



## Walk 10. Porlock, Bossington and Horner.

- 7.6 miles, 2 hours 50 minutes. Ascents and descents of 285 metres.

Terrain: Paths, tracks, roads, fields and shingle beach. Potentially muddy in places.

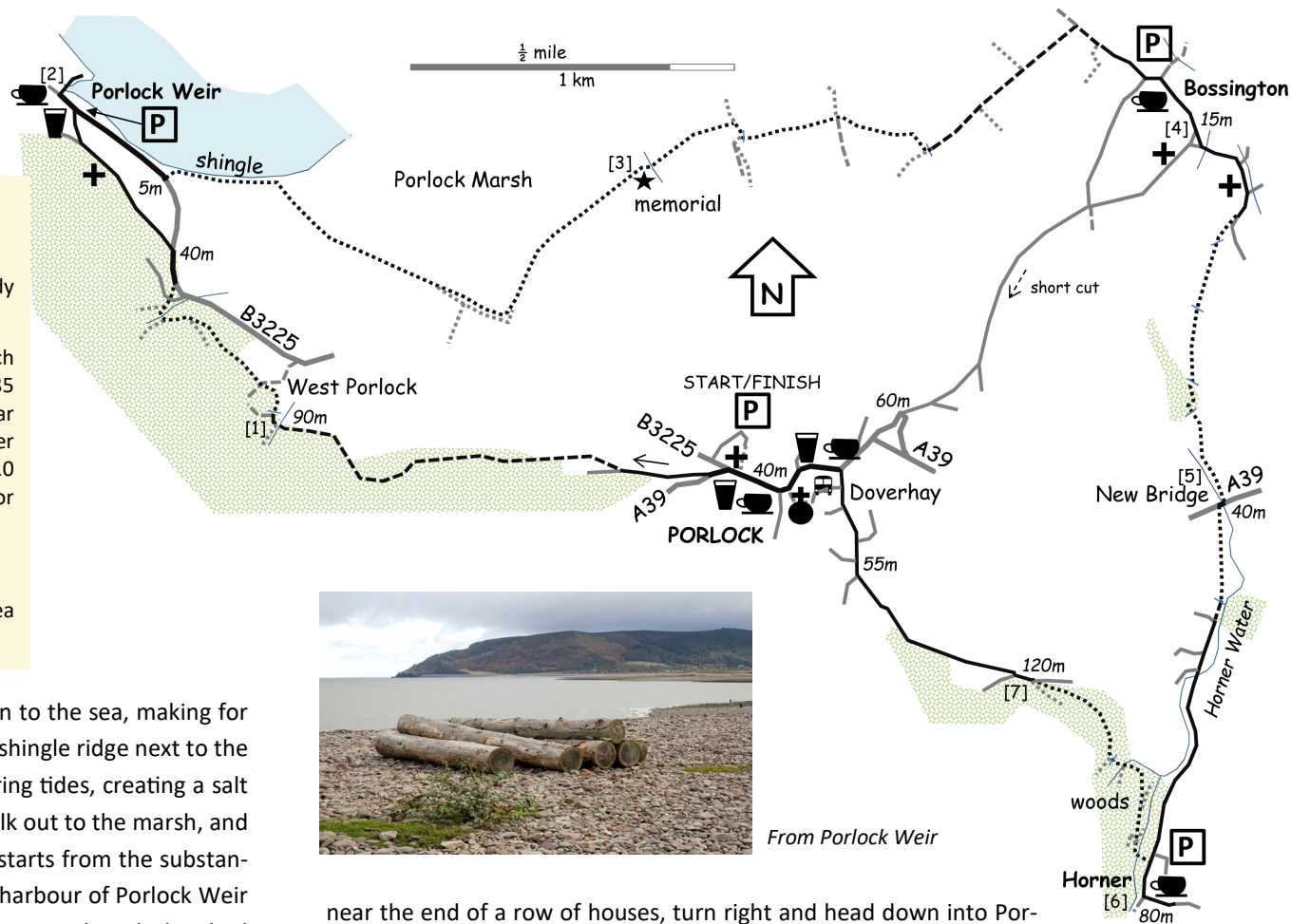
Access: By car, park in Porlock: there may be a space next to the church (SS 886 466, near TA24 8LA), or park in the long-stay car park (SS 885 469, TA24 8PH, £). Alternatively, the walk can be started from the car parks in Porlock Weir (SS 864 479, TA24 8PD, £), Bossington, or Horner (the last two free to National Trust members). By bus, use service 10 from Minehead to Porlock (Monday-Saturday) or 300 from Lynmouth or Minehead (school summer holidays only).

Map: Croydecycle O2 Porlock; OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: A choice in Porlock and Porlock Weir, as well as tea rooms in Bossington and Horner (check opening times in winter).

THE PORLOCK VALE IS THE ONE PART OF EXMOOR that slopes gently down to the sea, making for relatively easy walking. At one time the Coast Path headed along the shingle ridge next to the beach, but a tidal breach has led to the area becoming flooded at spring tides, creating a salt marsh and diverting the path inland. It is easy enough however to walk out to the marsh, and the National Trust has thoughtfully provided a boardwalk. This walk starts from the substantial and much-visited village of Porlock, exploring the mini-resort and harbour of Porlock Weir before heading around the marsh to contrasting Bossington, all painted and thatched cottages. The final stretch heads inland to Horner, returning through woodland to Porlock.

From the centre of Porlock follow the High Street past the church and around to the right towards Lynmouth. Pass a row of shops and a second (Methodist) church on the right; the footpath from the car park joins here. Pass the (Top) Ship Inn, and turn right on to the toll road. Three or four minutes later fork right on to a wide path signposted Coleridge Way to Porlock Weir. The path climbs gently into some woods, crosses a stream, then eventually comes above some houses (West Porlock) (30mins, [1]). At the next junction take the footpath to Porlock Weir (to the right and through a barrier). After five minutes or so the path meets a stream. Cross the ford (or use the footbridge if it is too deep), walk past a long low building and cross a tarmac lane. A little further on, the path meets a road. Turn left, then at the 'Porlock Weir' sign fork left on a minor road. This takes you past a corrugated iron chapel;



From Porlock Weir

near the end of a row of houses, turn right and head down into Porlock Weir. Your onward route is to the right, but first turn left and explore the village and harbour (50mins, [2]).

Leave Porlock Weir on the coast road, then as the road turns inland towards Porlock descend some steps on to the shingle beach. Follow the shingle ridge until a sign points right, following the diverted coast path around the salt marsh. Ten minutes later ignore the turn to the right, instead following the coast path around to the left and past an isolated building. Pass a memorial to the crew of a crashed wartime Liberator aircraft (1hr20mins, [3]), and cross a narrow footbridge to continue parallel with the coast. Go through a gate, entering the National Trust's Holnicote Estate. Your route continues ahead, but you might want to make a diversion on the boardwalk to the left to see the breach in the shingle. Follow the signs towards Bossington, on the official coast path which is well signposted. The path works its way inland, heading towards the broad bulk of Bossington Hill and widening to become a track

edged by hedges. At a T-junction, turn right on a stony track towards Bossington and Minehead. This soon brings you to the pretty village of Bossington, where it becomes a hard road and continues around past the car park. The tea room is on the right.

To take the short-cut to Porlock (see the shorter walk directions below), turn right at a triangular green (1hr45mins, [4]); otherwise carry on past West Lynch Farm (the Owl and Hawk Centre) and its chapel, following the road past a bridge on the left until you come to a foot-path to the right. Head into the field here, and walk along its left-hand boundary until you come to a gate; turn into the next field and head for a gate in the opposite side, just to the left of a wood. Cross the next field to a pedestrian gate into the wood; the woodland path soon re-emerges into another field. Head along the right-hand boundary to come to the A39 (2hrs, [5]). Cross both the road and the bridge over Horner Water, turning left into a field towards West Luccombe. Cross the field and go through a gate to join a farm track; continue ahead where this joins a hard road, and in a little over ten minutes come into Horner (2hr20mins, [6]). Your route back to Porlock is a blue-signed public bridleway to the right, opposite the first house and the (inconspicuous) entrance to the car park; however, the tea rooms are a little further on, around the bend in the road.

The bridleway heads over a stone bridge and bends right; take the central, larger path. The path climbs up above Horner Water then levels out and bends left. Go through a gate and head right, then take the left, upward fork away from the fence. Join a road (2hr35mins, [7]) to head uphill, then fork right towards Porlock. Keep right after a steep downhill gradient, and come into Porlock. At the main road, turn left to return to the church and car park.

**Shorter walk: Porlock, Porlock Weir and Bossington** (● 5.9 miles, ascents and descents of 205 metres). Follow the main walk to Bossington then turn right at the triangular green on to the road signposted to Porlock ([4]). The road comes into the outskirts of Porlock, past large, well-spaced individual detached houses. Ignore a left turn, then joining the A39 keep right on the one-way system (a small pedestrian lane is marked at the side of the road) and join the High Street to return to the church and car park.