

BENEFICE DAY OUT

4TH JUNE 2011.

On a glorious June day, some 35 happy and relaxed “trippers” climbed aboard the coach at Beara Cross, and settled down for a scenic trip to Totnes, in order to catch the steamer down to Dartmouth. Quite how scenic it was to be we were shortly to discover.

About an hour into the trip murmurs of disquiet could be heard in various parts of the coach. Lanes were getting narrower, and we seemed to be some way away from our scheduled arrival at Totnes. Disquiet turned to concern when, coming to sign posts – Dartmouth left, Totnes right, we turned left! Wendy, our able organiser remonstrated with the driver, who blithely considered he had got it right – our destination was Dartmouth. Oops.

Fortunately, the boat company were very helpful, and agreed to book us in the opposite direction, i.e. Dartmouth to Totnes. SO..... this gave us more time in Dartmouth, which was very pleasant. The castle and church were visited by some, which probably would not have been possible with the earlier itinerary.

At 3.15 pm we then caught the river boat upstream, to Totnes. This trip was delightful, the beauties of the river revealed – for me it even beat the River Fal, until now my benchmark. We had a very helpful commentary, packed with information, as we sailed gently along. We had even longer to contemplate the delights when we were briefly stranded on a sandbank (the tide hadn’t read the script), and there were various suggestions as to who should be sacrificed over board to lighten the boat. Suffice it to say, the water level eventually rose enough to refloat us and we made it to Totnes, where, to our considerable relief, the bus was waiting. And so to home.

We must thank Wendy Stratton for her consummate handling of the situation – both in the original organisation and then the unexpected. OK, we didn’t complete the whole itinerary (Paington railway will have to wait) but we certainly could not have bought the (extra) entertainment the day brought us. Well done Wendy and thank you.