

INTRODUCTION

The West Somerset Coast Path runs from the hamlet of Steart to the coastal resort of Minehead and passes through the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Coast Path links the River Parrett Trail to the South West Coast Path National Trail. The path also joins the Coleridge Way and Quantock Greenway just south of the A39 near East Quantoxhead.

The coast path is approximately 25 miles in length. There are magnificent seaward and inland views with occasional glimpses of industrial archaeology and a wealth of geology.

The route is described heading west from Steart to Minehead. You can join the path at a number of locations allowing you to choose the length of your walk. In addition, there are a number of circular walks adjacent to the main route as well as access to towns and villages at Kilve, West Quantoxhead, Williton, Watchet, Blue Anchor, Dunster and Minehead. These offer a range of services and facilities such as shops, pubs, cafes, restaurants, hotels and B&Bs.

The route has been developed with the kind co-operation of a large number of landowners and farmers along the route. Without their help and support many of the links in this path chain would not have been possible.

To make the most of your walk, dress to suit the season and wear stout shoes or boots. Please keep away from cliff edges and only go on to beaches where it is possible using public footpaths or a permissive access. Take care when crossing or using sections of road. Please keep dogs under close control near livestock at all times.

Look out for the distinctive ammonite posts and way-marker discs to help you follow the trail.

STEART TO STOLFORD 2.9 miles

From the car park near Dowell's Farm (1) turn right at the car park gate. Walk for about one mile along the road until arriving at a fairly sharp left bend. Look for the ammonite post on the right and pass between the large rocks. Follow the broad track ahead.

On the beach there are the remains of a quadrant hut that was used to determine the accuracy of bomb strikes when the area was a range during the last century. Although no bombs have been found for a long time, local children were once able to collect small shell cases for scrap metal. Looking back inland to the southeast you may spot the World War II barrage balloon hanger on the Pawlett Hams. This is a large rounded building rather like a huge barn.

As you continue along the track you are crossing firstly Wall Common and then Catsford Common grazed by sheep belonging to those who still enjoy Commoner's rights.

When you reach the small hamlet of Stolford the track converges with the sea wall and defence. Exposed just out at sea is the site of a submerged fossilised forest and rocky outcrops, showing us why shipping needs to take care navigating along this coastline.

Looking northeast up the Bristol Channel you can see the two islands of Steep Holm, and if light is favourable, Flat Holm beyond. Steep Holm is rich in military history and has evidence of occupation through many periods including Roman and Viking, and is also rich in flora and fauna. You can visit the island by charter launch from Weston-super-Mare, or in the summer, by one of the steam vessels sailing from Minehead.

STOLFORD TO LILSTOCK 4.1 miles

Stolford is easily accessed by road by following sign-posts to Hinkley Point power station from the A39. There is car parking for those who want an out-and-back walk between Stolford and Lilstock.

Leaving Stolford follow the broad track ahead and pass through a narrow gate beside a field gate. Ignore the footpaths to your left. You will see objects that look like old-fashioned lampshades hanging from poles in the field. These monitor the air quality in the area. As you approach Hinkley Point Power Station pass through a gate within a gate. The track is now edged on both sides by small woodlands, predominately alder with some willow. As you leave the wooded area, the path bears to the right. A large number of notices remind you that you are in a licensed nuclear power generating site.

Continue on the path with a fence to your left and a sea defence wall to the right. For almost three-quarters of a mile you can see over the wall and at low tide, flat pavements and blocks of limestone are visible.

The shore contains evidence of giant marine reptiles, whole ichthyosaur skeletons and large ammonites have been found. Also local people have uncovered the remains of elk antlers and wild boar tusks. Fossilised oak and yew tree sections are still visible in places.

On your left is a huge wall made up of rock-filled baskets. Out at sea is the caisson providing cooling water for the generating process. This is a popular shoreline area with fishermen who catch mainly cod but also some bass and flounder.

A solid concrete footway now takes you to the end of the Hinkley Point site. Even on this unnatural base, nature is colonising with a fine display of rock sea lavender finding a niche to survive. Ignoring the stile to your left follow the grass path. This grass area is one of the few remaining semi-natural grasslands along the coastline supporting species such as bee and pyramidal orchids, carline thistle, thyme and adder's tongue fern. After approximately three-quarters of a mile, the fence ends and an information board tells you about the area.

At an ammonite post, situated by a huge screen of brambles and scrub, follow the path to Lilstock down onto the pebble shore. Go through a gap to your left, through a kissing gate and turn right to walk along the broad headland path, with brambles and rising cliffs to your right, Far in the distance you can now see the distinctive shape of North Hill above Minehead.

Unless you intend to undertake a circular walk, using the numerous permissive paths, continue straight ahead and soon you will see below you on the foreshore the straight pavements of limestone become swirling formations.

Walk straight on until faced by a third hedgerow. In the right-hand corner you will find a step stile, cross over it and walk ahead with a wire fence to your right. Soon you will come across a mound and clump of elderly thorn trees. Keep right and walk on down to another gate within a gate. Pass through the gate and then turn right towards the beach at Lilstock.

The banked depression to your right as you arrive is what remains of Lilstock Harbour. The rectangular depression provided berthing facilities for small vessels. Coal, wheat and limestone were imported and exported making the site a bustling port. Old photographs also show houses built close under the cliffs on the quayside. A pier provided moorings for the Victorian pleasure steamers which travelled along this stretch of coast.

From your point of arrival turn left and leave for Kilve.

LILSTOCK TO KILVE 1.9 miles

Lilstock is accessible by car and parking is available. Follow road signs between Holford and Kilve on the A39.

The broad track passes Lilstock outfall on your left, suggesting that the fields immediately inland are again low-lying. Shortly afterwards you will see a World War II look-out bunker, discreetly placed to give an early warning of any enemy activity in the Channel. Continue on the broad headland track to a kissing gate. Out at sea you will see a number of yellow cones. These demarcate target zones for the military aircraft crews practising their strike skills.

In the spring these cliff edges are covered with cowslips. Inland the undulating farmland rises up to the Quantock Hills. This area marks the boundary of the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that was designated in 1956 as England's first AONB. Looking along the skyline from left to right you will see the hills above the villages of Nether Stowey and Holford, Both villages have close associations with the poets Coleridge and Wordsworth.

Moving on you will arrive at the Royal Navy lookout tower. Carry straight on ahead, dropping downhill. If the tide is out you can see further examples of the limestone formations on the foreshore. Watchet can be seen in the distance. Away to the left, on the western skyline, the highest point in Somerset, Dunkery Beacon on Exmoor, may be visible.

The path to Kilve ends on a flat, grass area and just ahead is a stream running through a reed bed into the sea. Do not cross it, but turn left and head inland on a broad track with the remains of a limekiln to the right, sheltered by thorn bushes. This area, now a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is the remains of a medieval harbour and is known as Kilve Pill. A short distance further on brings you to a red brick building with a distinctive chimneystack (the Oil Retort). (2)

Of great interest to the industrial archaeologist, it was part of the oil retort system built in the early part of the 20th Century. The coast at Kilve is rich in oil-bearing shale and large sums of money were invested in a hoped-for oil boom. Both interest and returns faded and the venture was abandoned.

Public toilets are available near the car park at Kilve Beach. If you feel like some refreshments, walk up the road past the grass car park on your right, to a Tea Shop near the remains of a 15th Century Chantry.

Chantries were specifically used for the saying of masses for the dead. The building fell into ruin after the Reformation in the 16th century and the ruins themselves were destroyed by fire in 1837. Kilve Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, which is close-by, has a fine Saxon font.

The Hood Arms and the village store are further on up the lane, past the church, on the A39, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the path.

KILVE TO A39 ROAD CROSSING 1.8 miles

If you have left the Coast Path to enjoy refreshments in Kilve, return to the old oil retort, near which is an Information board.

Pass through the access gateway to follow the tarmac surfaced path that climbs gently to a gate. [There are benches close by and a picnic table at the end of an easy access trail to the beach so you have the chance to sit and view the Bristol Channel.](#) Beyond the gate continue along the broad headland path which again gives magnificent views of the Quantock Hills as you look inland, the Welsh coast to the north, and northeast up the Bristol Channel. [Adjacent fields are sometimes grazed by fine examples of pedigree Hereford cattle.](#)

[The large country house inland to the south west is Court House at East Quantoxhead, home of the Luttrell family since the Norman Conquest, attached to which is the church of St Mary the Virgin.](#)

The headland path ends with a left turn at a lime kiln; here you can make a detour to visit the small hamlet of East Quantoxhead with its church and mill pond or go down some metal steps to your right to look at the foreshore and its geology. (3)

If you have taken the detour return to the limekiln and follow the direction indicated by the finger post to a kissing gate with a notice informing you that you are next using a “permissive” path, enclosed by a fence. The path climbs to a high point (Quantock’s Head) then levels to approach a second kissing gate. Go through the gate and turn left to head south on a broad field edge path. The land falls away on your right. Continue straight ahead. [On the right are the remains of a medieval windmill site.](#)

Do not turn left at an obvious path junction (4) but climb steadily straight ahead to arrive at a kissing gate on the side of the main A39 road.

A39 ROAD CROSSING TO WEST QUANTOXHEAD

1.7 miles

MOTORISTS ARE WARNED TO EXPECT PEDESTRIANS BUT PLEASE TAKE EXTREME CARE WHEN CROSSING THE A39.

Having arrived at the top of the field, marked by a kissing gate, cross the road with care. Pass through a second kissing gate and walk within an enclosed path for a short distance to join a fairly broad track. Turn left and walk up past the cottages on your left into a narrow enclosed lane, running uphill, to a gate where you are met by a choice of two bridle paths. (5)

This is where the Coast Path meets the Coleridge Way and the Quantock Greenway.

Take the path to your right. Follow it along a hedge bank, occasionally topped with a fence-line to deter deer entering the pasture. You are at the northern end of a block of common land that rises fairly steeply to your left. Red deer lie up in the bracken on this hill known as West Hill.

Walk on until the path drops steeply down to some steps with a handrail. Ignore the bridle path and Quantock Greenway signs that go off to the left. Carry on straight ahead to a permissive path, keeping well away from the fence line and quarry edge. Pass through a kissing gate and then follow the forest track round, keeping the road on your right, for about a mile. As the path climbs you will find a seat at the highest point with wonderful open views of St Audries, Exmoor and Minehead.

Continue along the path and keep the cast iron fence on your right. This was erected in the last century when the area formed part of the Deer Park for St Audries house and held large numbers of fallow and red deer. For a short time the two parcels of land were also connected by a bridge that crossed over the A39, but this was demolished in 1940. When you reach a gate, turn right, walking down the slope to meet a tarmac road. Walk down until you come to a gap on your left, just before the main road.

Go through this gap onto the enclosed section of path until you exit onto the car park at the Windmill pub.

WEST QUANTOXHEAD TO A39 AT HIGH BRIDGE, WILLITON 2.2 miles

Continue across the car park to the front of the Windmill pub then turn left at the Quantock Greenway signpost and follow the road into the village of West Quantoxhead. Carry on along the road (The Avenue) for about a mile arriving at a road junction beyond the national speed limit road sign. (6) Go straight ahead into Luckes Lane.

Ignore the first signposted field gate on your right and proceed for about half a mile to the next signed path on your right with a stile alongside the gate. Go over the stile and follow the field edge path on your right to meet two pedestrian gates. Ignore the right hand gate and go through the one straight ahead.

Follow the enclosed path with a hedge on the left and fence on right. There is a woodland to the left and once again the sea comes into view in the distance. The enclosed path goes through three gates before reaching an open field. Turn right to a stile and on to the verge alongside the A39 at High Bridge, on the outskirts of Williton.

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY

West Somerset Railway is Britain's longest preserved railway and runs for 20 miles between Bishops Lydeard and Minehead. The railway recaptures the era of the branch line country railway in the days of steam. There are 10 restored stations along the route, each having its own charm and character. Many have signalboxes, engine sheds, museums and steam engines. Stations along the way where you can join the train include Williton, Doniford Halt, Watchet, Blue Anchor, Dunster and Minehead. Trains run regularly throughout the year.

A39 HIGHBRIDGE, WILLITON TO WATCHET HARBOUR 2.2 miles

Cross the main road with care and almost straight away turn into Highbridge and follow the lane over the Doniford Brook to the railway crossing at Williton station. [Williton is the first place on the route where you can take the West Somerset Steam Railway.](#)

Pass over the lines and walk straight ahead along Station Road ignoring any turnings to your right until reaching the main A39 at Long Street.

Turn into Long Street and continue along the pavement for a short distance until you come to a lane on your right (just prior to the old hospital site with the green wrought iron railings).

Turn right into the lane and follow it along its length, turn left and proceed along this path which runs to the back of the houses until you come to a kissing gate. Go through the kissing gate and continue along the path until you join another path. Turn right and follow this path all the way to the end, you will cross a narrow stone bridge before joining the road.

Cross the road, turn left and walk along the road for a short distance and on the right is a stile leading into a field. Cross the stile and follow the field edge path which eventually becomes a wide grassy path hedged on both sides. Continue straight ahead until you come to the road.

Turn right and walk along the pavement until you come to a metalled path with lampposts. Turn right into the path and follow it all the way up over the hill until you come to a gate. Go through the gate, turn left then right and you will come to the road. Turn right then immediately left into Woodland Road and walk along the road until you come to Flowerdale Road. Turn right into Flowerdale Road and follow it to the end.

Turn left into Liddymore Road and continue until you arrive at the main road. Cross the main road with care and go straight ahead into Goviers Lane. Continue down Goviers Lane to the bottom, over the railway line, down the steps and go straight across the road and proceed along The Esplanade. As you pass the first white barrier look over the wall to see a fine pebble mosaic.

[The name Watchet has been given to a piece of cloth of a particular shade of blue. Whether or not the blue came from the dye of locally picked Whortleberries as some suggest, no one is sure.](#)

[The harbour is always a place of attraction and has a very long history. Maintenance records exist from 1458. It was completely rebuilt in 1708 by Sir William Wyndham for £1000, using local stone. It was enlarged in the mid 1800`s and completed in 1862, during which work two Mammoths tusks were dredged out of the mud. The harbour was severely damaged in 1900 by a storm and was again rebuilt, and strengthened. A thriving seaport for most of](#)

its history the last sailing schooner unloaded in 1930 and the last commercial cargo in the 1980`s. The port served as a vital exporting centre, taking iron ore from the Brendon Hills along the Mineral Line and via boat across the Channel to Newport. It has now been turned into a marina, with lock gates, to offer deepwater moorings at all times. The Lifeboat Station, which is now the Library, was opened in 1875 and withdrawn in 1944.

Half way along the pedestrianised Esplanade is a bronze statue of the Mariner, sited here because Samuel Taylor Coleridge was reputed to have written some of the Rime of the Ancient Mariner whilst in the town.

On the beach large deposits of an orangey pink alabaster can be seen and, in and among the limestone can be found fossils, especially ammonites. The Bristol Channel is also noted for its mud and it was an annual event to hold mud fights and wrestling in the harbour basin at low water.

At the end of The Esplanade you can turn left into Swain Street to enjoy the many pubs and tea shops.

Also well worth a visit is Watchet`s small but interesting museum, which has housed the town gaol, a chapel and hardware store in days gone by. The Museum is open from Easter until the end of October.

WATCHET HARBOUR TO BLUE ANCHOR 3.3 miles

From the harbour, walk past the museum and the London Inn where the Mineral Line train once arrived. Continue up the steep hill of West Street taking care as it narrows. On reaching a way marker post at the top continue up some steps, through a blackthorn thicket. (7) With a limekiln on your left cross over the stile.

The site you have just entered is Dawes Castle, owned by English Heritage, which was used as a place of refuge against the threat of Viking attacks.

At the highest point you can enjoy the 360-degree panoramic views.

The steam rising from the valley comes from the Wansborough Paper Mill. This paper mill works with recycled paper and cargoes used to be unloaded in Watchet Harbour.

Keeping the fence line on your right, proceed downhill to pass through a kissing gate. Walk on to follow a well worn, enclosed path, twisting and turning between trees and ground ivy. Soon the path surface is covered in stone chippings as it approaches an obvious concrete slipway.

Cross the slipway to join the path moving away to the right. Exercise care, as it is narrow above the drop onto the slipway. Under the heavy disguise of an ivy covering are the remains of another lime kiln.

Proceed on an enclosed path and you will eventually emerge from the trees into an open field on the left. Keep to the right-hand edge noting the public footpath sign to the beach at this point. It is a worthwhile detour.

Follow round the field to a hedgerow gap about 100 yards ahead. There, turn right and pass through the kissing gate in the corner of the field.

Walk up the slope through a wooded area. From the woods you have glimpses of fine views, but stay well away from the cliffs.

Continue ahead up the slope on the wide field edge path between a fence and a hedge. Immediately inland the Washford radio masts can be seen. After walking up the slope, pass through a hedge gap with a way marker on a stout post.

The views are now inland towards Exmoor.

Continue along the field edge path rounding the end of this field to enter another field, ignore the fork to the right, and stay along the edge of the cultivated part of the field. On the seaward side is a classic example of a land slip.

Stop at the next hedge gap to look straight ahead and you can appreciate why Dunster Castle was sited there: at the entrance to the valley into Exmoor.

Walk down the curving slope, through a wooded area, to arrive at a post and rail fence informing the public that a permissive path is used to walk on to Blue Anchor. The definitive public footpath has slipped away and is now probably at the bottom of the Bristol Channel! Please follow the waymarkers through the woods, climbing two short flights of steps until a junction is reached with a marker post. (8) Turn sharp right and do not leave this path until a further enclosed path, entered by a gate, reaches the road. Take care when joining the road and walk downhill past the Blue Anchor Hotel to arrive on the sea front at Blue Anchor.

The old name for Blue Anchor was Bradley Gate; the name Blue Anchor itself comes from the colour of the mud in the bay where vessels used to anchor. Veins of alabaster were found running through the blue lias and were quarried here from the 15th Century and used mainly for the construction of tombstones.

The existing concrete sea wall was built to prevent the collapse of these lias cliffs and to stop the low lying fields inland from flooding.

Blue Anchor offers a fine sandy beach at low water.

Walk the whole length of the sea front where there are opportunities to take refreshment, the last place being the Driftwood Café at the end of the seafront.

Again it is possible to access the Steam Railway for the final leg of the journey. Views across the arcing Blue Anchor Bay show you just how close it is to the final destination point in Minehead.

BLUE ANCHOR TO DUNSTER BEACH 1.6 miles

Follow the public footpath on the beach side of the chalets. To your right is another piece of World War II defence infrastructure. Continue on the pebbles to follow the path running alongside the railway line. [The tower on the tree-covered conical hill directly ahead is Conygar Tower, a folly built in 1776.](#)

About halfway along the arc of the Bay stop there to look back towards Blue Anchor, inland to rolling fields, woodland and to the huge outline of Dunster Castle.

[The Castle is now owned by the National Trust but from 1376 to 1976 it was owned by the Luttrell Family. The Castle was extensively remodelled in the 1860's and 1870's.](#)

Stay on top of the pebble bank across the bridge on top of the rock filled baskets. Continue to walk along the top of the beach to arrive at a mixture of old and new timber posts, blocks of concrete and red sandstone boulders. Continue on this shoreline path and follow the hedge round and across the bridge over the flood relief channel to arrive at a car park.

[This is Dunster Beach, a privately owned beach with a public footpath clearly marked across the foreshore. At one time there was a weir harbour here, as there is at Porlock further along the coast.](#)

DUNSTER BEACH TO MINEHEAD 2.8 miles

At the far end of the car park follow the waymarked signs on the seaward side of the beach huts. [Some of these huts date back to the 1920's but were requisitioned by the Army during World War II.](#) Walk on to the very last chalet beyond which there are two further examples of pebble built World War II look-out posts, both in very good condition. [A finger post points left to Dunster Station, which is about half a mile away.](#)

To the left is the outermost green of Minehead & West Somerset Golf Course. Please keep to the seaward side of the low white marker posts and proceed along an obvious path. There is a wide sandy beach on your right.

[Inland views open up once again with the Parish Church of St Peter at Minehead, prominent above the town, and the white pinnacles of Butlin's.](#)

Eventually a made-up path will be seen on a lower level to the left. This is a private path available only to the golfers. Stay on the path until the public path also drops to a lower level; Minehead harbour can be seen in the distance. Scrubby areas of sea buckthorn and blackthorn now screen the inland view and the path becomes enclosed.

Continue along a sandy path to arrive adjacent to the golf course clubhouse, a small road roundabout and the start of the promenade along the seafront of the town. Walk the length of the promenade, passing Butlins and the railway terminus, towards the harbour. [The dominant feature along the sea front is the view of a large wooded and inhabited hillside above Minehead known as North Hill. West of this hill lies Exmoor National Park.](#)

[The official start point of the South West Coast Path National Trail is marked by a sculpture of hands holding a map. This also marks the end of the West Somerset Coast Path. \(9\)](#)

CIRCULAR WALK AROUND STERT POINT 1.5 miles

From the car park, behind Dowell's Farm, (10) follow the permissive path accessed beside the interpretation panel down to the beach. Turn right and follow the pebble bank and grass path.

All along this stretch you will have wonderful views over Bridgwater Bay National Nature Reserve and across the Bristol Channel. The Bristol Channel has the second largest tidal range in the world and if you happen to be visiting during the rise or fall of the tide you can see the speed of the water and the large distance between high and low tide.

The local habitat comprising salt marshes, sand dunes and mud flats provides an ideal location for wildlife, especially birds. Bridgwater Bay is particularly important as a feeding ground for migrating wildfowl and waders and is protected as a National Nature Reserve and European importance as a RAMSAR site. Wildfowl and waders use the area as a stop off during their migration, whilst other species such as curlew, shelduck and oystercatchers can be seen all year looking for worms in the sand and mud.

At the end of the path pass through a wooden gate. From this point you have access to a variety of bird hides, including the impressive Tower hide. After enjoying the views over the reserve and river estuary return to the wooden gate. Turn right (south) and pass through a second wooden gate. As you start to follow the grass track you are now on the route of the River Parrett Trail, a fifty mile walk from the source of the river at Chedington in Dorset to the mouth of the river at Steart.

Turn right and continue to follow the track. Notice the variety of stone walls made from pebbles and the local stone that mark the old and existing field boundaries.

As you pass through the third wooden gate you now walk along the road passing a number of farms and ponds back to the car park.

CIRCULAR WALK AROUND KILVE AND EAST QUANTOXHEAD 2.7 miles

This is a particularly pleasant walk combining both coastal views and church history, with a chance to enjoy refreshments on the way.

From the oil retort at Kilve, follow the coast path using the instructions from Kilve earlier in the text.

Pass the limekiln where the route is joined by a path leading down the steps to the beach. (11) Along this part of the coastline a sport called 'glatting' was once popular where conger eels were hunted with dogs at low tide. Continue on the coastal route up the hill with a fenced off path. Note the wonderful wind-shaped blackthorn clinging onto the cliff edge. In places it has lost the battle and the cliff has been eroded and washed into the sea. At the kissing gate turn left and follow the dense thicket hedge with bramble, gorse and blackthorn providing an ideal shelter for rabbits, badgers and foxes. Along this section there are glimpses of the stone faced banks that kept the livestock in the correct fields. If the field gates are shut use the stiles beside them.

Directly in front of you inland are fine views of the bracken covered Smith's Combe on the edge of the Quantock Hills. At a point where the coast path continues up the hill, marked by a finger post, turn left down a public footpath. (12) This charming sunken green lane (Underway Lane) lined with high hedges leads you back down towards the hamlet of East Quantoxhead.

At the road bear left and after approximately 50 metres turn left into the field. (13) Follow the footpath diagonally across the field heading for the impressive Court House and church.

There is a chance to make a small detour to look in the fine church of St. Mary the Virgin. Inside the church beautifully carved bench ends depict designs of berries, grapes and leaves. Originally dating from mediaeval times, the church has fine examples of additions from various periods including the stones arches in the 13th Century and a 17th Century pulpit. Although the church was never a private chapel for the Luttrell family who have resided in the adjoining Court House for centuries, many family members have been the Rector of the parish.

Returning to the path, pass through the kissing gate and over the grass car park. Go around the duck pond and down the stone track. There are tea gardens close by in the village if a drink and cake are needed.

Walk along the track lined by thick beech hedges and a wonderful landscaped garden on the left. At the point where you can go left towards a stone bench and down to the beach, bear right and through a kissing gate. (14) Follow the field headland. During the spring and summer another short detour is worthwhile to view the woodland flora such as bluebells, primroses and

orchids in East Wood. Continue to follow the headland paths through two boundaries and aim for the church at Kilve. Cross the stream on the wooden bridge and follow the signs into the churchyard.

A short visit into the church of St. Mary's is worthwhile. Although less ornate than East Quantoxhead, the church displays fine examples of local craftsmanship and has close links with the nearby Chantry.

Exit the churchyard via the wooden lytch gate. Again a refreshments stop is available at the tearooms, or you can return to the start point by turning left and following the tarmac road back to the car park.

LINK TO WILLITON 0.9 miles

Walk the whole length of Long Street, passing the old hospital on your right (now converted to residential apartments), to the road junction near the Co-op in the middle of Williton.

Williton and its surrounding area had five water mills at one time. The remains of three can still be seen. One of these is at Bridge Farm and the other, a well-preserved example, now houses the interesting Bakelite Museum.

The Church is also worth visiting, for although much rebuilt by the Victorians, it possesses an unusual font made of the local alabaster. Williton also has several pubs, takeaways and a bakery.

From the junction turn right into North Street. (15) Continue along the road past the school until you come to a metalled footpath with lampposts. Continue as main route.

CIRCULAR WALK AROUND ST AUDRIES WOOD 2.2 miles

(16) enter the Forestry Commission land and turn right. Follow the main track up the hill until you reach a bench. The view over the St. Audries estate shows the variety of land uses, including fields with grazing red and fallow deer, a small chapel and a range of grand buildings. The estate now hosts wedding ceremonies and receptions, but in the recent past it has been a Buddhist retreat and girls public school. Continue along the track ignoring paths off to the left. The woodland is predominantly a conifer plantation of spruce, fir and pine varying in age that has been planted at various times between 1961 and 2001. The dark green blocks are broken up by native species of tree and shrub such as silver birch, oak, beech, gorse and holly.

Eventually the track turns right down a hill with a metal fence on the right to meet a gate. Go through the gate and then turn left. (17) Proceed up the hill on a stone track passing a water reservoir. Pass through a gate within a gate and continue up the hill on a grass path. On both sides of the path rhododendron grows to a height that protects walkers from the wind and provides a splendid floral display in late spring.

At the top of the path go through a kissing gate and turn left. Views straight ahead are of the Quantock heathland with a variety of floral species such as bracken, several species of heather and gorse. As you proceed along the well maintained path, you notice that the vegetation is kept away from the woodland to provide a fire break.

When you reach the brow of the hill the views open up across the whole landscape you have walked already from the start point at Steart to Kilve. Keep the metal fence on your left as you start to descend the hill. About two thirds of the way down there is a metal gate in the fence with a Quantock Greenway marker. Turn left through the gate (18) and then straight on to meet a stoned forest track. Turn right and follow the track downhill all the way back to the car park.

LINK TO DUNSTER VILLAGE 2.5 miles

Dunster village is said to be the prettiest village in Exmoor National Park and it is really worth a visit.

Turn left and out of the Dunster Beach car park entrance to follow Sea Lane. Cross the railway line and over a bridge. Turn left into Marsh Street and then left into Bremis Road. Follow the road around and then go up a small alley to access the pedestrian subway under the A39. (19) Pass through and continue up the hill on the pavement to the village. On your way up the hill you will pass a large car park and then arrive at the Exmoor National Park Visitor Centre.

As you continue round the corner the view down the High Street is of a picturesque medieval village with a wealth of heritage.

From the 11th century Dunster Castle to the Old Yarn Market. Wandering through the village you will see many beautiful thatched cottages and other buildings which date from the 17th and 19th centuries, cobbled walkways and a restored working watermill. There are numerous pubs, shops, galleries and tearooms.

Retrace your steps to the pedestrian subway under the A39 onto Marsh Street. Follow Marsh Street then bear left into Station Road. Continue along the road, cross the railway line and follow the road to the end. At the end of the road take the public footpath which starts near the Old Manor House. Continue past Lower Marsh Farm through a kissing gate then another kissing gate. Follow the path to the footbridge. Turn right at the footbridge and continue to the end of the footpath to rejoin the Coast Path.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This guide has been produced by Somerset County Council Rights of Way Service which also maintains the walk.

The route of the West Somerset Coast Path is subject to regular updating and improving. Please look out for signposts and waymarkers indicating sections of the path which may have changed since the publication of this booklet. We would welcome general comments on the walk using the prepaid postcard at the back of this guide.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of details given in this publication, Somerset County Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions, nor for any actions taken, or not taken, as a result of the information presented.

USEFUL MAPS

The most useful maps for walkers are the 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps. The maps providing coverage of the Coast Path are OL9 (Exmoor) and 140 (Quantock Hills and Bridgwater).

WAYMARKERS

The walk is marked by discs with the ammonite symbol, which appears throughout this guide. You will also follow standard footpath waymarkers. Yellow arrows indicate footpaths, blue arrows indicate bridleways and white arrows indicate paths where access has been permitted by the landowner.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Most of the walk follows public rights of way but the land they cross is private. Please keep to the line of the path and do not stray from the waymarked route. If the path has to be diverted for any reason please follow the waymarkers rather than the map until you are guided back to the main route. If you find any of the route obstructed please follow the route as closely as possible and report the obstruction to the Rights of Way Service.

PERMISSIVE PATHS

Some of the route follows permissive paths. Please pay attention to any notices such as Keep to the path and please keep your dog on a lead.

CAR PARKING

Car parking is available at Steart, Stolford, Lilstock, Kilve, East Quantoxhead, Williton, Watchet, Blue Anchor, Dunster Beach, Dunster and Minehead.

LOCAL ACCOMMODATION

For accommodation providers please contact Somerset Visitor Centre on 01934 750833, or e-mail somerset.visitorcentre@somerset.gov.uk

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

There are several bus services between Minehead, Dunster, Watchet, Williton, West Quantoxhead, Kilve, Cannington and Bridgwater. For details please call Traveline Public Transport Information on 0870 608 2 608

<http://www.traveline.org.uk/index.htm>

Information on West Somerset Railway can be obtained on 01643 709996
www.wsr.org.uk

PUBLIC TOILETS

Toilets are available at Kilve, Williton, Watchet, Blue Anchor, Dunster Beach, Dunster and Minehead.

SHOPS & TEAROOMS, ETC

There are shops at Kilve, Williton, Watchet, Dunster and Minehead. Refreshments are available at Kilve, East Quantoxhead, Williton, Watchet, Blue Anchor, Dunster and Minehead.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Rights of Way Service, Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY. rightsofway@somerset.gov.uk www.somerset.gov.uk

Quantock Hills AONB Service

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/countryside/quantockhills/aonbservice.htm>

DOGS

Please remember that dogs should be kept under close control. It is an offence to allow a dog to attack or chase livestock and it is advisable to keep dogs on a lead when passing near to livestock and close to farmyards.

COUNTRYSIDE CODE

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs.

Leave gates and property as you find them.

Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.

Keep dogs under close control.

Consider other people.

http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/countryside_code/

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES

Bridgwater S.D.C. Bridgwater House, King Square, TA6 3AR

Tel: 01278 436438 Fax: 01278 436480

Email: bridgwater.tic@sedgemoor.gov.uk

Watchet The Esplanade, Watchet, TA23 0AJ

Tel: 01984 632101

Fax: 01984 633344

Email: townclerk@watchettowncouncil.org

Dunster Dunster Steep, Dunster, TA24 5SG

Tel: 01643 821835 Email: dunsterc@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

Minehead 17 Friday Street, Minehead, TA24 5UB

Tel: 01643 702624

Fax: 01643 707166

Email: info@mineheadtic.co.uk <mailto:info@mineheadtic.co.uk>

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