

## Aveton Gifford

A perfect taste of the South Hams countryside - this inland walk bowls along on paths and green lanes, taking in hills and combes, gentle pasture, woodland and stream, with views across to the moor for good measure.

Start:	Memorial Hall car park, Aveton Gifford
Distance:	5.75 miles
Circular Walk:	Yes
Grade:	Moderate
Terrain:	Footpaths, with some short muddy sections in wet weather; green lanes, with some eroded sections; surfaced roads.
Obstacles & Steep Gradients:	9 stiles; 1 flight of steps; 1 steep ascent.
Public transport:	Bus service 93 from Kingsbridge, Modbury and Plymouth. For information on public transport in South Hams please call Traveline on 0870 6082608 <a href="http://www.traveline.org.uk">www.traveline.org.uk</a> .
Refreshment stops:	Fishermen's Rest pub 01548 550284: turn right out of car park, pub at far end of main street on right.
Toilets:	Public toilet on side of memorial Hall at car park
Parking:	Memorial Hall car park, Aveton Gifford. By donation.
Accommodation:	Please contact Kingsbridge Tourist Information Centre on 01548 853591 or visit <a href="http://www.kingsbridgeinfo.co.uk">www.kingsbridgeinfo.co.uk</a>
Other facilities:	Village stores and post office by car park, Aveton Gifford. Public payphone: turn right out of car park, 250 metres on right.
OS map:	Explorer 0L20
Grid Ref:	SX694477

### Heritage

St Andrew's Church was completed in 1250. In 1943 the church received a direct hit in a bombing raid by German planes. The Luftwaffe pilots had intended a 'harassment attack' on nearby Loddiswell, but lost their bearings and targeted Aveton Gifford by mistake. Four bombs were dropped on the village, one of which also destroyed the rectory. The church was restored in 1957.

### Landscape

The first stream above which you walk, through the fields beyond Little Combe, used to power the Town Mill, and becomes Parson's Brook a little further downstream. The second stream on the walk, flowing beneath Alleron Bridge, divides the parishes of Loddiswell and Aveton Gifford. The bridge itself is Grade II listed.



The agriculture which shapes the landscape in the area has changed very much in recent years. 135 acres of orchard were recorded in Aveton Gifford parish in 1842, almost all of which have now been grubbed up. The traditional brown South Devon cattle have largely been replaced by modern breeds, and dairy herds by beef cattle. Of 30 milking herds in the parish in the 1950s, only 4 remain.

This walk follows several 'green lanes'. Green lanes are ancient ways that were once trading, droving and smuggling routes. They would also have been used at one time by the people trying to avoid the tolls imposed on the main turnpike roads.

Many of the area's green lanes have fallen into disrepair over the years, becoming eroded and overgrown. However, two initiatives in recent times have helped halt the slide. One of these, On the Right Tracks, has used money donated by visitors through local businesses to carry out vital repair work to the network. 50 green lanes have also been restored through 'Life into Landscape', a project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund which has enabled resurfacing, drainage, clearance, and hedgerow restoration works to take place.

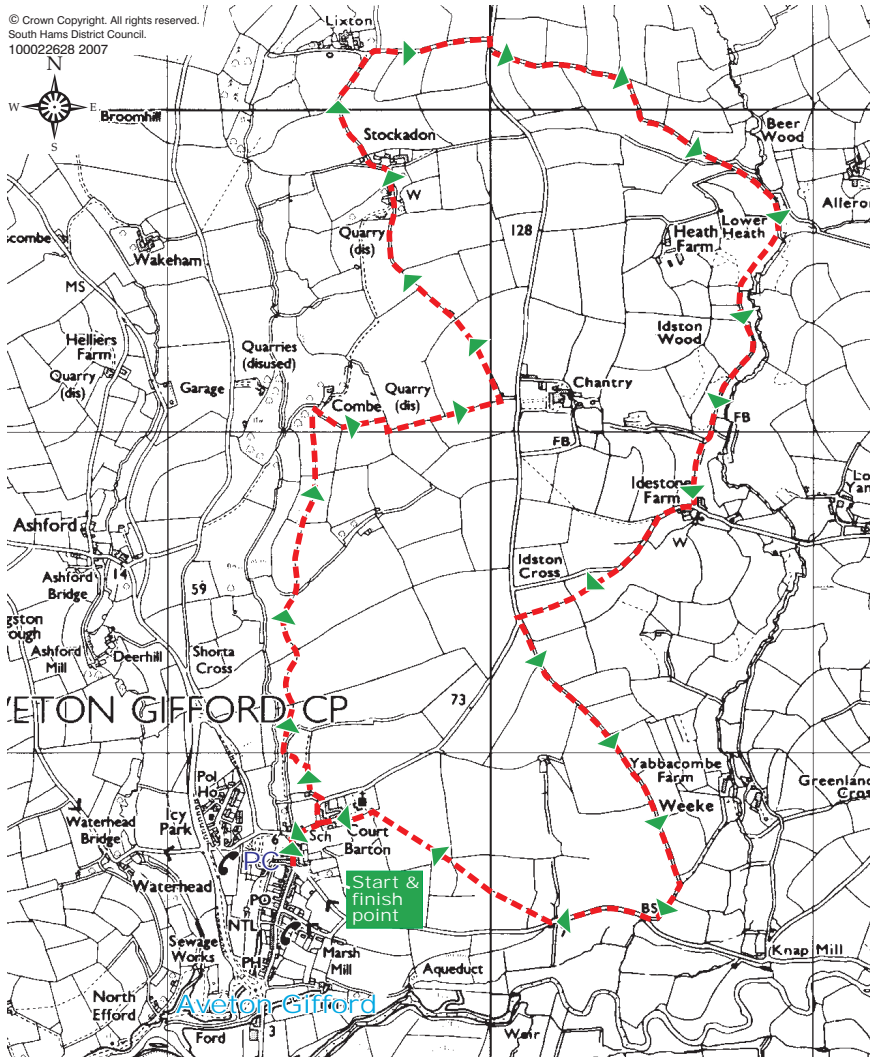
### Wildlife

Rushes are found in the damp grassy bottom of the first valley walked on the route provide butterfly 'rides' - warm, sheltered and sunny corridors between trees and hedgebanks that are perfect for these insects. The meadows south of Alleron Bridge are also rich in butterflies.

Species include the Clouded Yellow, with dark fringes to its yellow wings, and the large colourful wing 'eyes' of the Peacock Butterfly. The subtle brown and cream speckled wood, orange and white-winged orange tip, and the Red Admiral, with its white and red markings against a black dark background, are also all likely sightings.

Seasonal flowers along the route include the bright yellow stars of Celandine, delicate purple violets, and leggy Red Campion with deep pink blooms, all of these classic hedgerow plants. In the spring, Primroses are especially plentiful on the green lane at Beer Hill.

Among the birdlife, the Buzzard may be seen wheeling on the thermal air currents above or even perched in trees or on posts. A large and handsome bird of prey, it has rich brown plumage with pale barred markings, and flies on broad wings with 'fingered' tips. By the early 20th Century, the buzzard had been persecuted almost to extinction, but it is now a familiar sight in the South Devon countryside.



## Directions

1. Turn left out of car park entrance. Turn right at t-junction up Church Lane. Take track on left onto public footpath past Little Court.
2. Drop down across field with large spreading tree to a stile. At the far corner of cultivated area of next field, bear up to right.
3. Cross footbridge and stone stile. Go straight up over the hill, and pass to left of large waymarked fence post ahead. At field edge turn right through gate and onto bridleway, following blue waymarkers up the hill.
4. At fingerpost at the top of the rise turn left to follow bridleway along field edges and down rocky green lane.
5. Bear left in front of Stockadon Farmhouse, right past Chestnut and up narrow green lane and farm track to Lixton. Turn right up the road and bear right again. At Greyhill Cross, take the green lane opposite and to the right, signed 'Beer Hill'. Turn left along the road at the bottom. Turn right by the bridge to follow bridleway through fields and woods, above stream.
6. Bear right just before the house at Idestone, and then turn right along road.
7. After 350m fork left through double gates and follow fingerpost arrow across field to a stile. Follow field edge path to road, then turn first left up Hoppy Green Lane.
8. At t-junction turn right down lane then bear right along the road.
9. At bottom of dip, turn right by a small stream onto public footpath. Cut up through field over the hill and down through cemetery to left and continue down to join road. At Tree Corner, turn left into



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