



Walk No. 1 – Chudleigh Town South

*This is walk number one in a series of historical walks around Chudleigh and the surrounding countryside compiled by Alan Brunton for the Chudleigh History Group. Each walk commences from the Town Hall. The historical content of the walks is mainly brief, but further information can be found in *The Chudleigh Book*, available in the library.*

Walk 1: Distance approx. 1.5 miles. Time 1 hour. Easy walking.

The Town Hall was opened in 1865. Prior to the fire of 1807, which destroyed 200 of the 300 properties in the town, the site hosted the Kings Arms offering stabling and accommodation to coaching travellers on the Exeter to Plymouth highway. It was destroyed in the fire, poorly rebuilt and pulled down fifty years later.

From the Town Hall forecourt bear right into Fore Street passing the Obelisk and War Memorial. The former was erected during the 1830s, the latter in 1926. Just past the zebra crossing and opposite the shops is Alpha House, used as a hospital for injured servicemen during the First World War. The Phoenix used to be named the Old Coaching House and prior to that the Clifford Arms. The former suffered much damage in a fire in 2011 and the much altered premises with housing to the rear, in what was a large car park, built in its place.

The Church of St. Martin and St. Mary was dedicated in 1259 and is believed to be on the site of an early Saxon church. The Bishop Lacy was so named in 1961, previously being the Plymouth Inn. Next to the Church is the Old House, a plaque on the wall describing its purpose. The fire of 1807 destroyed most of Fore Street until reaching the church and Plymouth Inn.

From Fore Street carry on along Parade passing the Vicarage on the right side, formerly named Collingwood but acquired as the Vicarage in 1957. The garage, now Sibleys, used to be the West End Garage, and then you reach Coburg Corner. A property here is named the Old Smithy and suffered much damage in a fire in 1922. Turn left now into Rock Road. The large house on the corner opposite Old Smithy, now Hill View, used to be the police station. The police now work from a room in the Town Hall.

Walk on down Rock Road which offers views of Chudleigh Rock and adjoining fields to Palace Farm. This is the site of the Bishops' Palace built in the 13th century. Very little remains of the palace, just a few pieces of walling, but a geophysical survey in 2008 showed significant remains underground. Palace Farm is thought to be the palace's farmhouse.

Further down Rock Road a permissive footpath on the right takes you out onto the top of Chudleigh Rock but this can be wet, slippery and rough underfoot so stout footwear



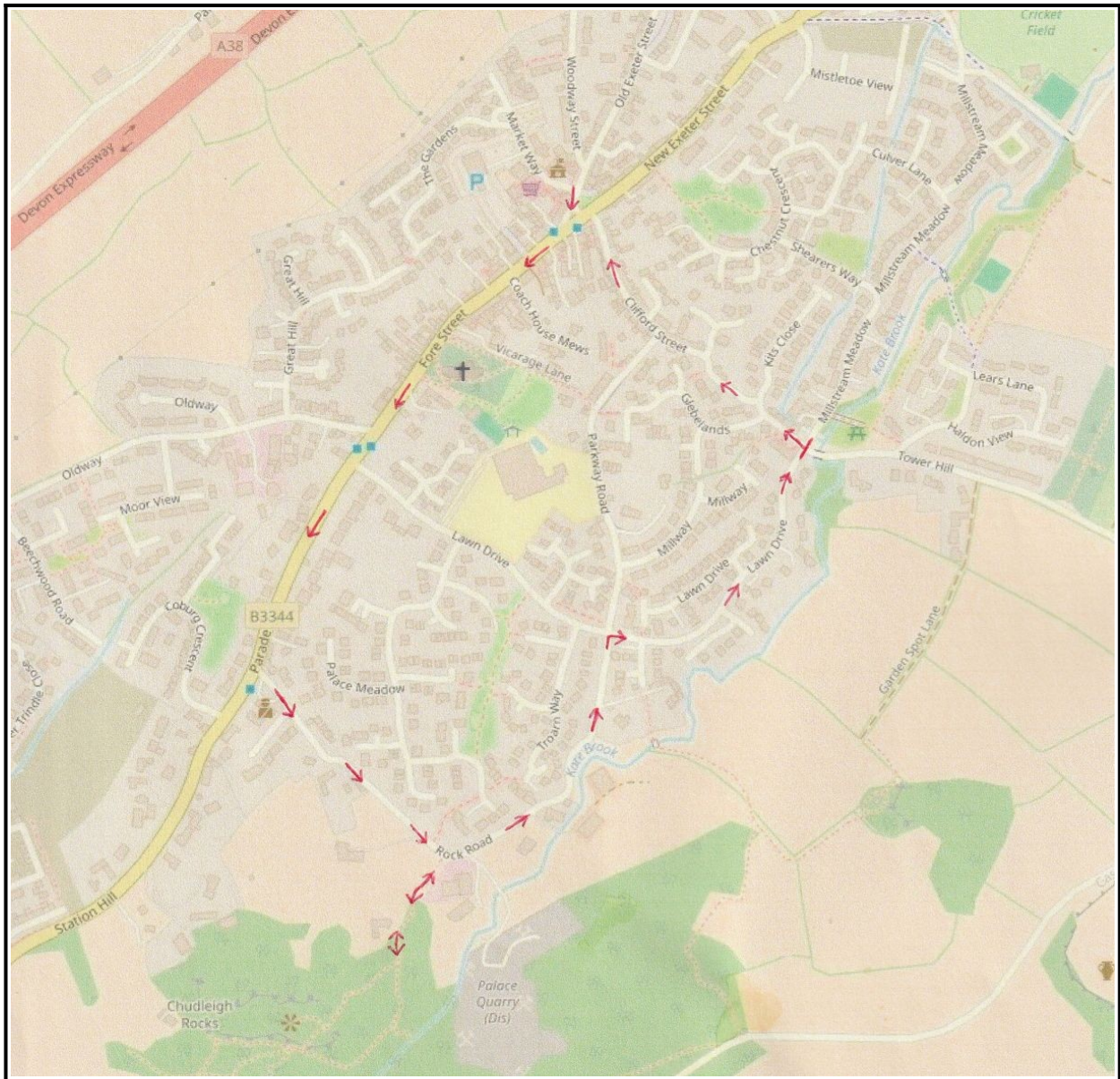
is recommended for this optional diversion. This path gives good views across what was Palace Quarry, worked until the 20th century. A path diversion takes you down to a small waterfall on the Kate Brook but this is quite a scramble. Best to keep on to the head of the rock.

Follow the road past the The Old Mill House / Palace Mill until reaching Lawn Drive, turn right and after a few hundred yards reach a small crossroads. Before turning left into Clifford Street, note the large premises here, now private housing, which used to be the Town Mills; mostly used as a woollen mill but also in later years as a grist mill. By walking a few yards past the bus shelter the old water wheel can be seen though the gates. The ground floor of the Millhouse still has several millstones and mill workings behind a glass screen. Return to Clifford Street.

Clifford Street used to be named Mill Lane. The name change was in recognition of successive Lords Clifford of Ugbrooke, particularly the Lord Charles Clifford who headed the committee which supervised the town's rebuilding following the fire of 1807.

Opposite to the entrance to Kits Close at the bottom of the stone wall is a C stone. In 1531 a law was passed stating that the road surface either side of a watercourse was to be maintained by the Shire, whereas the condition of other roads was the town's/village's own responsibility. In 1831 Devon magistrates further declared that this extent be marked by a C stone, standing for County. There is a pair to this stone a similar distance on the other side of the bridge.

Nearing the top of Clifford Street stands the Old Chapel. May Jones, author of *The History of Chudleigh* published in 1853, revised in 1875, funded the building of a Methodist Chapel in 1837. This building was demolished in 1889 and a new building erected. It in turn closed in 1914 but after the First World War accommodated the Plymouth Brethren until the 1990s. It is now a private dwelling. Continue up Clifford Street to return to the Town Hall.



Route of Walk No.1 (map source: OpenStreetMap)