Jane Howorth: MY DEVON

When she's not rehoming hens, the founder of a Devon-based animal charity is exploring the hills and woodlands around her home

Tell us briefly about yourself and what you do in the county.
I'm Jane Howorth and I'm the founder and CEO of the British Hen Welfare Trust. I used to be PA to the company secretary of *Auto Trader* magazine in a different life, but I moved to Devon and left all that behind and decided to do something more meaningful. I love cooking, gardening, walking, being with friends and enjoying delicious food and fine wine!

Where in Devon do you live?
I'm lucky enough to live reasonably close to Exeter in a home with a large walled garden which allows me to aspire to my gardening ambitions (not always achieved, inevitably), and my hens to potter gracefully around the place looking contented.

How long have you been here and what brought you here?
I moved to Devon in 1995 living initially just outside Cadeleigh, then Chulmleigh and now just outside Crediton. I'm hoping I'm deemed a local next year as I celebrate my 30th year as a Devonian.

What's the best thing about living in Devon?
Being so immersed in the countryside, especially some of the ancient woodlands, the friendliness of the people and the fabulous sense of community all add up to making it a very special place to be.

And the worst?
The roads, but then I don't think it's just Devon that's having to cope with poor road surfaces.

What is your favourite view in the county?
That's easy, definitely Raddon Top near to my home and where I regularly walk my three dogs; it has a beautiful panoramic view of the whole area and the wind is always guaranteed to be invigorating, regardless of my energy levels.

Describe your ideal day out in Devon.
It would definitely involve a long walk with my dogs and some friends, either on the beach or in woodland followed by a delicious lunch somewhere that's been recommended and then home to check the chickens, hopefully collect the eggs, and enjoy a glass of something chilled or mug of something hot depending on the weather.

PHOTO: BHWT

What is your favourite Devon journey, by any mode of transport?
I don't have a favourite, but when I first arrived in Devon my husband and I loved getting in the car and getting lost down whichever lane looked pretty. It was such a wonderful way to while away time, especially on a drizzly Sunday afternoon, often pausing at a local pub or tea room for a tasty treat. Now I do less driving and more meandering around woodlands, getting a little bit lost, but not so lost I can't find my way home for tea.

What is your favourite month to be in Devon?
I love September in Devon. I just adore the turn of the season, the soft glow of the summer sun late in the afternoon across the countryside and the inevitable crisping of the leaves as they slowly wane into so many glorious colours before giving us that final pleasure of a fabulous crunch under foot.

What gift from Devon would you give to a friend?
Along with some eggs from my hens, and fruit from the garden I'd probably give a hamper with some delicious Devon goodies. And if my garden performs as I hope, an offering of flowers too.

What three words best describe Devon?
Verdant, peaceful and welcoming. ●

The British Hen Welfare Trust works to rehome commercial laying hens and encourages support for British free-range eggs. In next month's issue Simone Stanbrook-Byrne takes a look at the charity, from its foundation in 2005 to this summer, which saw its millionth hen being rehomed and adopted by His Majesty The King.