

# The Exe Valley Way

A river valley walk between source and sea along the beautiful River Exe

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# The Exe Valley Way

A river valley walk between source  
and sea along the beautiful River Exe

A Guide for northbound and southbound walkers with a sketch map for each stage.

The Exe Valley Way is a long distance route for walkers exploring the length of this beautiful river valley. It is almost 80km/50miles in length, stretching from the South West Coast Path National Trail on the Exe Estuary to the village of Exford on the high land of Exmoor National Park. An additional 12km/7.5 miles route links Exford to Exe Head, the source of the River Exe, high upon the moor. Most of the route follows beside the River Exe. At the northern end of the route, the route follows the River Barle, a tributary of the River Exe, before rejoining the Exe at Exford.

The Exe Valley Way can be divided up into a series of 10 stages, most of which can be walked comfortably by most walkers in half a day. The route should be easily followed with the help of the sketch maps and route description inside this booklet and by following the Exe Valley Way waymarker signs along the route. The Exe Valley Way waymarker signs, as shown below, are located along the entire length of the route but with a slight variation of sign materials used inside the Exmoor National Park. The route is signed both northbound and southbound.



Exe Valley Way Waymarkers

The majority of the route follows footpaths and quiet country lanes where there is little traffic but there are brief stretches of busy roads in Exeter and Tiverton. Care should be taken at all times when walking on roads.

Whilst this booklet does give a broad outline of the waymarked route, it is emphasised that it would also be helpful to take an OS map along with you, particularly for the footpath sections.

## OS Maps which cover the Exe Valley Way:

### Explorer No. 114

Exeter & the Exe Valley (1:25 000)

### Explorer OL9


Exmoor (1:25 000)

## The Exe Valley

The Exe Valley is a beautiful and relatively unspoilt area of the Devon countryside. The River Exe, rising on Exmoor at a height of over 1450feet/442metres and within 5 miles of the Bristol Channel, then bends its way along an ever-changing route of over 60 miles to reach the sea on the South Coast of Devon at Exmouth.

From the fast-flowing waters and steeply-wooded valleys of Exmoor and the area north of Tiverton, to the more gently flowing and meandering waters leading down to the coast, the Exe Valley offers an immense variety of flora and fauna as it flows through peaceful villages, busy market towns and the cathedral city of Exeter.

## Key to Maps

- Start/End of Stage
- Exe Valley Way
-  Bus Links

## Sustainable Travel Links

Frequent and regular bus services operate near to the route between Stages 1 and 7 providing an opportunity to plan 'Ride and Stride' options. For up to date bus times call Traveline on **0871 200 22 33** or visit [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

## Walk North, or South - in stages....

Stages of the Exe Valley Way are shown in the following pages and directions for walkers are given for Northbound and Southbound journeys with map for each stage.

The stages are:

**Stage 1** 13km/8miles

Starcross to Exeter

**Stage 2** 9km/5.6miles

Exeter to Brampford Speke

**Stage 3** 7km/4.3miles

Brampford Speke to Thorverton

**Stage 4** 6km/4miles

Thorverton to Bickleigh

**Stage 5** 6.5km/4miles

Bickleigh to Tiverton

**Stage 6** 12.5km/7.8miles

Tiverton to Bampton

**Stage 7** 6km/4miles

Bampton to Brushford

**Stage 8** 11km/7miles

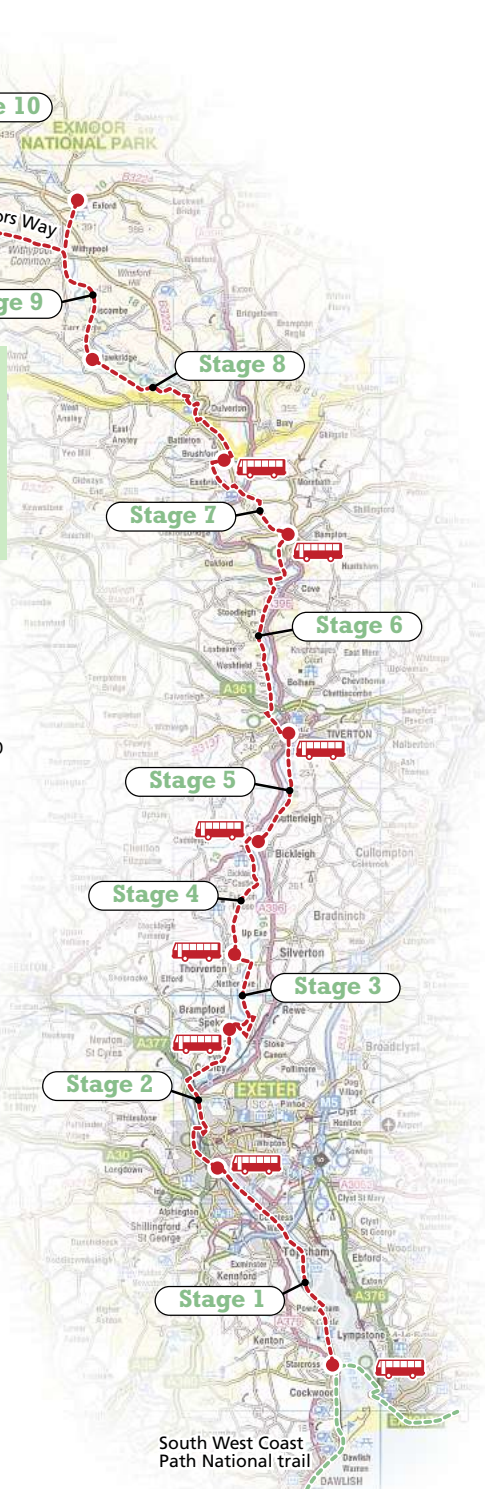
Brushford to Hawkridge

**Stage 9** 13km/8miles

Hawkridge to Exford

**Stage 10** 19km/12miles

Additional route to Exe Head via Withypool





## Stage 1

# Starcross to Exeter

13km/8 miles

Starcross is a large village situated halfway between Exeter and Dawlish. The village offers fantastic views across the Exe Estuary, an internationally important site designated for its special birdlife. Starcross was one of the villages along Brunel's famously ill-fated 'Atmospheric Railway', and the location of the only remaining pumping station (now the Starcross Youth Club).

This Stage may be divided into 3 sections:

- The southern section gives superb views over the estuary and surrounding parkland and marshes; the ideal walk for the lover of birds (estuary and marshes), deer (in Powderham Castle's grounds) and trains.
- The central section is an attractive rural walk between marshes and England's oldest pound lock canal (built 1560's) plus glimpses of the estuary are seen just beyond the canal.
- The northern section is more urban nearer the Canal Basin and Quayside but most of the length remains green. It is, in any event, a pleasant walk - watch out for views of the cathedral standing out over the city.

## Facilities

Starcross has most facilities: frequent buses and trains, pubs, shops, toilets and car park, so of course, has Exeter. Elsewhere on this stretch there are just two excellent canal side pubs, at the Turf Lock and at Double Lock.

Exeter has a Tourist Information Centre on the Quayside.

For bus times between Starcross and Exeter call the Traveline on **0871 200 22 33**.

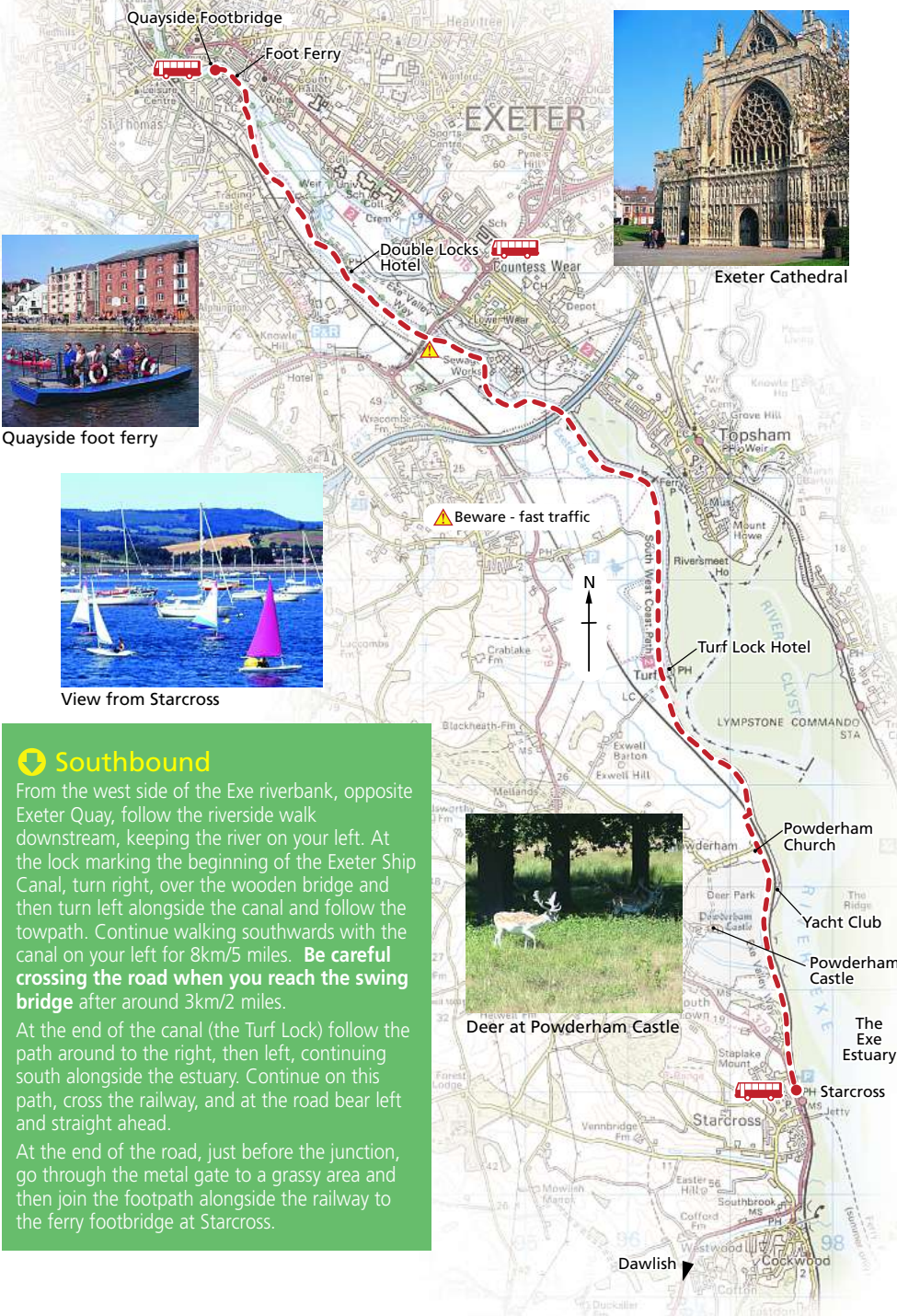
### Northbound

From the footbridge leading to the ferry, walk past the toilets to the footpath alongside the railway, leave the grassy area by the metal gate and take the minor road which forks right, back towards the railway and estuary. Continue north.

At Powderham Church, where the road swings away from the estuary, take the footpath straight ahead. Cross the railway and continue alongside the estuary to the Turf Lock Hotel at the end point of the Exeter Canal.

At the canal keep to the towpath on the opposite side to the estuary and follow this all the way to Exeter Canal Basin (8km/5 miles). **Be careful crossing the road at the swing bridge** (after 5km/3 miles). At the Canal Basin next to the Harbour Master's Office, take the wooden bridge over the canal then go left, alongside the river.

The historic Exeter Quay soon appears on the opposite bank. That, and Exeter City Centre, may be reached by the small chain ferry or over the tall footbridge.



Quayside foot ferry



View from Starcross

**Southbound**

From the west side of the Exe riverbank, opposite Exeter Quay, follow the riverside walk downstream, keeping the river on your left. At the lock marking the beginning of the Exeter Ship Canal, turn right, over the wooden bridge and then turn left alongside the canal and follow the towpath. Continue walking southwards with the canal on your left for 8km/5 miles. **Be careful crossing the road when you reach the swing bridge** after around 3km/2 miles.

At the end of the canal (the Turf Lock) follow the path around to the right, then left, continuing south alongside the estuary. Continue on this path, cross the railway, and at the road bear left and straight ahead.

At the end of the road, just before the junction, go through the metal gate to a grassy area and then join the footpath alongside the railway to the ferry footbridge at Starcross.

## Stage 2

# Exeter to Brampford Speke

9km/5½ miles

## Description

The southern end of this stage is alongside or close to the river in a semi-urban but pleasant environment.

The central section is urban, alongside a busy road, but with views of Exeter's rural surroundings just across the river.

The northern part is along rural paths in the Exe Valley, mostly on the valley bottom but occasionally rising to give fantastic views across the valley.

## Facilities

Exeter has all the facilities you would expect from a city and there are pubs at Cowley Bridge and in Brampford Speke.

The road section between St Davids Station and Cowley Bridge follows a bus route and very occasional buses go to Brampford Speke. Check with the Traveline on **0871 200 22 33** for bus times.

## Northbound

From the Exe riverbank opposite Exeter Quay, take the riverside walk, keeping the river on your right. Follow the path under the road bridges and at the weir turn left on the footpath and cycleway, following the signs to Exwick. Keep on this path, going right at one junction, to a road bridge.

Turn right, cross the bridges (the second is the Exe) and the level crossing, then right through the overflow car park to arrive at St. David's Station. At the station entrance, turn left to the pedestrian crossing and climb St. Clement's Lane to another pedestrian crossing. Cross and go up Howell Road opposite. At the top cross New North Road and turn left downhill, continuing on the pavement for 2km (1.5 miles).

At the roundabout cross Wrefords Drive then **carefully** cross the main road (Tiverton Road) to the Crediton Road (i.e. turn left towards Crediton). Cross the railway then **with great care and keeping well in**, cross the bridges over the rivers Creedy and Exe.

Take the first road on the right and at the sharp left bend go straight ahead through the lodge gates. Keep right at the fork, take the waymarked diversion round the farmyard, then keep close to the fence to a copse. Walk through, around to the right, then continue on the track straight ahead.

Leave the track where it swings sharp right and take the signed path which goes left ahead up over a field. Cross two fields diagonally then continue ahead on a track which becomes a surfaced lane.

On reaching a wider road, bear right then continue ahead and climb the hill into the village of Brampford Speke. The village pub (the Agricultural Inn) is ahead on the left, the church down a lane on the right.





## 🚌 Southbound

Leave the Agricultural Inn behind and on your right and take the road out of the village towards Exeter. At the bottom of the hill fork left at the road signpost after the bridge then soon after fork left at the road signpost after the bridge then soon after fork right. This lane becomes a track. Leave diagonally to the left just before a barn, crossing two fields.

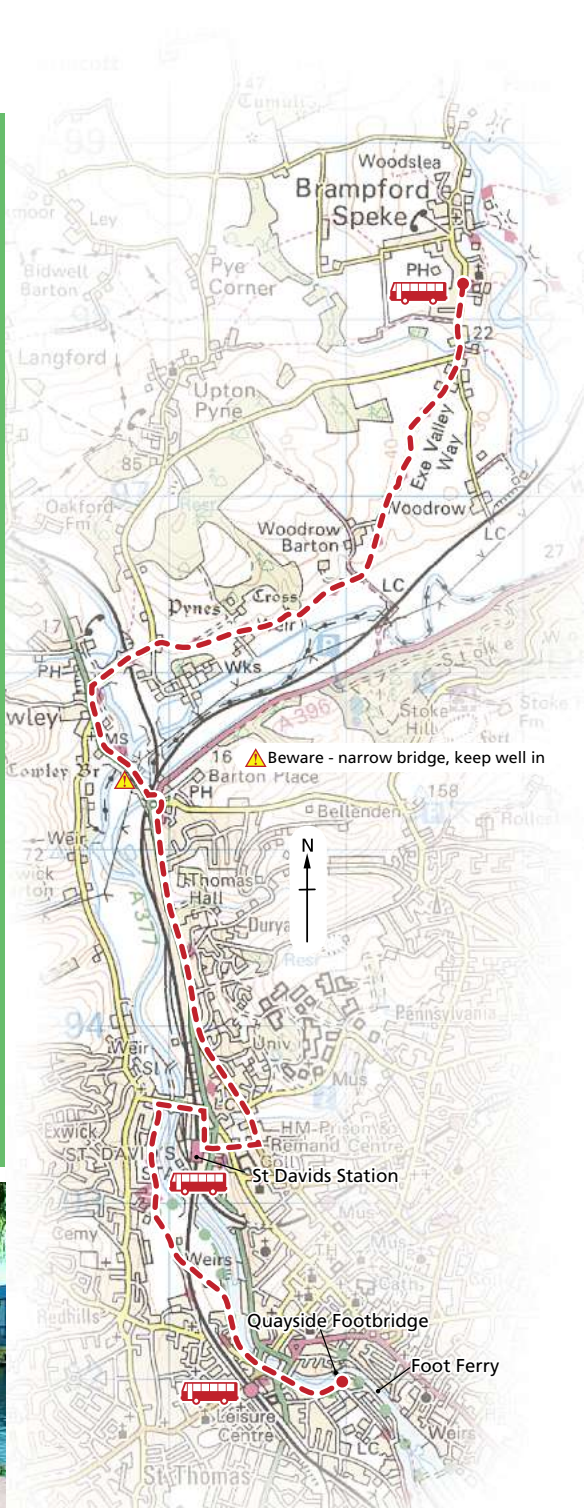
Descend to a junction of tracks, taking the one ahead with the fence to its right. Where it turns left bear right into a copse. After the copse keep to the fence on the right, take the waymarked diversion round the farmyard and on to a track. Pass through the lodge gates and bear left on the road ahead. At the main road turn left - **take great care and keep well in** when crossing the river bridges of the Creedy and Exe. At the roundabout carefully cross the Tiverton Road, then Wrefords Drive, and continue on the pavement alongside the road towards the City Centre (i.e. turn right at the roundabout). Keep on for 2km (1.5 miles) until you reach a pedestrian crossing at Howell Road. Use this to cross the road, then go down Howell Road. Cross the road at the bottom, go down St. Clement's Lane, cross the next road and go to St. David's Station.

Turn right and pass in front of the station then bear left, taking the path through the overflow carpark. Turn left, cross the level crossing and the two bridges (the first is the Exe), then take the footpath and cycleway on the left, signed for Exe Bridges. Keep to this path, bearing left at the junction.

Arriving at a weir, descent to the riverside path, pass under the road bridges and keep on the path next to the river to arrive opposite Exeter Quay.



Exeter Quayside



### Stage 3

## Brampford Speke to Thorverton

7km/4½ miles

This stage includes two options, a direct route and a diversion to take in the village of Stoke Canon. Parts of the diversion through Stoke Canon can flood in winter.

### Description

This stage follows the flat valley floor of the Exe, the valley being wide here. The route is partly on riverside and other paths, partly on very minor roads. The medieval Burrow Cross is of interest and in spring and summer wild flowers are abundant. On the riverside, butterflies such as the Marbled White are common. At dusk, barn owls may be glimpsed.

### Facilities

Brampford Speke has a pub and very occasional buses. Stoke Canon has a pub, shop and a regular bus service. Thorverton has pubs, shops, a car park and less frequent buses. There is another pub and regular bus service about ½ kilometre (¼ mile) from Latchmoor Green.

The regular buses on the A396 create the possibility of starting and finishing at a number of places close to the route.

Check with the Traveline on **0871 200 22 33** for bus times.



Views across the Exe Valley

### ⬆ Northbound

Take the lane towards the church, then the public footpath through the churchyard. Continue on the gravel path to a lane. Turn right then bear left downhill to the footbridge over the Exe. (On the far side the diversion to Stoke Canon commences - see diversion below).

For the direct route, take the path which bears to the left, and then bear round to the right. At an old gate (with a new kissing gate to the side) continue ahead, next to a hedge and on to a copse, bearing slightly left to the riverside.

Follow the Exe to a track which leads to a junction of tracks and turn left. (The Stoke Canon diversion rejoins here). At a T-junction turn right, then take the next side track on the left. At the end turn left then immediately right, into a field. Aim for the left end of the hedge on the far side and the hills in the distance. Cross the stile, which is quite hidden but is in the corner of the field just after the bend in the stream, go ahead then keep to the left of the hedge to a gateway.

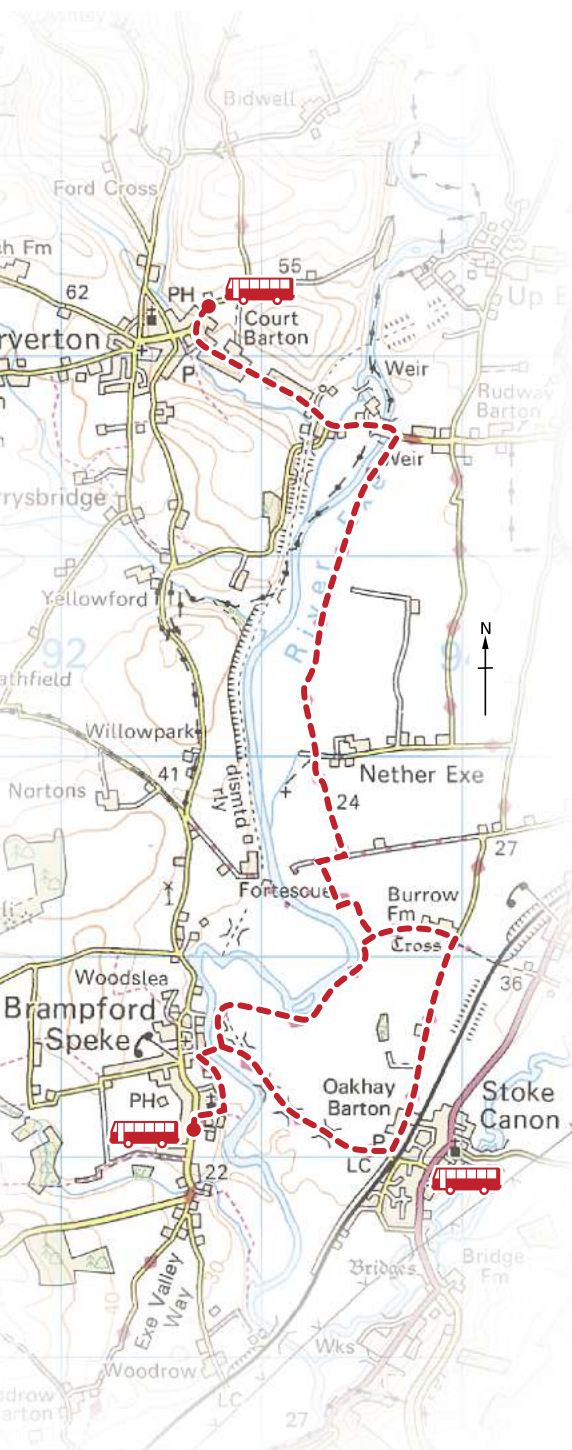
Go through a stile then cross the next large field in the same direction to where a fence meets the banks of the Exe. Continue alongside the Exe to a road. Turn left, across the river, and follow into the village of Thorverton.

### Diversion via Stoke Canon

Cross the footbridge and turn right over the field and over another footbridge to go on, and then alongside, the old Exe Valley railway line. At the metal gates go left along the field edge to a road. Cross the level crossing for Stoke Canon village.

To continue north, return to the level crossing, cross and take the lane next to Oakhay Barton. Turn left at the medieval stone Burrow Cross to rejoin the direct route.





## Southbound

From Thorverton take the main road towards Exeter. Immediately after crossing the Exe, take the footpath on the right, next to the river. At the fence bear left away from the river, aiming for a stile to the left of the two tall trees. Cross, then go through the gateway in the hedge ahead.

Continue ahead, going left of the wet area at the end, to a stile. Cross the next field, aiming for a gate in the middle of the hedge ahead. Go on to the track, then take the track to the right with the white bar gates.

At the end turn right, then left at the next junction. At another junction turn right (or left to take the diversion - see below), which soon leads to the Exe. Follow the riverside then, at the second stile, where the river turns to the right, continue straight ahead, away from the river to go alongside a copse then a newly-planted hedge to a gate, and through to a second gate. Go through, then bear round to the left and then on to a path which leads to a footbridge over the Exe.

Cross the bridge and at the top of the path turn left through a gate to a path which leads into Brampford Speke churchyard. At the lane turn right to the junction. The village pub is a little way to the right.

### Diversion via Stoke Canon

Turn left instead of right at the junction of tracks reached above and proceed to Burrow Cross. Turn right for Stoke Canon, crossing the level crossing for the village.

To continue south, take the footpath opposite the level crossing. At the metal gates go right, partly on, partly alongside, the old Exe Valley railway. Leave this for a footbridge then head for a larger one and turn left to cross the River Exe to Brampford Speke where the direct route is rejoined.



Brampford Speke Church

## Stage 4

# Thorverton to Bickleigh

6km/4 miles

This stage is along quiet country lanes and is also suitable for cycling.

## Description

The southern half of this stage climbs high up the sides of the Exe Valley giving superb views over the valley and beyond, and as far as the sea on a clear day.

The northern half follows the valley floor. The floor is relatively flat and the sides make the valley quite a distinct feature here. The route passes Bickleigh Castle, a medieval fortified manor house. The impressive Bickleigh Bridge over the Exe is rumoured by some, to be the spot where Simon and Garfunkel were inspired to write their classic song 'Bridge over Troubled Water'!

The villages at either end, Thorverton and Bickleigh, are both very picturesque.

## Facilities

There is regular bus service between Exeter and Tiverton which passes Bickleigh; some buses divert into Thorverton. There are pubs and shops in the villages at both ends and there is also a car park at Thorverton. Check with the Traveline on **0871 200 22 33** for bus times.

**Make Use of the Buses.** Frequent and regular bus services operate near the walking route on Stages 1 to 6 providing opportunities to plan route options. Check with Traveline on **0871 200 22 33** for accurate bus times, or visit [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk).





## ↑ Northbound

From the small green in the centre of Thorverton take the minor road to the right, which climbs gently from the main road. Keep on the lane, going left at the first farm track, climbing then descending to a crossroads.

Go straight across at the crossroads, climbing steadily then, keeping on the lane, descend steeply back to the floor of the Exe Valley. Pass Bickleigh Castle, and at the road junction continue ahead. **Be wary of traffic on this stretch.**

Cross the bridge to the main road at Bickleigh.

**Take care** crossing the Exe over Bickleigh Bridge then fork left down the minor road to Bickleigh Mill (Devonshire's Centre), Bickleigh village shop is straight on behind the Mill.

## ↓ Southbound

With your back to Bickleigh Mill, turn right to the main road. **Be wary of traffic on this stretch.** Cross the Exe on Bickleigh Bridge, then immediately fork left (signposted Crediton). Cross the next bridge, then fork left on a minor road (signposted Bickleigh Castle) and go along the lane past the castle.

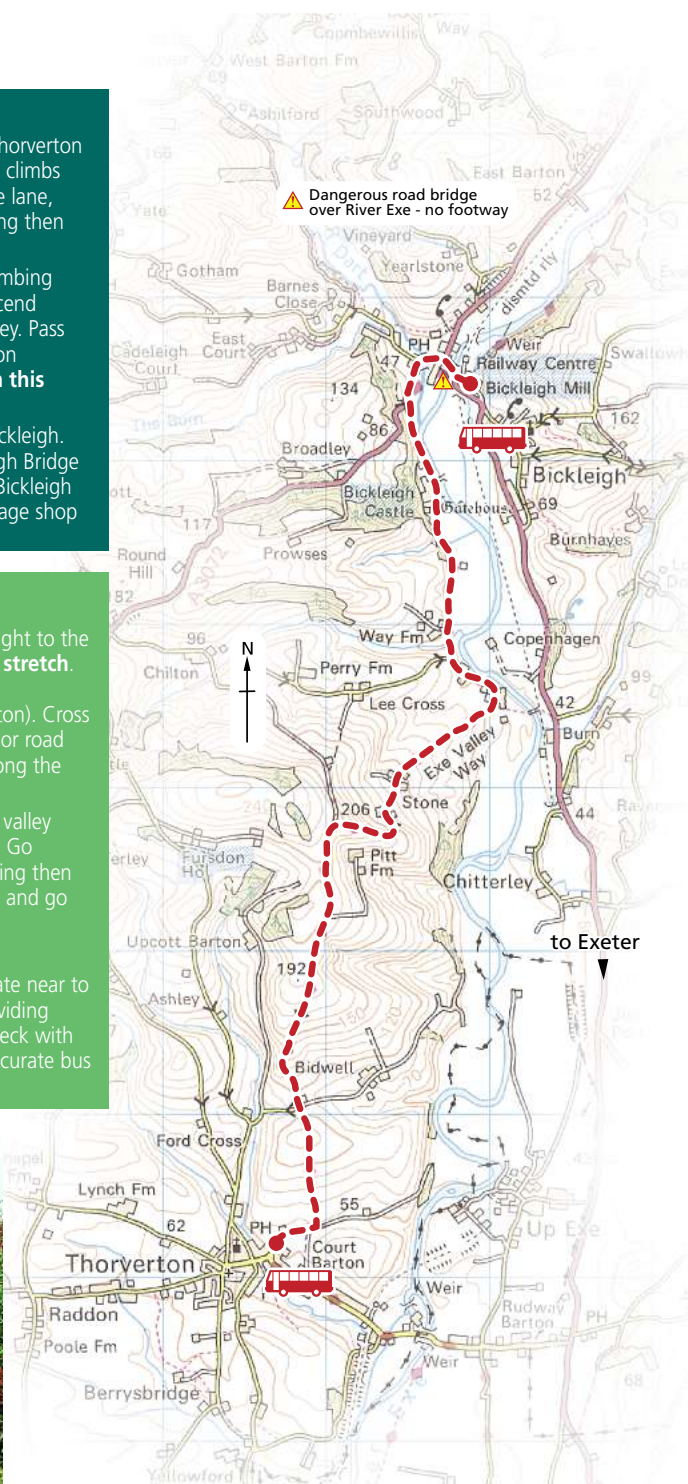
Keep to the lane as it climbs out of the valley bottom, then descends to a crossroads. Go straight across at the cross roads, climbing then descending bear right at the farm track and go on into the village of Thorverton.

Make use of the Buses!

Frequent and regular bus services operate near to the walking route on Stages 1 to 5 providing opportunities to plan route options. Check with the Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 for accurate bus times.



Typical congestion in the Exe Valley





## Stage 5

# Bickleigh to Tiverton

6km/4 miles

## Description

This stage closely follows the east bank of the River Exe, much of it through woodland. These rich woodlands of oak and ash are characterised by violets, early purple orchid and Indian balsam, up to 3m high with pinkie red flowers. Bickleigh village is also very picturesque.



Bickleigh Castle

## Facilities

Bickleigh has pubs and a village shop plus the Devonshire's Centre which is a large craft store and gift shop with a café. Tiverton has all essential facilities including shops, pubs, toilets and a Tourist Information Centre in Phoenix Lane.

Regular buses connect Bickleigh and Tiverton to each other and to Exeter.

## Northbound

Take the road into Bickleigh Mill (Devonshire's Centre) and turn left immediately before the house "Millhayes" almost behind the Bickleigh Mill. Go through the gates to a field edge beside a stream, and then head for a wooden gate to a woodland path.

Follow this sometimes muddy path parallel to the river. Turn left off the path shortly after descending to the riverside. Follow this permissive path, courtesy of the landowner, across a ditch and alongside the Exe to an open field.

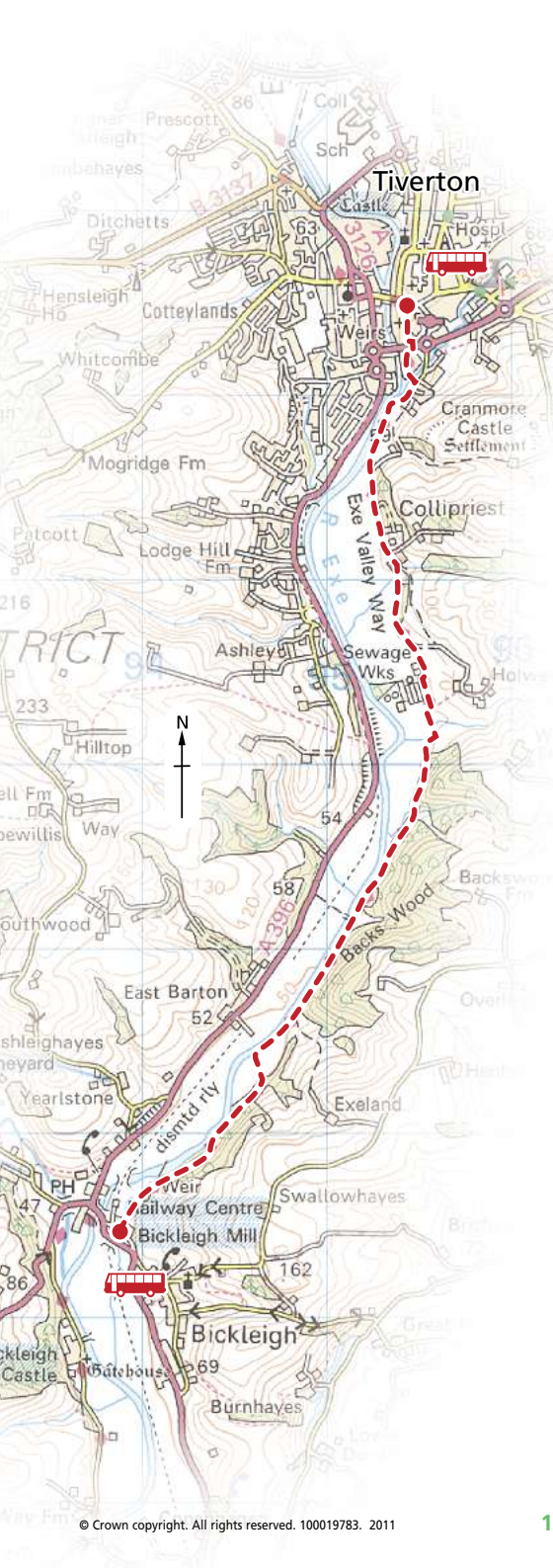
Continue alongside the Exe to a stile, cross and turn left, still parallel to the river. Cross the stile at the end and walk ahead into the wood.

Keep to the path, passing a private suspension bridge on the way. From the stile just after the bridge head diagonally left uphill to another stile. Follow the woodland path and at the gate turn left, then right at the stile into a field.

Heading towards the waterworks, cross the ditch, then go ahead next to the wood on the right to a gap in the hedge. Continue ahead and head for the right hand side of the waterworks. Aim for the stile in the far corner.

Cross the stile, pass the waterworks and continue on the track straight ahead. Keep going for 1.5km (1 mile) and at the road junction turn left into St. Andrew Street. Cross the footbridge and pass the museum to arrive in Tiverton.

The town centre is to the right at the Town Hall; turn left to continue north on the Exe Valley Way.



## Southbound

Take St. Andrew Street from the centre of Tiverton (next to the Town Hill), pass the museum and cross the footbridge. At the end turn right, then immediately fork right on to a lane running parallel to the river. Continue for 1.5km (1 mile) to the waterworks.

Cross the stile next to the waterworks entrance and take the path past the works. Cross the next stile and continue ahead parallel to the hedge and head for the gap at the far end of the field. Pass through and keep ahead, with the wood on the left, to a stile at the far end of this next field.

Cross the stile and turn left. Go through the gate on the right and soon after fork right on to a woodland path. At the end of the wood cross the stile and go diagonally right downhill to another stile. Cross and continue along the riverside past a private suspension bridge, on to a woodland path following the Exe Valley Way waymarkers.

At the end of the woods cross the stile and continue along the field edge, next to the river. Cross the stile at the far corner of the field and turn left, still on the riverside.

Follow the Exe on the permissive path, courtesy of the landowner, to the far end of this large field.

Cross the stile and continue on the riverside, cross a ditch a bear to the left to meet a path. Turn right along this sometimes muddy path through woods, parallel to the river.

At the end, go through a gate and along the field edge, next to a stream to the Bickleigh Mill complex. Go through the gates to the lane and turn right to continue on the Exe Valley Way.



Farming in Mid-Devon

## Stage 6

# Tiverton to Bampton

12km/7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> miles

## Description

Most of this stage follows the Exe through a beautiful section of its valley. The valley's sides are steep and thickly wooded and the route gives some splendid views of the valley.

North of Cove the route climbs out of the valley. North of Halfpenny Bridge the route follows the valley of the River Bathern, the tributary of the Exe on which the village of Bampton stands.



Wonderful woodland

## Facilities

Tiverton has a full range of facilities including shops, pubs, toilets and a Tourist Information Centre in Phoenix Lane.

Bampton is a pretty village with pubs, a small car park and a small range of shops, including a café.

There are regular buses from Tiverton to Exeter, and infrequent ones from Bampton to Tiverton. Check with the Traveline on **0871 200 22 33** for bus times.

## ↑ Northbound

From the Town Hall, walk down Angel Hill and cross the Exe. At the junction go straight ahead into St. Paul Street. Turn right at St. Paul's Church and continue ahead to the junction with Kennedy Way. Bear left (signposted to Witheridge). Turn right at a junction signposted to Washfield.

Turn right into higher Loughborough just past the junction with Longdrag Hill. Continue to the bottom. At the bridge continue ahead through the metal gate into the field. Cross the stile and turn right, alongside the fence, then head for the stile to the left of the house. Cross and turn left up the lane, then right at the road.

Continue for 1.2km (0.75 mile) and at Cotleigh bear right, signposted to Lower Washfield and Cove. Keep on this lane for almost 3km (1.8 miles) turning right at the junction at Hatherland Mill (signposted to Cove).

At the next junction turn left (signposted to Stoodleigh); after 600m (650 yards) bear right down a narrow lane, signposted to Cove. At the next junction bear right, again signpost to Cove.

Arriving at Cove Bridge over the Exe, turn sharp back left uphill (signposted to Stoodleigh). At the top turn right; keep on this land and after descending steeply back into the valley, cross the Exe on Halfpenny Bridge; at the main road take the lane going uphill opposite.

Keep to the lane, which after 1.6km (1 mile) leads into Bampton. For the town shops, turn right at the main road.



## Southbound

From the War Memorial at the west end of Bampton take the road signposted to "Trading Estate", off South Molton Road. Follow this road, at the end of the town keeping to the lane, not the public footpath. At the main road 1.6km (1 mile) out of Bampton take the lane opposite, cross the Exe on Halfpenny Bridge and then climb steeply out of the valley.

At the next road junction, after the level stretch, turn left steeply back downhill. At the bottom turn right just before Cove Bridge over the Exe (signposted to Washfield). At the next junction bear left, again signposted to Washfield.

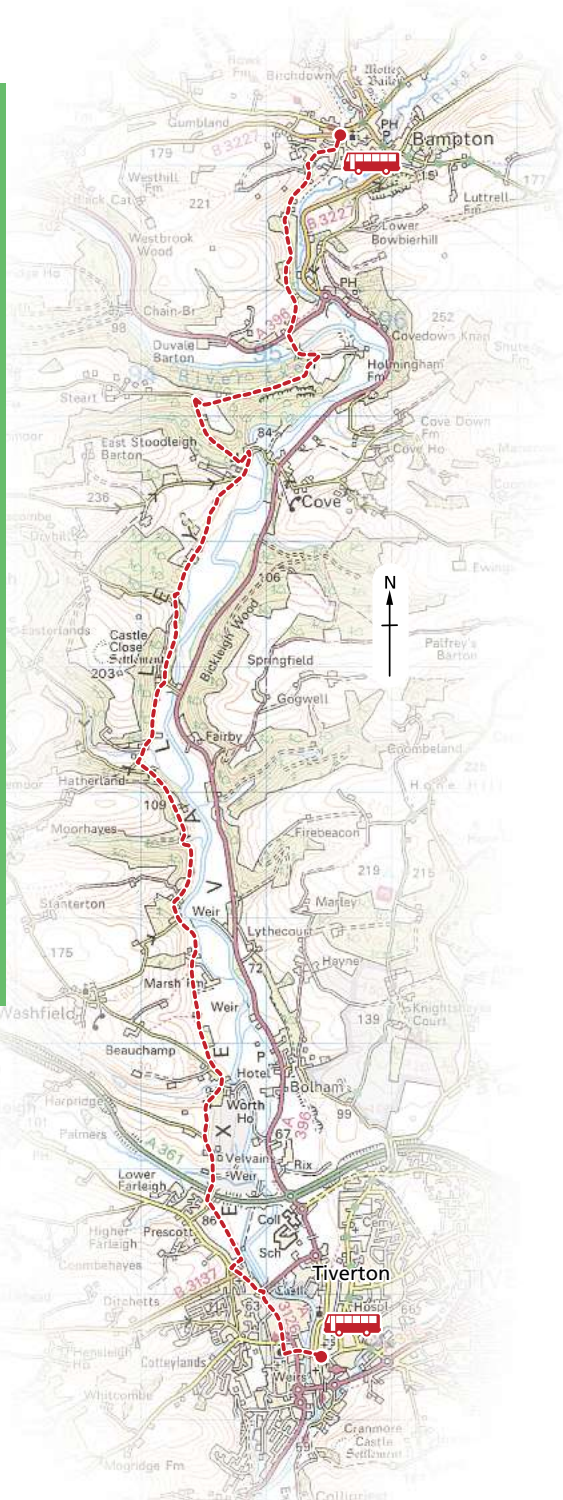
Meeting the bigger road bear left, signposted to Washfield and Tiverton, then just before the bridge over the Exe turn right, again signposted to Washfield. At the next junction (Hatherland Mill) turn left, still signposted to Washfield, and continue on this lane for almost 3km (1.75 miles).

At the junction at Cotleigh bear left, just after the road bridge turn left at the junction and continue down a lane to a stile on the right. Cross and head for the fence ahead and to the left. Walk alongside the fence to a stile, cross and go through the metal gate. Continue on the track to the residential road (Higher Loughborough).

At the main road turn left. At the junction with Kenndy Way bear right and continue ahead. Bear right again at the next fork and at St. Paul's Church turn left. At the mini roundabout go straight ahead, cross the Exe main road bridge uphill to reach the town centre and the Town Hall on the right.



A typical pub in Bampton



this stage are quite infrequent. Check with the Traveline on **0871 200 22 33** for bus times.

## Stage 7

# Bampton to Brushford

6km/4 miles

## Description

The southern part of this Stage crosses the watershed between the River Bathern and the River Exe, crossing high farmland and giving some superb extensive views over valleys to the edge of Exmoor. The northern part of this Stage follows a small tributary of the Exe, the Brockey River, through a small attractive valley. Brushford has a medieval church to explore with a 20th century Lutyens chapel.

## Facilities

Bampton has shops, pubs, car park, toilets and bus services to Dulverton and Tiverton. Exebridge also has a bus service as well as a pub and shop. There is also a nursery garden and one of the oldest trout farms in the country (with fish for sale). In Brushford there are buses to Dulverton and Bampton, and a pub/sporting hotel. The bus services along

### 🏠 Northbound

From the war memorial by the main car park near the church, take the narrow road which climbs gently uphill (signposted Dulverton for light cars and Exebridge). Climb the lane and turn right up the path at Grey Gables, bearing left to a metal gate at the top. Follow the hedge to a stile, then follow the track downhill left, then bear left to a stile in the left hand corner of the field.

Cross the three stiles, then go uphill next to the hedgebank, keeping it on your right. Cross the stile at the top and bear slightly away from the hedge, aiming for the obvious gap at the top of the field. Cross the next field diagonally to the top left-hand corner, go through the gateway, turn left then immediately right, along the field edge, with the hedge on your left. At the end go through the gate and follow the hedge on your right downhill to a gate into a farmyard.

Take the track through the farmyard. Bear left at the farmhouse, then straight ahead along an established grassy track to a farm gate into a field. Go through, follow the hedge on the left and descend in a shallow gully to a lane.

Turn left along the lane. At the bottom near the impressive irregular shaped toll house, cross the main road carefully and take the road opposite (signposted to Dulverton, Brushford).

Be careful on the next stretch of road, which can be busy in summer.

Go ahead into Exebridge, cross over the Exe and continue to the road junction, 250m (275 yards) past the bridge. Turn left at the junction (signposted Oldways End) and continue along the lane to the cottage at the bottom of the hill.

Take the track next to the cottage and follow the track across the field. At the fork in the track just before an old barn, follow the bridleway up to the right, through a field gate, and passing behind the barn. Continue to follow the bridleway up the hill and follow the track around the edge of Hulverton Wood. Near the end of the track, follow the bridleway as it heads down the field to the left. Pass through the field gate near an old hedgebank and continue down the field to the field gate. Turn left along the lane and cross the railway bridge. At the crossroads turn right towards the village centre and the route ahead to Dulverton and Hawkridge.



Views across the valley to Exmoor



## Southbound

From the centre of Brushford walk along the road towards the church, turning left at the crossroads and following the road over the railway bridge. Immediately after the left hand bend take the bridleway through the field gate on the right. Follow the bridleway up towards Hulverton Hill, passing to the other side of the hedgerow at the field gate. At the top of the field turn right along the track. There are lovely views over the valley below as you follow the track around the edge of Hulverton Wood.

Follow the bridleway down the hill, passing through the field gate behind an old barn. At the foot of the slope, bear left and follow the bridleway along the track crossing the field to a cottage. Go on to the lane and turn left.

Head uphill and at the end of the lane turn right. Be careful on this next stretch of road, which can be quite busy in summer.

Cross the bridge over the Exe and go through Exebridge village to the road junction near the impressive irregular shaped toll house.

At the garage cross the main road carefully and take the lane opposite (signposted to Morebath).

Where the lane approaches the electricity pylons, take the footpath on the right through a metal gate into a shallow gully. At the end of the track near the farm go through a metal gate and a pedestrian gate immediately on the right. Follow the wayposts along the edge of the farm, crossing a small stream, and through another gate to join a wider track on the uphill side of the farm buildings.

Follow the hedge on your left to the top of the hill and through a wooden kissing gate. Follow the hedge on the right to the end, turn left and immediately right through a gate. Cross the next field diagonally to the gap in the hedge and continue diagonally down the next field aiming for the bottom left corner.

Go through a kissing gate and continue downhill with the hedge on your left. Cross the two stiles at the bottom of the hill and enter the copse traversing uphill to a stile. Cross and follow the hedge to a metal gate. Go through and follow the drive to the right. At the road turn left to arrive at Bampton.



Beautiful riverside views near Hulverton Hill



## Stage 8

# Brushford to Hawkridge

11km/7 miles

This section between Brushford and Dulverton is part of an Exmoor National Park circular walk, and is waymarked with painted yellow waymarkers. There is also yellow waymarking of the route between Dulverton and Castle Bridge and between Castle Bridge and Hawkridge in painted red markers. The white rectangular Exe Valley Way waymarkers are not included in the National Park.

## Description

Most of this stage follows the attractive River Barle, an important tributary of the Exe. Much of the route is alongside the river, or nearly so, giving some very attractive valley scenery. The valley of the Barle is very beautiful especially above Dulverton where it is steep and wooded. Between Castle Bridge and Hawkridge the route follows the watershed between the Barle and the Dane's Brook, giving superb views over thickly wooded Exmoor valleys, pasture and heather moorland.

## Facilities

Dulverton meets most visitor requirements with shops, pubs, a car park, public toilets and an Exmoor National Park Visitor Centre. Infrequent buses connect the two to Bampton and Tiverton. Check with the Traveline on **0871 200 22 33** for bus times.

There are no facilities on this stage north of Dulverton.

## Northbound

From the centre of Brushford by the parish hall, go downhill to the main Dulverton road. Take the lane opposite/just to the left, signposted Dunster and Minehead. Where the lane bends right, take the footpath on the left, crossing the field. You are now entering the National Park. Cross the track at the end and continue ahead, alongside the River Barle.

At the end of the third field, bear right to an old barn and go through the gate just beyond to a hedged path. The path widens, then becomes a lane (Millham Lane then Chapel Street), leading into the main street at Dulverton. Village amenities are mainly to the right, the path continues to the left.

Turn left at Dulverton and cross the bridge over the Barle. Immediately after the bridge, take the minor lane on the right. Continue uphill between Rose Cottage and Berry House, and on to the track (signposted Hawkridge). Keep on this track for 1.6km (1 mile), bearing right at the end towards the farm buildings. Go through the yard to a lane and turn right, continuing for 230m (250 yards).

Just before the bridge turn left along the track. Keep on the track for 2.5km (1.5 miles), then fork right on a narrower path which descends to the river edge (signposted Tarr Steps). Keep close to the river, cross a stream and then join another track. Continue ahead on this track to reach Castle Bridge across Dane's Brook, a tributary of the Barle.

Cross the bridge, then take the track climbing diagonally to the left. Keep on the track as it climbs to the open land of Hawkridge Ridge. It then continues to an unsurfaced lane which leads into Hawkridge. At Hawkridge bear left, past the church, to the old cross road junction. This is where the Exe Valley Way joins the Two Moors Way. Turn right towards Tarr Steps.



Stunning landscapes across Exmoor National Park

## Southbound

The Exe Valley Way leaves the Two Moors Way at the old road junction in Hawkridge. Take the lane signposted to Tarr Steps, beside the church. Where it turns sharp left, bear right along the unsurfaced lane (signposted Dulverton). At the end of this lane continue ahead on the track next to the hedge. At the next fork take the left-hand gate and stay on the track over the open land of Harkridge Ridge and down through woodland to a bridge (Castle Bridge).

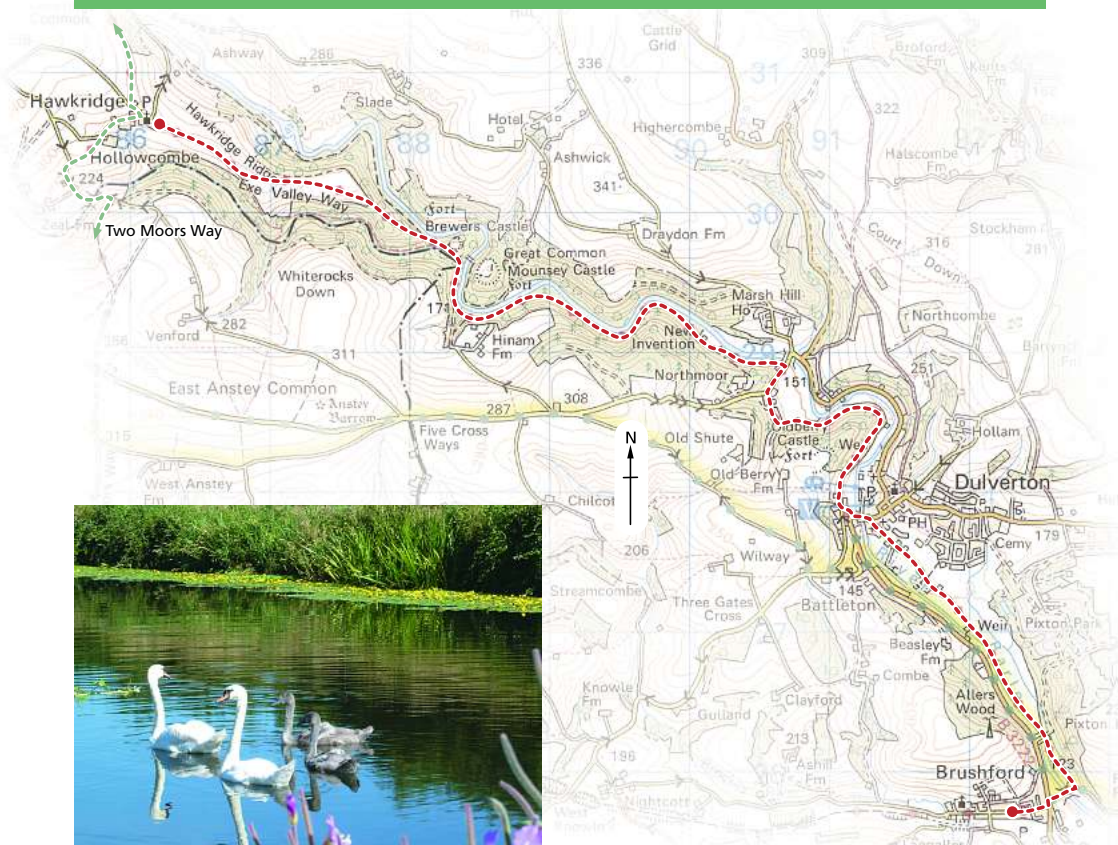
Cross Castle Bridge over Dane's Brook, a tributary of the River Barle, and continue on the track ahead. After 300m (330 yards) bear left off the track; cross a stream then continue next to the river (the Barle) to join a path. Keep on this as it rises to meet a track. Keep ahead on this track for the next 2.5km (1.5 miles).

On reaching the lane, turn right. After 230m (250 yards), just past Kennel Farm, bear left into the

yard and go through the left-hand gate ahead. Follow the track, forking left at the forestry area after 150m (165 yards), then continue on the track for 1.6km (1 mile). At the end follow the track steeply downhill to meet a lane, going straight ahead.

At the road junction turn left across the Barle, into Dulverton. Dulverton village centre is straight ahead however the path, after a short distance, turns right into Chapel Street. Follow the lane (becoming Millham Lane) past the sports field and keep ahead as it narrows to a path. At the end, go through the gate and turn right following alongside the Barle through three fields. Cross the track at the end then follow the path across the next field to a lane.

Turn right on the lane. At the main road take the lane opposite/slightly to the left, next to the garage, into Brushford.



A happy family on the River Barle

## Stage 9

# Hawkridge to Exford

13km/8miles

The next stage follows the Two Moors Way to Withypool where the Exe Valley Way leaves the Two Moors Way and arrives in the village of Exford.

## Description

The route winds gently up and down the hills and river valleys of this part of Exmoor and along a straight narrow lane to the village of Withypool. From here the route leaves the Two Moors Way and spurs off to Exford, where it once again rejoins the River Exe.

## Facilities

Withypool is a quiet unspoilt village and has a shop and a pub. A tea-room is also open from Easter to October. There is a pretty picnic spot with a small car park beside the old 6 arch stone bridge over the River Barle. Exford is a village famous for hunting, shooting, fishing and riding. There are several shops, pubs and a pleasant village green.



Red Deer on Exmoor (©ENPA)

## Northbound

From the centre of Hawkridge take the turning signposted "Withypool 3" and then turn right after a short distance onto a footpath signposted "Tarr Steps 1". Follow this well-way marked footpath for 1km over fields gently losing a little height. Emerging from a field follow the drive downhill signed to Parsonage Farm. Pass the farmhouse on your right and bear right into a sunken lane. After first wooden gate bear sharp left along a bridleway. Follow across the fields until you meet the tarmac road, then turn right and follow the road to Withypool. Cross the bridge and 200 metres past the Royal Oak public house take the permitted path on the left signposted "Exford Via Room Hill". (Note: If this path is closed then follow the main road up hill and turn left at t-junction). Follow the waymarkers steeply uphill at first until you meet a tarmac road. Cross straight over and onto a bridleway signed "Exford 2". From the gateway head North (left as you leave the gate). The bridleway is faint on the ground at first. Follow through the gorse until you pick a track up. Follow this bridleway, finally descending into a farmyard. Turn right in Farmyard signed "Exford" and over the bridge. Turn immediately left and follow upstream into Exford.



A delightful Exmoor village (©ENPA)





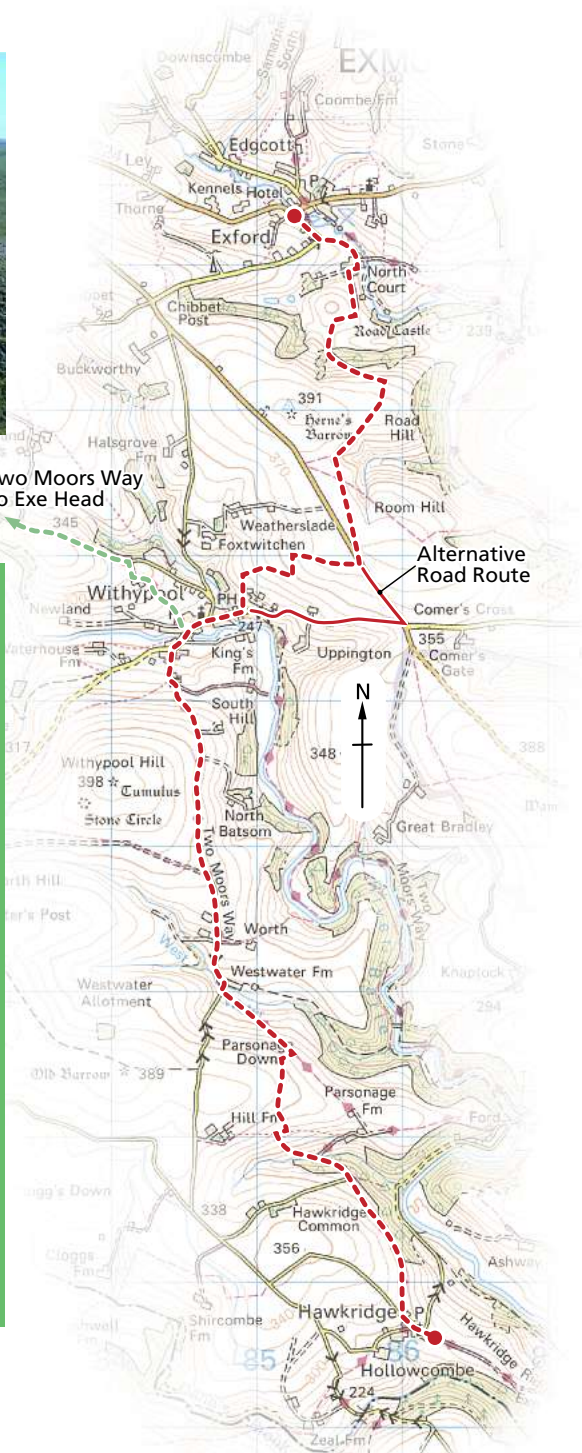
A view over Exmoor National Park near Exe Head

## Southbound

From Exford car park follow the footpath downstream through the meadow, soon crossing a bridge on your right and then turning left through the farm buildings. Follow the brideway through a gate and steeply uphill. When emerging on open moorland at the very top head straight ahead and then bear around the head of the Combe on the gradually fading track to a gate at the far corner (south). Cross the road and pick up the permitted path signed "Footpath Withypool". (Note: If this path is closed follow the road downhill and take the first right turn into Withypool). Follow this path across the farmland and then steeply downhill. Turn right at the very bottom and follow the road through Withypool and over the common for 3km. When the road steeply drops downhill turn left onto a brideway signed "Tarr Steps 2". Follow this across fields to Parsonage Farm. Turn right through Parsonage Farm Yard and follow the farm track steeply downhill and then up. At the top of the drive go through the field gate straight ahead signed "Hawkrigde". Staying initially low in the first field follow this path across fields to Hawkrigde.

Two Moors Way  
to Exe Head

Alternative  
Road Route



## STAGE 10 (Optional) Route to Exe Head The Source of the River Exe

19km/12miles

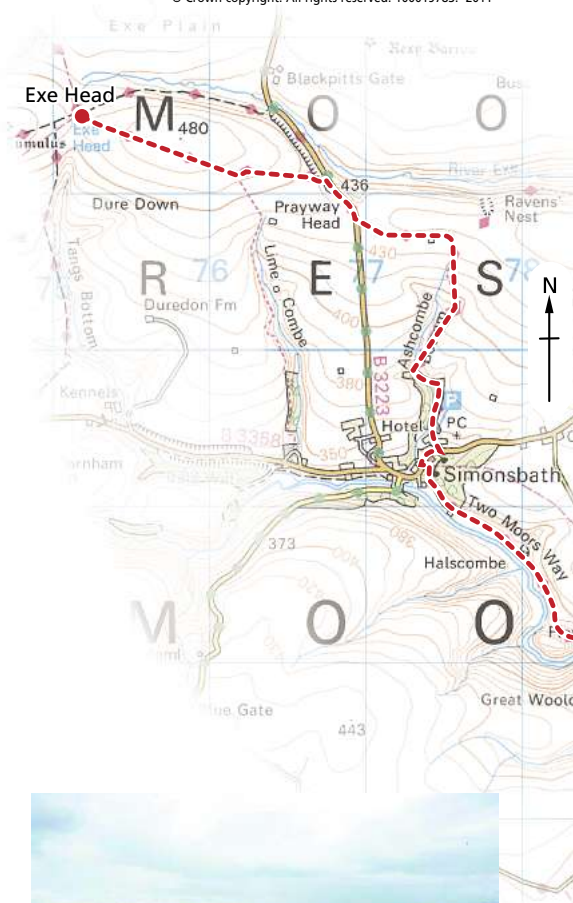
In order for this route to be a true walk from 'source to sea', it must continue to the source of the River Exe at Exe Head.

To reach Exe Head, return to the village of Withypool where the route rejoins the Two Moors Way. Walk along the Two Moors Way, north, in the direction of Simonsbath. Simonsbath is a small village with a church, two hotels and a tea room. Continue north along the Two Moors Way following the TMW waymarkers for approximately 3km/2miles high up on to the moor until you reach Exe Head.

Exe Head is, as its name suggests, the source, or 'head', of the River Exe and is an area of marshy ground high up on Dure Down. It is hard to believe that the water in this inconspicuous boggy area eventually emerges in the broad Exe Estuary on the South Devon coast over 50 miles away!



Exmoor ponies (©ENPA)



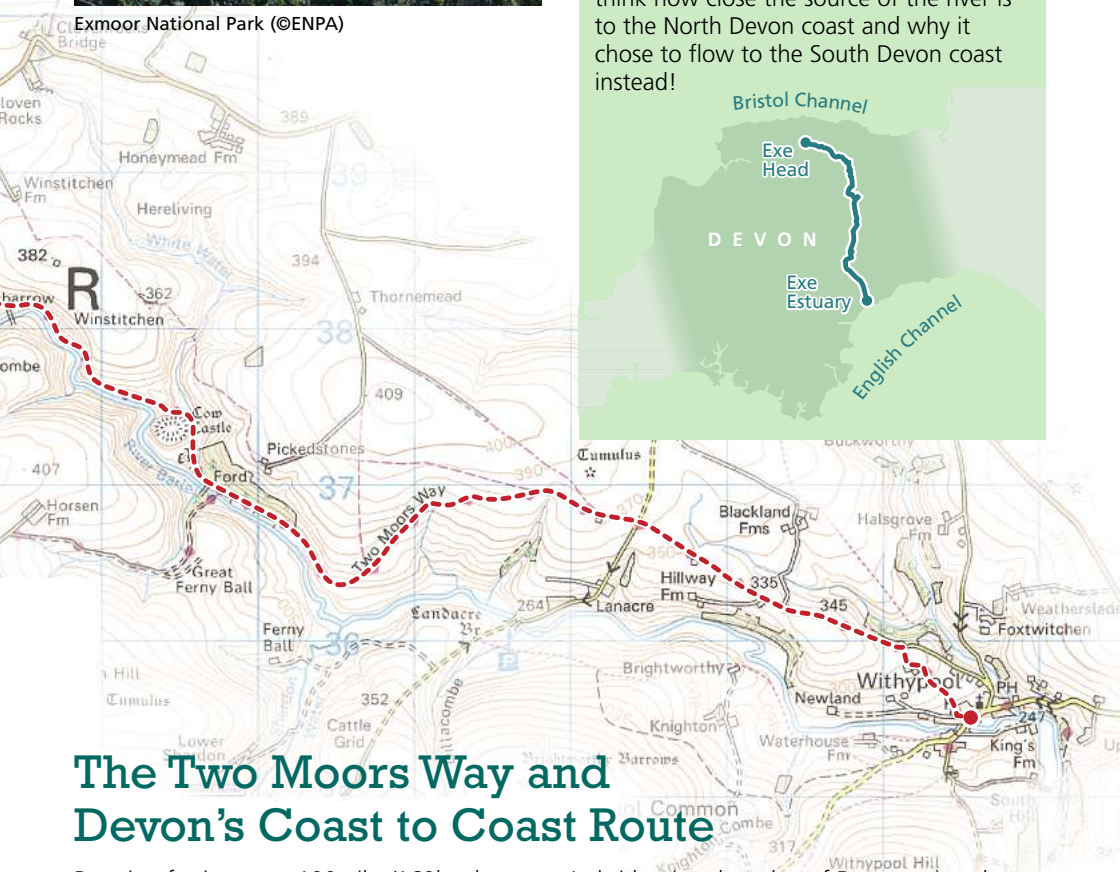
Exe Head, source of the River Exe



Exmoor National Park (©ENPA)

## The River Exe

The Exe Valley is a beautiful and relatively unspoiled area of the Devon countryside. The River Exe rises on Exmoor at a height of over 1450 feet/442 metres above sea level and within 5 miles of the Bristol Channel. The river then bends its way along an ever changing route of over 60 miles to reach the English Channel on the South Coast of Devon. It is amazing to think how close the source of the river is to the North Devon coast and why it chose to flow to the South Devon coast instead!



## The Two Moors Way and Devon's Coast to Coast Route

Running for just over 100 miles/160 km between Ivybridge (on the edge of Dartmoor) and Lynmouth (on the edge of Exmoor), this famous path links Devon's two National Parks.

Walked in conjunction with the Erme-Plym Trail, these two long distance paths form Devon's Coast to Coast walk, enabling you to dip your toes in both the English Channel and the Bristol Channel!



## Visitor Information

### Public Transport

Most of the towns and villages along the Exe Valley Way are served by buses although the frequency of services does vary. For up to date public transport information check with the Traveline on **0871 200 22 33** or at **[www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)**

The route passes the rail stations at Exeter St. Davids and Starcross. For information on rail services telephone **08457 48 49 50**.

Information on all public transport options is also available from the Tourist Information Centres detailed on the next page.

### Car Parking

Car parking facilities are indicated on the route maps. If you chose to drive, please use the car parks indicated, please do not park vehicles to inconvenience residents or other road users.

### Maps

**OS Maps which cover the Exe Valley Way:**

**Explorer No. 114**

Exeter & the Exe Valley (1:25 000)

**Explorer OL9**

Exmoor (1:25 000)



## Tourist Information Centres

### Tiverton

Tiverton, Phoenix Lane, EX16 6LU.

**Tel:** 01884 255 827

### Exeter

Exeter Quayside Visitor Centre, EX2 4AN

**Tel:** 01392 271611

### Exmoor National Park

Exmoor National Park Visitor Centre, Fore Street, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9EZ

**Tel:** 01398 323841

(for information on Exmoor National Park)



## In and around the Exe Valley

**Walking, cycling and horse riding** provide many opportunities for exploring the countryside close to the Exe Valley, including circular routes.

**The South West Coast Path National Trail** joins the Exe Valley Way at Starcross, gives access to a wide range of coastal settlements and scenery.

**The Two Moors Way** meets the Exe Valley Way on Exmoor. This is a long distance walking route across Exmoor and Dartmoor. It ranges from Lynmouth on the North Devon coast to Ivybridge on the southern edge of Dartmoor. This route can be extended to form Devon's Coast to Coast route, with an additional day walk to Wembury on the south coast of Devon.

For more information visit  
**[www.visitdevon.co.uk](http://www.visitdevon.co.uk)**





## Great Places to Stay

There is a wide range of accommodation in Devon. Delightful hotels on the coast or in the country, cosy country pubs, idyllic guesthouses and farms, ideal for family holidays. You will discover some wonderful and luxurious self-catering accommodation as well as relaxing holiday parks, camping and caravanning... all ideal for that perfect walking break, all year round.

**Making your selection couldn't be easier.**

## Need more information or want to make a booking?

Visit the website

[www.visitdevon.co.uk](http://www.visitdevon.co.uk)

## Be a responsible visitor!

## Explore a greener Devon...

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

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

Visit environmentally responsible attractions and indulge in some of the finest local food and drink on offer. Some suggested itineraries are available from [www.visitdevon.co.uk](http://www.visitdevon.co.uk) to help you make the most of your visit and help you to keep Devon special!





## Visit the Visit Devon Website

You will find more information about walking in Devon by visiting **www.visitdevon.co.uk** By clicking on the 'Walking' section of the website you will be able to search the walking database which contains lots of ideas and information on long-distance walks, short and circular walks, walking events, guided walks and walking holidays. The website also contains information on cycling, watersports, golf, food and drink, gardens, festivals and arts and craft activities on offer in Devon.



## Come and explore!

More and more people are realising that taking the bus or train is an easy, convenient, fun alternative to worrying about driving along narrow, unfamiliar country roads and finding somewhere suitable to leave the car.

Devon is blessed with a very mild climate. Spring arrives early with wild daffodils and bluebells filling the undergrowth of the valleys and woodlands and delicate yellow primroses, the county flower, carpet the banks of the lanes. Spring is a very special time of year for walking, awash with the colour and scent of wildflowers.

The summer lingers for longer in Devon. It can be well into September before misty mornings herald the start of autumn, a season which also lends itself to discovering the countryside on foot. Rich autumnal

colours give a golden glow to the landscape and the upper moorland areas become clothed in flowering heathers.

Winter can be an appealing season to explore Devon's countryside too. Walkers can wrap up warm and take leisurely lunch stops relaxing in front of a warming log fire!

## Be a Green Visitor

1. Do not disturb any livestock, keep your dog under close control and fasten all gates.
2. Take your litter home with you and recycle it if possible.
3. Do not disturb wild animals, birds or flowers.
4. Whether you are walking, cycling or driving, take special care on country roads.
5. If possible, leave your car at home and take the bus or train.
6. Buy locally produced goods, including food and souvenirs.
7. Support local shops, garages and other local services.



# If you enjoy Devon's coast and countryside...



Why not order one of our free  
booklets at [www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk)

For visitor information including accommodation availability visit  
[www.visitdevon.co.uk](http://www.visitdevon.co.uk)

If you need this booklet in a  
different format please  
contact 01392 382104 or  
email: [environment@devon.gov.uk](mailto:environment@devon.gov.uk)

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**EXMOOR**  
NATIONAL PARK

