

THE COLERIDGE WAY WALK JULY 2016 – Kellen Lincoln

The Coleridge Way is a 51 mile long distance path which starts in Nether Stowey in Somerset to Lynmouth in Devon. This route follows in the footsteps of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and crosses the Quantock hills and Exmoor National Park. The route crosses farmland, ancient woodland, coniferous woodland and moorland. It is one of the highest rated long distance footpaths in the world. I wrote a poem on each day we were walking.



Day 1

We arrived at Nether Stowey in the afternoon and checked in to a pub called the Ancient Mariner which is opposite the house where Coleridge spent 3 years of his life.

Once we had unpacked our bags we walked to the medieval Motte and Bailey castle at the top of Nether Stowey. The Castle had a Motte which had the foundations of the stone keep intact and 2 Baileys. From the top of the Motte we could see across the Bristol Channel to Wales and saw the islands in the Severn.

*“Day after day day after day,
we stuck nor breath nor motion
As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean”
Rime of the Ancient Mariner
Samuel Taylor Coleridge*



Day 2 (12 miles)

We walked from Nether Stowey to Wiliton crossing the Quantock hills. First we walked through fields of corn to Walfords Gibbet where in 1789 a man called John Walford was hung for killing his wife. Then we crossed some ancient woodland to a small village called Holford which had a 19th century dog pound. A dog pound is a place where stray dogs get sheltered from the wild. As we continued through Holford we walked along a drive where a once thriving now abandoned hotel stands with overgrown tennis courts and a dilapidated cottages. As we continued across the Quantock hills we were walking on the favourite haunt of the Lakeland poet Wordsworth. We later trekked around broom ball and descended into west Quantoxhead and followed footpaths and farmland into Stamford Brett where we made our way up an old sunken road to Wiliton to our accommodation called the White House.

The Coleridge Way

*As I walk in the footsteps of the poets of old
I listen to the poems and stories they told*

*I pass bright painted cottage of thatch and mortar
Through ancient oak and babbling water*

*Along sunken road and moorland climb
I trudge my way and hear their rhyme*

*I wonder past quarry and abandoned mine
Follow the feather and look for the sign*

*I tramp through fields of oat and corn
And scramble the moor of bracken and thorn*



Day 3(9 miles)

We left Wiliton and walked to Roadwater crossing ancient woodland and farmland. First we past Elizabethan farm buildings at Aller farm and continued across fields of barley, wheat and corn. Then we followed a sunken lane to the village of Monksilver which had a 14th century church. We then followed farmland to ancient woodland at birds hill and we climbed to the summit and descended into a village called Sticklepath and crossed Pitt wood and descended into Roadwater and checked into our accommodation for the night which was an inn called the Valiant Soldier.

Tree Tunnels

*As I wander through these tunnels of green
Nothing unnatural is there to be seen
I see squirrels climb to their secret spot
And fledglings learning from their mother a lot*

*As I continue through the beech, the ash and the oak
I spy the black flag of the elusive stoat
I smell the scent of meadowsweet close by
And see the kite framed in the blue sky*



Day 4 (9 miles)

We walked from Roadwater to Wheddon cross across farmland, ancient woodland and coniferous woodland. First we climbed into coniferous woodland where there was a bronze age cist. Then we crossed farmland where we could still see across to Wales. After we descended into Luxbrough we crossed Lype common and white moor to a sunken road and a very overgrown bridleway that led to Wheddon Cross and the Rest And Be Thankful inn where we would spend the night.

A tough day on the Coleridge Way

*The sun is so hot I feel I shall bake
But what am I doing here for goodness sake?
I now walk with feet so sore
I don't think I can go any more*

*The green nettles they sting, The many insects do bite
And this path keeps on going, there is no end in sight
The gate it is closed, the latch is away
The bullocks though encircle me, they want to play*

*I try to dodge cow pats along my route
But some though, find there way onto my boot
The signs have gone, which path should I take
Oh no, a dead sheep caught in the gate*

*All these problems you forget after a while
Because the view over Exmoor can raise a smile*



Day 5 (13 miles)

We walked from Wheddon Cross to Porlock weir crossing Exmoor, coniferous woodland and ancient woodland. First we walked through ancient woodland to Dunkery gate and ascended the highest point on Exmoor, Dunkery Beacon, in thick fog. After we descended Dunkery and walked to Webber's Post and a coniferous forest which we walked across to Horner. At this point we ascended the opposite side of the valley to Porlock. A famous event about the incredibly steep Porlock hill is about the Porlock lifeboat crew who had to deal with a shipwreck and had to push a wooden lifeboat up a hill with a gradient of 1 in 4 in some places.

After we had reached Porlock we followed the Worthy toll road for a bit then followed a bridleway to Porlock Weir where we checked into the café.

Porlock Weir

*As Herring gulls soar high above the bay
Quaint little fishing boats on the beach lay
The blue tranquil sea laps the pebbly shore
But in a storm this sea could roar*



Day 6 (9 miles)

We walked from Porlock Weir to Brendon crossing Exmoor and coniferous woodland. First we climbed through ancient woodland to Ash Farm and walked across farmland to coniferous woodland. We then crossed this and carried on across Exmoor to Oare and Malsmead where we crossed into Devon. We then continued through ancient woodland and ascended a small hill and descended into Brendon where we checked into the Staghunters inn.

The Stag

*A stag stands tall with antlers upright
He spies a rival after a fight
Their bellowing roar echoes all around
These dominant stags will stand their ground
A roaring charge as antlers clash
Crimson blood flows from a gash
The wounded stag gets driven away
The leading stag has won today*



Day 7(6 miles)

We walked from Brendon to Lynmouth through ancient woodland. First we followed a waterside path until we reached the Rockford inn. Then we were onto a large track beside the river Lyn through the valley of ancient woodland and waterfalls which was incredible. Then we followed this track all the way to Lynmouth where I went paddling in the sea. Then we checked into the Rising Sun where we were staying.

The walk was amazing and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

River Lyn

*Out of the moor, the tiny stream flows
Twisting and turning and slowly it grows
It emerges into a babbling brook
Grabbing rock from banks it took*

*Further down water levels rise
Meeting rivers and growing in size
As the big river from under bridges burst
The farm animals come to quench their thirst*

*As the lazy river reaches the sea
Children laugh and paddle with glee*

