

9. Leave the church and return to the westernmost steps. Walk along the concrete path to the corner of the churchyard. In 1779, a furious argument with his older brother led Coleridge to grab a kitchen knife and run at him. Their mother arrived on the scene and Coleridge, fearing a flogging, ran into College Road, round the corner below you, on past The Chanter's House (to your right and much smaller then) and across the fields beyond to the river. There he stayed all night despite a hue and cry to find him. You can visit this beautiful spot if you decide to follow Excursion 1 on the Coleridge Link Leaflet (from the TIC or download from the website).

10. Return to the main steps and walk down Silver Street past more Georgian townhouses and shops. Bear right through the square and along Hind Street. At the next junction cross Canaan Way to the recreation ground opposite. The park is called the Land of Canaan and was the location of one of Ottery's annual Fairs. Coleridge recalls these August events in *Frost at Midnight* written in the winter of 1798.

*With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birthplace, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,*

Here you will find the **Kubla Khan poetry stones**, installed in 2012 to honour the poet in his home town.

11. Having seen the poetry stones, return to Canaan Way and pass the medical centre on your right and turn right at the end of the road into Mill Street. Pause at the large redbrick house just past the St Anthony's Church. This is Raleigh House (named for an earlier house here reputedly occupied by the legendary Sir Walter Raleigh). This was the home of Coleridge's 'Faery Queen' recalled in his *Songs of the Pixies* written in 1793. She was Elizabeth Boutflower, who later married Thomas Davy the town surgeon and lived here into old age long after Coleridge had died. It was also the home of a notable Ottery inventor - (see the Heritage Society's plaque.)

12. Continue along Mill Street past the old Factory (Built in 1789 - now a listed building) as far as the bridge over the river Otter. This is Coleridge's 'wild streamlet of the west', immortalised in his *Sonnet to the River Otter*. Just across the bridge on the left is a set of steps to take you onto the Millennium Green. Stop by the river. Coleridge tells us he only has to close his eyes and the river returns to his imagination...



Raleigh House - home of the 'Faery Queen'

Dear native Brook! wild Streamlet of the West!

*Dear native Brook! wild Streamlet of the West!
How many various-fated years have past.
What happy and what mournful hours, since last
I skimm'd the smooth thin stone along thy breast,
Numbering its light leaps ! yet so deep imprest
Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine eyes
I never shut amid the sunny ray,
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,
And bedded sand that vein'd with various dyes
Gleam'd through thy bright transparence! On my way,
Visions of Childhood ! oft have ye beguil'd
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs:
Ah ! that once more I were a careless Child!*

The town tour ends here but if you would like to visit Pixies' Parlour, to see the place where Coleridge's 'Faery Queen' was anointed or where he spent his infamous night out, use the Coleridge Link Leaflet available at the TIC or downloadable from

www.coleridgememorial.org.uk/walking

Head back over the bridge and up the hill to return to the centre of Ottery where the tour began.

Published by the Coleridge Memorial Project, Fir Grove, Lower Broad Oak Road, West Hill, Ottery St Mary, EX11 1UF.
© Coleridge Memorial Project, 2011.
More information is available at
www.coleridgememorial.org.uk
Photos: Wikimedia Commons, Phyllis Baxter, Chris Wakefield, Peter Harris.



Coleridge Memorial Project

A tour of Coleridge's Ottery St Mary

A self guided walk



Devon's most famous literary figure



Samuel Taylor Coleridge grew up amid the sights and sounds of the small market town of Ottery St Mary in East Devon. It was clear from his very early years that Coleridge was different to other

children - at three years old he could read a chapter in the bible, and at seven he was reading the *Arabian Nights*. Many of the glorious places that Coleridge knew as a child are little changed

since he witnessed them in the late 18th century. This tour will take you to many of these places. You will find his 'Dear native Brook' and his 'old grey church'.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge 1772-1834

The poet and philosopher STC was born in the Schoolhouse, Ottery St Mary on 21st October 1772. He spent his childhood here and in later life wrote affectionately about the town and its surroundings. This leaflet will guide you to some of the places that Coleridge knew, tell you a little about his childhood in Ottery and show how it affected his later life and work.

The basic tour will take you about an hour (longer if you take a tour of the church). If you want to explore some of Coleridge's countryside, there are two excursions you can choose from detailed on the Coleridge Link Leaflet.

The basic tour is suitable for all ages and abilities.

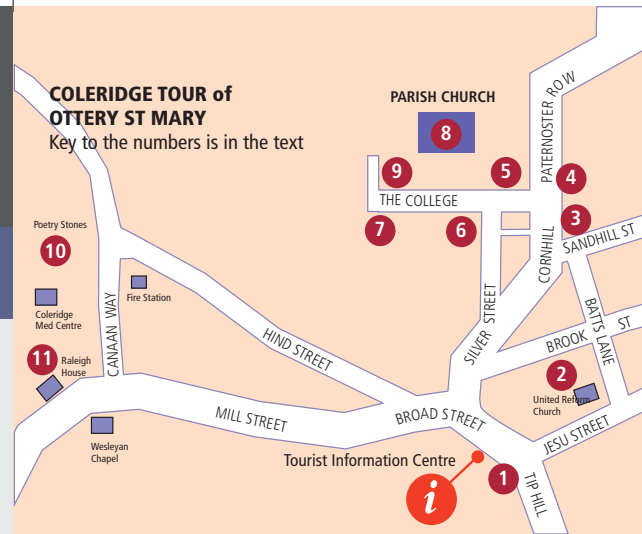
1. From the Tourist Information Centre, walk a few paces to the right and stand on the corner facing the fish & chip shop. In 1866, 32 years after his death, a large part of the town Coleridge knew was destroyed in a catastrophic fire. The houses on your right, on both sides of the hill, along with those you can see past the chip shop, were all destroyed. A few houses on the south side of the Square (proper name Broad Street) were spared but the fire took hold again down Mill Street (behind you on the left) and destroyed most of that too. After the fire, Ottery was rebuilt in brick and slate, so you will see only a few of the thatched houses that were once everywhere in the town.

2. Cross over the road to the chip shop and walk along Jesu Street as far as the United Reform Church on your left. This

was already a century old when Coleridge was a boy, and although his father was the vicar of the Anglican church, it has been suggested his mother had nonconformist sympathies. Coleridge's interests were certainly drawn in this direction when he was in his twenties.

3. Cross over to the chapel and walk down Batts Lane, cross Brook Street, and turn left at the end briefly into Sandhill Street. Turn right again in front of the Kings Arms and cross over to the pavement at the bottom of Cornhill. From this point on you will see parts of Ottery that look much as they did in Coleridge's time.

4. Walk up the hill passing the elegant Victorian and Georgian townhouses on your right. Stop outside Cornhill House and look across to the Church. There was a row of cottages along the frontage



of the churchyard facing you. These were demolished sometime in the 1870s. The space now occupied by the brick memorial and the library (the brick building across the road on your left) was Ottery's market place, full of movement and colour each Tuesday when everyone came into town to buy supplies or trade their goods.

5. Cross over to the corner of the Churchyard and walk towards the church steps ahead of you. On your right, about half way along, is a bronze tablet in memory of Coleridge placed here by Gilbert Coleridge in 1931.

*He prayeth best who loveth best
all things both great and small,
for the Great God Who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.*

6. Continue to the steps and pass them on your right. The little stream running along the roadside has been here since at least the 16th century. Coleridge used to make paper boats and sail them along it.

7. Walk along the Colle to the end - this lane and the churchyard adjacent is Coleridge's boyhood playground. He was born in the schoolhouse here (see the Heritage Society's plaque on the

wall) amid the decaying College buildings. He went to school here too, in the now demolished King's School building. The warden's house at the far end of the Colle on the corner remains least altered from Coleridge's time. He lived here very briefly after his father died in 1781 when the family had to move out of the vicarage. (NB these are all now private houses).

8. Go up the steps into the churchyard - Coleridge tells us he would act out scenes from the books he read as a child 'on the nettles and rank grass' in the churchyard. Go into the church (this is arguably the finest parish church in Devon). In the south tower is a beautiful medieval clock. The clock may have found its way into Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*...

*The moving moon went up the sky
And nowhere did abide
Softly she was going up
And a Star or two beside*

If you have time, a detailed tour of the church is a must. If not, make sure you see the information boards near the shop.

St Mary's Church. Coleridge's playground

Coleridge's birthplace - demolished 1884

Commemorative plaque on the churchyard wall.

The old King's School - demolished 1884

The medieval church clock

Coleridge's birthplace

