

In the 1800s, this area was part of Crocker's Farm, which stood with a collection of cottages and buildings south-east of the village centre. The farm's name likely derives from the Middle English 'crockere', being the occupational name of a potter. The name Clampitt likely stems from the regional term cloam, referring to earthenware clays used for potting. The 1839 parish tithe survey of Ipplepen records the use of two fields south of Crocker's Farm as 'waste' and in those fields are the remnants of large extraction pits – perhaps cloam pits that supplied raw material for the pottery? But when would a potter have been at work here? Archaeological excavations at the site of Ipplepen Priory found unglazed pottery broadly dated to between the late 14th and early 16th centuries, classified as 'Totnes-type' wares, that may have been produced more locally.

It is recommended that the following historic points of interest are visited on foot from Ipplepen, which would make a 4km (2.5 mile) return walk. Note that there is very limited roadside parking in Dainton but the surrounding lanes are narrow and not suitable for stopping.

## 8. IPPLEPEN: the gallows at 'Forchen'

Field-names can also be extremely helpful when studying landscape history. The 1839 parish tithe survey of Ipplepen records the names of every field in the parish. The fields east of Wrigwell Cross all included the word 'Forchen' which like the place-name Forches, probably refers to the site of gallows used in public executions. As the highest ground in the area, and directly adjacent to the main historic road between Newton Abbot and Totnes, this would have been a very visible and gruesome reminder to everyone of the consequences of serious crime.

The gallows site sits on private farmland north of the public footpath which crosses the A381 100m north of Wrigwell Cross.

## 9. DAINTON ELMS CROSS: Iron Age, Roman and early medieval settlement

As you walk or drive along the lane east from Wrigwell Cross toward Dainton Elms Cross, you pass through a landscape today used for farming and equestrian purposes, with no clue visible as to the rich heritage buried beneath the ground. The fields here conceal the archaeological remains of an Iron Age, Roman, and early medieval community, investigated between 2008 and 2019 through a collaboration between local metal detectorists, the British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme, Devon County Council, and the Department of Archaeology and History at the University of Exeter. There is nothing to see at ground level – and the site sits within private land – but a summary of this research is available in the booklet 'Prehistoric, Roman, and Medieval Ipplepen: archaeological investigations 2007–19' produced in conjunction with this guide.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

A definitive account of the archaeological project will be given in the book *Landscape and Society in Dumnonia: Iron Age, Roman, and Early Medieval Ipplepen and the Countryside of South-West of England*, written by Stephen Rippon, that should be published in 2026.

## 10. DAINTON: medieval hamlet

Dainton is first recorded in AD 956 when the King Eadwig granted land at Ipplepen, Dainton, and Kerswell to a noble lady called Aethelhild. The place-name Dainton means 'the settlement belonging to Dodda'. Both Dainton and Ipplepen were associated with a distinctive way of farming known as 'open fields', in which arable land was arranged in bundles (known as furlongs) of strips (known locally as 'landscres'). The strips were divided up between all of the villagers, and instead of earthen hedgebanks between fields as we see today, these parcels of land were separated simply by a narrow baulk of uncultivated land (hence the name 'open fields' – as opposed to fields enclosed by field boundaries). The abandoned settlement and cemetery at Dainton Elms Cross was covered by the open fields belonging to Dainton and Ipplepen for several hundred years, before the communities took the decision to abandon open field farming in favour of the approach we see today, with the fields belonging to each farmer lying in a series of fields enclosed by hedgebanks – these being the field boundaries that are still in use today.

## 11. DAINTON: Bronze Age settlement

Ascend the gentle hill from Dainton to enjoy the view from Miltor Mator Common. All across the hilltop are the remains of a prehistoric field system and settlement dating to the Late Bronze Age (c. 1200 -1000 BC). Excavated evidence suggests that at least some parts of the field system continued to be used in the Iron Age and Roman periods. Originally covering an estimated area of c. 20 hectares, this relict landscape has been gradually destroyed by quarrying of the limestone plateau over the past hundred years. It is said that before this loss that it was one of the largest surviving field systems of its type in South Devon. As well as these extensive Late Bronze Age remains, earlier Neolithic flints, including arrowheads, and stone axeheads have been found.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Smith, G., David, A., Jones, R. and Quinnell, H. 2021: *A Late Bronze Age Field System and Settlement at Dainton, South Devon*, Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society 79, 55-109.

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## ENCOUNTERING HERITAGE

# in Ipplepen, Denbury and Torbryan

**'History is all around us' may sound like a cliché, but it is true! The buildings, settlements, roads and fields that form the backdrop of our daily lives are all in one sense 'modern' – they are in use today – but they all have a history, and that history in many cases goes back hundreds or thousands of years.**

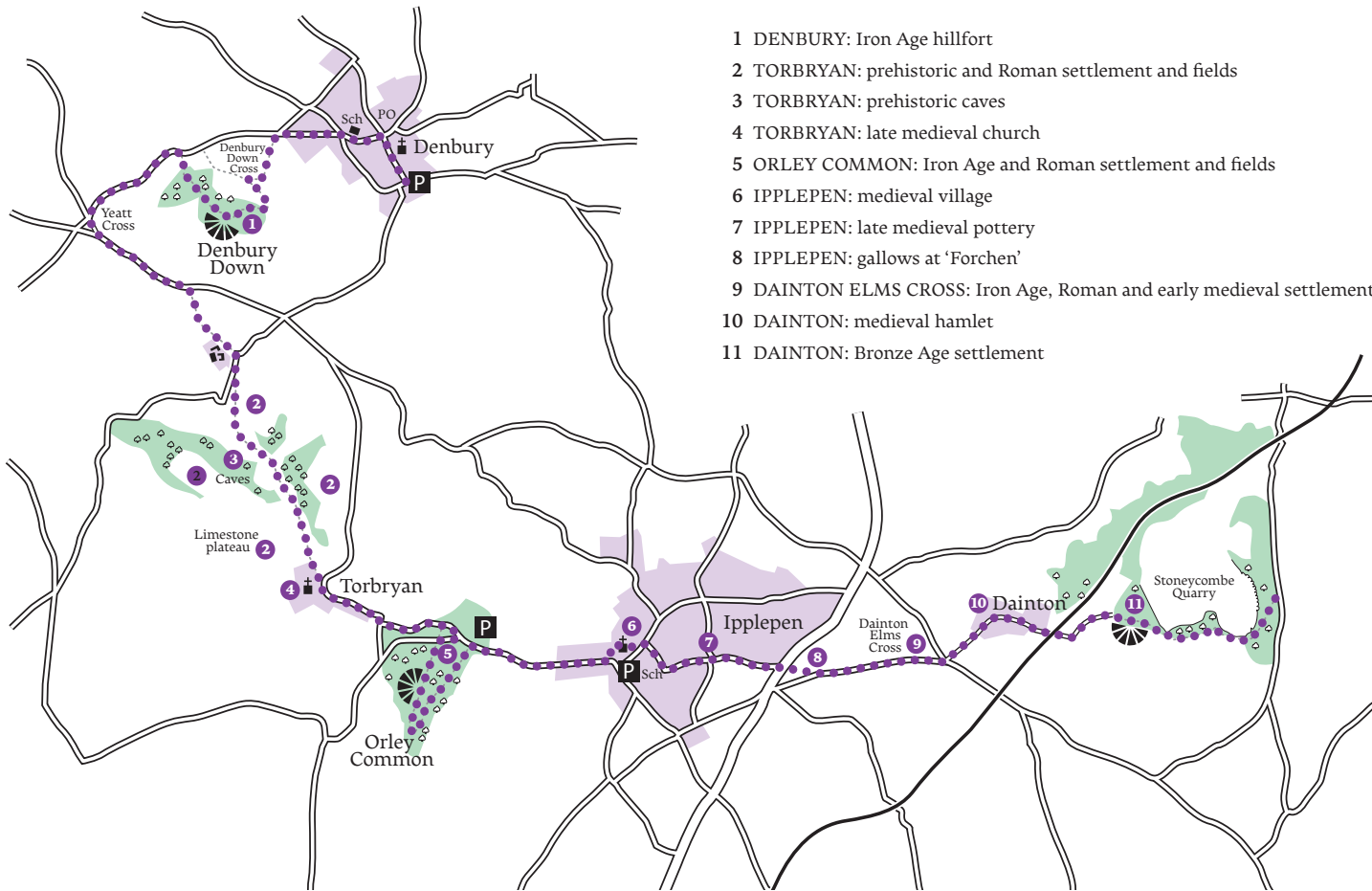
This history manifests itself in many different ways. In some cases buildings in use today are centuries old – notably our parish churches, while elsewhere ancient settlements and field systems that have gone out of use still have remains that are still visible today. Similarly, sometimes there may be nothing visible now of a place that was significant in the past, but its existence is commemorated in a modern field- or place-name.

This guide aims to introduce people living in, or visiting, the Ipplepen area to some of its history, to visit and walk in these historic places. Locations have been chosen that can be visited individually by car, or by foot along public rights of way, and include both obviously historically important places but others that people may walk past quite oblivious to what's there.

## 1. DENBURY: Iron Age hillfort

On Denbury Down is the site of an Iron Age hillfort, and the large ramparts and ditches that surrounded it can still be seen today. Whilst no archaeological excavation has taken place at the hillfort, it is of a type built between 300 and 100 BC. Inside the hillfort are two circular mounds that are thought to be burial monuments probably dating to the Bronze Age (c. 2500 to 800 BC). Though originally a prehistoric defended site, Denbury is recorded in Domesday Book as 'Deveneburie', which means 'burh (fort) of the men of Devon' and reflects its possible use – real or mythological – as a British stronghold during the Anglo-Saxon expansion into the region, known as Dumnonia, from the 7th century AD. Later in the medieval period the interior of the hillfort was ploughed and, according to the antiquarian Peter Orlando Hutchinson, the trees that cover much of the site today were planted in the beginning of the 19th century.

The site is owned and managed by Devon County Council and there is public access from Denbury up into the hillfort's interior. Visitors by car can park at Denbury Green, or on the roadside within Denbury.



- 1 DENBURY: Iron Age hillfort
- 2 TORBRYAN: prehistoric and Roman settlement and fields
- 3 TORBRYAN: prehistoric caves
- 4 TORBRYAN: late medieval church
- 5 ORLEY COMMON: Iron Age and Roman settlement and fields
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### 2&3. TORBRYAN: prehistoric caves and prehistoric and Roman settlement and fields

For people wishing to connect visits to Denbury Hillfort and Torbryan with a walk it is possible to follow a secluded valley path between Tornewton and Torbryan that is flanked by ancient woodland (woods in continuous existence since at least AD 1600). The archaeology of this area is not visible on the ground or publicly accessible, although it is included here as there is a small exhibition about it in Torbryan church. Hidden beneath trees and scrub on the west side of the valley are a series of natural caves that have provided important evidence of both wildlife and human activity from the Upper Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (c. 10,000 BC to 2500 BC). Finds include flint tools, polished stone axes, and pierced seashells. Deposits within the caves also provide a rare window into the wildlife that roamed the landscape over the past 200,000 years. An exhibit outlining 19th-century investigation of the caves, and the remarkable finds they produced, is on display in Torbryan church.

The limestone plateaux above the valley sides were home to prehistoric and Roman farming communities, and extensive relics of fields and settlements from those times survive as very faint earthwork banks.

### 4. TORBRYAN: late medieval church

The present-day church of The Holy Trinity at Torbryan was built in the early 15th century and, with the exception of the vestry added in the 19th century, the building remains in its original form. It represents an outstanding example of Devonian church architecture from this period, built in the elegant Perpendicular style. Many of the church windows retain coloured medieval glass. The interior contains particularly fine late medieval woodwork, with its highly decorative roodscreen from c. AD 1430 being of note, as well as a complete set of medieval pews in the nave. More information can be found inside the church on its history. Opposite the church, is the original church house, dating to the late 15th century, and formerly the village pub.

The church is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust and is open daily. Visitors by car should park with consideration within Torbryan.

### 5. ORLEY COMMON: Iron Age and Roman settlement and fields

Between Torbryan and Ipplepen lay Orley Common, an area of shrubby woodland interspersed with pockets of open grassland. Paths wind through this public space and as you walk along them you might notice low earthworks banks, hollows and mounds. These represent evidence for fields and settlements dating to the prehistoric and Roman periods that were situated across the Devonian Limestone plateaux in this area. In addition to having a rich heritage, the limestone grassland and ancient woods, are rich with flora and fauna.

Orley Common is a public open space managed by Teignbridge District Council, with a car park and information board.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

Gallant, L., Luxton, N. and Collman, M. 1985: *Ancient Fields on the South Devon Limestone Plateau*, Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society 43, 23–37.

### 6. IPPLEPEN: medieval village

Ipplepen is first recorded in AD 956 when Eadwig, King of England, granted land at Ipplepen, Dainton, and Kerswell to a noble lady called Aethelhild. The place-name 'Ipplepen' combines the personal name Ipela with the Old English word 'pen' – that means enclosure – suggesting that Ipplepen was named after 'Ipela's enclosure'. We next hear of Ipplepen in Domesday Book, which records that on the eve of the Battle of Hastings it was held by a Saxon called Goda. Domesday Book records that there was a sizable population with 56 households, and there was clearly a large amount of arable land – sufficient for 20 ploughteams – as well as 30 acres of meadow.

The parish church of St Andrew was dedicated in AD 1318 and the present-day church is mostly of 15th-century date. For a short period Ipplepen had a priory. In the 13th century, the church and part of the manor was granted to the Augustinian abbey of Fougères in Rennes, Brittany, and a cell of three or four canons lived under a prior. At the start of the Anglo-French Hundred Years War, in AD 1337, however, the small religious community was ejected by Edward III who appointed his own secretary, Robert de Chesterfield, as rector. The church has a magnificent rood screen with medieval painted saints, a medieval wooden pulpit and stained glass. Parking is available on the roadside near the church.

### 7. IPPLEPEN: a possible late medieval pottery production site

Place-names can be of great help to the landscape historian. Hidden in the street names Crocker's Way and Clampitt Road, given to a network of cul-de-sacs of 1960s housing on the south side of Ipplepen, is a possible link to a past craft or industry.