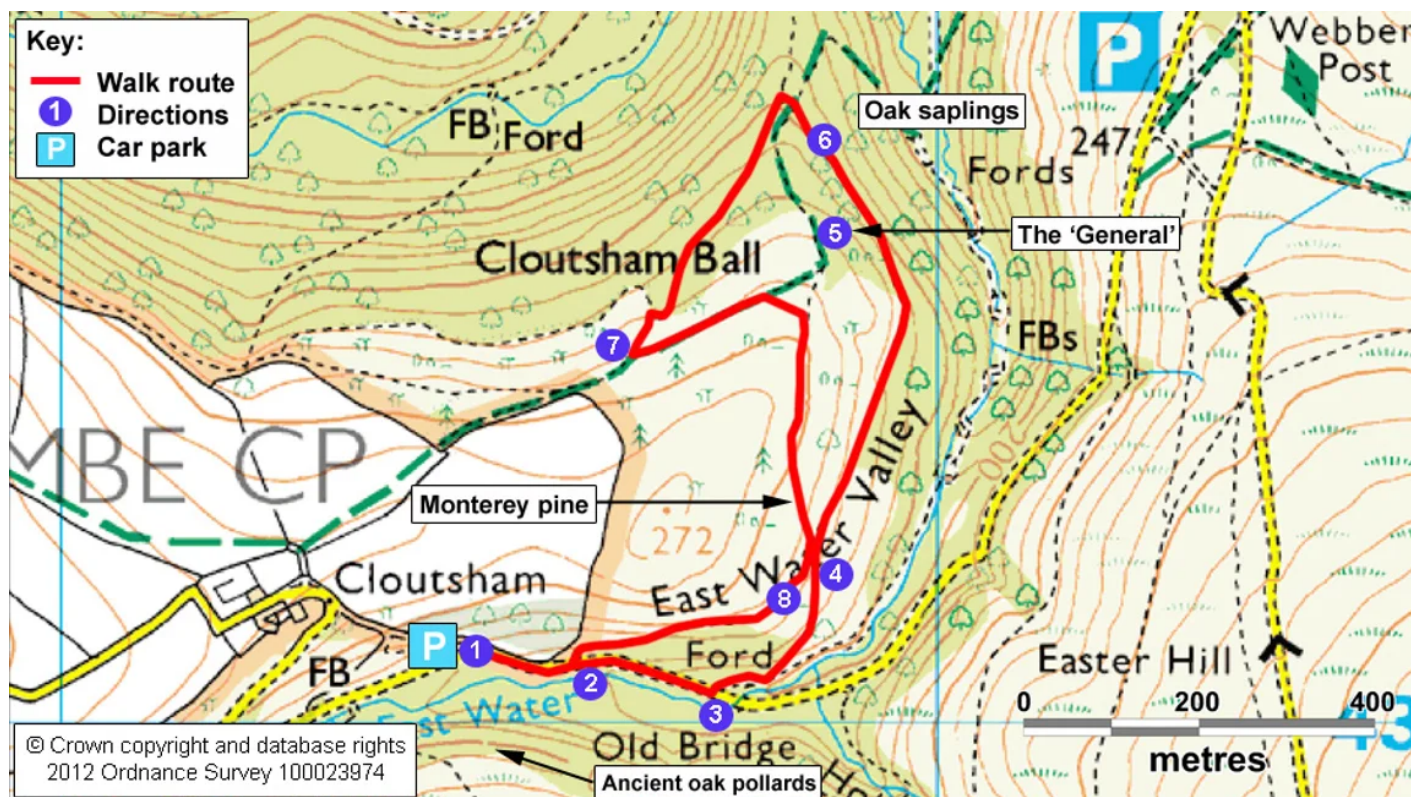


SOMERSET

Horner Wood ancient trees walk

Explore this extensive ancient wood pasture on a 2-mile walk where you will see ancient oak pollards, an impressive oak tree over 500 years old. Look out for a wide variety of wildlife that make their home amongst these magnificent trees including deer and stags.



Information

Address: Holnicote Estate, Horner, Minehead,
Somerset, TA24 8JU (nearest post code).

OS map: Landranger 181, Explorer OL9

Activity: Walking

Easy

Dog friendly: Dogs welcome under close control.

Full trail: Miles: 2 (km: 3.2)

Duration: 1 hour

Terrain

Some steep sections at the start, otherwise easy walking on good paths. Walking boots advised.

Total steps: 8

Start point: Aller Combe meadow parking area, grid ref: SS895431

1. Begin the walk at the parking area at Aller Combe meadow. This is a popular picnic spot on the East Water. As you leave the meadow, take a closer look at rare lungwort lichen on an ash tree opposite the parking space.
2. Turn right, following the road for 50m downstream. The muddy hollows on the right are deer wallows, where the stags come in the early morning to attend to their personal appearance. Continue down the road for another 200m, passing another deer wallow. On the left, in the woods, are ancient oak pollards. Up among a jumble of rocks on the left is another magnificent oak pollard.
3. Turn left off the road at a wooden barrier. Follow the track, then take a left fork away from the river after about 55yd (50m). Walk steeply uphill passing under a large maiden oak festooned with tree ferns. In spring and early summer listen out for wood warblers, later on you may see pied flycatchers.
4. Emerge from the woodland onto open heathland, known as Cloutsham Ball. 'Ball' is a local name for a hill. Now turn right, where the paths cross at a wooden bench.
5. After about 200m you will see a faint path on the left leading up to some scree, or bare rocks on the slopes above you. Turn up here and follow it for about 25m. This is a good spot for adders too, so take care where you tread.
6. Now, retrace your steps back to the main path, turn left and continue on your walk, heading back into the woods. On either side of the path are more oak pollards, perhaps once cut for making charcoal. You will reach a sign-post on the bridleway to Cloutsham. Turn left toward Cloutsham and walk uphill with the Horner valley below you on your right. Keep to the main footpath (do not fork left on to the bridleway), passing through a grove of ancient oak trees and dead hulks. Pass a pollard on your left with a mountain ash growing in it.

7. At the next T junction, turn left. Look back at breathtaking views out over Porlock Bay and Hurlestone Point. Carry on until you reach a blue-topped post, turn right out over the moor land and at the next junction keep right passing a large Monterey pine on the way.
8. When you get back to the cross paths at the wooden bench, turn right and follow the path back down to the road. When you reach the road, turn right back to Aller Combe meadow.

End point: Aller Combe meadow parking area, grid ref: SS895431
