



The Herepath (1): Notes for Combwich to Elworthy.

●/● 17 miles, 6 hours 15 minutes. Ascents of 600 metres and descents of 400 metres. Using two cars or a taxi the walk can easily be broken into two or three sections as described at the end.

Terrain: Roads, tracks and paths, some potentially muddy fields.

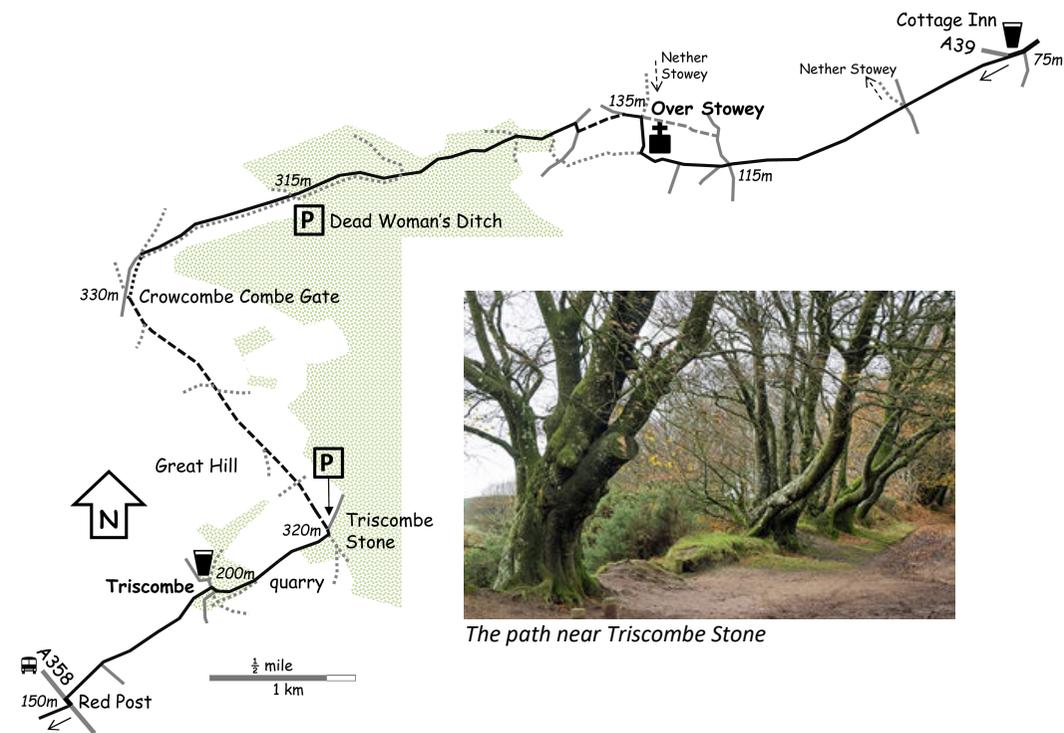
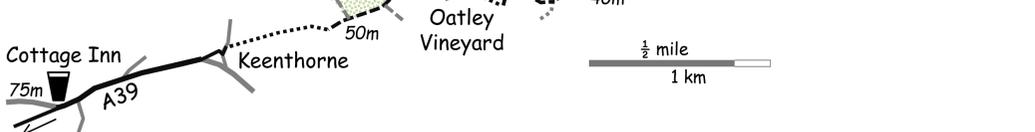
Access: Start at Combwich. There is no bus service, so either park or arrange to be dropped off at the village car park (ST 260 424, TA5 2QZ) then walk downstream to the start. The finish is at the crossroads of the B3224 and B3188 near Elworthy. If you are leaving a car, there is some space on the B3224 just to the east (c. ST 087 347).

Map: The route is on OS Explorer sheet 114 Quantock Hills & Bridgwater, except for the final mile which is on OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: In Combwich, on the A39 (Cottage Inn), off the route in Nether Stowey, and at Triscombe. The nearest refreshments to Elworthy are in Monksilver, Stogumber and Raleigh's Cross .

THE HEREPATH IS A SAXON ARMY ROAD that is thought to cross Somerset from Bristol to Pawlett, then on a ford to Combwich, across the Quantock and Brendon hills, and on to the top of Exmoor. More information on the path and the sources for the route in are a separate leaflet, 'Herepath source notes'; the section set out here takes the route proposed in 1922 by William Greswell, vicar of Dodington. I have only walked between Over Stowey and Triscombe (and driven the road parts), so treat the notes as a guide for finding your own way along the route.

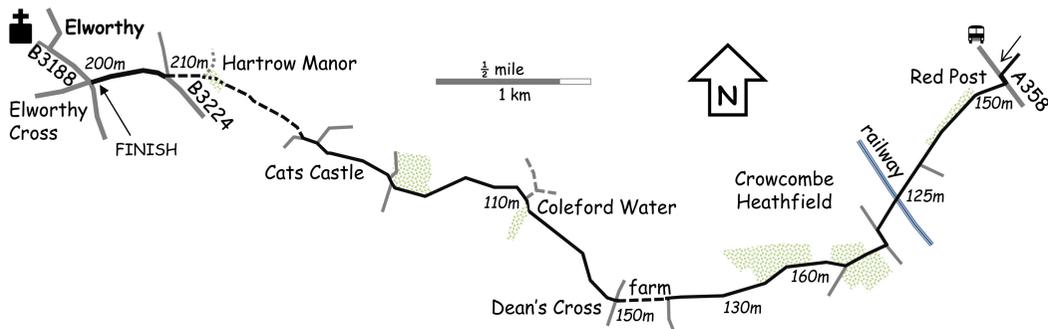
Start on the bank of the River Parrett half a mile north of the car park in Combwich, just before Combwich Clyce. There used to be a submerged causeway across the river here, still apparent (just) at the lowest tides of the year. Walk back into the village past the car park, curving around to the right and then bearing left to pass the village shop and post office.



The path near Triscombe Stone

Turn left at a T-junction with a wider road, and follow it for nearly a mile until you come to a turning to the right. Follow this around a sharp left-hand bend, then when you come to a T-junction (the road is fairly new and won't be shown on older maps) turn right, then right again three minutes later. Where the road bends left, Cannington Knoll and fort are in front of you. Follow the road for another ten minutes, then just past a house turn left on a sign-posted track. Use the map to follow this past Knoll Green, Oatley Vineyard and Furze Covert, then arrive at a road at Keenthorne. Turn left here, then right at a T-junction, and right on to the main road. Walk along it for ten minutes to the Cottage Inn.

From the inn, continue along the A39 for a minute or two, then fork left on a broad, straight road, soon passing through speed derestriction signs. In ten minutes come to a crossroads (the path to Nether Stowey turns off right here), and in another fifteen minutes or just over to a second crossroads. Continue ahead, then fork right towards Rams Combe. Now keep to the right until you pass Over Stowey church. Turn left a T-junction with a small ornamental stone building opposite, then in a couple of minutes bear left on a (possibly overgrown) lane just before a house. When this meets a road, turn right then shortly afterwards left. You are now on the Stowey (stone way) road up on to the top of the Quantocks. In a little more than half an hour of continuous ascent you will come to the Dead Woman's Ditch car park, a large open area on the left with a sign board (see Walk 45 for an explanation of the name).



A track now continues parallel with the road, on its left. Twenty minutes from Dead Woman's Ditch come to a pair of trees protected by a fence, and turn left here on a broad track. This is the ridgeway that runs along the top of the Quantocks. In about half an hour arrive at the car park at Triscombe Stone (the stone itself is not particularly conspicuous). Turn right on to a roughly-surfaced lane which takes you downhill past a small quarry. At the bottom, pass a thatched cottage and the Blue Ball inn, then keep left to head gradually downhill; fifteen minutes from the inn you will arrive at Red Post on the A358.

At the main road, turn right then immediately left on the road towards Crowcombe Station. Cross the railway, then ignore turnings first to the right then the left as the road goes through bends. Less than five minutes after the second bend, turn right on to a side-road. This narrow lane heads through trees before coming into the open. When it bends sharply left, continue ahead through a farm. Go straight on at a crossroads; watch for traffic on this narrow lane. The lane starts fairly straight, then dips down into a stream valley before rising again. At a T-junction where there is a single-storey lodge house, turn right then left towards Elworthy. Pass a road on the right to the Vexfords, then a couple of minutes later bear right on a signposted path. This takes you past Hartrow Manor, where it becomes a track; when it meets the road, turn left then right on to the wide B3224, and in little more than five minutes come to Elworthy Cross. The herepath now follows roughly the line of the top road for ten miles to Summerway Cross, where Part 2 of these notes pick it up.

Shorter walks. The route can easily be divided into two or three with connecting transport. Suggested segments are:

1/2 Combwich to Dead Woman's Ditch. ● 8.7 miles, 3hrs20mins. Ascents of 365m and descents of 55m. Dead Woman's Ditch car park is at ST 162 382, or see the route description.

2/2 Dead Woman's Ditch to Elworthy. ● 8.3 miles, 2hrs55mins. Ascents of 235m and descents of 345m.

1/3 Combwich to the Cottage Inn (ST 211 392, TA5 1HZ). ● 5.4 miles, 1hr55mins. Ascents of 125m and descents of 55m. An alternative finish is to continue for ten minutes beyond the Cottage Inn as described in the instructions, then turn right on the footpath into Nether Stowey (another 1.8 miles and 40m of ascent).

2/3 Cottage Inn to Red Post (ST 146 347, TA4 3HD). ● 7.1 miles, 2hr40mins. Ascents of 300m and descents of 225m.

3/3 Red Post to Elworthy. ● 4.6 miles, 1hr45mins. Ascents of 180m and descents of 130m.

© Stan Lester 2018. Partial recce 11/2017. Please email editor@exmoorwalker.uk with any updates or comments.

This route description is provided freely and in good faith. You are welcome to use, copy and distribute it for personal and non-profit purposes (attribution—non-commercial—no derivatives). No responsibility is taken for any errors or omissions, or for your navigation or safety on the walk. Introductory and safety information at exmoorwalker.uk.