

Otter Source to Mouth, Stage 3 - Weston (Honiton) to Newton Poppleford

This time the bus taking us to our start point was a grown-up sized no 9 double decker. Plenty of room for the total of 15 walkers, plus Kurly Kim the dog, taking part in Stage 3.

We started where we left off last time at the Otter Inn, Western Cross, with its fine River Otter frontage, and traversed country lanes passing the Deer Park Farm, where we saw a solitary deer among grazing sheep.



Just outside Buckerell we saw where the Martha Mockford fire had taken place. Then on to the village itself, with its charming fourteenth century church. Onwards, no time to linger. Coffee stop in a field just before Feniton where the sight of a field full of sunflowers delighted us.



So far the weather had been kind to us, no rain, some brightness, a bit of wind, nothing like the gales of the day before, which had made one wonder then if indeed we would be able to set out at all.

At intervals Paul would stop and regale us with some interesting facts about our surroundings. So many interesting people who lived and worked in this quiet and beautiful part of Devon.

A special breed of longhorn cattle is produced near Feniton. We did not see any on our walk though. We learnt that Feniton used to be called Old Feniton, and its nearby railway station (three quarters of a mile away from the village) used to be called Sidmouth Junction, whence one could leave the main line train and take the branch line to Sidmouth. Indeed we were to walk on some of this line, now disused.



Lunch was eaten in a delightful grassy field bordering 'our' river in sight of the ancient brick Gosford Bridge.



After lunch we carried on down the river passing Cadhay Bridge, some narrow crumbling paths through the woods necessitating single file. To Ottery St Mary then, where we viewed the Tumbling Weir and all the new building going on nearby.



Paul showed courage on a number of occasions when he would stand in the middle of a road, or a lane, and ensure the traffic slowed down and stopped for us while we scuttled across to safety. Once safely across the last road on leaving Ottery maps could now be put away as it was simply a matter of sticking to the river path. A couple of lucky walkers spotted a Kingfisher.

Near the Tipton Mill, now happily being gradually renovated, and the Archimedes Screw, we stopped for a teatime stop and a lovely surprise: homemade flapjacks from Penny and Paul. Delicious! And much appreciated by us all.

We learnt that Tipton Mill was once called Sergeant & Sons, Tipton. And it has two millwheels at right angles to each other.

We then made our way back along the river to Newton Poppleford and our cars, getting there around 4 pm, after having had a wonderful, friendly and educative walk.

Thank you indeed, Penny and Paul, once again.

Jacqui Ruhlig