

Thursday, 17th March “Patteson’s Way” with Haylor Lass

Ten of us assembled with Ruth and Haylor Lass outside St Andrew’s church in Feniton to walk this newly developed pilgrimage route that celebrates the life of John Patteson on the 150th anniversary of his demise. He grew up in Feniton, went to school in Ottery, served curacy at Alfington, and became the first Bishop of Melanesia, where he was martyred.

Before setting off, Haylor showed us the Patteson family tomb in the churchyard and a door in the wall that provided a shortcut for the family to access the church from their home, the impressive Feniton Court. We set off across open fields with views across the upper Otter



Valley, then the noisy A30 and quieter Exeter-Waterloo railway line to reach Fenny Bridges. From there, the route goes parallel to the River Otter as far as the church of St James and St Anne in Alfington. The church warden was waiting to greet us and offered us strands of wool from her own sheep to tie onto a tree in the churchyard dedicated to Bishop Patteson in honour of his sacrifice. He could have lived a very comfortable life in Alfington, but instead chose missionary work in little-known isolated islands in the Pacific Ocean.



After being treated to coffee at the old school house, we continued along the Otter Valley to the parish church in Ottery St Mary. Patteson would have known this church well as a boy, when he was at school in the town and lived with his uncle nearby. This was our lunch stop and opportunity to see St Stephens chapel with its commemoration of Patteson's work in Melanesia.



Our return journey was alongside the River Otter and then a diversion to the old A30 to view Patteson's Cross, which was erected in his honour in 1873, two years after his death.

From there it was a short distance across fields and along lanes back to Feniton church.

Jon Roseway