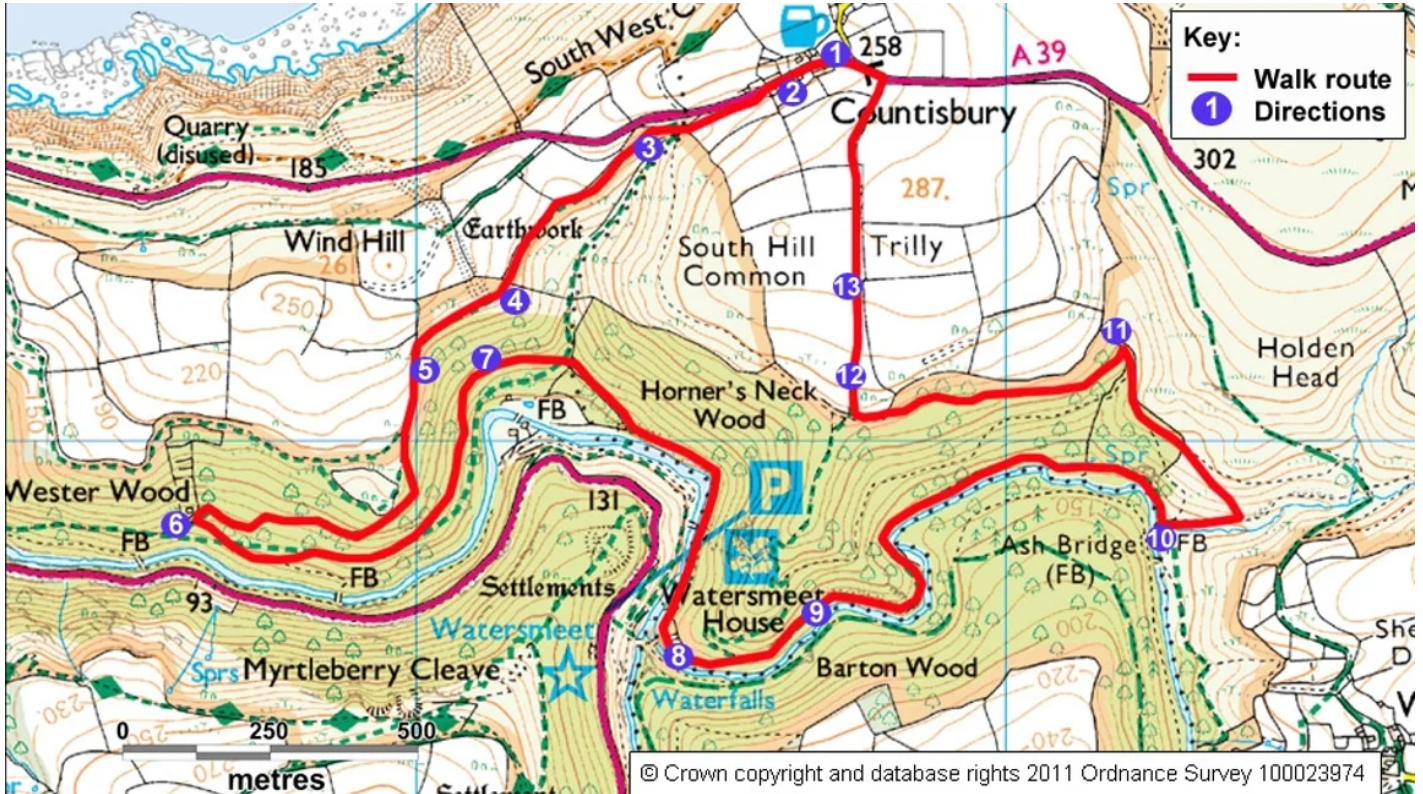


DEVON

Horner's Neck Wood extended walk

An interesting walk that crosses a variety of landscapes, including the rare opportunity to walk along the bottom of a deep Devoncombe without having to wade through a river. The route also goes through a large sessile oak woodland noted for its beauty, traverses an ancient linhay and passes alongside one of the most important Iron Age forts in Devon. It is rich in wildlife with the possibility of seeing deer and otters.



Information

Address: Countisbury, North Devon, EX35 6NE

OS map: Landranger 180

Activity: Walking

Challenging: A challenging walk over uneven ground, with several steep sections. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Dogs welcome; please keep on lead if there is livestock in surrounding fields. No litter bins along the trail so please take back with you.

Full trail: Miles: 4 (km: 6.4)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 2 hours 30 mins - 3 hours

Terrain

This circular walk follows footpaths, grassy tracks, uneven stony paths and steps across hilly terrain. There are some steep inclines.

Total steps: 13

Start point: National Trust car park at Countisbury, grid ref: SS747496

1. Walk out of the National Trust car park at Countisbury to the main road and turn right. Please be aware of traffic as this is a public road. Walk down the hill in the direction of Lynmouth, with the inn on your left and a row of cottages to your right.
2. Cross the road at the end of the row of cottages and take the signposted National Trust Centenary Path. Follow this to the right, signposted 'Lynmouth Watersmeet', through the metal gate and across a field to a wooden gate. Go through the gate and walk a few paces down to the fingerpost that signs 'Footpath Lynmouth 2 miles', 'Winstons Footpath Watersmeet' and 'Countisbury Off Road Path.' Turn right here towards Lynmouth, along the path that skirts around the small dam supported by the dry-stone ditch. From here, there's a panoramic view down Chiselcombe to your left.
3. Approximately 90yd (80m) along you'll come to another fingerpost signed 'Countisbury' to the right and 'Lynmouth' to the left. Take the grassy path to your left that skirts high along the north-west side of Chiselcombe.
4. Go through the wooden gate and continue along the path. To your left is a large area of sessile oaks called Westerwood that stretches along this side of the valley all the way to the outskirts of Lynmouth. As the woodlands open out you can, for a short while, look up to your right towards the base of the Iron Age fort of Wind Hill.
5. At the next fingerpost, take the fork to the left, signposted 'Lynmouth 1/4 via Arnold's Linhay', and follow this path as it winds its way down the side of the valley to the river.
6. As you walk through the wood look for a fingerpost on your right - it's where the path you are walking on reaches a T-junction, but it's easy to miss. At this fingerpost turn sharp left off Arnold's Linhay, which continues on to Lynmouth, and take the path

signposted 'Watersmeet-Rockford'. You're now walking upstream with the East Lyn River on your right.

7. Where the path forks there's a fingerpost signed 'Watersmeet Riverside Walk' to the right and 'Watersmeet Woodland Walk' to the left. Turn left and follow the path as it meanders its way along the side of the valley through the woodland to Watersmeet House.
8. Before continuing your walk up the East Lyn Valley, cross the two wooden bridges to the right of the house and take a look at the waterfalls at the confluence of the East Lyn River and Hoar Oak Water. Return across the bridges to the house and turn right to follow the path up the East Lyn River, past the house on your left and keeping the river on your right. Follow the path signed 'Public Footpath and Fisherman's Path Rockford and Brendon'.
9. Stay on the path to another fingerpost, then follow the sign to Brendon. The path climbs a little way up the side of the valley before coming back down to the water's edge where you enter Barton Woods. Follow the path by the side of the river, still to your right, until you can see Ash Bridge – a footbridge over the river – ahead of you.
10. Do not go as far as the footbridge. About 33yd (30m) before the bridge, take the path up to the left signposted Countisbury. Follow the path uphill, with a small brook to your right, until you come to a signpost. Don't turn right through the gate, but instead go to the left up the steep steps through Horner's Neck Wood. Follow the path as it goes uphill and then undulates through the woodland, stopping a while at the bench where the view opens out to your left there's a wonderful view down the East Lyn Valley and across to the grassy swathe of Wind Hill Fort.
11. Stay on this path until you reach a T-junction; there's a gate to your right that is overgrown. This is another good spot to look for deer. Turn left here and follow the path through the opening in the dry-stone wall. Follow the path through the woods until you come to a fingerpost in a clearing. Turn right here through the gate signed 'Countisbury 1/2 mile'.
12. Follow the wide grassy path through the gorse, up onto Trilly Ridge. Go into the field and walk to the waymarker ahead of you.
13. Turn back round and carry on walking across the field to the top right corner to a signpost showing 'Countisbury'. On a clear day there are far-reaching views cross the Bristol Channel to Wales. Go through the field gate and walk straight along the grassy track back towards Countisbury, through a couple more gates until you reach the main road. Please be careful here and watch out for traffic. Turn left and walk a short distance back to the car park.

End point: National Trust car park at Countisbury, grid ref: SS747496
