



Devon's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

This leaflet is part of a series of themed trails in Devon's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); helping you get out there, enjoy, and learn more about the landscape around you.

Trail themes include

- Coast in Conflict,
- Man and the Landscape,
- Trade and Settlement and
- A Colourful Landscape.

Have a look at these websites for further leaflets in the series, and ideas for other ways of enjoying yourself out and about!

See www.northdevon-aonb.org.uk,
www.southdevonaonb.org.uk and
www.discoverdevon.com

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is the Government's designation for Britain's finest landscapes; there are 40 in England and Wales. Together with Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, Devon's 5 AONBs cover 35% of the county. AONBs share a common commitment to secure sustainable living landscapes. Each AONB has been designated for special attention because of the quality of their flora, fauna, cultural and historical heritage, as well as beautiful scenery.

Their care has been entrusted to local authorities, organisations, community groups, individuals who live and work in them and those who value them.

The National Trust own and manage extensive tracts of coastline along the North Devon coast including the section between Bull Point and Lee, which it manages for wildlife and access for people to enjoy.

Lee Valley and Bull Point

- **Start/Finish:** Lee Cove car park
- **Distance:** 5 miles (8 km) ■ **Circular walk:** Yes
- **Grade:** Moderate to Strenuous
- **Terrain:** Coast path and public footpath. Some rocky, uneven, slippery and muddy patches
- **Obstacles and steep gradients:** 6 flights of steps; 14 stiles (4 can be avoided); 3 steep ascents; 2 steep descents
- **Accessibility:** This route is unsuitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs
- **Public transport:** Bus service Filers Travel 35 from Ilfracombe. For further details contact Devon Traveline 0871 200 22 33 or www.traveline.info
- **Toilets:** Public toilets 75m up footpath along route from car park
- **Parking:** Lee Cove Car Park. Pay and Display/honesty box
- **Other Facilities:** Public payphone on right, 700m back up through Lee village from Cove car park
- **Accommodation:** Please contact Ilfracombe Tourist Information Centre 01271 863001 www.ilfracombe-tourism.co.uk or www.discoverdevon.com
- **OS map:** Explorer 139 **Grid ref:** SS 480464
- **Countryside Code:** When walking in the AONB always follow the Countryside Code, which is dedicated to helping members of the public respect, protect and enjoy the countryside. Follow the link for more information www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk





Colourful Landscape

Devon offers a glorious tapestry of colour throughout the seasons.

From the dazzle of its coast and the inspiring open cliffs and heaths, to its richly wooded valleys and the patchwork of rolling field and pasture, this beautiful county offers a feast for the eyes.

It is a land of lush greens, in more shades than you would think possible. The exquisite lightness of spring's uncurling leaves, the deep greens of late summer's shaggy hedgerows, and the quiet beauty of winter meadows are just some of the delicate and delicious tones on view. Amidst all of this, a ploughed field here and there reveals the rich red or deep brown of the fertile soil, and as summer fades, the autumn colours light up the land.

Down by the sea, the bright blue and fresh white of the waves invigorate the senses, while up on the cliffs, purple heather mixes deliciously with the yellow gorse. Drop down into the valleys, and the peaceful woods are thronged with wildlife, while Devon's hedgebanks are a glorious riot of wildflowers in spring and summer.

Artists, whether poets, painters, sculptors or musicians have always been drawn here, seeking to capture the rich essence of the county. Yet colour is not confined to the landscape here. Charming villages, seasonal traditions, quirky place names, and even quirkier individuals all contribute to Devon's vibrant character.

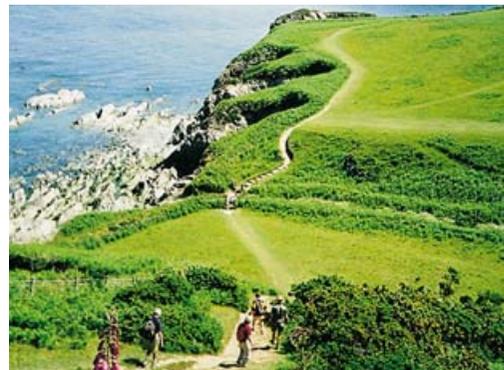
These guides introduce you to a few of Devon's larger than life characters. Some have lived within the law, and some beyond it, so be prepared for tales of smuggling, skulduggery, and eccentric antics!



Directions



1. From entrance to car park **(1)**, turn sharp left to follow footpath up valley along Tarmac lane, then between fences alongside pasture.
2. At the end of the field **(2)**, turn right over stile following 'Public Footpath' fingerpost. Cross further stile, then take left hand footpath following stream **(3)**.
3. Just beyond the next stile turn right signed 'Public Footpath to Damage Barton'.
4. At top of the hill **(4)**, follow footpath across field, over the road, and on through hilltop fields, following 'Public Footpath' signs and yellow waymarker arrows.



5. After 600m, ignore footpath signed to right, and follow yellow waymarker down slope to the left. Turn right through gate, then left back onto track, following 'Public Footpath' sign.
6. Skirt around right side of Damage Barton, and follow drive. At a left hand bend after 250m, turn right at gate and stile.
7. Follow path along right hand field edges **(5)**, then down steps **(6)** and left around Yarde Farmhouse. Turn right in the yard, following a 'Public Footpath' sign across small field.
8. At the houses, follow the little cut through to the left signed 'Footpath to Morteheo'. Beyond the complex at Easewell, go straight on through campsite.
9. At end of camping field, turn right through gate and along the lane **(7,8)** to Bull Point Lighthouse **(9)**. (Alternatively, turn left at field end to visit Morteheo. Refreshments in village include two pubs).
10. At the lighthouse turn right signed 'Lee 1½m'. Follow the coast path along the cliffs for 1¼ miles **(10)** until you drop down to road.
11. Turn left down the hill to Lee. At the bottom turn right to return to car park.



Points of Interest

1. Tucked away, and awkward to get to for the law enforcers, Lee was a perfect spot for smuggling activity. The illicit cargoes would be landed here on moonless nights. Then, the smugglers would transport the contraband inland using trains of donkeys, their hooves wrapped in rags to prevent any noise.

Although the smugglers often got clean away, there are records of government seizures of brandy, wine, silks, and salt at Lee, found buried beneath the sands and hidden in villagers' homes.

Lee was also famous for its wrecking activities and many an unfortunate ship ran aground on the treacherous beach, mistaking the small harbour for that of nearby Ilfracombe.

2. The valley at Lee is known as 'Fuchsia Valley'. The vivid red, pink and purple bells of the fuchsia can be seen in bloom here, there, and everywhere during the summer months. A stretch of fuchsia bushes stand to the left of the path here, just before you cross the stile into the field.

3. Borough Woods is a tremendously rich and varied woodland. The pointed oval leaves of the smooth limbed beech trees growing here have an almost translucent pale green when young. They darken through the summer and turn a burnished bronze come the autumn.

Other trees in these woods include alder and ash, evergreen holly and the silvery barked hazel. You may also

spot sweet chestnut, with its long serrated leaves and spiky seed cases. This woodland lost many of its oaks to the demand for timber during the two world wars, but some stately specimens remain.

Not content with adorning gardens, the glossy leaved Rhododendron has, like the fuchsia, jumped the garden gate into the wild. It thrives here in Borough Valley, producing massed heads of glamorous purple flowers which light up the scene. Unfortunately, this woody shrub also shades out native plants. It is poisonous to many creatures, sours the land, and spreads like wildfire. Like many of our 'problem' plants, it was introduced to this country by adventurous Victorian gardeners.

4. A glance back across the valley from here offers fine views of the conifer plantations on the opposite slope. The dark green areas are Sitka Spruce, a



fast growing timber tree from North America. In the midst of the spruce grows a large stand of Larch.

The larch is a lighter green than the spruce, especially in the spring when its delicate new growth emerges. It is also one of the few conifer trees to lose its leaves in the winter, and in the autumn its needles turn a beautiful light golden colour.

5. On the right just beyond the stile is a wonderful example of 'stone hedging', the traditional art of facing a bank with stone to retain and support it. Lichen forms a beautiful sage green coating on the stones here. Lichens, which are actually a combination of a fungus and an algae living together, cover almost 10% of the earth's land surface.

6. Beside the shallow flight of steps here, grow the bright pink blooms of Red Campion. This tall stemmed flower has pointed oval leaves, and deeply notched petals.

Herb Robert, another pink petalled flower, also grows here. Shorter than the

campion, with smaller blooms and finely cut leaves, it forms low clusters.

7. Alongside the lane down to Bull Point grows Alexanders. It has dark glossy leaves shaped a little like overgrown celery tops and produces massed heads of clustered yellow flowers in the spring. It was originally brought to Britain by the Romans as a vegetable, and was being grown to eat as recently as the 18th century.

8. Gorse grows thickly on this hilltop, filling the air with the coconut smell of its flowers on warm days. You can usually find some gorse in bloom at almost any time of year, which accounts for the convenient old folk saying, 'when the gorse is in flower, it's kissing season'!



9. Bull Point Lighthouse was built in 1879, partly in response to the "barbarous conduct of lawless wreckers". After luring a ship onto the rocks with deliberately misplaced lights, the wreckers would then plunder its cargo. The coming of the lighthouse meant that ships at last had reliable information to help them steer clear of danger.



10. The sheltered nook of Sandy Cove was a look out for local smuggler Hannibal Richards. Once a member of the notorious Cruel Coppinger's gang in Cornwall, he moved to Lee for the quiet life. He could not resist the lure of his old profession, however, and soon returned to crime. His vantage point was a cave in the cliff behind the beach, now covered by a rockfall.

Refreshments

This establishment specialises in local food and is close to the route:

Grampus Inn, Lee

01271 862906

www.thegrampus-inn.co.uk

Cosy and characterful pub serving real ales, including their own Grampus lager and Grampus EX34 bitter. Full food menu uses local and organic produce where possible. Cream teas served in the garden.

