

Doone Country from County Gate



The area around Badgworthy Water is famed as the setting for the novel *Lorna Doone*. The legendary hideaway of the outlaw Doones is a matter of conjecture but the walk is worthwhile for the stunning scenery and tranquillity of the open moorland.



POINTS OF INTEREST

County Gate [SS 794487](#)

This stands on the Devon/Somerset boundary, hence its name. There was a gate across the road and its stone posts can still be seen. Horsedrawn stagecoaches ran along the road until the 1920s. The gatekeeper's cottage, now the National Park Centre, was called the Road House and provided refreshments for travellers. It is reputed to have been connected with smuggling in the early 19th century.

Ashton Cleave [SS 790486](#)

This steep side of the East Lyn valley is covered with scree formed by frost weathering in the Ice Age. Amongst that is a mixture of scrub dominated by common gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and coastal heath dominated by bell heather (*Erica tetralix*) and western gorse (*Ulex gallii*). Facing south and relatively undisturbed, it is a good area for butterflies, with over twenty species recorded.

Malmsmead [SS 792478](#)

The 17th century packhorse bridge spans Badgworthy Water, the boundary between Devon and Somerset. Originally called Malmsmead Farm, Lorna Doone Farm was home of the Snow family until they moved to Oare Manor in the 18th century. Nicholas Snowe was churchwarden in the novel, but there is no other connection.

Waterslide [SS 791453](#)

Here Lank Combe Water slips over beds of sandstone in a small ravine. Jan Ridd, the hero of the 'Lorna Doone' novel, fell into a pool below such a waterslide whilst fishing for loaches.

Hoccombe Combe [SS 793444](#)

This is probably the site of the Domesday settlement of Bicheordin, and medieval hermitage of Badgworthy of which foundations of fourteen buildings can be found. Beyond the small hillock in the combe can be found the remains of a farmhouse, occupied until the 19th century, and of a shepherd's cottage built from the ruins.

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK

Exmoor became Britain's eighth National Park in 1954 and these walks were designed to celebrate its Golden Anniversary.

The National Park covers 267 square miles of Somerset and Devon. It is a landscape of great variety: from rugged, towering cliffs to gently rounded hills, wooded valleys, colourful heaths, wild grass moors and farming hamlets and it is home to nearly 11,000 people.

For further information contact Exmoor National Park Dulverton Visitor Centre: Tel 01398 323841
E-mail: NPCDulverton@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk
Website: www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

MAP

Scale 1: 50000 SHEET Nos SS 1

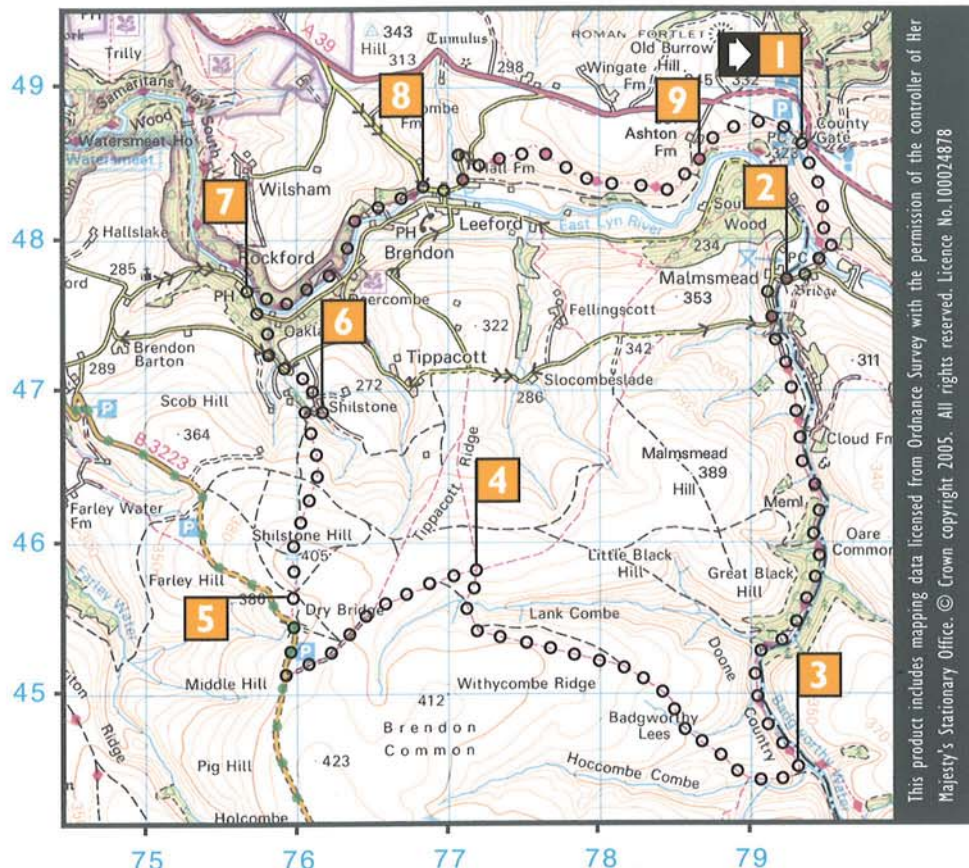
The map section below is taken from the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map OL9

The area is also covered by the Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 180.

1 Kilometre

1 Mile

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK



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11 miles (18 kilometres). 6 hours. Start point: National Park car park at County Gate. Moderate to strenuous. Navigation on open moorland may be difficult in mist. Buses between Minehead and Lynmouth will stop at County Gate and, in summer, pass Brendon and Rockford. At Brendon and, in season, Malmsmead and Cloud Farm. **WC** At County Gate and Malmsmead car parks. On lead at all times.

WALK DIRECTIONS

1 From the car park entrance at **County Gate**, facing the road, take the gate to the right towards Malmsmead. Continue downhill. At the river, cross the bridge. Continue to the road and turn right.

2 At **Malmsmead** cross the bridge and take the road to the left. 300 yards up the road take the gate to the left towards Doone Valley. Continue on the track on the same side of the river for about two miles, crossing the footbridge at Lank Combe, where you can look upstream to the **Waterslide**.

3 At **Hoccombe Combe** bear right, following the signs for Brendon Common. Continue uphill and after a mile go through a gate, continuing in the Brendon Common direction. The track skirts Lank Combe then fords it, continuing upwards to the right.

4 At the crossing at the top, fork left towards Dry Bridge. After a mile the track meets the main road over the common. Fork left and follow the road verge for 400 metres and over Dry Bridge.

5 Take the track on the right towards Shilstone. Continue straight over Shilstone Hill, passing the trig. point on the summit and dropping ahead for another kilometre to the hamlet at Shilstone.

6 Cross the stream and turn left through the farmyard. Keep straight ahead through the gate and across the next field. In the next field

drop to the bottom left corner and over the stile onto the road. Turn left along the road, cross the stream and take the next path on the right towards Rockford. Drop steeply through the woods to a road. Turn left and continue to Rockford.

7 On entering the hamlet, take the footbridge to the right. Cross and turn right towards Brendon. Follow the track along the same side of the river, through woods and between the mill buildings to the mill drive. This leads onto a minor road. Continue ahead to the bridge.

8 Do not cross the bridge but continue along the road in the direction of Porlock. After the next bend take the footpath to the right towards County Gate. The path zigzags steeply upwards, then follows the boundary below fields for a mile.

9 Cross a footbridge and turn left uphill. After about a hundred metres, bear right across a level patch to a gate. Keep upwards towards County Gate. The path then skirts the top of **Ashton Cleave** back to the car park

Blackmore memorial

