Welcome to this selection of walks in and around the neighbouring parishes of Dolton and Dowland, also straying into the adjacent parishes of Beaford, Merton, Iddesleigh, Ashreigney and Winkleigh.

Each walk description begins with a brief indication of distance and walking time to help you choose one suitable for you, but please expect to take longer if you intend to stop and enjoy the views or to take photos, as the ‘walking times’ are just that. Some of the views are simply breathtaking and we would not want you to miss these just to keep to the stated time.

Please also take note of general conditions; if it is raining or threatening to do so, and the introduction says ‘can be wet in places’ then it probably will be wet, so be sure to wear appropriate footwear and be ready for rain!

The directions given are necessarily brief in order to fit in as many walks as possible. If you would like more details of the walks and the surroundings you will be passing through, then an accompaniment for each walk can be found via the Dolton website at www.dolton.org.uk and these will be updated from time to time. You can print these to read along the way.

Many of the routes cross each other so once you have done the walks as described, you can easily mix, extend, shorten or reverse routes to suit yourself. The descriptions only really work if you follow the given directions, so it is best to do them as described first, then vary them once you are familiar with the area.

All of the routes follow either quiet country roads, lanes or public footpaths which are mostly well signposted along the way, so look out for waymarks and follow these to cross check that you are on the right track. Some of the paths are not heavily used and therefore not particularly clearly defined, so please follow the directions carefully.

BE PREPARED. These are not walks where you will pass crowds of others along the way and there are no ice cream vans or cafes round each bend. Carry provisions and particularly water with you, and you can always plan to stop at one of the inns either along the way in a few cases, or at the end of your journey. These will generally be happy to provide a meal and hot & cold drinks to help you along the way.

We hope that you enjoy the walks as much as we have done in the preparation of this guide!

Roger Dunn & Alan Haynes, January 2014
DOLTON & DOWLAND WALKS ~ Overview

These ten walks (no. 4 has two versions) all start and end in the parishes of Dolton or Dowland. The Dolton walks begin in The Square, with the exception of walk 9 which requires a short drive to Ashwell car park. Four walks pass through Dowland parish, with no. 8 starting in Dowland.

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The route of each walk is shown as a blue line, emphasised with red arrows, on each map. Unless you are already familiar with the area, it is advisable to carry your own 1:25,000 map with you to avoid getting lost and for greater clarity & understanding of the route.

Please be aware that many of the walks pass over farmland or through farms. If fields are planted with crops, try to go around the edge. Keep clear of cattle and keep dogs under control.
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**Cycle Routes around Dolton & Dowland**

As well as many good walks, there are plenty of excellent cycle routes around the area - the choice is yours depending on your type of cycling. The area is criss-crossed with many minor roads and quiet country lanes, ideal for the leisure cyclist, and it is not difficult to largely avoid the only two main roads, the A3124 to the east and the A386 to the west.

Just a short distance away is the Tarka Trail cycle route, part of the National Cycle Network route 27, the Devon Coast to Coast. This can be accessed at Meeth, or Petrockstowe, from where you can remain almost exclusively on traffic-free cycle paths all the way to Braunton.

For planning your cycle route in the immediate area surrounding Dolton and Dowland, use OS maps 127 and 113 (1:25,000)

Please note that although the road sections of the walks are also suitable for cycling, most of the walking paths are not, and in many cases cycling is not permitted on the footpaths.
WALK 1 - Cleave, Chapple & Eastacott farms

4.1 miles, approx 1½ hours, easy going on mostly quiet lanes

A straightforward walk starting in Dolton village square, mostly on quiet lanes although the start is on the B3217 with some traffic likely. Suitable in most weather, with a couple of moderate hills. Passes close to both Dolton pubs, but no other facilities en route.

Starting and finishing in Dolton Village Square, this walk can easily be altered as follows, depending on conditions and your stamina:

A) At the turning to Cleave Farm near the Dolton village sign, you can take the well signposted Tarka Trail across country, via Ham Farm and on to Staple Cross.

B) At Chapple Cross you can remain on the road either to Dowland or via Staple Back Lane to Staple Cross.

Otherwise, the full route is as follows:

• From the Square, go past Church Street Stores and down Church Street, passing St Edmund’s Church main gate. Turn right and after 100 yds continue down the hill to the right-hand bend and the Dolton village sign.

• For Tarka Trail diversion (see walk 6 on p11) go through the wide metal gate and follow signs down the steep valley, up to Ham Farm, across fields to Staple Cross to rejoin the route

• Otherwise, continue down the hill to the bridge at the bottom, then up past the main entrance to Ham Farm. Continue along this road rising gently to Chapple Cross, turn left and after 30 yds right towards Chapple Farm.

• After ½ mile, take the marked footpath to the left off this lane, diagonally across the field and over a stile in the corner, then diagonally across the next field unless it is planted with crops, when you can go round the edge. Turn right onto the road and into Dowland, turning left at the junction opposite St Peter’s Church.

• Continue on this lane for ½ mile to Staple Cross. Turn right here as the ground continues to rise gently until the highest point just before passing Eastacott Farm on the left and Newlands Farm on the right. Continue for a further ½ mile to Furzepark Cross where there is an iron bench at the crossroads.

• Turn left and go down the hill before rising again to pass the main entrance to Stafford Barton House. The road now descends gently before crossing the brook at Culiford, followed by a moderate climb up Stafford Hill and back into Dolton. Turn left at the top of the hill, out onto the main road, past the planters and village notice board then fork right along Fore Street to the Square.
WALK 2 - Halsdon Wood, Iddlecott, Down Farm

3.5 miles, approx 1½ hours on lanes, footpaths and meadows

Mostly an easy walk, about half on quiet lanes but with a couple of quite steep climbs. Suitable in most weather although after heavy rain some of the farm tracks and valleys can be quite muddy. No facilities en route until you return to Dolton.

Starting and finishing in Dolton Village Square, this walk goes past the entrance to Halsdon Nature Reserve, maintained by the Devon Wildlife Trust, and the walk can be easily adjusted to take in more of it if you wish. Alternatively you can easily miss out Down Farm and return along Brook Road to Dolton, which reduces the distance to 2.8 miles. Cattle may be encountered in one or two of the fields.

- From the Square, take West Lane out of the village and down the long gentle hill. At the bottom the lane bends left then right, and after another 200 yds turn right at Woolridge Cross.
- After a few yards you pass the entrance to Halsdon Woods where you can divert - maps are usually available in the box below the information board.
- Continue up the lane, after ½ mile passing another entrance to the woods on the left. Once the hill flattens out, immediately after the entrance to Venstave Cottage, turn right at the signpost down a steep path, which can be muddy.
- At the bottom, turn left onto a track down to the stream with some pretty cottages on your left, where Halsdon watermill stood nearby in the 19th century. Cross the footbridge, through a boggy area into the field. Follow the hedge up the right side of the field and through a gate at the top, maintaining the same direction through the next field towards a tall beech tree.
- Go through a 5-bar gate (signposted) and gently up through the woods following the track of a small stream and cross a stile into a field. Head diagonally across the field towards a large isolated tree, with distant views of Yes Tor on Dartmoor.
- Exit the field through a large metal gate and turn left onto a farm track. Ignore footpath signs (where you could divert quickly back to Dolton) and continue through the farmyard, onto a concrete lane passing a pond on the right. At the road, turn left for 90 yds, then right towards Down Farm.
- Stay on this concrete track, ignoring more footpath signs, past a bungalow on the right then turn right through a gate before the farmyard, with signpost. Head diagonally down across the field, through a gate into the woods, following the stream.
- Through a gate into a meadow, continue to the trees at the end and through another gate, turning left onto Brook Road and back into Dolton, turn right for the Square.
WALK 3 - New Bridge, Huish, Merton and Beaford Bridge
9.5 miles, approx 4 hours plus stops; woodland and countryside

The longest walk in this book, on country paths and tracks but with 3 sections on quiet lanes. Mostly easy
going, with a few steep hills. There is a pub about half way at Merton, also the pubs in Dolton and Beaford

- From the Square, take West Lane out of the village and down the long gentle hill. At the bottom the lane bends left then right, and after another 200 yds go straight on at Woolridge Cross. After ¼ mile, half way up a hill, turn right onto the marked footpath. This path rises gently through the woods.

- Cross a stile on the left and walk alongside a field. Cross the next stile on the left and continue in the same direction alongside another field, and in the corner near Brightley Barton farm, go left, remaining in the field, then exit onto the farm track and turn left.

- At the road, turn right and continue downhill to cross the river Torridge at New Bridge.

- Immediately after the first thatched cottage, turn right through a wide gate, through the yard and take the bridle path through a gate and up to the left. At the field, go straight across (but if there are crops you can go around the field either way) and onto a wide farm track, with a blue arrow waymark on the gatepost.

- Continue alongside the woods, with lovely southerly views to Dartmoor, and after a field go through the gate onto a concrete lane. Follow the sign to Huish Church, go through a gate and past the Old Rectory and the pretty St James the Less church, turning right just after it to Heanton Satchville and onto a fenced lane through parkland. Go straight on at the crossroads and through a gate with a yellow waymarker.

- Follow the field track downhill gently bending left; at the bottom cross the bridge and go steeply uphill to the road at Shepherd’s Court (turn right here if not going to the pub)

- Turn left to go to the Maltscop Inn, Merton, ¼ mile, or turn right to continue the walk.

- From Shepherd’s Court, continue along the road, gradually descending to Merton Mill. Fork left at the bottom towards Beaford, first steep uphill then gently down to Balls Corner, where you fork right to Beaford.

- Follow the road down to cross Beaford Bridge, continue past some thatched cottages (Beaford Mill) and steep uphill. After the sharp right bend, turn right onto the footpath, down through the woods towards the river. Ignore the first path left, continue along the riverside to the second left turn, follow this path up through the woods and join a farm track steep uphill.

- After the gate at the top, go left onto a tarmac lane, stay on this until until you meet Brook Lane at Frosts Corner. Turn right and continue for 1½ miles to Dolton.
A fairly gentle walk along pretty lanes, with the middle part on marked footpaths past Stafford Barton, then some open fields and with a choice of two routes from Cherubeer. Suitable in most weather, though there could be some muddy parts in the middle, farm section.

- From the Square, go along Fore Street and continue past the village notice board where you cross the road, bear right then turn right down Stafford Hill. (alternatively, head for the village hall and take the footpath across the field to the bottom of Stafford Hill)
- Pass the sewage works and continue up the road for ¾ mile to the entrance to Stafford Barton, going through the small signposted gate to the left of the main gate.
- Follow the iron fence on your left, passing a pond, with Stafford Barton house away to your right.
- Straight ahead there is a signposted track between a fenced field on the right and a hedge on the left; it turns right at the end of the field and continues to a lane which goes to the house. This path around the field can get overgrown so it may be easier to go left of the hedge, turn right at the end onto a rough track, then up to the lane.
- Once on the lane, turn left away from the big house and after about 100 yds go through the second of two gates on the left. Walking diagonally across the field, head to the right of the roof of a farm building in the distance and through a gate in the hedge on the right side of the field. Continue in the same direction through the next two fields, passing through gates in the corners of both.
- In the next field, after a short distance go through the first gate in the hedge on your right, then diagonally to the gate on the right of the farm buildings of Cross Farm. Through this gate you emerge onto the farm lane; turn right and follow the lane until it joins the road at Cherubeer hamlet.
- **EITHER A:** Turn left and follow this quiet road for about 1½ miles back to Dolton, passing Aller Farm on the way. Keeping straight ahead at all junctions brings you back to the centre of the village.
- **OR B:** Turn right and take this road past the three houses of Cherubeer and continue to the ‘T’ junction. Turn right and follow this straight but pretty road, passing Stafford Moor Fishery and Dowland Moor on the right. At the crossroads at Loosedon Cross turn right, then after another 1¼ miles turn right at Furfepark Cross. This road takes you back past the entrance to Stafford Barton and on back to Dolton.
Ashwell - walks 5 & 9

Dartmoor, from Iddesleigh - walks 6 & 8

Stafford Road - walks 1,4,6

Poole Cottage, Iddlecott - walk 2

Beaford Bridge - walk 3

Fore St, Dolton. Royal Oak far left - walks 1,2,4,7
Halsdon Woods in the spring - walk 5

Cleave Hill, Dolton - walk 1

St Edmund’s Church, Dolton from south east - walk 6

Near Ashwell car park - walk 9

Past Stafford Moor Fishery - walk 4B

River Torridge beside Halsdon Woods - walk 5

Karin Hewlett

Karin Hewlett

Karin Hewlett

Karin Hewlett

Karin Hewlett

Karin Hewlett
WALK 5 - Halsdon Nature Reserve and Buckland Farm
5.1 miles, approx 2¼ hours through woods, farms and quiet lanes

Taking in most of the direct route through Halsdon Woods, this walk can be easily varied to include more of this lovely nature reserve, and the return could be altered at Stubbyfield Cottage to include part of walk 2, thereby reducing the time spent walking on roads. The woods can be muddy at times.

- From the Square, take West Lane out of the village and down the long gentle hill. At the bottom the lane bends left then right, and after 200 yds turn right at Woolridge Cross.
- Go over the bridge and left through the gate into Halsdon Nature Reserve, which is maintained by the Devon Wildlife Trust. There is an information board and usually leaflets available showing the various routes through the woods.
- Continue on the lowest path, gently descending until you reach the River Torridge. Here the path turns right and continues alongside the river.
- Where the path divides, take the low, left route remaining beside the river, signposted Halsdon Hide. At the 5-bar gate & stile go straight on into the meadow, keeping to the riverbank fence on the left. (If there is a sign restricting entry to the meadow, turn right up the hill and follow the Halsdon Hide signs.)
- Continue into the next field, again keeping to the riverbank fence until you reach another 5-bar gate. Go through this and the hide is on the right, well worth a visit to relax and enjoy the wildlife.
- Follow the steep path up behind the hide, turning left at the first junction and after a further 100yds turn right and continue uphill. At the next junction go left and uphill again to a stile at the top. Turn left after the stile, through the gate and follow the right-hand hedge to a wooden bench at the top of the field, called the “Top of the World”, from where there are superb views.
- From the bench, head down to the far right corner of the field, through a stile into the woods. At the junction, go right to a gate & stile into a field, then straight across to another gate and up into Ashwell car park. Follow the car track to the road at Stubbyfield Cottage and left along the road . On the second left bend, take the footpath on the right through a gate, left to a gap in the hedge, through a 5-bar gate and head diagonally across the field.
- At the far side, cross the track and through the left-hand gate into a field, again heading diagonally across to a waymark. Go through another stile/gate and to the right of the hedge ahead, down to a metal gate. Go left past the wood-faced cottages then right along the lane until you reach Brook Road where you turn right; it is then about a mile back to Dolton where you turn right for the village centre.
WALK 6 - Tarka Trail to Iddesleigh, back via Furzepark Cross
7.5 miles, approx 3 hours, mostly footpaths out, quiet lanes back

A beautiful longish walk starting in Dolton village square, following the Tarka Trail all the way to the Duke of York pub in Iddesleigh, recently famous for its connections with “War Horse” and good for a refreshment stop. Can be muddy when wet, but the return is largely on quiet lanes and paths.

- From the Square, go past the village shop and down Church Street, passing St Edmund’s Church. Turn right and after 100 yds continue down the hill to the right-hand bend and the Dolton village sign.
- Opposite the Dolton sign, enter the wide field gate and go straight down the steepest part to the stile at the bottom. Cross the bridge, go through a gate on the left and rise through two more fields, keeping the hedge on your right.
- Through a wide gate, cross the lane and over the stile into a field, keeping to the hedge on your left. Cross the stile beside Ham farmhouse and continue down this field keeping the hedge on your left.
- Cross the bridge and stile, keep the hedge to your left up to the top of this field, through a gate and diagonally across the next field, aiming left of a cluster of trees in the far corner. Cross another stile and continue in the same direction through the next field to the far corner, at Staple Cross.
- Cross the lane, go down the farm track passing the bungalow on your right and barns on the left, over two stiles, then turn half-right towards a gateway. After the gate, follow the hedge on the right to the stile at the bottom.
- Follow the signs through the woodland and across the bridge into an irregular shaped field. Head straight up to the ridge, where the exit lane becomes visible in the far corner. This track, sometimes muddy, soon joins another: keep straight and you soon emerge in Upcott hamlet. Turn left on the lane past the farm, then immediately right down a rough track.
- Half way down, go left over a signposted stile and across the field, aiming slightly downhill for a gateway in the opposite hedge. Then head right, towards the centre of some trees at the bottom. Cross the bridge over the twisting stream, emerging to follow a fence on the right; continue across this field, over a stile in the corner, pass some farm buildings on the left and go straight on to the farm lane.
- Follow this lane all the way to Combe Cottage, with lovely views of Dartmoor ahead. Go straight across the road and down through East Park farmyard. At the bottom turn right and follow Park Lane until you emerge in the middle of Iddesleigh, where you will...
probably be ready for a break at the Duke of York! (note footpath just before end of Park Lane, continue from here)

- Go back to the footpath sign in Park Lane and turn left up across this field keeping the hedge on your left, and through the gate. Cross the next field diagonally right, to the far corner gate and emerge onto the road.
- Turn right along this road, crossing your earlier route at Combe Cottage. Continue along this quiet lane, passing the three properties of Whitemoor hamlet and some bends in the road until a sharp left followed by sharp right. On the right bend, follow the footpath sign left, along a short lane into North Hall.
- At the gate (please leave it as you find it), continue in the same direction across the gravel drive, passing the house on your right and through the small gateway opposite into a small garden area, across which is the stile into the field. Bear slightly left down this field until you find the stile into the woods.
- Go down through the woods and across the stream - there are waymarks in the woods but these can be hard to find. Carefully follow the waymarks and be sure to locate the next before losing sight of the previous one. There are some very wet spots, but after crossing the stream you should find the path up to a stile where you exit the woods.
- There are marker posts up and to your left where you cross the fence and on to the gate in the far corner, where you emerge onto the lane to Pewson Barton. Turn right on this lane which rises to meet the road. Turn right and follow this quiet road to the crossroads at Furzepark Cross where there is an iron bench opposite. Straight across, and it is about a mile to Dolton where, after climbing Stafford Hill, you turn left to the centre of the village and back to the Square.

**WALK 7 - Combe, Cudworthy & Down Farms, Beaford Moor**

*7.6 miles, approx 3¼ hours, on footpaths, fields and some roads*

*This is quite an open country walk, with plenty of views of the rolling Devon countryside. Two short stretches are alongside roads, but the visibility is good. Some of the fields can be very wet at times.*

- From the Square, go along Fore Street and continue along the main road to Dennis Cross playing field. Turn left into Brook Road and continue for ½ mile, then turn right onto the farm track for Down Farm.
- Where the lane turns right, take the rough track straight on which descends until you reach the corner of a field. Head for the bungalow opposite, going over a stile in a gap between the trees and down to a wide metal gate into a field.
• Continue up this field, passing a thatched cottage on your right, onto a farm track and past the aforementioned bungalow on your left, continuing all the way to the main road. Where the lane zigzags you are passing from Dolton to Beaford parish.

• Cross the A3124 onto the wider verge opposite, going left towards Beaford for ¾ mile. There is a very short stretch with no verge, but visibility is good. At a gate near the wind turbine there are fine views (left to right) of Beaford Church, Huntshaw Cross, Upcott Farm, Roborough and the radar station at Eaglescott airfield.

• Shortly after a left turn to Dolton, at a large layby on the right, turn right towards Combe Farm (this is the closest point to Beaford where, if thirsty or hungry, you could divert to the Globe Inn on the main road). Follow the tarmac lane down past the farm buildings, leaving all gates as you find them. Keep to this track after the farm as it continues to descend then turns sharp right.

• When the track rises steeply, follow the lower track in front of the barn and through the wooden gate just up the bank. Go diagonally left across the field and head towards the barn on the far side, where you exit through two gates, rejoining the track. Follow this through several fields, with views to your left across to Roborough village and church tower.

• At the end of the farm track, go through the left-hand gate and head towards some farm buildings amongst trees opposite. At the bottom of the field, cross the stile and bridge into a usually wet field. Aiming for a cluster of trees to the left of farm buildings, you will reach a stile, bridge and another stile. It gets drier as you ascend to join the farm track; follow this tarmac track past the buildings and up to the lane.

• At the lane, turn right and follow it across Roborough Common to the B3217. Turn right, crossing over to the wider verge, and continue past Firsdon Farm to the delightfully named Cowflop Cross (Devonian for foxglove). Turn right again down a quiet road past Beaford moor to the A3124 crossroads at Cuppers Piece.

• Turn left for 100m then right onto the farm lane which descends gently to Great Cudeworthy Farm. Go between farm buildings heading straight towards the farmhouse, where you turn right past a barn then left to go round the back of the farmhouse and gently down to a large drinking trough.

• Cross straight over the next field towards the woods, and at the bottom cross two stiles and a bridge, into the woods. Just after rising slightly, follow the signpost turning right to follow the track and passing four marker posts until you reach a gateway into a field.

• Head up the middle of this long narrow field until you find a green footpath sign in the left hedge, about 150m before the end of the field. Go through the gateway and onto the concrete farm lane, turning left towards Down Farm. This descends gently to the farm, but just after the bungalow on the right, go through the wooden gate on the right into a field. Head diagonally across this field and through a metal gate into the woods.

• Take the well defined path through these woods until you emerge in the field through another metal gate. Take the level track through this marshy field to the copse at the end and exit over a stile into Brook Road. Turn left for the short climb
WALK 8 - Dowland, Iddesleigh, Eastpark and Upcott
4.3 miles, approx 1¾ hours, on quiet lanes and footpaths

Starting along the road from Dowland to Iddesleigh, this walk follows some of the Tarka Trail, then footpaths across farmland and on farm tracks. Hilly in places, and sometimes muddy in the farm sections.

- **Parking** - From Dolton, drive south on the B3217 to Dowland; park on the side of the road somewhere near Dowland Church.
- From the crossroads near the church at Dowland, head south along the ‘main’ road, although this is usually quiet. After about ½ mile, at the top of Berry Hill, there are lovely views towards Dartmoor.
- Continue along the road all the way to Iddesleigh, ignoring two left turns. At the church, it is more interesting to turn left through a gate into the churchyard, following the path round the south side onto a cobbled lane and emerge near the Duke of York Inn.
- Take the road across the village green and go straight ahead on the Tarka Trail, not down the hill to the right.

- Go past Park cottages and straight on to Eastpark Farm, turn left and continue up, passing farm buildings (and sometimes peacocks) on your right.
- Go gently uphill, past 3 ponds on your left, left at the fork, and rise to cross the road at Coombe Cottage onto a farm track. Follow this lane all the way to Coombe Farm.
- After some farm buildings on your left, go over a stile ahead of you, pass the farmhouse on the right and go straight down the field to a stream at the bottom (do not follow the Tarka Trail which is off to the left here).
- Cross the bridge and stile, then keeping in the same direction, climb the hill up to Pewson Barton farmyard, with its classic and little-changed medieval Devon farmhouse. Head for the gate by the building with a green roof and cross the farmyard to the lane which exits to the left of the farmhouse.
- Continue on this lane until you reach the road; turn left and continue for about ½ mile into the hamlet of Upcott. Turn right opposite the entrance to Ridges farm, then after 100 yds turn left onto a track marked as an “unmetalled road”.
- This track descends gently and it can be rather wet at the bottom, but it soon rises again to dry ground. Continue up to the road at the top, where you turn left back to the crossroads in Dowland.
**WALK 9 - Ashwell, Beaford Mill, Abbot’s Hill and Beaford**

5.2 miles, approx 2 hours on quiet lanes, tracks and woodland

Beginning a short drive from Dolton at Ashwell car park, this walk includes some very quiet lanes and farm tracks, then a lovely stretch in woodland and beside the River Torridge. Good in most weather, but with the chance of encountering cattle just after Mount Pleasant, and horses near the end of the walk.

- **Parking** - From Dolton, drive down West Lane to the bottom, turn right at Woolridge Cross. Continue for 1 mile, then turn left into Devon Wildlife Trust Halsdon Reserve at Ashwell

- Walk back up the car park track to the road and turn left at Stubbyfield Cottage, following the road past Strawberry Hill and South Harepath on your right. Ignore the footpath on the left at the right-hand corner, and continue on the road until the next footpath sign on the left. This goes down a tarmac lane past Fernhill and on to North Harepath; where the lane becomes concrete, take the rough farm track left.

- Shortly there are two gates, go through the right-hand one and follow the right-hand path downhill and through a metal gate. Turn right onto the well-defined path which takes you down through Beaford Woods.

- At the bottom, turn right at the T-junction and cross over a wooden footbridge. Follow the path, with the river Torridge on your left, past Doreen Curtis’ memorial seat and shortly the path rises away from the river. Continue past Beaford Mill cottages on the left, and where the path emerges onto the road, turn left down the steep hill. After the bend, turn right onto the bridleway.

- (You can take a shortcut here - turn right on the footpath straight up the field, with fine views. Turn right at the top, rejoining the walk at ♦ below)

- Bear right as the rough track rises through the woods, continuing to a stone wall. Turn left and continue rising, past Beaford House on the right and emerge onto a quiet road opposite a post box at Abbots Hill. Turn right, following the road until you see footpaths both sides - take the right-hand path towards the aptly named Mount Pleasant.

- At the house bear right, passing to the right of both properties, through a metal gate and across the field keeping the hedge on your right. Through another gate, descend slightly right to two more gates and into the top of a field where it is worth stopping to take in the stunning views to Dartmoor, Yeory, Warham and Potheridge.

- ♦ Turn left, keeping the hedge on your left along the top of the field; cross the stile into the woods. Go straight ahead, to the right of a hollow and descend to a rough track at the bottom. Continue ahead to a fence then right up the track to the road.

- Turn left to Beaford, until you see the footpath opposite the entrance to the village green and church (straight on for The Globe Inn). Go through Rye Park Close, straight through the next three fields, then through a metal gate and slightly right through a wooden gate. Descend across this field, through a gate in the fence and one in the far hedge (avoid horses by going right). Turn left onto the lane, then right at Fernhill onto the road and retrace your earlier route back to Ashwell car park.
The neighbouring villages of Dolton and Dowland lie about 7 miles southeast of Great Torrington and about 10 miles north of Okehampton. Their lovely setting is in a relatively quiet part of northwest Devon sometimes known as “Ruby Country”, roughly midway between Dartmoor and Exmoor, and with the meandering River Torridge running past both villages on its way to the sea at Appledore near Bideford.

The two parishes actually include the four distinct settlements of Dolton, Dowland, Langham and Upcott. Records only take us back to the Domesday book, but these places were surely occupied for many centuries before that. The parishes are currently home to just over 800 adults, of whom about 90% live in Dolton, 10% in Dowland.

The villages began, as far as anyone can tell, as a collection of Saxon settlements which developed throughout the centuries and underwent many changes over the years. Yet in spite of all the changes, much has remained largely unchanged and it is a combination of all of this which we enjoy, indeed celebrate, as we walk around exploring the area and admiring the landscape.

Farming has been the lifeblood of the area through the centuries, and this has shaped much of what we see around us; the fields with their apparently haphazard hedges, some straight while others have seemingly unnecessary curves, and between them run narrow roads following paths set well before William was a conqueror - do not get the idea that these were originally cart tracks as they were here well before wheeled transportation arrived in the area.

The lords of the manor are no longer in charge and agriculture is no longer so dominant, although it is still vitally important. The working population is employed in a great variety of occupations and there are many more retired people. Local businesses include shops, pubs, local trades, B&B’s, micro-businesses and of course tourist attractions including a holiday complex, caravan site, Halsdon Nature Reserve, the Tarka Trail and the Tarka cycle route and coarse fishing at Stafford Moor; within some of the cob walls under thatched roofs there are thriving businesses using latest technology. Those of us lucky enough to live here have one thing in common - we love this area, the way it looks, the sense of well being and community which it imparts, and whilst we should treasure these things, we should also understand that change is inevitable.

Some of these changes are evident as you follow the walks outlined in this booklet; for example, derelict mills and cottages, sometimes difficult to spot even if you know where they used to be.