



## The Herepath (2): Notes for Summerway Cross to Porlock Weir.

- 11.9 miles, 4 hours 25 minutes. Ascents of 410 metres and descents of 760 metres. Add 1.4 miles and 90 metres of ascent (and about 35 minutes) if starting from Wheddon Cross. The walk can be broken at Exford: see the notes at the end.

Terrain: Mainly surfaced roads and stony tracks, some potentially muddy paths.

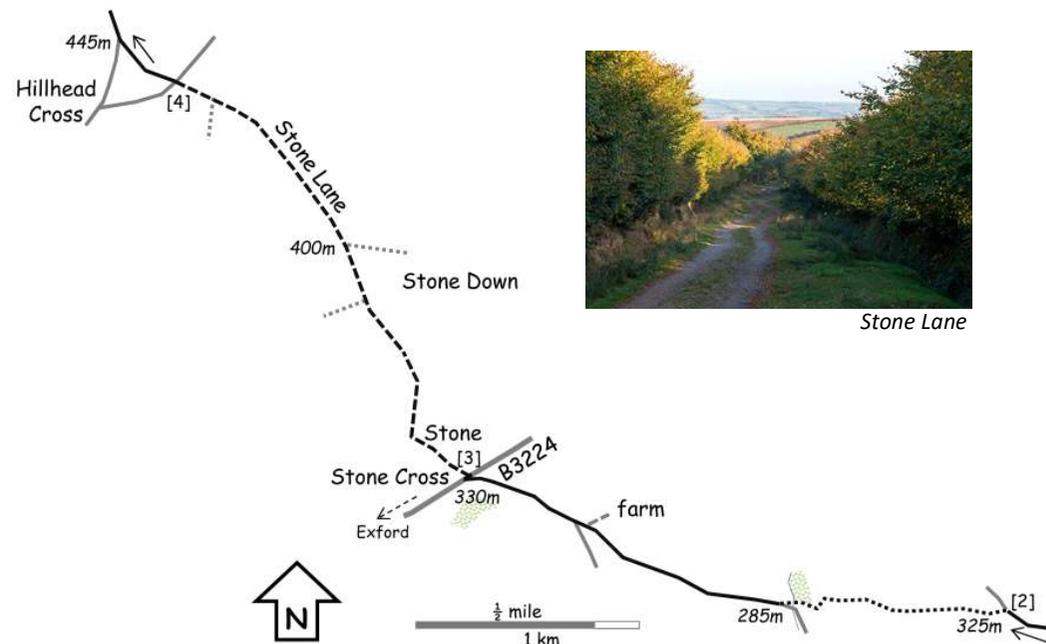
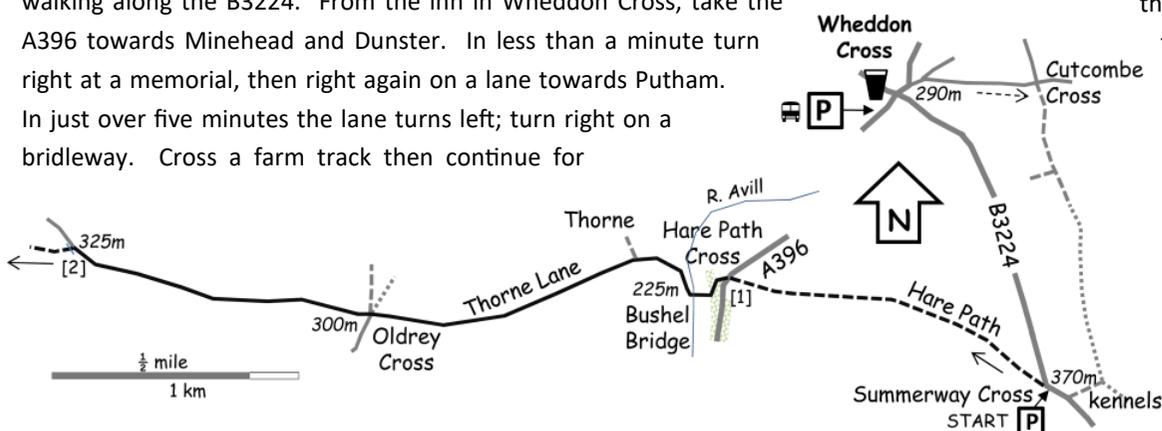
Access: Start from Summerway Cross on the B3224 a mile SSE of Wheddon Cross (SS 930 376). Either arrange to be dropped off, or with two cars there is a small layby at Summerway Cross. By bus, start from Wheddon Cross. With careful planning it is possible to park at Porlock Weir and take the bus to Wheddon Cross via a change in Minehead.

Map: OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor. The final section from Pittcombe Head is also on Croydecycle map 02 Porlock.

Refreshments: Pubs and seasonal tea rooms in Wheddon Cross, Porlock Weir and (for the shorter walks) Exford.

THIS SECOND HEREPATH ROUTE explores the continuation of the east-west path from Summerway Cross south of Wheddon Cross to Stone Cross, then across the moors to Pittcombe Head and down to Worthy and Porlock Weir. Most of the route – but not the part between Thorne Lane and Stone Cross – has been checked on the ground. The first part of the route is as described by William Greswell in 1922, and the second follows Hazel Eardley-Wilmot's route, set out in 1990, to Worthy. For details of the sources see the separate file 'Herepath source notes'. Apart from the historic interest, the walk has far-reaching views over the open moors and a final descent through woods to the attractive coastal village of Porlock Weir.

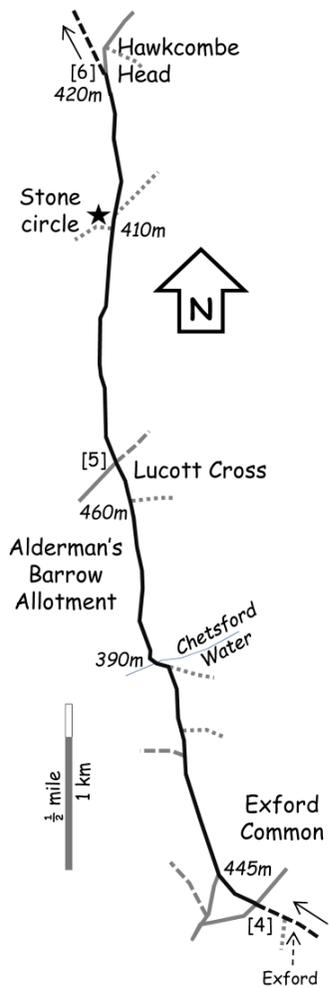
If you are using the bus connection to Wheddon Cross, the following route avoids simply walking along the B3224. From the inn in Wheddon Cross, take the A396 towards Minehead and Dunster. In less than a minute turn right at a memorial, then right again on a lane towards Putham. In just over five minutes the lane turns left; turn right on a bridleway. Cross a farm track then continue for



another 12-15 minutes to arrive at kennels (Pitleigh). Take the track to the right to come to the main road. Turn right to Summerway Cross, where a broad lane forks off to the left.

Start the walk from Summerway Cross. Follow the broad, unsurfaced lane, marked as a byway, that forks away from the road; this is named Hare Path on the map. In nearly a mile this crosses the A396 at an angle, at Hare Path Cross (17mins, [1]). It continues as a narrow but surfaced road, Thorne Lane. You will soon drop down to Bushel Bridge, in Saxon times a ford across the River Avill, before the road rises and straightens out. It is easy to imagine a Saxon host marching along this basically straight road, perhaps on its way to intercept marauding Vikings in the Porlock Vale. Ignore a crossing lane, but in another fifteen minutes turn left through a gate on a signposted broad earthen track (1hr, [2]). Follow this for a little over twelve minutes; the last section bends left then right. At a road, turn right and continue until you meet the B3224 again, keeping an eye out for traffic. At the junction (1hr35mins, [3]), Exford is a mile to the left.

The route continues ahead on Stone Lane, a well-defined restricted byway that passes through the hamlet of Stone before heading on to the open moor. Soon after it becomes enclosed by hedges again, arrive at a crossroads (2hr15mins, [4]). Continue ahead here on a hard road, and continue slightly to the right at the next junction. You are now on the Exford to Porlock road, which you will follow for the next three miles at an average height of over 400 metres; for much of the way the road is on open moorland, so you will not need to walk all the way on tarmac. Descend to Chetsford Water



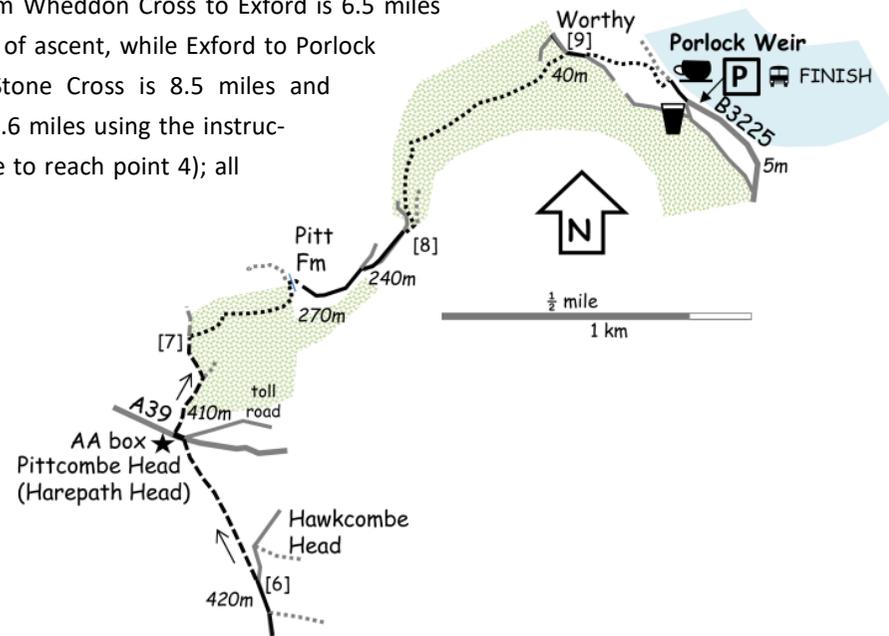
and up again, then views open up to the right of the Dunkery ridge. A side road comes in from the left at Lucott Cross (2hr55mins, [5]). A little further on the road goes over a cattle grid and becomes edged by a fence on the left. About 25 minutes later, the road veers right away from the hedge; continue ahead here on a wide track (3hrs25mins, [6]). This takes you to the A39 at Pittcombe Head, at one time known as Harepath Head.

Briefly turn left here, then opposite an AA phone box take the bridleway to the right: go through the gate and follow the blue waymarks. Ignore the first track descending to the right; views across Porlock Vale soon open up. Little more than five minutes later follow the bridleway downhill to the right (3hr40mins, [7]; the 'main' route straight on is a forestry track and is not a right of way). Keep right where a track leads off to the left, following the main way down and around to the left. Coming above a house and its well-kept garden, turn right on a track, ignoring the sign for Culbone via Smalacombe. Join a surfaced road, which in around five minutes comes to an oxbow junction. Take the right fork here, then in two or three minutes fork right on a signposted footpath (4hrs, [8]). Keep left when it forks, following it down through wooded Worthy Combe. At the bottom turn right on a road (4hr15mins, [9]), then in a minute or less take the coast path to the left. You will soon have views over the shingly beach and creek at Porlock Weir. Following the path along the edge

of a field, look out for an almost hidden footpath sign to turn off to the left: go down some steps here to the little seaside village of Porlock Weir, where the walk ends.

**Shorter walks.** The route divides into two at Exford, which is served by an infrequent bus. To finish at Exford, turn left at the 1hr35min point ([3]) and walk along the road into the village. The northern half of the route can be started from Exford by following the B3224 towards Wheddon Cross and turning left at Stone Cross ([3]). Alternatively, to reach point [4] directly from Exford, walk uphill past the post office then turn right into Combe Lane opposite the top of the green. Head uphill past Combe Farm. The surface gradually deteriorates to a stony track. Go through two field gates; when you are faced with two gates either side of a bank, the track continues through the right-hand one. Go through a gate in a tree-topped bank,

and turn left on to Stone Lane to arrive at the junction ([4]). From Wheddon Cross to Exford is 6.5 miles with 270m of ascent, while Exford to Porlock Weir via Stone Cross is 8.5 miles and 300m (or 7.6 miles using the instructions above to reach point 4); all are ●.



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