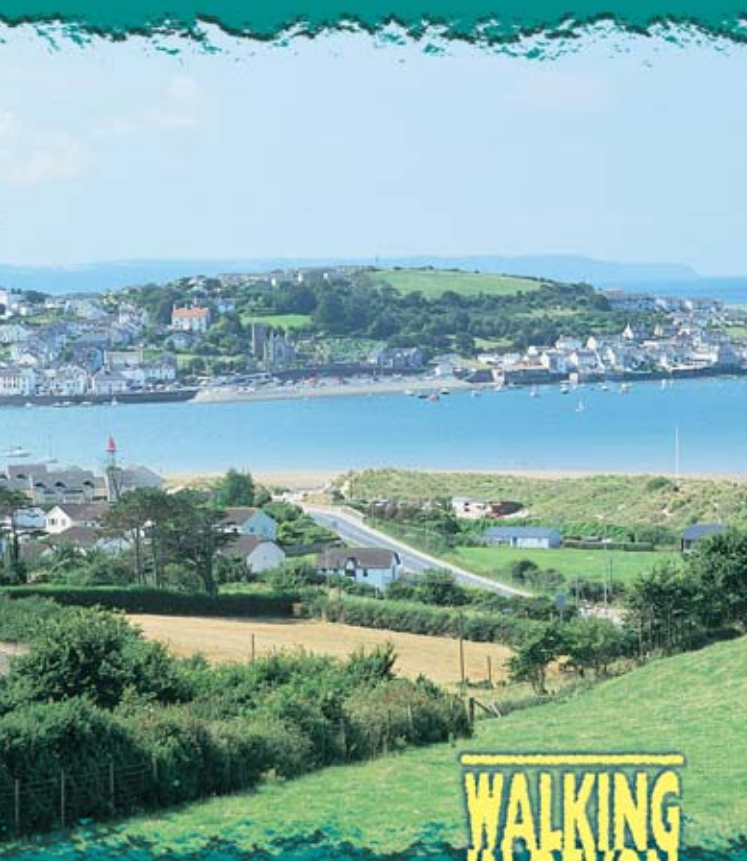


Dart Ferries Walk

pinetrees, pebbles & plantations

Torridge Estuary Rail Trail



**WALKING  
IN DEVON**



# Introduction

Devon is well-known for its unspoilt beauty and tranquillity. Walking in the county offers the ideal way to appreciate its quality, giving the opportunity to get into the heart of the landscape and really feel part of the environment.

There are walks to suit all tastes through a variety of superb scenery. Choose whether you want coastal cliffs and sandy bays, moorland, wooded valleys or quiet and remote countryside - or a combination of any of them - and you will be able to pick a walk to match your requirements. In addition, some Trails have historic or literary links to give further interest.

Many of the Trails have convenient parallel public transport routes - bus or train - which means you can walk shorter sections to the next pick up point, and some can be used in conjunction with linking paths to form circuits.

This leaflet gives three suggested walks based on some of the Trails; one short (21/4km/11/2 miles), one longer (5km/3 miles) and one longer still (11km/7 miles).

## Dart Valley Trail

The riverside path forms part of a long-distance route, the Dart Valley Trail, one of a network of such Trails in Devon. The Dart Valley Trail links Dartmouth and Kingswear with the picturesque village of Dittisham in a 13km/8 mile circuit, with an extension of a further 13 km/8 miles to the attractive town of Totnes at the head of the estuary. A detailed information pack is available from the Dartmouth Tourist Information Centre, price £2.

## Tarka Trail

The Tarka Trail is a 180mile/290km figure of eight following the route of Tarka the Otter. Parts are available as a cycle route. It is one of a network of long distance Trails throughout Devon.

An introductory leaflet and a detailed route book on the Tarka Trail are both available.

## South West Coast Path

The South West Coast Path has a total length of over 600 miles/960km around the whole peninsula between Minehead and Poole. The Pines, Pebbles and Plantations walk follows part of the Coast Path in its south Devon section. The South West Coast Path is a superb way to experience a range of fine Devon scenery, from cliff tops to wide estuaries, sandy bays to wooded valleys. Numerous guides are available on the Coast Path, including a comprehensive guide and accommodation list produced by the South West Coast Path Association.

# Dart Ferries Walk

The walk, which is based on the Dart Estuary in South Devon, gives some alternative options and includes the attraction of two ferry crossings of the Dart.

## The Walk

**Start the walk at Dartmouth Station on the riverside Embankment.**

The Station Restaurant has the unmistakable architecture of a GWR building, although no trains ever ran to Dartmouth. It was originally intended by Brunel that the line from Paddington would cross the Dart a little upstream to terminate in Dartmouth. However, difficulties meant that a bridge across the Dart was never built and the railway only ever went to Kingswear on the opposite bank.

However, tickets to and from Dartmouth could be bought, including the ferry crossing, hence the station.

**Walk down to the ferry pontoon behind the station and take the passenger ferry to Kingswear.**

The ferry lands next to Kingswear Station. This was the end of the GWR line from Paddington and was closed by British Rail in 1972. However, a private company bought the length of line from Paignton and it now operates as a steam railway. This offers a wonderfully scenic trip of 30 minutes which follows the coast as well as climbing high above the estuary. Kingswear Station has featured in numerous period films and television series, including "The French Lieutenant's Woman" and episodes of "Poirot".

**Walk out to the road and turn left uphill. Turn left down the steps which descend to cross the railway on a metal footbridge. On the far side continue between the boatyard and the railway.**

## Fact File

Lower Dart Passenger Ferry operates 7 days a week, regular service 7 am until late, Monday - Saturday; 8 am until late, Sunday.

Higher Dart Ferry operates 7 days a week, regular service 6.30 am until late, Monday - Saturday; 8 am until late, Sunday.

Walk length: Basic route 2.25km/1.5 miles

Higher path option 3km/2 miles

OS Maps: Outdoor Leisure (1:25000) No. 20 South Devon  
Landranger (1:50000) No. 202  
Torbay and South Dartmoor

**Cross the marina access road (1) and follow the path upriver between the railway and the Dart.**

This path gives superb close-up views of the estuary as well as a splendid panorama of the Dartmouth waterfront opposite and the Britannia Royal Naval College on the hill above.

**The path leads to the slipway for the Higher Ferry. Board the ferry to return to the Dartmouth side (2).**

The Naval College was built in 1902-05 to train naval officers and replaced an old ship, the "Britannia", which was moored in the estuary.

The Higher Ferry is technically a "floating bridge" and runs on two chains which cross the river and return to the bed once the ferry has passed. It was opened as long ago as 1831.

**Now walk back along the Embankment to return to Dartmouth Station.**



## Higher Path Option

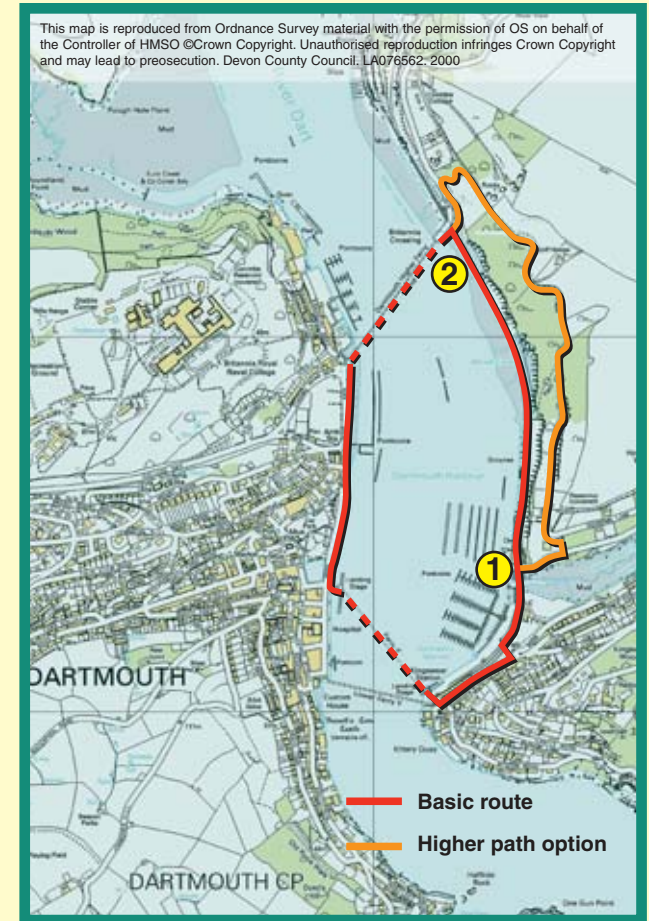
**Follow the route described above to the riverside footpath from Kingswear. Just after crossing the creek beyond the marina access road, leave the riverside footpath and cross the railway at the small level crossing (1 above).**

**Follow the lane, then take the footpath up the steps on the left - look out for the sign screwed into the wall. At the top of the steps turn left and follow the path through the woods, high above the estuary.**

The views tend to be best early in the year, before the trees are in full leaf, but wherever there is a gap the panoramas up and down the estuary are superb. This is Hoodown Wood, one of the many woodlands clothing the slopes of the Dart Estuary. They may well owe their existence to being used as a source of timber for shipbuilding at and around Dartmouth.

**Just before the houses at the far end of the woods take the footpath which zig-zags steeply down to the left - it is signed to Kingswear and Dartmouth. Walk down the road at the bottom to the Higher Ferry (2 above).**

From here you can cross to the Embankment as described above.



# Pines, Pebbles & Plantation

This walk is in East Devon. It is based on the charming seaside town of Budleigh Salterton and forms a circuit, partly inland and partly using the South West Coast Path.

If you would rather, it is possible to continue the inland route into Exmouth rather than returning to Budleigh Salterton. This inland part of the walk uses a former railway, so it is also suitable for use by cyclists, wheelchair users or as a pushchair walk.

## The Walk

**From the town centre at Budleigh Salterton walk along the promenade to the far, eastern end of the town at the estuary of the River Otter.**

Budleigh Salterton is a charming seaside town with very much a traditional, "olde-world" character. This unspoilt character is partly a result of the pebbly beach, which prevented it from ever becoming a resort for large scale tourism. The pebbles are part of a band of infertile land known as the Bunter Pebble Beds, laid down over 200 million years ago in river beds of the time.

A bar of pebbles has built up across the mouth of the River Otter, forcing its course to the east. Behind is an attractive landscape of salt marshes, now managed as a nature reserve. The mouth of the Otter is immediately recognisable by the line of pine trees on its eastern side.

**Walk from the estuary alongside the car park towards the town.**

Note the remains of the old lime kiln by the entrance to the car park. Lime was landed by ship and burnt in kilns to improve the fertility of the soil. This one dates from the early 1800's.

**Continue along the promenade to the end of Fore Street, then keep along the road, bearing away from the sea.**

Note the plaque on the white house on the right (the Octagon), relating to the artist Millais. The famous painting "The Boyhood of Raleigh" is said to have been based on the wall just behind you. Raleigh himself was born at Hayes Barton, 31/2km/2 miles inland

**Carry on along the road as far as the traffic lights, then turn right into Station Road. Near the far end of the green fork left along Moor Lane. Follow around to the right at the top, then turn immediately left by the telephone box into Bedlands Lane. On reaching the main road turn left then almost immediately right, into Bear Lane. A short way along the lane turn left through the wooden gate at the walking and cycling path.**

## Fact File

Budleigh Salterton is accessible by bus from Exeter, Exmouth and Sidmouth. Service number 57 operates three times an hour from Exeter, four times an hour from Exmouth and once an hour from Sidmouth, Mondays - Saturdays; on Sundays twice an hour from Exeter and Exmouth, four times a day from Sidmouth. Journey time 35 minutes from Exeter, 15 minutes from Exmouth, 25 minutes from Sidmouth

Walk length: 11km/7 miles.

One climb on the Coast Path section of 80m/250ft.

Stiles: 4, all on the Coast Path section.

OS Maps: Explorer (1:25000) no 30 Exmouth and Sidmouth.

Landranger (1:50000) no 192 Exeter and Sidmouth.

Refreshments: Budleigh Salterton: (all facilities); Littleham: (pub); Sandy Bay: (café April - October).

This path leads down to the line of the Exmouth - Budleigh Salterton railway. An information board by the gate gives some background information on the railway, which closed in 1967.

The line soon enters an area of woodland and plantations. The unproductive nature of the geology of the pebble beds means that heathland and woodland are the main land uses in this area.

Continuing, the geology changes, and so does the landscape. The pebble beds give way to softer, more fertile soils which result in a landscape of green fields and farmland.

**For the circuit back to Budleigh Salterton, leave the track and fork left just before the bridge on**

**reaching the edge of Exmouth (signposted to Capel Lane).**

**(Those who wish to continue to Exmouth can follow under the bridge into the housing area. Then follow blue or brown cycle route signs.)**

**Leaving the track, at the top of the slope turn left and continue straight ahead at the bollards into the narrow lane. Bear left at the main road and descend to the village of Littleham.**

The road passes the 15th-16th century church. Littleham was one of the historical parishes on which the town of Exmouth developed. It is now a suburb with buses to the town centre.

**Follow the road through Littleham, past the pub and up the hill into the Devon Cliffs Holiday Park at Sandy Bay. Pass the World of Country Life Museum (refreshments April - October).**

**From the phone box carefully follow the yellow arrows through the holiday park; follow the road half-right for a short distance then take the first left, Nutwell Glade and on ahead into Maple Park. At the end fork left and head downhill. At the bottom go straight ahead on the grass next to the hedge; this soon leads to the Coast Path.**



**From here, turn left and the route follows the Coast Path back to Budleigh Salterton.**

Budleigh is soon visible ahead beyond the distinctive red cliffs.

**The path passes through several fields alongside some new cliff falls (take care here), and crossing four stiles. It then rises abruptly through gorse to the top of West Down Beacon.**

The climb to West Down Beacon marks the change in geology, back to the pebble beds from the softer, lower, more easily eroded land behind. It also provides extensive views over the coast towards the Exe Estuary and Tor Bay beyond.

**The path now descends gradually into Budleigh Salterton. Just after passing through a grassy area be sure to keep right, on the Coast Path, to arrive at the sea front.**

Views over the town to the estuary beyond, with its characteristic pines, mark the end of the walk.



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# Torrige Estuary Rail Trail

This walk in northern Devon is on part of the Tarka Trail which uses the former railway. This stretch along the Torrige estuary makes an attractive walk and is suitable for use in conjunction with the local bus service.

The suggested walk follows the Tarka Trail between Instow and Bideford. It is recommended that you start at Bideford, catch the bus from here to Instow and walk back. Alternatively, it is possible to start the trip on Barnstaple; if doing so, get the bus from Barnstaple to Instow, walk to Bideford and then take the bus back to Barnstaple.

Since the route uses a former railway, it is also suitable for use by cyclists, wheelchair users or as a pushchair walk.

## The Walk

**Get off the bus at Instow Quay. Arriving from Bideford, walk forward 100m towards the Promenade (arriving from Barnstaple, walk back 100m to the Promenade).**

The Promenade offers a superb view of the Torrige Estuary, joined by its "twin" the Taw from the right, and across the river to Appledore.

**Now walk back to the bus stop at the Quay and continue along the road past the general store, pub, and Post Office. At the end of the road is the level crossing at Instow Station. Cross the line and turn right towards the station platform.**

Immediately on your left is Instow signal box. Built in 1861 it has the distinction of being a listed building, very unusual for a signal box. Threatened with demolition when the railway closed, it was saved by the efforts of a local pressure group. The restored rails provide an appropriate setting.

Approaching the station platform you will see an information

## Fact File

Bus routes 1 and 2 operate between Bideford, Instow and Barnstaple.

During most of the day they run approximately every half an hour; first bus from Bideford 06.25 Monday- Friday, 07.14 Saturday, 09.59 Sunday; last bus from Instow 23.19 Monday - Saturday, 22.18 Sunday. Journey time Bideford - Instow 8 minutes, Barnstaple - Instow 21 minutes. For enquires call Traveline on 0870 608 2 608.

Bus stop in Bideford on the Quay, opposite Kingsley House. From Barnstaple, catch the bus at the bus station in Silver Street.

Walk length: 5km/3 miles.

OS Maps: Explorer (1:25000) no. 139 Bideford, Ilfracombe and Barnstaple

Landranger (1:50000) no. 180 Barnstaple and Ilfracombe

Refreshments: Instow (pub and shops); East-the-Water (pub and shops); Bideford (all facilities).



panel regarding the Tarka Trail and Instow and the plaque commemorating the Trail opening.

**Continue through the station and along the old railway.**

Note the post marking the mileage from Waterloo at the end of the station.

The railway was built in 1855 to link Bideford with Barnstaple and became part of the London and South Western Railway. Passenger services ended in the 1960s but the line was retained for clay trains into the 1980s. It now forms part of the Tarka Trail, a route following the wanderings of Tarka the Otter in the book of that name. This part of the railway is also used as part of the South West Coast Path as an alternative to the ferry crossing between Instow and Appledore.

**In the cutting some 300m after the station look out for a path leaving the track to the right.**

This leads to a viewpoint over the estuary at a restored lime kiln. These kilns burnt lime imported from South Wales; the burnt lime was used as a fertiliser. You will pass another alongside the track nearing Bideford.

**Return to the main track and continue onward.**

As the track opens out it gives superb views across to Appledore Shipyard. Appledore has a long history as a fishing and shipbuilding centre. The present covered shipyard dates to 1969.

It is also worth looking back at this point, down the estuary. The panorama shows Appledore and Instow framing the dunes of Braunton Burrows with the line of Saunton Down behind.

Continuing, the estuary begins to narrow - a flood embankment was built into the river here resulting in marshland now occupying the area between the railway and the river. Not in use now for agriculture, it is an important wildlife habitat.

Further on, the view ahead is dominated by the A39 Torrige Bridge. Built in 1988, it carries the A39 high over the estuary. Having passed under the bridge, the view now centres on Bideford and its Long Bridge over the Torrige.

Bideford has an attractive location, seen to advantage from the track. Described by Charles Kingsley as "the little white town", it

rises on a hillside above the estuary. The medieval Long Bridge enhances its setting. Its 24 arches are each of different span, said to be because local parishes paid different amounts towards its building, the span width reflecting the amount of money supplied.

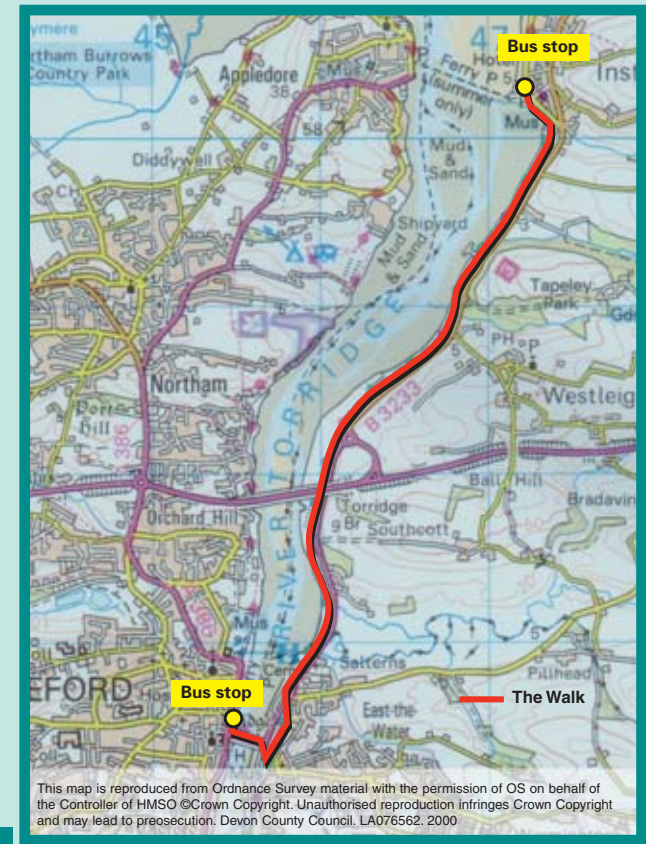
**The track now enters East-the-Water and arrives at Bideford station.**

As the name suggests, East-the Water is the extension to Bideford across the river and dates back as a suburb to the 1300's when the bridge was first built. Bideford Station includes an information point and refreshments are available in season. It is also the location of Bideford Railway Museum, housed in a replica signed box at the far end of the station. There is also a re-laid length of railway track and enthusiasts run a diesel locomotive.

**To return to Bideford go down the slope from the platform on the right.**

The Tarka Trail continues on the railway. The next major location is Torrington Station, 9km/5.5 miles distant.

**From the platform go down the slope and steps and walk ahead over the Long Bridge. Turn right on the far side to return to the Quay.**



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# Information

There is a free leaflet on Devon's network of walking trails - *'Making Tracks - Walking Trails in Devon'*. It is available from local Tourist Information Centres and also from:

Devon Tourist Information Service  
PO BOX 55  
Barnstaple EX32 8YR  
  
Devon Holiday Line  
0870 60 85 531

*Quote publication reference number DP04*

Information is also available on the other trails on which these walks are based, and may be obtained from the address above.

**Dart Valley Trail Guide Pack** £2.40(inc. p&p)  
*quote reference number DP42*

**Tarka Trail Walkers Guide Book** £4.25(inc. p&p)  
*quote reference number DP32*

**Tarka Trail Leaflet** £0.60(inc. p&p)  
*quote reference number DP06*

**South West Coast Path Guide Book** £5.99(inc. p&p)  
*quote reference number DP33*

Updated information on footpaths in Devon is found on the Devon County Council website at:

[www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk)

or on the Devon Tourism site at: [www.devon4allseasons.co.uk](http://www.devon4allseasons.co.uk).

For information on the South West Coast Path visit:

[www.swcp.org.uk](http://www.swcp.org.uk).



DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

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