



## Walk 12. Minehead, North Hill and Selworthy Beacon.

- 10.7 miles, ascents and descents of 665 metres. 4 hours 30 minutes constant walking, allow around 6 hours.

Terrain: Generally well-made paths, some narrow and slightly uneven. The outward route has a few steep climbs. ! In places the 'Rugged Coast Path' is fairly narrow above steep hillsides, but it is never excessively exposed.

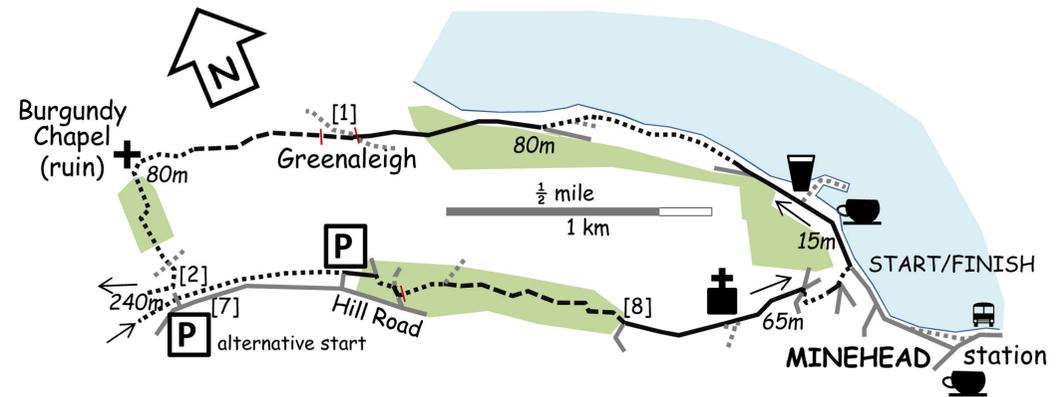
Access: Start at Minehead, at the South West Coast Path monument just east of the harbour (SS 971 468, TA24 5UJ). There is free parking in some of the streets just inland of the monument, or a car park past the harbour. Alternatively, start from the railway station (served by buses from Taunton, Bridgwater, 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, pass the camping site (TA24 5LB), ignore a hard-surfaced parking area just as you leave the woods, then in under half a mile make a sharp right turn on to an almost hidden track.

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. This is a good area for winter walking as, unlike on central Exmoor, the open moorland is fairly free-draining. This moderately 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 (left as you face the sea if starting from the car park). At the next signpost in three minutes or so turn right on to the 'rugged coast path'. Soon come to a simple seat overlooking the Bristol Channel; fork left here to come in three or four minutes to a field gate. Go through, keeping to the main path, slightly to the left and downwards: you are now on the rugged (lower) coast path, which has no official turn-offs for three miles (narrow tracks head down the combes, but they terminate at cliffs high above the sea).

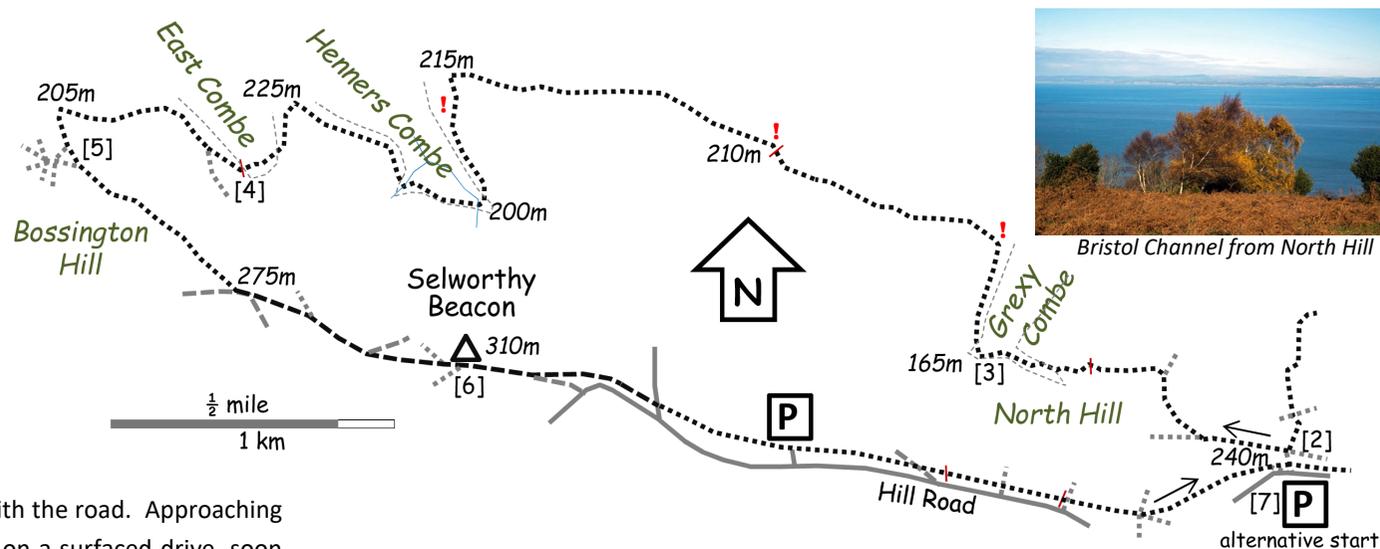
The path takes you into Grexy Combe and down to a stream (1hr25mins, [3]). Follow it back up the left-hand side of the combe; arriving above the coast it turns sharply left. Watch your footing on a short exposed section. Continue high above the sea for half an hour or so, passing through a gate after which there is another slightly exposed section. Come to a small rocky mound and bear left, following the path alongside Henners Combe. Descend to a stream near the head of the combe, then return to the coast. Almost immediately, continue around to the head of a third combe, East Combe, where there is a gate (2hr30mins, [4]). Go through and keep right, ignoring a path coming in from the left. At a fork take either path. About five minutes later it turns left above Hurlstone Combe; over to the right is a rocky crag, just above Hurlstone Point (see walk 11), and beyond it Porlock Weir and in the distance Foreland Point comes into view.

Ignore a path heading right, then keep left at the signpost towards Minehead (2hr45mins, [5]; you are now on the official Coast Path, indicated by an acorn symbol). Ascend to the ridge in front of you, keeping left at the next short signpost (looking back, Porlock is now visible). Bear left at the next junction, still on the Coast Path. Ignore paths turning off to the left, leaving the Coast Path and walking gently upwards to the hilltop in front of you; marked by a cairn and behind it a trig point, this is Selworthy Beacon (3hr10mins, [6]).

Four minutes or so past the Beacon fork left, then cross a narrow access road (the main road just to your right is Hill Road; it continues all the way to the church in Minehead). Six or seven minutes later pass a small parking area, continuing on the path more-or-less parallel with the road. When a wider track heads right to the road, keep ahead on a narrow path and go through a gate into a field. Cross the field parallel with the road. At the far end, go through another gate near a cattle grid, taking the path as it heads away from the road. At a wide grassy area continue ahead and slightly left on a narrow but well-defined path, which brings you to a car park (3hr50mins, [7]; this is the alternative start).

Continue between two sturdy posts 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, soon coming to a larger car park. This is a disused tank marshalling area, 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 (4hr10mins, [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 can easily be divided into two shorter circuits. For the **eastern circuit from Minehead** 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 3hr50min point ([7]) (● 3.9 miles, ascents and descents of 315 metres). For the **longer western loop** that includes the rugged coast path, start the walk at the small car park on North Hill (SS 947 476) as described in the instructions. Join the main walk at the 1-hour point ([2]), turning left at the signpost towards Bossington, and follow it until it brings you back to the car park (● 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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