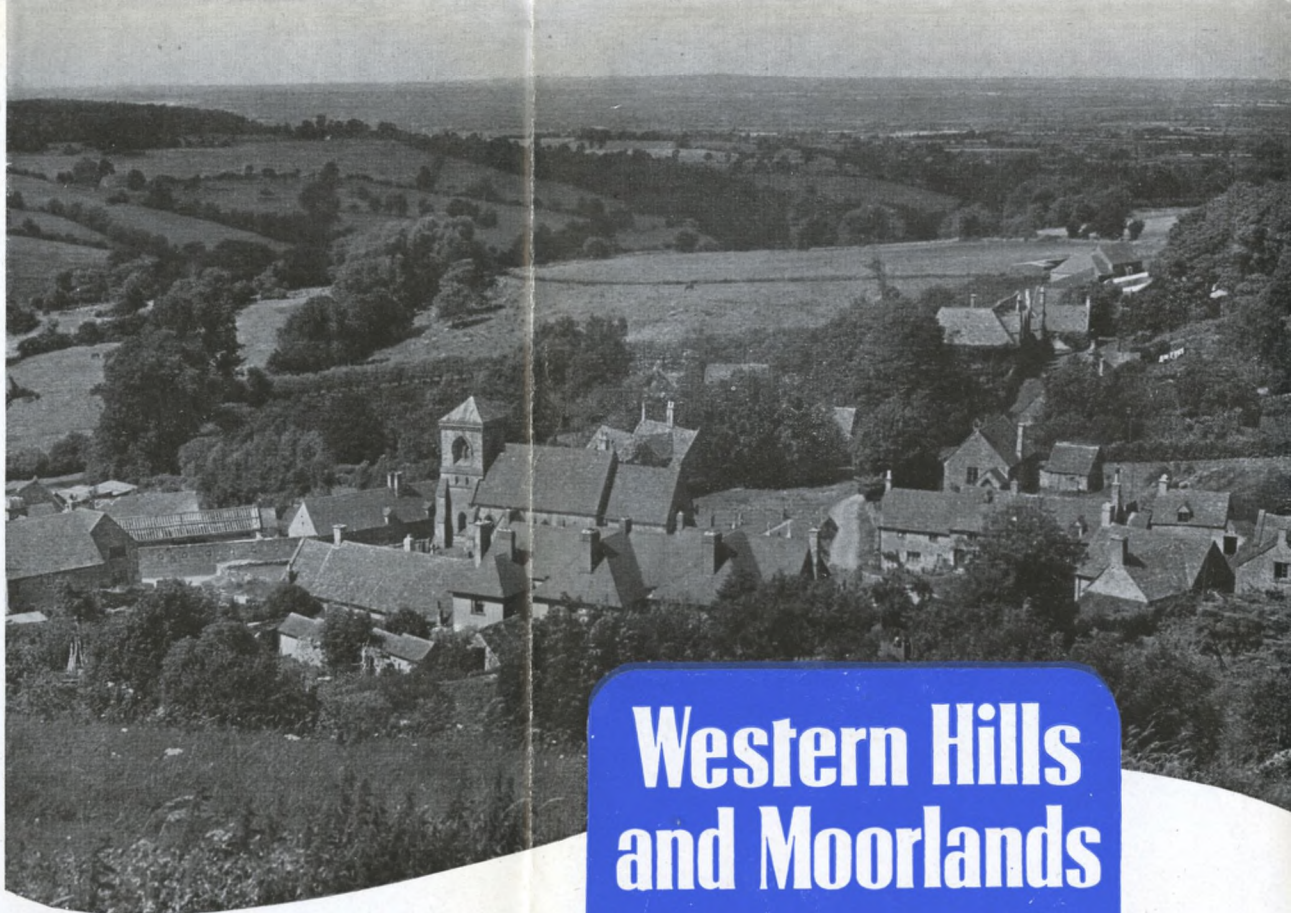


SNOWSHILL,
A COTSWOLD
VILLAGE



Western Hills and Moorlands

by Maxwell Fraser

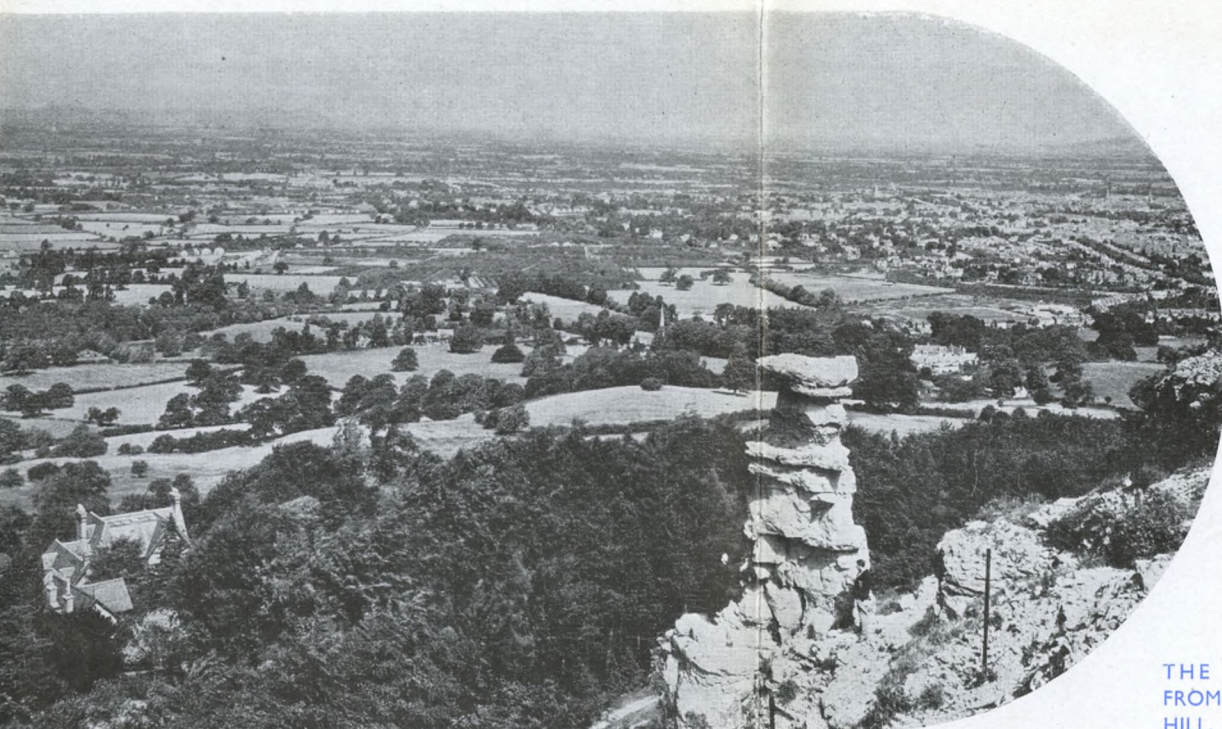
The increase in the number of those who enjoy holidays with pay, and restrictions in Continental travel, have strained the resources of famous English holiday towns to bursting point, but those who seek less crowded districts find endless delight in exploring the western hills and moorlands, with their unspoiled beauty, their still lonely byways, historic towns, and picturesque villages.

THE COTSWOLDS

The Cotswolds run from Bath northwards into Gloucestershire, spilling over into Oxfordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Leicestershire; but the district usually associated with the name runs across Gloucestershire from Wotton-under-Edge on the

south-west, to Aston-sub-Edge on the north-west, a distance of 40 miles, with Cheltenham and Gloucester on the north-west, and Oxford on the south-east, to provide easy access by train or 'bus, and many a delightful old Cotswold town, headed by Cirencester, the "Capital of the Cotswolds," to make a congenial headquarters for exploring the hills and valleys.

Cirencester is set on the banks of the river Churn, which marks the boundary between the rolling, grassy uplands of the north-east Cotswolds, and the deep, winding, richly wooded valleys of the south-western hills. There are splendid Roman relics in the Corinium Museum; the gateway of a Norman abbey; a magnificent parish church; some ancient inns and almshouses; and a splendid



THE COTSWOLDS
FROM LECKHAMPTON
HILL, CHELTENHAM

park laid out by a former Lord Bathurst, the friend of Pope. The principal avenue runs from Cirencester to Sapperton, a distance of five miles, and is open to the public.

In the neighbourhood of Cirencester are such charming little villages as Stratton, whose small church has some Norman work; Daglingworth, with interesting details in its church suggestive of Saxon architecture, a picturesque farmhouse, a dove-house, and the ruins of a nunnery; Duntisbourne Rous church, with a saddlebacked tower, and a 14th century cross in the churchyard; Duntisbourne Abbots, with its churchyard gay in summer with rambler roses; Elkstone, in a lonely depression of the hills, with the tower of its fine Norman church making a conspicuous landmark; Brimpsfield, another Norman church with a Perpendicular tower, near the site of a Norman castle and the source of the River Frome which waters the Stroud Valley; Braunton, Bagendon, Rendcombe and Cowley, each with something of interest in its church; beautifully situated North Cerney,

with its Perpendicular church; and Coberley, near Seven Springs, one of the reputed sources of the Thames. Chedworth's Roman villa is now in the care of the National Trust, and Andoversford has an old coaching inn with Adams fireplaces.

The Fosse Way between Cirencester and Stow-on-the-Wold gives access to delightful byways, leading to the charming villages of the Coln Valley and to Northleach, whose magnificent church is a proof of the town's importance as a wool mart during the Middle Ages. Another road runs from Cirencester to Fairford, famous for its fishing and its 16th century stained glass church windows, and so to Oxford. A third road, running from Cirencester to Burford and Chipping Norton, gives access to many an enchanting village, including Bibury, made famous by Arthur Gibbs' book "A Cotswold Village" and Frank Leslie's picture of Arlington Row.

Burford itself is a place of serene beauty, its grand church and many ancient houses dreaming of its long and eventful history.

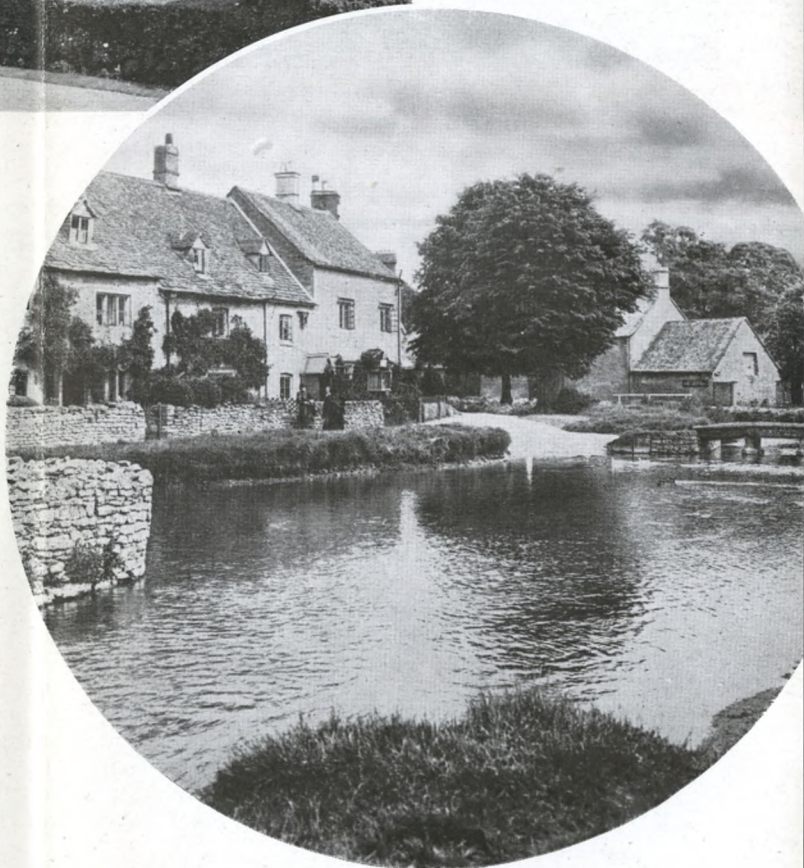


GREAT TEW,
OXFORDSHIRE

LOWER SLAUGHTER,
COTSWOLDS

Set on a hillside above the river Windrush, it has many delightful riverside villages in the neighbourhood. In the upper reaches of the valley the river flows through the main street of Bourton-on-the-Water, and in the lower reaches is Witney, on the Oxford road.

The greater number of Cotswold towns lie in the valleys, drowsing in the sun beside famous little trout streams, but for those who love the heights there is Stow-on-the-Wold, on the ridge between the valley of the Dikler and the Evenlode, and Chipping Norton over the Oxfordshire border. Stow is on the Fosse Way, nearly 800 feet above sea-level, and has a market square bounded by picturesque old houses, and dominated by the 14th century cross and 13th century parish church. The great Fair, held twice yearly, dates back to 1477. Stow can be made a centre for the attractive little villages of Great, Little and Wyck Rissington; for Upper and Lower Swell; and Upper and Lower Slaughter—all villages with interesting churches and manor-houses; and for the





CHEDWORTH,
NEAR CHELTENHAM

OLD COURT HOUSE,
TETBURY



Guitings in the Windrush valley. Northward is the road to Broadway, and eastward to Adlestrop, the wide and luxuriant valley of the Evenlode, and the charming old mansion of Chastleton, on the way to Chipping Norton, with its many picturesque old houses set 650 feet above sea-level, its stately parish church, and its ancient foundation but placid history. Warren Hastings was born nearby at Churchill and buried at Daylesford.

South of Chipping Norton are the villages of Wychwood and Woodstock, and the great mansion of Blenheim; and north are the Rollright Stones, said to be older than Stonehenge, and now in the care of the National Trust. Also in the neighbourhood of Chipping Norton are the lovely villages of the Stour valley and the historic manor house of Compton Wynyates; and the upper valley of the Evenlode, with the pleasant little town of Moreton-in-Marsh, where the White Hart Hotel still shows the room in which Charles I once slept. Moreton is a junction for the main railway line between Oxford and Worcester, serving Chipping Campden, fairest

of all the little Cotswold towns, and a branch line to Shipston-on-Stour.

Railway and road run along the northern edge of the hills, serving Weston-sub-Edge; Broadway, haunt of celebrities; captivating Stanton and Stanway; proud Winchcombe with its splendid parish church, Pilgrim's inn, and stately Sudeley castle; the ruins of Hayles Abbey; Bishop's Cleeve and Southam; Prestbury, and other pleasant villages on the way to Cheltenham, which is a perfect centre for some of the loveliest of Cotswold scenery and architecture, including the beautiful Painswick Valley and the town with its great church, its many old houses, and its famous Yew trees, ceremoniously clipped annually on

Yew Sunday, in September. The town is described by W. St. Clair Baddeley in "A Cotswold Manor," and Sydney Dobell, the poet of the Cotswolds, is buried in the churchyard.

Leckhampton Hill and the rocky Devil's Chimney; the beechwoods of Cranham; Prinknash Priory; Birdlip Hill—nearly a thousand feet high; Cleeve Cloud, the highest point on the Cotswolds, and many another place, are within easy reach of the famous Spa of Cheltenham. The busy town of Stroud is in close touch with the country, and is fascinatingly set on a hillside with an imposing parish church rebuilt in the 19th century, and a Town Hall dating chiefly from the Elizabethan period.

No less than five valleys converge on the town—the narrow Stroud Valley, watered by the river Frome, with the towns of Chalford and Brimscombe giving way to the richly wooded region known as the Golden Valley, with the secluded villages of Sapperton, Edgeworth and Miserden. The Nailsworth valley, with Woodchester, Nailsworth, Avening, and other interesting places, is on

the way to the picturesque market town of Tetbury. Minchinhampton, with its breezy common, is high on the ridge between the Nailsworth and Stroud valleys. It has two golf courses and a picturesque market house; and Amberley has memories of Mrs. Craik's novel, "John Halifax, Gentleman." The Painswick and Slad valleys run northward from Stroud, and the Stonehouse valley is the western continuation of the valley of the Frome, stretching away to the shores of the Severn, with delightful villages clustering thickly—Frocester, Selsley, Nympsfield, Uley, and the manor-house of Owlpen; Dursley, nestling under the slope of Stinchcombe Hill; and Wotton-under-Edge, an old town of gabled houses and steep streets, on the slopes below a monument to William Tyndale, translator of the New Testament into English, which is a landmark for miles around.

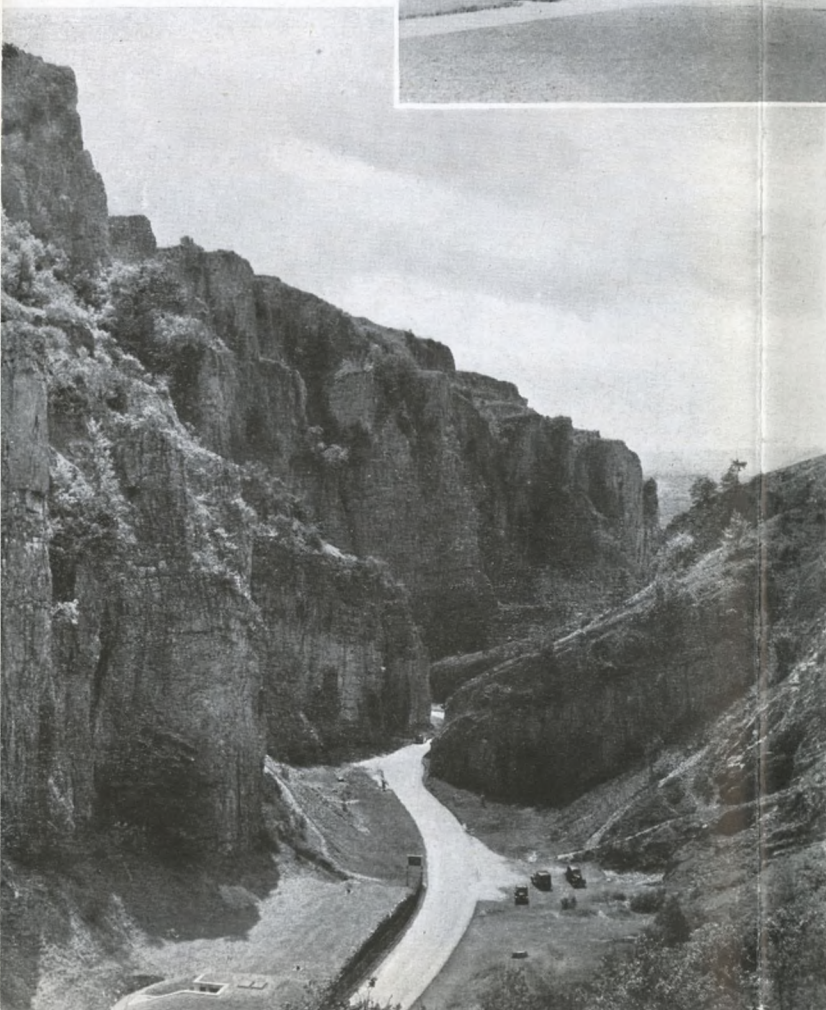
THE MALVERNS

The Malverns have many enchanting footpaths in their nine-mile range, command a wide-spreading view over the great Severn Plain, stretching away to the Cotswolds on

MALVERN FROM THE HILLS



WELLS CATHEDRAL



the east, and the massed array of the Welsh Mountains on the west. Music, drama and poetry have flourished in the shelter of these hills since the days when William Langland, the 14th century poet, wrote "The Vision concerning Piers the Plowman." Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford have long been joined in the Three Choirs Festival, and Malvern in our own time is the setting for a festival of Drama dedicated to Bernard Shaw; whilst Jenny Lind and Sir Edward Elgar sleep in the shelter of the hills they loved.

Malvern, with its beautiful Priory Church, its splendid situation, and its wells of pure medicinal water is, of course, the chief centre for exploring the Malvern Hills, but they can also be reached from Worcester, the county town on the Severn, rich in ancient buildings as it is in history, with its glorious cathedral beautifully set beside the river. Tewkesbury, with its ancient inns, its memories of "John Halifax, Gentleman," and of the "Pickwick Papers," its great Abbey Church, and the battlefield, where the last decisive battle of

CHEDDAR GORGE

the Wars of the Roses was fought, is another good centre for the Malverns. A branch railway line links Malvern with Stratford-on-Avon.

THE MENDIPS

The Mendip range, which runs across North Somerset for thirty miles, has a character unlike that of any other hill range in England. The hills stand like a vast wall, levelled on the summit to a long plateau on which there is an intricate network of Roman roads and ancient British trackways. There are innumerable gorges, of which the most famous are the great rock walls of Cheddar with their colourful stalagmitic caves; the almost tropical luxuriance of Wookey Hole, with its huge caves rich in legend and history, and its underground river; and lonely Burrington Combe, with the cleft rock which inspired the hymn "Rock of Ages."

The ideal touring centre for this great range is Wells, which is within two miles of the Wookey Hole Caves, eight from the great Gorge of Cheddar, and five from the exquisite ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, which mark the site of the first Christian church of England, fragrant with legends of Joseph of Arimathea and King Arthur. Bath lies twenty miles away. Wells, the "Capital of the Mendips," reproduces the very atmosphere of pre-Renaissance England, when ecclesiastical architecture had reached its highest perfection. High on the Mendips above Wells is Priddy, around which the loveliest of all Somerset legends centres. In the western Mendips which reach the sea at Weston-super-Mare, there are many old-world towns and villages: Axbridge, Banwell, Compton Martin, Loxton and Christon, all with fine churches; Winscombe, with its memories of John Locke and Hannah More; Churchill, home of the ancestors of Winston Churchill; Chewton Priory, seat of Earl Waldegrave, Chew Magna and others no less attractive, whilst in the Eastern Mendips are Shepton Mallet with its church, market cross and mediaeval shambles, and Frome, a centre for many fascinating places, including Orchardleigh, where Sir Henry Newbolt is buried, Nunney with its moated castle, and Mells with its ancient manor-houses.

THE QUANTOCKS FROM ABOVE COTHELSTONE



CROWCOMBE VILLAGE, QUANTOCKS

SELWORTHY,
SOMERSET



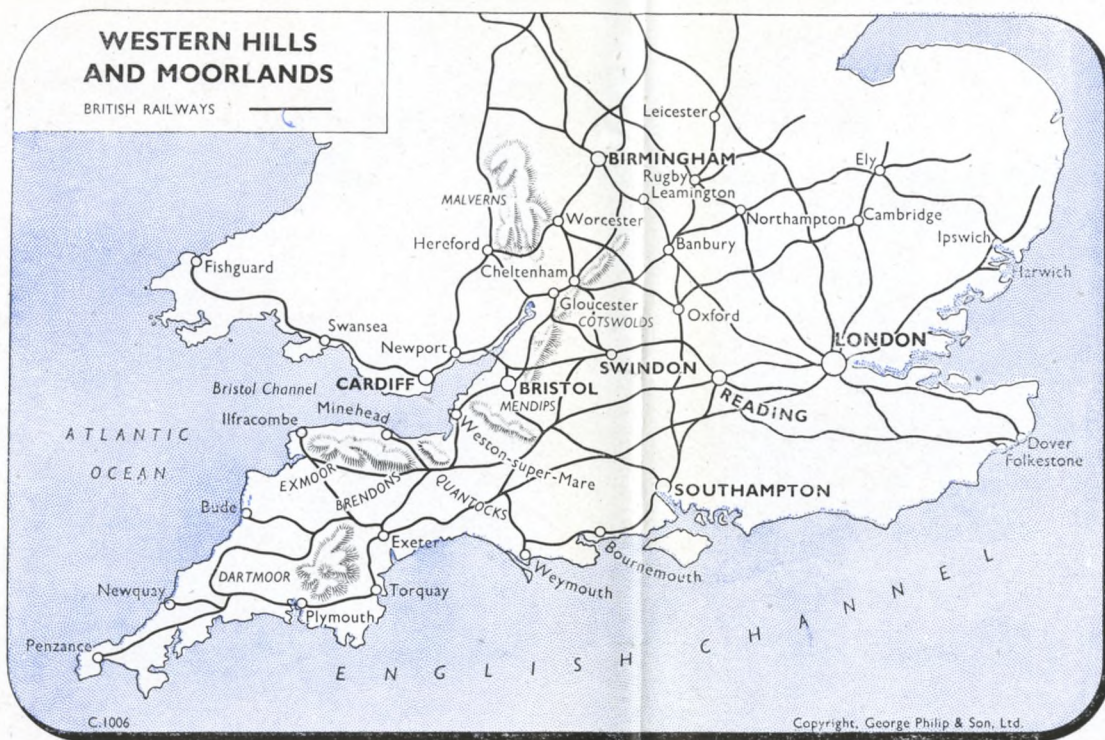
PORLOCK VALE AND
HURLSTONE POINT

THE QUANTOCKS AND BRENDONS

The Quantocks are richly wooded hills running down to the Severn Sea, and can be explored from Taunton, the county town of Somerset, or Bridgwater on the east, or from the coastal towns and villages between the estuary of the Parret and Minehead. Innumerable Quantock villages remain much the same as in the days when Wordsworth and his sister lived at Alfoxden Manor, and Coleridge at Nether Stowey. On the seaward side of the hills is East Quantoxhead, with its Norman Court House, seat of the Luttrells of Dunster Castle for centuries, and there are many by-ways and pretty villages in the neighbourhood. The West Somerset coast resorts, with the exception of Minehead, are small, but the quaint little

port of Watchet with its historical and literary associations; Blue Anchor with its splendid sands; and Porlock, bowered in roses, are especially delightful to tourists.

On the landward side of the Quantocks are Bicknoller, below the prehistoric Trendle Ring; Halsway Manor, said to have been a hunting lodge of Cardinal Beaufort; beautiful Crowcombe, with its ancient church and manor house, and its thatched cottages; Cothelstone, with its memories of the Stawells, former lords of the manor; Broomfield, with its interesting old church; Hestercombe, in a picturesque dell; Goathurst, where the Kemeys-Tyntes have been seated at Halswell House for centuries; Enmore, with its modern castle; and Durleigh, with its old manor house and dovecote.



Running more or less parallel with the Quantocks are the Brendons, which have associations with Sir Francis Drake; that brilliant wit, Sydney Smith; and with Southey. Dunster, with its picturesque houses, its grand old castle and ancient inn, deep in the Brendons, is a superb centre for this hill range or for Exmoor, and among the many secluded villages are pretty little Washford with the exceptionally well-preserved ruins of Cleeve Abbey; Stogumber, with its Elizabethan mansion of Combe Sydenham nearby; the diminutive village of Monk-silver; Carhampton and Withycombe, with their richly carved church screens; Williton, with the neighbouring mansions of Orchard Wyndham and Nettlecombe, all on the seaward slopes, and the even more remote villages of Withiel Florey, Huish Champflower, Chipstable and others as delightful as their names.

EXMOOR

Exmoor has the supreme advantage of

DUNSTER

reaching down to the sea among the tumbled wooded hills ringing the beautiful Vale of Porlock. It is a place for lingering by the wayside, and not for set planning. There are few roads and even fewer bus routes, but many a friendly little market town or village on the outskirts can be made a centre for





LUCCOMBE
VILLAGE

exploring all this wild upland, so remote from the bustle and hurry of modern life.

All the river valleys of Exmoor are haunts of anglers, and some of the loveliest converge on Dulverton, a little market town on the Barle, which is a great hunting and angling centre. Withypool is a picturesque little place; Simonsbath, in the very heart of the moor, a lonely one; Exford, on the Exe, another great centre of stag hunting and angling; Winsford, with its many little bridges, is sheltered by Winsford Hill, on which the ancient stone bearing the name of a kinsman of great Caractacus is still standing; lonely Hawkridge is high above the old clapper bridge of Tarr Steps; but the loveliest and best-known villages are on the seaward side, so much of which is protected by the National Trust—over 12,000 acres of sheer beauty. Here are Dunkery Beacon, the highest point on the moors, and the valleys of Horner, Cloutsham and Sweetworthy, the villages of Selworthy, Horner, Tivington with its thatched chapel, West Luccombe, Allerford and Brandish Street,

Bossington, and Luccombe, the village which was selected by Mass Observation for their account of life in an English village.

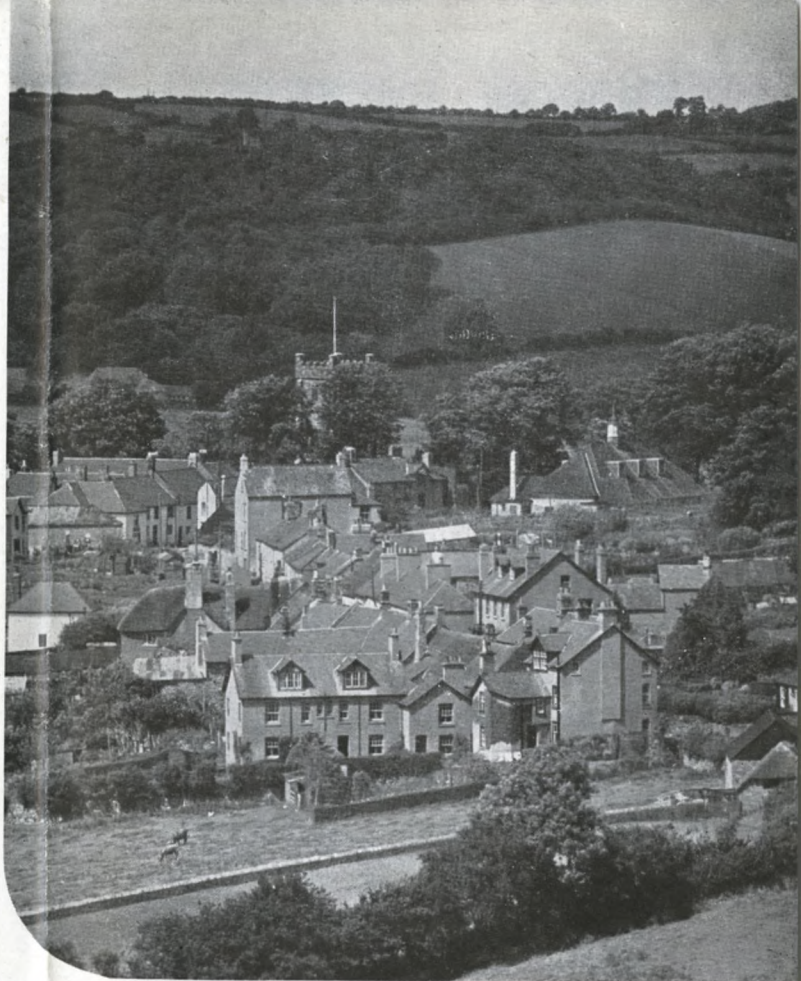
Close to the Devon border is Oare, with a medallion of R. D. Blackmore in the church, to remind us that he has brought people from all parts of the world to this little church and the surrounding moors, with the magic of his descriptions in "Lorna Doone." Down by the sea are the enchanting trio of Porlock, West Porlock and Porlock Weir, with the tiny church of Culbone almost buried in wooded hills, and at the opposite end of the moor, the long road which climbs from the valley of the Avill at Dunster, between the heights of Brendon and Exmoor, and by way of the valley of the Exe to Dulverton.

DARTMOOR

The heather country of Dartmoor, broken by grim tors of granite which are a characteristic of the moor, and of which Haytor is the most famous, stretches north and south across Devon, with richly wooded valleys and picturesque little towns and villages on its outskirts.

One road crosses the moor from Tavistock to Moretonhampstead, and is joined at Two Bridges by a road from Yelverton and Princetown, and by another from Ashburton via Holne Chase, Pounds Gate and Dartmeet. Practically all the Devon rivers have their source on Dartmoor, including the lovely Dart, which rises in the desolate region near Cranmere Pool, and the no less beautiful Teign, Tavy and Taw.

All Dartmoor is rich in legends and literary associations, but the Dart claims Holne, birthplace of Charles Kingsley, and Dartington, the birthplace of James Anthony Froude, the historian. Bagtor was the birthplace of John Ford, the 16th century dramatist; Dean Prior had Herrick as its vicar for 30 years; Tavistock was the birthplace of Sir Francis Drake, and Widecombe-in-the-Moor is for ever famous through the "Devon National Anthem of "Widdicombe Fair," and through the book and play of Eden Phillpotts. Among many delightful places hidden away in unsuspected valleys of the moor are Fingle Bridge; Lydford; Grimspound—a settlement



CHAGFORD

of the Bronze Age, consisting of 24 hut circles in perfect condition; Moretonhampstead with its 17th century almshouses; Bovey Tracey and exquisite Lustleigh; North Bovey and the Manor House Hotel; and beautiful villages of thatched cottages with such quaint names as Gidleigh, Throwleigh, Drewsteignton, Mary Tavy and Buckland-in-the-Moor. Chagford, in the east of the moor, owes much to a former rector, who publicised its beauty with such success that, although so small and far from a railway station, it has electric light, telephone, a pure water supply and every modern convenience; whilst Okehampton, on the west of the moor, is a busy market town with the picturesque ruins of a 12th century castle.

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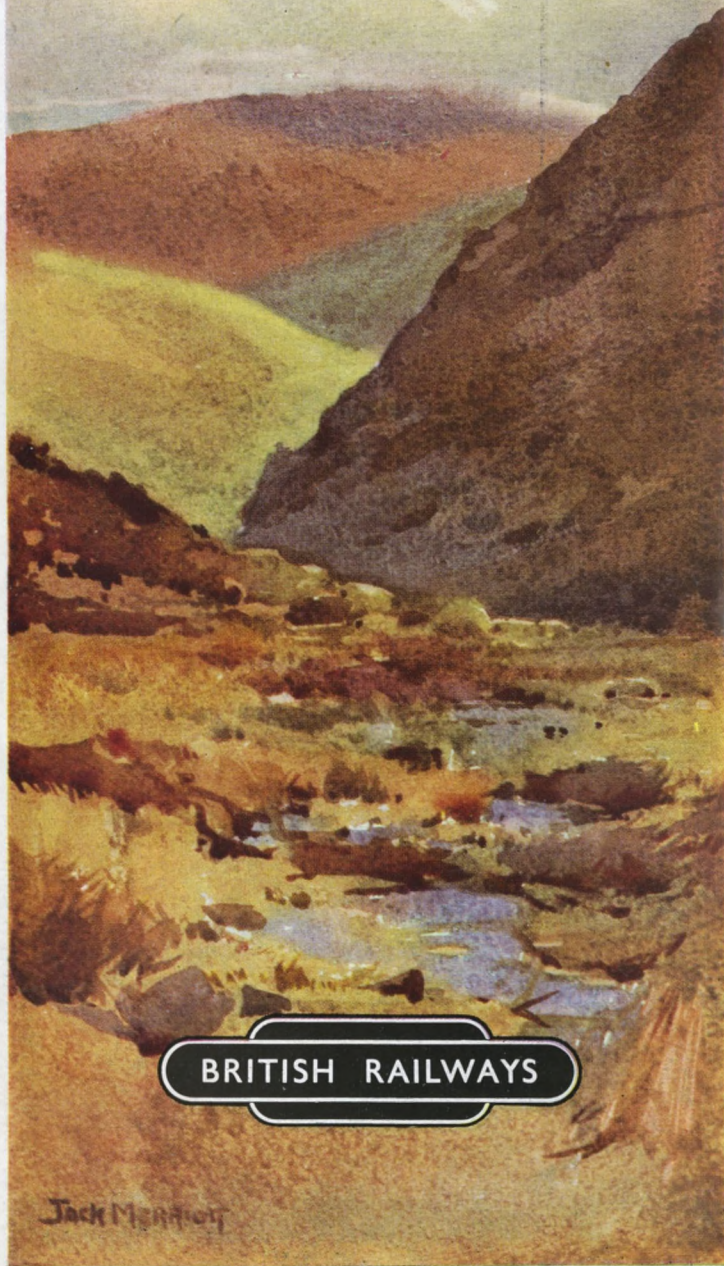
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