

COUNTRYSIDE TEAM  
DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL  
LUCOMBE HOUSE  
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EXETER  
EX2 4QW



## Discover Devon Differently....

**Devon has the most fantastic natural environment and we all want it to stay that way.**

Why not leave the car behind for the day and explore Devon by foot, by bike or even by canoe! You can visit places 'off the beaten track' and experience the heart and beauty of Devon at a different pace of life.

Much of Devon's coast and countryside is accessible by public transport and it can be great fun! Why not see the Jurassic Coast, England's first natural World Heritage Site, from the top of a double-decker or enjoy the spectacular birdlife on the Exe Estuary from a ride on the Avocet Line?

### 10 reasons why you should leave your car behind and *Discover Devon Differently*:

- A bus or train ride can be part of your day-out experience
  - Save money – petrol and parking are expensive
  - Save even more money – many attractions offer discounted tickets for visitors arriving by sustainable modes of transport
  - Nobody enjoys sitting in a hot car in a traffic jam
  - Walking, cycling and other sustainable activities are great fun and can help to keep us healthy
  - Car parking can be hard to find and often stressful
  - Walking, cycling or horse riding allows you to travel at a more leisurely pace of life allowing you to take in the scenery.
  - High volumes of traffic on rural roads discourages other users such as cyclists, walkers and horse-riders
  - Enjoy the fresh air, improved by less congestion
- And most importantly...
- You are reducing your impact on the environment. This is especially important in Devon with its special and sensitive areas such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Why not download a Discover Devon Differently Itinerary from [www.discoverdevondifferently.com](http://www.discoverdevondifferently.com) and enjoy a car-free day out in Devon.

For visitor information including holiday accommodation availability visit [www.discoverdevon.com](http://www.discoverdevon.com) or call the Discover Devon Holiday Line **0870 608 5531**

For up-to-date information on bus and train times call the Traveline on **0870 608 2 608** or visit [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)



Cover Photo credits: Torrington View and Torrington Clock Tower, North Devon Marketing Bureau.



# Ride & Stride

...in Tarka the Otter Country!  
Around Great Torrington.

A great half-day walk along a stretch of the Tarka Trail north of Great Torrington, North Devon. This walk is based on a short bus ride and a stride back along the scenic trail.



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Torrington is positioned on the Tarka Trail. The Tarka Trail is a long-distance footpath route which forms a figure-of-eight through northern Devon of some 180 miles, following the route taken by Tarka the Otter in the book of that name. Tarka was born and died near Torrington, so in one sense this is the beginning and end of the Trail. This walk starts with a short bus ride to form a circuit based on the town, crossing various parts of the Torrington Commons and using a length of the Tarka Trail.

**Getting there:** Torrington has good bus links to Bideford, Barnstaple, Okehampton, Plymouth and Exeter, as well as smaller towns and villages in northern Devon. For timetable details call Traveline on 0870 608 2 608 or visit [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

**Walk Length:** Approx. 4 miles/ 6.5 km; 2 stiles; two steady climbs.

**Facilities:** Great Torrington has all facilities; there is a pub at Taddiport; at Torrington Station are cycle hire facilities, refreshments, car park and pub.

## The Walk

**The journey starts in Great Torrington. Take the number 70 bus to Weare Gifford. Buses run approximately every hour and a half so call the Traveline on 0870 608 2 608 or visit [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) to check which bus to Weare Gifford is at a suitable time. If unsure, ask the driver to stop at Weare Gifford.**

Weare Giffard is a long, picturesque village on the floor of the Torridge Valley. The village has a pub.

**From the church in the centre of the village walk back along the road along which you have just travelled. Go past the pub and bear right along the main road. After just a few metres a footpath is signed**

**right off the road, down to the river. Turn left and continue over the stream, ascending some steps. Continue following the path through the wood, ignoring the occasional side path, descending the next set of steps.**

Cross over the River Torridge and join the Tarka Trail.

**The railway from Bideford to Torrington was completed in 1872, and gave the town a direct link all the way to London. Beyond Torrington a narrow gauge mineral line extension was built to the clay quarries at Meeth and Peters Marland, and this was rebuilt as a full-size passenger railway in 1927. All passenger services ceased in 1963, and clay traffic in 1982. Since then, the line has become transformed into a cycle and walkway, part of the Tarka Trail. It is also suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs, which can use it for many miles in both directions from Torrington Station.**

For those interested in the Tarka story, it is worth diverting to the right along the Tarka Trail for a short way to the next Torridge bridge. From here, on the left will be seen Beam Aqueduct, which carried the Rolle Canal over the river. It was in the shadow of this aqueduct that Tarka was born.

**Turn Left (heading south) along the Tarka Trail.**

The path continues up the Torridge Valley crossing the river three times, each bridge giving good views of typical Tarka haunts.

**Continue until you reach the site of Torrington Station. From here bear left along a footpath following alongside the river towards Great Torrington. The Tramp waymark guides walkers on a 20 mile circular walk created by the Torridge Ramblers to celebrate the Millennium. Continue past the treatment works until reaching the main road at Taddiport Bridge.**

Taddiport bridge is said to be medieval (13th century), but has also been attributed to the 16th century. Originally it carried the main road to

Torrington from the south. The old toll house is next to the bridge.

**Cross over the road here and take the footpath immediately opposite, known as the Rolle Road.**

Rolle Road follows the line of the former Rolle Canal. This was built for Lord Rolle between 1820 and 1824 and stretched for 7.5 miles/12 km between the tidal Torridge and Heasland Moor, a little upstream from Torrington. It was abandoned with the coming of the railway in the 1870s, some of its course being used for the railway, but here it was filled in and used as a road. This length of Rolle Road is suitable for cyclists, pushchairs and wheelchairs, although it is a little rough in places. It may be accessed from Taddiport or Town Mills.

**Follow the path veering uphill to the obelisk.**

This is a memorial to the soldiers who died at the Battle of Waterloo. Presented by the ladies of Torrington, it was erected three years after the battle, in 1818, and asks for "peace for the souls of the Heroes !!!"

**Follow the main surfaced path uphill from the obelisk. Follow the path and keep ahead at the junction, past the seats.**

The wall on the right surrounds the site of Torrington Castle. First documented in 1139, it was destroyed in 1228 but rebuilt, although it later fell into disuse. The walls and mock battlements were added in the mid-19th century by Lord Rolle as an added attraction for the town.

**Go through the arch and walk to the far right hand corner of the car park. Continue ahead toward the high street.**

The Town Hall in Torrington was built in 1861 on the site of a previous one, in a Georgian style to go with the rest of the street. It contains the



original Shambles yard, once the meat market for the town. While most of the street is 18th century in age and style, there are some older buildings. Notable is the Black Horse Inn, almost opposite the Town Hall.

**The walk ends at the High Street, the short, broad street in the town centre.**

For further information on the Tarka Trail and the wider network of walking routes in Devon, obtain a free brochure 'Discover Devon Walking' from local Tourist Information Centres or visit the website [www.discoverdevon.com](http://www.discoverdevon.com) which has lots of walking information plus brochure request page.

### OS maps for this walk:

- Landranger No.180 Barnstaple and Ilfracombe (1:50,000 scale)
- Explorer No.126 Clovelly and Hartland (1:25,000 scale)

## Do you enjoy the fresh air out in the countryside?

Have you ever been walking, horse riding or cycling in Devon? If so, where do you turn for information?

Information about the best places and times to walk, ride or cycle in Devon is very important for everyone. Devon County Council is constantly looking to improve the information provided to the public and we would like you to tell us how we can do this... By answering the 6 questions below you will be entered into the **FREE PRIZE DRAW** with an opportunity of winning a **Luxury Devon Food Hamper worth £100**. (See Terms & Conditions below)

- How satisfied are you with current information about using countryside paths, bridleways and cycle tracks, e.g. leaflets and guides.
 

very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	very dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- How satisfied are you with information about these routes from our website [www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk) and [www.discoverdevon.com](http://www.discoverdevon.com)

very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	very dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- How satisfied are you with information on regional walking and cycling routes e.g. Tarka Trail, Dart Valley Trail, East Devon Way.
 

very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	very dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- What information do you find useful in walking, cycling or horse riding literature?
 

Maps  Local history  Local wildlife  Photographs

Detailed description of the route (e.g. turn left after the stile)

Other (please detail) .....
- How do you normally access the Devon countryside?
 

Public transport  Private vehicle  From home on foot/horse/bike/other

Other (please detail) .....
- How frequently do you visit the Devon countryside for recreation?
 

Daily  Weekly  Monthly

Other (please detail) .....

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Please complete the following section with your details.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms ..... Address .....

Postcode ..... Email address .....

Recreational interests (please detail) .....

Age: Under 16  16-24  25-34  35-44  45-54  55-64  65+

What ethnic group do you belong to? .....

Do you have a disability? Physical  Sensory  None

We may wish to contact you again to monitor your satisfaction with new countryside information. Please indicate if you are happy for us to contact you. Yes  No

**Terms and Conditions:** The draw closes on 20/09/06. The prize winners will be selected at random within five days of the closing date. The decision of the promoter (Devon County Council) is final. The £100 Hamper is subject to availability. The prizes are non-transferable, and no cash alternative is available. By entering into the promotion all participants are deemed to have accepted and agree to be bound by these terms and conditions. Winners may be required to participate in publicity. The prize on offer is not open to negotiation and is subject to availability. Entries limited to one per household. Promoter: Devon County Council, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QD