

## Watersmeet and the Cleaves



This walk provides spectacular views over a deep, wooded valley to Lynmouth, the Bristol Channel to Wales. Down in the valley the route follows tumbling, rock-strewn rivers with mossy rocks, ferns and rare plants.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

### Mineral Water Factory SS 736487

A plaque marks the site of the former Lynrock Mineral Water Factory, which was built into the cliff by the river at around 1911. It exploited the natural spring which emerges from the rocks. By the Second World War demand for the water had declined and the factory had closed. The buildings were swept away in the 1952 flood disaster

### Whitebeam Trees

Whitebeam trees are so called because of the pale undersides to their leaves. Around Watersmeet and the Exmoor coast there are several varieties that are endemic; that is they are found nowhere else. There are at least three species that are unique to Exmoor and several sub-species, some of which can be found along the route of this walk.

### East Lyn Valley

From Rockford to Lynmouth the East Lyn cuts one of the deepest gorges in Britain. In the early part of the Ice Age the valley was much shallower and continued through the Valley of Rocks to the sea much further to the west. Rising sea levels in a warm part of the Ice Age caused coastal erosion and the river to fall to the sea at Lynmouth. The steep drop gave the river power to quickly deepen its valley, cutting back from the sea

in a series of waterfalls. Remnants of the former valley floor can be found high up on the cleaves.

### Summer House Hill SS 728488

This was the site of a summer house built for the Rector of Lynmouth around 1820. The building was demolished following numerous complaints from prudish Victorians about the antics of the 'courting couples' that it attracted. The area is the site of the underground reservoir for one of the World's first pumped storage schemes, serving the hydro-electric power station that was built by the river below in 1890.

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK

Exmoor became Britain's eighth National Park in 1954 and these walks were designed to celebrate its Golden Anniversary. The public were invited to propose their favourite walks as part of the series and this walk is based on a walk proposed by Tony Beck.

The National Park covers 267 square miles of Somerset and Devon. It is a landscape of great variety: from rugged, towering cliffs to gently rounded hills, wooded valleys, colourful heaths, wild grass moors and farming hamlets and it is home to nearly 11,000 people.

For further information contact Exmoor National Park Dulverton Visitor Centre: Tel 01398 323841  
E-mail: [DulvertonVC@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:DulvertonVC@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)



## MAP

Scale 1: 25000 SHEET No. 55

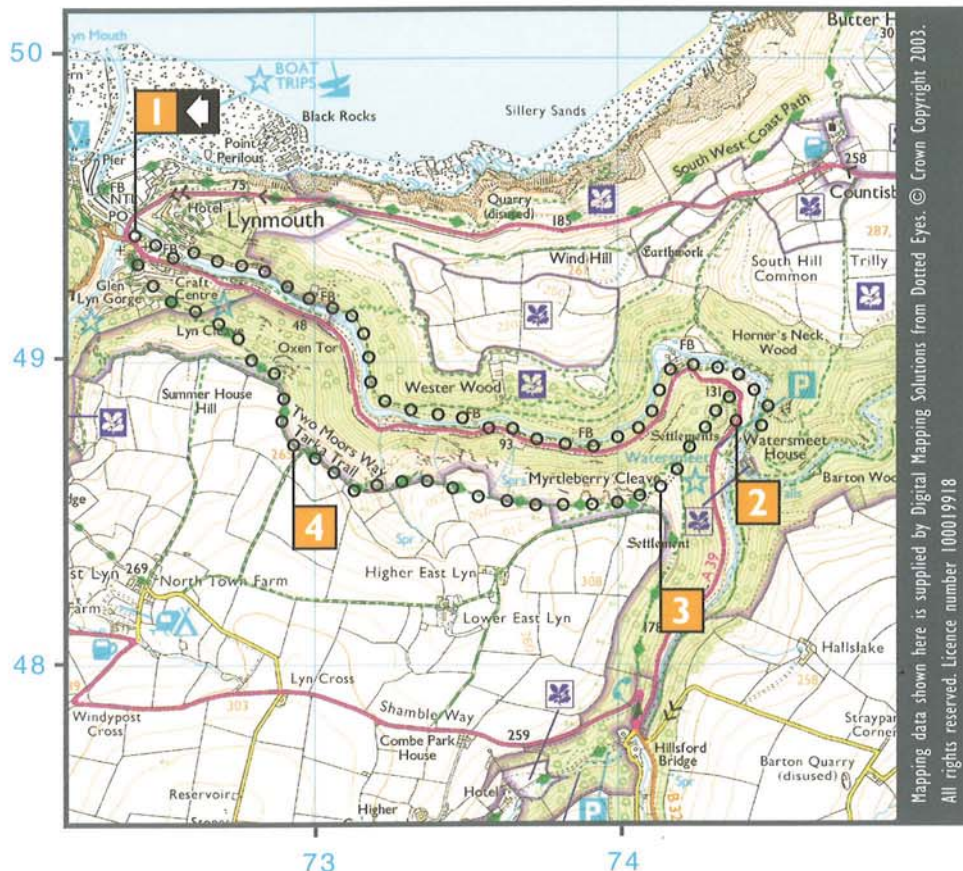
The map section below can be found on the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map OL9.

The area is also covered by the Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 180.

1 Kilometre

1 Mile

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK



- 5 miles (8 kilometres). 2 1/2 hours. Start Point: Lyndale car park, Lynmouth.
- Moderate to strenuous. Watersmeet can be busy at times. The Cleaves are quieter but more strenuous walking than the riverside paths. Busses run to Lynton and Lynmouth from Barnstaple and Minehead. Refreshments are available at Watersmeet in season and Lynmouth. WC At Watersmeet and Lynmouth. On a lead.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

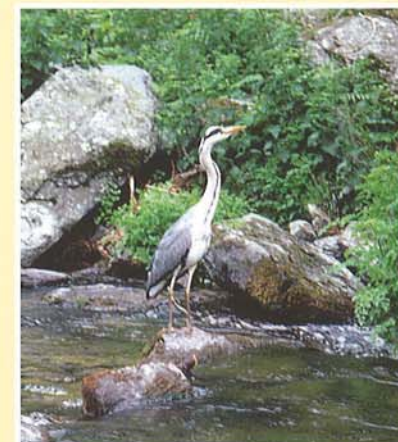
Most of the land covered by this route is owned and managed by the National Trust, which has an information centre at Watersmeet. Parts of the route are not on Public Rights of Way but permissive paths provided by the National Trust. The walk starts at Lynmouth's main car park by Lyndale Bridge on the A39 where there is a parking charge, so have some coins ready.

**1** Keep the river bank on your left, then cross a white footbridge just beyond the car park. Turn right and keep the river on your right, following signs to Watersmeet. After about half an hour the path will cross the wooden Blackpool Bridge and continue past the site of the old **mineral water factory**. Keeping close to the river, there will be a choice of bridges at Watersmeet. Take the high, stone and concrete Chiselcombe Bridge. There is a **whitebeam** tree by the side of the bridge. Follow the path upstream to Watersmeet House and cross both wooden bridges to view the waterfalls. Continue upwards to the right, to the bottom of the car park on the main road.

**2** Taking care of traffic, walk down the road for 50 metres. Turn left opposite the NT staff car park to begin the steep ascent to the top of Myrtleberry Cleave. The first hundred metres or so takes you through oak woodland but you soon break out in to more open countryside of bracken and heather and pass Myrtleberry North Camp (Iron Age) before ascending some 130 steps to reach the top.

**3** Turn right, along the cleave top. After two wooden gates the path makes a steep descent into a combe, crosses a bridge and continues back up again to regain the top of the cleave. From here there are good views over the East Lyn valley. At the edge of **Summer House Hill**, follow the sign, marked Oxen Tor, to Lynmouth on your right.

**4** The path takes you over Oxen Tor down through woods of sweet chestnuts on a good path until you reach a garage/shed on your left. Do not be tempted to take the wider path on your right but continue past the garage with high garden walls on your left. The path soon reached houses and becomes tarmac. Take care – this can be slippery when wet. Cross the main road and return to the car park.



Grey Heron

*The East Lyn is renowned for its fishing and the fish attract herons, which nest in trees in the wooded tributary valleys.*