



Tourism – North Devon and Historical Buildings

Because of its size, this thematic guide is split into three parts, each with the same introduction and list of references:

- 1: The Coming of the Railway, and East Devon
- 2: South Devon and Dartmoor
- 3: North Devon and Historical Buildings

Tourism in Devon was established in the mid eighteenth century, with Exmouth and Teignmouth developing in the 1750s, and Sidmouth, Dawlish and Ilfracombe in the 1770s. The facilities at this time were very rudimentary, although cures for a variety of illnesses and ailments by sea bathing and the imbibing of sea water were promoted with great enthusiasm. Exmouth introduced the bathing machine in 1759, with Teignmouth following a few years later in 1762. The declaration of war with France, which meant that travel on the continent became virtually impossible, and the desire of the Englishman to tour or winter in a mild climate altered the situation radically, and forced them to look elsewhere for these pursuits. The newly emerging watering places of the South West were to fulfil these needs. Even the threat of war brought new and immediate economic benefits to Devon. The naval facilities built at Devonport and later the breakwater, became objects of interest to the tourist, as they gazed on the with a mixture of patriotic pride and an appreciation of our industrial expertise.

Roads in the county were in a poor state. As late as the 1750s Devon had no turnpike trusts and in 1760 it still took four days to travel the 170 miles from London to Exeter. As coaching and the roads improved the time taken to travel this time was greatly reduced, (1764: 48 hours, 1783: 32 hours and 1785: 24 hours) and by the end of the coaching era the Exeter Telegraph had reduced the journey time down to 17 hours. But even after arrival at one of the major towns, travelling elsewhere in the county could be very slow. North Devon was particularly difficult to reach, with coach journeys from Exeter to Barnstaple (39 miles) taking almost the whole day. It was not until the 1830s that Ilfracombe and the other North Devon resorts were accessible on good roads, many earlier visitors had preferred to travel by sea to reach them, using the steam packets from Bristol and Swansea. All this was to change with the arrival of the railways, which opened up the county and its watering places to a wider cross-section of society.

From Exeter the South Devon Railway had by the end of 1848 opened up the resorts of Torquay and Plymouth to an influx of tourists. In 1854 the North Devon railway took the line up to Barnstaple and by the 1870s a network of branch lines connected the smaller towns like Dartmouth, Exmouth, Seaton, Sidmouth, Ilfracombe and Bideford to the main lines.

With the increase of visitors there came an improvement in the economy, allowing local entrepreneurs to add better facilities for the visitor to enjoy. The Devon resorts were

transformed from small fishing villages into sophisticated spas, with assembly rooms, libraries, theatres, promenades and purpose built accommodation, which not only attracted the sick but the fashionable as well. The climate was also a great attraction often being less severe and kinder to the infirm than elsewhere in the country. Works of literature also had an effect on the popularity of the region, and the descriptions of Devonshire scenery in the works of Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* (1855) and R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* (1869) brought curious visitors to the region. In the 1860s a local entrepreneur created the holiday resort of Westward Ho! to capitalise on the popularity of Kingsley's novel.

Tourism is still an important contributor to Devon's economy, indeed it has a major influence not only on the economic but also the social and environmental well-being of the area. The subsequent recirculation of this wealth within the local economy supports a whole range of ancillary manufacturing and service industries. Thereby a substantial portion of the country's employment has long been generated.

10. Clovelly

- *The hand book of North Devon*,
Exeter : Henry Besley, 1857. pp.65, 66

This little fishing village, about eleven miles from Bideford, stands in a most singular and picture situation, in a cleft or ravine of a steep rock adjoining the sea. It is one of the most romantic places in Devonshire, the houses being built upon the precipitous side of the cliff, one above the other; and the street is actually a regular flight of steps; so that carriages cannot be taken down to the inn, but must be left on the brow of the hill. The hostelric known by the name of the New Inn, affords respectable accommodation to visitors. ... The objects of principal interest to the traveller are the drive or walk through the Hobby, which should by no means be omitted; the walk through the Park, with its most striking and romantic views of the bar &c.; the rocks on the beach at Mouth Mill, which are seldom visited, but are well worth the attention of persons interested in geology, and the singular position of the village. The walk through the park and back would be about four and half miles; but nearly two miles walking may be saved by directing the carriage to set you down (with guide) at 'the wilderness;' or to meet you there at your return at an appointed time. The scenery around Clovelly, including the park of Sir James Williams, and the new drive through the Hobby road, before referred to, may be esteemed as among the most beautiful in the county. Permission to enter these grounds is kindly granted on application at the house. Messengers are generally waiting on the brow of the hill, where the carriages stop, to be dispatched for guides.

Pedestrians can take a delightful round from Clovelly, through Hobby to Buck's Mills, three miles; thence by Peppercombe and Abbotsham, to Appledore. --- After passing Buck's Mill, there are paths on the brow of the cliffs all the way. A delightful walk may also be taken from Clovelly, over the headlands to Hartland; by Gallantry Bower; thence to Mouth Mill and Brownsham; when at Brownsham, about three and half miles from Clovelly, a path on the cliffs will lead round to Hartland Quay.



Image 10(a) SC0390, Clovelly Devon, Rock & Co, 1855

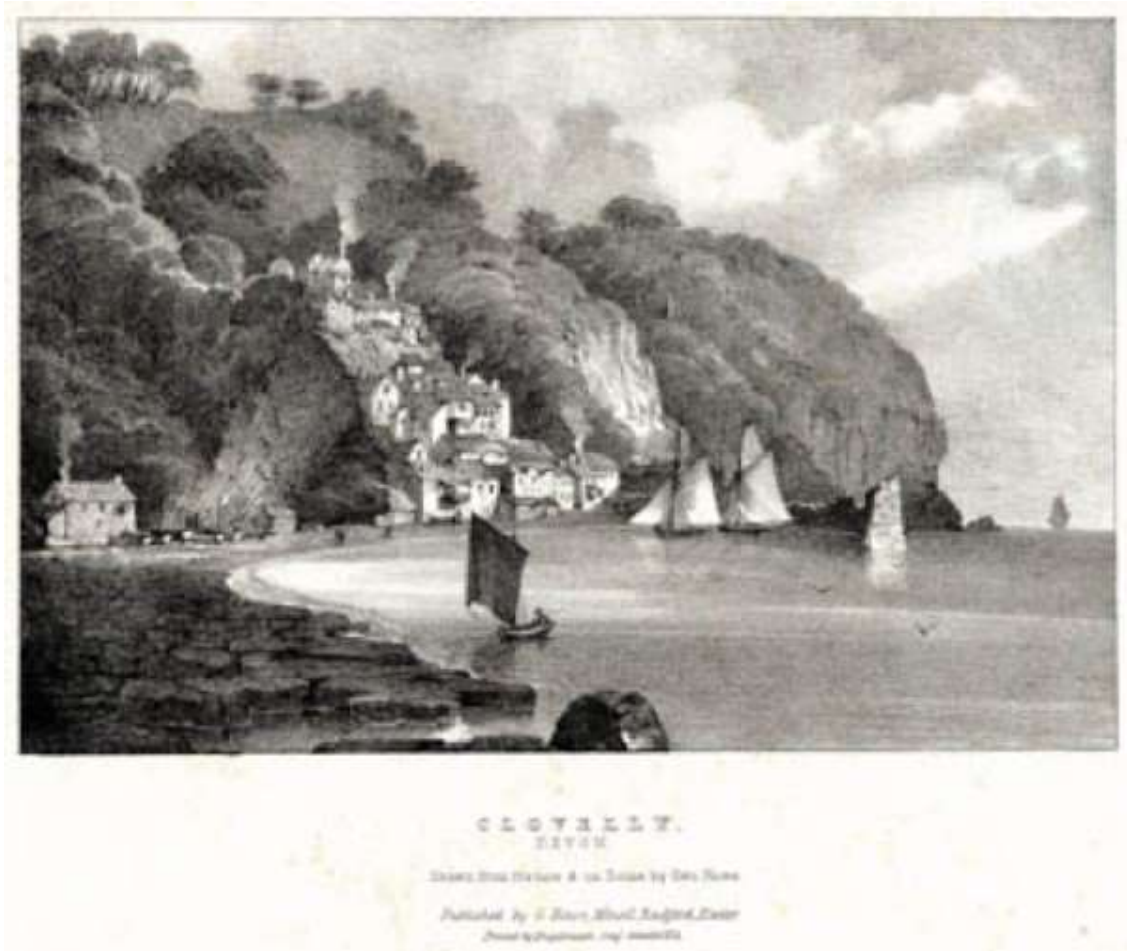


Image 10(b) SC0376, Clovelly Devon, George Rowe, 1828

11. Ilfracombe

- *The Hand Book of North Devon*,
Exeter : Henry Besley, 1857. pp. 42, 43, 46, 47

Ilfracombe, an ancient seaport and market town, now a fashionable watering place on the north-coast of Devon, is situated in the hundred of Braunton, about 11 miles from Barnstaple. The town is partly at the bottom of a steep declivity, and partly up the side of it, and consisted, till the increase of new buildings, principally of one long street; and as you enter from Barnstaple, has a singular and irregular appearance. ...A short distance from the Lantern rock is a loftier eminence called Capstone Hill; west of this are a series of precipitous rocks or tors, forming romantic coves, in one of which called Wildersmouth, a great resort for strangers, used to be the principle place for bathing before the baths were erected and tunnels formed leading to the romantic coves at Crewkhorne, now a more retired place for the purpose.

Widersmouth

A favorite (sic) spot so called and general rendezvous of visitors. Here, in season, among the rocks, parties amuse themselves in an endless variety of ways; some read, --- others sketch, --- whilst some are listlessly reclining upon the rocks, --- others are seen jumping from crag to crag ardently bent on geological examination of the strata, or in search of the shells which are found in the sand between the rocks. When the weather is fine the attractions of this place are further enlivened by the strains of an excellent band which play at 11 and 6 every day. From Wildersmouth the stranger can get to Crewkhorne, but if he attempt it by the beach it will be prudent to observe the state of the tide. And here it will not be amiss to remind him, that in all his excursions on the coast, whenever he places himself between high cliffs and the sea, that this is a most salutary caution.

The Tunnels

Through which the Visiter (sic) can pass by paying a toll of one halfpenny. These lead to Crewkhorne. This spot presents some of the most romantic scenes about Ilfracombe. Here is a cave which tradition reports to have been the temporary refuge of Sir William de Tracey, one of the murderers of Beckett, Archbishop of Canterbury. It affords excellent accommodation for bathing. One of the coves on the east is appropriated for the ladies' machines, and well protected from intrusion; whilst another on the west is allotted to gentlemen.

The Tors

A ridge of hills looking down upon the Bristol channel, on the north side of which is a walk well deserving of a visit as it commands very extensive and picturesque views of the adjacent country, together with a fine prospect of Lundy Island and the Welsh coast. By exploring the different paths to the several points called Tor-head, the Lover's Leap, and White Pebble Bay, the stranger will get some fine and diversified scenery. As the whole of the ground about the Tors is private property, a card of admission is necessary, which can be obtained at the cottage near, or at the Clarence Hotel, on payment of a small fee.



Image 11(a) SC1325, Ilfracombe from the Tors, George Townsend, 1856



Image 11(b) SC1220, Ilfracombe Hotel North Devon, Rock & Co, 1868



Image 11(c) SC1235, Capstone Hill Parade Ilfracombe North Devon, Rock & Co, 1864



Image 11(d) SC1236, Capstone Hill Parade Ilfracombe North Devon, Rock & Co, 1864

12. Lynton and Lynmouth

- *Pictorial and descriptive guide to Lynton, Lynmouth, Minehead, &c.*
London : Ward, Lock, & Bowden, Ltd, 1893. pp. 7-8

Lynmouth, at the foot of the hill at which the coach stops, may be reached by a sail from Portishead, which is found (by those who are on sufficiently good terms with Father Neptune to enable them to enjoy a trip by water) a very pleasant one; the coast-line is picturesque, and affords the *voyageur* ample opportunity of noticing how precipitously the hills of Exmoor descend into the sea. But, like everything else in this world it soon becomes monotonous. As headland after headland is passed, the passengers on board the steamer begin to grow weary and to wish themselves once more on *terra firma*, the more especially if the 'stormy winds' show any inclination of blowing; and that it is not until Countisbury Foreland is rounded, and the vessel steams slowly into smooth water, that they quite regain their content. But once there, they are more than satisfied. They declare that the view which bursts upon their gaze would well repay (what, after all, they have not experienced) a great deal of fatigue and discomfort, and they forget all their impatience as they stand on the deck and drink in the beauties of the scene. And well they may, for they have reached the most lovely of England's 'village ports.' Immediately before them is 'the

mountain rising from a lake,` with Lynmouth's white cottages and Rhenish tower at its base, and four hundred and fifty feet higher, on the dark hill side, the church and villas of Lynton.

As soon as the signal indicating the number of passengers on board has been hoisted to the masthead, broad punts row up, and being 'made fast` to the steamer, rapidly receive a miscellaneous freight of boxes, bags, shawls, umbrellas, and visitors. If they arrive at low-water, the passengers are landed at the wall by the salmon trap, some little distance from the shore, and make their way thither over the stones which have been brought down by the river, in course of ages; but if the tide will allow, they step from the punts on to the rudely-made pier, at whose head is the before-mentioned watch-tower. Said to be an exact reproduction of one on the Rhine, it was erected by General Rawdon, a former resident at Lynmouth; and it is preserved with religious care by its present inhabitants, the very tint of the surrounding stones being matched in replacing any of the old ones with which time may have dealt too harshly. Its unique form has afforded occupation for the pencils of the hundreds of artists who have resorted to this spot of late years.

Lynmouth is an old fishing village, and has grown into a watering-place as the charms of the surrounding country have become better known. It is built at the mouth of the two Lys, which meet at the bridge just above the entrance to the village, and mingle their music under valerian bushes, wind down to the sea in one channel,

*Chattering over stony ways
In little sharps and trebles.*

This channel is fringed by the hotels and houses, nestling beneath Hollardy Hill, on whose summit Lynton is perched, its luxuriantly wooded and precipitous rocks forming an appropriate background to the picture seen from the deck of the steamer.

- *The Hand Book of North Devon*
Exeter : Henry Besley, 1857. p.53

A walk in the Valley of the Rocks

Let him enter the Valley by way of the South Hill, and from the summit survey the singular scene around and beneath him. Turning his face towards the sea, the huge pile of rocks on the left is known and called by the name of Castle Rock, from a fancied resemblance (sic) to an old time-worn fortlace. There is a way to the summit by a path lately cut on the sides. The high mass of rock on the right appear as if squared and piled by the hand of man. There are many stone circles in the Valley, which looking at the character of the place, it is not unreasonable to suppose may be of Druidic origin, A locale more suited, from its position and associated objects, for the celebration of the sombre and mystic rites of pagan superstition, than the Valley of the Rocks, can scarcely be imagined. --- Huge masses of rock and immense stones lie scattered along in every part of it, diversified with a short green herbage, and adorned in summer-time with the splendid fox-glove, which in this neighbourhood grows in profusion and to a height more than common. The Cheese-press rocks,

commonly called the Devil's Cheese Wring, near which we have desired the conveyance to be sent, stands on the south of the valley.



Image 12(a) SC1499, Linton and Lynmouth, James Banfield, 1840



Image 12(b) SC1673, Castle Rock Valley of Rocks Lynton, Rock & Co, 1859



Image 12(c) SC1666, Valley of Rocks Linton North Devon, Rock & Co, 1860



Image 12(d) SC1654, The Devil's Cheese Wring in the Valley of Rocks Devon, George Rowe, 1830

13. Historical Buildings

- *A Guide to the Watering Places on the Coast Between the Exe and the Dart* ; Teignmouth : E. Croydon, 1818. pp. 48-50

Berry Pomeroy Castle

This romantic ruin is situated near the village of Berry, about two miles from the town of Totness, and about twelve miles from Teignmouth. It is supposed to have been erected by one Ralph de la Pomeroy, from whom it partly derives its name, who came over with William the Conqueror, and was inhabited by different branches of that family 'till the reign of Edward the sixth, when it became the property of the Duke of Somerset, by purchase; and ever since that period has been in the hands of that illustrious family. On viewing the ruin from the south majestically rearing its

head amid the bosom of a thick wood, the eye of the spectator is rivetted (sic) to the spot by the grandeur of its appearance. Here nature seems to have exerted her skill to add to the beauty of the scenery, and the oaks wave their broad spreading boughs as if conscious of their dignity in this grand spectacle. The great gate, the walls of the south front, and part of the west end of the building still remain. Over the gateway is a watch or guard-room, and underneath is a room which has the appearance of a prison; none of the other apartments bear any mark of their original use. The fortifications were destroyed during the disturbances in the reign of Charles the first. The whole of the ruins are so finely mantled with ivy, and so beautifully interspersed with thick bushes, that they present a scene, perhaps unequalled. What person can enter these ruins without reflecting that this ancient fortress was once the scene of gaiety and splendour: -- but alas ! the iron hand of time has swept away not only its former inhabitants, but its grandeur --- its gaiety --- and its mirth: and those very apartments which were once the abode of youth and beauty, are now become the habitation of the bat and the screech owl.



Image 13(a) SC0161, Berry Pomeroy Castle, George Townsend, 1861



Image 13(b) SC0140, Part of the Interior Berry Pomeroy Castle, William Gauci, 1840

- *Budleigh Salterton and Its Vicinity : A Hand Book for Visitors and Tourists Salterton* : W.Baker, 1845 p. 33

Hayes Barton

To the west of this point on the road, a pathway through verdant uplands and pleasant lanes, takes us to the ancient farm place of Hayes, which claims a visit from the lover of English history, as having been the birth-place (in 1552) of Sir Walter Raleigh, (sic) whose father, Wimond Raleigh, (sic) held an eighty year's lease of it from the Duke family of Otterton.



Image 13(c) SC0698, Haye's Farm East Budleigh Devonshire The Birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh, Haye's, 1850

- *Hand book of Devonshire. Extracted from the Route Book of Devon*
Exeter, Exeter : Henry Besley, [1850?] pp. 6, 9-10

Rougemont Castle

The city [Exeter] rises with a bold aspect on the eastern bank of the river Exe, and was formerly enclosed with walls and gates --- the whole of the latter were removed some years since, but a great portion of the former still remains. The antiquary may be gratified with an inspection of the old Saxon Gateway to Rougemont Castle, now standing in Castle-street, adjoining the entrance to the present Castleyard. The Castle, now the site of the Devon Sessions House, encloses a space of thirty poles in diameter, somewhat in the form of a pentagon, and is situated on the north side of the town, about two furlongs from the river on a hill overlooking every part of the ground within the walls on which the town is built, and commanding from the ramparts an extensive prospect.



Image 13(d) SC0771, Rougemont Castle Devonshire, Rougemont, 1790

Exeter Cathedral.

On viewing the exterior of this building a great impression is produced on the mind of the spectator, by the massiveness of the two towers, and the noble and perfect appearance of the whole structure. The west end presents a screen with three openings of doorways, a wall behind, with very slight buttresses worked up in the screen, and other buttresses of much bolder projection at the angles. The screen is sculptured over with statues representing patriarchs, apostles, kings of England, heroes of the Crusades, illustrious bishops and worthies, and emblematic figures of the cardinal virtues. Some of these have been mutilated by time or the depredating hands of barbarous innovators; but nearly the whole of the damaged statues, together with the decayed pinnacles round the church, have been replaced within these few years by the Dean and Chapter.



Image 13(e) SC0831, The Cathedral Exeter, William Spreat, 1850

- *The Hand-Book to South Devon*
Devonport : W. Wood, [1855?] p. 21

Dartmouth Castle

The walk to Dartmouth Castle is remarkably pleasant, and to the antiquarian will well repay a visit. We are indebted to A.H. Holdsworth, esq.; of Dartmouth, for the following description of it:- The forts and castle, which stand on the western shore at the bottom of the range, are built on the rocks, the spring tide reaching nearly to the foundation of their walls. There are two modern forts facing the south, which command the range. These, in the late war, were mounted with twelve long eighteen-pounders; and a small fort adjoins the castle, on its northern side, with three six-pounders. In the rear of the castle is the church of St. Petrox and its yard; and above it the site of a much older castle, the whole being enclosed by the remains of a very thick wall and ditch --- once a fortress of great strength. On the hill above it is the ruin of a fort mentioned by Sir Thomas Fairfax as ' Gallant Bower'.



Image 13(f) SC0509, Dartmouth, Samuel Prout, 1820

- *A Perambulation of the Antient(sic) and Royal Forest of Dartmoor*
Rowe, Rev Samuel
Plymouth : C.E. Moat, 1856. p. 235

Brentor Church

Leaving the town [Tavistock] by the old Okehampton road for our next excursion, we shall soon discern high on an insulated hill before us, the church and steeple of Brentor, four miles from Tavistock, on the northern verge of Heathfield down. Unlike the Dartmoor tors, Brentor is a volcanic eminence rising abruptly from the surrounding country. The church which crowns the summit is said to owe its erection to the pious gratitude of one of those 'who occupy their business in the great waters,' in commemoration of his deliverance from the dangers of the stormy deep, and in fulfilment of a vow which in the time of peril he had made to build a church on the first land he might discover, should he be permitted to reach the shore in safety. This is said to have been Brentor, and here accordingly the votive shrine was erected by the grateful merchant. There is however a popular legend in the neighbourhood, which reports that the church was intended to have occupied a more convenient site, but the design was frustrated by Satanic devices.



Image 13(g) SC0234, Bren-Tor and Church Devonshire, J Storer, 1804

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