



AllWays Traveller

The River Dart, Devon UK

www.allwaystraveller.com

Going with the flow in Devon

Devon is an English county located in the UK's South West.

Within the county, the River Dart is one of the country's majestic waterways.

It starts with the coming together of the East Dart and West Dart rivers, at the appropriately named Dartmeet, within the Dartmoor National Park.

From there the river flows through areas of great natural beauty into the English Channel at Dartmouth.

Along the way it passes through attractive villages and country towns.

A small ferry boat across the river from the village of Dittisham taking visitors to Greenway, the former holiday home of Agatha Christie.

The River Dart provides a fine 'route-map' for exploring part of one of England's most diverse and attractive counties.

Ashley Gibbins

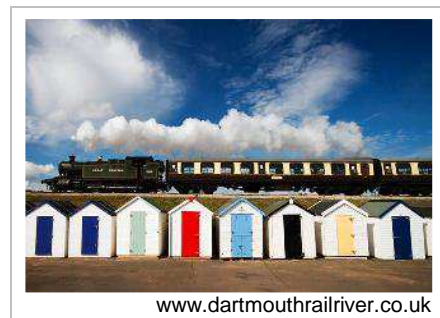
Managing editor
AllWays traveller



www.visitdevon.co.uk



www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk



www.dartmouthrailriver.co.uk

A personal view of the River Dart



Meandering memories in Devon

By Ashley Gibbins

I have always enjoyed a genuine fascination with rivers.

The first to capture my attention was the River Parrett in Southwest England, which flows through my home town of Bridgwater.

From an early age, my father would have me exploring this river for its wildlife.

Being a tidal river, the constant churning of the muddy silt results in the water being a dense, dirty brown colour.

So no fish of note, except for the millions of newly born eelers that, every year back then, provided a 'black market' source of income for the local lads.

But where the Parrett flows through the town centre there were seagulls galore (a much maligned bird) and mute swans.

But go towards its source and the river flows through the nature rich Somerset levels.

It was in this area of outstanding natural beauty that I saw my first Bewick swans, curlew, redshank and marsh harrier.

To the Thames

Then, aged 11, the annual school outing took me to London and a afternoon cruise on the Thames.

Once aboard young chums seemed happy to run up and down the deck, if I remember.

But for me it was the Thames itself bustling with activity that kept me enthralled.

Living in London these many years later I am no less excited by one of the world's great rivers flowing through the world's greatest city.

Taking the river route

When planning a short break, it is always worth checking if there is a river of note to be explored.

If so, using this as the route map can be most rewarding – and certainly the case with the River Dart, in Devon.

This wonderful waterway starts its journey to the sea high up on Dartmoor and ends it when it flows into the English Channel at Dartmouth.

Following this route gives the visitor to Devon the chance to explore every aspect of the county's contrasting beauty.

Choosing a 'base camp'

For our River Dart exploration, we selected the *Glazebrook Hotel* as our 'base camp'.

Sitting on the very edge of the Dartmoor National Park, this is a truly unique hotel is ideally located for reaching all parts of the river.

See : A place to stay (below)

While in Dart area

Following the course of the River Dart takes in the wilds of Dartmoor, country towns, areas of outstanding natural beauty and stunning coastal areas

Dartmoor

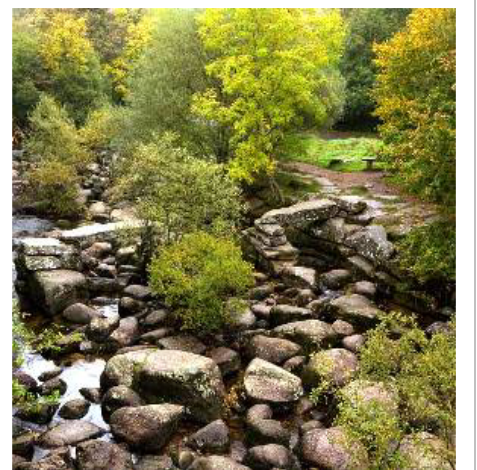


Dartmoor is an area of outstanding natural beauty with granite tors, wooded valleys with fast flowing streams and rugged, wild, wide open spaces.

A national park, it covers an area of 368 square miles with a one time thriving tin and copper-mining industry and the source of much of the granite used for the houses in the nearby villages and towns.

Dartmoor also offers splendid walking and cycling interspersed with country pub lunches and Devon cream teas in the small towns and villages, which are scattered across the moor.

Dartmeet



www.devonguide.com

An obvious place to visit and a very popular beauty spot -or 'grockle gathering' - during spring and summer is Dartmeet.

It's here where the east and west branches of the River Dart meet in a steep, wooded valley with splendid leisurely walks.

Nearby is Pixieland and Brimpts Farm, which is the home of the Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust.

Dartmoor National Park



www.dartmoor.gov.uk

Naturally enough, we wanted to start our Dart tour on Dartmoor.

Dartmoor is an area of rugged and outstanding natural beauty with granite tors, wooded valleys, fast flowing streams and wild open spaces.



www.dartmoor.gov.uk

Baskervilles hound

It is no wonder Arthur Conan Doyle chose Dartmoor as the location for his Sherlock Holmes thriller the *Hound of the Baskervilles*.

And while the hound may have been a figment of the author's imagination, there is no shortage of sheep cattle and wild ponies grazing Dartmoor today.

The river starts at Dartmeet, where the *East Dart* and *West Dart* converge to form the *River Dart*.

Some splendid walks are around here, although it can be a tourist honeypot during high season.

The national park authority

The National Park authority provides a full visitor information.

www.dartmoor.gov.uk

Totnes



Having much enjoyed our time on the moor, we then went to Totnes, which lies somewhere midway between Dartmeet and Dartmoth.

This is a very attractive English country town that is made all the more so by the river running through it.

And so, well I spent a leisurely hour in the Riverside Park watching the boats pass by, Ann took in the antique emporiums and many arts and craft shops.

We came together for a lunch in one of the quirky and organic emphasis eating places - many with a new age twist.

I am told that a group of fellow travel writers have proclaimed Totnes to be one of the 10 funkiest towns in the world.

Who am I to argue?

www.totnesinformation.co.uk

Widecombe-in-the-Moor



A typical Dartmoor village is Widecombe-in-the-Moor whose fair on the second Tuesday in September, attracts thousands, and which is known for the folk song of the same name, featuring Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

www.visitdartmoor.co.uk

www.dartmoor.gov.uk

www.legendarydartmoor.co.uk

www.widecombe-in-the-moor.com

www.dpht.co.uk

Sharpham Vineyard



Sharpham Vineyard overlooks the River Dart two miles downstream from Totnes.

This thousand year old farm consists of five hundred acres owned by the Sharpham Trust including the house, which was designed in 1770 by Sir Robert Taylor.

The Trusts aim is to produce world class wine and cheese in harmony with the surrounding natural beauty.

The estates farm produces its own Jersey cow's milk and the winery grows a range of high-quality, cool climate grape varieties.

in the vineyard, the team at Sharpham is in control of production from start to finish.

There are a series of fine walks from Shapham and a restaurant on site.

www.sharphamtrust.org

Dittisham and Greenway

Moving ever closer to the Darts end and absolute must do's are the almost impossibly beautiful village of Dittisham and the National Trust property of Greenway.

Both are located opposite each other on either side of the Dart estuary.

Dittisham



The best approach is via the delightful village of Dittisham.

Park up on the perimeter of the village and take a stroll down hill to the harbourside.

Then there is the choice of coffee and fresh sea food at the Anchorstone cafe or a pint and a bar snack at the Ferry Boat Inn.

Ring the bell

And when ready just ring the bell on the quayside and a ferryboat makes its way across to you.



The trip across the estuary to Greenway may only take five minutes.

But it's another chain in the link of memories of the trip.

Greenway



www.nationaltrust.org.uk/greenway
Nick Gutteridge

Greenway is a National Trust property so those who know me will know that I am going to sing its praises.

The Trust does a magnificent job in preserving and protecting our national heritage and making a visit to its properties so rewarding.

In this case, Greenway is the holiday home of the author Agatha Christie and her family.

The house itself is time locked to the 1950s and is stocked full of the family's furniture and memorabilia.

Gardens galore

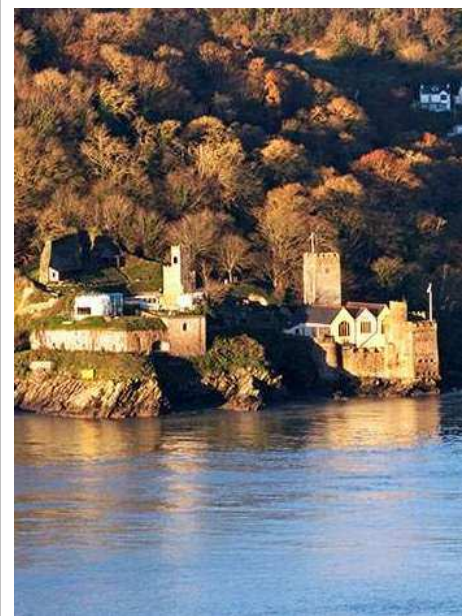


Surrounding the house is a fine walled formal garden and, beyond, a series of woodland walks down to the boathouse.

And stunning views of the Dart throughout.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/greenway

Dartmouth Castle



www.englishheritage.org.uk

Dartmouth Castle, located at the mouth of the Dart estuary, was begun in 1388 by John Hawley, privateering mayor of Dartmouth and the inspiration for the flamboyant 'Shipman' in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

It is one of the most picturesque fortresses in England.

The first fortification in the country, it was built to mount 'ship-sinking' heavy cannon it's role was to protect local merchants.

Incorporating the church of St Petrox, the castle saw action during the Civil War, and continued in service until World War II.

The castle offers some spectacular views of the Dart estuary.

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dartmouth-castle.

Dartmouth Steam Railway River Boat Company



The historic Dartmouth Steam Railway runs between Paignton and Kingswear passing along the Dart estuary.

It is one of the most scenic steam railway lines in the country.

And so to Darts end



Dartmouth

Dartmouth, which is located, as its name suggests, on the River Dart, is a small, bustling resort much favoured by coach parties.



A deep-water port for sailing vessels, Dartmouth has always been of strategic importance.

As far back as 1147 and 1190 it was used as the sailing point for the Crusades and for over 600 years, Dartmouth Castle guarded the narrow entrance to it.

Bayard's Cove is Dartmouth's oldest wharf and the cobbled quayside is where the Mayflower moored up in 1620 as the Pilgrim Fathers made their way from Southampton to America and discovery of the New World.

Today it's more a case of day trippers heading into Dartmouth.

The town has a fine collection of ancient buildings including Agincourt House by the Lower Ferry, which dates back to the 14th Century and the Royal Castle Hotel on the Quay, built in 1639.

From Dartmouth there is the opportunity to take a ferry across to the picturesque Kingswear.

www.discoverdartmouth.com.

Blackpool Sands



And though it may be that Dartmouth is an obvious end of the trip, I would urge travelling just a couple more miles down the coast to Blackpool Sands.

Blackpool Sands has a beach that can compare with any.

Okay, so the weather may not always be as good as in the Caribbean but, catch this beach on a fine day and it is stunning.

Kingswear Castle



The paddle steamer Kingswear Castle is the last remaining coal-fired paddle steamer operating in the UK.

She was built in 1924, although her engines date back to 1904, and plied her trade between Totnes and Dartmouth until 1965

The steamer was then purchased by the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society which spent 15 years fully restoring her to her former glory and saw her offering river trips on the Medway.

In 2012, the Kingswear Castle returned to her home waters of the River Dart.

Visitors can now enjoy a range of cruises along the lower reaches of the river from Dartmouth.

www.dartmouthrailriver.co.uk

More information



www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk
www.visitdevon.co.uk

A place to stay along the River Dart



Glazebrook House : www.glazebrookhouse.com

By Ann Mealar

Set in stunningly secluded gardens and grounds, *Glazebrook House*, which is located on the fringe of the Dartmoor National Park in South Devon, is a genuinely unique boutique hotel.

Appearances can be deceptive. At first glance, Glazebrook House looks like any other very attractive, but traditional country house hotel.

However, all is not what it seems – but in a good way!

A world of retro curios

Step through the castle-like archway and you enter a world of retro curios and vintage chic that can't fail to delight and surprise the most discerning of guests.

With great whimsical charm, this late Georgian/early Victorian mansion has been redesigned by Timothy Oulton, in the quintessentially British style of a 19th century collector.

The skeleton of an exotic bird stands on a plinth in the hallway, crystal chandeliers hang from the ceilings and plush tartan carpet compliments polished wooden floors.

Union flag drapes

Traditional buttoned leather sofas sit alongside plush Union flag drapes and a large chrome British bulldog sits on the polished steel reception desk, complete with a Churchill style bowler hat.



Each room is different but has the same integrated style, comfort and surprise factor.

The bar has tufted leather panel walls and chandelier coffee tables that automatically light up at 6pm.

The large leather chairs are handcrafted, the floor is polished wood - all creating a feel of a modern Gentleman's club.

The bedrooms

The eight luxurious bedrooms at *Glazebrook* are named after characters in "Alice and Wonderland".

This happened quite by chance, but *Glazebrook* accommodates the quirky 'Alice' theme very well.

The dining room is candlelit with white table linen and chinaware, comfortable tanned leather studded chairs, and light from the sparkling chandeliers bouncing off the selection of silver trays that cover one of the grey coloured walls.

See also :

[AllWays traveller to the Glazebrook Hotel](#)
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www.*****

A snapshot of the River Dart, Devon UK



AllWays traveller and the International Travel Writers Alliance



AllWays traveller

AllWays traveller provides travel features to destinations worldwide from the journalists in the International Travel Writers Alliance.

www.allwaystraveller.com



The International Travel Writers Alliance

The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.

www.itwalliance.com

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Ashley Gibbins



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