



## Walk 0A. Morteheo and Lee Bay.

- 7.2 miles, ascents and descents of 550 metres. 3 hours 5 minutes constant walking, allow 4-5 hours overall.

**Terrain:** A mix of roads, tracks, and paths, some uneven and potentially slippery. Morte Point is uneven rock.

**Access:** Start from the car park in Morteheo (SS 458 452, EX34 7DR, £). Bus 31 runs roughly hourly between Ilfracombe, Morteheo and Woolacombe on weekdays and Saturdays. The walk can also be started from the car park at Lee (SS 480 464, near EX34 8LR).

For the alternative linear walk catch bus 31 from Ilfracombe to Morteheo (takes 20-30 minutes). Between March and the end of October parking in the centre of Ilfracombe is expensive, so you may prefer to park off the A399 on the other side of the harbour (Larkstone car park, SS 527 476, EX34 9NU, £). Ilfracombe can also be reached by bus from Barnstaple (21, daily and 301, Monday to Saturday) and Combe Martin (301).

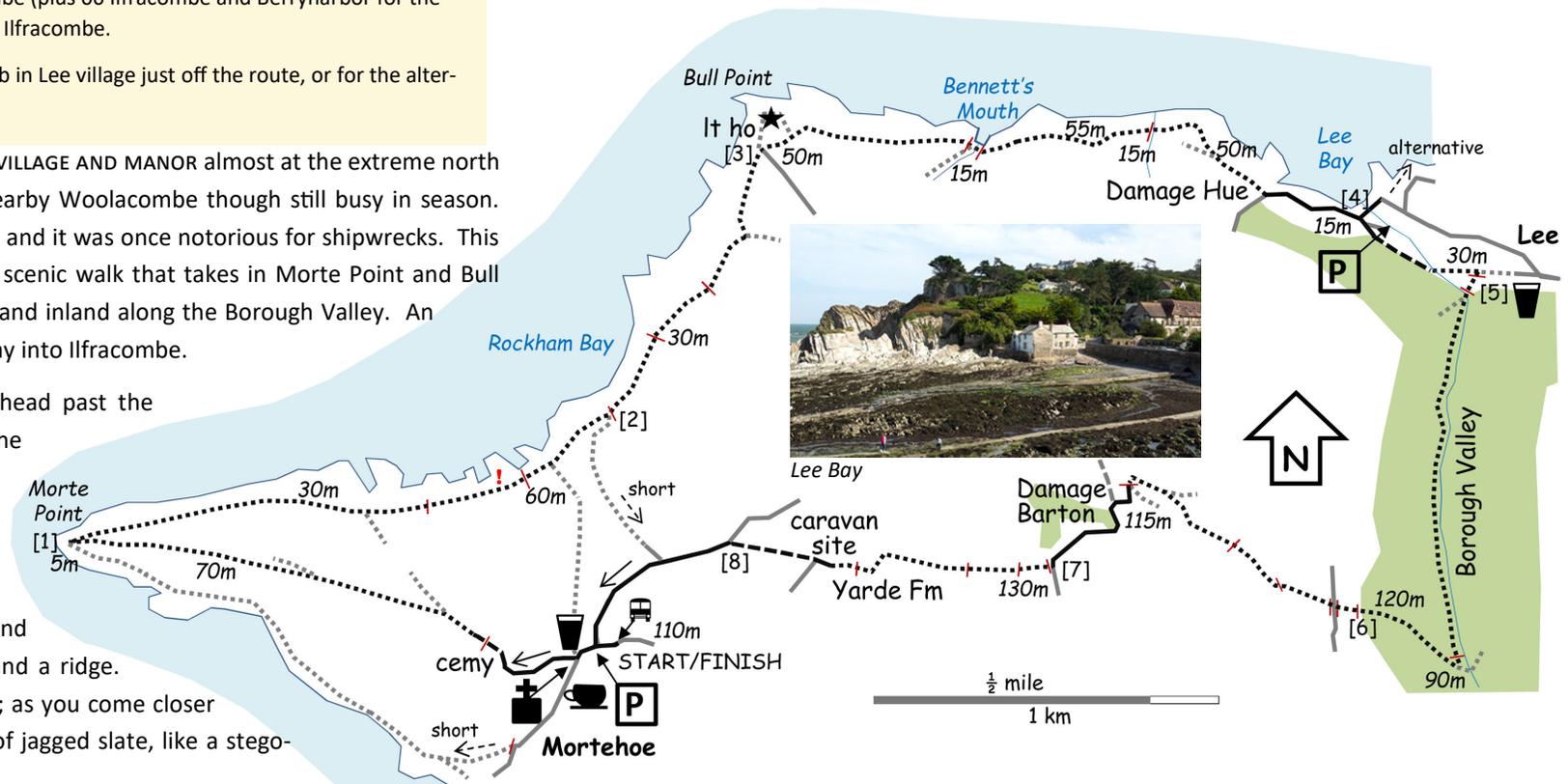
**Maps:** Croydecycle 07 Morteheo & Woolacombe (plus 06 Ilfracombe and Berrynarbor for the linear walk) or OS Explorer 139 Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.

**Refreshments:** Pub and cafés in Morteheo, pub in Lee village just off the route, or for the alternative walk plenty of choice in Ilfracombe.

MORTEHOE IS AN ATTRACTIVE FORMER FARMING VILLAGE AND MANOR almost at the extreme north-western point of Devon, less visited than nearby Woolacombe though still busy in season. Nearby Morte Point is formed of jagged slate, and it was once notorious for shipwrecks. This is an undulating, mildly strenuous but highly scenic walk that takes in Morte Point and Bull Point before heading to picturesque Lee Bay and inland along the Borough Valley. An alternative coastal walk continues from Lee Bay into Ilfracombe.

Starting from the post office in Morteheo, head past the Smuggler's Rest towards the church. Take the narrow road to the right between the pub and the church, pass the cemetery and continue on a rough track past a pair of gates. Bear left on a grassy path to head towards Morte Point. When the path forks, keep left and aim for a slight col between a pointed hill and a ridge. Follow a narrow path outwards along a ridge; as you come closer to the point you will walk through a jumble of jagged slate, like a stego-

saurus's back. Pick your way carefully down to the point (25mins, [1]), then turn around and take the coast path on what is now your left-hand (north) side, heading for the lighthouse at Bull Point. You may see seals among the rocks here. Continuing along the coast path ignore the turn to Morteheo, but follow a short diversion soon after where the original path is dangerously close to crumbling cliffs. Go through a gate, climb upwards, and pass a short section next to a sheer drop before heading down again. Through another gate, then another path from Morteheo comes in from the right; keep left here. The path goes up and down before going through a third gate, just after another Morteheo path (55mins, [2]), and bearing left. After the next gate the path diverts briefly inland; the 2014 storms washed away the way down to the beach, leaving wooden steps hanging precariously over the cliff. Take a narrow path to the left, bringing you to Bull Point lighthouse (1hr10mins, [3]). You can walk all the way around the lighthouse enclosure, but the way on is the main path to the right. Drop down to a small rocky bay or inlet (Bennett's Mouth), up the other side, then down to another small bridge, uphill again and up steps (ignore the path to Sandy Cove on the left). The onward path is signposted to Lee. Meet a road and turn left to stroll down into Lee Bay (1hr40mins, [4]). This picturesque and relatively undeveloped little bay is worth exploring, particularly when the tide is out.



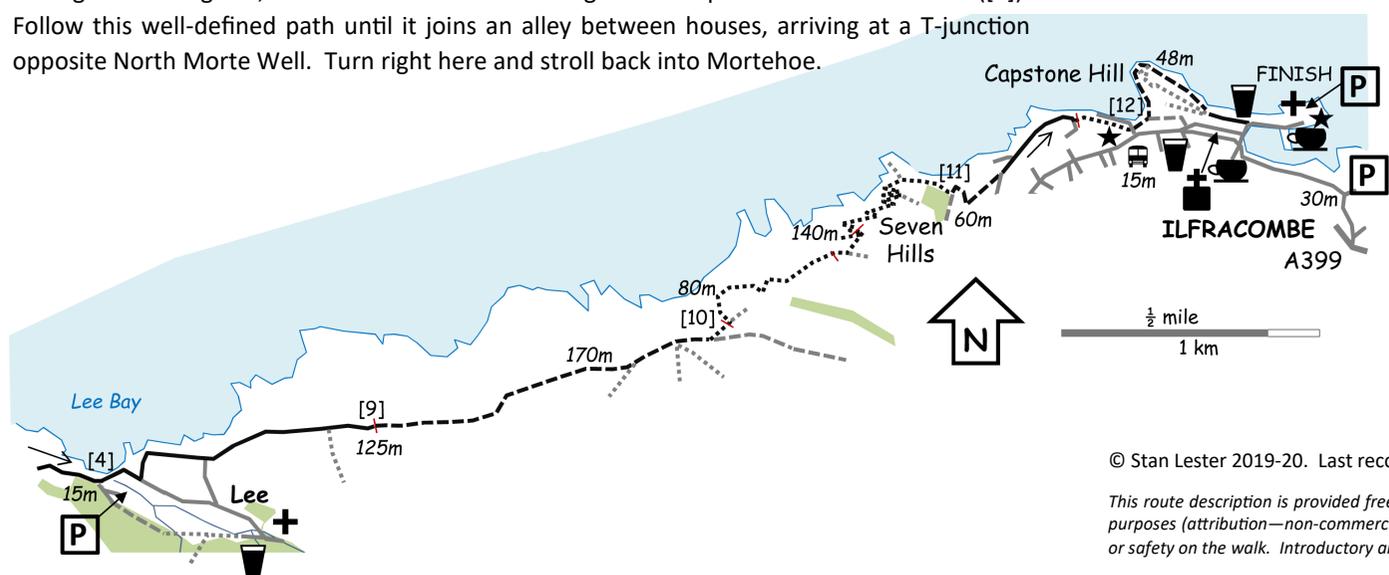
To continue, take the small road close to where you came down the hill, signposted to the car park and toilets. The footpath, initially a broad surfaced track, is the right fork. Pass the toilets, then the path narrows and runs parallel with a field. The main village is straight ahead, but to continue the walk turn right through a gate ('Borough Woods'; 1hr55mins, [5]), across the end of the field then through another gate and over a footbridge. Turn left. This rather lovely path rises gently beside the stream among trees and ferns. Just after a metal kissing gate turn right and head upwards. After a fairly steep and possibly slippery climb leave the woods, go over a stile (2hr20mins, [6]), and cross the field ahead. Cross a narrow lane, continue along the right-hand side of the field, then turn left at a hedge to go through a gate. Bear right to cross the field to the next gate, and follow the path through a field dotted with gorse scrub until it joins a track that heads left through a double field gate. This is Damage Barton. Go through the gate and turn right in front of a massive stone barn, then left to pass the front of the farmhouse. Walk up the drive past two seats overlooking the coast, then turn right over a stile (or through a gate; 2hr40mins, [7]). Follow the path to a second gate, then keep right along the field edge. Through another gate, then down steps on a broad enclosed path. Continue ahead at a junction ('Mortehoe'), then bear left on a grassy path. Go through a gate and past a pond, then turn left at some buildings. A concrete path takes you into a caravan park facilities centre. Bear right to walk through the park, ignoring the entrances on your left. Leaving the park, come to a T-junction (2hr55mins, [8]; the right-hand turn is a private road to Bull Point lighthouse). Turn left and stroll back into Mortehoe.

**Short walk: Morte Point** (● 2.8 miles, ascents and descents 175m). In Mortehoe follow the road downhill from the church. Turn right through a gate when the road bends sharply left, and follow the path downwards and slightly to the right. This brings you to the coast path. Walk out to Morte Point, picking up the main walk at the 25-minute point ([1]). Continue through the two gates, then before the third turn right on the path towards Mortehoe ([2]). Follow this well-defined path until it joins an alley between houses, arriving at a T-junction opposite North Morte Well. Turn right here and stroll back into Mortehoe.

**Alternative walk: Mortehoe to Ilfracombe via Lee Bay** (● 7.7 miles, ascents of 540m and descents of 640m). This undulating coastal alternative continues from along the coast to Ilfracombe, picking up the return stretch of Walk 0. Take bus 31 (Mon-Sat, hourly) from Ilfracombe to Mortehoe (20-30 minutes): get off at the village centre (the post office stop). Follow the main walk as far as Lee Bay (1hr40mins, [4]). At the far side of the bay start heading uphill past a (currently) derelict hotel. Turn left on a narrow lane signposted 'coast path'. This heads steeply uphill, gradually easing off. At a pair of isolated houses ('Blue Mushroom') go through the gate ahead to continue on the coast path, now a rough track (2hr5mins, [9]). The official path keeps alongside the right-hand field edge, but you can wander anywhere between here and the cliffs. There are good views first back along the coast, then over Seven Hills and Ilfracombe. Come to a pair of gates on your right, and follow the path as it drops between banks; go down a fairly steep (and potentially slippery) section, then bear left on the signposted coast path to go through a wooden gate and turn sharply left (2hr25mins, [10]). Follow the coast path to a signpost, then through a gap in a wall. Head up to a stile, and continue uphill to a seat; to the left is a mini-turret, with a toposcope indicating what you can see (visibility permitting) on the far side of the Bristol Channel.

From the seat start heading down towards Ilfracombe, then turn left through a gate. The path appears to double back on itself, but it soon zigzags down the hill. Ignore a right turn to the National Trust car park; continue zigzagging, then level out to approach Ilfracombe. Soon after some steps come to a path junction and turn left on the coast path towards the town centre. Now turn right on an unmade residential road, which soon swings around to the left (2hr50mins, [11]). Keep left at a hard road. This takes you above the coast; look out for the Tunnels Beach below on the left. When the road bends sharply right, go through a metal

pedestrian gate on the left. Keep left through a little garden, then head down steps to the 'cooling towers' arts centre. You can go directly to the car park or bus stop from here, but if you have time head all the way to the end of the quay, where you will find Damien Hirst's statue 'Verity'. Walk down to the main road, turn left, and then left again on a promenade beneath cliffs (3hr5mins, [12]). This will take you around the headland. When it ends turn left on a road, where Henry Williamson (author of *Tarka the Otter*) lived for the latter part of his life. Keep left past the Sandpiper Inn to arrive at the quay.



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