

DISCOVER

East Devon Area
of Outstanding
Natural Beauty



EAST DEVON

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



**BREATHTAKING VIEWS • GREAT WALKS
WILD DAYS OUT • AWARD WINNING LOCAL FOOD**

Looking for fun and healthy outdoor activities?



Our guide offers you a taster of how to make the best of our great outdoors, for all ages and for all abilities.

Accessibility at heart

By providing you with information on path condition or barriers, this guide allows you to decide on which parts of the following five adventure trails best meets your needs and how long you want your adventure to last. The below symbols indicate that an area is accessible for:



- a** ●●●● Level flat surface with resting places
- b** ●●●● Natural surface, kissing gates, no steps/stiles
- c** ●●●● Natural surface, varying gradients, gate on route
- d** ●●●● No stiles, up to five steps in a flight with a hand rail
- e** ●●●● More difficult terrain



TIPS FOR A GREAT, AND SAFE DAY OUT

- ▶ Plan ahead and follow any signs
- ▶ Leave gates and property as you find them
- ▶ Protect plants and animals, please take your litter home
- ▶ Keep dogs under close control and on a lead around livestock
- ▶ Be considerate of other people using Rights of Way and those working the land
- ▶ Guard against all risks of fire, especially on heathland sites

USEFUL INFORMATION

- **For all Rights of Way information** visit devon.gov.uk/prow, or to report a path problem call Devon County Council 0845 1551004.
- **For full map coverage** use O.S. Maps *Explorer 115 Exmouth and Sidmouth* or *Explorer 116 Lyme Regis and Bridport*.
- **Join us on board** for the best views. For public transport information visit transportdirect.gov.uk or call Traveline 0871 200 2233.
- **If you come by car**, please drive carefully in our villages and our narrow rural roads.
- **Eat the view!** Buying local products and services helps support those businesses that keep the landscape special.

Map inside



1 BEER HEAD



Walk in the footsteps of Jack Rattenbury, the 19th century Beer smuggler known as Rob Roy of the West! The striking chalk outcrop of Beer Head has many a story to tell and offers breathtaking coastal views.



Beer Head Famous site of a Napoleonic gun emplacement and a Romano-British farmstead.

Prehistoric field systems This has been a farmed landscape since before the Bronze Age. Modern sonar has been used to map out the ancient field systems of Beer's earliest settlers. The landscape continues to be cared for by today's farmers.

Under Hooken Created by a massive landslide in 1790. Look out for the ruins of an old limekiln.

Beer The name has nothing to do with smuggling liquor! Beer originated from the old English word 'Beare', meaning wood or grove. Also see how the village architecture is very much entwined with the underlying geology – Beer freestone and flint. Visit the Fine Foundation Centre on Beer beach to find out more.

2 LADRAM BAY AND RIVER OTTER



This walk takes 1 to 4 hours



There is a wealth of wildlife, history and culture to be discovered along the River Otter, so keep your eyes open. If you wish to cycle, the NCN route 2 links Otterton to Budleigh and then onto Exmouth along the old railway, but remember no cycling on footpaths.

Otter Estuary. This was once a busy trading point in the 15th century, called Bodelie Haven, until the pebble ridge blocked the river entrance. Now saltmarsh, mudflats and grazing marsh attract a wide variety of bird to this nature reserve, managed by the Pebblebed Heath Conservation Trust.

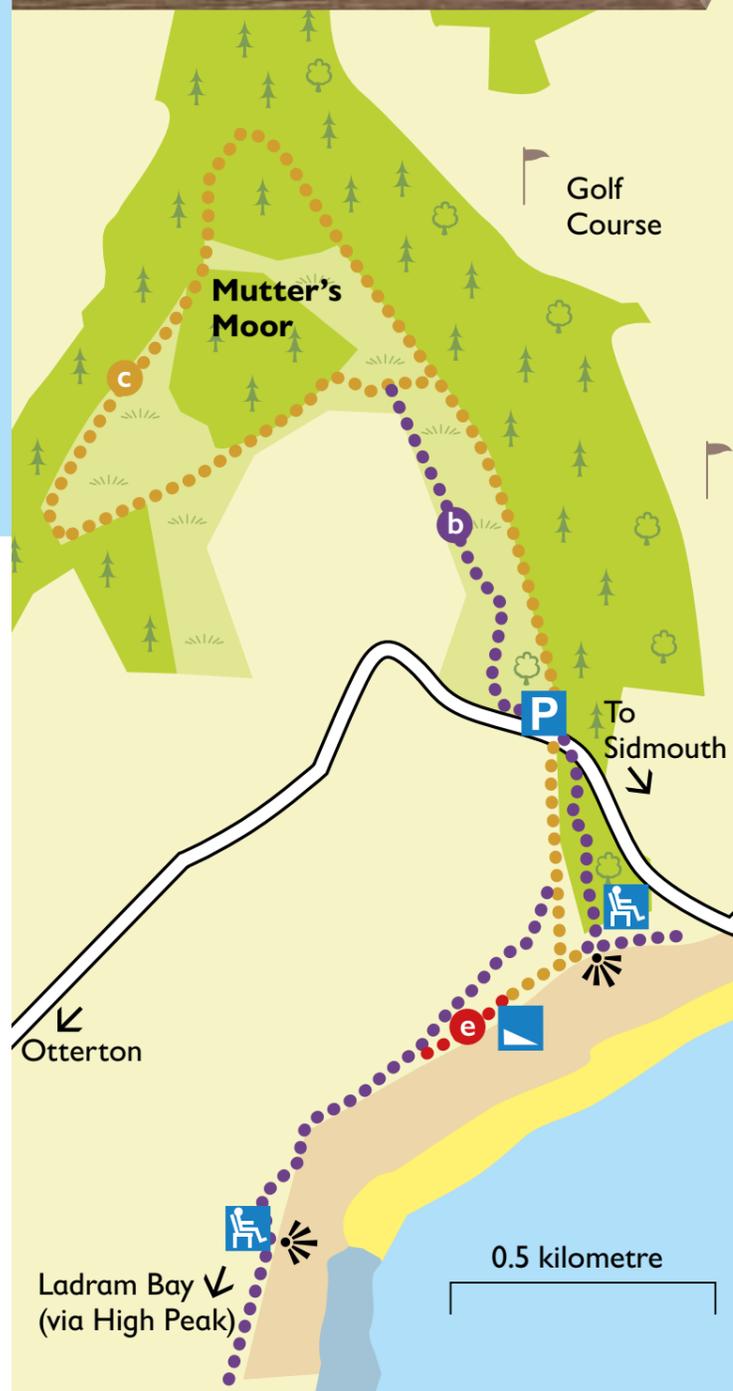
Otterton. Look out for the characteristic architecture of Mark Rolle, signed with his initials. Note the rounded edges of brickwork to farm entrances that prevent livestock getting injured.

Ladram Bay. 225 million year old sandstone, laid down when Devon was more like a desert and near the equator! Early rhychosaur dinosaurs have been found in these rocks! Wonderful stack features are formed by the wave erosion eating away at weaknesses in the stone.

3 MUTTERS MOOR, SIDMOUTH



This walk takes 1 to 2 hours



The tracks and paths around the heathland provide good level access for offroad bikes and walking, best enjoyed in summer for the vibrant colours and birdsong. Join the South West Coast Path at Peak Hill for stunning coastal views, although bike riding is prohibited on footpaths.

Owned by Clinton Devon Estates Heathland requires management, such as the removal of scrub and trees, to maintain its importance as a habitat for the abundant wildlife. In the summer, snakes or lizards maybe spotted basking in the sun whilst nightjars 'chirr' loudly in the evenings, as they come out to hunt moths.

Steven Stones There is believed to be a former Bronze Age stone circle on the moor. It forms part of the story of early prehistoric settlements in this area, which includes the finding of ancient tools, ritual tumuli and Iron Age hill-forts, as described by Sidmouth antiquarian Peter Orlando Hutchinson.

National Trust The National Trust manage the coastal woodland at Peak Hill.



4 BRANSCOMBE



This walk takes 1 to 2 hours



The level path from the village hall to Branscombe Mouth winds a delightful path through this series of interconnected combs. The facilities at the village hall are provided by the community, please donate to their upkeep.



Old Bakery, forge and Manor Mill
These National Trust properties promote the heritage of Branscombe.

Branscombe Mouth Now a popular seaside destination. This was once a coal yard, receiving coal from South Wales, to fire the numerous limekilns burning the cliff-top chalk. The stream also powered a gypsum mill too. Today the 'Branoc' micro-brewery provides ale to the local hostelryes.

Crops in the cliffs Landslides along the cliffline have created many small, extra areas of land. Even up to the 20th century these undercliffs were used as small plots, called 'plats', for growing crops such as potatoes or daffodils, as the soil was fertile and was sheltered from the elements. Weston Plats, further west, have been opened up by the National Trust for you to walk around and can be accessed via the Donkey Sanctuary.

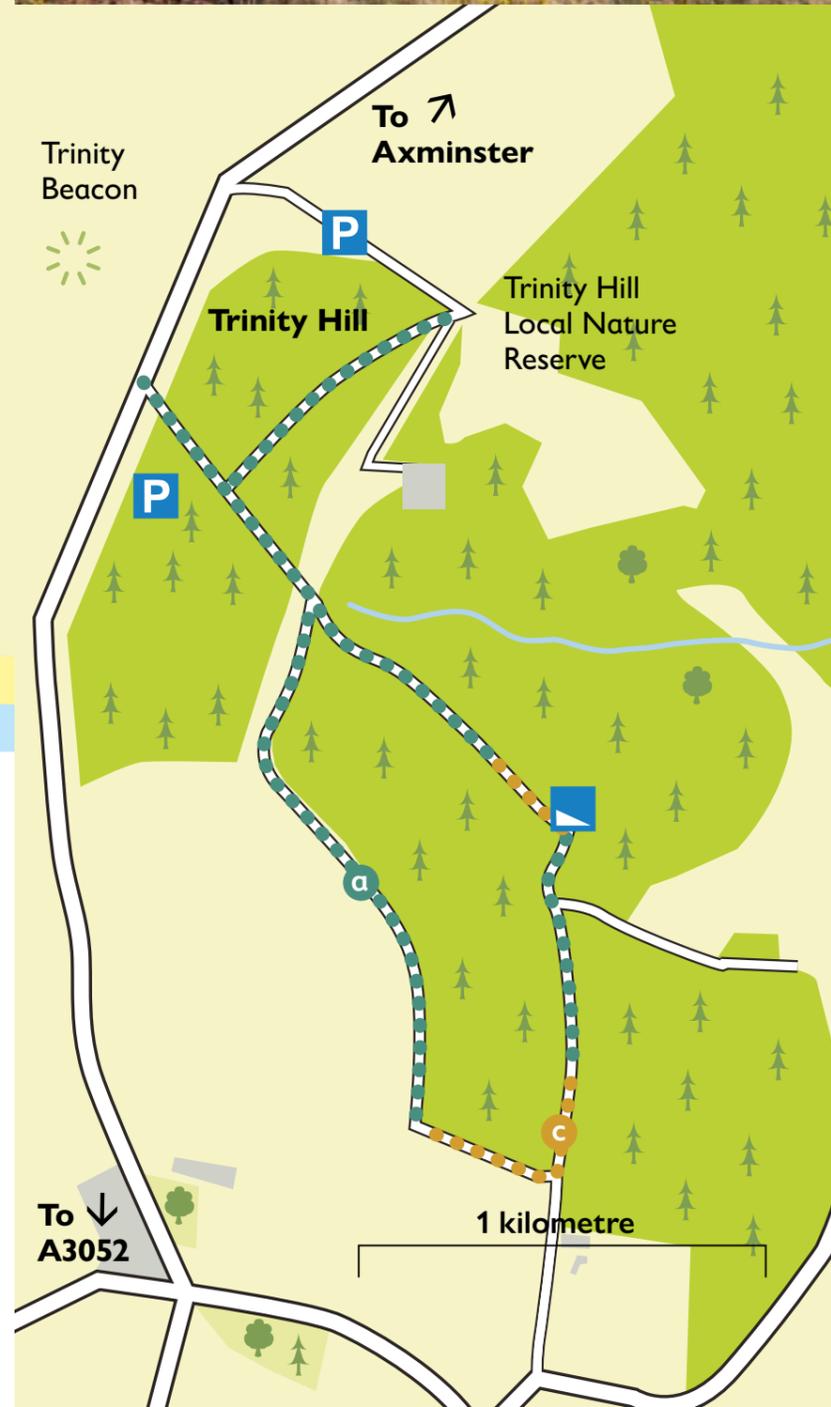
5 TRINITY HILL, AXMINSTER



This walk takes an hour



The woodland and heath plateau or ridge you walk across here is typical of one of the main landscape types of East Devon AONB. Much of this woodland is a crop and so is periodically harvested by such bodies as the Forestry Commission.



Trinity Hill Local Nature Reserve This reserve is looked after by the East Devon District Council Countryside Service. It is a haven for heather, with three different types present – bell, ling and cross-leaved.

Woodland management Note how heathland returns after woodland management, where the soils are infertile and thin. Heathland was historically a lot more common in this landscape, used as a fuel source, bedding and for grazing.



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SEE OVERLEAF
FOR WALKS
1 TO 5

Wild days (and nights!) out for every season...

SPRING

6. Holyford Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
Aroma of bluebells and birdsong fill the air. wildeastdevon.co.uk

7. Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs National Nature Reserve
A seven mile coastal trek through the best example of an active landslip system in Europe. naturalengland.org.uk



SUMMER

8. Bystock pools
Easy access boardwalks and downloadable audio tours available. devonwildlifetrust.org.uk, 01392 279244

9. Aylesbeare Common
Heathland, sheltered wooded fringes, streams and ponds. Important for Dartford warblers, nightjars, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies. rspb.org.uk, 01392 233655

10. Try a boat trip
A completely different view of the Jurassic Coast. Boats operate from Lyme Regis, Beer, Branscombe and Exmouth, or hire a kayak at Sidmouth or Ladram Bay. For details ask at your nearest Tourist Information Centre.

AUTUMN

11. Harford Woods
Walk on the old Feniton to Sidmouth railway line through picturesque woodland. clintondevon.com

12. Offwell Woodland Trust
Woodland Education Centre in Forestry Commission woodland with heathland, ponds and wetlands. countrysideinfo.co.uk, 01404 831881



WINTER

13. Seaton Wetlands
Seaton Wetlands is a honey pot for birdlife, especially in the winter months. Easy access bird hides provide excellent views of the Axe Vale and its wildlife. wildeastdevon.co.uk, 01395 517557. Try the mobile birdhide trips being offered by Seaton Tramway.

14. Otter Estuary
Tidal mudflats, saltmarsh, reedbeds and grazing marsh with easy access viewing platforms and birdhides. pebblebedheaths.org.uk

15. Norman Lockyer Observatory
Make the most of our dark winter skies and visit one of the most important observatories in the country, run by expert volunteers. normanlockyer.org.uk, 01395 579941

Become a landscape detective

People have been living and working here for thousands of years. Their activities, along with nature and the geology beneath, helped shape the landscape we see today, so it is the perfect place to become a landscape detective!

16. Beer Quarry Caves
A complex of underground caverns created by centuries of quarrying the famous Beer Stone, as used in Exeter Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. It is also internationally important for its hibernating bats. Open Easter to November. Charges apply. beerquarrycaves.co.uk, 01297 680282

17. Bicton Park
A 64 acre site celebrating horticulture, champion trees and much more. Open all year. Charges apply. bictongardens.co.uk, 01395 568465

18. Blackburn Camp
Iron Age encampment surrounded by woodland and farmland, best seen in May for its display of bluebells. englishheritage.gov.uk

19. Gittisham Hill
Open access land rich in evidence of Bronze Age burial sites, managed by the Combe Estate.

20. Woodbury Castle and The Commons
Iron Age hill fort and also once part of a vast World War II American army base. Today the heaths are used for training by the Royal Marines. The world class heathland is home to over 70 species of rare birds, butterflies, moths and dragonflies. pebblebedheaths.org.uk

21. World of Country Life
Exmouth's seasonal exhibition and museum of agricultural machinery and steam engines from the yesteryear. Charges apply. worldofcountrylife.co.uk, 01395 274533

22. Seaton Jurassic
Travel through time and discover the secrets of our planet's past. Hundreds of things to see, touch and do. Charges apply. seatonjurassic.co.uk

The East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is just that – outstanding! Here are just some of the places where you can enjoy its fantastic scenery and wildlife, learn about its rich culture and heritage, marvel at its world class coastline or savour its award winning local food and drink!

Most of the East Devon AONB is dominated by its greensand ridges and numerous river valleys, which extend north into the Blackdown Hills AONB. These landscape types contrast with the smaller area of coastal chalk plateau, the most westerly outcrop of chalk in England. The western end of the AONB is characterised by an extensive band of pebble beds, laid down some 240 million years ago during the Triassic period, forming an area known locally as 'The Commons'.

KEY

- Jurassic Coast
- Jurassic Coast towns
- Towns/villages
- Nature reserves
- South West Coast Path
- East Devon Way
- Cycleway
- View point
- Tourist information
- Walks/attractions



Picturesque villages and vibrant market towns

The settlement pattern of scattered villages and isolated farms, still seen today in the East Devon AONB landscape, has changed little in the last 400 years. The rivers of East Devon have been the source of water power used for milling or processing in the textile industries, helping grow thriving economies important to our industrial heritage. Find out more about our rich culture and heritage by visiting one of the many volunteer run museums. Explore our towns and villages to discover award winning local food and drink.

Axminster
Ancient market town on the River Axe. Gateway to the East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONBs. Home of Axminster Carpets, first established by Thomas Whitty in 1755.

Colyton
Learn about the 'Monmouth rebellion' in Devon's most 'rebellious town'. Highly skilled craftsmen still apply their trades, such as the local wheelwright and England's last working oak tannery.

East Budleigh
Celebrated birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh, on the edge of The Commons.

Honiton
A regionally important market town for antiques and famous as a centre for trading lace. Lace was not only produced in Honiton but was also sourced from many outlying villages. The skilled work provided valuable income to rural and coastal villages, such as Beer, where lace for Queen Victoria's wedding dress was made.

Newton Poppleford
See how 'popples' – a local name for the pebbles - have been used in the local architecture.

Otterton
Classic Devon cob and thatch cottages with a working watermill, Otterton Mill, on the River Otter.

Ottery St Mary
Birthplace of poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge and famous for its unique bonfire night celebrations, when flaming tar barrels are carried through the streets.

Sidbury
Saxon village in the Sid Valley, with a restored water mill - the church crypt is one of only six in the country.

Get a buzzards eye view

With its spectacular coast and countryside, the East Devon AONB has some really breathtaking views, as you explore the many high ridges and hills.

23. Fire Beacon Hill LNR
Heathland site in a prime vantage point overlooking Sidmouth and once the location of a Spanish Armada beacon. wildeastdevon.co.uk

24. Musbury Castle
Views across the Axe and Coly Valleys from the East Devon Way below Musbury Castle, now looked after by the National Trust. nationaltrust.org.uk

Way to go

Walking, cycling and horse riding are all great ways to get out and enjoy the AONB. With miles of footpaths, bridleways and green lanes across the area there's something for everyone.

28. South West Coast Path
From Lyme Regis to Exmouth, 30 miles of the 630 mile National Trail. Enjoy spectacular views of the Jurassic Coast or a choice of bite size circular walks. southwestcoastpath.com

29. East Devon Way
A memorable walking experience linking footpaths, bridleways and stretches of country lanes creating an inland route from Exmouth, through the heart of the AONB to Lyme Regis – follow the EDW foxglove logo. eastdevonway.org.uk

25. Orcombe Point
A geoneedle marks the start of the Jurassic Coast. nationaltrust.org.uk

26. Salcombe Hill
A wheelchair friendly path out to the cliffs offers impressive views along the Jurassic Coast, east and west. nationaltrust.org.uk

27. White Cross Picnic Site, East Hill
Views over Ottery St Mary, The Commons and to Dartmoor beyond. wildeastdevon.co.uk

30. Exe Estuary cycle route
The Exe Estuary Trail is part of the developing network of cycle routes in Exeter, one of England's oldest cities. sustrans.org.uk

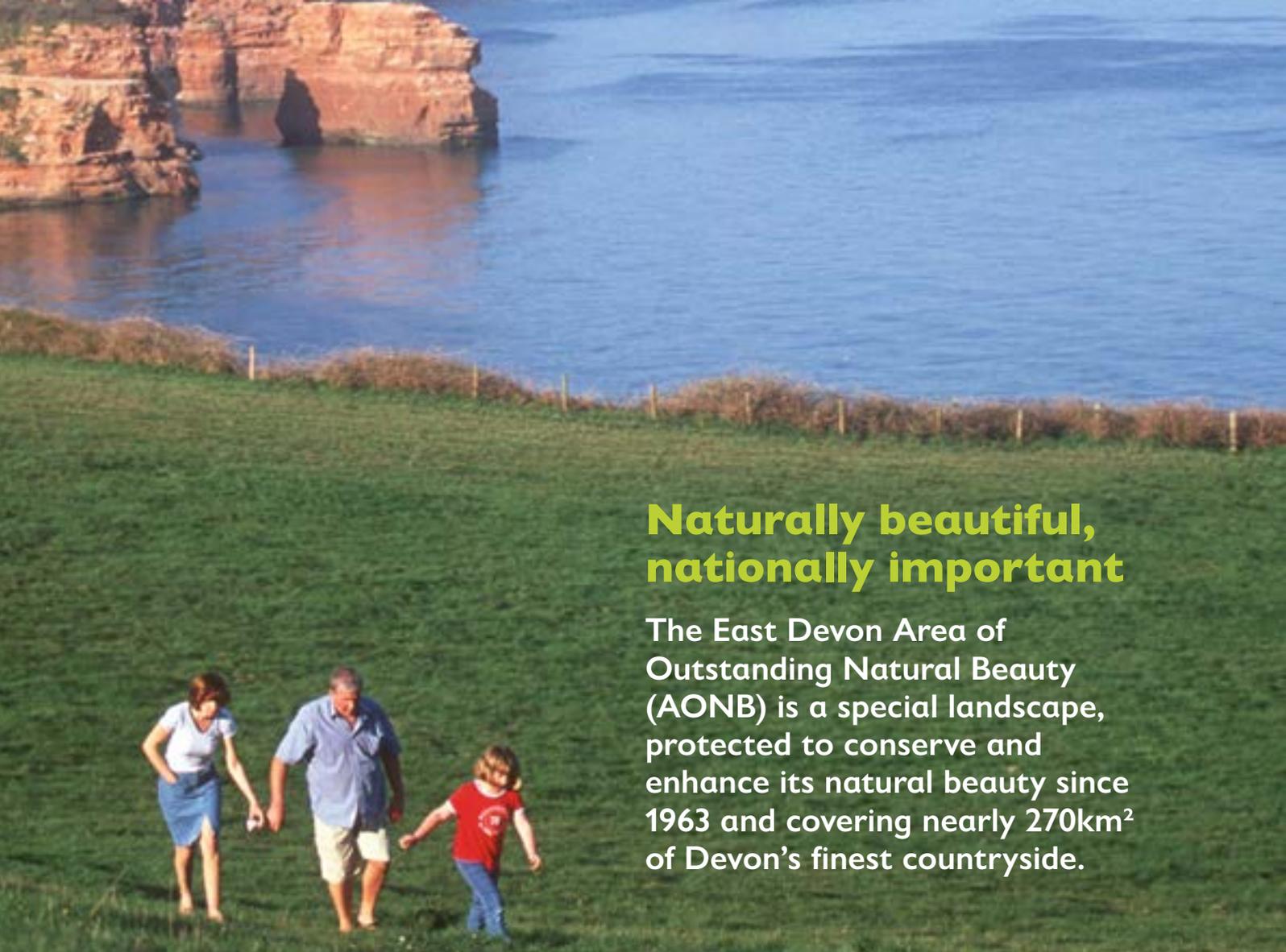
31. Exmouth to Budleigh Salterton cycleway
An old railway line ideal for family friendly days out. Part of the Sustrans NCN number 2. sustrans.org.uk

32. Horse riding
With over 160km of legally accessible routes, there are great opportunities for riding. Visit a Tourist Information Centre for local riding school details.

Jurassic Coast Gateway towns

The geology of East Devon and Dorset is so special that the coastline has been designated England's first natural World Heritage Site – the Jurassic Coast. Gateway Towns allow you to immerse yourself in millions

of years of the Earth's history, spanning three geological periods between 250 and 65 million years ago; Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous. jurassiccoast.com



Naturally beautiful, nationally important

The East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a special landscape, protected to conserve and enhance its natural beauty since 1963 and covering nearly 270km² of Devon's finest countryside.

It is part of the same family of nationally important landscapes that also includes National Parks. There are 34 AONBs covering nearly 15% of England's best bits! The East Devon AONB Partnership which represents a

wide range of organisations, land owners and businesses, works together to conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities, whilst encouraging a vibrant rural economy.

For more information on our work, grants and contact details, visit our website:
eastdevonaonb.org.uk



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East Devon AONB
is funded by:

