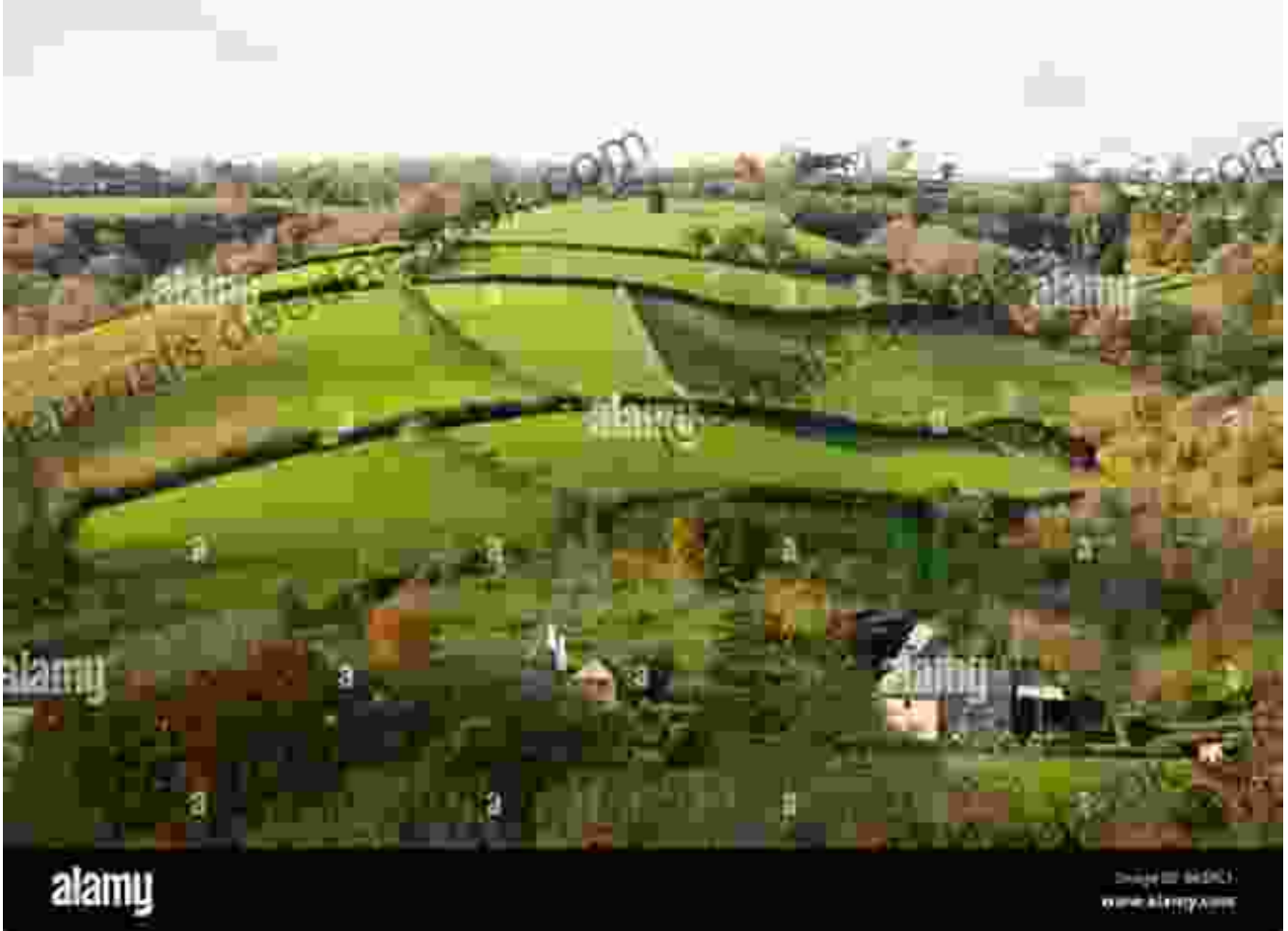


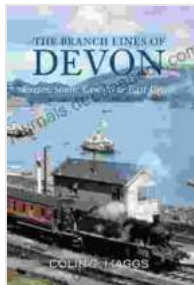
Exploring the Enchanting Branch Lines of Devon: Exeter, South Central, East Devon



Nestled in the heart of South West England, the county of Devon boasts a captivating network of branch lines that weave through charming towns and reveal hidden gems amidst picturesque landscapes. These railways, once essential arteries connecting far-flung communities, now offer a unique and unforgettable way to explore the region's rich history, stunning natural beauty, and diverse attractions. Embark on a rail adventure along the branch lines of Devon, and discover the enchanting destinations that await.

Exeter: The Gateway to Devon's Branch Lines

The journey begins in the historic city of Exeter, the county's capital and a major railway hub. From here, three distinct branch lines radiate outward, inviting travelers to explore the diverse regions of Devon.



The Branch Lines of Devon Exeter, South, Central & East Devon by David Brandon

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3463 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Print length	: 295 pages
Paperback	: 176 pages
Item Weight	: 1.04 pounds
Dimensions	: 6.77 x 0.6 x 9.76 inches



1. The Tarka Line: A Literary Journey Through North Devon

The Tarka Line, named after the beloved novel by Henry Williamson, meanders through the enchanting landscapes of North Devon. The journey begins in Exeter and winds its way through picturesque towns such as Crediton, Barnstaple, and Bideford, offering stunning views of the rolling countryside, meandering rivers, and dramatic coastline. Alight at any of the stations along the line to explore charming villages, visit historic landmarks, or embark on nature walks amidst breathtaking scenery.

2. The Exe Valley Line: A Tranquil Escape into Nature

The Exe Valley Line offers a tranquil escape into the heart of the Devon countryside. The train glides along the scenic Exe River, passing through picturesque villages nestled amidst rolling hills and lush meadows. Along the way, stop at Tiverton to explore its historic castle and charming town center, or head to Exmouth for a refreshing coastal getaway. The Exe Valley Line is a haven for nature lovers, with opportunities for birdwatching, walking, and cycling in the surrounding countryside.

3. The Avocet Line: A Coastal Odyssey to Exmouth

The Avocet Line is a delightful journey that connects Exeter with the vibrant coastal town of Exmouth. The train hugs the Exe Estuary, offering panoramic views of the water, the Exe Valley, and the rolling hills beyond. Disembark at Topsham to explore its historic waterfront and charming streets, or continue to Exmouth, a popular destination for sailing, windsurfing, and other water sports. The Avocet Line is a perfect choice for a day trip or weekend getaway, combining the tranquility of the countryside with the excitement of the coast.

South Central Devon: A Haven for History and Heritage

Venturing south from Exeter, the railway lines delve into the historic heart of Devon, where charming towns and ancient monuments await.

4. The South Devon Main Line: A Journey Through Time

The South Devon Main Line, one of the oldest railways in the country, connects Exeter with Plymouth, passing through the historic towns of Newton Abbot, Totnes, and Kingsbridge. Along the way, the train skirts the picturesque Exe Estuary and offers glimpses of the rugged Dartmoor National Park. In Totnes, explore the medieval streets and climb the iconic

castle for breathtaking views over the town and surrounding countryside. Kingsbridge, a vibrant market town, serves as a gateway to the stunning South Hams area, renowned for its beautiful beaches, coastal walks, and quaint villages.

5. The Teign Valley Line: A Scenic Ride to the Coast

The Teign Valley Line branches off from the South Devon Main Line at Newton Abbot and meanders through the picturesque Teign Valley. The train follows the meandering River Teign, passing by ancient woodlands, rolling hills, and charming villages. Alight at Teignmouth to explore the lively seaside town, with its sandy beaches, Victorian promenade, and historic harbor. Alternatively, continue to Dawlish, famous for its stunning coastal railway line that hugs the rugged cliffs, offering breathtaking views of the sea and coastline.

6. The Buckfastleigh Branch Line: A Pilgrimage to a Devon Gem

The Buckfastleigh Branch Line is a short but scenic journey that connects Totnes with the historic town of Buckfastleigh. The line winds through the picturesque Dart Valley, passing by the ruins of Buckfast Abbey, once one of the most important religious centers in Devon. Alight at Buckfastleigh to explore the historic town, visit the restored Buckfast Abbey, or embark on a walk along the picturesque River Dart. The Buckfastleigh Branch Line is a perfect choice for a leisurely day trip or a pilgrimage to one of Devon's most sacred sites.

East Devon: A Tapestry of Coast, Countryside, and Culture

East Devon is a region of captivating landscapes, from the dramatic Jurassic Coast to the rolling hills of the Blackdown Hills. The railway lines

here connect historic towns, charming villages, and seaside destinations, offering a diverse range of experiences.

7. The Seaton Tramway: A Heritage Railway with a Coastal Twist

The Seaton Tramway is a delightful heritage railway that runs along the stunning Axe Estuary, connecting the seaside town of Seaton with the historic town of Colyton. The journey offers panoramic views of the estuary, the rolling hills of East Devon, and the distant coastline. Alight at Colyton to explore its medieval streets and historic buildings, or continue to Seaton, a popular destination for beachgoers, nature lovers, and those seeking a relaxing seaside getaway.

8. The Axe Valley Line: A Rural Retreat into East Devon

The Axe Valley Line branches off from the Seaton Tramway at Axminster and meanders through the tranquil Axe Valley. The train passes through picturesque villages nestled amidst rolling hills and lush meadows, offering a glimpse into the rural heart of East Devon. Alight at Chard to explore the historic town and visit the Museum of Somerset, or continue to Yeovil, a vibrant town with a rich industrial heritage. The Axe Valley Line is a perfect choice for a leisurely escape into the Devon countryside, with opportunities for walking, cycling, and exploring charming villages.

9. The Sidmouth Branch Line: A Coastal Adventure to the Jurassic Coast

The Sidmouth Branch Line connects Exeter with the picturesque coastal town of Sidmouth, considered one of Devon's most beautiful seaside destinations. The train journey offers stunning views of the Exe Estuary, the rolling Devon countryside, and the dramatic coastline of the Jurassic Coast.

Alight at Sidmouth to explore the town's charming streets, visit the Connaught Gardens, or embark on a walk along the scenic coastal path. The Sidmouth Branch Line is a perfect choice for a day trip or weekend getaway, combining the tranquility of the countryside with the excitement of the coast.

Beyond the Rails: Exploring Devon's Branch Line Attractions

While the branch lines themselves offer an unforgettable journey, the true magic lies in the destinations they connect. Along the way, discover a wealth of attractions that cater to every interest, from history and culture to nature and adventure.

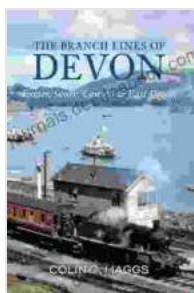
- Visit historic castles, such as Tiverton Castle in the Exe Valley and Buckfast Abbey in the Dart Valley. - Explore charming towns and villages, each with its own unique character, from the medieval streets of Totnes to the seaside charm of Sidmouth. - Embark on nature walks and cycling trails through picturesque landscapes, including the Exe Valley, the Teign Valley, and the Axe Valley. - Take a boat trip along the River Exe or the River Dart, offering a unique perspective on the region's stunning scenery. - Sample local produce and enjoy traditional Devon cuisine at charming pubs and restaurants along the lines.

Plan Your Branch Line Adventure

Embarking on a branch line adventure in Devon is easy and affordable. Trains run regularly from Exeter, providing convenient connections to all the branch lines. Consider purchasing a Devon Day Ranger or a Devon Explorer Pass for unlimited travel on trains throughout the county. For more information, visit the Great Western Railway website.

Accommodation options are plentiful along the branch lines, ranging from charming bed and breakfasts to comfortable hotels. To plan your itinerary and book your tickets, visit the National Rail Enquiries website.

The branch lines of Devon offer an enchanting journey through a region of captivating landscapes, rich history, and diverse attractions. From the rolling countryside of North Devon to the dramatic coastline of East Devon, the railways connect charming towns and villages, revealing hidden gems along the way. Embark on a rail adventure along these picturesque lines, and discover the magic that awaits beyond the rails.

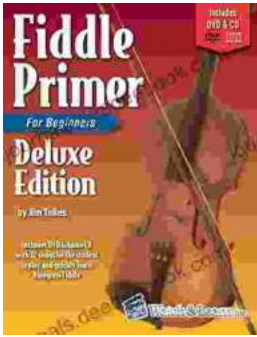


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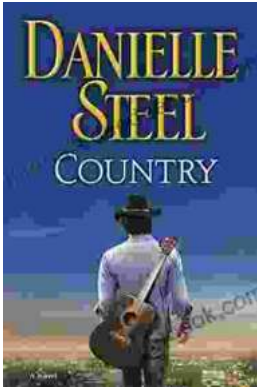
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