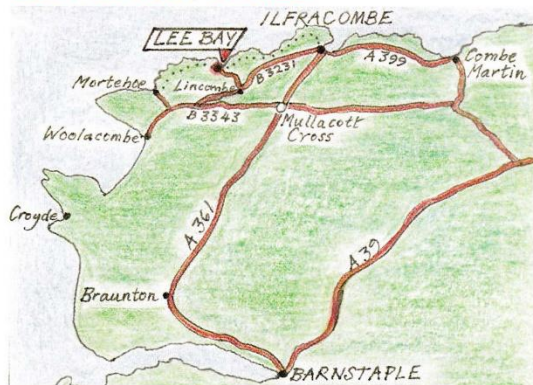


HOW TO GET TO LEE



Lee can be reached by road from Ilfracombe or Barnstaple.
 Bus no 305 runs between Ilfracombe and Lee.
 Bus no 31 runs between Ilfracombe and Mortehoe via Lincomb.
 Lee can also be reached on foot via the Coast Path/ Tarka Trail.
 Useful telephone numbers: Tourist Information: 01271 863001
 Devon Bus enquiry line: 01271 382800 (Mon-Fri, 8.30-17.00)

WALKS IN THIS SERIES

approx time

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Village Walk | 3/4 hr |
| 2. Smugglers' Path | 1 (1/2) hrs |
| 3. Woodland Walk | 1-2 hrs |
| 4. Coast and Country | 2 hrs |
| 5. Clifftop, Gorse and Heather Walk | 3 hrs+ |



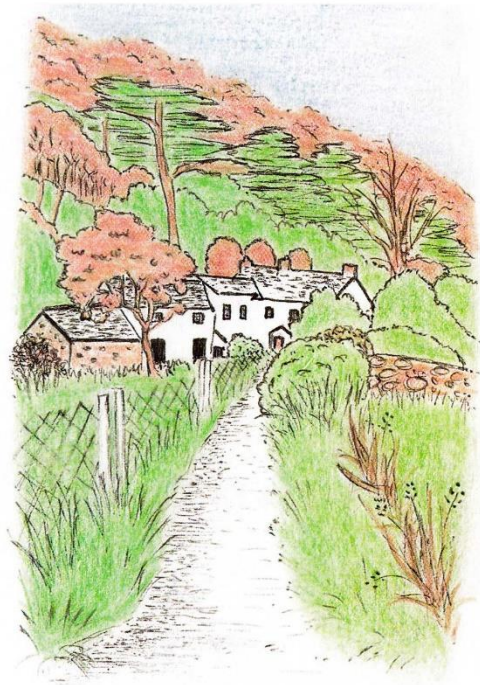
Produced by Ruth Larrea for:
 The North Devon Heritage Coast Service



WALKS FROM LEE

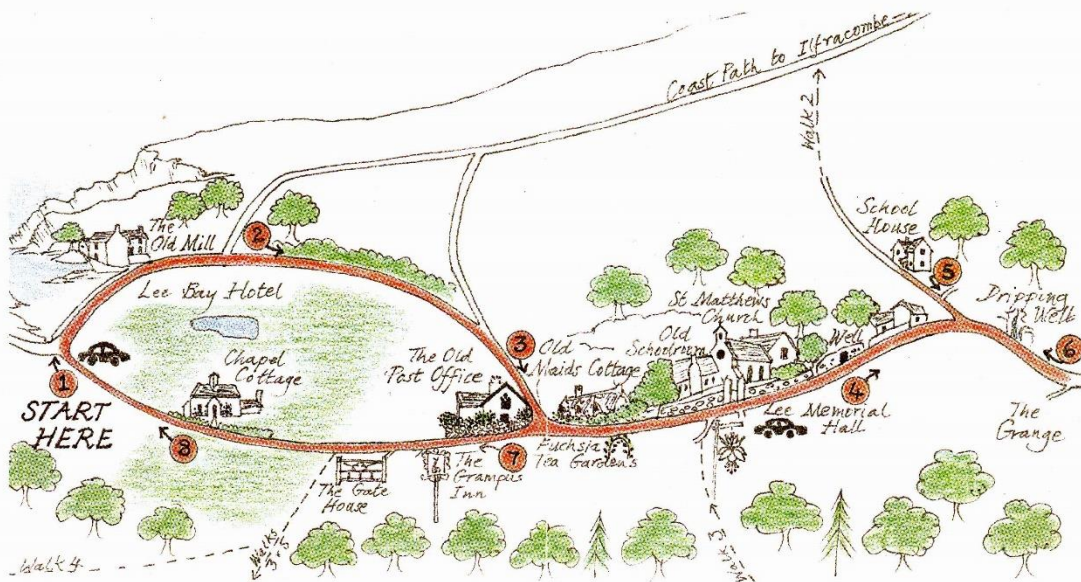
a series of graded walks

No 1: Village Walk



*A short walk exploring the fragrances
 and textures of the village and its
 gardens*

North Devon Heritage Coast



1. VILLAGE WALK

LEE VILLAGE AND ITS GARDENS

The village of Lee nestles between steeply wooded hills in a sheltered valley winding down to the rugged North Devon coast.

In this sunny, secluded spot all kinds of plants flourish and over the years the gardens have been cultivated to make Lee one of the most attractive villages in the region.

The pretty stonework walls form an infinite variety of patterns and textures, softened by the many colourful plants growing over and around them, and especially by the scarlet blossoms of the bushes which give the village its well-deserved name of Fuchsia Valley.

As well as traditional cottage gardens, and more exotic species like palms, figs and vines, there is an alpine garden on the wall outside the Memorial Hall, an old-fashioned fruit, flower and vegetable garden by the School House, and a fine mature shrubbery around The Grange. But perhaps most delightful of all are the unexpected glimpses of individual gardens through the many lovely little gateways. Look for details of gateposts and steps and features of the cottages themselves, such as porches, windows, roofs and chimneys.

All this is set off by the magnificent coastal scenery: thickly wooded hills, lush meadows, trickling streams and the rocky cove surrounded by rugged cliffs. It is this visual contrast, and the resulting combination of the smells of salt, seaweed and vegetation with the more delicate fragrances of garden plants, which gives Lee a character all of its own.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Can you spot the following features?

- Herringbone walls
- A wrought-iron fuchsia
- A ship's bell
- Two dripping wells
- Owl, cat and mouse heads on gateposts
- A Victorian pillar box
- A stone on which seven Bishops sat
- A stone-breaker's depot

And can you identify these buildings?

- A farm which is now an inn
- An inn which became a post office
- A post office which is now a cottage
- A chapel which is now a cottage
- A mill which is now a cottage

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Start from the car park near the sea front. Come out of the car park and turn right, following the road alongside the cove and past The Old Mill and The Lee Bay Hotel.

2. Keep straight on, following the road inland towards the village. There are lovely views over the grassy meadows of the valley and the thickly wooded hills beyond. Set amongst trees on the opposite hill is The Manor House, now a hotel. Southcliffe Hall is the large house in the valley just behind the far meadow.

3. Follow the road as it slopes down into the heart of Lee village. The Old Maids' Cottage with its picturesque thatch is on the left. A short distance further on is the Old Schoolroom, next to St Matthew's Church.

4. Continue up the lane as it begins to climb gently, passing a small well set in the wall between The Old Vicarage and Rose Cottage. On the opposite side are lovely little meadows with the woods rising beyond.

5. At the junction with the lane leading to the Coast Path, make a brief detour left to The School House, from where there are delightful views down over the valley. Then retrace your steps and continue up the road, past the Dripping Well, as far as the entrance to The Grange. This is now a clematis nursery and tea rooms. A few yards further up on the right is a lay-by which was once a stone-breaker's depot.

6. Retrace your steps back to the village, passing the Memorial Hall, the former Lee Post Office with its wisteria archway, and the Fuchsia Tea Gardens.

7. At The Old Post Office, take the left-hand fork which is a footpath to Lee Beach, passing between several interesting old houses with lovely gardens. Cross the little footbridge over the stream beside which stands a very old linhay or stone barn. Continue on down the path which runs between meadows in which there are often rare breeds of sheep.

8. After passing Chapel Cottage, carry on down the footpath which runs alongside the gardens of the Lee Bay Hotel to rejoin the car park.

ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Herringbone Walls

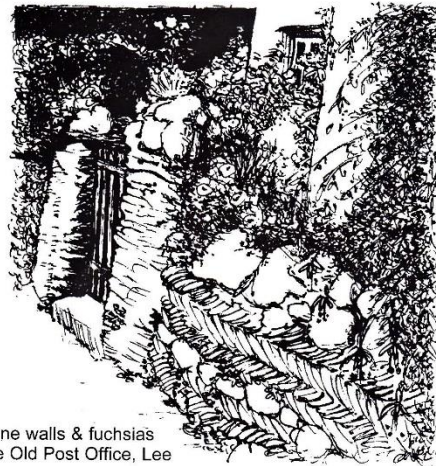
In 1871 the village was developed by Mr Robert Smith, the owner of what is now The Grange. His foreman, a local man called John Cousins, put in all the pretty stonework walls with fuchsias growing on them. Lee soon became known worldwide as the Fuchsia Valley and there was even a song written about it. Now, over a hundred years later, the walls still stand and the fuchsia bushes flourish.

The Old Mill (c.1560)

Until the early 1890s this was a working corn mill fed by a leat which ran alongside the road behind the Lee Bay Hotel. The waterwheel was removed at the end of the century and ever since it has been a private residence or tea house. During alterations in 1976 a fine old bread oven was discovered in one of the kitchen walls.

The Old Post Office (c.1706)

In the latter part of the last century this was the village post office. Before 1873 a postman walked from Ilfracombe to Lee via the cliff road and from there on to Morteohoe, Woolacombe and West Down. A telegraph was installed in 1897. On the day Queen Victoria died, during a violent thunderstorm, the postmistress was taking down a telegram telling of the queen's death when she was struck by lightning in the left eye and blinded. Shortly afterwards the post office was transferred to its present position.



Stone walls & fuchsias
The Old Post Office, Lee

The Old Schoolroom

The bell above the entrance came from a ship, the Europa Lancaster, which was wrecked off Lee in 1858 and still bears the inscription of the ship's name and date. The school was built for 48 children and opened in 1860. The schoolmistress received a salary of £20 and a house (School House in the lane above The Grange). The number of children gradually declined until in 1939 the school was closed, though it was used for evacuees during the war. It then fell into disuse until in 1971 the present craft shop was opened.

St Matthew's Church

Consecrated in 1835, this is a very small Victorian church in neo-gothic style. The carved oak panelling, including that of the pulpit and choir gallery, is much older, probably dating from the 16th century, and is said to have been collected from old buildings in the neighbourhood.



Cut Horse Heads, The Gate House

The Gate House

This was once the carriage house and stables for Southcliffe Hall. Later it was run as the Fuchsia Glen Tea Gardens and all the crockery bore the fuchsia emblem. The gateposts with their animal motifs are the handiwork of the present owner.

Former Lee Post Office

From the 1850s this was the village inn. Barrels of beer were fetched from Mortehoe in a horse-drawn buggy. From the early 1900s until 1994 it was the village Post Office.

The Old Maids Cottage

Probably the most photographed building in Lee, this was built as a one-storey cottage about 1653. In the 1870s it was rebuilt by Mr Robert Smith during his development of the village. It has one of the few thatched roofs to survive; the others were replaced by slates. A poem entitled "A Bird in the Hand" tells of the three pretty young maids who were so choosy about their suitors that they ended up as "The Three Old Maids of Lee".

The Grange

Once the home of Mr Robert Smith, the developer of Lee as the Fuchsia Valley. He demolished the old thatched farmhouse which stood here until 1871 and built a villa known as The Elms. Subsequent owners extended the building and laid out the grounds. The house was renamed "Miramar" (view of the sea) in 1898. It is now known as The Grange and has been converted into flats. The splendid glasshouses were once used to grow chrysanthemums and are now a clematis nursery. A few yards up the road towards Ilfracombe is a small lay-by once used by a stone-breaker. Here he would smash stone into small pieces for road-building, and pile it up for collection.

Lee Memorial Hall

This was built in 1923 to commemorate those from Lee who had served in the 1914-18 war. It continues to be a focal point for social life in the village. Outside is a decorative wrought-iron sign with the name of the village and the fuchsia emblem. The Bishop's Stone is just behind the steps to the Hall. Carved on the top are the words "The Bishop's Stone, here rested Henry of Exeter." A bronze plaque gives a list of seven bishops known to have sat on it between 1833 and 1921; several others have done so since!

Victorian Pillar Box

This stands tucked back in the lane beside the Memorial Hall at the entrance to Southcliffe Hall, a large house dating from the 1740s which was once the home of the Rev George Tugwell, vicar of Lee, expert on marine life and personal friend of the writer, George Eliot.

The Grampus Inn

This very old building was originally a farm, known variously as Lower Warcombe Farm, the Farm at Nether Warcombe, or simply the Old Farm. The grounds around the house were for many years a tea garden. In 1973 the owners were granted a licence to trade as a public house and in the subsequent years the building has been restored and the gardens laid out.

Chapel Cottage

During the 15th century there was a chapel here, dedicated to St Wardre. In the 16th century it fell into disuse, after which it was used as a cowshed and store. It was rebuilt as a private residence in 1840, enlarged in 1925 and again in 1970. In recent years it has been developed as a tea garden.