



Walk 27B. Dulverton and Winsford.

- 12.4 miles, ascents and descents of 680 metres. 5 hours continuous walking, allow 6½ -7 hours overall.

Terrain: Paths, tracks and fields, muddy in places and with some slippery bedrock. Some walking on quiet lanes.

Access: By car, park in the long-stay car park next to Exmoor House (SS 912 280, TA22 9HL, £). Dulverton is served by bus 25 from Taunton and Bampton, 198/467 from Minehead and 398 from Tiverton and Bampton. Bus 198/467 travels from Dulverton to Winsford in the mornings, returning in the afternoon. No service on Sundays.

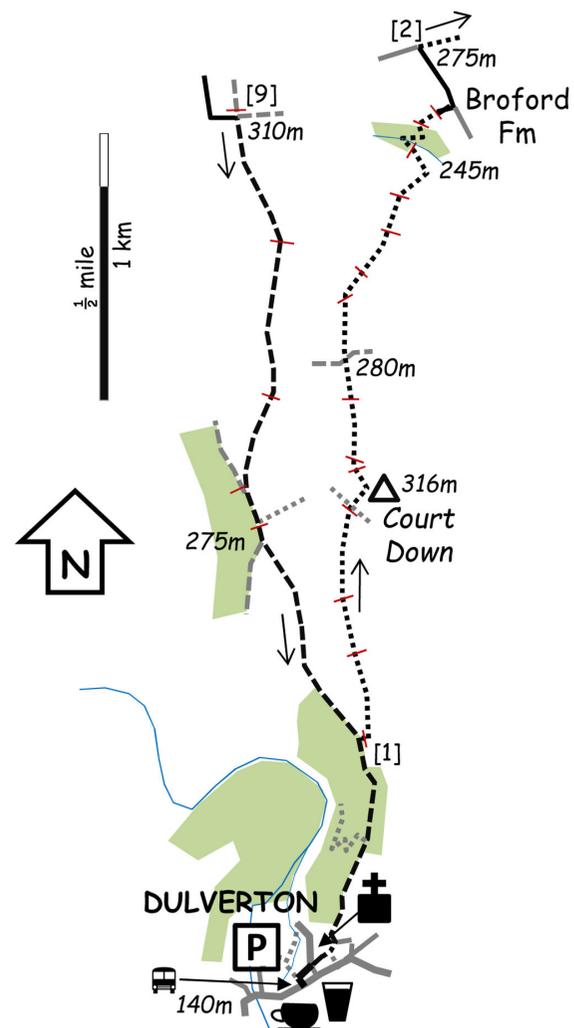
Map: OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor; Croydecycle 56 Dulverton and Tarr Steps covers the first part of the outward route, and the return.

Refreshments: Plenty of choice in Dulverton, inn in Bridgetown, inn and seasonal tea room in Winsford.

THIS WALK HEADS NORTH FROM DULVERTON THROUGH ROLLING COUNTRY over Court Down to Broford Farm. It then takes an undulating route partly through woods to Bridgetown, and along the Exe Valley to Winsford. The return route takes the path through Yellow Combe and over the moors before returning to Dulverton on the long track from Broford. This route almost falls into the 'strenuous' category, but you will be rewarded by highly varied scenery and one of Exmoor's prettiest villages. The bus connection between Dulverton and Winsford makes it easy to do one or other half of the walk with careful timing.

For the **outward leg** (● 6.5 miles, ascents 450m and descents of 400m) start from the centre of Dulverton. Head past the Lion Hotel, then take a path to the right-hand side of the church. Go through a small alley between the church and a house, continuing uphill beside the churchyard. Turn left when you come to a T-junction, and bend right on to a stony and potentially slippery lane at the former schoolhouse. Continue steeply uphill towards Broford. Soon after the lane flattens out, come to a large white gate on the right. Three minutes or so later turn right on a bridleway marked Court Down (20mins, [1]). Go through the gate and turn sharply left. Keep to the right-hand side of the field, then go through a gap at the end. North Combe house is in the valley below. Now follow the path on the left between hedges. Go through two gates in succession and walk beneath some sycamore trees. Go through the next gate and keep left along the edge of the field. After another gate bear slightly right to the trig point at Court Down.

After admiring the views, veer left to go through a gate. Keep right and go through two successive pedestrian gates. Walk along the left-hand field edge towards a lone house. Cross



the road in front of the house and enter the next field; continue directly ahead to go through a small gate in the hedge. Now bear right and keep roughly parallel with the hedge, coming to another small gate. Go through the two gates and walk along the right-hand field edge. Continue ahead at a line of beech trees, then go through a field gate. Follow a line of trees (a former field boundary) downhill, keeping to the left-hand side, to arrive at a confirming bridleway sign. Bear left as indicated and follow the path along the edge of a wood. Go through a gate to enter the wood; cross a small stream and follow the path to the right then around to the left. Go through a gate on the right, cross a field, then enter a farmyard (Broford Farm); walk through it and turn left and uphill on a narrow lane. Where the road bends left, turn right and through a gate on a public footpath signposted to Hol-lam Farm (1hr10mins, [2]).

Follow the left-hand boundary through two further gates. At the end of the third field, bear slightly right at a solitary tree and go through a gate on to a sign-posted footpath. This tracks to the left

above a valley. Ignore two paths joining from the right; a little later, after rounding a bend, keep right where a path heads steeply uphill to the left. Cross a stream next to some silos (1hr30mins, [3]), then continue ahead and uphill on a winding farm road. Keep left at a fork. Continue to the farmhouse; turn right immediately after it on a stony track. Keep right at the fork and go through the middle of the three gates; now turn left and walk along the field edge. Go through a gate, turn right on a track, then immediately left to descend through the woods on a blue-marked bridlepath. Turn left at the next junction then go through a gate. Now turn right to walk parallel with the field edge towards Bridgetown. Go through the gate at the bottom, keep left around the house, through a gate, and along the driveway. Turn right at a road to come to a bridge over the River Exe (1hr55mins, [4]).

Your way on is along a path to the left just before the bridge. Soon after the path comes into a meadow, head over to the left and go through a gate. In seven or eight minutes, arrive at a road. Turn right here, then take the first left, a drive signposted as a bridleway and footpath (2hr15mins, [5]). Follow the footpath through the houses (Copleham), go through a gate, bear left to go over a stile, and head uphill. Through the gate, take the upper path ahead of you. Go through the middle gate, keep right, then at the far side of the field go through two gates in quick succession. Winsford and its church now come into view. The signposted public path is very overgrown, so continue on the concrete driveway. Go through a gate and follow the road around to the left and through the hamlet of West Howetown, over the River Exe, and into Winsford where there is an inn, a seasonal tearoom, and bus stop, as well as a total of eight bridges (2hr45mins, [6]).

For the return route (● 6 miles, ascents of 230m and descents of 280m) head to the war memorial and bear left past the thatched Royal Oak Inn. Walk up the hill past several houses, then turn left on a signposted bridleway to Dulverton, Tarr Steps and Winsford Hill. After an initial steep climb on a stony path, the way levels out and becomes quite muddy. Come to a gate, noting the isolated Yellow Combe Cottage on the right. Go through, and turn almost immediately left over a stile; cross the stream via the footbridge or ford, and continue on the bridleway. Turn right when this meets a wider track, heading uphill beside a stream. At a T-junction, turn right for a short distance on a vehicle track; as the track curves left, branch off to the right on a signposted bridleway. A steep and possibly slippery climb through bracken and scrub brings you to the head of Yellow Combe, and back to the track (3hr20mins, [7]). This isn't yet the highest point of the walk, but all the steep climbing is now over.

Cross the track, go through a gate, and turn right. Walk parallel with the right-hand side of the field, but bear left slightly to go through a field gate. Turn left, signposted Tarr Steps and Spire Cross, and keep the field boundary on your left. Go through the next gate on the left, and turn right on a wide track. Follow it around to the left towards Mounsey Hill Gate, then in a minute or so keep left next to the hedge; you will soon see a confirming sign for Mounsey Hill Gate. Keep the boundary on your left; when you come to the start of a line of tall beech trees, go through a gate on the left. Keep close to the fence on your left. After crossing a small gully, continue up the gentle slope. Where the field on your left ends, a gate leads into it: go through it on a bridleway marked 'Summerway' (3hr55mins, [8]), keeping to the right-hand side of the field. This brings you to a road: turn right. In around ten minutes, after the road bends sharply left, the tarmac runs out (4hr15mins, [9]). Turn right here on a restricted byway to Dulverton. Follow this easy path through several gates to rejoin your outward route (4hr45mins, [1]), turning right at the steps beside the churchyard.

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