

itineraries
for
independent travel

itforit

EXMOOR

9 day itinerary



EXMOOR

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UK Dartmoor (first published 2001)
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 Snowdonia (first published 2004)

Cover image Lee Abbey, and Foreland Point in the distance

EXMOOR

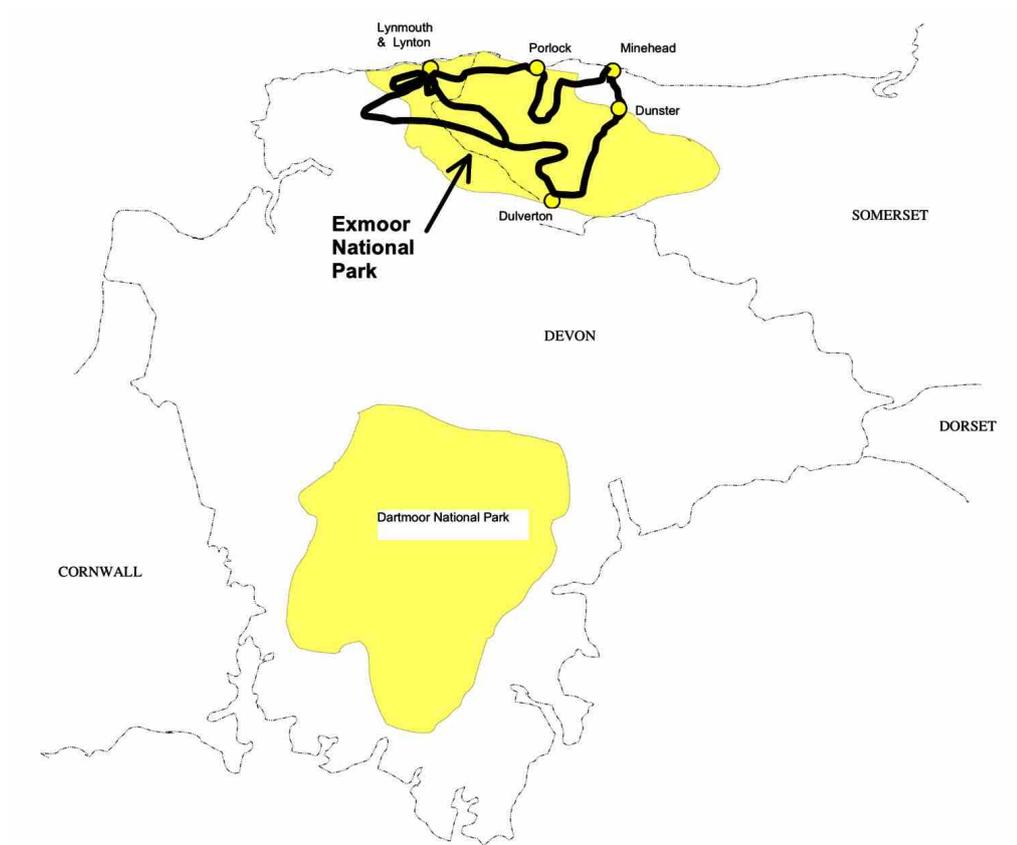
9 day itinerary

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Many years of travelling, and thoroughly enjoying, the States and National Parks of the USA, and also National Parks in Britain, have provided a good insight into the essential features to see and things to do. There are so many books to read, and so much tourist information to absorb on arrival at each destination, that precious time can be lost in trying to discover the most advantageous points of interest. This itinerary sets out in clear bulleted lists just what to see and do.

There is no preoccupation with giving advice about the cheapest or best airline, car-hire company, restaurant, or hotel. You are free to choose any of these, without any reference to the itinerary. No inducements or enticements are taken from organisations trying to boost their profits. This itinerary highlights facts and legends (where appropriate), to help you get the best out of your time.

This itinerary has been prepared with various assumptions, and attempts to provide a well-researched route, without the need to instruct travellers in the art of travelling. This means that there has been no attempt to give tiny details, such as how to read a map, or where to find all specific places, unless the signposts are not clear enough. Many places are well signposted.

Many of the places in this itinerary can be visited at any time of the year. However, we have assumed that the itinerary will be taken by car during the normal tourist months, and so there will be no problems with any opening times of houses, museums, or hotels, etc. The walks suggested are suitable for the summer months, between about May and September.

Accommodation is usually easy to find, and on most occasions it is not necessary to book in advance. However, if you wish to stay in a particularly popular area, or time of the year, then you are strongly advised to book well in advance. Campsites are often available. There are some small hotels in the country areas, and larger ones in the towns. In the country areas of Britain, it is normal to stay in private homes providing 'Bed & Breakfast', and it has been our experience that these provide cheap, comfortable accommodation in relaxed surroundings. We have stayed in modern homes, and old cottages and farmhouses - one was at least 1,300 years old, with breakfast served in an old chapel!

Day numbers allow for one day of travelling at each end of the itinerary. Most people will need these travelling days.

Although the days are marked as Day 1, Day 2, etc., there is no reason why you cannot spend two or more days at one of the overnight stops. You may have relatives in the area, or just wish to lengthen the tour a little, to accommodate some aspect you find particularly interesting, or do some shopping. Just alter the day number, and carry on at your own pace.

Mileages on each day should be taken as being rather approximate, depending on how many features you visit along the route. Some days you may cover fewer miles, some days you may cover more - but the overall distance should be about right.

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OVERVIEW

- It is one of Britain's smallest National Parks, covering 267 square miles. About one third is in Devon, and about two thirds in Somerset. About half of the National Park's coastline is in each county.
 - About 11,000 people live here, many connected with farming and tourism.
 - Although the main villages are popular with tourists, most of Exmoor is rarely busy, and it is easy to escape from the crowds.
 - It has a gentle charm, and most of the villages have not been spoilt by tourism. The moorland and deep, wooded valleys are still wild and unpretentious. This is pure England at its best.
- Exmoor can be divided into four distinct areas.
 - **The north coastline** is an area of Heritage Coast. This 34-mile stretch of dramatic scenery contains wonderful rocky and wooded headlands.
 - The highest sandstone cliffs in England, backed by coastal hills, rise from the Bristol Channel - up to 1,421 feet at Culbone. There are attractive coastal villages with small harbours.
 - The tiny beaches, surrounded by towering cliffs, were once the haunts of smugglers, bringing their illicit goods ashore.
 - **Between coast and moorland** are wooded valleys, deep ravines, and pretty villages.
 - **The centre** is a large expanse of open moorland.
 - **The Brendon Hills** are in the east of Exmoor National Park. These are pleasant rolling hills of heather and gorse - farmed to the south, but wooded to the north.
- **Visitor Centres** are at Porlock, County Gate, Lynmouth, Dulverton and Dunster.
- **The River Exe**, from which the moor derives its name, rises on Exmoor, and is the largest river in the area. It flows south to enter the English Channel at Exmouth.
- **Animals**, including sheep, goats, cattle, Exmoor ponies and red deer, graze the moor.
 - Exmoor ponies, descended from wild horses, have bred here since the Ice Age, being the oldest wild pony breed in Britain.
 - It is home to the largest wild herd of red deer in England.
 - Controversial deer hunts are a tradition on the moor. They are culled selectively outside the calving season to maintain a vigorous herd.
 - The twelve-pointer 'Royal' red deer stag, is the emblem of Exmoor National Park.
 - Otters can sometimes be seen in quiet river areas.
- **Lark the Otter**, the book by Henry Williamson, was set in the west of the area. He wrote this whilst living in a cob-built cottage on the north Devon coast.
- **Cob** is a type of wall, built on a sound, solid foundation. The wall is made of mud and straw, and must be kept reasonably dry at all times, otherwise it returns to its natural state. The roof and dry foundation are both vital.

continued.....

OVERVIEW (continued)

- **A combe** ("coom") is a deep ravine, with short, fast-flowing streams. The main river valleys are wooded.
- **A cleave** is the side of a steep valley.
- **A leat** is a man-made watercourse, usually to carry water to a mill, for washing ore in the mining industry, or to supply a community.
- **A whortleberry** is also known in the area as a myrtleberry. Elsewhere, it is also known as a bilberry, blaeberry, hurtleberry, and blueberry. Its colour was used in the dyeing industry.

Humans on Exmoor

- **Humans** have lived on Exmoor for the last 10,000 years.
 - The earliest occupants, about 8000 BC (the Middle Stone Age peoples) hunted sheep in the warmer months - the coastal areas being used for the colder months. Flint arrowheads have been found around Porlock.
 - Between about 4000 and 2000 BC, the New Stone Age settlers cleared trees, grew crops, and kept sheep, pigs and cattle. The removal of the woodland areas led to the moorland areas of today.
 - Between about 2000 and 650 BC, the Bronze Age peoples buried their dead in barrows, and erected stone monuments - mostly on the higher ground. The climate became better, and the higher moorland became inhabited with crude enclosures and dwellings.
 - About 500 BC, the Iron Age peoples started to build hill-forts and hill-slope enclosures.
 - In 43 AD, the Romans built at least two signal stations on the coast, to warn of any attacks from the Silure people of South Wales.
 - In the 500s AD, St Petrock - a prince from Wales - moved into the area, preached Christianity, and founded churches.
 - In the 700s AD, the Germanic Saxons moved here, and set up a manor at Lynton. They established many farms and villages, creating the pattern of inhabitation that is still present - this continued to develop until the 1200s.
 - The central area became a Royal Hunting Forest from before 1000 AD. There were not many trees - very similar to now - but the King's deer were protected by Royal Forest laws.
 - From the 1100s, the woollen industry started to flourish, and markets developed in the towns. Pack horse bridges were built to prevent delays from flooded rivers.
 - Up to about 1400, the sheltered valleys became more inhabited, and Christianity developed in the area.
 - From 1818, attempts were made to drain vast areas of the moor area for agricultural use, without much success. However, the efforts have made the area less wild.
- **Farming** still takes place in much of the area, particularly in the south, mainly with sheep and cattle.
 - Crops are grown on the better soils of the Brendon Hills to the east, and in the Vale of Porlock to the north.

continued.....

Humans on Exmoor (continued)

- **Coastal trade** has been a large part of life, particularly at Porlock, and Lynmouth.
 - Fishing, particularly for herring and oysters, was important for centuries, until the larger shoals of herring deserted the Bristol Channel in the late-1700s.
 - Trade across the Bristol Channel to South Wales was very important, especially for limestone and iron ore. Other transported materials included bark for tanning leather, coal, and timber for pit-props.
 - Tourism on paddle-steamers, particularly from Bristol, was important during the late-1800s.
- **Mining** has taken place in small ways over parts of Exmoor.
 - Where these activities have taken place, and then deserted, nature has taken over, and the one-time disfigurements have blended harmoniously to make an interesting environment.
 - Silver was mined around Combe Martin for about 600 years, and finally ceased in the 1880s.
 - Iron ore was mined in various places, generally with little success - except for a good seam on the Brendon Hills, which was worked from 1853 to 1878. The ore was shipped to South Wales via Watchet.
 - Copper was mined at North Molton, in the River Barle valley, and at Molland in the south.
 - Baryte, manganese and gold were found in some mines.
 - Slate was quarried on the Brendon Hills. It was for local use, and did not compete with better qualities available elsewhere.
- **Industry** has been important here.
 - The woollen industry flourished from the 1100s.
 - Sheep were farmed more intensively, and the towns grew as the woollen markets developed.
 - Lime-burning was done for hundreds of years, but mostly in the 1700s and 1800s.
 - Limestone rocks, up to 2 feet in diameter, were quarried in South Wales and shipped across the Bristol Channel.
 - The normal method of shipping was in wooden, sailing ketches with two masts.
 - Layers of limestone and coal were put into a bowl in the top of the lime kiln. A fire was started, and it burnt for about eight hours, reaching temperatures of about 900°F.
 - The quicklime dropped into large access points at the bottom of the kiln, from where it could be raked out, when cool. These access points also allowed control of the air intake for the fires above.
 - The quicklime was used to neutralise the acidity of Exmoor soil, and for lime mortar. The industry died out in the early-1900s, when alternative chemicals were produced commercially.
 - There are the remains of lime kilns at Lynmouth, Lee Bay, Woody Bay, Heddon's Mouth, Watersmeet, and many other locations.

continued.....

Humans on Exmoor (continued)

- Water power was harnessed at a few places.
 - Lynmouth still has a hydro-electric plant on the West Lyn River.
 - A hydro-electric plant at Lynmouth on the East Lyn River provided electricity for the Lynton and Lynmouth area from 1890 until the 1952 Lynmouth flood disaster. There were other plants at Lee Bay and Dulverton.
 - Various water mills have been in operation since the 700s AD, especially at Dunster, Allerford and Piles Mill.
- Mineral water was bottled about 1 mile upstream from Lynmouth.
 - The Lynrock Mineral-Water Company claimed it was the 'purest in the world', and was 'radio-active'!
 - The still variety traded as 'Lynrock Water', and the aerated variety as 'Sparklynrock'!
 - Many claims were made for its quality, its tonic properties and treatment of many complaints, including gout, rheumatism, anaemia, liver/kidney complaints, blood/skin impurities, acidity and constipation.
 - The factory was destroyed in the flood of 1952.
- **Periods of history** can be very confusing, and are often vague, with many periods overlapping, and differing between many parts of the world. The following is a simplified glossary of British history.
 - **Stone Age** is divided into three separate ages.
 - **Palaeolithic** was from about 2.5 million years ago, to about 12,000 years ago (10,000 BC).
 - **Mesolithic** was from about 12,000 years ago, to about 5,500 years ago (10,000 BC to 3,500 BC).
 - **Neolithic / Megalithic** was from about 5,500 years ago, to about 4,000 years ago (3,500 BC to 2,000 BC).
 - **Bronze Age** was from about 4,000 years ago, to about 2,700 years ago (2,000 BC to 700 BC).
 - **Iron Age** was from about 2,700 years ago, to about 2,000 years ago (700 BC to 43 AD).
 - **Romans** were in occupation from 43 AD to about 400 AD.
 - **Middle Ages** were from about the 400s AD to 1485.
 - **Early Middle Ages** were from about the 400s AD to 1066.
 - **Dark Ages** were a period of the Middle Ages, from about 650 AD to 850 AD.
 - **Medieval** was a period of the Middle Ages, from 1066 to 1485.
 - **Tudor** was during the reigns of Henry VII, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I from 1485 to 1603.
 - **Stuart** was during the reigns of James I, Charles I, Charles II, William III & Mary II and Anne from 1603 to 1714
 - **Georgian** was during the reigns of the four Georges I to IV (1714-1830).
 - **Victorian** was during the reign of Victoria (1837-1901).
 - **Edwardian** was during the reign of Edward VII (1901-1910).

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USEFUL INFORMATION

Walking

- This is the most popular activity, with many long and short walks available.
- There are over 600 miles of public footpaths and bridle-ways, which are all way-marked.
- Most of Exmoor National Park land is privately owned, and therefore it is necessary to walk only on the way-marked paths.
- There is also much open land available to walkers, called 'Access Land'. This is also marked.
- A standard method of marking is:
 - Footpaths are way-marked with yellow.
 - Bridle-ways are way-marked with blue. Walkers may also use these.
 - Roads used as public paths (RUPP) are way-marked with red.
- There are various long distance trails, which pass across Exmoor, e.g:
 - The 'Two Moors Way' is 102 miles between Ivybridge at the south of Dartmoor, to Lynmouth in the north of Exmoor.
 - The 'Tarka Trail' is a figure-of-8, 180 mile loop trail. It centres on Barnstaple in Devon.
 - The 'South West Coast Path' is the longest national footpath, at 630 miles.
 - It is also referred to as the 'South West Way' and 'South West Peninsula Coast Path' and 'South Coast Path National Trail'.
 - It starts in Minehead, proceeds 30 miles along the rugged coast of Exmoor, and continues via Lands End to Poole harbour in Dorset.
 - The 'Macmillan Way' is a cross-country walk of 290 miles.
 - It goes from Barnstaple in Devon to Lincolnshire. 20 miles are within Exmoor National Park. In this section, it follows other long distance trails.
 - Money raised from the sale of publications goes towards Macmillan Cancer Relief.

Other activities

- Various activities available on Exmoor are horse-riding, pony-trekking, 'Land Rover' safaris, falconry, fishing, golf, rock-climbing, swimming, cycling and mountain biking.
- There are also train rides, and boat trips.
- Surfing is available on the Atlantic waves of the Bristol Channel.

Time to visit

- This itinerary has been created on the assumption that it will be used during the months of May to October. During other months, some of the attractions will not necessarily be open. However, the beauty of the landscape is still available, and can be just as enjoyable.

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Travelling information

- **Maps**
 - It has been our experience that the **Ordnance Survey Landranger** maps are the best to use. The scale of these is 1:50,000, which is about 1.25 inches to 1 mile.
 - They are available throughout Britain, at bookshops, and similar outlets. They are also available from various internet 'stores'.
 - The recommended maps for this itinerary are:
 - **Number 180** Barnstaple & Ilfracombe.
 - **Number 181** Minehead & Brendon Hills.
- **Map grid references**
 - Every town and village, etc. in the itinerary has a map grid reference. This has been calculated using the above maps. It is a very simple way to pin-point a place.
 - All Ordnance Survey maps are covered by a series of horizontal and vertical grid lines, spaced 1 kilometre apart.
 - Grid references are 6 figure numbers, e.g. 872453, on map number 181.
 - To find where this grid reference is, look along the bottom of the map for a number 87, and then the next figure (2) indicates how many tenths to move further right, i.e. two-tenths of that box.
 - Then look along the side of the map for a number 45, and then the next figure (3) indicates how many tenths to move further up i.e. three-tenths of that box.
 - Where your two imaginary lines meet, i.e. 872 and 453, this is at a place called 'Buckethole Farm'.
- **Distances and directions**
 - Every town and village, etc. in the itinerary has an approximate distance from the previous place, together with the approximate direction.
 - The distance is in a straight line on a map. This is provided so that you can easily find each place, before you start to travel. The distance is not necessarily the distance along the road - it is almost certainly very much longer!
 - It is worth noting that the altar is at the east end of a church, and on upright headstones, the inscriptions generally face east.
- **Driving information**
 - If you are hiring a vehicle, then you should read the hire agreement carefully, in order that you do not contravene any of the conditions of hire. Many parking areas are not paved, and it is suggested that driving on this type of surface may well be acceptable to the hire company. However, *itforit* cannot be held responsible for varying conditions of hire companies.
 - The total distance you will travel on this itinerary will be about 210 miles.
 - Conventional 'Fly-Drive' types of itineraries often state just the minimum distances, which do not allow for the normal extra bits of driving - like going out for a meal, going shopping, missing the exit off the road, etc.
 - *itforit* believes the total will be a reasonable judgement of your actual mileage, based on:
 - Our own experiences.
 - The assumption that you go to some of the less-major places, but not all of them.

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Admission Information

- **Admission charges**
 - Nearly every place makes an admission charge.
 - Exceptions to this are government establishments.
 - It is worth looking for coupons giving discounts on admission prices. You will find these at Tourist Information Centres, hotels, etc. If none is on display, it is still worth asking.
- **The National Trust**
 - This is Britain's leading conservation charity. It is not dependent on the government for funding, but relies on voluntary contributions to care for the countryside and buildings in its custody, in perpetuity.
 - Membership of the National Trust provides certain benefits, including 'free' entry to properties.
 - On this itinerary, there are many places owned by The National Trust, including about 10% of the land. For most places, there is no charge, but others have entry fees. In any year, the membership cost would be more than the separate entry fees, and therefore it is not a good 'investment'. However, if other National Trust properties are to be visited at another time, then it may be worth considering.
 - Details of the above are available from National Trust properties, or by telephoning 0870-458-4000, or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk.
 - Citizens of the USA may consider joining The Royal Oak Foundation.
 - The membership dues are tax-deductible (it is a '501-c-3' charity), and it provides many benefits, including 'free' entry to properties.
 - Telephone (in the USA): 1-800-913-6565
- **English Heritage**
 - This only applies to Cleeve Abbey, on this itinerary.
 - This organisation conserves buildings, as does The National Trust, but generally the buildings are not complete, such as old castles. It is the duty of this organisation to stabilise the properties, to prevent any further decay, and allow public access.
- **Great British Heritage Pass**
 - This is for overseas visitors only, on production of a valid passport. The pass is available in various 'time lengths'.
 - For a fee, this provides 'free' entry to many properties around the United Kingdom, including those belonging to The National Trust, English Heritage, plus many more organisations, and also private properties.
 - It is good value, if you are going to visit more properties than in this itinerary. For this itinerary alone, it is not a good 'investment'.
 - More details are at www.visitbritain.com
 - It is available from:
 - Most of the large Tourist Information Centres, in cities, ports and airports.
 - Britain Visitor Centre, 1 Lower Regent Street, London.

continued.....

What to see and do

- This itinerary is essentially based on Exmoor, with various extra places added, around its perimeter.
 - Minehead is included, as it is the 'Gateway to Exmoor', with plenty of accommodation.
 - Arlington Court is included, as it is a National Trust property, with much of interest, and only a small detour from the route.
- It is not expected that everything in this itinerary will be undertaken.
 - It is impossible to see everything on Exmoor in seven days!
 - There are about 4,000 years of history, and a large area of land to cover.
- *itforit* recommends that you select the day's activities from the choices described, and allocate time accordingly.
- Essential places to visit are ***in bold and underlined***.
- Interesting places, such as towns and villages, walks, etc. are ***just underlined***. As many of these places as possible should be included in the itinerary, in order to achieve maximum enjoyment, together with understanding of the history and culture of the area.
- *Suggested walks are in italics. Distances are always stated for the total return or loop.*
 - *Walks suggested are some of the easier ones, with good views or particular interest.*
 - *It is recommended to do as many walks as possible, to get the most out of this itinerary.*
- Tourist Information Centres are always worth visiting.
 - They give a very good overview of the area, together with its history, culture, geology, etc.
 - *itforit* does not presume to be a better authority than Tourist Information Centres.
 - *itforit* itineraries prepare you for a place of interest, and suggest the essential items to see and do.
- All places have rules about damage to the environment, litter, camping, and so on. Please ensure that you abide by these regulations.

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9 day itinerary

Lorna Doone, a romance of Exmoor

R D Blackmore set his romance here in the gently rolling moorland, with its beautiful combs and farmland. The tourist industry, particularly in the northern areas, has capitalised on the fascination with the Lorna Doone story.

R D Blackmore

- Richard Doddridge Blackmore was born in Longworth, Berkshire, on the 7th June 1825.
- His father was the Curate of the local Church.
- His grandfather was the Rector of Oare Church, Devon, from 1809 to 1842.
- His mother died within months of his birth, and he was brought up by his aunt.
- In 1831, his father re-married, and Richard went to live with him in Devon.
- He was educated at Blundell's School, Tiverton, from 1837 to 1843. He then went to Exeter College, Oxford, where he graduated in Classics in 1847.
- He then went into Law, and was called to the Bar in 1852.
- Isolated attacks of epilepsy forced him to give up being a Barrister, and he became a Teacher of Classics in 1853, at Twickenham, Middlesex.
- Also in 1853, he married an Irish lady, Lucy Maguire.
- In 1857, his uncle died, leaving him a large bequest. This enabled him to build a large house at Teddington, Middlesex, where he lived for the rest of his life.
- He was a reclusive character, spending his time writing and gardening.
- He died on the 20th January 1900, 12 years after his wife. They had no children.
- *Lorna Doone*, published in 1869, is undoubtedly his most famous book. It created a new movement of romanticism in English literature.
- He also wrote poems, and various other books - amongst them were *Clara Vaughn*, *Craddock Newell*, *The Maid of Sker*, *Alice Lorraine*, *Cripps the Carrier*, *Christowell*, and *Springhaven*.

continued.....

Background to the story

- R D Blackmore had spent much time with his grandfather on Exmoor, and had heard the stories of the Doones.
 - He based many of the characters in the book on locals of Oare village, who he had met.
 - He used familiar places, but altered the spellings and distances between them.
 - He researched the story, whilst staying in Lynmouth.
 - As he believed the basic story to be true, he called the book a 'romance', rather than a novel.
- The Doones came from Scotland. They were wealthy, and part of the nobility of the Stuarts, but were disinherited, and forced to leave.
 - It is said that the Doones arrived on Exmoor in 1620, but returned to Scotland in 1699.
 - There is another theory of the origin of the Doone name on Exmoor: A servant of a Rector at Porlock may have come from Doune, near Dunblane in Scotland. On the death of the Rector, in 1647, the servant went to live on Exmoor, escaping from unfriendly locals.
- The Doone family lived in a combe on Exmoor, raiding and stealing from local farmers. It is thought they also captured women and children, and committed various murders.
- There is no evidence of any murder of a bride at Oare Church, and there is no grave.
 - However, at the Church of St Michael the Archangel, at Chagford, Devon (50 miles south), Mary Whiddon was shot outside the church after her wedding service, in October 1641. The miscreant was a former suitor.
 - It is possible this murder was the inspiration for R D Blackmore.
 - This is featured in the *itforit* Dartmoor itinerary.

Lorna Doone - a very short version

- It was set in the late-1600s.
 - The peaceful Ridd family of farmers, lived at Plover's Barrows Farm, at Oare.
 - The outlaw Doone family, had fled from Scotland, and settled in a valley named Glen Doone.
- Jack Ridd, the head of the household, was attacked and killed by Carver Doone on his return from Porlock Market.
 - John Ridd, the young son, was brought back from his school in Tiverton, Devon.
 - During the journey home, they witnessed another Doone attack on a wealthy family travelling in a coach.
 - Both parents were killed, but the young child was snatched up and taken away by the Doones.
 - On arriving home, John found that he was now the head of the household, taking over from his father, providing for his mother and two sisters.
 - He was determined to punish the Doones for killing his father.
- John enjoyed catching fish in Bagworthy Water.
 - When he was 14, he went further upstream than ever before - closer to Glen Doone.
 - He found a beautiful waterslide into Bagworthy Water, and climbed up it to have a glimpse into Glen Doone.
 - Here, he met Lorna Doone who was nine years old.
 - She used the rocks here as her secret place, and John fell in love with her.

continued.....

Lorna Doone - a very short version (continued)

- Seven years later, on New Year's Eve, John's Uncle Reuben was attacked, beaten and robbed.
 - John, who had grown very tall and strong, and become the area wrestling champion, decided to go to Glen Doone, to challenge the Doones.
 - There was a confrontation, but John escaped.
 - While he was in the Glen, he met Lorna again.
 - Their love for each other grew, even though the hatred between the families increased.
- Sir Ensor Doone, Lorna's grandfather, who was dying, decreed that Lorna should marry her cousin, Carver Doone.
 - Carver was the most evil of all the Doones.
 - Lorna was torn between her love of John Ridd, and her desire to please her grandfather.
- In order to stop Lorna marrying Carver, John went to rescue her from the Glen.
 - There had been heavy snowfall, making the Doones feel safe in their Glen, relaxing the guard at the entrances.
 - John was able to enter the Glen and rescue Lorna, together with her maid, Gwenny.
 - He took them to Plover's Barrows Farm, where they lived happily with the Ridd family.
- The villagers of Exmoor were increasingly angered by the Doones.
 - Led by John Ridd, they rose up against them, and entered the Glen.
 - They set houses alight, and killed all the male members of the Doone family, except Carver.
- John discovered that Lorna was not a Doone after all.
 - She was the child he had witnessed being abducted from the coach of the wealthy parents.
 - Lorna went to live with her uncle in London, and had a lavish lifestyle.
 - John thought he was not worthy of her. However, she missed him and his family so much that she returned to Exmoor.
- John and Lorna were married at Oare Church.
 - They had just made their vows, when a shot rang out, and Lorna collapsed into John's arms.
 - Carver Doone had fired the shot and fled from the church. John, who thought his bride was dead, pursued Carver until he cornered him in a boggy valley.
 - They fought, and Carver fell to the ground. He slowly sank into the bog and drowned.
- John returned to Plover's Barrows Farm to find that his wife was not dead.
 - Lorna had been tended by John's cousin, Ruth, who had removed the bullet, and was nursing her back to health.
- John and Lorna lived happily for the rest of their days at Plover's Barrows Farm.

- The entire story was set against problems.
 - King James II was dying, and there was a possibility of a change from Roman Catholicism to Church of England.
 - England was in turmoil, with the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685.

continued.....

Places to visit on the itinerary (in itinerary order)

Dunkery Beacon

- When Carver Doone became the new clan captain, the Doones stole the brazier and wood from here, for their celebrations.

Porlock

- This was the nearest town to Oare, having a port at Porlock Weir.

Lynmouth ("lin-muth")

- This is where John Ridd visited old Will Watcombe.

Valley of Rocks

- Mother Meldrum's winter home was here, in a cave under the Devil's Cheesewring rock, although there is no such cave.

Malmsmead ("marms-meed")

- Farmer Nicholas Snowe lived in this village with his daughters.

Badgworthy Water and Valley ("bad-ger-ee")

- These run through Malmsmead.
- Badgworthy Valley area is called Doone Country on Ordnance Survey maps - it is not Doone Glen (see Lank Combe below).
- It is accessible by road.
- Badgworthy Water flows into the East Lyn River just north of Malmsmead. John Ridd referred to the East Lyn River as Lynn Stream.

Lank Combe

- This is about 1 mile upstream - south - from Malmsmead, entering Badgworthy Water from the west.
- Lank Combe is considered to be Doone Glen, and has various features, including the waterslide, which is a small waterfall at the mouth of Lank Combe.
- It is only accessible on foot.

Oare

- **Church of St Peter**
 - This 1100s church is where Carver Doone shot Lorna Doone on her wedding day.
 - John Ridd was the Churchwarden here.
 - The church has changed much over the centuries.
- **Oare House**
 - This can be seen across the valley, as you leave the church. A previous farmhouse, and some of the remaining outbuildings are reputed to have been 'Plover's Barrows Farm'.
 - It is a private farm, and not open to the public.

Landacre Bridge ("lan-uh-cuh")

- This is not included in the itinerary, but is at 816362.
- This is a large bridge spanning the River Barle, in wild moorland.
- Here, Jeremy Stickles was ambushed by three of the Doone family.

Dulverton

- This was the home village of Ben and Ruth Huckaback.
- In the parking area, outside the Exmoor National Park Authority headquarters, is a bronze statue of Lorna Doone, commissioned by an American visitor.

Dunster

- This market town was where John Ridd's mother's cousin was a tanner.

EXMOOR

9 day itinerary

Overnight summary, with alternatives

Exmoor is not a large area. It would be possible - particularly at low tourist times - to stay in just one place for the entire time, and use this itinerary.

If this is being considered, then the Lynmouth and Lynton area is ideal.

Otherwise, overnight suggestions are in main towns.

- Accommodation could be taken anywhere in each local area.
- Information Centre telephone numbers are provided. They have accommodation registers, and can provide lists, etc.
- There are also many National Park Information Points, often at the Post Office, newsagent, and other small shops.
- The Exmoor Tourist Association web site can provide information at: <http://www.exmoor.tv>

Day 1 Minehead
Tourist Information Centre: 01643 702624

Day 2 Porlock
Visitor Centre: 01643 863150

Day 3 Lynmouth
Visitor Centre: 01598 752509
Lynton
Tourist Information Centre: 01598 752225

Day 4 Lynmouth
Visitor Centre: 01598 752509
Lynton
Tourist Information Centre: 01598 752225

Day 5 Lynmouth
Visitor Centre: 01598 752509
Lynton
Tourist Information Centre: 01598 752225

Day 6 Lynmouth
Visitor Centre: 01598 752509
Lynton
Tourist Information Centre: 01598 752225

Day 7 Dulverton
Visitor Centre: 01398 323841

Day 8 Dunster
Visitor Centre: 01643 821835
Minehead
Tourist Information Centre: 01643 702624

Day 9 Your onward journey

Date.....

Today's map number - **181**

Travelling day

- This page may be used to make notes about your travelling arrangements, in order to arrive at Minehead - ready to start on your itinerary on Day 2.
- If you are going to arrive early at Minehead, you may wish to see some of the interesting features there. In which case, please refer to Day 2.
- An optional extra place to visit, about 8 miles southeast of Minehead, is Cleeve Abbey. It is not on Exmoor, but is included on this day as it may be of interest (see below).

Cleeve Abbey

- This is about 8 miles southeast of Minehead, just off the A39, at Washford, at O50407
- This was built as a Cistercian monastery, founded in 1198.
 - The majority of the monastery took over 100 years to build.
 - The name 'Cistercian' is taken from the Abbey of Citeaux, in Burgundy.
 - It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and called Vallio Florida - meaning 'valley of flowers'.
- The original Abbey Church no longer exists, except for the bases of the pillars.
- However, there are well-preserved ruins of much of the 1200s monastery.
- There is a wonderful 1400s refectory, with excellent beamed roof.
 - The original 1200s refectory was demolished when the new one was built - although the floor tiles can still be seen outside, as a pavement.
- The dormitory has an interesting lintel over the fireplace, which was previously a tomb lid.
- There are still some traces of Cistercian masonry painting, especially in one bedroom.
- After the dissolution of the monastery in 1536, the buildings were used as a farm, and much fell into disrepair.
- It is now cared for by English Heritage, and is generally open from 10:00 am daily.



Overnight around Minehead

Date.....

The first day of your *itforit* itinerary! Lots of pretty villages and churches today.

Approximate miles = 30

Today's map number - 181

Start the day in Minehead

Minehead

- This is on the A39 road, at 970460.
- It calls itself the 'Gateway to Exmoor', and has a reputation for wonderful floral displays, particularly along The Avenue and The Parade with splendid trees, which run from the waterfront up to Wellington Square.



- The sheltered position of the town, provides good conditions for exotic plants to flourish. The town has taken advantage of this fact to good effect, by planting palm trees and other Mediterranean plants.
- The early-1700s was its heyday as a port. However, competition from other ports, and the accumulation of silt in the harbour, led to its decline.
 - Since the 1800s, it has turned its attention to being a tourist town.
 - The once-famous Butlins Holiday Camp, which encouraged families to the seaside after World War II, is still a 'Family Entertainment Resort' at the eastern extremity of the town. Changed in image, it is now more 'up-market' than its predecessor.
 - The famous pop group, Status Quo, was created here in 1965.
- Its name is possibly from the Welsh 'mynydd' ("mun-ith"), meaning mountain - probably referring to North Hill.
- **Blenheim Gardens**
 - These are between The Avenue, Blenheim Road and North Road.
 - They are famous for floral displays, and also for Sunday concerts during the summer.
- **Arthur C Clarke**
 - The science fiction writer was born at 13 Blenheim Road on the 16th December 1917.
 - He died on the 18th March 2008 in Sri Lanka.
- **South West Coast Path**
 - This starts from the waterfront, where an unusual galvanised monument is installed. It is designed as two hands holding a map, and is about 10 feet high.
 - The South West Coast Path is the longest national footpath, at 630 miles.
 - It goes along the rugged coast of Exmoor, and continues via Lands End to Poole harbour in Dorset.

continued.....

Minehead (continued)

- **Quay Town**
 - This is the 1600s harbour area to the west side of the town. There are nearby waterfront cottages, which were built for sea captains and wealthy merchants.
 - Adjacent to the 1610 harbour is a new promenade, which continues all around the bay.
 - A new seafront was completed in 2000, which involved raising the beach level with sand, and building a higher wall to protect the town from flooding.
- **Quirk's Almshouses**
 - These are in Market House Lane, off the upper end of The Parade.
 - In 1630, they were built and given to the poor of the area by the wealthy merchant and ship-owner, Robert Quirke. He was grateful for the safety of his ship, and its valuable cargo, in a storm at sea.
 - The cottages had a major restoration in 1986, which makes them appear somewhat newer.
- **North Hill**
 - This is an area of hotels and private residences, with good views across the Bristol Channel and the town.
- **Church of St Michael**
 - This is in St Michael's Road. It was originally built in the 1300s, and enlarged in the 1400s. The entire church was restored in the 1800s, including a new roof.
 - There is an octagonal font with carved figures, which probably dates from the 1400s.
 - The Richard Fitzjames illuminated missal dates from about 1320. This most valuable book is displayed at the west end.
 - A missal is a book containing the complete service for Mass for a year.
 - It has a beautiful, ornate oak rood screen.
- **Church Steps**
 - This is a pathway, which has three access points - all opposite the Church of St Michael.
 - It is a quaint area, winding down between cottages to the corner of Church Street and Vicarage Road.
 - The whole area around the bottom of Church Steps is very attractive.



continued.....

Minehead (continued)

- **West Somerset Railway**
 - The station is at the east side of the town, near the waterfront.



- It has Britain's longest stretch of steam railway, which was originally a branch line of the Great Western Railway. It was re-opened in 1976.
- Trains run 20 miles from here, along the coast to Watchet, and then inland to Bishops Lydeard.
- There are 10 restored stations along the route.
- At the Minehead station, there are displays of rolling stock and an engine restoration shed.
- **Market**
 - This is held on the parking area, near the West Somerset Railway station, every Tuesday and Thursday.

Holnicote Estate ("hun-ee-cut")

- After leaving Minehead, most of today will be spent within this estate.
- It is the largest property of The National Trust on Exmoor, covering an area of about 20 squares miles.
- The Acland family acquired the Holnicote Estate in 1745, when the heiress of the estate, Elizabeth Dyke, married into the Acland family.
 - The Acland family already owned great areas of Somerset and Devon.
 - It remained in the Acland family until 1943, when it was given to The National Trust.
- The Acland family had many employees in the area. Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, particularly, was responsible for much good work on the estate, and for the welfare of his employees.
- The estate takes in Dunkery Beacon to the south, and 4 miles of coastline to the north, including many woods, farms, moorland areas, and villages in-between.
 - The most noteworthy of the villages are Luccombe, Horner, Selworthy, Allerford, and Bossington.
 - There are over 100 miles of footpaths on the estate.
 - More information about the estate can be found at National Trust shops in the area, and the West Somerset Rural Life Museum at Allerford.
- Cottages on the Holnicote Estate are rented to people of all ages with local connections.
- The original estate house and buildings are at the village called Holnicote, at 912463. They are not open to the public. The buildings are used by The National Trust as an administrative centre. Holnicote House is used as a holiday walking centre.

continued.....

Selworthy

- This is about 3 miles west of Minehead, at 919468.
 - The parking area is at the top of the village, by the church.
- Church of All Saints
 - From its high vantage point, there are wonderful views across the village towards Dunkery Beacon.
 - The original central section was built in the 1300s. The nave has almost unique roof bosses, with faces and statuettes.
 - The plain, north aisle was added at a later date, but before the south aisle.
 - The south aisle has beautiful proportions, with its arches, pillars and windows. Its barrel roof has 90 carved bosses, and there are 33 unusual carved angels around the wall-tops.
 - The floor area inside the church is almost square.
 - The exterior is painted with a mixture of lime and animal fat.

- Selworthy Green

- This is just down the hill from the church, through the gate marked 'Selworthy Green'.



- It is one of the most perfect village settings on Exmoor, in the heart of the Holnicote Estate, with beautiful cottages down the hill of Selworthy Green.
- The village was designed by Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, as a model village for the infirm and old employees of his Holnicote Estate. They are almshouses, provided by an employer, rather than the Church.
 - Although the beautiful cream-coloured cottages appear to be very old, they were re-built around 1828, being carefully designed to appear as part of an old village.
 - The cottages have wonderful high chimneys, and eyebrow windows, which peer out under the beautiful thatched roofs.
 - The National Trust has one of the cottages as its information centre.
- Tithe Barn
 - This is on the opposite side of the road, and slightly lower down the hill from Selworthy Green.
 - It was built in the 1300s, and has been converted to a private residence.

continued.....

Allerford

- This is about 1 mile west of Selworthy, at 905470.
- It is a pretty village, with a famous packhorse bridge.



- **West Somerset Rural Life Museum**
 - It is housed in a building, which was a school from 1821 to 1981.
 - It displays domestic, local industry and farm equipment from 100 years ago.
 - The Victorian schoolroom has desks, textbooks, and toys from that time.
 - There is a cobbler's workshop, and demonstrations (on occasions) of crafts, such as weaving and spinning.
 - There is an interesting room containing over 40 albums of early photographs of individual villages on Exmoor. It also has historical information about Holnicote Estate, and other archives.

West Luccombe

- This is about 0.75 mile southwest of Allerford, at 899462.
- It is a small village with a narrow packhorse bridge, about 30 yards upstream from the road bridge.

Horner

- This is about 0.5 mile south of West Luccombe, at 897455.
- It is a small village with a few cottages clustered around one corner of the road.
- There is a delightful small packhorse bridge - just in the woods, almost opposite the last house at the north end of the village.

Luccombe

- This is about 1 mile southeast of Horner, at 912445.
 - It is best to park at the lower end of the village, just below the Church and Village Hall.
- Its name means 'enclosed valley'. It was mentioned in the Domesday Book ("dooms-day"), and has been a cereal farming and fruit growing area since the 1500s.
 - The Domesday Book of 1086, listed all properties, in order to assess tax due to King William the Conqueror.
- In 1947, the village was the subject of a Mass Observation survey and a detailed account of the village was recorded in the book 'Exmoor Village'.

continued.....

Luccombe (continued)

- It is one of the prettiest villages on Exmoor, with cream-coloured cob cottages from the 1500s and 1600s.
- Many of the cottages were originally simple 'cross-passage' houses, with two rooms, no chimney, and a cattle shed separated from the rooms by a passage.
- Some of the cottages, were modified by raising the roof to provide an upper floor, and adding chimneys - usually on the fronts of the buildings - with the fire heating the entire house.
 - Rounded bread ovens were also added to the outside of the cottages. They are accessed from inside the cottages, and are next to the chimneys.
- Modern houses have been built in the village, but an attempt has been made to harmonise them with the traditional styles.
- **Village Hall**
 - It was built as a school in 1881, and closed in 1946. It was funded by subscription, the Church and the Acland family.
 - Children were allowed half-day holidays during the whortleberry picking season.
 - The school records show that children played truant, to go stag hunting!
- **Church of St Mary the Virgin**
 - The original nave, on the north side, was built in the 1200s, with its barrel roof and painted bosses.
 - On the north wall, there is a large brass memorial to Dr Henry Byam, a Vicar of Luccombe, who died in 1669. The Latin inscription tells his interesting story.
 - During the English Civil War, the area was strongly Royalist, and the Vicar (Dr Byam) was arrested by the Parliamentary troops of Oliver Cromwell.
 - The English Civil War of 1642 to 1646 was about the power to rule the country - the King or Parliament. The argument was not a class or social problem, but religious and political. It was the Royalists (for the King) against Parliamentarians (with Oliver Cromwell in charge). Generally, London and city-dwellers, together with the upper classes supported the Parliamentarians. The country-dwellers, and lower classes supported the Royalists.
 - Dr Byam escaped, and managed to join King Charles I at Oxford, following him on his flight for freedom.
 - Mrs Byam and their daughter tried to escape to South Wales, but drowned in the Bristol Channel.
 - In 1660, then under the rule of King Charles II, Dr Byam returned as Vicar of Luccombe. He was also appointed as Prebendary of Wells, which entitled him to a share of the Cathedral revenue.
 - In the floor of the north nave, there is an excellent brass engraving of William Harrison, clothed as a nobleman. He died in 1615, aged 76.
 - It is just in front of the altar rail, protected by a small piece of carpet. Please ensure you replace the carpet.

continued.....

Luccombe (continued)

- The Post Office
 - This is opposite the Church lychgate, and is a cob cottage, dating from the 1500s.
 - The Ketnor sign over the door dates from its use as a shoemaker's shop, in the 1880s.
 - Ketnor (or Kitnor) was the old name for Culbone parish (see Day 3). The members of the family were medieval lords.
 - In 1890, it became a general store.
 - In the 1960s, it became the Post Office. At this time, mains water and electricity were installed.
 - A Victorian post box is still housed in the left wall of the building.
- Church Gate Cottage
 - This is at the bottom of Stoney Street, opposite the Post Office, and next to the Church lychgate.
 - It is a typical 'cross-passage' house, with a chimney added at each end.
 - It was once a teacher's cottage, and was extended to provide a schoolroom.

Dunkery Beacon walk

- *Dunkery Beacon is about 2 miles southwest of Luccombe, at 892415.*
- *The 2 miles return walk starts at the parking area at 904420, and slowly ascends about 250 feet.*
 - *From the parking area, there is an excellent view towards Minehead, and across the Bristol Channel.*
- *Dunkery Beacon is the summit of Dunkery Hill, and is the highest point on Exmoor, at 1,703 feet.*
 - *It provides good views in all directions. There is an orientation table at the summit pointing out features on Exmoor, Dartmoor, and further afield in England and South Wales.*
- *Bronze Age cairns at the summit date from 1500 - 2000 BC.*
- *At one time, it was the site of a fire beacon, used to warn of danger.*

Cattle roam freely on the open moorland.



continued.....

Stoke Pero Church

- This is about 2 miles northwest of Dunkery Beacon, at 878435.
- It is an isolated church, high on Exmoor, at 1,013 feet.
- It is not dedicated to any particular Saint. The area was originally called Stoke, and the 'Pero' part came from the name of Rectors.
- The first recorded Rector was in 1242, named Piro.
 - Other Rectors of the same family continued at the church over the next 100 years, with many corruptions of the name - Pyro, Pirow, Pyrou, Peyroun.
- The old church deteriorated, and was re-built in 1897.
 - When the foundations were dug for the new church, human remains were discovered, which indicated that there had been an even earlier church.
 - The porch and tower are from the original church, which existed in 1242.
- The open oak-beamed barrel roof was built with timber from Porlock.
 - It was transported by donkey and cart, in two journeys every day, over many months.
 - The donkey, named Zulu, became famous, and his portrait is displayed in the church.

Bossington

- This is about 3 miles northeast of Stoke Pero, at 897479.
- It is a pretty village with lime-washed cottages, looking out over Porlock Bay. Bossington Hill stands guard behind it, to the east.
- The village straggles along one main street, with just a few short side streets.
- Many of the cottages have remarkably tall chimneys. Next to the chimneys, some have typical rounded bread ovens - accessed from inside.

Hurlstone Point walk

- *Hurlstone Point is about 1 mile north of Bossington, at 898493.*
- *The 2 miles return walk starts at the parking area in Bossington at 898480, and ascends about 150 feet.*
 - *The path goes over a small footbridge, and then turns left, following the stream for about 0.25 mile.*
 - *It then slowly climbs to Hurlstone Point, where there are the remains of a substantial building.*
 - *These remains were a Coastguard Lookout.*
 - *It was built in 1904, and housed two Coastguards for two weeks at a time - each working a shift of 6 hours.*
 - *From 1928, the men were housed in a cottage in Bossington Lane, when off duty.*
 - *From 1950, it ceased to be manned full time, but continued part time into the 1960s.*
- *There are excellent views from this rocky headland across Porlock Bay to the west, and (at low tide) the beach of Selworthy Sand to the east.*

Overnight around Porlock

- This is about 2 miles southwest of Hurlstone Point, at 885467.
- See Day 3 for details of Porlock.

Date.....

Enjoy the beauty of the Lorna Doone area, and learn about the world-famous flood.

Approximate miles = 30

Today's map numbers - **181 & 180**

Start the day in Porlock

Porlock

- This charming village is set in a wide valley, close to the sea.
- It has a variety of seemingly erratic architecture, which has developed over the centuries, winding along the narrow High Street. It is popular with tourists during the summer.
- There are hills on three sides - all with steep road gradients.
- **Church of St Dubricius**
 - St Dubricius was a Welsh Saint (460 AD - 545 AD, or possibly until 612 AD). It is possible that he crowned King Arthur and officiated at his marriage to Guinevere.
 - It is probable that an original church dated from the time of St Dubricius. Parts of the present church date from the 1200s, although many alterations were carried out in the 1400s and late-1800s.
 - The spire is unusually truncated, rising from a massive tower. It was storm-damaged in 1591, and not rebuilt to its original height.
 - The clock, inside the church at the west end, is thought to date from about 1450.
 - **Chapel of the High Cross**
 - This unusual feature is above the porch, and accessed by a spiral staircase.
 - It is a small room - measuring about 12 feet square, with an altar and a few chairs.
 - In the 1400s, it was a monks' room for valuables.
 - In the 1700s, it was a schoolroom. There are indications in the outside wall of the church, showing where a staircase allowed the children to enter the schoolroom, without going into the church.
 - In the 1800s, it became a store again.
 - In 1985, it was made into a chapel.
 - **Harington Monument**
 - This 1460 monument is close to the chancel, and is regarded as one of the best 1400s monuments in England.
 - It has reclining stone effigies of Lord John Harington and his wife, Lady Elizabeth.
 - In 1417, Lord Harington went to France with 86 archers and 29 lancers, to fight for Henry V at Agincourt. However, he was taken ill of 'the fever'. He died in 1418.
 - There are many graffiti inscriptions in the alabaster monument - the earliest from 1591.

continued.....

Porlock (continued)

- **Doverly Manor Museum**
 - This is in a late-1400s building on the corner of High Street and Doverhay.
 - It has artefacts and exhibits about the history of Porlock. There are also interesting photographs of Porlock, comparing old views with new.
 - Entry is free.
- **Porlock Bay**
 - This has a wonderful pebble beach, built naturally over 6,000 years. It is thought to have been formed here because of the high cliffs to the west, and the great difference between high and low tides.
 - The remains of a forest, dating from 3000 to 4000 BC, have been found on the beach. Tree stumps and branches can be seen at low tide.
- **Porlock Hill**
 - This is, perhaps, the most famous aspect of Porlock - see next page.

Porlock Weir

- This is about 2 miles northwest of Porlock, at 863479.
- It is an attractive small village, with its tiny harbour, pebble beach and wooded backdrop. It is popular with tourists during the summer.



- Boats leave here to catch lobsters off Hurlstone Point.
- The Ship Inn is attractive, set amongst the old houses. Although it was originally built in the 1300s, it was altered in 1651 and 1920.
- The area to the east of the village is popular with birdwatchers.

Culbone Church walk

- *This is a 4 miles return walk from Porlock Weir, to the church at 842483.*



- *The path starts between The Ship Inn and The Anchor Hotel, and ascends about 450 feet, with occasional good views across the Bristol Channel.*
- *It goes through the dense Yearnor Wood ("yar-nuh"), which is part of Culbone Woodlands.*
- **Note:** *Culbone Church is only accessible on foot from Porlock Weir. It is not accessible by road.*
 - *The path goes past the tollhouse of Worthy Toll Road. It is possible to start from here, by paying the toll, and then parking in the private area. This reduces the total distance by nearly 1 mile.*

continued.....

Culbone Church walk (continued)

- Church of St Beuno ("bay-no")
 - *This is the smallest complete parish church in England, with only about 20 parishioners.*
 - *The inside of the building measures about 35 feet by 12 feet, and has seating for only 33 people.*
 - *It was probably built in the late-1100s, although it is possible that parts of it are earlier than 1066. The short spire was added in about 1810.*
 - *In 1280, the Chaplain killed a man by hitting him on the head with a hatchet.*
 - *At one time the church is reputed to have served a colony of lepers, who were not allowed into the church, but followed the services through the windows.*
 - *The area once had a thriving charcoal-burning industry, and it is thought that some of the workers may have been lepers.*
 - *The hamlet of Culbone inspired Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 - 1834) to write *Kubla Khan*. However, it is thought he actually wrote it at The Ship Inn, at Porlock.*
 - *Culbone is a corruption of the Celtic 'Kil' meaning 'Church', and 'Bone' being 'St Beuno'.*
 - *St Beuno was a Welsh Saint, born in the late-500s AD, and died in 642 AD.*
 - *Kitnor (or Ketnor) was the old name for Culbone parish. Kitnor was probably a corruption of Anglo-Saxon words meaning a sea-shore cave.*

Porlock Hill

- This rises west out of Porlock, and is famous for the 1:4 gradient on the A39 road.
- It was notorious for car engines overheating in the early days. There were so many breakdowns, the Automobile Association installed a telephone box on the summit of the hill - the box is now a listed building.
- Modern cars have no problems with the hill.



- Without going too far out of your way, there are two options available, if you wish to avoid Porlock Hill.
 - **1. Toll Road from Porlock Weir, via Worthy**
 - This has a maximum gradient of between 1:5 and 1:7.
 - It goes from Porlock Weir harbour, up a small lane, and then a rather difficult right turn towards Worthy.
 - The road at Worthy has a gate across it at the tollhouse. There is a chain bell-pull outside the tollhouse - pulling this encourages somebody to collect the toll.
 - The narrow lane winds its way up the wooded Worthy Combe.
 - Follow the signposts for Lynmouth and Countisbury. It ends opposite The Culbone Inn, at 831471, on the A39 road.

continued.....

Porlock Hill (continued)

- **2. Toll Road from Porlock, via Porlock Manor Estate**
 - This has a maximum gradient of 1:14.
 - It is an easier journey, with good views over the coastline.
 - There is a toll-booth near the lower end of the road.
 - It goes from Porlock, and ends opposite the AA telephone box at the top of Porlock Hill, at 842463, on the A39 road.

Oare

- This is about 2 miles southwest of Culbone, at 802473.
- Church of St Mary the Virgin

- This is a beautiful small 1100s church with a low barrel roof.



- Regrettably, the wooden eagle lectern was stolen in 1999, together with other church treasures - a 1718 coffin lid, an oak carving, and a painting.
 - A replacement wooden buzzard lectern has been made by a local National Park Ranger, who carved it with a chain-saw and chisels.
- It is of particular significance to enthusiasts of *Lorna Doone* (see information on page 14).
- It contains a memorial to R D Blackmore, similar to that in Exeter Cathedral.
- In the late-1600s - the supposed time of *Lorna Doone* - the church was not as it is today.
 - The present chancel did not exist, and the altar was in the position of the present wooden screen.
 - The tower at the west end did not exist.
 - The seating would have been on wooden benches.
 - R D Blackmore did not state where Carver Doone was positioned, when he shot Lorna at her wedding.
 - A tradition has developed, claiming that he shot through a side window. There is one either side of the nave - both having angled sides, suitable for a close view of the altar.
 - An alternative suggestion is that he shot from the west end of the church - as that was where the main door was situated.

continued.....

Malmsmead ("marms-meed")

- This is about 1 mile west of Oare, at 792478.
- It is popular for walking, horse-riding and tourists - particularly enthusiasts of *Lorna Doone* (see information on page 14).

- **Malmsmead Bridge**

- This is an attractive, much-photographed, narrow bridge beside a wide ford.



- **Badgworthy Water and Valley** ("bad-ger-ee")

- Badgworthy Water is the name of the river. The spelling varies, sometimes being Badgeworthy (with a middle 'e'). Ordnance Survey has standardised on Badgworthy.
 - Badgworthy Valley is marked as Doone Country on Ordnance Survey maps. However, the genuine 'Glen Doone' is thought to be Lank Combe, about 2 miles south of Malmsmead.

Badgworthy Water walk

- *This return walk starts in Malmsmead, at 792478, ascending about 125 feet.*
 - *The walk along the banks of Badgworthy Water, in 'Doone Country' is rewarding, for as far as you wish.*
- *Walk to the right (west) of Lorna Doone Farm, south up the road for about 0.25 mile to a 90° bend in the road. The path continues straight from the bend.*
 - **Note:** For a fee, it is possible to walk through the private fields of Lorna Doone Farm for about 0.5 mile. This stays close to Badgworthy Water, and is a more level path.
- *About 1 mile (2 miles return) from Malmsmead, there is a memorial to R D Blackmore on the west bank of Badgworthy Water.*



- *About 2 miles (4 miles return) from Malmsmead, the waters from Lank Combe enter Badgworthy Water from the west.*
 - *A small footbridge crosses it.*
 - *The water slide is about 50 yards upstream from the bridge.*
 - *Walking up Lank Combe, the steep-sided ravine suddenly opens out after about 300 yards, to where perhaps the Doone family lived on an open plain.*
 - *The footpath up Lank Combe may be followed for as far as you wish.*

continued.....

Badgworthy Water walk (continued)

- About 2.75 miles (5.5 miles return) from Malmsmead, the waters of Hoccombe Combe enter from the west.
 - At the entrance to the combe, there are the low remains of a small farming settlement of about 12 - 14 buildings.
 - The buildings originally had stone walls and thatched roofs. It is thought they were first inhabited over 1,000 years ago, and deserted in about 1430.
 - The ruins are thought to have inspired R D Blackmore's village of the Doone family - except that he based the village at Lank Combe.

County Gate

- This is about 1 mile north of Malmsmead, at 794487.
- It is an excellent place to stop to admire the view over Malmsmead and the moorland.
- It is called County Gate, as it is the border between Somerset and Devon.
 - The walker's shelter and picnic area are in Somerset. The Exmoor National Park Visitor Centre and parking area are in Devon.
 - It was also once called Cosgates Feet, as it was at the foot of Cosgates Hill. In 1298, Cosgates was called Cornesgate, but the name became corrupted.

Brendon

- This is about 1.5 miles southwest of County Gate, at 768483.
- It has a quaint packhorse bridge and pretty cottages.
- The name is derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'brun' or 'bryn' meaning 'brown' (or 'bramble'), and 'dun' meaning 'hill'.
- A 5-mile excursion, goes south from Brendon, keeping right at all junctions.
 - It provides a good variety of scenery, including woodland, the East Lyn River, open moorland, attractive hamlets, and valley bottoms - all along narrow lanes.
 - The journey travels through Tippacott (at 767471), Brendon Barton (at 748474), Rockford (at 756478), and returns to Brendon.
 - **Church of St Brendan**
 - This is at 750477. It is the parish church of Brendon, but not within the village. It was built in 1738 - having previously been in the village of Cheriton, about 1.5 miles to the southwest. Some of the building materials were re-used.
 - In the lychgate, there is an unusual stone, on which to rest a coffin.
 - A lych is the old word for a body. A roofed lychgate was a place to rest with the coffin, before a funeral service.
 - The font is from the original church, and may be older than 1066.
 - A second, smaller font was presented to the church by a family from Sussex, having moved to farm in the area. The farming was not successful, and the family left in the late-1900s, having donated the font - a family heirloom.

continued.....

Brendon (continued)

- Church of St Brendan (continued)
 - St Brendan was born in Ireland, and lived from 484 to 577 AD.
 - He is often called 'The Navigator', as he made many sea expeditions, particularly to find the 'Blessed Isle'. He is thought to have been the first to 'discover' America, together with 60 companions.

Foreland Point walk

- This is about 2 miles northwest of Brendon, at 755512.
- The 3 miles return walk starts from the National Trust parking area, on Countisbury Hill, opposite The Exmoor Sandpiper Inn, at 747497. It ascends about 50 feet and then descends about 500 feet.
- The walk goes through Countisbury Churchyard, and then follows round, and over, the headland to Foreland Point.
- This headland has some of the highest sea cliffs in England.



- There are superb coastal views - particularly as Foreland Point projects further into the Bristol Channel than other headlands. It is the most northern point in Devon.
- From the end of Foreland Point, it is possible just to see the white domed roof of Foreland Lighthouse - on the cliffs, far below.
 - The lighthouse was built in 1900, with keepers' cottages.
 - In 1993, the lighthouse was automated, and the cottages are now used as holiday accommodation.
- On returning to the parking area, there is a good view of Wind Hill. This is about 0.5 mile west (right) from The Exmoor Sandpiper Inn, separated by a deep valley.
 - It is the site of an fort from the 800s AD.
 - In 878 AD, the Saxon army, led by Odda, is thought to have won a decisive battle here against the Danes, led by Hubba.
 - Opinion is divided about the actual battle site, but this is considered to be the most likely.
 - Odda had no dependable water supply at his hill-top position, and realised his vulnerable situation.
 - Hubba had arrived from Denmark with his men in 23 ships, and started to establish themselves lower down the hill, at a place called Arx Cynuit ('arx' is Latin for a fortification).
 - Odda suddenly attacked the Danes, killing Hubba and 800 of his men.
- It is thought the name 'Cynuit' has been corrupted over the centuries, to become Countisbury.

continued.....

Lynmouth ("lin-muth")

- This is about 2 miles southwest of Foreland Point, at 725495.
- It is set at the foot of cliffs, with a picturesque small harbour.



- It was a once just a small fishing village, with herring and oysters being the main catch. There were many buildings around the harbour, in which to dry, salt and smoke the herrings.
 - The large shoals of herring suddenly deserted the local waters in the late-1700s, and only returned in quantity on a few rare occasions.
 - The oyster trade ceased in the early-1900s, because of over-fishing in the late-1800s.
- The level between high tide and low tide is the second greatest in the world, at nearly 11 metres.
- It has been popular with artists and poets, particularly Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
 - It was the Victorians who developed it from a fishing village, calling it "England's little Switzerland".
 - In the late-1800s, there was a flourishing tourist trade with day-trippers from paddle-steamers, which provided excursions along the Bristol Channel, mainly from Bristol.
- 'Lyn' is from the Saxon word 'llynna' meaning 'torrent'.
- The town is world-famous for the devastating flood of the 15th August 1952 - easily the worst British river flood disaster.
 - It is thought the valley has been similarly flooded, on at least three other occasions, in 1607, 1770 and 1859.
 - Details of the 1952 flood disaster are below, under 'Flood Memorial Hall'.
 - There have been concerns that a British Government trial of 'rain-producing chemicals' were being tested.
 - In 1997, it was admitted some tests were carried out, but that they failed.
 - The experiments could have been for military purposes, for fighting forest fires, promoting growth of crops, or overcoming droughts.
- The following are in order, starting from the lower station of the Cliff Railway, walking towards the town centre:
- **Lynmouth & Lynton Cliff Railway**

- This travels from The Esplanade up to Lynton.
- It is a totally water-powered railway, which opened in 1890.
- Each car has a 700-gallon water tank. The upper car's tank is filled with water, and the weight of it pulls the lower car up. It is regulated carefully to maintain the correct speed, and varies according to the weight of passengers.



- The water is piped by gravity from the West Lyn River, higher up the valley.
- The gradient is about 1:1.75 - an angle of about 35°.
- The entire journey takes about 90 seconds each way.
- It was financed by George Newnes (see Lynton on Day 4).

continued.....

Lynmouth (continued)

- **Lime Kiln**
 - This is a lime kiln with five access points - although one is blocked up. There is a short explanation of its history.
- **Exmoor National Park Visitor Centre**
 - In addition to visitor information, it has a replica of the 'Louisa' lifeboat, which became particularly famous on the 12th January 1899.
 - A large, three-masted vessel called 'The Forest Hall' was noticed in distress in Porlock Bay, close to Porlock Weir.
 - The seas were too high to launch the lifeboat.
 - Twelve horses and nearly 100 people, dragged the lifeboat 13 miles, including up two 1:4 hills, to Porlock Weir.
 - They removed gates and walls to widen the road.
 - They reached Porlock Weir at 6:00am, and then helped to rescue the stricken vessel, and 15 souls.
 - A re-enactment took place in 1999.
- **Rhenish Tower**
 - This is on the harbour jetty. It is a 1954 replica of the original, which was destroyed in the 1952 flood. It includes a beacon cradle - the fire helped fishermen to find their way home.
 - The original, probably built in the 1830s, was used to pump seawater to a building next to the Bath Hotel, for taking baths. It was designed from a painting of a tower on the coast of Lebanon, but was supposed to look like a tower of the German Rhineland.
- Beside the harbour is a quaint row of fishing cottages, stepped down the lower part of the hill. These are much photographed, for calendars and jigsaws, etc.
- **Flood Memorial Hall**
 - This is on The Esplanade, at the lower end of the river, close to the jetty.
 - There is a display area by the pavement, which houses varying exhibitions. A memorial plaque records the launches and numbers of lives saved by the crew-members of the lifeboat 'Louisa' (but spelled 'Lousia').
 - The flood exhibition is upstairs, via the outside steps, on the left of the hall. It gives a good portrayal of the flood, and there is a large pre-1952 model of the village. The model has been used in film documentaries.
 - The weather was particularly wet that year, especially August.
 - The ground was already saturated on Exmoor, and the rivers more full than usual.
 - Then, in a freak situation, two storms converged on Exmoor, and 9 inches of rain fell in 24 hours.
 - The rivers - East Lyn and West Lyn - meet at Lynmouth, and discharge much of the water from Exmoor through a narrow outlet, into the Bristol Channel.
 - The river water levels rose, and started to collect debris, which built up behind the bridges, like dams.
 - The bridges could not hold the water, and each one suddenly burst, allowing a surge of water past.
 - The water cascaded down the rivers, carrying mud, rocks, massive boulders and debris.
 - 90 million tons of water flowed through Lynmouth in 7 hours.

continued.....

Lynmouth (continued)

- **Flood Memorial Hall** (continued)
 - The flow was too much for the rivers - they burst their banks.
 - 34 people were killed, including 11 on holiday.
 - 61 homes, 18 shops, 5 hotels, the lifeboat station, 28 bridges, and 95 vehicles were also lost.
 - Since the flood, the rivers have been made three times wider at Lynmouth, with high, defensive banks.
 - The devastation was so great, that the entire village was evacuated for five months, whilst major work was carried out.
- **Mars Hill**
 - This is the oldest area, behind the harbour, with pretty cottages. The name is a corruption of the French 'mer' meaning 'sea'.
 - R D Blackmore stayed here, while he researched *Lorna Doone*.
 - There are secluded hotels and villas, higher on the hillside.
- **Glen Lyn Gorge**
 - This is 200 upstream from the harbour.
 - The power of the West Lyn River is being harnessed here with a hydro-electric generator.
 - The water is piped down 250 feet to produce 300 Kilowatts of electricity, which is fed into the National Grid. This amount is the equivalent to Lynmouth's consumption.
 - It is the largest private generating plant in the country.
 - There are displays about water power, including turbines, irrigation and tidal power. The turbine generator can be seen.
 - Water cannon can be operated, which utilise the water discharged by the generator.
 - There is a footpath up the steep, narrow gorge, with markers showing the high water levels in the 1952 flood.
- **Tors Hill**
 - This is the lower slopes of Countisbury Hill, and overlooks pleasure gardens, tennis courts, putting green, etc. Manor Green is a pleasant grassy area, above the shingle beach.

Overnight around Lynmouth / Lynton

Date.....

Mostly walks today, in ancient woodlands, and on the hills with wonderful views.

Approximate miles = 10

Today's map number - 180

Start the day in Lynton

Lynton ("lin-tun")

- This is about 0.5 mile west of Lynmouth, at 720495.
- It is set on a cliff shelf, 500-600 feet above Lynmouth.
- It was a fashionable resort in the 1800s, and much remains of the Victorian and Edwardian architecture.



- **George Newnes**

- He was born in 1851, the son of a Congregational Minister. He became the wealthy publisher of the Sherlock Holmes stories, and the 'Tit-Bits' journal. His wealth and upbringing made him a generous man.
- In 1887, on his first holiday visit, he agreed to pay for the construction of the Cliff Railway.
- In 1891, he made plans to build a pier to boost the tourist trade. A building boom started, and property prices soared.
- In 1892, he announced that the pier was not to be built. Building stopped, property prices crashed, and he became very unpopular.
 - It has been suggested that as he had decided, in 1890, to build himself a mansion, overlooking the village on Hollerday Hill, he wanted privacy from tourists. His mansion, called Hollerday House, was completed in 1893.
- In 1895, he provided money for the railway to Barnstaple, which was completed in 1898. As a result, he regained his popularity.
- Also in 1898, he financed the present Town Hall, which was completed in 1900. Other donations were made for the cricket pavilion in the Valley of Rocks, and the Congregational Church.
- His business started to fail, and he became a diabetic. He appeared to lose the will to live. He died at Hollerday House in 1910, aged 59, after an eight-week illness.
- He left many debts, and unfortunately Hollerday House was mysteriously gutted by fire in 1913, before it could be sold.

continued.....

Lynton (continued)

- **The Lyn and Exmoor Museum**
 - This is opposite the school - by the main parking area - in Market Street (off Castle Hill).
 - It is housed in the whitewashed, 1700s St Vincent's Cottage, which is possibly the oldest home in Lynton.
 - It displays an Exmoor kitchen of 1800, tools, farming and poaching equipment, a variety of other local artefacts, in addition to items and memories of the 1952 flood disaster.
 - It has a scale model of the Lynton to Barnstaple Railway, which closed in 1935.
 - Most displays are from the last 200 years.
 - The building is reputed to have been haunted.
 - In the 1930s, footsteps and other strange incidents were reported. The bones of a child were discovered in a bricked-up cupboard.
- **Church of St Mary the Virgin**
 - Most of this dates from when it was re-built in 1741. It was further restored in the late-1800s.
 - The churchyard has a slate orientation table providing distances and directions along the coast, and across the Bristol Channel to South Wales.
- **Town Hall**
 - This Victorian extravaganza, in Lee Road, was entirely paid for by George Newnes (see previous page). Its architecture is a gothic, chalet-style castle, with Tudor parts!
 - It is used by the community for a variety of functions.
 - There is a Town Council, but the local residents refer to Lynton and Lynmouth as 'villages'.

Hollerday Hill walk

- *This 1.25 miles return walk starts at Lynton Town Hall, at 719495. It ascends about 340 feet.*
 - *Follow the driveway to the right of the Town Hall, following signposts for Hollerday House.*
- **Hollerday House site**
 - *This is just over half-way up the hill. It was the magnificent mansion of George Newnes (see previous page), although there is little left to see. There is a plaque, with an explanation.*
- *Follow the signposts for 'Valley of Rocks', and then for 'Overlook'.*
- **Hill Fort site**
 - *This is close to the summit of the hill. It dates from the Iron Age, of about the 500s BC.*
- **Hollerday Hill summit**
 - *This provides a good view over the Valley of Rocks, from 800 feet above sea level.*



continued.....

Cleaves walk 1 (2 miles return version)

- This starts about 1.5 miles southeast of Lynton, at Hillsford Bridge, at 740478.
- It is a return walk providing wonderful views over the valley of the East Lyn River, across the Bristol Channel to South Wales, and over moorland. It ascends and descends about 300 feet.
 - It follows part of the Two Moors Way and the Tarka Trail.
- Leave Hillsford Bridge, and walk up the A39 road for 200 yards to the next hairpin bend. At this point, walk straight ahead, up a clear, wide track.
 - At the top of the track, where it leaves the woods, there is the site of Myrtleberry South Camp, an Iron Age fort from about the 500s BC.
 - Continue past the fort on Myrtleberry Cleave, following the signs for Lynton and Lynmouth, turning back when you wish.
 - Walking as far as Ladycombe, where the path suddenly descends in a series of hairpin bends, is a 2 miles return walk.

Cleaves walk 2 (4.5 miles loop version)

- This starts about 1.5 miles southeast of Lynton, at Hillsford Bridge, at 740478.
- It is a 4.5 miles loop walk going up onto Myrtleberry Cleave, and returning through ancient, tiny farming communities. It ascends and descends about 650 feet.
 - The walk provides wonderful views over the valley of the East Lyn River, across the Bristol Channel to South Wales, and over moorland.
 - The first section follows part of the Two Moors Way and the Tarka Trail.
- Leave Hillsford Bridge, and walk up the A39 road for 200 yards to the next hairpin bend. At this point, walk straight ahead, up a clear, wide track.
 - At the top of the track, where it leaves the woods, there is the site of Myrtleberry South Camp, an Iron Age fort from about the 500s BC.
 - Continue past the fort, following the signs for Lynton and Lynmouth, then down the series of hairpin bends, down and then up Ladycombe.
 - Still continue along the path, past Oxen Tor (marked on a signpost), ignoring paths down to Lynmouth.
 - At a signpost to West Lyn, turn left through a gate, and follow the right hedge through two gates, and along a farm track for 0.5 mile to West Lyn farming community.
 - This section of the path is over Summerhouse Hill. In about 1820, the Rector of Lynmouth built a summerhouse on the edge of the hill, with a view over Lynton and Lynmouth. It is no longer here.
 - Turn left along the road, signposted for Hillsford Bridge and Brendon.
 - After about 300 yards, turn left onto a grassy track (at a right bend in the road). This track bends in a long right arc, for about 400 yards.
 - Continue straight ahead through a gate, into a field for about 400 yards, following the Hillsford Bridge signpost.

continued.....

Cleaves walk 2 (4.5 miles loop version) (continued)

- *Go through another gate onto a walled grassy track, for about 600 yards.*
- *When you reach farm buildings, continue straight ahead through five gates - all within 300 yards.*
- *On reaching another farm, turn left, and after 50 yards, bear right along the main farm-track to go through a gate onto a walled grassy track.*
- *After about 400 yards, bear right onto your original path, and continue downhill, back to Hillsford Bridge.*

Combe Park walk

- *This starts about 1.5 miles southeast of Lynton, at Hillsford Bridge, at 740478.*
- *It is a 2 miles return walk through the beautiful Hoar Oak Woods, which are part of the Watersmeet area - an area designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its extensive, ancient woodlands. It slowly ascends about 200 feet.*
 - *It follows part of the Two Moors Way and the Tarka Trail.*
- *There is a small parking area for public use, after which there is a private road to an hotel.*
- *Follow the signs for Cheriton, to the right of the private road.*
- *After going past the rear of the hotel, there is a choice of following the 'Riverside Walk' or the 'Woodland Walk' to Scoresdown.*
 - *Both paths end at Old Scoresdown Farm. The return walk can be along the same path, or by choosing the 'Scenic Footpath' - which becomes the 'Woodland Walk'.*

Watersmeet

- *This is about 1 miles north of Hillsford Bridge, at 744486.*
- *It is where the East Lyn River meets Hoar Oak Water in a series of waterfalls. Salmon may be seen leaping upstream in springtime.*
- *The area around Watersmeet is one of Southwest Britain's largest ancient woodlands, which are in an almost natural state.*
 - *Most of the trees are oak, ash and wych elm.*
 - *Two of the woods bordering the East Lyn River are in the 10 most important woodland areas owned by the National Trust.*
 - *Parts of the area are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).*
- *It is an exceptionally beautiful area, and popular with tourists.*
- *There are 38 miles of footpaths crossing the area.*
 - *All of the well-maintained footpaths are within the woodlands, and follow the two rivers.*

continued.....

Watersmeet (continued)

- **Watersmeet House**

- This is about 0.25 mile down from the road, set in a clearing in the beautiful valley.
- It was built by the Rev. Walter Halliday, the son of a wealthy naval surgeon and banker. On inheriting the family fortune, Walter Halliday gave up his career in the Church, and devoted his time to the Romantic Movement of poetry, in which he had been involved at Oxford.



- Walter Halliday probably designed the house himself, and started the building before his marriage in 1830, completing it in 1832. The stone was quarried at Watersmeet. At first, it was a fishing lodge, used only during the spring. Walter Halliday died in 1872, and his wife, Catherine, died in 1886.
- It is now used as a National Trust shop, with information and refreshments. It is open daily during the summer.
- During the late-1800s, an unsuccessful attempt was made to mine iron ore in the valley. Prior to that, there had been industries of charcoal burning and lime burning.
 - The remains of a lime kiln with three access points can be seen on the south side of the East Lyn River, about 400 yards upstream from Watersmeet House.

Overnight around Lynmouth / Lynton

Date.....

Close to the sea today, with breathtaking walks, and a man's unhappy descent from wealth.

Approximate miles = 20

Today's map number - 180

Start the day around Lynton

Valley of Rocks walk

- *This is a 4 miles return walk to The Valley of Rocks and Lee Abbey. It is reasonably level along the coast path.*
 - *It is an alternative to driving to The Valley of Rocks parking area - see below.*
- *There are magnificent views along the coast, and across the Bristol Channel to South Wales.*



- *It starts from the western end of North Walk, which begins as North Walk Hill, at the side of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, in Lynton.*
 - *Note: Car parking in North Walk is minimal, and should be found elsewhere in Lynton.*
- *It follows the coastline, along a good asphalt path.*
- *The walk can return the same way, or along the road, back through Lynton.*

Valley of Rocks

- This is about 1 mile west of Lynton, with a parking area at 707498.
- It is a valley of rock formations, between the sea and the moorland, with steep terrain, and scattered boulders of sandstone and slates.
 - It is unusual, as this valley is parallel to the coastline. The land rises on one side to the moor, and on the other side to Castle Rock, which then drops 430 feet into the Bristol Channel.
- The valley has no real stream or river, although it is thought the joint rivers of the East Lyn and West Lyn flowed through here at one time. There are two theories.
 - One suggests that during the ice age, about 450,000 years ago, a massive dam of ice at Lynmouth created a lake, and forced the joint rivers to divert westwards through this valley.
 - The other suggests that the headlands, east and west of Lynmouth, were once joined. This had the same effect as the dam of ice. The river mouth at Lynmouth has cut through that headland over the last 125,000 years.

continued.....

Valley of Rocks (continued)

- In addition to Castle Rock, other formations have been given names, such as The White Lady, Ragged Jack and the Devil's Cheesewring.
 - In *Lorna Doone*, Mother Meldrum lived in a cave under the Devil's Cheesewring rock, although there is no such cave.



- It has been suggested that previous peoples have lived here - possibly the Bronze Age people of 3,000 years ago. There is no definite proof of this.
 - It has been claimed that the apparently scattered rocks have been placed in their positions by an earlier culture - some in stone circles.
- It is a particularly beautiful area, with wonderful views along the coastline of steep, wooded cliffs.
 - To the west, there is a tower on the rocky Duty Point. It is thought this was built as a folly, and that the site was used by Customs officers looking for smugglers.
- Wild goats live in the area, as it is thought they have done for 3,000 years. They are not always easy to see, as they are often concealed in the crags and bracken - but they are not particularly shy of humans.



- The original herd was hunted during the 1800s, until it had disappeared. The herd was replaced in 1897, but two bad winters in the 1900s killed the new herd. The present herd of Cheviot goats dates from a re-stocking in 1976, from Northumberland.
- There is now a herd of about 40 goats. In recent years, they had become a nuisance to gardeners. The population was managed by culling, and by moving some to other parts of England.
- They are some of the few remaining wild goats left in England. Goats were brought to England about 6,000 years ago, by migrating farmers - rabbits and fallow deer were only brought to England about 900 years ago.

There is a Toll Road between Valley of Rocks and Lee Bay. It is about 0.5 mile long, and then joins a narrow lane - a public highway - to Woody Bay.

continued.....

Lee Abbey

- This is immediately west of The Valley of Rocks, at 698494.
- There has never been an abbey on this site, but it acquired its name because the property once belonged to an abbey in Dorset.



- Originally called Grange Farm, it became the home of a wealthy wool merchant from Barnstaple. He moved here in 1628, to escape from the plague. His family continued to own it, and finally left in 1713.
- The present mansion was built in 1850, combining it with the old manor house. It has since been altered and enlarged, and is now a Christian retreat and conference centre.
- It is not open to the public.

Lee Bay

- This small beach is immediately west of Lee Abbey, at 693494.
- It is within the private estate of Lee Abbey, but public access is permitted, down a 200-yard private road, opposite a Toll House.
 - Although the private road states 'Private Road - Lee Abbey Vehicles Only', there are some public toilets at the top, behind which is a field for parking.
 - Public access on foot is permitted, via a gate opposite the toilets.
- On the right of the lane is Pelton House, which once had a pelton wheel for harnessing hydro-electric power.
- Near the beach, there is a lime kiln with two access points, above which is holiday accommodation.
- Beside the lime kiln is a pair of stone-built stores. One of them has been converted into a chapel by a staff member of Lee Abbey.

Where the Toll Road ends at Lee Bay, a narrow lane continues to Woody Bay. It can be avoided by using alternative roads from Lynton.

Woody Bay

- This is about 2 miles west of Lee Abbey, at 680490.
 - **Note:** There is little to see here, unless at least one of the two walks is undertaken (see pages 46 and 47).



- Woody Bay is a beautiful, small secluded area, which is part of a larger designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). During the 1800s, it was known as Wooda Bay.

continued.....

Woody Bay (continued)

- In 1885, a Kent solicitor - Colonel Benjamin Lake - purchased Martinhoe Manor, which included the estate of Woody Bay, and the nearby Hunter's Inn (see next page).
 - He thought the area was ideal for tourism, and built an hotel, constructed a golf course, and sold land for development.
 - Between 1893 and 1895, he built roads to Woody Bay, and agreed to allow the new railway to cross his land.
 - He decided to build a pier in the bay, to accommodate steamers, which would bring tourists to Hunter's Inn, via his newly-constructed road at the top of the cliffs.
 - Work commenced on the timber pier in 1895, and was completed in 1897.
 - It was a failure - steamers could not berth at low tide, and a storm in January 1899 caused considerable damage. The pier was demolished in 1902.
 - Colonel Lake became bankrupt in 1900, with debts of over £170,000. He was sentenced to prison for 12 years, for misusing his clients' money, and died in 1909.
 - The estate was sold in 1900, to pay some of the liabilities.

Woody Bay walk

- *This starts about 2 miles west of Lee Abbey, at 680490.*
 - *Park at about 676487 in the National Trust parking area, alongside the road.*



- *The 2 miles return walk takes the asphalt track downhill, just below the parking area - signposted to Martinhoe Manor.*
 - *Note: Although the public can legally drive down this track, it is discouraged, as parking is for residents only. Turning is difficult, and it is better to park at the suggested parking area.*
- *The walk descends about 600 feet to sea-level, through woodland and rhododendron bushes.*
 - *It is particularly attractive in late May, when the rhododendrons are in flower.*
 - *The rhododendrons may be very attractive, but have become a pest, and attempts are being made to control them.*
- *Just above the beach, the footpath turns sharply to the right. At this point, it is possible to look through a gate to the left, to see the remains of the pier-head - a concrete and walled area, to which the timber pier was attached.*
- *At the beach, there are well-preserved remains of a lime kiln with three access points.*

continued.....

Woody Bay to Hunter's Inn walk

- This starts from the same place as Woody Bay walk (see previous page).
- The 5.5 miles loop walk is along some of the most beautiful coastal scenery in Britain. It descends about 350 feet.
 - It follows the South West Coast Path and Tarka Trail to Hunter's Inn.
 - It returns along a road built by Colonel Lake - now a track.
- Take the asphalt track down the hill, as in the Woody Bay walk, but after about 0.5 mile, turn left along a path marked as the Coast Path to Hunter's Inn.
- The path continues all the way along the coast to Heddon's Mouth, and then turns inland to Hunter's Inn.
 - Along the way, a rock arch can be seen at sea level.
- Return from Hunter's Inn along the old coast road, which is simply signposted as Woody Bay. You will have met this wide path coming in from your left just before Hunter's Inn.
 - This path continues all the way back to the parking area at Woody Bay.
 - About 0.5 mile after turning eastwards along the coast from the River Heddon valley, there is a short diversion of about 600 yards return up to a Roman fortlet, or signal station.
 - The remains of the fortlet are a round, raised area.
 - It was used to keep watch on the Silures of South Wales.
 - The inland views are good from here, across to Martinhoe and the rolling hills.

Hunter's Inn

- This is about 2 miles southwest of Woody Bay, at 655482.
- It is a popular area, in the beautiful, wooded valley of the River Heddon.
- The area, in addition to the Inn, is referred to as 'Hunter's Inn'.



- The Inn is set in woodland with delightful gardens and ponds.
 - Peacocks can often be seen outside the Inn.
 - The Inn was originally a thatched farmhouse, which served beer to the community. By the late-1800s it had become quite a large Inn, popular with tourists.
 - In 1895, the thatched roof caught fire, and the entire building was lost.
 - Unfortunately, the tenants were not well insured, and the costs fell to the owner - Colonel Lake. The building of the present Swiss chalet- style Inn commenced in 1896 - with the intention of promoting it as a tourist attraction. Since then, it been altered and enlarged.

continued.....

Heddon's Mouth walk

- This is a 2 miles loop walk from Hunter's Inn, along a deep ravine to Heddon's Mouth, at 655497. It descends about 150 feet.
 - At Heddon's Mouth, there is a small pebble beach, with a well-preserved lime kiln with two access points.



- It starts to the right of Hunter's Inn (as you face the front), and then is clearly signposted to Heddon's Mouth.
 - Keep to the right (east) of the river, not crossing a stone bridge, but crossing on a much later wooden bridge to the opposite bank, signposted 'Beach'.
- Return from Heddon's Mouth on the west side of the river.
 - About half-way back, there is a footpath marked 'Coastpath to Combe Martin' to your right (west). This also climbs up to Heddon's Mouth Cleave, which provides good views over the wooded valley. This will lengthen your walk, by as far as you wish to go, and then return.
- On reaching the road, turn left, back to Hunter's Inn.

Trentishoe

- This is about 1 mile southwest of Heddon's Mouth, at 646486.
 - The road starting at 651483 states 'Unfit for motors'. It is recommended to take the road starting at 643481.
- It is a small farming community, well protected from the sea and wind.
- It was used as the setting of R D Blackmore's first book *Clara Vaughn*, published in 1864.
- Church of St Peter
 - The nave and tower were built in the 1400s.
 - Prior to the new chancel being built in the mid-1800s, it was the smallest church in Devon - and still is one of the smallest.
 - The Church of St Beuno, at Culbone, is smaller, but is in Somerset. Both are on Exmoor.
 - The Musicians' Gallery was built in 1771, and has a removable panel - to allow for the bass viol's bow.
 - The small organ had previously been on the S.S. Mauretania. It was presented to the church in 1966 by the Cunard Steam Ship Company, after the ship's final voyage.
 - At one time, the Vicar was supposedly involved in allowing the church to be used as a store for contraband, smuggled at Heddon's Mouth.

Overnight around Lynmouth / Lynton

Date.....

Today, there is an ancient church, a National Trust property, and some moorland walks.

Approximate miles = 50

Today's map number - 180

Leave Lynmouth / Lynton south on the B3234 road.

Parracombe

- This is about 4 miles southwest of Lynmouth / Lynton, at 670450.
- It is an interesting village, set down a winding hill.

- **Church of St Petrock**

- This church is at the top of the hill, in the area of Parracombe called Churchtown, at 675450.



- Follow the signposts for Parracombe, and then turn left off the hill, as it descends into the village.
- It was the first place in Devon to have a Christian Church, and was founded by St Petrock in the 550 AD. None of the original church remains today.
 - A later St Petrock's Church was built in the 1100s, but none of this church remains either.
 - St Petrock was a Welsh prince, who lived in the 500s AD.
- Construction of the present church started in the 1200s, the chancel being the main part that has survived. Its first Rector is recorded as Stephen St Albyn in 1284.
- It is a rare example of an un-restored church. It remains as it was in the late-1700s.
- When the new church was built in the village centre, John Ruskin was leading a national protest movement, and saved this church from demolition in 1879.
 - John Ruskin (1819-1900) was the son of a wealthy sherry importer. He became the greatest art critic of his time, and the most notable social commentator.
 - His ideas inspired the founding of the Arts and Crafts Movement, The National Trust, and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.
- It is still a consecrated building, although no longer regularly used for worship.

continued.....

Parracombe (continued)

• **Church of St Petrock (continued)**

- The plain walls have original hat pegs. There are 1700s box pews, a pulpit, and a stepped musicians' gallery at the rear of the church, in which the band of musicians and choir were seated.



- One of the pews has a piece removed, to allow for the bass viol's bow.
- There is a fascinating screen with a large panel above, inscribed with the Lord's Prayer, the 10 Commandments, the Creed, the Royal Coat of Arms, and other inscriptions.
- Outside the church, two cottages on the boundary of the churchyard were once a brewing-house, providing worshippers with refreshing ale.
- **Holwell Castle site**
 - The location of this motte and bailey fort stands out clearly, 0.25 mile south of the village.
 - A 'motte' is a man-made hill, on which the castle was built.
 - A 'bailey' is a courtyard within the walls of the castle.
 - The outlines of ramparts are terraced to the summit.
 - The original castle is thought to have been built during the 1100s as a private fortress.
 - The site is not accessible to the public, but can easily be seen from the Church of All Saints in the village.

Arlington Court

- This is about 4 miles southwest of Parracombe, at 611405.
 - It is just outside Exmoor National Park boundary, but worthy of inclusion in this itinerary.
- It is a beautifully proportioned mansion, built in 1822. Its plain appearance is enhanced by pillars, and a semi-circular porch.
 - Two previous mansions had been built here. The mansion prior to the current one dated from the 1500s.
- It was built for the wealthy Chichester family.
 - The family had been land owners in the area since 1384.
 - The last of the family to live here was Miss Rosalie Caroline Chichester. She was born here in 1865, and died in 1949, leaving the house and estate to the National Trust - including 3,500 acres.
 - The Chichester family loved the sea - Rosalie had been on two world cruises before she was 13.
 - Sir Francis Chichester (1901-1972) was a distant nephew of Rosalie. In 1967, he single-handedly sailed round the world, in Gypsy Moth IV. He was buried 2 miles southwest of Arlington, at Shirwell.

continued.....

Arlington Court (continued)

- Many collections are displayed, especially of model ships, pewter and shells.
 - Rosalie was a rather eccentric lady, and many of the collections are hers, amassed whilst travelling around the world. A red amber elephant has pride of place in the White Drawing Room.
 - There is a 'collection' of Shetland ponies and Jacob sheep in the grounds - all descendants of those introduced by Rosalie.
- The 30 acres of grounds have many lawns and specimen trees.
 - The formal garden and walled kitchen garden were originally laid out in 1865.
 - The wilderness area has ponds and woodland.
 - There is a large lake created from the River Yeo.
- The working stables have horses, together with a famous and growing collection of over 50 horse-drawn carriages. They include an 'ambulance' carriage, and that of the midget 'General' Tom Thumb, made when P T Barnum (1810-1891) brought his circus to Britain.
 - Carriage rides can be taken through the grounds.
 - Carriage driving tuition is available.



- *There are many walks in the grounds, especially to the lake.*
- This is a National Trust property and opening times should be checked on 01271 850296. The grounds are usually open from 10.30am, and the house from 11.00am, but the property is generally not open on Tuesdays.

Pinkery Pond walk 1 (3 miles return version)

- *This 3 miles return walk starts about 7 miles east of Arlington Court, at 725406. It ascends about 200 feet.*
 - *It is a walk up a pleasant valley, on a reasonable path, to the source of the River Barle.*
- *The path heads north for about 1.5 miles, skirting round Pinkery Farm, and after a further 0.5 mile, passing a wind generator.*
- *About 1 mile further, the path reaches Pinkery Pond, at 723423.*
 - *This 30 feet deep reservoir is one of the few stretches of open water on Exmoor.*
 - *It was created by John Knight (see Simonsbath, on next page) in about 1830, who employed 200 Irish labourers to build a dam across the River Barle, just where it rises in this wild area called 'The Chains'.*
 - *The Chains is a plateau over 1,500 feet. It is a watershed, with the rivers Barle and Exe flowing south, and the others flowing north - particularly as tributaries to the rivers East Lyn and West Lyn.*
 - *The Chains is the wettest area of Exmoor.*
 - *The reason he built the reservoir is not clear. There are traces of an unfinished canal from the reservoir to a point about 1 mile northeast of Simonsbath.*
- *It seems that John Knight named this Pinkworthy Pond, but it is pronounced "pinkery" - hence there is confusion!*

continued.....

Pinkery Pond walk 2 (4 miles loop version)

- This 4 miles loop walk starts about 7 miles east of Arlington Court, at 729402. It ascends about 200 feet.
 - This extended walk provides much better views over the moor, and also goes over a wild and (sometimes) wet area.
- The path heads north for about 1.5 miles.
 - After the second gate, continue in the same direction, following a well-spaced row of wooden markers - and following a right arc from about half-way across the field.
 - Before reaching Chains Barrow summit, turn left where you meet another path - keeping on the south side of the fence.
- After about 0.75 mile, the path reaches Pinkery Pond, at 723423.
 - This 30 feet deep reservoir is one of the few stretches of open water on Exmoor.
 - It was created by John Knight (see Simonsbath, below) in about 1830, who employed 200 Irish labourers to build a dam across the River Barle, just where it rises in this wild area called 'The Chains'.
 - The Chains is a plateau over 1,500 feet. It is a watershed, with the rivers Barle and Exe flowing south, and the others flowing north - particularly as tributaries to the rivers East Lyn and West Lyn.
 - The Chains is the wettest area of Exmoor.
 - The reason he built the reservoir is not clear. There are traces of an unfinished canal from the reservoir to a point about 1 mile northeast of Simonsbath.
- It seems that John Knight named this Pinkworthy Pond, but it is pronounced "pinkery" - hence there is confusion!
- At Pinkery Pond, take the path left (south), and it follows the stream skirting round Pinkery Farm.
- Turn left along the road for about 0.5 mile.

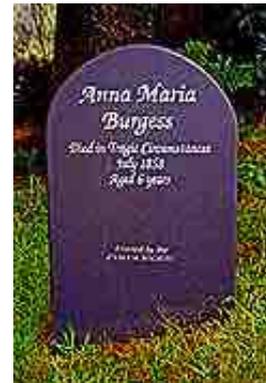
Simonsbath ("sim-unds-barth")

- This is about 4 miles southeast of Pinkery Pond, at 773393.
- It is thought to have been named after a Danish leader, called Sigmund, who settled in the area, and helped the locals resist the invading Saxons.
 - The name seems to have been changed from Sigmund to Simon, and the ford across the River Barle became known as "Simon's Path". It was then changed to "Simon's Bath".
- It is a popular starting point for walking into the depths of Exmoor, particularly along the River Barle.
- The Simonsbath House Hotel was built in 1654 by a Dutchman, called James Boevey ("boo-vee"). It was his private house, with his young wife, Isabel Visscher, from London. He was the first commoner to procure the freehold of the Royal Forest of Exmoor. He died in 1696.
- In 1818, John Knight purchased the forest for £50,000, and moved into the house that James Boevey built.
 - He built a 29 mile stone wall in 1820, called Forest Wall, encircling his estate, and some of this can still be seen.
 - He was the son of a wealthy iron-master industrialist from Shropshire, and had been farming in Worcestershire.
 - He made Simonsbath his headquarters - attempting to drain the moor and grow crops.
 - He built access roads to Simonsbath, replacing the muddy tracks used by packhorses. He also built many of the central Exmoor farms.

continued.....

Simonsbath (continued)

- There was too much rainfall to grow crops. However, John Knight's son, Colonel Sir Frederic Winn Knight, created a rotation system of grassland and root crops. Some farmers still work this system today, but the underlying rock prevents good drainage, and so John Knight's vision may never be achieved.
- Whilst attempting to mine for copper in the Barle Valley, he actually found iron ore. But this was short-lived, as the ore seam was very thin.
- The family did not attempt to cultivate The Chains (see Pinkery Pond, on pages 51 and 52), as it was too great a problem. However, the family did try to re-direct water from Pinkery Pond, and from the River Exe. Plans were also in hand to construct a railway across the centre of the moor.
- In 1897, the Knight family sold the estate to Earl Fortescue (Lord Clinton). After the deaths of Earl and Lady Fortescue in 1958, and in subsequent sales, the estate was split up.
- Church of St Luke
 - This is the highest church on Exmoor, at 1,140 feet.
 - It was built during Colonel Sir Frederic Winn Knight's life, at the expense of the Government.
 - It had been part of the agreement, in selling the rights of the Royal Forest of Exmoor, that if a church was required at a later time, the Treasury would fund it.
 - A large pink granite tomb in the churchyard contains the remains of Colonel Sir Frederic Winn Knight (1812-1897), his wife, and his son - Frederic Sebright Winn Knight, JP, DC (1851-1879).
 - The Exmoor Society has erected a black slate headstone, at the back left corner of the churchyard, to Anna Maria Burgess, aged six, who was murdered by her father in 1858 (see the Wheal Eliza details, on next page).



continued.....

Wheal Eliza ("weel") and Cow Castle walk

- *This 4 miles return walk starts at Simonsbath at 774393, about 100 yards west, and across the road from the Exmoor Forest Hotel.*
- *It goes along the tranquil, sheltered, moorland valley of the River Barle. It is reasonably level, except for the 50 feet ascent to Cow Castle.*
 - *Follow the signs for Cow Castle at the beginning of the walk.*
 - *The path follows the river at all times, except for a small section, after about 1 mile, when it goes round the small hill of Flexbarrow.*
- **Wheal Eliza**
 - *This is about 200 yards after Flexbarrow, near a footbridge.*
 - *During the 1500s, there may have been mining in this area.*
 - *In 1846, a syndicate attempted to extract ore, but was not very successful.*
 - *In 1856, Frederic Knight took an interest, and granted a lease to other miners.*
 - *Iron ore was actually found, and a very small amount of copper ore, but mining only continued until 1857.*
 - *Many of the problems were caused because the mine shaft was below the river level.*
 - *On the bank, there are the remains of some buildings. These were originally offices and workshops, but in later years they were used by a shepherd as a home.*
 - *Between these ruins and the river bank, there is a spoil-heap.*
 - *It was a site in the infamous 'Wheal Eliza Murder' of 1858.*
 - *William Burgess found family life difficult after his wife died. He put two of his children into service, but his daughter, Anna Maria, was too young.*
 - *He murdered Anna Maria, and buried her body. However, when he found the police were on his trail, he exhumed her body, and disposed of it down the Wheal Eliza mine shaft, tied in a tarpaulin coat.*
 - *Anna Maria's body was discovered, and her father eventually admitted his sins. He was hanged in 1859, at Taunton.*
 - *'Wheal' is a Cornish word, meaning 'mine'.*
- **Cow Castle**
 - *This is about 0.75 mile further along the path from Wheal Eliza, where the path suddenly turns left from the river.*
 - *It is a small conical-shaped hill, in a bend of the river.*
 - *On the summit, there is the site of an Iron Age fort, dating from about the 500s BC.*
 - *It has a reasonably flat, oval top, measuring about 100 x 75 yards. Below the top is a large ditch and rampart on the slopes.*
 - *From the top, there are excellent views of the Barle valley. The smaller hill, just to the south, is called 'The Calf'.*

Overnight around Lynmouth / Lynton

Date.....

Pretty villages, a mysterious stone, an ancient causeway - in the wild areas of south Exmoor.

Approximate miles = 40

Today's map numbers - **180 & 181****Leave Lynmouth / Lynton** southeast on the A39 road.**Exford**

- This is about 8 miles southeast of Lynmouth / Lynton, at 853384.
- It is an attractive village with cottages set around a large green.
- The village developed around the shallow crossing point of the River Exe, and became a centre for the sheep industry.
- It is popular for riding, shooting, fishing and hunting. Since 1875, the 'Devon & Somerset Staghounds' have had their kennels here.

Nearby Landacre Bridge, a rather stark and solid structure, set in wild moorland.

It is interesting to enthusiasts of *Lorna Doone* (see information on page 14).

**Withypool**

- This is about 2 miles south of Exford, at 846355.
- It is a quiet little village on a wide part of the River Barle.
- It has a good road bridge, having six arches, and a small weir below.
- 'Withy' is the word used for willow stems, which are used in basket-making. The willows grow well along the river banks.

Winsford

- This is about 4 miles east of Withypool, at 906350.
- It is a delightful village on the River Exe, with fords, a village cross and interesting bridges - especially the footbridge over the Winn Brook.
- A most attractive and picturesque thatched pub - The Royal Oak Inn - is in the centre of the village. The original part of the building dates from the 1100s, when it was a farmhouse and dairy.

continued.....

Caratacus Stone

- This is about 1.5 miles southwest of Winsford, at 890336.
- In 1906, a stone-built shelter was constructed, to protect it from the weather.
- The stone is about 1 foot wide, 6 inches thick and 5.25 feet high - although 1.25 feet are below ground.
- It was mentioned in a book of 'Perambulations' of 1219-1279.
- On the north face, is the Latin inscription 'CARAACI NEPVS', meaning 'Kinsman of Caratacus'. The letters are most clearly seen when highlighted by the sun. It seems, however, that the words were inscribed many centuries after the death of Caratacus.
 - Caratacus was the King of the west of Britain, when the Romans invaded in 43 AD. He led many skirmishes against the Romans.
 - In 50 AD, he led an army against the Romans, but was defeated in Shropshire, and escaped to South Wales - the home of the Silures.
 - In 51 AD, he was eventually captured in Yorkshire, and taken to Rome with members of his family.
 - Emperor Claudius paraded him through the streets of Rome, and was so impressed with the courage of Caratacus, that his life was spared.

Winsford Hill

- The summit of this is about 1 mile northwest of the Caratacus Stone, at 876343.
- Also close to the summit are the Wambarrows.
 - These are three large, grass-covered burial mounds. Two of them are enclosed.
 - They are from the Bronze Age people of between about 2000 and 650 BC.
- There are wonderful views from here.
- *It is possible to walk across the moorland from here in many directions.*
 - *The Punchbowl is about 0.25 mile (0.5 mile return) to the east.*
 - *This 200 feet deep valley is beautifully formed, and has a spring rising within it. On calm days the water can be heard at the top of the valley.*



- *The view along the valley is towards Withycombe Farm and Dunkery Beacon.*

continued.....

Tarr Steps

- These are about 2 miles southwest of Winsford Hill, at 868322.



- Other than for disabled parking, it is necessary to park higher up the hill, above the river.
- It is then about 600 yards down to the river, descending about 150 feet, either on the road, or via a longer scenic walk.
- The name 'Tarr Steps' is misleading, as 'they' are actually an attractive clapper bridge over the River Barle, which is about 45-50 yards wide at this point.
 - Clapper bridges have a very basic design, with varying numbers of uprights - depending on the width of the water to be crossed.
 - The horizontal part of the bridge is just a slab of rock, which spans between two uprights.
 - There are many short clapper bridges on Dartmoor.
- The bridge was once considered to be prehistoric, but is now thought to be medieval.
 - Within the 60-yard structure, there are 17 spans between uprights. The largest is 8.5 feet long and 5 feet wide, and weighs about 2 tonnes.
 - The bridge is more of a raised walkway, being about 3 feet higher than the normal water level.
 - The bridge is entirely dependent on its own weight to hold together. However, in 1943, it was damaged when the river froze. There was further damage during the floods of 1952. It has been repaired by the Royal Engineers.
- It is considered to be the finest bridge of its kind in England.
- The name is possibly from the Celtic 'tochar' meaning 'causeway'.

Tarr Steps walk

- *This 2 miles loop walk starts at Tarr Steps, at 868322, and is reasonably level.*
 - *It starts from the opposite side of the river from Tarr Farm, and follows a signpost stating "1 1/2 mile circular walk".*
 - *However, the walk is actually 2 miles. The path is not marked on maps, as it is on private land, but it is a 'permitted path'.*
- *The walk follows the beautiful wooded valley of the River Barle for 1 mile upstream.*
- *It then crosses a footbridge, and returns on the opposite bank.*
 - *Having crossed the footbridge, keep to the lower footpaths by the river-side.*

continued.....

Dulverton

- This is about 4 miles southeast of Tarr Steps, at 914279.
- It is a beautifully situated small town on the River Barle, almost at Exmoor's most southern point.
- It prospered as a market town, based around its woollen industry. In 1598, there were six water-powered mills.
- It is regarded as the modern capital of Exmoor, providing services for the south of the area.
- The town, particularly the Town Hall, and surrounding areas were used as locations in the film *The Land Girls*.
- Fore Street
 - The purpose of this wide main street was to accommodate markets and fairs - particularly in the upper end, which is now called Bank Square.
 - The charter to hold a market was granted in 1306, by Edward I.
 - The Town Hall is an 1866 building, with an unusual double set of exterior steps, constructed in 1927.
- Guildhall Heritage Centre & Art Gallery
 - This is next door to - and behind - the Exmoor National Park Visitor Centre, in Fore Street.
 - It has displays of cottage life in the 1800s, together with old photographs of the Dulverton area.
- Exmoor National Park Authority headquarters
 - These are based at Exmoor House by the River Barle.
 - It was originally built in 1855 as a workhouse for up to 52 paupers. It has since been used as a maternity hospital, and for council offices.
 - Outside Exmoor House is a bronze statue of Lorna Doone, commissioned by an American.
- Woodliving
 - This is a thatched cottage on the B3222 road, about 200 yards past the church.
 - It is thought to have been built in the 1200s.
 - In the 1500s, it was used as a tannery, and the six typical Exmoor tall chimneys were added.



Overnight around Dulverton

Date.....

Today, a tiny hamlet, and Dunster, the gem of Exmoor - steeped in history and charm.

Approximate miles = 30

Today's map number - 181

Leave Dulverton east on the B3222 road.

Bury

- This is about 2 miles east of Dulverton, at 946274.
- It is an attractive small hamlet of just a few houses, with a picturesque footbridge over the River Haddeo, next to a wide, deep ford.
 - The bridge was used as a location in the film *The Land Girls*.



Dunster

- This is about 11 miles northeast of Bury, at 990435.
- It is one of the most picturesque villages on Exmoor.
- In medieval times, the woollen industry generated its wealth.
 - The height of the woollen industry was in the 1500s, and continued until the 1700s.
 - A heavy woollen cloth was produced here, called 'Dunsters'.



- At one time, it had an important port at the nearby village of Marsh Street. However, the port became full of silt, and all that remains is the beach.
- The name of 'Dunster' means a fortified hill. This obvious hill has been a stronghold since at least Saxon times - the 700s AD.
- After the Norman Conquest of 1066, William de Mohun was given 69 manors in the West Country. Dunster was made the administration headquarters.
- It is thought the hymn "All things bright and beautiful", written by Mrs C Alexander, was inspired by Dunster and its surroundings.
 - The Luttrell family were "the rich man in the castle".
 - Dunkery Beacon was "the purple headed mountain".
 - The River Avill was "the river running by".

continued.....

Dunster - 1/2 day walking tour (2 miles loop walk)

Note: Although it is recommended that Dunster Castle should not be missed, it has been assumed that this walking tour will be started in the village parking area. For those definitely visiting Dunster Castle, it may be best to park in the National Trust parking area of the castle, and start the walking tour from there.

Otherwise: Start at the parking area, at 993438, off Dunster Steep, which is the A396 road - off the A39 road.

- **Pottery Kiln**
 - This is accessed from the higher end of the parking area.
 - Go through a gate, and follow round behind the buildings for about 200 yards.
 - The kiln was used between about 1750 and 1850, and has been recently restored.
 - It is possibly the only simple updraft kiln left in the country, of the type used by potters. It is about 10 feet in diameter, and 16 feet high. It has a large conical brick chimney, and four vents in the roof.

Return to the parking area.

- **Conygar Tower** (to be seen on Conygar Hill, facing the parking area)
 - This 1755 tower was supposedly built as a landmark for ships, but is regarded merely as a folly.
 - The name is from the medieval 'coney garth', meaning 'rabbit warren'.

Turn left up Dunster Steep, and after the National Park Visitor Centre fork right up The Ball - following the winding lane around.

An archway leads you into the original Benedictine Priory precincts.

- **Tithe Barn** (on the left)
 - This 1500s barn was used for storing 'rents', mainly wool, from tenants of the monks. The normal rent was 10% of the annual produce.
- **Village Priory Gardens** (through the first gate in the wall, on the left)
 - These walled gardens were originally the kitchen gardens for the castle.
 - The first garden is an open recreation area, and has a gate through to a second garden, with herbaceous borders and some of the original trees.
 - They were purchased by villagers for the benefit of the community in 1980.

Leave the Village Priory Gardens, by the same gate, and turn through the next gate in the wall, on the left.

- **Memorial Garden**
 - Monks grew herbs here. It is now a garden dedicated to the men of Dunster, who have died for their country.
- **Dovecote** (opposite the Memorial Garden)
 - The Luttrell family of Dunster Castle purchased this in 1539.
 - It has 500 nest holes, and the pigeons provided the monks with fresh meat in the winter.
 - This circular building, with its revolving central ladder was restored in 1989, with original woodwork.
- **The Old Priory** (on the left)
 - It was the lodging house of the monks, and is now a private house.

An archway leads you out of the original Priory precincts.

If you wish to make a small detour of about 600 yards return to see the Butter Cross, turn right into St Georges Street, and walk up the hill.

Afterwards, return to the same point.

continued.....

Dunster walking tour (continued)

- **Butter Cross** (on the right, up St Georges Street)
 - This once stood in the market place, at the foot of Castle Hill. Dairy produce was sold beside it.
 - In about 1825, it was moved when the wooden shops, called 'The Shambles', were demolished.

Walk through the lychgate into the churchyard.

- A lych is the old word for a body. A roofed lychgate was a place to rest with the coffin, before a funeral service.
- **Priory Church of St George**
 - The original date of the church is in doubt, but a small part dates from the 1170s. The tower was added, and major work was carried out on most of the building in the 1440s. Further construction continued to the end of the 1400s.
 - The building fulfilled three functions - a parish church, a priory church, and a private chapel for the Luttrell family.
 - This has a wonderful, richly-carved, fan-vaulted rood screen, which is the longest in England. It was built in 1499 to screen the parishioners from the Benedictine monks.
 - A massive brass chandelier hangs over the central (monk's) area, with unusual (and rather incongruous) wrought iron work above it.
 - At the east end of the south aisle, there are three wooden chests, dating from the 1100s and 1200s.
 - The east end of the church is still owned by the Luttrell family, and has various tombs and monuments.
 - The clock carillon plays a different melody each day, and carols at Christmas - including the 'Dunster Carol' ("I hear along our street/ Pass the minstrel throngs./ Hark! they play so sweet/ on their hautboys Christmas songs".)

Leave the churchyard from either of the two south exits, and turn right into Church Street.

- **Spears Cross**
 - This crossroads and public house is thought to have been named after William Sper, who lived in a house here in 1486.
 - Miniature cottages can be seen in the rear garden.

Continue over the crossroads, into West Street. Turn left into Mill Lane.

- **Wesleyan Chapel and School**
 - This private house is immediately on the left corner of Mill Lane, now called The Old School House.
 - It was built as a Wesleyan Day School in 1825, and re-built in 1855. The obvious church-type windows can be seen at the rear of the property.
- **Cottages** (opposite The Old School House)
 - These were originally built to house the local poor.

Continue to the end of Mill Lane, following the leat, which carries water to power the mill.

- **Dunster Water Mill**
 - This was built on the site of an original mill, which was mentioned in the Domesday Book.
 - It is a working flour mill, built in 1680, with two overshot wheels.



continued.....

Dunster walking tour (continued)

- **Dunster Water Mill** (continued)
 - It was rebuilt between 1779 and 1782, and continued to work for most of the next 180 years until 1962. In 1979, it was refurbished, and has continued to work since.
 - The refurbishment was carried out with traditional methods, using timber and metal, and has produced a very quiet milling operation.
 - Also inside the mill, is a small museum of associated machinery.
 - The grounds are very pleasant, with a 1700s footbridge over the River Avill. It is possible to walk from here to Dunster Castle, along a footpath.
 - This is a National Trust property and opening times should be checked on 01643 821759. It is usually open from 10-30am, but generally not open on Fridays.
 - The milling operation is still a private business, and even National Trust members pay the admission charge.

From the Mill, return along Mill Lane for 100 yards, and take the path signposted 'Pack Horse Bridge' to the left. At the end of path (called Mill Gardens), bear left (along Park Street), to Gallox Bridge.

- **Gallox Bridge**
 - This packhorse bridge used to be called Doddebridge in the 1300s. The name was changed in the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547), when gallows were erected at the crossroads, 100 yards on the other side of the bridge.



From Gallox Bridge, return up Park Street, and then turn right into West Street, which was the old area of homes for manual workers in the wool trade.

- **Thatched Cottage** (on the right, in West Street)
 - This cottage is one of the oldest in the village.
 - When it was built, it had no chimney - the thatched roof allowing the smoke out. The chimney was added in the 1500s or 1600s.

Continue along West Street. At Spears Cross bear right into the driveway to Dunster Castle.

continued.....

Dunster walking tour (continued)

- **Dunster Castle**

- This dramatic castle dominates the village, situated on top of a wooded hill.
- It was founded in 1070 by the de Mohun family. It has been altered many times over the centuries, but the 1200s gatehouse has survived.



- The Luttrell family lived here from 1376 until 1950, and in 1976 it was given to The National Trust.
- The castle was altered in the 1600s. In 1645, it was besieged and held by the troops of King Charles I, during the Civil War. At this time, many defences were demolished, but the house survived.
- It was remodelled in 1868-72, and the internal features are now mainly Victorian - although some 1600s plasterwork and an oak staircase can still be seen.
- There are fine, landscaped gardens and parkland in 28 acres, with good opportunities to walk.
- Also in the grounds, is the national collection of strawberry trees (*Arbutus*). These are slow-growing evergreen shrubs, which have strawberry-shaped fruit in late autumn.
- This is a National Trust property and opening times should be checked on 01643 821314. It is usually open from 11:00am, but generally not open on Thursdays and Fridays.

Leave Dunster Castle across a staggered crossroads, and down the steep hill (not named, but called Castle Hill).

At the bottom of the hill, High Street is in front of you. Look left into West Street, and you will see:

- **The Old Nunnery** (on the right, in West Street)
 - This was built by the Abbot and Convent of Cleeve, after being given the land in 1346.
 - It was originally called the Chantry of St Laurence, and was used as a guesthouse for the Priory.
 - The face-hung slates are an interesting feature of the building, which is now separated into three cottages.
 - It seems, regardless of the name, it was never a nunnery.

Walk along High Street, which was the old area of homes for wealthy merchants.

continued.....

Dunster walking tour (continued)

- **High Street**
 - At the height of the village's woollen industry, this wide street held markets, with stall-holders buying and selling. This market was commonly called The Shambles.
 - Cloth traders, weavers, spinners, and dyers all congregated here, together with their packhorses.
 - **Dunster Dolls Museum** (on the left)
 - This is in the upper floor of the Memorial Hall, in High Street - on the left of the Post Office.
 - It houses over 900 dolls from many countries and periods.
 - **Yarn Market** (on the left)
 - This was built in 1609 by George Luttrell.
 - The belfry in the roof was where the start of the day's trading was announced.
 - Cloth was laid out on the top of the oak-topped walls.
 - When Dunster Castle was under siege in 1645, a cannonball from the castle forced a hole through a roof beam. The hole can still be seen. The building was restored after the siege, in 1647, as indicated by the date on the weathervane, above the belfry.
 - **Luttrell Arms Hotel** (on the right)
 - This was built in about 1500 as a guest house of the abbots of Cleeve Abbey.
 - After the dissolution of Cleeve Abbey in 1536, the building became The Ship Inn.
 - In 1645, during the Civil War, it was used as the headquarters for the Roundheads, for the 160 days of the siege of Dunster Castle.
 - Stone from the castle defences was used to build the entrance porch.
 - It became the Luttrell Arms Hotel in 1799.
 - It is an interesting building with ancient features in the hall and yard. There is also a raised 'secret' garden, accessed from above the ground floor.

After the Luttrell Arms Hotel, continue up High Street, and round into Dunster Steep, back down to the parking area.

Overnight around Dunster / Minehead

Date.....

Travelling day

- This page may be used to make notes about your travelling arrangements for your onward journey.
- At *itforit*, we hope you have enjoyed your itinerary, and that you will try another.
- If you have any comments about the itinerary (good or bad), please let us know.