Poet, philosopher, inquiring spirit

The Friends of Coleridge (the Samuel Taylor Coleridge society) was formed to share and spread the works and ideas of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Poet, philosopher, activist and radical thinker, Coleridge is unique among English poets. His ideas are as relevant now as they were in his own time, and inspirational for us today.

Coleridge wrote some of the most famous and well-loved poems in the language – Kubla Khan, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Christabel, Frost at Midnight – as well as others that still await the wide readership they deserve. Lyrical Ballads (1798), the groundbreaking result of his momentous collaboration with Wordsworth, is regarded as one of the founding texts of English Romanticism.

Coleridge, an inquiring spirit, possesses a unique power to stimulate us into looking and thinking in fresh ways.

Explore the wide-ranging activities and work of the Friends of Coleridge society

What we do

✦ Organise a biennial Summer Conference, and an annual Autumn Study Weekend in the Quantocks
✦ Produce a twice-yearly Bulletin showcasing the latest Coleridge research
✦ Support activities in the places where Coleridge lived, including Ottery St Mary, Bristol, Somerset, the Lake District, Calne, and Highgate
✦ Support the work of the National Trust at Coleridge Cottage, Nether Stowey
✦ Support universities with student bursaries, and arrange workshops in schools
✦ Give readings and talks to groups and societies
✦ Arrange informative walks in Coleridge country and along the Coleridge Way (Nether Stowey to Lynmouth)
✦ Provide an extensive website offering links to places, online texts, and critical essays

Join us and get involved

✦ Become a private or institutional member
✦ Receive the twice-yearly Coleridge Bulletin
✦ Meet other Coleridge enthusiasts at our Summer Conference, or at the Autumn Study Weekend which is held at at Halsway Manor in the Quantock Hills
✦ Visit our informative website and Facebook and Twitter pages and contribute your Coleridge news
✦ Ask for support and publicity when planning your local activities – talks, walks, readings, conferences

To join the Friends of Coleridge society

Complete the enclosed form or visit our website and click the ‘Join us’ tab

www.friendsofcoleridge.com

‘His thoughts did not seem to come with labour and effort; but as if borne on the gusts of genius …’  WILLIAM HAZLITT
’I am … a great reader – and have read almost everything – a library cormorant’

Coleridge was not just a great poet. He read and wrote on psychology, religion, politics, education, logic and philosophy, literary criticism, the natural world, science and technology (he was a friend of Humphry Davy), and social reform (including slavery and child labour).

The first account of the murmuration of starlings

Soon after this I saw Starlings in vast Flights, borne along like smoke, mist – like a body uninduced with voluntary Power / – now it shaped itself into a circular area, inclined – now they formed a Square – now a Globe – now from complete orb into an Ellipse – then oblongated into a Balloon with the Car suspended, now a concave Semicircle; still expanding, or contracting, thinning or condensing, now glimmering and shivering, now thickening, deepening, blackening!

From Kubla Khan

… with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Coleridge’s letter on child labour, read out in Parliament

But free Labour!—in what sense, not utterly sophistical, can the labour of children, extorted from the want of their parents, ‘their poverty, but not their will, consenting’, be called free? … Has it or has it not been proved that the common results of the present system of labour in the Cotton Factories is disease of the most painful and wasting kinds … ?

From This Lime-tree Bower my Prison

…They, meanwhile,
Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told;
The roaring dell, overwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun;
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge …

From The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Visit Coleridge Cottage, Nether Stowey

Samuel Taylor Coleridge lived in Nether Stowey in Somerset from 1797 to 1800. The cottage in Lime Street, in which he wrote some of his most famous poetry, is administered by the National Trust. To find out more, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/coleridge-cottage

‘Never saw I his likeness, nor probably the world can see again’

CHARLES LAMB