

The
Carlton

Walks with Ragamuffin

Walk 1

Ilfracombe to Lee Bay

Welcome to Ragamuffin Rambles and our Top Dog Walks.

Walk 1 is a walk we do most Sundays to go to St Matthews Church in Lee, which is well worth a visit.

We start at the National Trust Ilfracombe Torrs Car Park; Grid Ref: SS511474.

At the bottom of the car park we follow the path down and around to the left, past the NT Torrs walk sign.

Humans just don't get walks the way we dogs do and I believe miss out on so much as they just never stop to sniff and pee enough and there some great places on this walk. So, just follow your nose up the zigzag hill signed 'Coast Path', which the Victorians carved into the rock face.

Start of the coast path (below)



When we reach the top, we go through the gate and around to the right. There, sometimes we stop at a toposcope, which is a joint partnership project between the National Trust, Ilfracombe Arts College and South West Coast path Team called "Unlocking our Coastal Heritage". Mum pretends she is stopping to admiring the view but I think it's because she is quite old and out of breath. Even as a dog, I will admit it's

quite a steep climb and a very spectacular view. If you have little children be prepared to carry them!

Your narrator on the toposcope (below)



We then pass the signs for coast path to Lee, go down the hill and cross over the stile and follow the path, keeping the sea on your right. If it's a very clear day along this part we get a great view of Lundy Island. And if you are especially lucky you might see Dave the dolphin. Along this bit, us dogs need to be careful, as usually there are sheep and cattle, so you must stay very close to your humans to not scare the other animals. Also, there are some very big drops, yikes!

The route to Lee can involve farm animals





we follow the road all the way down the hill and at the bottom we turn left to go to Church but if you turn right you get to Lee beach.

Lee is a lovely little village with a great pub called the Grampus where they are very dog friendly and give you biscuits and sausages.

For more info on this walk go to the National Trust website and put in walk the Ilfracombe Torrs. Have fun!!

Beware the cliff edges

We go through the gate, across the field, turning right at the dirt track, following signs for coast path to Lee. This is about a mile and then we reach the field gate,



Walk 2

Woolacombe to Putsborough

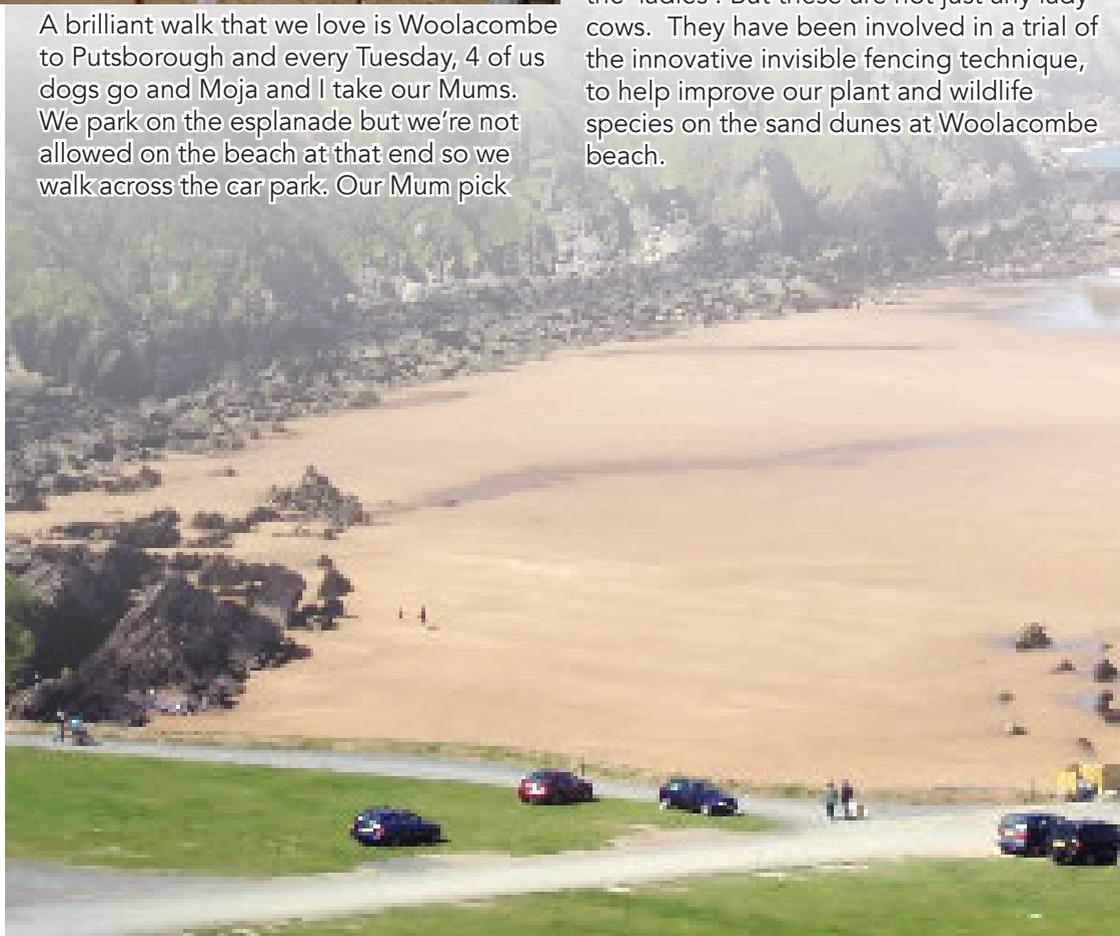


A brilliant walk that we love is Woolacombe to Putsborough and every Tuesday, 4 of us dogs go and Moja and I take our Mums. We park on the esplanade but we're not allowed on the beach at that end so we walk across the car park. Our Mum pick

up poo slaves really like it if we can do our poos there because there are lots of bins. We get on the beach after the stream. Then you just keep walking.

Dogs must be on leads from the stream to Mill Rock from Easter to November but beyond that we can run around to our hearts delight and fantastic it is too. Also you can run around on the dunes to as much as you like.

You might meet some North Devon Red cows on the Woolacombe dunes, called the 'ladies'. But these are not just any lady cows. They have been involved in a trial of the innovative invisible fencing technique, to help improve our plant and wildlife species on the sand dunes at Woolacombe beach.





they continue any further they will receive a pulse from the collar which stops them. The cows really got the hang of this and rarely tested the boundaries. I have to say whilst they are delightful they are pretty big, so us dogs need to be careful not to get too close, and I recommend you give them right of way, particularly when they have calves. Like all animals they are very protective of their young.

The invisible fence means no gates, no stiles and no obtrusive fences, meaning easy access for visitors and the stunning rolling dunes would keep their character. The ladies grazing the dunes have been fitted with collars that respond to a radio signal emitted by a cable buried around the dunes. When approaching the cable an alarm sounds on the collar and the clever cows have been trained to know if

The Beach is 3 miles long with wonderful sand dunes and brilliant to run up and down and swim so we must try and keep it that way for the benefit of everyone. A big part of that is picking up litter. My friends and I always try and help and some dogs take it more seriously than others, however if you can turn it into a game why not! You always get to meet very interesting people and make new friends.



Walk 3

Hillsborough to Hele

Known to the locals as 'the sleeping elephant', Hillsborough Nature Reserve offers a short but testing walk for you and your dog. This dog walk takes you past beaches which are also dog friendly so offers plenty of opportunity for a run and a dip in the sea for both of you – especially welcome during those warm summer months!

The views provided by this dog walk are glorious – a bird's eye view of Ilfracombe, out to Lundy Island and even as far as the South Wales coast. There is so much for nature lovers to enjoy along the way too with an array of wildlife and their habitats to be seen.

Ragamuffin continues his journey: We had a lovely walk with our friends Tina, Jessica and Homer. Homer is 7 seven months old and Jessica is four and half.

We had to pick a walk that wasn't too far to go as puppies can't go too far at first.

We met at the swimming pool on Hillsborough. A hike up to Hillsborough will reveal the remains of an Iron Age hill fort, the largest cliff castle in the south west and around

2000 years old.

Interestingly, Hillsborough is also one of the earliest examples of conservation schemes in the area - arising when the quiet, recreational facilities of Hillsborough were threatened by developers in 1895. Ilfracombe Urban District Council came to the rescue and purchased Hillsborough (now a Local Nature Reserve), prompting The Journal to run the headline "Saved from the builders' hands."

It was a little bit too far to go for our youngsters so we went along the beautiful tree lined pathway towards Hele Bay (pronounced Heel). That is quite a steep climb down but brings you to a lovely view of Hele Bay. Again there is a lot of history surrounding this bay.

During the great Ice Ages Hele was many tens of kilometres from the sea. The back lanes either side of Hele Valley are ancient ridgeway routes, which have probably been in use for 4,000 years.





The main road through Hele, from Ilfracombe to Combe Martin, was built by one of the last Turnpike Trust's, granted in 1865. The road opened in 1868. A photograph shows the toll-gate in Hele, removed in 1888.

Prints from the 1850's show Hele as a rural idyll. The village had expanded towards the sea and by 1841 there were 30 people living just in Hele Close (now Beach Road). In the 1890's, Hele Bay Estate was bought

by the Ilfracombe Gas Company and in 1898 the principal farm of the Estate, later to become the site of the new gas works, was burnt down.

So interesting stuff for humans but the most important thing for us dogs and children is that we can run around there all year round, met your pals and no restrictions. Run, swim and play, hurray. Then end up at the Hele Bay Pub which is very child and dog friendly.



Morte Point, Mortehoe Village

Enjoy a challenging walk through a rare spot of coastal heathland which provides the wonderful backdrop for a wealth of wildflowers and wildlife. You might even be lucky enough to spot some of our famous sealife including dolphins and seals.

This wonderful dog walk will take you out into the fresh country air and really give you an opportunity to get the blood pumping with steep ascents, steps and descents to challenge you along the way. Adventurers will be rewarded with the discovery of some hidden beaches along the way and for those who enjoy a bit of history, discover why Morte Point has been responsible for many a shipwreck throughout the centuries.

Saunton Sands

A short drive or long walk along the South West Coast Path and you arrive at stunning Saunton Sands. This particular beach is a favourite for dog walks as it welcomes dogs year round.

Saunton Sands employs easy to follow zoning sections where just the car park and first 5 minutes of your stroll requires that your dog is kept on the lead. From here you have the next 3.5 miles of golden sands to explore and enjoy with your four legged friend.

Baggy Point

As well as providing a dog friendly route, Baggy Point is also an easy access route which is especially important in opening up our beautiful countryside walks to as many people as possible. Considered an easy route, Baggy Point lends itself to those pups who cannot manage a challenging route but still enjoy the great outdoors. It is also considered equally good for young children.

Baggy Point might be a shorter, easier dog walk than others on our list, but nonetheless it delivers in breathtaking sights. The views along the way extend along the coast and out to sea and you can also enjoy sightings of our diverse wildlife and sealife – there's plenty to keep everyone captivated along the way.

The South West Coast Path

The Carlton Hotel is delightfully situated in Ilfracombe town centre where you can begin dog walks in any direction to end up on the beautiful South West Coast Path. Here we have miles and miles of stunning countryside and coastal walks to explore and discover your very own favourite spot.

On the hotel doorstep

There's so many walks around town and Ilfracombe. To name them all would take far too long. Our local fellow dog walkers will recognise many of these though

Up the Torrs – a gentle ascent (depending on whether you circuit clockwise or anti-clockwise) including a dramatic view looking back to the channel over the compact 'Combe valley. This walk starts on the pavement but quickly moves past the large Victorian houses and into wooded grounds.

The Seafront and harbour – past our lovely museum, onto Wilder beach. Always remembering to pick up a stick or two for Leo. Briskly onwards and around Capstone. Keeping an eye out for playing seals of the rocks, and sometimes hanging on for dear life as we pass Windy Point. A sharp turn left down to the harbour and maybe a rest in one of the bars along the Quay. Not always mind you (okay more often than not). Head back past St James and past the pretty row of shops, or take a little more time out by climbing the ascent to Fore Street and then the High Street.