were soaking up the recent rain. The flat bottomed flood plain of the Coly and Umborne are subject to regular flooding and constant movement of the river course. The land has traditionally been used as meadows and pastures for dairy and beef cattle and sheep of which we saw a large flock. On the return leg, we crossed the River Umborne several times via wooden bridges and caught glimpses of Shute House.

Some of us stopped in the pub for lunch after the walk having abandoned our muddy boots.

Thank you Stella for an enjoyable walk today in glorious sunshine in an area we should return to explore further.

Heather Fereday