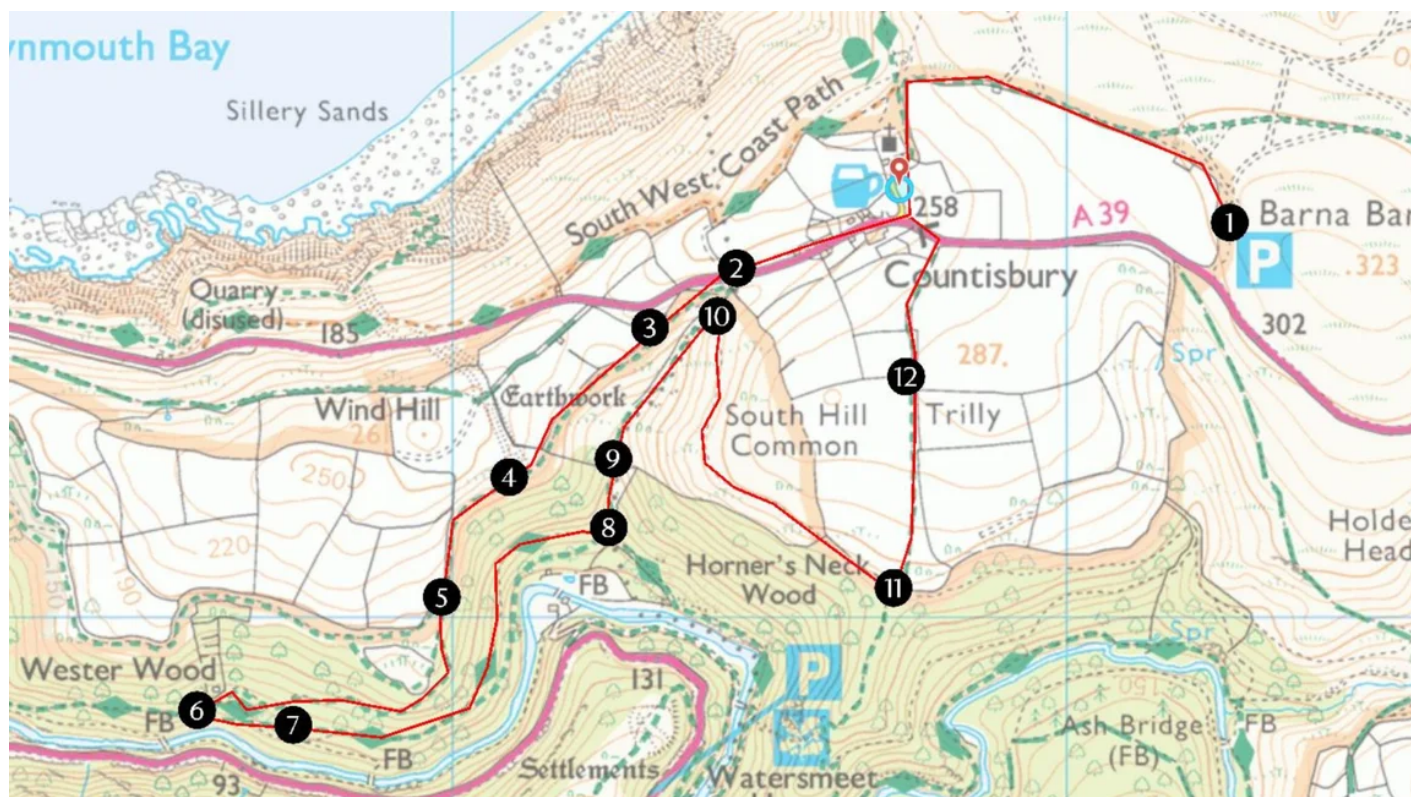


DEVON

Countisbury to Arnold's Linhay circular walk

This interesting walk 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.



Information

Address: Barna Barrow, Countisbury, North Devon
EX35 6NE

OS map: Landranger 180

Activity: Walking

Moderate: Hilly route over rough terrain, with one short steep section. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Dogs welcome

Full trail: Miles: 4.8 (km: 7.68)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 1 hour 50 mins

Terrain

This circular walk follows footpaths and grassy tracks across hilly terrain. There are some long inclines but only one short section is steep. Parts of this walk may be muddy and slippery in the wet so please ensure you wear suitable footwear for this walk. 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. Thank you.

Total steps: 10

Start point: National Trust car park at Barna Barrow, grid ref: SS744497

1. Walk up through Barna Barrow Car Park towards the Bristol Channel. At the top of the car park turn left and follow the grassy path to the right of a wall. When the paths fork take the left-hand route until you reach the finger post. From here you can enjoy extensive views across to Lynton and Lynmouth. Look across to Countisbury Church and aim for the pedestrian gate which is at the right-hand side of the churchyard wall. Go through the gate and through the churchyard. Follow the lane through Countisbury down to the road and into the car park of The Blue Ball Inn. Turn right out of the car park and cross the road where it is safe to do so.
2. Next to the Exmoor Bunkhouse take the path to the right, signposted 'Lynmouth Watersmeet' through the metal gate. Follow the path across the field to the wooden gate. Go through the gate and walk a little way down to the finger post that reads 'Public Footpath Lynmouth 2'. Turn right here, towards Lynmouth, along the path that skirts around the small dew pond supported by a dry-stone wall. From here, there is a panoramic view down Chiselcombe to your left. On the far side of the pond the path forks. Take the left-hand path.
3. Approximately 90 yd (80m) along, you'll come to another finger post on your right signed 'Countisbury/Arnold's Linhay' and 'Lynmouth' to the left. Take the grassy path to your left that skirts high along the north-west side of Chiselcombe. As you walk look over to your left to the sweeping views across the East Lyn Valley and over to the grassy swathe of another Iron Age earthworks, Myrtleberry North. You can also see a wide variety of fungi here - on trees, in the grass and on the stems of the gorse. Please do not touch or pick any as many species are poisonous.
4. Go through the wooden gate. 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. The trunks and boughs of many of the trees are covered in lichen and moss, testament to the fact that Devon has some of the cleanest air in the British Isles. Take a close look at the dry stone wall to your right as you walk along - home to a wide variety

of small plants, providing an important habitat for insects. 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 1/4 miles via Arnold's Linhay', and follow this path as it winds its way down the side of the valley to the river. Keep a keen eye out for wildlife in the woods; if you're very fortunate you may see roe deer, easily identified by their white tails. This wood is also a haven for birdlife, and even in winter you'll hear birdsong competing with the rush of the East Lyn River as it makes its way to the sea. In the autumn and winter, when they are stripped of foliage, you can see the wonderful shapes made by the oaks in Westerwood as their boughs have twisted and curled in their search for light.
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 you turn sharp left off Arnold's Linhay, which continues on to Lynmouth, and take the path signposted 'Footpath Watersmeet 1'. You're now walking upstream with the East Lyn river on your right.
7. Where the path forks there's a fingerpost signed 'Footpath Watersmeet 1 Riverside Walk' to the right and 'Footpath Watersmeet 1 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.
8. At the next 3-finger signpost, that has Chiselcombe written on its vertical post, turn left, signed 'Footpath Countisbury 1/2 mile.' (If you like, you can follow the path straight on at this point, signed 'Watersmeet 1/2 mile', and have one of our cream teas in the tea-garden - please check the website for opening times. You can then retrace your steps to this point and carry on with your walk).
9. After a short climb, go through the wooden gate and stay on the grassy trail as it winds its way up the bottom of this steep-sided valley called Chiselcombe. During the last Ice Age the summer thawing of the top layer of permafrost resulted in a slow flow of loose rock and soil downslope, clearly visible as the large areas of scree on both sides of the path.
10. At the head of the valley, you'll return to the fingerpost mentioned in point 2 of this walk. From here you can retrace your steps back to the car park at Barna Barrow. Please be careful when crossing the main road.

End point: National Trust car park at Barna Barrow. Grid ref: SS744497
