



CASTLES OF DEVON

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When you think of Devon you don't immediately think about Castles, well I never did. To be honest as a child we always went to Cornwall and the Cornish beaches. We never explored Devon. The first time I explored Devon was when Rik and I came to Devon to look at The Ivy Barn. Well since living here we have realised there is so much more to see and so much more about Devon than first imagined. What is fascinating is that there are a number of Castles around the area which allow you to delve into the history of the area. They may not be as popular and as imposing as Windsor Castle but they still give you a insight into what the area was like centuries ago.

DARTMOUTH CASTLE

Dartmouth is one of my favourite towns in South Devon with the colourful residences on the hill over looking the estuary and the old tudor buildings that are along the front. On a fine day you can enjoy a river boat trip from the town quay to the castle. Dartmouth Castle has stunning views of the Dart Estuary and out to sea and was actually an artillery fort built to protect Dartmouth Harbour. It has been well positioned to guard the Estuary and the vibrant port of Dartmouth for over 600 years. The earliest parts of the castle date back to 1380s. These parts were built to protect the harbour from French attack. The

artillery in those days were catapults and possibly early canons. The castle was then extended in the 15th century with an artillery tower and an iron chain was added which could be stretched across the harbour to another tower at Godmerock. The castle saw action during the Civil War and continued in service up until World War II. There is plenty to see in the castle and a riverside tea room if you get peckish.

BERRY POMPEROY CASTLE

Within a short driving distance of Dartmouth and Totnes Castle, Berry Pomperoy is hidden away in a deep wooded valley. Berry Pomperoy was built in the late 15th century by the Pomperoy family who had held the land since the 11th century. They ran into financial difficulties and the land was sold to the 1st Duke of Somerset, Edward Seymour in the 1540s. The 15th century defences guard the ruined shell of its successor the grand Elizabethan mansion of the Seymours which was begun in around 1560 and enlarged from around 1600. Sadly it was never completed and was abandoned by 1700.

TOTNES CASTLE

This is a classic and best example of a Norman motte and bailey castle. Climb to the top and you will have stunning views of the town of Totnes and the River Dart. Don't miss the 'graffitti' on the trees left by prisoners of war during the Second World War

OKEHAMPTON CASTLE

If you would like to go further afield why not take a day trip and enjoy a drive through Dartmoor National Park whilst travelling to Okehampton and visit what was once the largest castle in Devon. Set on a wooded spur above the River Okement this castle was built soon after the Norman Conquest as a motte and bailey castle. It was turned into a sumptuous hunting lodge/residence with a deer park in the 14th Century by the de Coutenays, the Earl of Devon but after the last owner Henry Courtney was executed by Henry VIII it fell into ruin.

As you can see there is always more to see in Devon. If you would like more information why not sign up to our monthly Newsletter "Moor to Sea- The Ivy Barn Leaf" which provides more details on the area, places to visit, places to eat and our special offers. Sign up here by emailing us at: theivybarn@gmail.com