



Walk 3A. Hunter's Inn, Voley and the upper Heddon valley.

- 5.8 miles, ascents and descents of 415 metres. 2 hours 30 minutes constant walking, allow around 3½ hours.

Terrain: Mainly paths and farm tracks, short sections on fields and roads. Can become very muddy and waterlogged between Trentishoe Manor and Voley.

Access: Park at Hunter's Inn (SS 655 482, EX31 4PY; access on narrow lanes). There is a National Trust car park (£ or free to members), or limited free parking on the road.

Map: Croydecycle 05 Combe Martin and Hunter's Inn or 54 Lynton Lynmouth with Hunter's Inn; OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

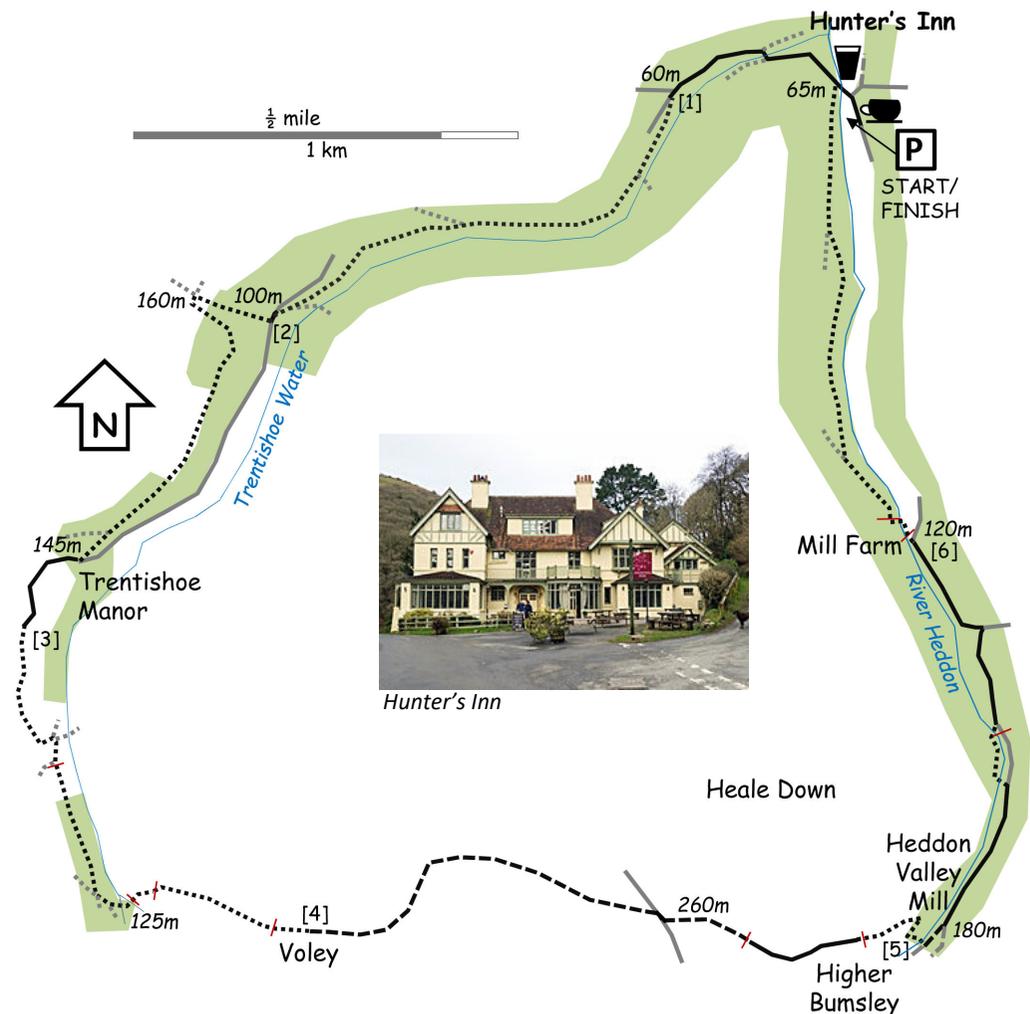
Refreshments: Hunter's Inn, at the inn itself or takeaway refreshments from the National Trust pantry.

Hunter's Inn is an ideal base for exploring the lower reaches of the Heddon Valley and joining the Coast Path, but routes can also be made up heading inland. This walk heads out along the wooded Trentishoe Water valley and on to the southern edge of Heale Down, before returning downstream along the Heddon Valley. It is an ideal walk on a hot day: not too strenuous, and there is plenty of shade. Even when I walked this route on a busy July afternoon, the only other people I encountered were all within sight of Hunter's Inn.

Facing the front of Hunter's Inn, head left and follow the road over two small bridges. Ignore the narrow road on the right to Trentishoe, but directly past it take a wide footpath that bears left into Parsonage Wood (10mins, [1]), following it along Trentishoe Water towards Trentishoe Mill. When the path forks, keep left; a little later, ignore a path from the right. Arriving at a narrow lane, turn left then almost immediately turn right on an ascending foot-path towards Ladies Mile (30mins, [2]; continuing on the lane is an easier but less scenic alternative). After a steep climb come to a crossroads and turn left on Ladies Mile towards Trentishoe Mill (the full length of Ladies Mile is explored in walk 3). This atmospheric path takes you past lichen-clad oaks, with occasional views to the left. A little under 15 minutes later, return to the lane and turn right on to it opposite the entrance to Trentishoe Manor (if you have stayed on the lane just curve around to the right).

The lane ends at an isolated house (Rudd's Cottage; 55mins, [3]). Your way on is upwards on a stony path to the right of the cottage. In about five minutes come to a small bridge, bear left then almost immediately turn right and upwards towards Voley (and) Dean. Half a minute later bear left, either over a stile or through an open gateway. At the next crossing take

the left-hand path downwards towards Voley, then shortly after turn left again and cross two footbridges; it can become very muddy and waterlogged here. Keep right in the field and go through a gate, then head left and join the upper field boundary, turning right to walk along a green lane between two low banks. This soon runs out; continue along the field edge, with views across the valley to your right. At the end of this long field go through a kissing gate next to a field gate, joining a grassy track and coming to Voley Farm (1hr20mins, [4]). Bear left here on to the stony farm drive. This rises gradually, coming after around 15 minutes to a narrow lane. Cross diagonally right and continue along the drive towards Higher Bumsley. Go through a gate and downwards on a tarmac drive; you will be able to see Parracombe church in the distance. The drive comes to a small car park at a farm: continue ahead here on a grassy path. This zigzags down to a stream, the River Heddon (1hr50mins, [5]).



Hunter's Inn

Cross a footbridge then turn left in front of Heddon Valley Mill, a large triple-gabled house. Keep left on the drive and follow it along the river for two or three minutes until you are directed to the left over a footbridge. The path soon crosses back again, next to a high metal gate; continue along the drive until it meets a road. Turn left, keeping to the road until you come to Mill Farm, a white-painted stone house (2hr5mins, [6]). Turn left here on to a footpath. This takes you over the river and above the opposite bank past a National Trust sign. Start to head uphill, then take the right-hand path down rough steps, signposted to Hunter's Inn. Arrive at a road and turn right to cross back over the river to the inn.

The walk can easily be extended to **Heddon's Mouth**, a two-mile return stroll. Detailed instructions are in walk 3, but there are paths either side of the river: to find the one on the western side, follow the road back past the inn over both bridges, then turn right as signposted.