



## 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](http://www.northdevon-aonb.org.uk),  
[www.southdevonaonb.org.uk](http://www.southdevonaonb.org.uk) and  
[www.discoverdevon.com](http://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 much of the Brownsham area, which it manages for wildlife and access for people to enjoy.

*Please recycle this leaflet by passing it onto a friend when you have finished with it. Don't let Devon go to waste.*



## Brownsham & Clovelly

- **Start/Finish:** Brownsham car park
- **Distance:** 5.5 miles (9 km)
- **Circular walk:** Yes     ■ **Grade:** Moderate
- **Terrain:** Coast path, public rights of way, surfaced road, and green lane. One rocky and uneven stretch and some slippery patches in wet weather.
- **Obstacles and steep gradients:** 3 flights of steps; 2 stiles; 1 steep ascent; 1 steep descent
- **Accessibility:** Route is unsuitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs
- **Public transport:** Bus service 519 to Clovelly from Bude. Bus service 319 to Clovelly from Barnstaple (Start walk from Coast Path above Clovelly). For further details contact Devon Traveline 0871 200 22 33 or [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)
- **Toilets:** No public toilets on route. Toilets are available in Clovelly, a short detour from main route
- **Parking:** Brownsham National Trust car park. By donation
- **Other Facilities:** Public payphone, post office and general stores in Clovelly village, a short detour from main route
- **Accommodation:** Please contact Bideford Tourist Information centre 01237 477676 or [bidefordtic@torridge.gov.uk](mailto:bidefordtic@torridge.gov.uk) or [www.discoverdevon.com](http://www.discoverdevon.com)
- **OS map:** Explorer 126     ■ **Grid ref:** SS 285259
- **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](http://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 car park, return to road and turn left. After 100m turn right, signed 'Mouth Mill 1 mile', and follow track down hill **(1,2)**.



2. At a major fork in the woods bear right signed 'Public Bridleway'. Bear left after 70m, and then after a further 70m turn right off the main track to follow public bridleway up rocky track.
3. Go straight on through metal gate after 150m. Bear left along field edge. Follow bridleway across next field via gate left in middle of pasture as waymarker. At top corner of field bear left along track.
4. Follow bridleway down through Court Farm and continue along drive. If you prefer to follow shorter route, turn left by the stream below the farm and follow the track. At the bottom, track curves round to left.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way round the bend fork right following white waymarker. Bear left after 70m to rejoin main route along coast path. Rejoin main route directions at instruction 9.
5. At estate yard **(3)** and church bear right up drive (or to visit

church or gardens, follow black and white signs ahead and to right, looping round to left).

6. At the road turn left along pavement **(4)**. Where pavement peters out, continue along road, past 'T' no-through-road signs.
7. At junction by small car park turn down to left signed 'Coast Path Brownsham 2 1/2m' then fork immediately left through large black gate with white 'Coast Path' sign. Bear right along track. (Alternatively to visit Clovelly **(5)**, turn right at initial junction down path to village. To return to route retrace your steps and follow directions).
8. Follow coast path fingerposts, 'acorn' waymarkers, and yellow arrows along clifftop. Path passes through parkland field, woods, and field once more, before re-entering woods.
9. At path junction bear right signed 'Coast Path' **(6)**. At a further path junction beyond 'Angel's Wings' shelter, bear right following coast path fingerpost **(7)**
10. At T-junction at bottom turn left signed 'Coast Path'. (Alternatively turn right to follow permissive path to viewpoint, then retrace your



steps to here and go straight on). Turn sharp right after 30m to follow track.

11. At the sea wall at Mouth Mill (8), drop down to the left and cross stream, then turn left up track. Beyond the half ruined building on right, turn sharp right to follow coast path up through woods (9).
12. From the stile at top of woods, instead of following coast path round right edge of field, go straight ahead up over the brow to gate and stile. Follow the old green lane inland (Permissive Path) (10).



13. When you reach farm buildings bear right past front of large barn, then right again up road. Car park is 50m on right.

## Points of Interest

1. The field beyond the gate to your right here contains Culm Grassland, which was a part of Brownsham Moor. The name comes from the rock beneath called Culm Measures, which give rise to heavy, acidic, and often wet soils, which are difficult to farm. The farmer's loss is nature's gain, as these grasslands are incredibly rich in wildlife, including scarce

orchid varieties and the rare marsh fritillary butterfly. Both Brownsham Moor and the nearby woods are now owned by the National Trust.

2. Brownsham Wood supports a lavish variety of trees and woodland species. Oak, hazel, holly, and tall elegant ash trees all thrive here. Birch trees, with a dusting of lichen over their silvery or sometimes wine coloured bark, grow along the left of the track, as do greenish barked willows. Hazel trees grow to both right and left, with tendrils of honeysuckle wrapped around some of their branches.



3. This is the heart of the Clovelly Estate, an ancient manor. At the time of the Domesday Book it was owned by the King, and it has been associated with only three families since the mid 13th century.

Of these, the famous Cary family included Robert Cary, knighted by Henry V after defeating the Knight Errant of Aragon. His grandson William, fighting for Henry VI, was captured and beheaded after the Battle of Tewksbury during the War of the Roses; and another

William, grandson of the first, was immortalised as 'Will Cary of Clovelly' by Charles Kingsley in his novel Westward Ho!

4. There is a good view from here of Clovelly Court. It is the family seat of the Hamlyns and their descendants, who have owned the estate ever since it was built in 1740. Fire destroyed all but one wing in 1789. Strangely, the same wing escaped damage once more in 1943 when fire broke out again.

The walls in front and to the left shelter Clovelly Court Gardens. These famous Victorian kitchen gardens, now fully restored, grow peaches, lemons, melons, figs, and vines, along with vegetables and herbaceous plants.

5. Clovelly itself, a short detour from the walk route, is a quirky and charming village. Built into a 400ft cliff, it is even now in the 21st century a car-free zone, with its one steep cobbled main street named 'up-a-long' and 'down-a-long'.

"And a mighty sing'lar and pretty place it is, as ever I saw in all the days of my life", was how Captain Jorgan, one of Charles Dickens' characters, described



Clovelly. Painted by Turner and many other artists, Clovelly was also where author Charles Kingsley was brought up. He later returned here to write his celebrated novels The Water Babies and Westward Ho!

Clovelly owed its prosperity in former times to the herring shoals. An annual festival is still held in the village to celebrate the return of the 'silver darlings' on their annual migration.

6. This shelter, called Angel's Wings, was built by Sir James Hamlyn Williams in 1826, one of several shelters he constructed around the estate. Sir James' daughter, Lady Chichester, lived across the bay, and he sited the shelter here so that he could look across to where she lived.



7. The open area on the high cliff here is called Gallantry Bower, a small patch of coastal heathland amongst the woods. The remains of a Bronze Age 'Tumullus', or burial mound, can still be seen, linked possibly to the ancient hillfort at Windbury Head, which is visible to the west.

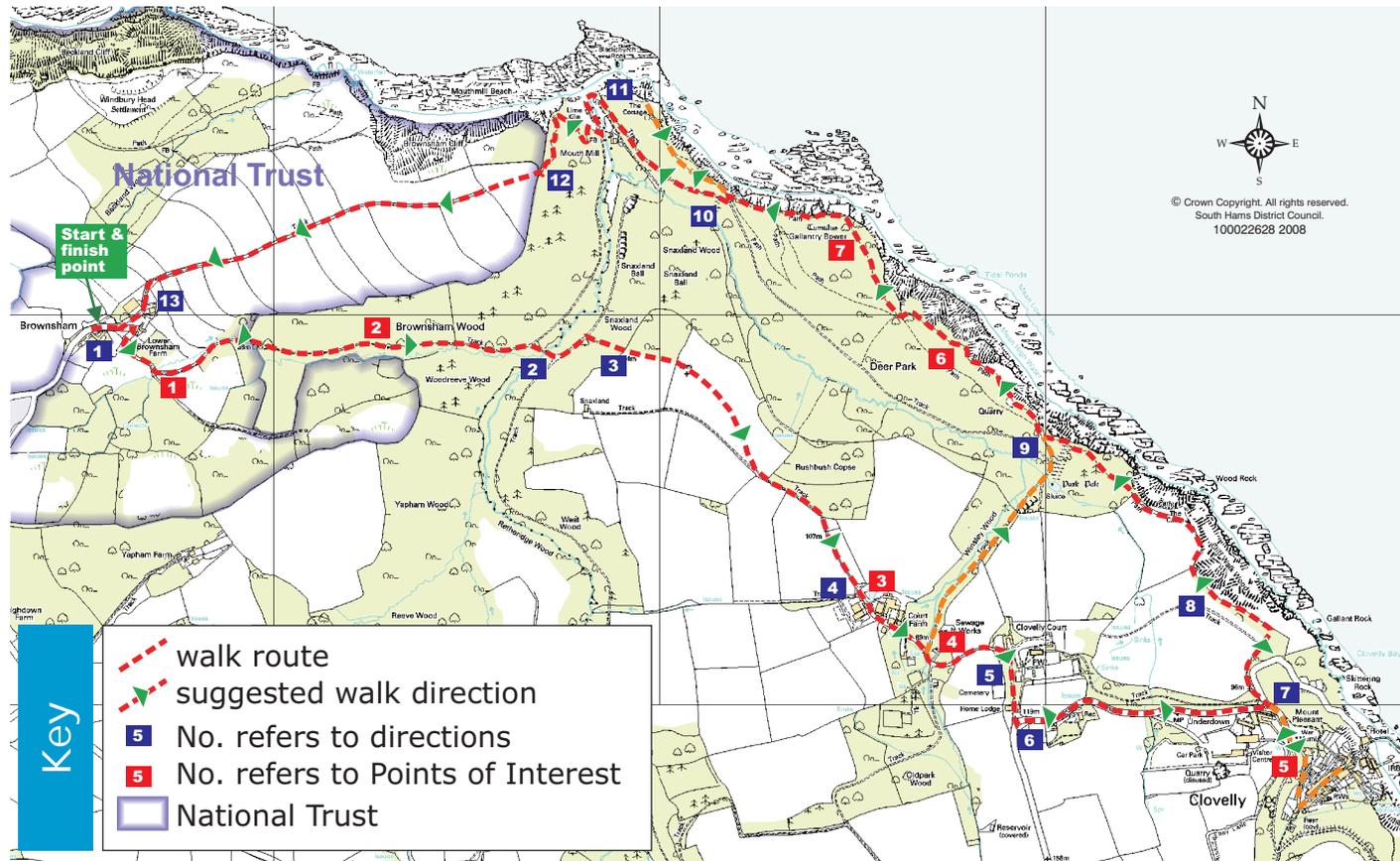
During World War II, commandos trained by climbing up these formidable cliffs. A colony of baby-faced, gull-like



Fulmars nests on the craggy rock face, sailing the winds on their stiff outstretched wings.

- Mouth Mill was a centre of smuggling in days gone by. Contraband goods could be secretly hauled ashore at this remote, sheltered cove with little fear of discovery. Down on the beach stands Blackchurch Rock, which has two windows dramatically cut through its sides by the sea.

Legal trade also took place at Mouth Mill. The mill which gave the valley its name is now a cottage to your left up the valley. Across the stream stands a wonderfully well preserved lime kiln. Limestone and coal, imported from South Wales, were placed in layers from the top, and then burnt slowly over several days. Afterwards the lime was shovelled out from the opening at the bottom.



- This green lane must be an old route indeed, if the hedges on either side are anything to go by. Research suggests that the more tree species are found in a hedge, the older it is. Each species in a 30 metre stretch is said to represent 100 years in age. Holly, blackthorn, hazel, willow, hawthorn, sycamore, ash, and rose all grow in these wonderfully healthy hedgerows. Look through the gateways on your right to catch glimpses of the Iron Age Hillfort at Windbury Head. Many of these old hillforts are located along the North Devon Coast.

## Refreshments

No refreshments directly on route, but a selection available in Clovelly village and at the nearby Visitor Centre, a short detour away on foot (but be warned, it is quite a steep climb back up out of the village!)

These establishments specialise in local food:

### Cottage Tea Rooms, Clovelly

01237 431781  
(Clovelly Visitor Centre)

[www2.clovelly.co.uk](http://www2.clovelly.co.uk)

Serves cream teas, hot and cold drinks, cakes, along with meals and light bites. Open Easter – end October.

### New Inn, Clovelly

01237 431781 (Clovelly Visitor Centre)

[www2.clovelly.co.uk](http://www2.clovelly.co.uk)

Open all day, with food served lunchtimes and evenings, situated halfway down the village. Fish, crab and lobster from Clovelly boats, game from the estate, and vegetables sourced partly from Clovelly Court Gardens.



- This is a wonderful example of old coastal Oak Woodland. The broad green blade like leaves of woodrush carpet the floor, which is also peppered with bluebells and primroses in the spring. Oak trees themselves provide a habitat for over 200 other organisms, more than any other British tree.