



National  
Trust

# Exploring Exmoor

## A walking guide



North Devon and Somerset





Walkers enjoying the view from Bossington Hill above Porlock Bay, on the Holnicote Estate.

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## Introduction

From hidden Heddon Valley in North Devon to the vast, sprawling expanse of the 5042-hectare Holnicote Estate in Somerset, the National Trust manages massive areas of open-access land across Exmoor National Park, maintaining hundreds of trails enjoyed by thousands of walkers every year.

In this booklet we explore some of the routes that roam across this multifaceted moor, taking you from wind-blown Tor tops and wide-open heathland, into deep combs and wild woodlands, along the banks of rushing rivers and chattering streams, right to the dramatic cliffs and craggy coastline where Exmoor tumbles into the sea.

En route we'll meet the myriad of species that populate the moor, from birds of prey, ponies, red deer and rare butterflies to wildflowers and fungi that transform the landscape into an ever-changing kaleidoscopically colourful wonderland as nature's calendar revolves.

As well as one multi-day outing, there's a short walk for every month of the year here, arranged by season. However, all of these routes can be enjoyed at any time, and the adventures and encounters you'll experience will be different each time you set out.

Happy walking.

**The Exmoor Coast team**

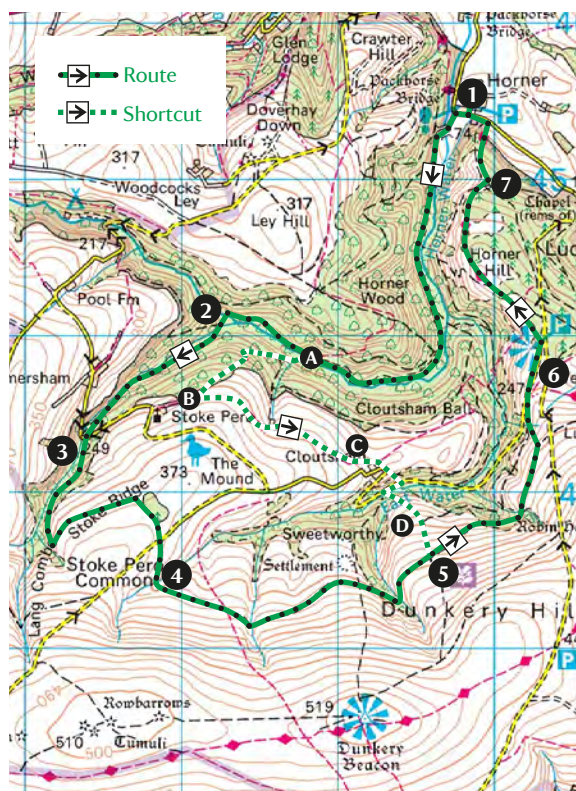




Spring, best for coastal wildflowers

## Horner Wood and the north face of Dunkery

Explore this looping trail through one of England's biggest nature reserves, 1626-hectare Dunkery and Horner Wood, along the tree-fringed banks of Horner Water and across wide-open moorland on the flanks of Dunkery Hill, Exmoor's highest point, en route to Webber's Post.



'From walking alongside Horner Water and exploring the wild woodland on either side of the valley, to chance meetings with Exmoor ponies with spring-born foals on the side of Dunkery Hill, this route has it all.'

Paul, National Trust Ranger

~x 7½mi (12.5km)  
Shorter route 6mi (10km)

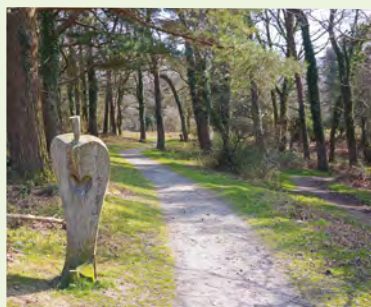
M Moderate to challenging, with some steep climbs

⌚ 4-5 hours approx.  
(3-4 hours for shorter route)

SS898/455 / OS Explorer OL 9

### Nature highlights

In spring, the woods of lichen-cloaked ancient oak and ash trees are full of wild flowers and a rising tide of bluebells, while moorland trails are ablaze with flowering gorse. Enjoy surprise encounters with wild Exmoor ponies and red deer. Look out for woodland birds including whinchat and ringed ouzel.



### Start: Horner Wood car park, TA24 8HY

- Exit the car park by the information sign to the right of the toilet block. Walk along the footpath, turning right onto the lane at the café. At the corner, turn left along the track, cross the beautiful stone bridge over Horner Water, and go through the gate. Walk with the chattering water on your left and the ancient oaks of Horner Wood on the right. Ignore the first few footbridges, where fingerposts point towards Webber's Post, and stay on the right bank, following signs towards Pool Bridge.

### Shortcut

- When you reach a four-way fingerpost indicating 'Pool Bridge 1' (straight ahead), 'Horner 1½' (back the way you came), 'Bridleway Ley Hill' (right), follow the sign pointing left, to 'Bridleway Stoke Pero', and cross the bridge. Bear right, ascending with a stream to your left and the river on your right, and take the steep, snaking path to the top.
- At the T-junction, turn right along the bridleway and walk until you meet a fingerpost. Pass through a wooden gate and turn sharp left, following a sign indicating Webber's Post. Go through another gate. When you reach a double gate, take the left one (with blue bridleway markings). Walk with the hedge on your right, taking in fantastic views of Dunkery and the Somerset coast. Follow blue bridleway indicators across two large fields, passing through two more gates. In the next field, head towards a gate in the corner and then turn right, following a fingersign to 'Cloutsham'.
- At the farm/B&B, turn left on the road, round the corner and then go left down a rough track. Upon meeting the road, go right and walk with the river on your left, until you see a footbridge.
- Cross the water and take the path up the hill, with a stream to your right, until you emerge from the trees onto Dunkery Hill. Keep climbing, ignoring the first scrappy path leading left. At the next crossways go left, rejoining the main route.

### End shortcut

- At Wilmersham Wood, take the footbridge across the river and walk up a slight incline, through a valley with a stream on your left. After about 100 yards/metres the path fords the stream and begins climbing through Stoke Wood. The route skips back and forth across the water as you clamber up the combe, with waterfalls cascading by the trailside.
- Cross a lane between Wilmersham and Stoke Pero and continue through the woods until the trail abruptly rises away from the stream. At a major T-junction, turn left and climb out of the tree cover, onto the open moor. Take the track to a circular copse atop Stoke Ridge, skirt around the edge of the trees, cross a quiet road and follow the signpost for Dickie's Path, Webbers Post and Dunkery.
- Descend, cross a stream and take the rising path leading left. After another stream, continue along Dickie's Path, across Goosemoor Common, ignoring scrappy tracks joining left and right. Here you'll pass prehistoric Sweetworthy Settlements, two circular Iron-Age hillforts vaguely recognisable by the remains of their 2000-year-old ramparts.
- Eventually the main path narrows, enters trees and descends towards the sound of rushing water. Continue on the main path, straight over a crossways next to a lonely thorn tree. <<Shortcut rejoins here>> Continue straight on, tracing the contour of the hill and crossing another stream at Hollow Combe. Shortly after this, on Easter Hill, the footpath forks; go left and descend towards Webber's Post.
- Cross a small road, enter the car park and drink in the dramatic vista of the Somerset coast and countryside. Leave the car park following a sign pointing towards 'Porlock', along a wide, well-made trail, passing a large wooden apple and a chunky stone bench. Keep following fingerposts indicating a permitted bridleway leading to 'Horner' (not 'Horner Water'). After passing a wooden hut with commemorative plaques, continue straight on.
- At the T-junction, go right along a permitted bridleway towards Horner, and at the next junction, go left and take 'His Honours Path'. Another left, followed by a right brings you to a tall gate. Join the road, go left and wander back to Horner.





Spring, best for bats and bees

## Ladies Mile meander

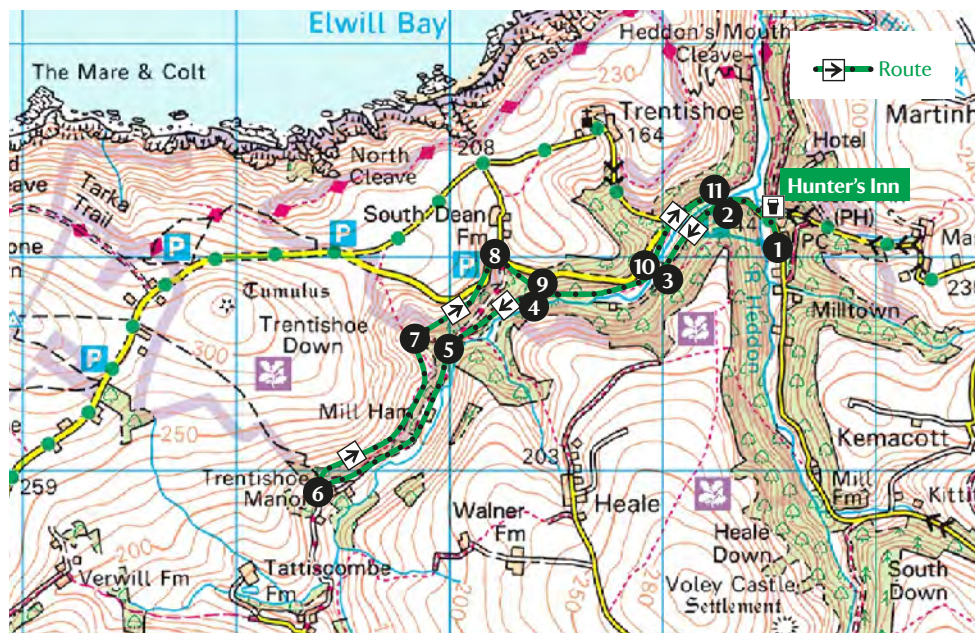
Explore Exmoor's hidden Heddon Valley, a vibrant oasis of coastal and moorland life, during this circular stroll that goes via the door of one of the moor's most iconic pubs: the Hunter's Inn.

3mi (4.8km)

Relatively easy. Mostly wide paths, rocks and roots to watch out for, and only a modest amount of ascent.

1.5-2 hours approx.

SS654/480 / OS Explorer OL 9



### Nature highlights

The National Trust's woodland management is creating areas rich in floral diversity throughout this Exmoor valley, and the colourful spring explosion of wildflowers attracts a wealth of bees, bats, birds and butterflies, including the high brown fritillary. Listen out, too, for the coo of cuckoos in spring.

'There's no better perspective of Heddon Valley as it springs back into life after winter than from Ladies Mile trail, which clings to the side of Trentishoe Down.'

Dan, National Trust Ranger

### Start: Heddon Valley car park, EX31 4PY

- Before setting off, take a look around Heddon Valley car park. Spend a moment on the bench, contemplating the river as it rushes past en route to the sea. There's also an orchard, bug hotels, bird feeders and much more to explore. When you're ready, exit the car park and walk along the road to the left of the Hunter's Inn, keeping an eye out for the resident peacocks, until you reach the stone bridge.
- At the bridge, take the track leading left. Peaceful 'Harry's Orchard' here, named after a local character, has several apple trees and a large damson.
- By Vention Cottage, go right and cross the wooden footbridge, then turn left along the footpath. The National Trust has created a large glade here, felling beech trees to allow other tree species and ground flora to grow. More diverse flora attracts new animals, including insects, birds and bats. As you wander, look out for spring flowers such as wood sorrel, wood anemone and wood ruff (all delicate little white flowers).
- Carry on along the lower footpath. During spring, this meadow is great for spotting a range of butterfly species, including the speckled wood. In April and May you may also see some small, pretty pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies.
- Continue along the road to Trentishoe manor. More woodland management here has seen the National Trust clearing birch and nursing a young group of oak and rowan trees. With trees better spaced, the area will become wood pasture, again increasing species diversity. In spring the glade will come alive with butterflies and birds.
- At the manor, take an acute right turn and walk northeast, along Ladies Mile Path, with the road to your right and Trentishoe Down rising to your left. These 'scallop' (imagine a scallop shell) increase the area of edge habitat as well as species diversity. Edge habitats are the most important areas for wildlife and these will be frequented by butterflies and birds. This more linear feature also creates great foraging grounds for bats.
- When another path crosses your way, carry on straight ahead. This crossroad is a real suntrap – a lovely place to pause for a rest, and to spot spring butterflies. It's usually chilly here in April, so only a few emerge, but by May the place comes to life. Listen out for cuckoos too – they're regular April visitors.
- At the road, go right, then right again at the crossroad 20yds/metres further on, and then immediately left onto another footpath. In another example of woodland pasture restoration, the National Trust have coppiced this area, rejuvenating existing oak and rowan trees, and planting some new trees. This spot is directly below a high brown fritillary site, and the sun now reaches the bracken and warms the butterflies' eggs in winter and the caterpillars in spring. More nectar is also produced from the bramble created by piling up the treetops.
- Rejoin the footpath you were on earlier, leading back towards the Hunters Inn. In this woodland area, several trees have been felled by the wind, and a glade is likely to be opened up naturally, creating the same conditions as those helped along by the National Trust. Here rangers have simply cleared the path, otherwise letting nature take its own course.
- Go past the wooden footbridge and continue until you reach the road. You will pass a stone embedded in the ground; this is a boundary marker, but according to a local tale, a young girl who lived nearby used to call it 'fat man's grave', and she was warned never to go beyond it while out exploring. An impressive lime tree next to the stone measures some 6 metres in circumference – this was probably also once used as a boundary marker.
- Go past the footpath to Heddon's mouth (unless you fancy a detour) keeping on the road until you pass the Hunters Inn and reach the car park.







Spring, best for nesting pied flycatchers and dippers

## Watersmeet bluebells

Do this delightful dawdle in May for the best bluebell action. Spring is also when the waterfalls are at their roaring best, but bear in mind that this is a very scenic stroll in any season.

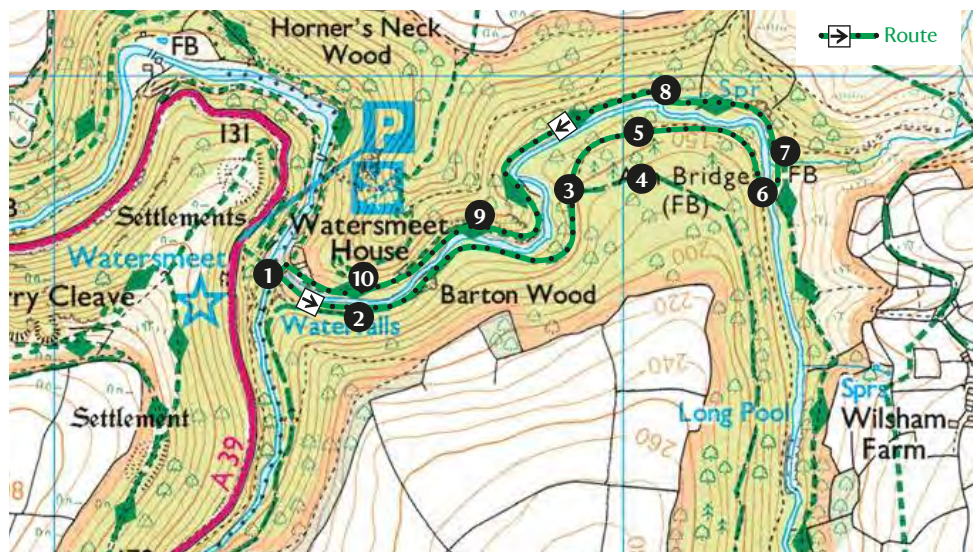
1½mi (2.5km)

The relatively easy route is narrow and rocky in places beyond Ash Bridge, but mostly rambles along well-made paths.

1 hour approx.

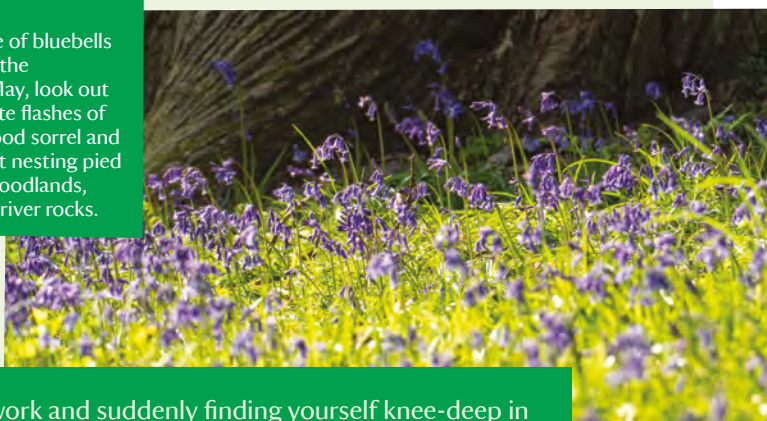
SS744/487 / OS Explorer OL 9

**Note: car park is council-run pay & display**



### Nature highlights

Besides a rising tide of bluebells that washes across the landscape here in May, look out for the delicate white flashes of wood anemone, wood sorrel and wood ruff. Also spot nesting pied flycatchers in the woodlands, and dippers on the river rocks.



'Walking into work and suddenly finding yourself knee-deep in bowing bluebells...well, someone has to do it.'

Rob, National Trust Ranger

### Start: Watersmeet House, EX35 6NT

1. Cross the East Lyn bridge from Watersmeet House, and turn left to walk along the river, against the flow. (For an amazing view of waterfalls, take a very short diversion here, and venture out onto the bridge over the Hoar Oak River, 20yds/metres to your right.) Close by the bridge, in the rockface to your right as you look up the East Lyn River, is an old mine adit (entrance). This was an exploratory adit and was never used – it's not very deep and you can look inside.
2. At the junction by some disused limekilns, carry straight on. There are limekilns all over North Devon, but they're usually found on the coast and are typically more rounded in construction, so these square ones on a river are a bit different. They were used to create lime to put on fields to sweeten the acidic soil for better growing conditions.
3. When the path forks, head right, up to the bluebell viewpoint to gaze across the ocean of azure flowers that laps around the ankles of the trees each spring.
4. This is the best view of the densest patch of bluebells. There are countless thousands in this woodland and they usually peak in the second week in May. Also keep an eye out for little pied flycatchers – they consistently nest here and will have arrived by spring; the male is a lovely black-and-white bird. Come back down to re-join the path. Here you need to make a decision: return back the way you came (on a relatively wide easy path), or carry on across the bridge then turn left (the path on the way back is narrower and rocky in places).
5. If you choose to continue, you will walk through two glades the National Trust has recently created in the beech plantation. Beech woodland is very poor for diversity, allowing little ground flora. Now opened up, ground cover and different tree species are already starting to grow.
6. When you reach Ash Bridge, cross the river and turn left, following the fingerpost on the other side pointing towards 'Watersmeet'.
7. Continue to walk downstream, with the river on your left. Keep your eyes peeled here for dippers – an enigmatic plump little river bird, easily identifiable from its brown back and white breast, which can be seen bobbing up and down on rocks before plunging under the water to catch riverfly larvae. The presence of lots of dippers on the river is an indicator of good water quality. This is also an area where salmon make their 'redds', a depression in the riverbed where the females lay eggs after their long journey from the sea.
8. The crook pool is a great place for a little rest, and to search out some of spring's other forest flowers, such as wood anemone, wood sorrel and wood ruff.
9. A stony point here is called 'Sorbus Rock', named for the proliferation of whitebeam sorbus trees that stand on its shoulders. There are numerous species of sorbus tree in this valley, and some are thought to be endemic, so they're found nowhere else in the world.
10. Carry on along the river, and very shortly you will be back in Watersmeet tea gardens.



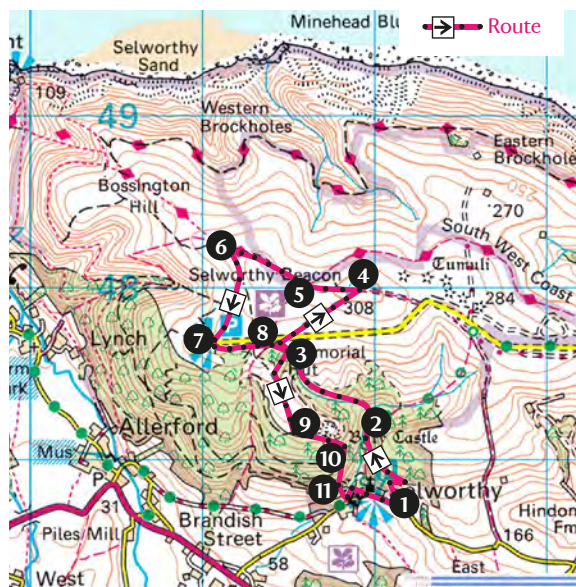




Summer, best for sunsets over the sea

## Selworthy and Bury Castle Woodland

From rich woodlands to open moorland with stunning views along Somerset's coastline, this stroll reveals Exmoor's many faces, and finishes at the door of an exquisite tea-room on Selworthy Green, surrounded by a sleepy hamlet-huddle of thatched cottages.

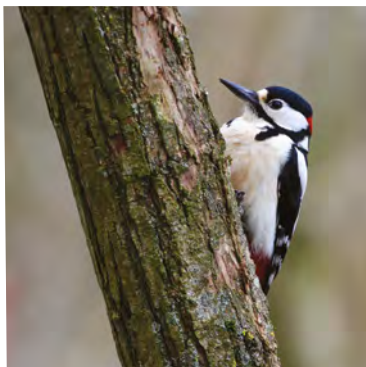


3½mi (5.5km)

Moderate, with some steep climbs. Shortcut possible.

2½ hours approx.

SS920468 / OS Explorer OL 9



### Nature highlights

Selworthy wood contains oak, sycamore, ash, silver birch, sweet chestnut, holly, evergreen oak and various conifer species, and provides a home for red and roe deer. Birds include nightjar, tawny owl, blackcap and woodpecker. On the coast, look for skylark, wheatear, raven and peregrine falcon.



'This walk is wonderful for the mixture of rich woodland and open coastal landscape you pass through. And the fact it finishes at the door of a fantastic tea-room is a bonus.'

Phil, National Trust Ranger

**Start: Selworthy church car park, TA24 8TW (drive past the church to reach this car park)**

1. Leave the car park behind the church, following a fingerpost sign pointing to 'Selworthy Beacon / North Hill'. Go through a gate and ascend a steep path that zigzags uphill. Pass through another gate.
2. At the fork, go left (downhill), following a sign for 'Selworthy Combe'. Descend to a crossways and continue straight over, across a stream, towards 'Selworthy Beacon'. Cross a second stream and follow the broad footpath as it arcs left and climbs, with a babbling brook chatting away on your left.
3. Emerge onto open moorland, where the western maritime heath flora includes bell heather, heath milkwort and western gorse. Keep following the footpath as it leans left, skirting the treeline. A fingerpost soon indicates 'Bury Castle', but ignore this and instead follow the track leading right, uphill to a tarmac road. Cross, and walk along the track angled slightly right, leading directly to the trig point and cairn at Selworthy Beacon.
4. Selworthy Beacon (1010 feet/310 metres), the walk's high point, serves up spectacular views across the Bristol Channel to Wales. Look inland (southwest) to spot Dunkery Beacon, Exmoor's tallest peak. In 1588, both beacons were set ablaze to warn of the approaching Spanish Armada – two links in a chain of such signals that carried the message from Cornwall to London. Take the track leading left (west), walking with the sea on your right.
5. At a three-way fingerpost, where the South West Coast Path joins from the right, carry straight on, along the bridleway in the direction of Bossington. Walk past a wooden arrow post, enjoying views along the Exmoor coast straight ahead.
6. At the next wooden post, by a T-junction, take an acute left, leaving the South West Coast Path. When the track forks, go right and descend to the car park.
7. At the extremity of the car park, on the precipitous edge of the hill, an information board explains the main features of the generous vista, which stretches into North Devon, across countless coves, beautiful bays and remote secret beaches. Bid adieu to the view, turn and walk away from it, taking the well-made gravel pathway leading slightly right, which slides serpentine-like through the woods.
8. After about 300 metres you'll reach the 'Memorial Hut', built in 1878 to commemorate former landowner Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, who planted all the woodlands between here and Bossington between 1815 and 1834, each section commemorating the birth of one of his nine children. Continue past this verse-inscribed hut, almost to the point where you emerged from woods earlier, then bear right along a grassy track that follows a broad curve and dips into Selworthy Wood.
9. At the next T-junction, go left (following a fingerpost pointing to 'Bury Castle') and amble across a flat grassy expanse. The ditches, banks and rudimentary ramparts of this ancient Iron Age site, dating to around 400 BC, are off to your left. Although called a castle, this site probably housed a small farming community 2500 years ago. Constructed on the spur of a hill, so the steep sides would deter attackers, it was further defended by a circular rampart and a v-shaped outer bank and ditch. When you reach a large wooden field gate (don't go through), turn left and walk with the stone wall on your right. From the corner of the wall, keep going straight, descending into woods.
10. A switchback leads to a small wooden gate. Go through and keep descending down a zig-zag route, following a fingerpost pointing to 'Selworthy and Allerford'. Take a sharp left at another fingerpost, heading towards 'Selworthy Combe'. Go up a gentle rise and then, at another fingerpost, just before a wooden gate, go right to Selworthy and descend via another series of switchbacks.
11. At the bottom, amid a tangled knot of trails, follow signs to 'Selworthy Green'.









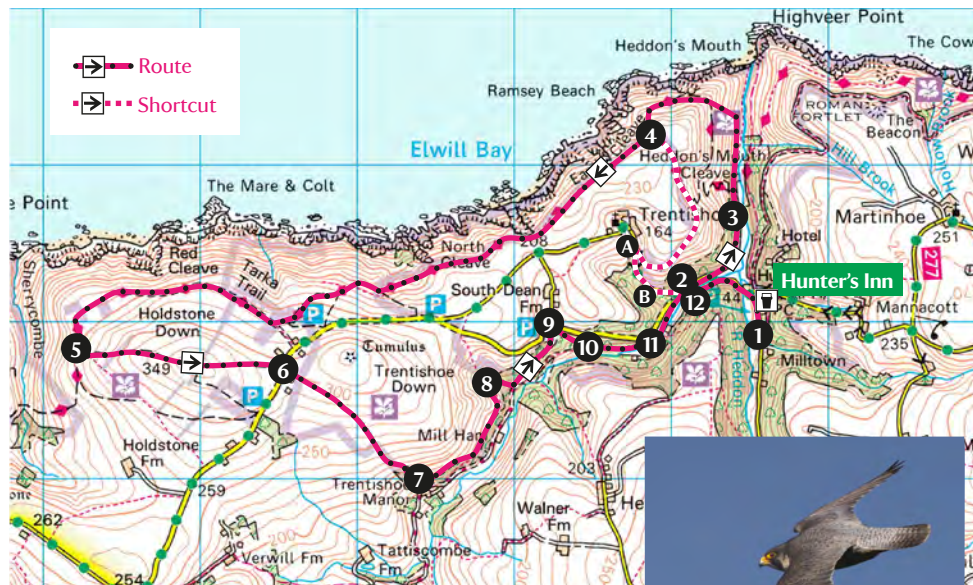


Summer, best for high brown fritillary butterflies

## Heddon Valley butterflies

Follow this trail from the shady woodlands of the Heddon Valley up and along the coast path and onto the moors, along the way you'll see a plethora of butterflies, including the UK's most endangered butterfly the high brown fritillary.

-  7½mi (12km)  
3mi (5km) shorter route
-  Challenging, steep climbs  
and walks near cliff edges
-  5 hours approx.  
(1½ hours for shorter route)
-  SS654/480 / OS Explorer OL 9



### Nature highlights

During the summer Heddon Valley is home to dozens of species of butterfly including; grayling, wall browns and the UK's most endangered the high brown fritillary. As you walk along the cliffs you may see peregrine falcons and around Holdstone Down you'll find Dartford warblers.

'Standing at Peter Rock on this route, gazing out along the Exmoor coast bathed in summer morning or evening light, is one of my favourite places in the world to be – it gives you a real butterfly's-eye view of this extraordinary place.'

Josey, National Trust Ranger

### Start: Heddon Valley car park, EX31 4PY

1. First, explore Heddon Valley's wildlife-friendly car park and see what pollinators (bees, beetles, wasps, flies etc) you can spot getting busy in the bug hotels and flowers. Then turn left out of the car park towards the Hunter's Inn. Stay left of the pub and cross the stone bridge.
2. Take the path on the right of the road, toward Heddon's Mouth, passing an old orchard. According to 1840s tithe maps, most of the houses in the valley had their own orchards and this would have been one of them.
3. As you walk towards Heddon's Mouth, take the coast path on your left towards Combe Martin. The meadows on your right, full of flowering buddleia, are excellent for spotting butterflies. You can see dozens of species, including the high brown fritillary in late June. You are now heading up and out of the valley, walking on the steep but stunning coast path. Peter Rock is a great spot to enjoy spectacular views of Exmoor plunging into the sea; it's an excellent place to see grayling and wall brown butterflies, as well as peregrine falcons, which nest on the cliffs.
4. At East Cleave the path forks. Here you can either take the short cut and head back inland to Trentishoe by going left (in which case skip to A), or go right and carry on towards Combe Martin on the coast path.

### Shortcut

- A. Follow the Tarka Trail until you meet the road, then turn left down the hill. As you walk, you'll be passing through the best high brown fritillary site in the country. There are numerous high browns toward the end of June as well as dark green fritillary and at other times of year, small pearl-bordered fritillary and silver washed fritillary. Sometimes all four can be seen on the wing.
- B. Turn left again. following the road back around to the car park and Hunters Inn.

### End shortcut



On the longer route you'll pass Neck Wood, an isolated copse of trees where six different sorbus species (whitebeams) thrive. The oak trees here grow curved, due to the wind, which make them perfect for shipbuilding, and they used to be felled and thrown down to the sea for collection. On the hillside of Trentishoe Down, above and below the path, are the remains of Bronze Age hut circles and barrows. At a T-Junction, turn right and walk around the sea side of Holdstone Down.

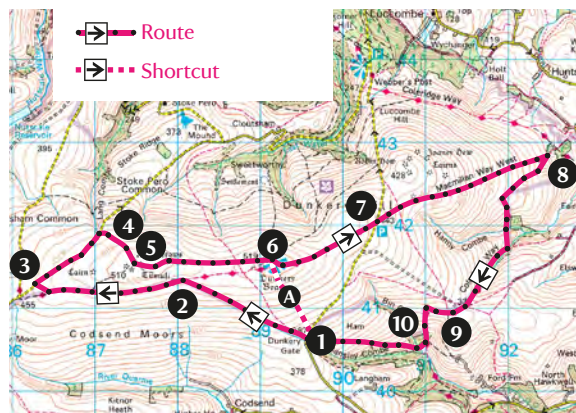
5. At the next fork, go left and climb to the summit of Holdstone Down, keeping an eye out for Dartford warblers among the dense gorse. From the top of Holdstone Down, on a clear day, you'll be able to see as far as Dartmoor to the south and the Brecon Beacons in Wales to the north.
6. After taking in the view, head down to the road. Cross, and then follow the path across the heath and down into the woods.
7. Turn left along 'Ladies Mile'. As you walk along this path you should see an array of woodland butterflies, such as the speckled wood. Butterflies thrive here because the National Trust has created glades, increasing the diversity of flora, which also supports more invertebrates, birds and bats.
8. When another path crosses the route, continue on straight across. You'll soon pass one of the area's best high brown fritillary sites where, towards the end of June, nectaring occurs on the bramble.
9. Join the road and turn right. Head down and around the bend. At the crossroad turn right then immediately left onto the footpath back down into the valley.
10. At a T-junction, go left towards the Hunters Inn. Near the path junction is an impressive old lime tree, probably planted as a boundary marker, which has a circumference of around 6 metres. Just next to it you'll see the old boundary stone known locally as 'fat man's grave'
11. Turn right across the wooden footbridge and up through the drive of the house, then turn left along the track back towards The Hunter's Inn.
12. Turn right out of the track onto the road toward the Hunter's Inn and the car park.



Summer, best for explosively colourful moorland heather

## Dunkery Beacon

This loop route departs Dunkery Gate and wanders right across the roof of Exmoor, going via the prehistoric remains of Great and Little Rowbarrow, taking in sections of the Coleridge and MacMillan ways, and topping out at Dunkery Beacon, the moor's highest point, offering absolutely spectacular views.



**Nature and pre-history highlights**  
Dunkery ridge is topped by a row of Bronze-Age barrows. This landscape was once densely forested and populated by bears, wolves, wild boar, horses and red deer. Deer remain, along with wild Exmoor ponies. Heather now dominates, exploding into a blooming burst of pink-and-purple colour in summer, when bees and butterflies abound.

'I love this walk because of the landscape's ancient, enigmatic history, and the morning encounters I enjoy with skittish packs of wild red deer and tousle-maned Exmoor ponies, which look lovely and sleek in the summer months, with their new coats.'

Tom, National Trust Ranger

- 10mi (16km)  
5mi (8km) shorter route
- Moderate – some climbing required, some high and exposed terrain, but good paths.
- 5 hours approx.  
(2 hours for shorter route)
- SS896/406 / OS Explorer OL 9



**Start: Dunkery Gate car park, by Dunkery Bridge, TA24 7AT (see grid reference)**

1. Leave Dunkery Gate car park and carefully cross the road. Pick up the path directly opposite, which leads left, gently ascending as it crosses the open moor. When the path forks, stay on the main track, ignoring the very faint hint of a trail spidering off to the right, and keep climbing.
2. When another path joins from the right, keep going straight, along a track that traces a contour line and forms part of the MacMillan Way West. A fence runs parallel to the path, on your left.
3. About a mile/1.5km further along this track, the path forks (if you miss the fork, you'll soon meet a T-junction in the track, and the same directions apply). Go right, and walk until you emerge through a gate onto the tarmac road. Go right and walk along the quiet road for around 750 metres.
4. When you reach a open area on the right, marked by a National Trust stone pillar bearing a sign for 'Dunkery', turn right and walk back onto the moor, along the gradually ascending track, passing a small, square fenced enclosure.
5. After about 300 metres you'll reach the ridge. Great Rowbarrow – the largest of a line of 4000-year-old Bronze-Age burial cairns found along Dunkery ridge – is just to the left of the track. Follow the path around to the left and walk towards Dunkery Beacon, now clearly visible atop the moor, straight ahead of you. Around 150 metres later you'll pass Little Rowbarrow, just left of the track.
6. After contemplating these prehistoric piles, continue climbing to the summit cairn and trig point that announce your arrival at the top of the moor. Standing 1703 feet (519 metres) above sea level, Dunkery Beacon occupies Exmoor's highest point. Flaming signals have been lit here since Elizabethan times (when they warned of the approach of the Spanish Armada). From the National Trust memorial, which sits atop another Bronze-Age memorial cairn, absorb the panoramic vista, with the immense moor stretching out 360 degrees around you, and the blue blanket of Porlock Bay reaching to the northern horizonline.

### Shortcut

- A. To head straight back to the start from here, simply take a right (as seen from the direction of your approach) from the beacon cairn and descend the rubbly track leading directly down to the road. When you reach the tarmac, turn right and the car park is off to the left, 50 metres along the road, just before you reach Dunkery Gate and Bridge.

### End shortcut

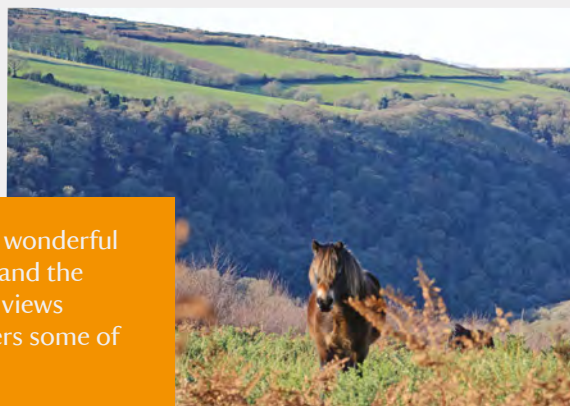
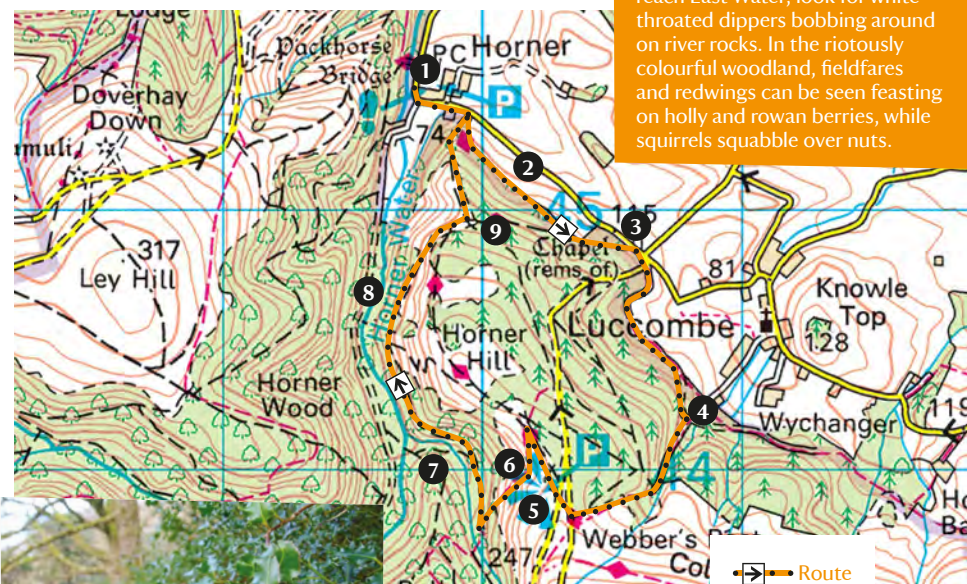
7. Once you've taken in the view, continue straight on (from the direction of your approach), going east along the MacMillan Way West. After walking down the side of Dunkery Hill for about a mile, you will cross a tarmac road. Pick up the path on the other side and keep going in the same direction, crossing straight over a smaller trail. When the path forks, keep right, walking gently downhill towards a patch of woodland, along a bridlemay signposted to 'Brockwell'.
8. Just before you meet the trees, take the path veering sharp right, following a sign for 'Spangate'. The path, part of the Coleridge Way (dedicated to the West Country wordsmith and wandering poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge), climbs, forks (stay right), then bends left and dips to go through a stream at Hanny Combe.
9. Continue for almost a kilometre, to a confluence of paths and a gate. Follow the signpost pointing right, and shadow the fenceline (which is on your left) as the path elbows around to the left and descends between Dunkery Errish and Bincombe Wood (a good butterfly-spotting site), to meet and cross the River Avill in a copse around Mansley Combe.
10. At the next fork, go right again, following the sign to 'Dunkery Gate' and bidding goodbye to the Coleridge Way. Pass through a wide gate with a bridlemay sign, then walk up through a field, keeping the fence line on your right. Ignore gate on right and continue until you reach a smaller gate. Go through and follow the track through a large field to another gate, which leads back to Dunkery Bridge and the car park at Dunkery Gate.





## Horner Wood and fall's gold

Horner Wood, one of Britain's biggest and most beautiful ancient oak woodlands, is especially spectacular in autumn, when leaves turn from lusty green to rusty red, vibrant yellow, deep orange and earthy brown, before falling and carpeting the walking trails.



'Autumn always reveals Horner's wonderful woodland afresh, as foliage falls and the newly denuded trees allow extra views through the valley. This walk offers some of Exmoor's very best vistas.'

Jack, National Trust Ranger

3½mi (5.5km)

Moderate. A couple of steep climbs and descents, follows well-made paths.

2 hours approx.

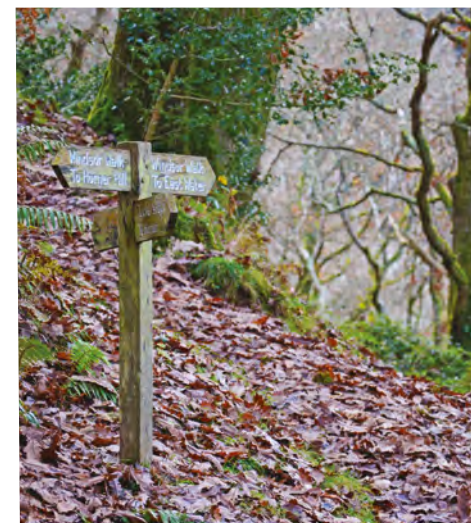
SS898/455 / OS Explorer OL 9

### Nature highlights

While walking across the moor, listen out for the autumn-rut bellowing of stags, and when you reach East Water, look for white-throated dippers bobbing around on river rocks. In the riotously colourful woodland, fieldfares and redwings can be seen feasting on holly and rowan berries, while squirrels squabble over nuts.

### Start: Horner Wood car park, TA24 8HY

1. From the 'walks and wildlife' information board in the car park, set off along the footpath to the right of the toilets. Walk past the café on your right and when you meet the road, turn left and walk up the hill. Just past Horner Mill, turn right, off the road and onto a footpath, following the permitted bridleway fingerpost pointing towards 'Webber's Post', passing through a tall gate. Ignore the pink arrow pointing straight ahead and follow the main track as it curves left and begins ascending. Ignore another path that quickly shoots right, and continue straight until the track forks.
2. Take the left fork and follow the wide track, crunching across a carpet of chestnut casings and yellow, red and brown beech and oak leaves. Keep the fence on your immediate left, and enjoy the view beyond, across a great green expanse of the Somerset coast. Walk up to the nearby crossroads and take the unsealed lane directly opposite, following a fingerpost pointing along a bridleway towards 'Brockwell'. Go through a gate and wander beneath the overhanging pine, beech and chestnut trees of Luccombe Plantation, which borders the path to the right. Scampering squirrels will be busy burying nuts for winter, while you can enjoy views of lovely Luccombe village on the left.
3. Carefully cross the road and, in small clearing slightly to the left, you'll find the remains of a small, somewhat mysterious medieval chapel, which offers a view through the trees and hills to the Somerset coast. Walk up to the nearby crossroads and take the unsealed lane directly opposite, following a fingerpost pointing along a bridleway towards 'Brockwell'. Go through a gate and wander beneath the overhanging pine, beech and chestnut trees of Luccombe Plantation, which borders the path to the right. Scampering squirrels will be busy burying nuts for winter, while you can enjoy views of lovely Luccombe village on the left.
4. Stay on the main track until you reach a distinct crossways with a fingerpost. Turn right and follow the sign to 'Webber's Post'. As you ascend, the chattering stream beside the path gets steadily louder, until you eventually meet it at a waterfall, just to the left of the track. After a fairly stern climb, when the woodland opens up and a footpath crosses your trail (just before the road), turn right into the clearing.
5. Cross two small sealed roads and enter Webber's Post National Trust car park. Take in the rapidly changing and ever-vibrant vista from the viewpoint, which looks out over Horner Wood and Ley Hill, where autumn paints the trees a riotous range of colours from ruby red to ochre orange and sunset yellow, before blowing the leaves from their boughs. The coast can be seen to the south, and away to your left (southwest) is Dunkery Beacon. Leave via the footpath leading into woods, from just beyond the last of a series of four benches to your right (as you face into the valley).
6. Walk to a T-junction, then turn left and descend quickly through the trees. Take the first path leading right, with a little stone wall embedded in the bank, and keep dropping through Horner Wood towards the increasing urgent sound of rushing water.
7. The path bottoms out in an opening, where a confluence of tracks meet on the banks of beautiful, babbling East Water. Take a moment to enjoy this wonderful waterway, looking out for white-throated dippers on the rocks, before taking the singletrack path leading uphill and right. Follow lovely, leaf-carpeted 'Windsor Walk', through Horner Wood, with the rushing river occasionally visible through rapidly undressing trees to your left.
8. At the crossways with 'Tuckers Path', stay on Windsor Walk, which climbs and opens out, offering a stunning view through the valley towards the sea and across the channel to Wales. The path passes beneath magnificent holly trees, heavy with blood-red berries in autumn, and the heather on each side blushes a bashful pink. When you meet a bridleway, keep going straight, following a fingerpost pointing to 'Horner'.







## Barna Barrow and Kipscombe colours

This circular route starts and finishes near the idyllic Exmoor hamlet of Countisbury. En route you'll explore Barna Barrow and enjoy fantastic vantage points atop Butter Hill and on the grassy sides of Kipscombe Hill, overlooking Watersmeet Valley and the North Devon coast.

3½mi (5.5km)

Relatively easy. A little bit of ascending required to reach the best viewpoints.

2 hours approx.

SS753/496 / OS Explorer OL 9



### Nature highlights

Barna Barrow's heather explodes into vibrant pink and purple hues in late summer/early autumn, and this area is internationally renowned for wonderfully colourful waxcap fungi. Listen for chip-chipping stonechats and look up to see soaring peregrines, buzzards and skylarks. Meadow pipets, fieldfare, linnet, starlings and redwing are autumn regulars.

'The views on this short stroll are eyepopping, especially when framed by autumn's awesome colours, but remember to look down too, to see our sensational waxcaps.'

Kev, National Trust Ranger



**Start: Barna Barrow car park, EX35 6NE (500m east of the Blue Ball pub)**

- From the National Trust's Barna Barrow car park, found just off the A39, set off along the path leading northwest (in the opposite direction to the road), and turn left along the field boundary. The field to your left here as you walk, just over the wall, is called 'Sentry'. The names of many fields in this area date back centuries – to medieval times and beyond. Their origin has long been forgotten, but the local history is rich – the name of the nearby settlement of Countisbury is thought to mean 'camp on the headland', after the Iron Age fort on Wind Hill (just west of the village), and Barna Barrow boasts Bronze Age burial mounds.
- Just before the T-junction with the South West Coast Path, by the bench, take an acute right turn and walk up the path leading directly to the crest of the hill, where there's a trig point, hut and communications mast. Standing proud at over 1000 feet (302 metres) in height, Butter Hill offers stunning panoramic views: Foreland Point is immediately to your north; looking east you can gaze along the seashore to scenic Somerset; the immensity of Exmoor lies to the south; and to the west the coast curls around the coves of North Devon. While you are up here, keep your eyes to the sky to spy high-flying big brown buzzards, lightning-fast peregrines and other birds including ravens, stonechats and white-bottomed wheatears. After enjoying the vista, descend down the opposite side of the hill, towards the corner of the field.
- From the corner, turn right and follow the field edge. Keep walking along the track as it leaves the border wall and continues across the heather-bedecked heath, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Barna Barrow bursts into its full kaleidoscopic glory as summer segues into autumn, with three species of heather (bell, common, and cross-leaved heath) erupting in shades of purple and pink, set against a lovely luminous backdrop of yellow-flowering gorse. As you walk, birds such as meadow pipets, linnet, starlings, fieldfare and redwing will dart out of the heather. Watch out for waxcaps here – with up to 27 species present, this site is internationally important for these sensational small, glossy mushrooms, with their bright orange, yellow and red caps.
- When you meet the tarmac drive, cross straight over, skirt around Kipscombe Farm, which is on your left, and head up towards the grassy hill that crowns Countisbury Common.
- The route leading up Kipscombe Hill gifts walkers yet more breathtaking views. To the north you can stare across the Bristol Channel to Wales, while over to the west a tapestry of farm fields and woodlands unfolds right across wonderful Watersmeet Valley, painted various shades of green, gold, red and orange by the onset of autumn. You may see and hear skylarks and meadow pipets here, and roaming Exmoor ponies are regular visitors. If you're here in October, when resident red deer rut nearby, listen out for the stags 'bolving'. Head on up, all the way to the top of Kipscombe Hill – the peak of which stands 1125 feet (343 metres) – or simply cut across the mound's grassy flanks, before dropping back down to the car park just to the west of Countisbury Common.
- Carefully cross the A39 and do a loop around Ammony, where more waxcaps and views of Watersmeet Valley can be enjoyed. Returning to the car park, go straight ahead, passing to the left of the National Trust brick post, and walk along the track with the heather-bearded face of Barna Barrow immediately on your left. A 'mound' marked on the map here is thought to be a Bronze Age bowl barrow – a burial mound formed from earth and stones (another is marked on the map as a 'tumulus' on the other side of Kipscombe Hill). When you return to point 4, turn left and wander along the path leading through the heather to Barna Barrow car park. As you walk back across the heath, keep an ear out for the distinctive chirp of the stonechat, which sounds like two small stones chipping together.







Autumn, best for bright red berries and wild ponies

## North Hill and Selworthy Beacon circular

This long but rewarding ramble follows a rollercoaster route along a sensational section of the South West Coast Path, offering stunning sea views every step of the way, often glimpsed through windows between bushes of sunbeam-yellow flowering gorse and vibrant heather.

7¼mi (11.5km)

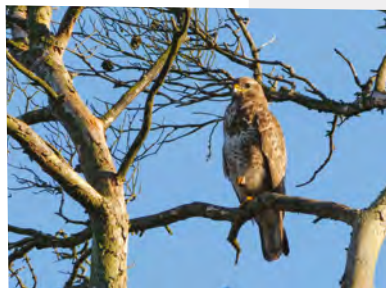
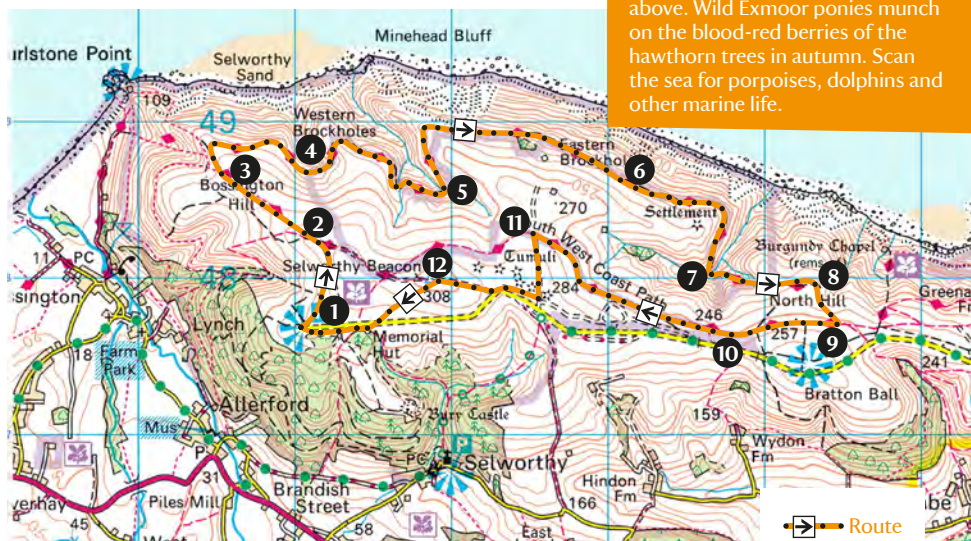
Challenging. Follows well-made footpaths, with narrow sections and steep drop to one side. Be careful with children and dogs.

3 hours approx.

SS911/477 / OS Explorer OL 9

### Nature highlights

The heather-covered cliffs along this curvy coastline offer perfect hunting conditions for birds of prey – look out for buzzards, peregrine falcons and kestrels wheeling above. Wild Exmoor ponies munch on the blood-red berries of the hawthorn trees in autumn. Scan the sea for porpoises, dolphins and other marine life.



'If you like your horizons big and blue, this is the walk for you.'

Pete, National Trust Ranger

**Start: Selworthy Beacon viewpoint car park, at the far end of Hill Road (accessed via Minehead)**

- After taking in the stunning vista from the viewpoint at the eastern end of the car park, looking out over Porlock Bay towards North Devon and across the Bristol Channel to Wales, leave the car park – walking north in the direction of the coast, along the level track (not the descending path). Keep going straight ahead at the first junction, and stay left when you meet the South West Coast Path.
- Just 30 metres later there's another junction – go straight ahead, towards the rounded hillock of Bossington Hill and Hurlstone Point, keeping to the gently descending path (not the bridleway that drops steeply left). Bossington Hill cairn is off to your left, along with spectacular coastal views.
- When you reach a fingerpost pointing towards 'Bossington' (left), ignore that and go straight ahead, following the sign indicating 'Rugged Coast Path' and keeping to the main track as it arcs right. You're now walking east along the South West Coast Path, with white-capped waves and views of Wales left, and Minehead straight ahead.
- At the fork, go left (the tracks rejoin later). The path writhes serpentine-like around the combs that indent the coast here, like bitemarks in Exmoor's sea-facing flank. When the path forks again, by a 'Rugged Coast Path' sign, stay left once more, sticking close to the coast and descending around the head of East Combe. Go through a gate and along the path that descends and then rears back up, cutting a colourful corridor through high yellow-flowering gorse.
- The path ventures deep into Henners Combe, taking you temporarily away from sea and along a rolling route, dropping to cross the stream that's been carving the combe for millennia, and then clambering back out the other side. It dips again, to cross another two cascading waterways, before climbing steeply and rounding the eastern arm of the combe, rising to return you to magnificent coastal views. Look left to enjoy the excellent vista west, into Devon.
- Continue walking east along the cliff-hugging South West Coast Path, with the sea on your left. The trail becomes quite narrow, and there are steep drops directly onto the rocks – be careful with children and dogs.
- Go through a gate and along a path that tiptoes

across blankets of bright bracken. Round Furzebury Break (on top of which – inaccessible from the path – is an Iron-Age hillfort) and descend into Grexy Combe. Cross the stream and climb back up the other side, along a steep zigzag path to a broad grassy area – a great picnic spot on calm days.

- Go through a gate onto North Hill, which was used for tank training during WWII by Canadian and American troops, and remains pockmarked with scars from their bunkers, observation posts and gun platforms. Walk up the broad, grassy track towards the summit until a path comes in from the left, by a wooden seat with great views east towards Brean Down and the Holm islands. Go right here, walking away from the sea.
- When you reach a T-junction and fingerpost indicating the 'Coast Path', turn right and walk back along the inland iteration of the South West Coast Path, with the sea on your right. Go through a gate, past a National Trust sign announcing the 'Holnicot Estate'. Keep strolling, with a wall running parallel to the path on your right.
- At the fingerpost indicating 'Wydon' (left) and 'Bossington' (straight on), keep going straight. Pass through a gate and walk along a corridor path between walls of high gorse.
- Ignore tracks coming in left and right, and when you reach a tarmac lane, turn left and walk away from the sea. After about 500 metres, just before meeting the road, turn right onto a track that crosses the lane.
- Continue walking uphill to the cairn and trig point at Selworthy Beacon (1010 feet/308 metres), part of a chain of beacons lit to raise the alarm as the Spanish Armada approached the English coast in 1588. Turn left and descend to the road. Cross, then pick up the footpath that leads right, past the 'Welcome Hut' and back through the trees to the car park.



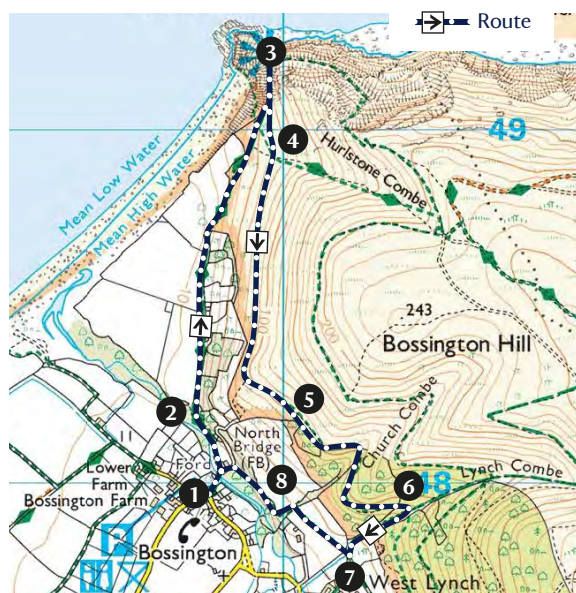




Winter, best for ravens and peregrine falcons

## Bossington, Allerford Wood and Hurlstone Point

This easy, enjoyable walk begins from the beautiful coastal hamlet of Bossington on the hem of the Holnicote estate, visits a historic lookout tower with spectacular views across the waves to Wales, and returns via a wonderful woodland, along stream-hugging footpaths.



### Nature highlights

This coastal landscape is carpeted in rare western maritime heath vegetation, containing plants including bell-heather, western gorse and bristle bent grass. Tufts of thrift, thyme and rock stonecrop hug the stony ground. Wheatears nest in the scree on Hurlstone Point's higher reaches, and ravens and peregrine falcons patrol the cliffs.

'This is a walk for all seasons, offering wonderful views along the Somerset coast where Exmoor meets the sea. Visibility across the wind-whipped waves towards Wales can be even better on crisp, cold winter days than it is during the lazy, hazy summer.'

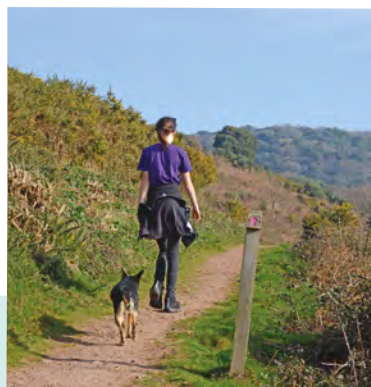
Nigel, National Trust Ranger

2½mi (4km)

Moderate. Well-defined footpaths and bridleways. One moderately steep ascent and a couple of fields to cross.

2½ hours approx.

SS897/480 / OS Explorer OL 9



### Start: Bossington car park, TA24 8HF

1. Leave the village car park by crossing the footbridge over Horner Water. Turn left along the wide path and follow the fingerpost pointing towards the coast path and Hurlstone Point. After tracing the babbling brook for a while, the path bears slightly right and begins to rise.
2. Go through a large field gate and follow the track as it continues ascending. To your left the Porlock Marshes can be seen stretching towards the sea, with several lime kilns and a WWII pillbox visible on the pebbly beach.
3. Ignore a track joining from the right, and walk along the narrowing path all the way to Hurlstone Point, where a lonely, enigmatic tower stares stoically across the broad Bristol Channel towards Wales. The two-storey stone tower dates to 1902, and was in use as a coastguard lookout shelter until just after WWII. It's in a state of ruin now, but still provides some sanctuary from the elements in wild weather. The path continues beyond the tower and it's possible to scramble right up onto the headland, but as the wooden notice cautions, the track is occasionally ill defined, and very often narrow, steep, rough and extremely exposed. So, instead of clambering up to the headland (which can be more easily enjoyed from the Bossington, Selworthy Beacon and North Hill Walk in this booklet), after taking in the vista from the foot of the tower, turn around and go back the way you came.
4. When the path forks, take the left track to traverse a higher contour line around the hill than your approach route. At the next crossways, go straight on, following the fingerpost pointing towards 'Lynch'. Keep glancing across your right shoulder to enjoy sensational sea-soaked views along Somerset's west coast, where Exmoor meets the sea.
5. After about 1km, a permissive footpath joins on the right. Ignore this and keep following signage for Lynch. Oak trees and firs start to cast long winter shadows across the track, and a stone wall runs to the right of the path.
6. At a T-junction, turn right, pass through a gate and descend along an earthy singletrack path into the enigmatic embrace of Allerford Wood. Quickly you find yourself amid a tangle of trees whose gnarled boughs almost block out the sky, and around the ankles of which nothing grows. These evergreens are holm or holly oaks, and they create a unique and slightly sinister environment as they close in over the trail,

which tunnels bravely on through the plantation. Soon, however, the woodland opens up and the holm oaks are joined by a diverse gang of oak, ash, beech, silver birch, holly, sweet chestnut, sycamore, Douglas fir and Scot's pine trees. Like all of Allerford and Selworthy Wood, these were planted by Sir Thomas Acland, who between 1815 and 1834 added a new section of trees after the birth of each of his nine children.

7. Pass through another gate and, when you meet a stream, turn right along a bridleway, following a fingerpost pointing towards 'Lynch Bridge'. Descend along the track, with the stream on your left and a stone wall to your right. Go through a gate, exiting Allerford Wood, and continue descending. At a T-junction, turn right, follow a footpath sign indicating the way to Bossington, and go through a gate. Walk to the other side of the field, cross a stream, go through another gate and turn left immediately along hedgerow, following a small, yellow arrow sign.
8. At the bottom of the field, go through another gate and turn right along winding path. This traces the river, with the water chattering away to your left. At the next T-junction, turn left and cross the bridge to the car park.

Before leaving, be sure to explore Bossington Village, where the lovely lime-washed cream-coloured cottages that surround the walnut trees in the green are maintained by the National Trust. These houses date to the late medieval period (14th and 15th century) and typically feature large bread ovens and tall chimneys. Located amid the thatched cottages of the idyllic hamlet, Bossington boasts a beautiful tea room called Kitnors – the perfect place to finish your walk.







Winter, best for rugged looking Exmoor ponies in their winter coats

## Foreland Point

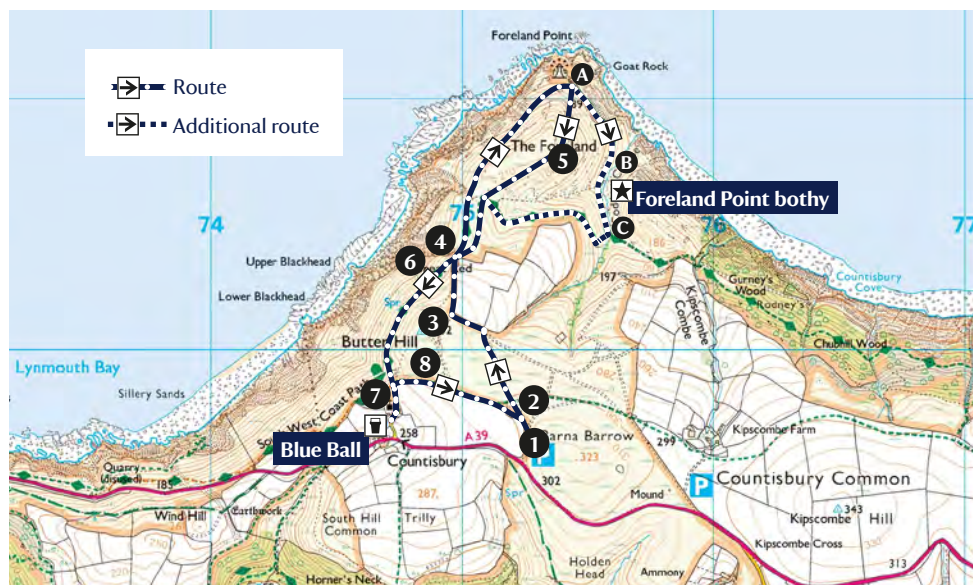
This wild winter wander explores Exmoor's northern extremity – Foreland Point – where a lighthouse winks at its mate on Porthcawl Point in Wales, across the wind-whipped waves of the Bristol Channel. The views are spectacular and a warm pub awaits towards the end of the route.

2½mi (4km)  
3¼mi (5.2km) longer route

Easy main route, but the extra loop to the lighthouse at Foreland Point is challenging – narrow, descending path, exposed with loose scree. Should not be attempted in high winds or poor light. Not suitable for young children.

2-3 hours approx.

SS753/496 / OS Explorer OL 9



### Nature highlights

Look out for Exmoor ponies in their shaggy winter coats, and groups of grazing red deer. Starlings, goldfinches and fieldfare fill the air and flit between bushes in the winter, while ravens and peregrines patrol the hilltops and cliffs around Butter Hill and the Foreland.

'This walk takes you right to the point where Exmoor plunges into the sea. A winter sunset seen from Butter Hill, often in the company of red deer, is a wonderful thing to behold.'

Jess, National Trust Ranger



**Start: Barna Barrow car park, EX35 6NE (500m east of the Blue Ball pub)**

1. Park up in the national Trust's Barna Barrow car park, found just off the A39, about half a kilometre east of the little village of Countisbury. Leave the car park and head north, emerging onto the heath.
2. When the path splits, take the right fork and carry on heading north through fields, heading straight towards Foreland Point. Here you are hiking though heathland considered to be some of the country's best, across a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Look out for wild Exmoor ponies, now covered in their heavier winter coats. You may flush up a snipe or two here, and keep an eye out for flocks of starlings and goldfinches, and other winter visitors such as fieldfare.
3. Keep walking until you meet a field boundary, then turn left and walk with the wall on your right and the summit of Butter Hill off to your left.
4. Continue to the top of Great Red, a geological exposure offering excellent views west, along the North Devon coastline, and north across the Bristol Channel to Wales. This is also a favourite hangout for Exmoor ponies. From here, to follow the main route, drop down into the dip and then carry on, straight up and over onto the point path; don't take the path to the left (easily identified by a sign warning that it's steep, with loose scree), unless you want to do the additional optional loop (see below), or the South West Coast Path, which turns right. Instead take the middle option to the top of The Foreland.
5. On a crisp, clear winter's day you can see as far as the Brecon Beacons across the water in Wales from the amazing viewpoint atop The Foreland, and the panorama extends right along the north west coast of Devon. Look out for soaring peregrine falcons and red deer here. When you have immersed yourself in the view for long enough, return the way you came to Great Red.

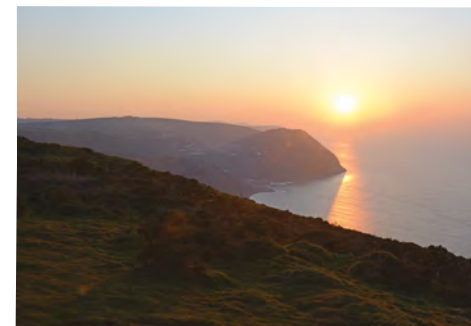
### Additional loop start

An adventurous additional loop can be added to this walk, which will take you right down to the lighthouse at Foreland Point, but it's not for the nervous. As the signs correctly caution, the path leading left from (4) down to the lighthouse is narrow, steep and occasionally sketchy, with scree sometimes tumbling from above and beneath your feet – only attempt it if you're confident and footsure.

- A. At the bottom, you will reach Lynmouth Foreland Lighthouse, which was built in 1900 to assist ships negotiating the Bristol Channel at night or in bad weather. It stands 15 metres high and its signal can be seen for 18 nautical miles. If you look across the water to Wales, you will see the lighthouse's opposite number blinking back from Porthcawl Point.
- B. From the lighthouse, turn right and wander up the tarmac lane. After a couple of hundred metres you will see a stone hut to your left – this is the National Trust's Foreland Point Bothy, a basic form of accommodation that can be rented out for a remote overnight stay beneath the Exmoor skies.
- C. Continue up the hill from the bothy, and after about 100 metres, turn right on to the South West Coast Path, which climbs back over The Foreland. When you return to the path at (4), turn left.

### Additional loop end

6. Head back towards Countisbury along the South West Coast Path (staying right when the track forks), walking around the west face of Butter Hill, where a well-placed bench prompts you to pause and enjoy the lovely view looking out over Lynton and Lynmouth.
7. Go through the graveyard at Countisbury Church, continue down to the A39 and carefully cross. Here you will find a warm welcome in a bar with a fireplace at the historic Blue Ball pub. Opposite is the Butter Barn, a National Trust-run barn for walkers and groups to stay in.
8. To finish up, leave the pub, walk back through the churchyard and head right along the field boundary back to Barna Barrow car park.



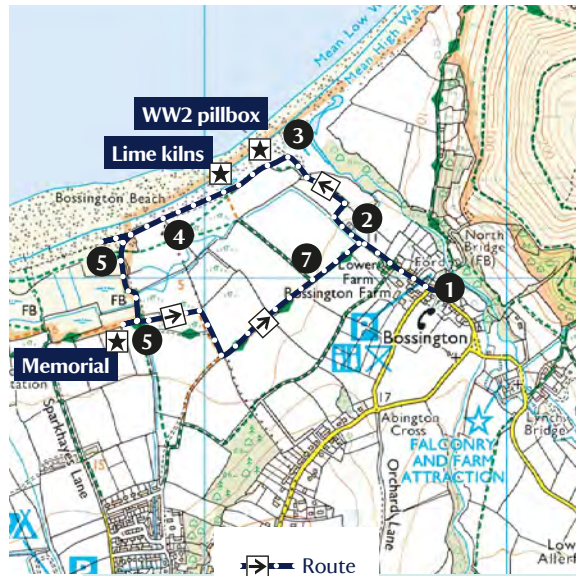




Winter, best for snow buntings

## Porlock Bay and Sparkhayes Marsh

Starting and finishing from the beautiful, bucolic hamlet of Bossington, this brisk winter discovery walk takes in everything from historic limestone kilns and World War II pillboxes on the beach, to a salt marsh that is home to hundreds of bird species.



2½mi (4km)

Easy. The route follows level, well-made paths and lanes

1½ hours approx.

SS897/480 / OS Explorer OL 9



### Nature highlights

Snow buntings can be seen overwintering in the fields here, amid more regular waders and marsh dwellers, including oystercatchers, spoonbills, shelducks, curlews, redshanks, little egrets, common cranes and herons. Lucky walkers might spot an osprey. Otter tracks are sometimes seen in the mud, even if the animals remain elusive to the eye.

‘The birdlife visible on this walk makes it one of my favourite strolls. And the terrain is dynamic, too – being sculpted by the tide, it can change overnight, with a new breach appearing. One polite request: please keep dogs on the lead to avoid damage to ground nesting birds.’

Mark, National Trust Ranger



### Start: Bossington car park, TA24 8HF

1. Leave the car park via the route you drove in, passing the toilets and phonebox. Turn right, walk along the street to a junction. Turn right here, along a cul-de-sac, passing Bossington farm and a series of delightful cottages, until the road segues into an unsealed track.
2. Keep walking, with a stream on your left. Ignore the first footpath leading left and continue straight on towards the beach. As the path doglegs right, Bossington Hill looms ahead and you'll spot historic Hurlstone Point lookout tower keeping watch over the waves.
3. The track ends abruptly at a shingle ridge, which extends right along the beach, creating a natural barrier that, usually, keeps the sea from flooding the salt marsh behind. Next to you, Horner Water disappears into the stones, flowing between and beneath them into the sea. Turn left and follow the path, which runs alongside the shingle ridge, or head down onto the pebble beach to explore the pillbox, intended as a gun emplacement in the event of an enemy invasion in World War II.
4. The path goes behind the shingle ridge and passes the remains of limekilns, which once extracted lime from limestone brought over from Wales, for use as fertilizer on the fields and in mortar for building houses. A second pillbox sits much further up the beach than the first (although it was once completely inland, and is an indicator of how much land has been lost to the sea since WWII). The ridge momentarily obscures the sea view from the path, which is indicated by posts, but there are gates by the pillbox and the limekilns, where you can walk out onto the beach.
5. To your left is Sparkhayes Marsh, part of the National Trust's Holnicote Estate. The marsh, managed by the National Trust with the support of English Nature and Exmoor National Park Authority, provides a home and feeding grounds for many wading-bird species and ducks. A path leads left, but carry straight on with the ridge on your right, until the path pops out onto the pebbles. Manmade sea defences are visible along the length of the beach here, but they're not always capable of keeping the water out, and often the route to the far west of the bay (where an ancient submerged forest lies beneath the water) is cut off by tide surges and breaches. A stone ruin here is all that remains of a golf course, which was built in the 1920s, but only

survived for one season before being swamped. A stone wall marks the end of the National Trust's area. This is a good place to spot birds such as reed buntings, sedge and reed warblers. Also look for rare plants, including Babington leek and yellow horned poppy.

6. Go back the way you came, and then turn inland along a raised wooden causeway, walking across the marsh towards the lonely looking trees of a petrified forest, where dark ravens caw and conspire in the bare boughs. At the end of the board, keep going straight to meet a well-made path and a National Trust sign. Our walk goes left here, passing through a double set of gates, but if you go right, you will – after about 150 metres – find a memorial commemorating the crew of an American B24 bomber that crashed on this spot, killing all but one of the crew, after clipping Bossington Hill in bad weather on 29 October 1942, while returning from a U-Boat Patrol mission.
7. Keep going, though more gates, across a couple of fields and along a single-track path that passes through a corridor between hedges (home to yellowhammers and whitethroats during nesting season), all the time following signs to Bossington. At the road, turn right and walk back into Bossington Village, where a hot pot of tea and a selection of cakes await at charismatic Kitnors tea-room.







Multiday walk, best done late spring to early autumn

## Horner Wood to Foreland Point, via Doone Valley and Watersmeet

This wonderful walk crosses the Somerset–Devon border, following a looping route along sections of two clearly signposted long-distance footpaths – the Coleridge Way (named after Devon-born wandering wordsmith Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and waymarked with feather-quill icons) and the South West Coast Path (waymarked with acorn symbols). These trails run parallel, enabling walkers to turn around at numerous junctures, so it can be done as a one-, two- or three-day adventure, depending how much moor you want to explore.

**Please note:** If you're planning to do this as a multiday walk and need to leave a vehicle overnight, contact the National Trust Ranger Team for advice first on 01643862452 or at [hornerwood@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:hornerwood@nationaltrust.org.uk)

**Start:** Horner Wood car park, TA24 8HY

### Day one: Horner Wood to Cloud Farm (10mi)

1. Leave the car park via the vehicle entrance/exit. Turn left on the lane, then go right, over a pretty packhorse bridge, and follow bridlemay signs pointing towards Porlock. Continue to a junction with a B-road, go straight, onto the tarmac, and when the road forks, go right, uphill. Descend into Porlock, go left on Coach Road and follow alleyways towards the church spire. Turn left on High Street and follow signs to Lynmouth. When the road forks, just past The Ship Inn, take the 'Scenic Woodland Toll road'.
2. Turn right onto a footpath and follow Coleridge Way signs towards Porlock Weir. When you meet the tarmac lane at Porlock Ford Community Hall, go left up a long hill towards Yearnor Mill Bridge. Follow waymarkers through Worthy Wood. At a T-junction at the top of the woods, go right.
3. Descend to Yearnor Mill Bridge, go left on the tarmac lane, towards Culbone Hill. Turn sharp right and trace Coleridge Way signage along lofty lanes wending through a rolling rural landscape, with wonderful sea views between the voluptuous mounds of Culbone Hill and Worthy woods.

30½mi (50km) (shortcuts possible)

This walk follows well-made and easily identifiable paths for its entire length.

1-3 days

SS898/455 / OS Explorer OL 9

Overnight accommodation can be booked at National Trust campsites, bothies and bunkhouses en route.

First Buses of Somerset No.10 bus (Minehead–Porlock) stops at Red Post, the turning for West Luccombe and Horner, a short distance from Horner Wood. [firstgroup.com/somerset](http://firstgroup.com/somerset)

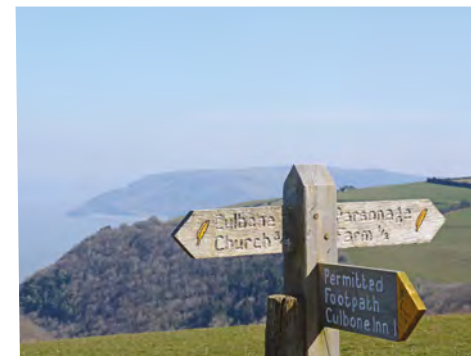


4. A path leading right at Silcombe Combe is a good place for day walkers to shortcut down to the South West Coast Path and return to Horner. Multiday walkers continue straight on.
5. Turn left along a tarmac lane, following Coleridge Way signs towards Oare. Carefully cross the A39, go 100 yds/metres, turn right and walk across North Common. Follow the trail as it clings to the steep side of deep Deddy Combe, which drops dramatically to your right. As you descend, Oare Water comes to meet you from the left.
6. Follow the flow of the river to a road. Go left, leaving the Coleridge Way to cross the attractive stone bridge, and walk uphill towards a church. Ignore road signage pointing right for Lorna Doone and Cloud Farm and go left. Just past the church, turn right onto a bridlemay, following a fingerpost pointing towards South Common and Larkbarrow. Go through several gates, following fingerposts for Doone Valley and Cloud Farm, keeping the fence on your right all the way down into the National Trust campsite at Cloud Farm.

You're now in North Devon, and this idyllic spot, situated right on the banks of Badgworthy Water, is the perfect place to pitch a tent for the night.

### Day two: Cloud Farm to Foreland Point (8mi)

1. Leave the campsite via the bridge over the chattering river, turn right on the bridlemay and follow a fingerpost pointing towards Malmsmead. At the lane, continue straight to Lorna Doone Farm, where a National Trust–owned farmshop, café and pub sits scenically by Badgworthy Water.
2. Cross the stone bridge, then turn left along a bridlemay at Parsonage Farm. Cross a footbridge, go left, rejoining the Coleridge Way, and follow signs towards Ashton Cleave and Brendon along the banks of the East Lyn. Soon the route leaves the river, climbs steeply and crosses a little footbridge with stunning views through Ashton Cleave.
3. At Hall Farm, descend to Brendon village, where two beautiful bridges span the river, and turn right along the road, keeping the Lyn on your close left. Follow a lane leading left and walk along Countisbury Mill footpath. Trace the Coleridge Way as it hugs the lively Lyn's serpentine curves, wandering through woods along a stunning section of trail towards the National Trust tea-room at Watersmeet.
4. Just before Watersmeet House, turn right, away from the river and off the Coleridge Way towards Countisbury. The steep path zigzags through trees before emerging onto South Hill Common. At the crossways, go straight, through a gate and over the brow of the hill to Countisbury.



5. Emerge onto the A39, turn left and descend to the Blue Ball. Carefully cross the road, pass the National Trust's Butter Hill bunkhouse (available for accommodation) and go towards the church. Go through the graveyard and take the path leading across Butter Hill to Great Red, enjoying spectacular views west along Devon's north coast.
6. The Foreland offers another vista, across the waves to Wales, and it's possible to reach the lighthouse at Foreland Point (see p24), but our route turns right, going east along the South West Coast Path.

At the T-junction, turn left to find the National Trust's Foreland Bothy, which offers basic accommodation in a stunning location.

### Day three: Foreland to Horner Wood (12.5mi)

1. Head up the tarmac lane to a T-junction, then turn left onto the South West Coast Path. Cross a stile, turn right by a woodcarving and Glenthorne Cliffs National Trust sign and trace an excellent section of cliff-hugging trail through Gurney's and Chubhill woods, past Desolation Point.
2. Turn right along a gravel lane and walk uphill, past a house guarded by gates topped by a brace of wild boar's heads. Turn left, onto a footpath, to encounter an enigmatic stone cross by a stream, known as Sister's Fountain. Rejoin the track, go left and follow acorn-embellished signage below Sugarloaf Hill. Cross a series of wonderful waterfalls and continue through Yenworthy, Embelle and Culbone woods, before arcing around cute Culbone Church.
3. When the path forks, keep left and follow signs for Porlock Weir. A series of switchbacks lead to and through two short brick 'fairy tunnels', leftovers from Lady Lovelace's ornate garden at Ashley Combe House. Walk between fields and boatyards until you emerge by Porlock Weir Hotel and the 'Bottom' Ship Inn. From the car park, follow the coast path sign for 'Bossington via marsh',

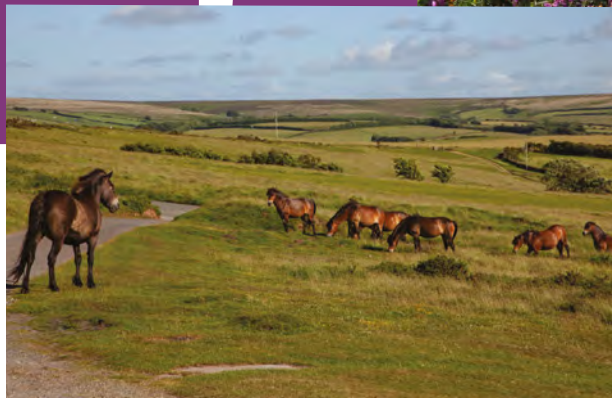
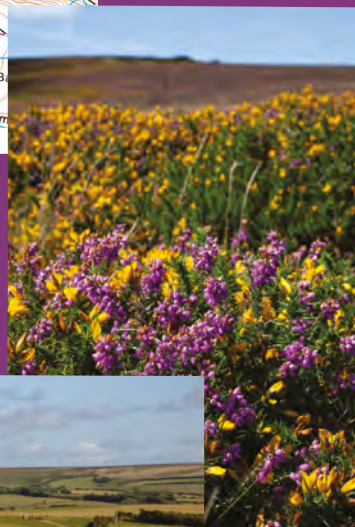
down onto the beach. After a short trudge across pebbles, the route returns to a better footpath, skirting around the salt marsh, home to hundreds of wading birds and ducks (see p26).

4. Keep following the path, towards a series of petrified trees. Just after a memorial (to the crew of an American B-24 bomber that crashed during WWII), by a National Trust sign for Sparkhayes Marsh, turn right up a footpath leading to Sparkhayes Lane (use the pedestrian path on the left) and Porlock. Head for the church spire, go left on 'The Drang', then retrace your footsteps from the beginning, back to Horner Wood.



See next page for map





If you'd like this information in an alternative format, call 01803 842382 or email [northdevon@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:northdevon@nationaltrust.org.uk)

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