



Walk 44A. Kilve and the north Quantock coast.

- 10.2 miles, ascents and descents of 410 metres. 3 hours 50 minutes constant walking, allow 5-5½ hours.

Terrain: Mainly on paths and tracks, mostly good; two steep, potentially muddy paths near the end.

Access: Start in Kilve. There is a small car park in the village centre (ST 148 429, near TA5 1EA, or a larger one between the tea garden and the beach (ST 145 442, TA5 1EG, £; head towards the coast and pick up the walk at the oil retort). Alternatively park at East Quantoxhead or Lilstock and start the walk from there. Bus 15 from Minehead and Watchet (and by request 23B from Watchet) stops at Kilve early mornings on college days and returns late afternoon.

Map: OS Explorer 140 Quantock Hills and Bridgwater; the western half of the walk (and the alternative walk to Watchet) is on Croydecycle 55 Watchet and Quantock North.

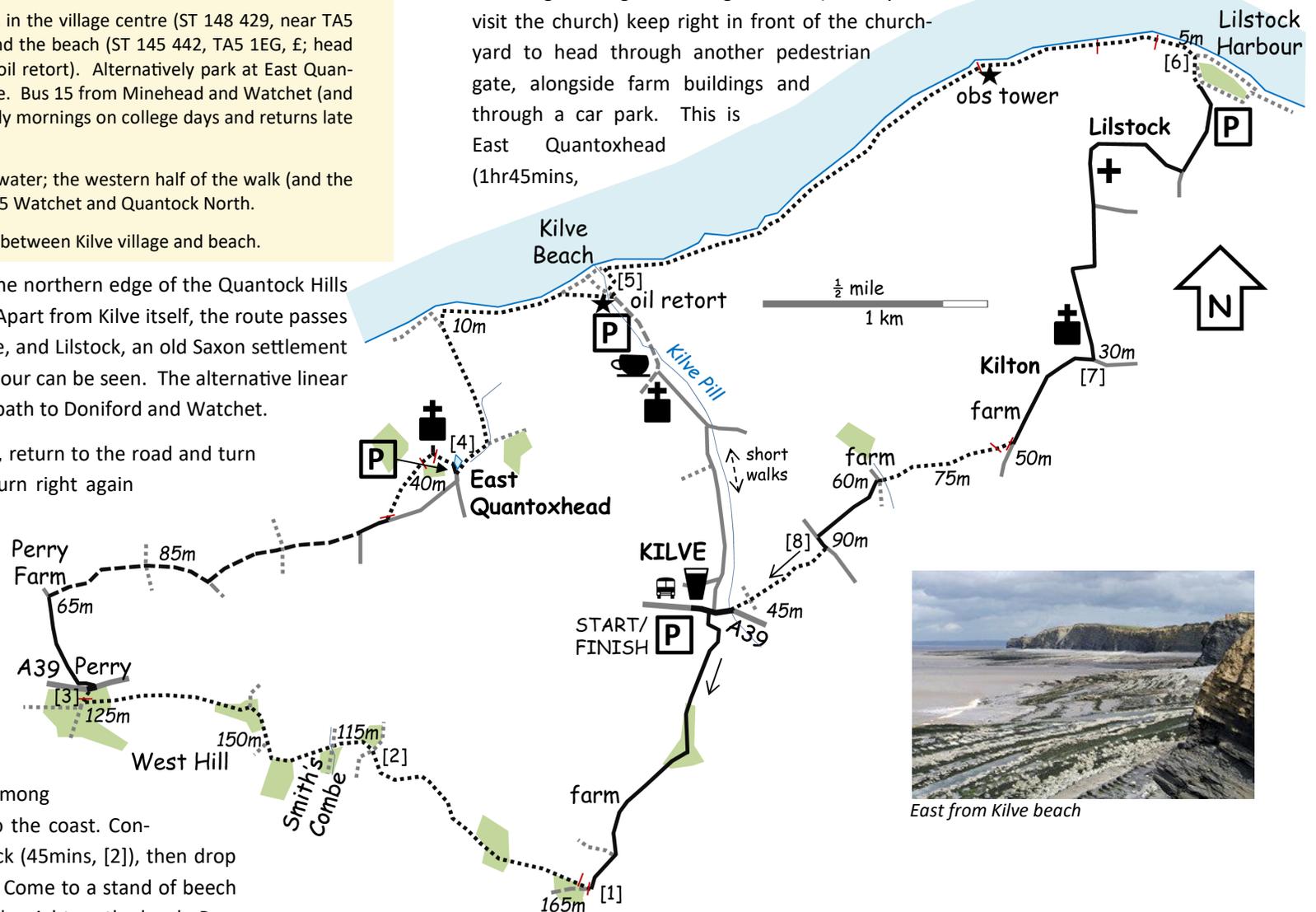
Refreshments: Inn in Kilve; seasonal tea garden between Kilve village and beach.

This walk takes in two contrasting landscapes, the northern edge of the Quantock Hills and the fields and low cliffs of the plain below. Apart from Kilve itself, the route passes through East Quantoxhead, a small estate village, and Lilstock, an old Saxon settlement where the remains of a nineteenth-century harbour can be seen. The alternative linear walk heads west along the new stretch of coast path to Doniford and Watchet.

Starting from the village centre car park in Kilve, return to the road and turn right past the Hood Arms. Just past the inn turn right again into Pardlestone Lane, immediately after the entrance to Kilve Court. Follow the road for nearly a mile; it snakes upwards and ascends steeply at the end. When you can go no further (28mins, [1]), turn right through a field gate on to a restricted byway, then keep right to go through a pedestrian gate on a path signposted to Perry; this path is shared with Walk 44. Keep the fence to your right. You will soon emerge into open moorland, among gorse bushes, with intermittent views across to the coast. Continue ahead at a path junction on top of a hillock (45mins, [2]), then drop down to a stream and cross two plank bridges. Come to a stand of beech and pine trees, then follow the path around to the right on the level. Pass

another stand of pines, continuing along the fence line; ignore a turn to the right and a little later one to the left (Quantock Greenway). When you come to some wooden steps, go down them and turn right through a gate to come to the A39 (1hr10mins, [3]).

Cross over and turn right, then almost immediately left on a no through road. This takes you past two houses; five minutes later, come to Perry Farm and turn right just before the farmhouse, on a stony lane signposted as a footpath. Pass a crossing track, bear slightly right, then at a signposted junction turn left. In about ten minutes, after a crossing path, turn left when you meet a road. A minute later turn left through a gate into a field. Head towards the church, go through another gate, then (unless you want to visit the church) keep right in front of the churchyard to head through another pedestrian gate, alongside farm buildings and through a car park. This is East Quantoxhead (1hr45mins,



East from Kilve beach

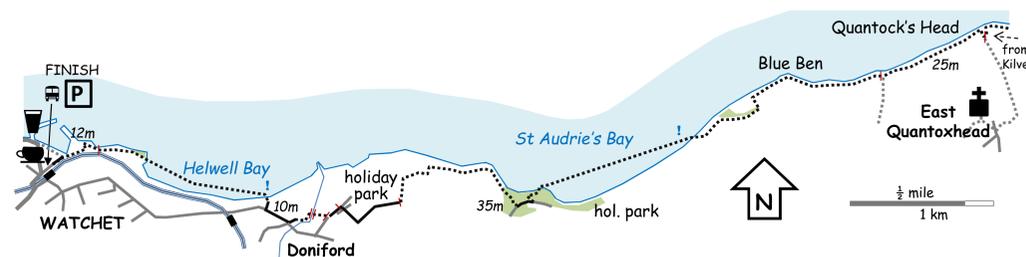
[4]). Leaving the car park, walk behind the pond and join a signposted path towards the beach. Turn left where indicated ('beach'), arriving at the overgrown ruins of a lime kiln. Continue ahead, turn right on to the coast path, then a little over five minutes later take the right-hand fork to come to a small brick tower with a metal chimney (2hr5mins, [5]). This was a retort for distilling oil, part of an unsuccessful venture to exploit the oil content of the local shale beds in the 1920s. Your way on is to the left, just past the retort; a seasonal tea garden is five minutes to the right, beyond the car park, along with the remains of a 14th-century chantry.

From the retort head left, then left again on a path, passing another old lime kiln to come back to the coast path. Turn right here and walk along the gently undulating cliffs for around half an hour. Your next marker is a modern naval observation tower; officially the path passes to its seaward side. Pass a low concrete building, then after two gates and a short section on shingle follow the sign to head right away from the beach (2hr45mins, [6]). Before turning off you might want to continue along the coast for a few minutes; there was a harbour here for most of the nineteenth century, and the remains of the floating harbour, now a dry channel behind the shingle ridge, and harbourside stores, tucked into the cliff and partly hidden by vegetation, can still be seen. The bay is an attractive sweep of shingle backed by low, scrub-topped cliffs. Hinkley Point power station dominates the coast just beyond.

Heading inland, take the right fork to come to the car park. Walk down its access road, then when this comes to a T-junction turn right to walk past Lilstock, an old Saxon settlement which is now made up of three farms. Keep around to the left, noting the tiny church down a narrow lane; this was remodelled from a larger one around 1881 when the parish was merged with Kilve. Ignore a turning on the left, follow the road through bends, pass Kilton church on the right, then bear right at a junction (3hr15mins, [7]) and walk through Kilton itself. Pass Kilton West Farm, start up the hill, then as you come to houses on the left, turn right through a gate into a field at a footpath sign. Head diagonally left and go through another gate. Now keep to the left-hand edge of the field; at an apparent junction continue straight ahead. Join a path heading steeply downwards, splash through a stream and meet a road at a farm. Bear left here and start heading uphill. At a T-junction turn left (3hr40mins, [8]), then in a minute or so turn right on a footpath between hedges. This heads steeply downwards and can be quite muddy. It brings you back to Kilve and the A39 at a former telephone box. Head right alongside the road to go over a footbridge and arrive back at the Hood Arms and car park.

Shorter walks: The walk divides neatly in half using the lane from Kilve down to the beach. For the western circuit (● 6.5 miles, ascents and descents of 310m), follow the main walk to the oil retort ([4]) then turn right and pass the tea garden and church to return to Kilve. For the eastern walk (● 5.7 miles, 170m), start the walk by turning left at the post office in Kilve and following Sea Lane down to the oil retort ([4]). Join the main walk here.

Alternative walk: Kilve to Watchet (● 6.5 miles, ascents of 185m and descents 210m, !). This linear walk follows the recently-opened coast path between Doniford and Kilve beach. Check the tide times before setting off, as there is a short section on the beach which is impassable at high water; aim to arrive there between four hours before and two hours after low water (closer to low water if a strong wind is blowing in from the sea). Take the weekday early morning bus 15 or 23B (or arrange your own transport) from Watchet to Kilve, then turn left at the post office to walk down Sea Lane to the oil retort. Bear left here to join the coast path. Turn briefly left at a small gulley, then right and through a gate to continue on the coast path and ascend Quantock's Head. Continue ahead at the next gate. The path now takes you past Blue Ben, a lower headland. At the opening into the next field follow the sign left to divert around a deep wooded gulley. Soon after returning to the path, you descend to the beach. Make for a waterfall at a small headland, to the right of a clifftop chalet park. As you approach the waterfall, cross lines of rock and ascend two sets of metal steps. Just around the headland take some steps on the left. A short steep climb brings you to the entrance to the chalet park, in front of a large red brick house. Turn right on the road, then at a speed bump turn right on a footpath into a small wood. Fork right at the post, then enter a field. In five minutes or a little over the path turns inland to skirt around another holiday park. When you come to two gates, turn right as signposted on to a service road. Follow it around to the right, cross another road, then turn left out of the gate. In little more than a minute turn right on a footpath. Cross the stream then turn left on a service road and right on the main road. You can follow this into Watchet, but if you have time before the tide turns, before the road bends at a bridge turn right into a parking area (possibly out of use) where there is a large lime kiln. Descend to the beach and turn left to walk towards a low headland. Just as you reach it head upwards on steps: there are over 70. Keep to the clifftop, then go through a gate and continue towards the signalling house. This is Splash Point, a former Victorian pleasure ground with views over the harbour. The path to the left takes you alongside the railway to arrive back at the car park, bus stop and station.



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