



Walk 6. Lynmouth, Foreland Point and Watersmeet.

- 7.7 miles, ascents and descents of 720 metres. 3 hours 30 minutes continuous walking, allow 4½-5 hours.

Terrain: Paths and tracks. ! The route includes several steep, uneven sections and unprotected paths above cliffs and steep hillsides. The most exposed section, the cliff path from Foreland Point, requires surefootedness and a head for heights, and it should only be used in good weather: it can be bypassed using the official coast path. A stick or pair of poles is useful here.

Access: Parking at either end of Lynmouth (SS 724 494, EX35 6ES or SS 719 497, EX35 6HJ, both £; on-street parking is limited to two hours between April and October). Lynmouth can be reached by bus 309/310 from Barnstaple. Bus 300 connects Lynmouth with Minehead in the school summer holidays. The walk can also be started from the Barna Barrow car park off the A39 east of Countisbury.

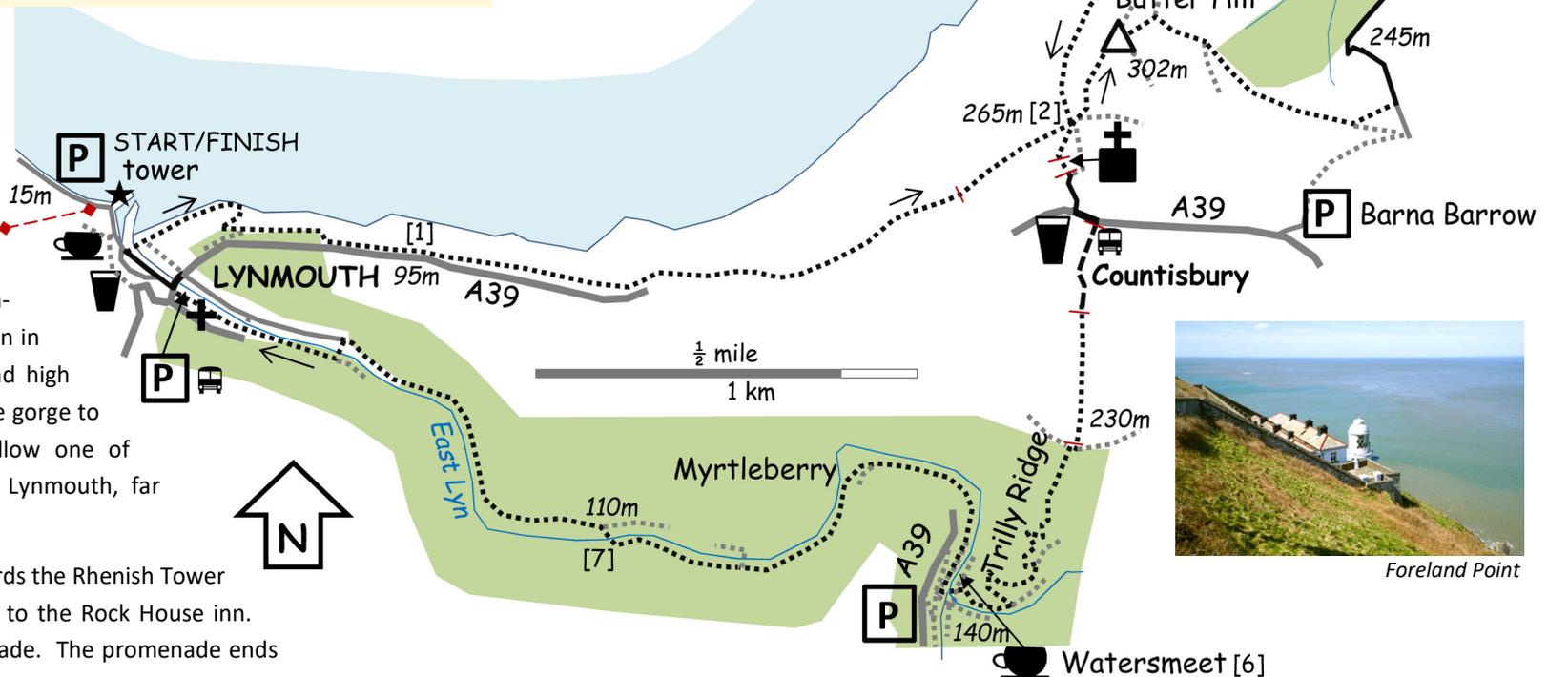
Map: Croydecycle 04 Lynton, Lynmouth & Doone Valley or Coast Path Map 1 Exmoor; OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Several options in Lynmouth, pub at Countisbury, seasonal tea garden at Watersmeet.

THIS IS AN EXCEPTIONAL WALK EVEN BY THE STANDARDS OF THE EXMOOR COAST, particularly if done on a clear, sunny day. The outward stretch provides a constantly changing coastal panorama between Lynton and Foreland Point, followed on the other side of Countisbury Hill by views along the cliffs to Hurlstone Point and beyond. After returning around Foreland Point, Lundy can be seen in good visibility. The route then heads inland high above the East Lyn river, descending into the gorge to come to picturesque Watersmeet and follow one of Devon's best-loved river valleys back into Lynmouth, far below the towering tree-clad hillsides.

Start in Lynmouth. From the A39 head towards the Rhenish Tower on the coast, but cross over the footbridge to the Rock House inn. Walk past a small kiosk and along a promenade. The promenade ends

at a small beach; turn right and walk alongside a stone wall, then left to go up some steps. Turn left at a T-junction. The path zigzags steeply upwards to come to a useful seat before following the A39 for a while. Join the road briefly at a layby, leaving it at the far end (20 minutes from the footbridge, [1]). The path ascends steadily (ignore two paths coming in from the right, and note a small wartime gun emplacement), then levels off and goes through a gate. A short ascent brings you to a junction by a wall. Turn left here. Keep alongside the wall, then after a view over Countisbury to the left bear slightly right on a grassy path to come to a seat ('GJP', 1hr, [2]). Your next way-point is the radio mast, now almost out of sight: the path is to the left, behind the seat. Head up to the radio station and trig point on Butter Hill. Counting anticlockwise, take the second, narrower path off the hilltop. In just over a minute come to a drystone wall with a stone trough in front of it. Turn right and walk alongside



Foreland Point

the wall for a minute or two, then bear slightly right to follow a well-defined path ahead. When the path forks, head left. Arrive at a narrow tarmac road and turn left; it snakes steeply downhill to your destination, the Foreland Point lighthouse. After the third sharp bend, there is a wide oxbow (1hr30mins, [3]). Cross a small bridge, noting the path to the left on its far side. Pass a National Trust bothy, then the road runs out at a turning area where there is a viewpoint (1hr45mins, [4]): the lighthouse is to the left, to the right you have views along the coast to Bossington Hill and Hurlstone Point, and directly ahead across the Bristol Channel is Porthcawl.

Starting to retrace your steps, the cliff path is immediately on the right with a suitable warning notice and 'danger' sign. Don't attempt it in poor weather or if you are uncomfortable with narrow tracks above steep drops, but instead return almost to the bridge and turn right there to follow the official coast path. Otherwise make sure you have nothing that could trip you up or fall out of your pack, and head upwards. The route is straightforward but very narrow and uneven with loose shale at various points, and you will need to concentrate on your footing for best part of half a mile. The two paths come together at a sloping grassy plain (2hr5mins, [5]). Start to head towards the radio mast, then follow the coast path around to the right. You will soon see the top of Countisbury church tower ahead, and arrive back at the GJP seat (2hr25mins, [2]). Head towards the church, go through the churchyard, then down a lane to the main road to the left of the Blue Ball inn. Turn left on the road, then right on the footpath marked to Watersmeet via Trilly Ridge.

The path is initially a small lane. After a gate, it becomes indistinct; head for a large farm in the distance, slightly to the right of the field wall. This will bring you to a wide path that descends through gorse bushes to a gate. Go straight ahead here, following a ridge which takes you into woodland. This is Trilly Ridge, above a wide loop in the East Lyn river. At the end of the ridge the path zigzags downhill: ignore smaller paths to the left. Arriving at a T-junction, turn right and stroll down to Watersmeet House, a former fishing lodge and now a (seasonal) National Trust tea garden and shop (2hr50mins, [6]). There are several ways back to Lynmouth, but the route followed here stays closest to the river. Cross the bridge in front of Watersmeet House, then a second bridge, and turn right to ascend slightly then descend back to the water's edge. The path now continues along the left bank, between fences through the grounds of a house called Myrtleberry, then past a footbridge. The next footbridge (3hr10mins, [7]) gives you no option but to cross over, so carry on with the river now on your left. Just before the path joins a road, cross back over the river on a footbridge and turn right. This will bring you past Middleham Gardens, the only remnants of some houses destroyed in the 1952 flood. Continue along the river bank, through a car park and back into Lynmouth.

Shorter walks: This walk divides into two (unequal) halves, plus a short out-and-back walk from Lynmouth. **(1) Lynmouth, Countisbury and Watersmeet** (●/● 4.7 miles, ascents and descents of 450m): Follow the main walk to the 1hr point ([2], the GJP seat), turning right and picking up the return route via Countisbury church. **(2) Foreland Point** (● 3.3 miles, ascents and descents of 300m): Start from Countisbury, and walk through the churchyard. Join the main walk at the 1hr point as above, and follow it back to Countisbury (same warnings regarding the cliff path as the main walk). **(3) Along the East Lyn** (● 4 miles, ascents and descents of 280m): Follow the path from Lynmouth along the river to Watersmeet. At first keep to the north bank, taking the right fork ('Watersmeet via river bank') when indicated. You must then cross to the south side; follow the path through Myrtleberry and on to Watersmeet. Return the same way, or use the signposted woodland path to Lynmouth on the north bank, which rejoins your outward route at the fork. A more energetic return route is to take the path from Watersmeet up to the A39, arriving at a small parking area for two or three cars; then continue upwards on the path opposite. This ascends steeply to join the final section of Walk 20, above the East Lyn gorge.

Alternative longer walk: Lynmouth and County Gate circular (● 13 miles, ascents and descents of 1150 metres). Follow the main walk to the 1hr30min point ([3]). Now join Walk 7 at its 2hr50min point ([6]), and follow it to its end at County Gate, then return to the start of the Walk 7 instructions to come back to Watersmeet. Rejoin the instructions on the left at the 2hr50min point ([6]) to return to Lynmouth.

Linear walks from County Gate to Lynmouth are described in Walk 7.

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