



Walk 29. Wheddon Cross to Winsford and Dulverton.

- 10.5 miles, 4 hours 5 minutes. Ascents of 540 metres and descents of 690 metres.

Terrain: Roads (mostly quiet lanes), paths and fields. Some slippery paths and muddy sections.

Access: By car, either park in Dulverton next to Exmoor House (£, at SS 912 280, TA22 9HL) and take the morning bus 198 or 467 to Wheddon Cross, or park next to the inn at Wheddon Cross (SS 924 388) and return by bus or taxi. Bus 198/467 connects Dulverton, Wheddon Cross and Minehead; there are three buses daily, one via Winsford and Exford. Dulverton is also served by bus 25 from Taunton and 398 from Tiverton, both via Bampton.

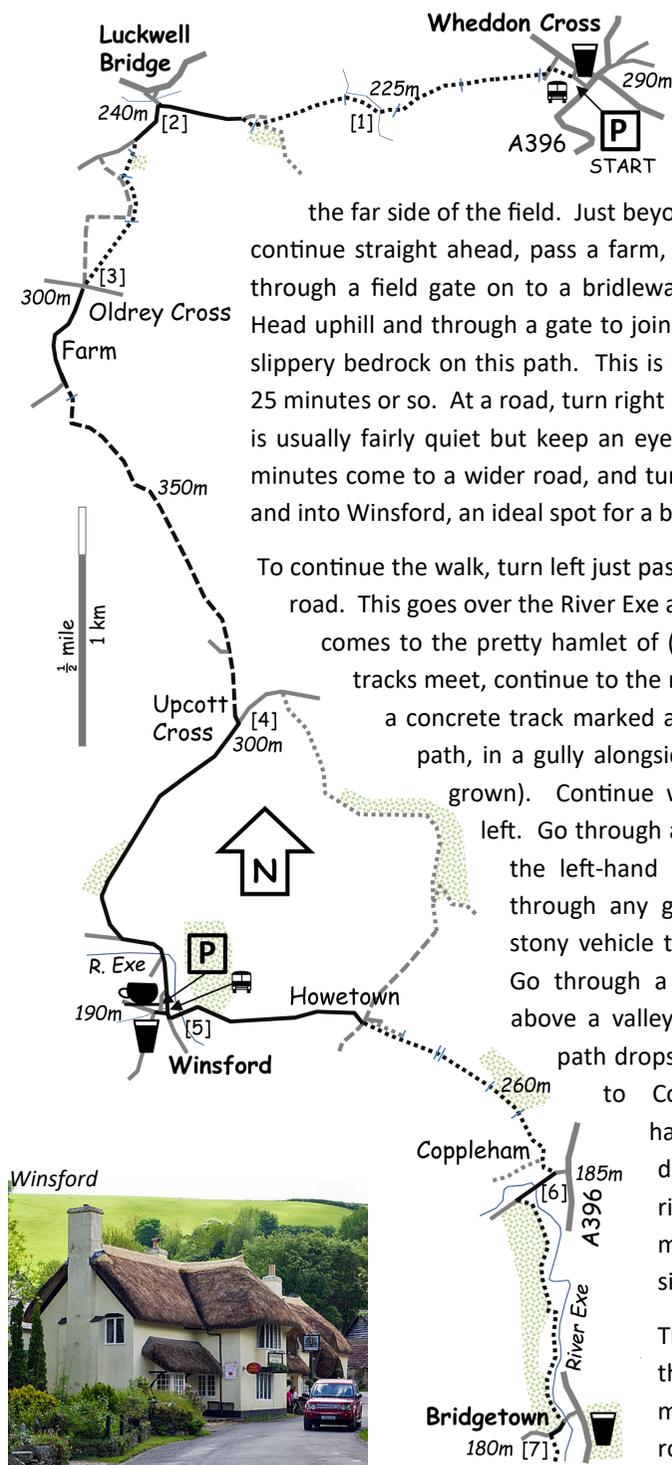
Map: OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor; Winsford and the very last part of the walk are on Croydecycle 56 Dulverton and Tarr Steps.

Refreshments: Pubs in Wheddon Cross, Winsford and Bridgetown, seasonal tea room in Wheddon Cross and Winsford, wide choice in Dulverton.

Wheddon Cross, at 300 metres above sea level, is sometimes claimed to be the highest village on Exmoor (Simonsbath is 25 metres higher). It is nevertheless high up, and with a welcoming inn (the curiously-named Rest and Be Thankful), car park, seasonal tea room, small shop and bus stop, it is an ideal starting-point for linear walks in all directions. This one crosses undulating hills to the picturesque village of Winsford, already encountered in walks 26 and 27. Tracking the River Exe, the route continues to the small riverside village of Bridgetown, another option for a halfway refreshment stop. It then returns to the high downs on a path parallel with the A396 before descending again to the attractive and well-equipped little market town of Dulverton, explored more fully in walk 28.

Leave the car park in Wheddon Cross through a gate by the toilet block, following the bridleway along the right-hand field boundary towards Luckwell Bridge. At the end go through a gap next to a house, then head diagonally left and go through a field gate with a blue-topped post to join an enclosed path. When the path comes into a field, cut the corner to a ford (and footbridge) on the left (10mins, [1]). Cross the stream then turn right and head along the field boundary, confirmed by a blue-marked fencepost. After a gate, join a well-defined track running parallel with the stream. At a small open area continue ahead as signposted for Luckwell Bridge. Go through the right-hand field gate, then bear left to join a vehicle track. Come to a T-junction, with the bridge on your right (25mins, [2]); your onward route is to the left.

Start heading uphill on the road, then just after the largely blank wall of a house on the left, turn left up steps on a footpath. After a gate head diagonally left and upwards to the end of a line of tall conifers. Looking back you will be able to see Dunkery Beacon in the distance, with



its distinctive cairn. Go through another gate and continue along the right-hand side of the field. Cross a stile then bear slightly right towards a gate in

the far side of the field. Just beyond is a crossroads (Oldrey Cross): continue straight ahead, pass a farm, then two minutes later turn left through a field gate on to a bridleway to Upcott Cross (45mins, [3]). Head uphill and through a gate to join a track between trees; mind the slippery bedrock on this path. This is Ison Lane: stay on it for the next 25 minutes or so. At a road, turn right (1hr10mins, [4]); this narrow lane is usually fairly quiet but keep an eye out for vehicles. Within fifteen minutes come to a wider road, and turn left to head over the River Exe and into Winsford, an ideal spot for a break (1hr30mins, [5]).

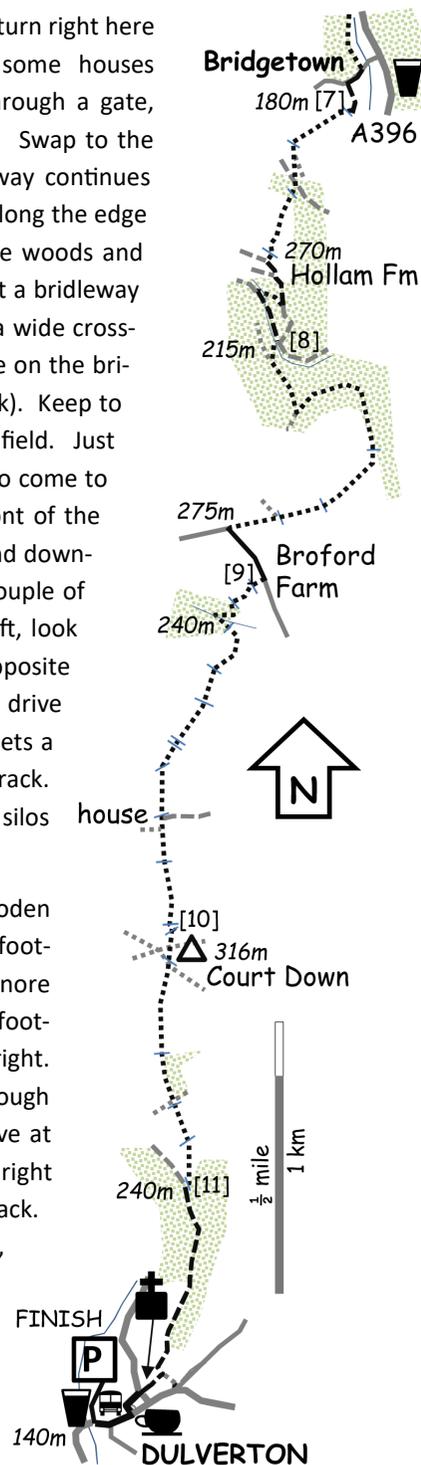
To continue the walk, turn left just past the bus shelter on a no through road. This goes over the River Exe again, and five minutes further on comes to the pretty hamlet of (West) Howetown. Where three tracks meet, continue to the right but turn immediately left on a concrete track marked as a permissive path (the original path, in a gully alongside to the left, is becoming overgrown). Continue with the field boundary to your left. Go through a pair of field gates, then keep to the left-hand side of the field without going through any gates (don't be tempted by the stony vehicle track that bears off to the right). Go through a gate and follow a grassy path above a valley. After a gate with a stile, the path drops steeply alongside trees to come

to Coplesham, another attractive hamlet. Join a drive and walk down to the road (2hrs, [6]); turn right here, then in a couple of minutes turn left on a bridleway signposted to Bridgetown.

The bridleway continues alongside the River Exe for ten or twelve minutes before coming to another road. Unless you want to visit the

inn at Bridgetown, which is over the bridge to the left, turn right here and then within a minute left on a drive past some houses ('bridleway to Hollam Farm'; 2hr15mins, [7]). Go through a gate, then turn right to keep the stone bank on your right. Swap to the other side of the hedge at the next gate; the bridleway continues uphill in a gully, but it may be easier to walk above it along the edge of the field. After a fairly steep ascent come to some woods and turn left through a gate on a grassy track. Fork right at a bridleway sign to continue uphill. At the top of the hill there is a wide crossing track: turn right then left as signposted to continue on the bridleway (if you have the OS map, it misses out the track). Keep to the right and go through a gate in the corner of the field. Just beyond is a junction: turn left, marked as a footpath, to come to Hollam Farm. Turn left in front of a barn, pass in front of the farmhouse, and follow the drive around to the right and downhill. Ignore a track coming in from the right, but a couple of minutes further on, before the drive bends sharply left, look out for a grassy path doubling back on the right (it is opposite a small hollow in the hill opposite; if you miss it, the drive will take you to the silos). Follow this path until it meets a stream; splash through, and turn left on a vehicle track. This crosses the stream again and brings you to some silos (2hr45mins, [8]).

Cross the stream for a final time using the ford or wooden footbridge next to the silos, and turn left. Follow the footpath around to the left, then as it swings back right ignore two tracks to the left to continue on the waymarked footpath. Go through a gate into a field and keep to the right. Go through two further gates and continue to a rough road; turn left here, and in maybe three minutes arrive at Broford Farm (3hr10mins, [9]). Your way on is to the right through the farmyard, leaving by a field gate at the back. Cross a small field and go through a gate. Turn left, follow the path across a stream and back around to the left. Go through a blue-marked gate and walk clockwise to the far corner of the field. Head through a gate, then along the left-hand side of this and the next field. After a double pedestrian gate



head slightly to the left, to come to a gate set back into the hedge. Continue across the field here, to another gate just left of a house. Carry on straight ahead, along the edge of fields. When you come to a double pedestrian gate go through and turn left, to arrive on Court Down (3hr40mins, [10]). Head slightly out into the field, at an angle around halfway between the hedge and the trig point. This will bring you to two field gates next to each other; take the left-hand one and continue with the hedge to your right. Cross a field beneath trees, then head down a lane between hedges. Pass Northcombe House a little way to your left, then in three minutes or so turn sharply right to come to a T-junction with a track, signposted as a bridleway (3hr50mins, [11]). Go through the gate and turn left. In eight or ten minutes this track brings you to Dulverton, by the church; turn right to head into the centre and back to the car park or bus stop.

Shorter walks: The walk divides neatly at Winsford, where there is a daily bus in each direction. **Wheddon Cross to Winsford** is ● 5 miles with ascents of 150 metres and descents of 245 metres, and **Winsford to Dulverton** ● 6.5 miles, ascents of 390 metres and descents of 445 metres.

Longer walk: Wheddon Cross – Winsford – Tarr Steps – Dulverton (● 15.5 miles, with ascents of 700m and descents of 850m). Follow the main walk to Winsford. From Winsford follow the outward half of Walk 27 to Tarr Steps, then see Walk 25 or 28A to continue to Dulverton.

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