

THE LORNA DOONE TRAIL

By S.H. Burton,

Revised and expanded by John Burgess and Caroline Tonson-Rye

R.D. Blackmore's deep affection for, and understanding of, Exmoor's landscape, people and legends shines through his immortal novel *Lorna Doone*. Through words and pictures this book, *The Lorna Doone Trail*, traces the Exmoor adventures of Jan Ridd and Lorna Doone and the host of other characters such as Jeremy Stickles and Tom Faggus who feature in the grand sweep of the story. Using Blackmore's own words as the starting point, *The Lorna Doone Trail* helps to marry plot with place, using generous illustrations and expert commentary to put the narrative in its real-life context. It enables lovers of the novel and its abounding life to follow confidently in Blackmore's footsteps and revisit the key locations of the timeless Exmoor story of derring-do, and love enduring against the odds.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

S.H. Burton (1919–2005), writer, teacher, and publisher, was head of the English Department at Blundell's School between 1945 and 1964. He wrote many books on a wide range of subjects, his most successful being *Exmoor* (4th edition, 1984).

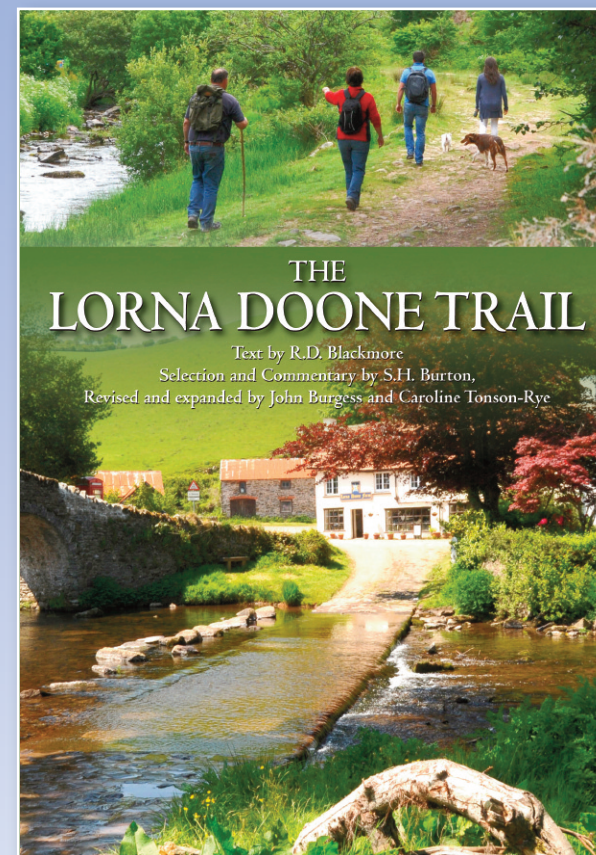
John Burgess, born in Somerset, was a BBC radio journalist and producer for almost twenty-five years, but his life-long love of Exmoor and its people first took root when he joined the Exmoor National Park Authority in the late 1970s. He produced with Caroline Tonson-Rye *Hope Bourne's Exmoor: Eloquence in Art* (Halsgrove, 2013).

Caroline Tonson-Rye retired to Exmoor in 2010 after a career in publishing. She is a Trustee of the Exmoor Society, and editor of *Exmoor Chroniclers* (Exmoor Society, 2017).

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THE LORNA DOONE TRAIL



Dulverton today, a busy moorland town as depicted in the novel.



Present day
Watchet harbour
and marina.
(© Paul Savage)



View from
heather-clad
Dunkery Beacon
looking towards
the Bristol
Channel.
(© Paul Savage)

Example pages

THE LORNA DOONE TRAIL

The Valley of Rocks

Now the wisest person in all our parts was reckoned to be a certain wise woman, well known all over Exmoor by the name of 'Mother Meldrum' ... [She] had two homes ... according to the time of year. In summer she lived in a pleasant cave, facing the cool side of the hill, far inland near Hawkridge, and close above 'Tarr Steps', a wonderful crossing of the Barle river, made (as everybody knows) by Satan, for a wager. But throughout the winter, she found sea-air agreeable, and a place where things could be had on credit, and more occasion of talking. Not but what she could have credit (for every one was afraid of her) in the neighbourhood of Tarr Steps; only there was no one handy owning things worth taking.

Therefore, at the fall of the leaf, when the woods grew damp and irksome, the wise woman always set her face to the warmer cliffs of the Channel; where shelter was, and dry fern bedding, and folk to be seen ... And there ... anyone who chose

Tarr Steps, a clapper bridge, probably of medieval origin.

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THE LORNA DOONE TRAIL

Feral goats in the Valley of Rocks.

might find her, towards the close of a winter's day, gathering sticks and brown fern for fuel, and talking to herself the while, in a hollow stretch behind the cliffs; which foreigners who come and go without seeing much of Exmoor have called the 'Valley of Rocks'.

This valley, or 'goyal' [goyle], as we term it ... lies to the west of Lynton ... Our homefolk always call it the 'Danes', or the 'Dene'; which is no more, they tell me, than a hollow place ... It is a green rough-sided hollow, bending at the middle, touched with stone at either crest, and dotted here and there with slabs, in and out the brambles. On the right hand is an upward crag, called by some the 'Castle', easy enough to scale, and giving great view of the Channel. Facing this, from the

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The Valley
of Rocks.