

Holford, Somerset Coast & Northern Quantocks



Starts at Holford Green car park, Somerset

4 hours 30 minutes | 10.6miles 17.0km | Moderate

ID: 0.1612 | Developed by: Edward Levy | Checked by: David Thompson | www.ramblersroutes.org

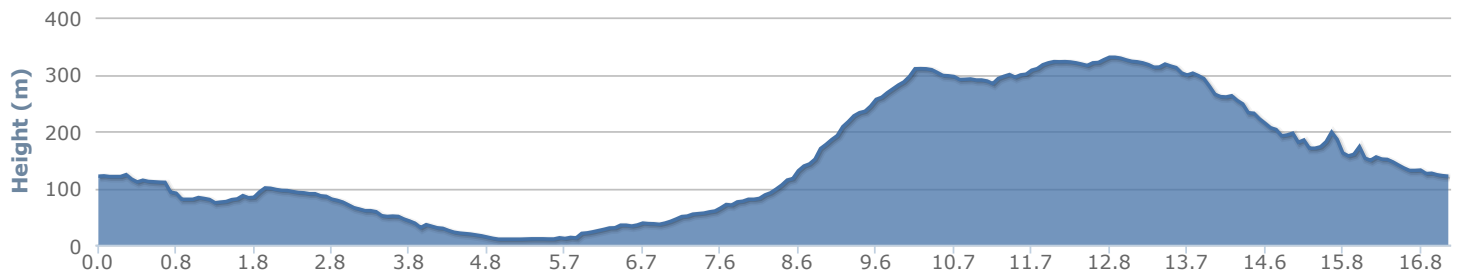
A circular walk from Holford walking down to the coast at Kilve, passing through the village of East Quantoxhead, climbing onto the top of the Quantocks and returning to the start through a beautiful combe.



— Main Route — Alternative Route H Point of Interest 4 Waypoint

Distance: 16.97km Ascent: 483m Descent: 483m

Route Profile



*move mouse over graph to see points on route

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Starts at

Woodland car park in village of Holford opposite Green

Ends at

Woodland car park in village of Holford opposite Green

Getting there

By car: *In the village of Holford on the A39 Bridgwater - Minehead road turn left into road running to the side of the Plough public house. Follow the road past the village church on left and then round sharp left and right hand bends to arrive at Holford Green. The car park is in the woods on the left. There is no parking fee.*

Route instructions

(A) Holford is a lovely picturesque village on the edge of the Quantocks. It is surrounded by beautiful Combes with wonderful names like Butterfly Combe and Ladies Combe, in the middle there is Holford Glen, once the home of a Huguenot silk factory.

[1] Leave car park by crossing Holford Green and exit in the left hand corner into a road. Turn left and follow road, which shortly turns sharp right by dog pound.

(B) The story behind the Dog Pound is quite gruesome: the hounds were housed on the Alfoxton estate and looked after by the huntsman. At this time meat for the hounds was hung in the trees, which attracted many of the local stray dogs and they often unsettled the hounds. One night the huntsman was awoken by the sound of braying dogs and so went to investigate. Unfortunately he did not put on his normal hunting garments and as a result was attacked and killed by his own hounds. To prevent strays causing such an occurrence again the dog pound was built. The ancient dog pound was given to the village of Holford in 1982 by the family of the late John Lancelot Brereton. They were descendants of the St.Albys, owners of Alfoxton Park since the 15th century. Their crest appears on the building. The building is looked after by Holford Parish Council.

Proceed along road for approx.150yds and turn right at finger post. Follow path, which drops steeply down to cross a footbridge and then climbs a steep slope to reach a stile. Cross stile and turn left and follow minor road. After approx. 200 yds turn left through a gate at waymarker and follow path. This leads through a wood (a few paths drop off to the left ignore these and keep to the upper path). On reaching a gate pass through it into a field and continue along path, which runs close to the left hand fence. The path passes through three fields followed by a short stretch of woodland. At end of woodland pass through a gate and cross short grassed strip to pass through another gate. Continue ahead in next field towards corrugated farm sheds. Just before reaching sheds turn right where you will find a wooden gate. Pass through gate and turn right and follow path uphill passing back of sheds and plastic greenhouse tunnels to reach A39.

[2] Turn right onto A39 **this is a busy road proceed with great care**. In a short distance the road becomes bordered by a grassy bank. **It is preferable to get off the road and climb onto the bank and walk along the top**. As the A39 reaches a sharp bend to the right there are 2 roads turning left. Take the first turning (Hill Top Lane). The lane soon reaches some houses and turns sharp left. At this point a footpath goes straight ahead (there is no waymarker but the path runs down the side of a house named: "Crossways" passing the left hand side of it's garage to a stile). Cross the stile into a field and bear slightly right to reach a stile in the opposite hedge. Cross the stile and pass through a copse to reach and cross a stile exiting into a lane. Go ahead in lane and pass into Higher Hill Farm. There is a stile ahead in a fence. Cross the stile and then

cross a small field to the gate ahead. Pass through gate and follow the path. Initially the path is confined to a track between fences passing two fields on left. At the end of grassy track pass through gate into a field and cross the field passing some young trees on the right and then alongside the right hand hedge. Keep the hedge on the right and continue to right hand corner of field where you will find a stile hidden in the corner. Cross the stile and go ahead past the front of Lower Hill Farm to a gate ahead. Pass through the gate and follow track along edge of field (confined between a fence and hedge). Continue onwards to a stile which cross into a field and follow path alongside woodland on right.

[3] At end of field pass through metal gate and turn left to follow a track for a short distance to a “T” junction with a minor road. Turn right and follow the road downhill crossing a stream and then the village duck pond on left to reach a “T” junction. Turn right and walk ahead to pass Kilve Church and the Chantry (ruin) on your left. The entrance to the Chantry Tea Gardens is at the rear of the Chantry ruin.

(C) The Church of St Mary dates back to the 14th century. In the vestry is one remaining and very beautiful carved arch of the ancient screen. The tower has very recently had a considerable amount of restorative work done on it, and it is now rendered and painted a shade of off-white, as the whole church was until the early years of the 20th century.

Behind the church is the ruin of the chantry. The Chantry was founded in 1329, when a brotherhood of five monks was employed to say Mass for their founder, Simon de Furneaux. The Roll of Incumbents shows that several successive chantry priests were incumbents of Kilve parish. The chantry seems to have fallen into a ruin long before the dissolution of the monasteries, and for centuries it served as a barn for the adjacent farm. The farm serves food and drinks in its garden by the ruins. It is a pleasant place to stop on a sunny day.

The road terminates at Kilve Beach car park where there are public toilets.

(D) At the far end of the car park are the remains of a brick retort, built in the nineteen twenties, when it was discovered that the shale found in the cliffs was rich in oil. Thankfully the scheme was abandoned before the whole area could be laid waste.

From car park bear left to cross a bridge over a stream and follow path uphill with Kilve Beach on the right.

(E) Kilve beach is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a favourite haunt of geologists with its spectacular rock formations and fossils, including ammonites and reptile remains.

Continue to a gate. Pass through gate and follow path along cliff edge with seaward views ahead towards North Hill Minehead, Exmoor and Dunkery Beacon beyond.. Turn left where the path heads inland. Proceed ahead through a gate passing a stone seat on left and woodland garden on right. At junction with path ahead turn right along a stony track going uphill.

[4] The track reaches a “T” junction in East Quantoxhead with village pond on right.

(F) The pond is known as the duck pond but is the mill pond of the mill at it's rear. The pond recently sprang a leak and became a muddy patch. However it is such a well loved feature it did not take long before complete restoration took place. The pond with the thatched mill cottage behind now looks better than it has done for many a year.

Turn right and almost immediately left to cross a car park diagonally to the follow a tarmac path which leads to the village church.

(G) This small village seems caught in a time capsule, it lies just off the Main A39 and on the edge of the

Bristol channel. The village centre has a feeling of great tranquility with it's exquisite manor house, thatched cottages & medieval barns..

The village has been one of the homes of the Lutterell Family, for over seven and a half centuries. Their house, known as The Court House, looks very austere with square headed, lead lined, stone mullioned windows. The style shows typical features of Elizabethan architecture together with a fine example of a Jacobean staircase. It is not open to the public but a couple of times a year the beautiful gardens can be visited. Sir Hugh Lutterell started the building of the present Court House, he died in 1522 and is buried in the small church next to the house. The family has lived in the area since the time of the Domesday survey.

The small church of St Mary's nestles close to the manor house wall, very peaceful and very rich in fantastic woodcarvings. The small church has a close association with the Luttrell family and ,inside, there is the 16th century tomb of Sir Hugh Lutterell. The first recorded Rector of the parish in 1328 was an Andreas Loterel. Another member of the family was rector for over 70years in the 19th century, (Rev. Alexander Fownes Luttrell).

The church was built in its present position because of the risk of flooding in early times. It is built of locally quarried grey lias and granite. Internal restoration has stripped off the internal plaster so that the stone-work is visible. The plain western and chancel arches date from early 13th century. The wooden pulpit dates from 1633 and has extremely fine carved panels. The building is well looked after but, like most buildings of this age, restoration work is urgently required to repair some of the mistakes of earlier restoration. There is a beautiful peaceful atmosphere within the church, a place to stop and contemplate.

Turn left by the church entrance and cross to a gate ahead. Pass through the gate and immediately cross a stream on edge of the field. Go straight ahead across the field to a gate in the opposite hedge. Pass through the gate into a lane and turn right. Follow the lane a short distance and where it turns sharp left go straight ahead up a track. Follow track uphill. At top of the hill a path crosses from fields either side and a path goes onward downhill. Turn into the lefthand field and follow the path around the edge keeping the hedge on left. On reaching a kissing gate pass through it and **cross main A39 carefully** to pass through another kissing gate on the opposite side. The path then runs initially between a fence and a hedge before exiting into a lane. On reaching the lane turn left and go uphill past a thatched cottage. The lane terminates as it enters the final house. Follow the driveway through the garden of the house to the parking area. Turn right from the parking area to follow the path uphill to gate opening onto the hillside.

[5] Pass through the gate and turn left to follow a path alongside boundary fence on left towards a stand of pine trees. After approx. 200yds bear right at a finger post indicating a bridleway. Follow the bridleway diagonally to the right uphill. At the point where a path goes steeply up to the right bear slightly left to follow the path alongside trees on left. As you progress upwards a combe appears on your left. Follow the path up hill keeping the combe on your left. On nearing the top the path bears left and levels. In a short distance the path coming up from the combe crosses in front. Turn right onto this path and proceed uphill. Cross another path and walk towards a finger post ahead. At the finger post bear left and follow the path to the top of Bicknoiller Beacon.

(H) Bicknoller Beacon is a good viewpoint with views up and down the Bristol Channel and across to South Wales. The Quantock Hills were England's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty being designated in 1956 and consists of large amounts of heathland, oak woodlands, ancient parklands and agricultural land.

[6] Bear left at the beacon cairn to follow the path running across the top of the hill. Go straight ahead at

point where a path crosses diagonally from right and continue onwards to cross another path also crossing diagonally from right. After approx. 20yds turn right down a broad track. Follow the track downhill where it soon converges with a major track coming in from the right. In a short distance pass Bicknoller Post on left and then continue to follow the broad track across the top of the hills for approx. 1½ miles to Halsway Post.

[7] At Halsway Post follow the main track bearing round to the left with heather banks on either side. At point where heather bank cease on the left turn left across a grassy bank and follow the path descending into a combe. Follow the path over the open hillside and then into woods.

(I) The trees in the woods are mainly oaks. The Quantocks are the home of red deer. They are frequently seen in the woods and on the open hilltops. You may be lucky and see some especially if they are downwind from you.

In the woods the path descends more steeply making a sharp right hand turn. The path then descends with a stream on the left. Continue on the path until reaching a junction with another path coming up steeply from the left. Turn left onto this path and ford stream ahead. Continue ahead and shortly after another path joins from the left ford another stream. At the point where the path approaches a major stream bear right up a bank to then follow the path alongside the stream. This path soon turns into a major track which runs back to Holford Green.

Acknowledgements

Developed by: *Edward Levy*

Checked by: *David Thompson*

Holford Historical Society, Quantock Online, Visit Somerset, Wikipedia.



Holford Dog Pound
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



Kilve Oil Retort
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



Kilve Beach
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



Seaward View Towards Minehead From Kilve
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



East Quantoxhead Duckpond
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



East Quantoxhead Church
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



View
From
Bicknoller
Beacon
Photo taken
by: Edward
Levy



Bicknoller Post
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



Halsway Post (Route Takes Left Fork)
Photo taken by: Edward Levy

