

Economic benefits of tourism: The Coleridge Way

In January 1797, Samuel Taylor Coleridge rented a house at Nether Stowey on the Quantock Hills in Somerset. Inspired by the local landscape, he produced Rime of the Ancient Mariner and Kubla Khan and, with William Wordsworth - then living in nearby Alfoxden - The Lyrical Ballads of 1798, a seminal work of English Romanticism.

In 2005, the Coleridge Way walking route opened, linking sites and locations associated with the poet's stay in Somerset. Beginning at Nether Stowey, the path winds 35 miles across the Quantock Hills to the coastal town of Porlock in Exmoor National Park, and was an immediate success with a wide range of visitors. By 2007 it was estimated to be bringing £160k per year into the local economy, with 72% of businesses along the route seeing 'significant benefits' as a direct result of the Coleridge Way.

In May 2014, a 15-mile extension to the route was opened following the successful completion of a project by Exmoor National Park in partnership with the the Lyn Community Development Trust, Lyn Valley Society, Lynton and Lynmouth Town Council and Lynmouth Flood Memorial Hall Fund. The extension links Porlock with the Valley of Rocks and Lynmouth, one of Coleridge and Wordsworth's favourite walks. As well as enhancing the visitor experience, it is hoped the extension will increase the economic benefits to the local economy, in particular the settlements along the route which provide key services to visitors.

Accommodation providers are already reporting an increase in interest for bookings for next season (2015).



Promoting the new route on The Coleridge Way © Steve Guscott, Exmoor National Park Authority

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