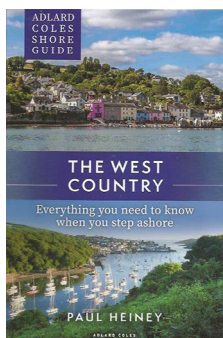


BOOKS

Reviews of books and publications

The West Country



Paul Heiney
Adlard Coles
978 1 3994 0999 5
2025
220 x 140mm
208 pages, flexiback
£20.00

Wikipedia's map of the West Country includes Bournemouth, Salisbury, Swindon and Gloucester. Thus, this book's coverage, the southwest coast from Bill of Portland to Scilly but with nothing at all on the north coast, seems a bit mean. A different title would be more appropriate. You may recall that

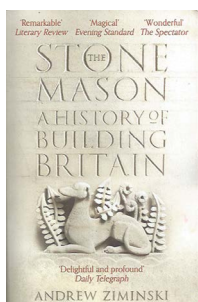
his *Maritime Britain* (May 2005, p34) was primarily about maritime museums and old ships southeast of a line from Shetland to Scilly.

Written for yachtsmen, it is not a pilot. It takes each port or anchorage and describes what it has to offer in the way of amenities, either at the port or within moderate travelling distance. These are often what the yachtsman may need, nearest repairs, laundry and the like, with the distance to such facilities if they are not to hand. However, they go much wider, walks, places to eat or drink, attractions for families and even a number of places with kayak hire. Often these would assist visitors by road or rail.

As well as the coast a number of estuaries are visited, the Dart, the Exe, the Yealm, the Fal and the Helford River. The book does tend to skip features of interest where there is not a port but as these are fairly frequent and significant places of interest are mentioned in passing this is not a great problem.

It is an attractive book but not what it says on the cover.

The Stonemason



Andrew Ziminski
978 1 473 66394 7
John Murray
2021
200 x 130mm
316 pages, paperback
£10.99

As a stonemason, much of Andrew Ziminski's work involves cutting rotting stone out of old buildings such as cathedrals, mostly around Wessex, and replacing it with good. From ancient Persian mosques through millennia of mainly religious buildings, religious and architectural concepts are explained, right down to his current tools.

A difficulty today is finding suitable matching materials, no longer as readily to hand, so that, around Avebury, for example, he tended to drive around with one eye on surrounding fields and ditches, ready to stop and lift any suitable sarsen stone into the back of his pickup.

This led on to wondering how stones were moved in earlier times. Teams of men hauling ropes tied to blocks of stone would not have worked on surfaces that were not smooth, firm and free of stones.

One of the most spectacular views in the country is obtained by opening the trapdoor at the very pinnacle of Salisbury Cathedral's steeple, to the horizon in all directions. Below is a network of river channels, some of which could be used to bring even large stones. Bearing in mind higher water tables in the past, Andrew does the calculations for the size of timber raft needed to support even stones for Stonehenge.

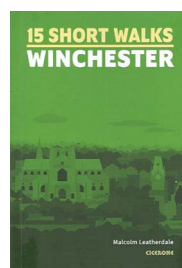
'As usual I had brought *Laughing Water* along in the back of the pickup.' This was his open canoe, used here to try the route in the half light, to avoid access confrontations. Crossing the Sound of Iona was

an odd one, most being in the southwest after completing jobs. From Bath he canoed up the Avon to Bradford. From Glastonbury he used the flooded River Sheppey, over its banks, to Hinton St George. From Wareham it was a coastal trip to Portland. The longest was from Kew to Bath via the Thames, Kennet and Kennet & Avon Canal. Often he bivvied overnight as necessary and there was plenty of wildlife to see.

The book has overtones of quiet anger, sometimes unexpectedly, maybe supporting those more used to a bad press, dropouts in a graveyard, the Stonehenge sunrise crowds rather than authority. Of Crofton pumping station he says 'I thought the great brick chimney a piece of architecture far more worthy than the showy domesticity of its cousins at Hampton Court, which do nothing better than aid the provision of heat and hot food.'

This is the first paperback edition, beginning with two pages of quotes from reviews of the original. The *Evening Standard* begins 'A compelling book: part travel journal - paddling along misty streams in the South-West by canoe'. No other review extract mentions the canoe.

15 Short Walks Winchester



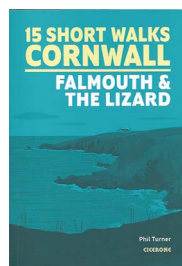
Malcolm Leatherdale
Cicerone
978 1 78631 164 1
2023
170 x 120mm
95 pages, paperback
£9.95

The Test, the Itchen and Itchen Navigation, the Alre and the Dever are all met and sometimes followed on these walks around Winchester, frequently in the form of braided chalk streams, often fast flowing. Like every other inland river in Hampshire, the EA claim that none of them has navigation available to the public although they are unable to produce justification for their position. It was the navigability that assisted the Romans in making Winchester their fifth largest English city, later becoming the English capital.

Clean water, attractive landscapes, often rural, and mellow brick and stone buildings produce enjoyable riverscapes in a band from east of Winchester towards Andover, the book well illustrated and supported by sections of OS 1:25,000 map.

Malcolm Leatherdale previously wrote *Walking Hampshire's Test Way* (Nov 2018, p29). The current title selects from a wider spread of rivers but in less detail so that families can pick brief strolls.

15 Short Walks Cornwall Falmouth & the Lizard



Phil Turner
Cicerone
978 1 78631 173 3
2024
170 x 120mm
95 pages, paperback
£9.95

All but two of these fifteen walks are adjacent to water, usually tidal. Two are on the north coast of Cornwall, several around Carrick Roads and the others mostly from Falmouth round the south coast to Porthleven.

The latter is alongside the Loe, which would have been open to the sea until blocked by the siltation of the Loe Bar. Penrose Estate donated it to the National Trust in 1974, subject to the condition that boats and swimmers should not be permitted to use it. It would be interesting to know the legal basis for the imposition of these restrictions.

Author Phil Turner highlights 'Lizard Point is the most southerly point in mainland Britain, so it's surprising that so many people are focused on Land's End to John o' Groats journeys. Particularly as John