

Saturday 7th March “Sid Valley Ring Part 1” with Vivien Insull

Maybe it was the promise of a dry day that tempted so many of us out or was it the new walking route created by the Sidmouth Town Council and the Sid Vale Association, known as the Sid Valley Ring.

We caught the bus from Sidmouth to Sidbury where the walk started. Striding uphill along the muddy East Devon Way we passed Goosemoor Farm causing its dogs to bark excitedly. Continuing upwards to White Cross we then walked along the ridge and through woods. It was still fairly hazy around us but visibility improved as we walked on. During our coffee break we admired the scenic views across the valley below with daffodils flowering around us.



Refreshed from our break we continued our route around Beacon Hill and the edge of Harpford Common catching glimpses of the sea. A descent along a small lane brought us out, much to my surprise opposite Waitrose. This lane, Core Hill Lane was apparently the old road from Sidmouth to Ottery St Mary.

Crossing the road we then traced our way amongst the interesting back streets of Sidmouth including Ice House Lane with an attractive square of listed cottages dating from the 17th century. It unfortunately also has a tendency to flood at the far end and we were brought to an abrupt halt when faced with water along the length of the road. Our leader ventured forth to test the depth and a few of us followed with the water rapidly flowing into our boots. Those in wellington boots easily waded through. The wiser members of the group consulted their maps and devised a drier detour.



Meeting up with them a few minutes later we continued the walk along the Bickwell Valley admiring its impressive collection of large houses many of which were designed by RW Sampson.

The walk continued towards the sea front skirting along roads and footpaths alongside a small stream. Those that stayed to the end had lunch on the seafront while others with wet feet took the quickest route back to their car.

Thank you Vivien for introducing us to this interesting and varied new walking route around Sidmouth. We look forward to walking the 2nd stage of it.

Stella French