

North Hill Minehead

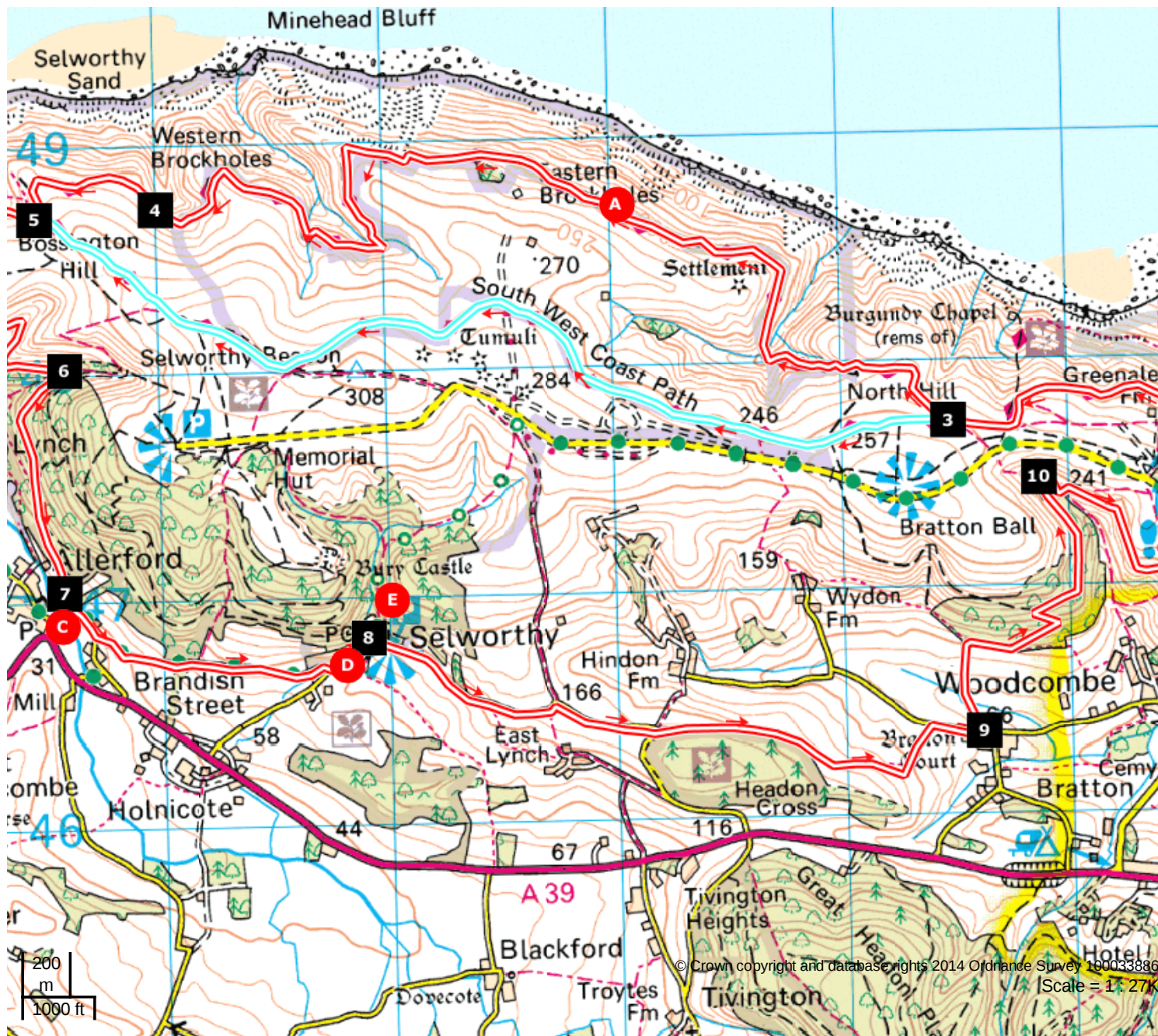
Starts at Blenheim Road, Minehead. TA24 5QB

6 hours 0 minutes | 14.3miles 23.0km | Moderate



ID: 0.3186 | Developed by: Edward Levy | Checked by: David Thompson | www.ramblersroutes.org

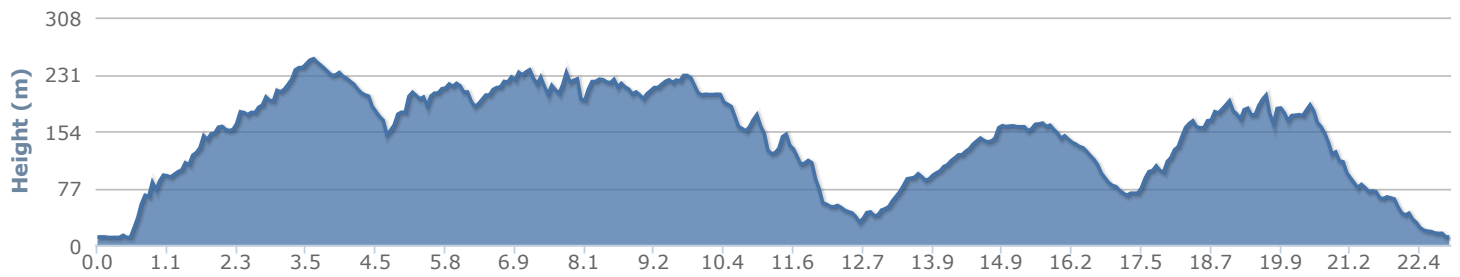
A circular walk following the South West Coast Path from Minehead up onto North Hill, then circumnavigating the hill before returning to Minehead.



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

Distance: 22.90km Ascent: 1048m Descent: 1048m

Route Profile



*move mouse over graph to see points on route

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Starts at

Junction of Blenheim and North Roads Minehead TA24 5QB. Grid Reference: SS 971 466

Ends at

As start

Getting there

By car: Minehead is on the A39 running between Bridgwater and Barnstaple. There is free parking in both Blenheim and North Roads.

By public transport: The town is served by frequent buses from Taunton. There is a steam railway service from Bishops Lydeard (on A358 from Taunton). Bus and rail timetables: <http://www.travelinesw.com>.

Route instructions

North Hill rises up from the western side of Minehead and extends almost 5 miles towards Porlock. Most of the hill is within the Exmoor National Park and the scenery throughout the walk is typical of Exmoor with bracken and heather clad hillsides and deep tree clad combs. This route initially follows the South West Coast Path, but once on the top of North Hill leaves the National Trail to follow the rugged and exposed alternative coast path, along the north side of the hill. A high contouring path is used on the western side of the hill before dropping in on the villages of Allerford and Selworthy. The return follows the lower slopes of the south side of the hill before climbing up over the eastern shoulder and descending back into Minehead, passing the old church and thatched cottages on the way down into the town.

For much of the way the route runs close to the top of the hill progressively giving extensive views across the Bristol Channel to South Wales, over Porlock Bay and the Exmoor Coast to Foreland Point near Lynmouth, across Porlock Vale and up to the heights of Exmoor culminating with Dunkery Beacon at 1,705 feet.

[1] Walk down Blenheim Road the short distance to the sea front, cross the road onto the promenade, turn left and continue to the metal sculpture depicting the start of the South West Coast Path.

[2] Turn left from the sculpture and cross the road and commence to ascend the steps of the path going uphill. Turn first right and ascend stone steps and tarmac path climbing up and across the hillside. Where path reaches a road turn right onto the road and follow it through woodlands. Where the surfaced road ceases continue in the same direction on the wide stony track (Waymarked Greenleigh Farm). Pass through a gate and continue to follow the track now Waymarked with the National Trail acorn symbol. Continue past another waymark with Greenleigh Farm but carry on up the left hand track, not down to the farm. The path continues uphill through woodland before emerging onto open hillside overlooking the Bristol Channel on top of the hill. At the point where small posts cross the path turn left immediately after them. A short distance ahead at cross paths turn right.

[3] Turn next right (Waymarked Alternative Rugged Coast Path) and follow path for the next 3 miles. The path runs high above the sea with some steep climbs and descents on the way. No paths join or leave on this section so the route is easy to follow.

(A) Take in the extensive views across the Bristol Channel to South Wales all the way along the path.

If you do not wish to tackle the rugged coastal path continue ahead following the South West Coast Path

which meets the route at Waypoint [5].

[4] At junction with wide path bear right onto it (now Waymarked Bossington Hill and Hurlestone Point) The path initially continues high above the sea and then turns left inland. Ahead to the right you will see a point where a number of paths meet. Continue towards them and turn first right to reach the point where they meet.

[5] From paths meeting point follow the downhill path for a short distance and then immediately bear left to follow path contouring around hilltop (Waymarked Lynch Combe).

(B) As the path rounds the top of the hill wide views open up. Directly below is the village of Bossington with Porlock and the heights of Exmoor rising beyond. Porlock Bay lies slightly to the right ending at Porlock Weir with views continuing along the high coastline down to Foreland Point above Lynmouth.

After crossing the front of Bossington Hill the path descends into a combe and then continues its descent into woodland .

[6] At junction with a path running downhill turn right and then almost immediately left through a gate. (Waymarked St Agnes Fountain). On reaching wooden seat at St Agnes Fountain cross a path and continue downhill in the same direction (Waymarked Allerford). The path soon leaves the woodland and then crosses a field to exit through a gate into a road.

[7] Turn right and follow road down across Allerford pack horse bridge. Turn left to view the bridge and old stone cottage behind it.

(C) Allerford packhorse bridge: Allerford's main claim to fame is the picturesque 15th pack horse bridge which spans the Aller Brook. This Grade II listed structure is supported on two segmented arches and has a width of just 4 feet.

After viewing bridge recross it and follow road uphill. After passing an old thatched cottage on left go straight ahead into bridleway and follow it to junction with the road in Selworthy. Turn left and follow road uphill. Just after passing public toilets turn left through a gate entering Selworthy Green. Follow the tarmac path passing a thatched cottage on left. At path junction just after passing cottage turn left and follow the path uphill bearing right at top to pass National Trust shop on left.

(D) Selworthy Green, with its rough circle of thatched cottages around a central green, is one of the tourist highlights of Exmoor. What is not perhaps clear is that it has not grown up haphazardly over the years, but could be described as an early form of "sheltered accommodation". It was built in a deliberately old-fashioned style in 1828 by Sir Thomas Acland, then owner of the huge Holnicote estate to provide housing for retired or infirm workers from his employment.

[8] Exit Selworthy Green through the gate by the memorial cross and cross road and walk ahead on road passing church on left.

(E) The Church of All Saints which sits on a hillside above Selworthy, is a whitewashed 15th-century Church, with a 14th-century tower. It has been designated by English Heritage as a Grade I listed building. The pulpit includes a 17th-century hourglass and the iron-bound parish chest dates from the same time. Within the church is a copy of the Chained Book of 1609 by Bishop John Jewel, entitled Defense of the Apologie of the Church of England. In the churchyard is a medieval cross with three octagonal steps, a square socket, and an octagonal shaft. The head is missing The churchyard provides views across the valley to Dunkery Beacon.

Follow the road uphill and continue along it until the point where it turns sharp right to round the edge of a

wood on the left. On this corner you will find a gate entering a path running alongside the wood. Take this path (Waymarked Bratton). Follow the path alongside the woodland and then into a field where follow the left hand hedge. Watch for a gate on the left and pass through it and follow right hand hedge to the gate in the corner. Pass through gate and turn right into a lane. Follow this lane downhill until reaching farm buildings on the right.

[9] Turn left to follow a stony track (Waymarked Woodcombe) initially downhill and then uphill to a gate leading into woodland. Pass through gate and turn right and follow path running along edge of wood. At Waymarker post on left (North Hill) turn left to follow path going uphill into woods. This path ascends by way of 2 hairpin bends. After rounding the second bend follow the path uphill to reach a stile. Cross the stile and go ahead to a junction with a wide path. Turn left (Waymarked North Hill) and follow path uphill.

[10] Where a path joins from the right turn right (Waymarked Woodcombe). Go downhill and then in approximately 150 yards turn left and in a short distance turn right onto a path contouring round the hill. Follow this path to the junction with a wide track just after passing a fenced reservoir on right. Go ahead on the track to "T" junction with road. Turn left and walk uphill past entrance to campsite on the right.

[11] Just after passing campsite entrance turn right onto a footpath (Waymarked Moor Wood). At junction with path by high wire fence turn left and then first right into a stony track going downhill. At junction with road turn left and follow road to Minehead Church on left.

(F) Minehead Church and Church Steps: St Michael's church stands high above the town. Illuminated at night, it still guides people home - as it did mariners in centuries past. It is a 14th century building with a 15th century tower and boasts a fine rood screen and a ten-bell peal. The building is open daily, from early morning to dusk. All visitors are welcome.

On the right hand side of the road opposite the church is Church Steps. This was the old way to the church climbing a steep path between thatched cottages.

Follow road on from church through a narrow section. Bear left to follow major road downhill passing round a hairpin bend by the War Memorial and on down to "T" junction with Blenheim Road. Turn left and walk along Blenheim Road to return to the starting point.

Additional 'Point of Interest' information

Notes

Map: Explorer OL9

Terrain: North Hill rises high behind Minehead and is typical of Exmoor with deep combs and high moorland. The route undulates around the hill with some big climbs and descents along the way. The walk is towards the upper end of the moderate grading.

North Hill Campsite: <http://www.campingandcaravanclub.co.uk/minehead>

Refreshments: There is a National Trust cafe housed in a thatched cottage on Selworthy Green. This is a pleasant place to stop during the walk. There are a plentiful supply of public houses, restaurants and cafes in Minehead.

Acknowledgements

Developed by: *Edward Levy*

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With thanks to Esme and Brian Gilling who developed part of this route for a Sedgemoor Ramblers Sunday walk.



Grexy Combe on Alternative
Rugged Coast Path
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



High Above the Bristol Channel
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



Porlock Bay from Bossington Hill
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



Allerford Packhorse Bridge
Photo taken by: Edward Levy



Thatched Rooftops Selworthy Green
Photo taken by: Edwar



Church Steps Minehead

Photo taken by: Edward Levy

