



Walk 12. Minehead, North Hill and Selworthy Beacon.

- 10.7 miles, 4 hours 20 minutes. Ascents and descents of 665 metres.

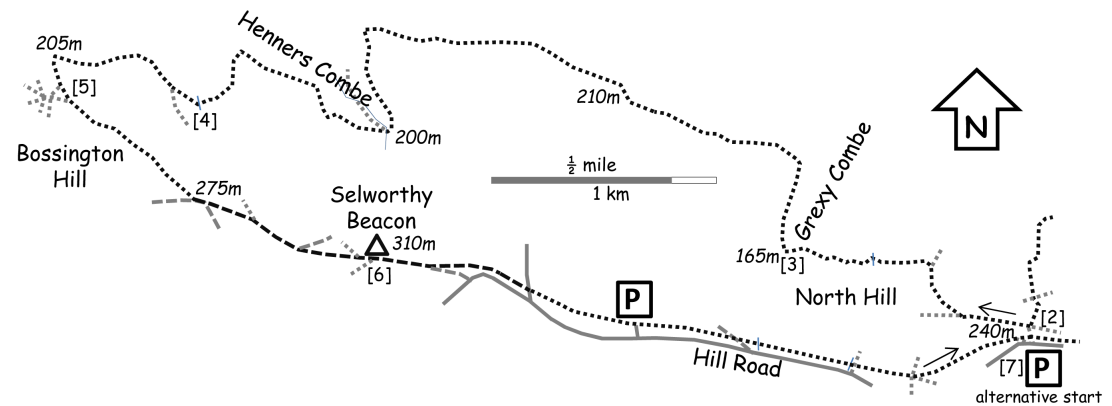
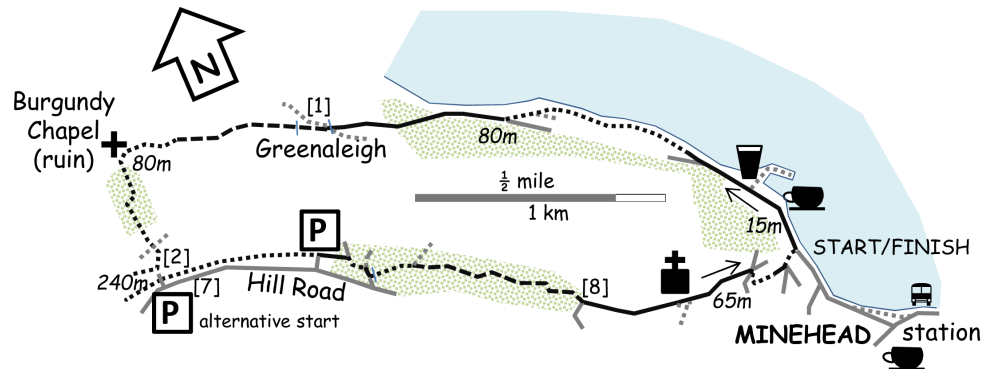
Terrain: Generally well-made paths, some narrow and slightly uneven. The outward route includes some steep climbs, and parts are fairly narrow above steep hillsides.

Access: Start at Minehead, at the South West Coast Path monument just east of the harbour (SS 971 468, TA24 5UJ). There is free parking in some of the streets just inland of the monument, or a car park past the harbour. Alternatively, start from the railway station (served by buses from Taunton, Bridgwater, Dulverton and Porlock as well as seasonal steam trains) and walk along the sea front towards the harbour. By car, another alternative is to park off Hill Road at North Hill (SS 947 476) and start the walk from there: leaving Minehead on Hill Road, this is the second small car park on the right after the camping site (TA24 5LB).

Map: Croydecycle 01 Minehead Dunster Selworthy; OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Wide choice in Minehead, none on the route otherwise.

FROM MINEHEAD THERE IS A MAZE OF PATHS heading on to North Hill and Bratton Ball, thinning out to three main routes leading further west towards Bossington Hill: the Hill Road and the path running parallel with it to Selworthy Beacon, the official coast path just below it, and further down the 'rugged' coast path, now signposted by the National Trust. All three routes are highly scenic; the 'rugged' path is closest to the sea and skirts deep combes, while the inland routes offer distant coastal views and rather better ones inland and across to Dunkery Beacon and high Exmoor. An advantage of this area for walking is that the open moorland rarely becomes waterlogged, unlike that on central Exmoor. This fairly energetic route follows the lower path out and returns via Selworthy Beacon and the uppermost path before heading back through an old and attractive part of Minehead.



Starting from the Coast Path monument (hands holding a map), walk along the sea front to Minehead Harbour. Continue on the coast road, then join the coast path at a small play area (12mins). The path gradually climbs above the sea. Keep right at a T-junction, then join a narrow road. Ignore a path to the right and continue past a large house, Greenaleigh (30mins, [1]). Arrive in front of the remains of the medieval Burgundy Chapel, by a small stream. Don't cross but keep left here and ascend steeply, first to a conveniently-placed seat, then alongside a combe. Cross a signposted path, then in a couple of minutes come to another signpost just before a small car park (the alternative start point; 1hr, [2]). Turn right here towards Bossington. At the next signpost in three minutes or so turn right on to the 'rugged coast path'. Follow the path to a seat overlooking the Bristol Channel, then fork left alongside a low bank to come in three or four minutes to a field gate. Go through, and keep to the main path, slightly to the left: you are now on the rugged (lower) coast path, which has no turn-offs for three miles (narrow tracks head down the combes, but they terminate at cliffs high above the sea).

Walk to the head of Grexy Combe (1hr20mins, [3]), follow the path right alongside the combe, then left to continue high above the sea for half an hour or so. The path then takes you down and around another large combe, crossing a stream, then to the head of a third combe where there is a gate (2hr20mins, [4]). Go through and keep right, ignoring a path coming in from the left. In seven or eight minutes the path swings sharply left, with views over Hurlstone Combe (the small path from Hurlstone Point joins from across the hillside here). Keep left to avoid a complex path junction (2hr35mins, [5]), following the sign to Minehead. Keep left again on the broad coast path, indicated by an acorn symbol, until it turns off to the left: continue ahead here as signposted towards Selworthy Beacon, arriving at a trig point in about four minutes (3hrs, [6]). In another four minutes or so fork left, then cross a narrow road (the road to the right continues all the way to the church in Minehead). Pass a small parking area, then follow the path more-or-less parallel with the road. After

crossing a track the path continues through a gate and across a field, then through a second gate. From here it gradually heads away from the road. At a wide grassy area continue directly ahead on a narrow but well-defined path, which brings you to a car park (3hr40mins, [7]; the alternative start). Continue ahead between two sturdy posts to continue on a wider path, still parallel with the road. Approaching another parking area take the right-hand fork and continue ahead on a surfaced drive, shortly coming to a larger car park (part of a wartime military installation); head for the right-hand corner to find an onward path. This soon meets a wider crossing track: turn briefly right, then left through a gate to descend into woods. Pass a brick building, keep right where a path forks to the left, and arrive at a road on the edge of Minehead (4hrs, [8]).

Turn left here and walk down to the 14th-century St Michael's Church. For a brief detour, turn right just before the church to walk behind a thatched cottage; this brings you to Church Steps. Turn left then right on to the road. At a war memorial, continue across and slightly to the right as if entering a driveway, then sharp right on Church Path. This soon becomes a road; walk past the houses to a road junction, continuing straight ahead and down some shallow steps to arrive back on the coast road opposite the 'hands'.

Shorter walks: This walk conveniently divides into two shorter circuits. For the eastern circuit follow the instructions to the 1-hour point ([2]), then continue into the car park and turn left to rejoin the main walk at the 3hr40min point ([7]) (● 3.9 miles, ascents and descents of 315 metres). For the longer western one that includes the rugged coast path, start the walk at North Hill car park (SS 947 476), joining the main walk at the 1-hour point ([2]) (● 6.8 miles, ascents and descents of 350 metres).

Alternative walk: Minehead to Porlock (● 8.4 miles, 3hrs 30mins, ascents of 620 metres and descents of 600 metres). Follow the outward instructions, then at the 2hr35min point ([5]) keep right and follow the Coast Path down Hurlstone Combe. Continue ahead at a crossing path, then turn left towards Bossington. Cross a footbridge into a car park, then turn left on a road to pass a tea room and some cottages. At a broad triangular green, turn right signposted to Porlock. 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 arrive at the church (and bus stop or car park). Bus 10 returns to Minehead. See walks 10 and 11 for maps.

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