

Timberscombe to Dunster

Ride & Walk



Fact File:

Highlights: Wootton Courtenay, panoramic views, Wootton Common, St Leonard's Well, Dunster Dovecot, Dunster Tithe Barn, Dunster church.

Start Point: Dunster

Start Grid ref: SS 954 421

Distance: 6.4 miles, circular

Height gained/lost: 394 metres. A mainly easy walk with one steep ascent after Wootton Courtenay.

High Point: 292 metres

Low Point: 46 metres

Toilets: none

Eating places: none, shop at Wootton Courtenay

Time required, including stops: 4 hours

Public transport: 198 bus service. Please check the current timetable on Traveline 0871 200 22 33 www.travelinesw.com before travelling.

Route description: This is a beautifully varied walk, starting easily through farmland before reaching the delightful village of Wootton Courtenay. A charming 13th century church is passed before the main climb of this walk up an old lane called Roadway Lane. There are gates to each side giving a good excuse for a breather and look at the country views. Near the top the route takes a more level path which offers panoramic views over where you have been walking. One then gains a little more height on to Wootton Common with more open views soon over to the sea and Blue Anchor Bay and Minehead. The walk then loses height to pass through forest and out to open moorland before returning past a medieval well to Dunster.

Route directions: The grid references are given should you like to follow the route on an Ordnance Survey map. They are not needed to follow the route which is described very accurately in the text.

Catch the 399 bus from Dunster Steep car park or Dunster High Street bus stops. Ask to get off at Timberscombe.

1, SS 954 421, 0 miles

From the main road at Timberscombe, cross over to go down Wanneroo Farm road signed Public Footpath to Wootton Courtenay. By the farm gate pass through a kissing gate on its left to follow a path to the next gate to cross a river footbridge to pass through the next bridle gate into a field. Now bear right to a gate ahead to cross a track to a kissing gate opposite.

2, SS 952 423, 0.2 miles

Now bear slightly right to a stile in the hedge ahead. From here bear slightly left almost parallel to the telegraph wires on your left to reach the far corner of this field and a stile. From this stile bear left again, again almost parallel to the telegraph wires to the corner with another stile.

3, SS 949 424, 0.4 miles

Cross the small stream footbridge and now follow the left-hand boundary of this large field with the stream over to your left, to reach the next stile ahead. From this stile bear right over to a gate in the hedge ahead and now bear slightly right uphill to the top corner of this

field, soon ignoring the gate in the top field boundary on your right.

4, SS 943 427, 0.9 miles

You now reach a stile. Cross and continue ahead level with this field boundary on your right. Soon ignore the gate on your right continuing ahead to the far narrow corner of this field and a stile. Now follow the sunken lane ahead ignoring a gate on your right to reach a gate ahead. Continue on the narrower path ahead to another gate and houses.

5, SS 936 431, 1.4 miles

At the road T-junction turn right over the stream bridge and continue ahead into the village. Soon ignore the bridleway on the left, carrying on ahead now climbing gently to a T-junction with the church ahead. Turn left here to pass the stores to reach a small brow in the road.

6, SS 937 433, 1.7 miles

Turn right here signed to Wootton Hill and Minehead. Go up this road to pass the Village Hall on the right and on to a path ahead. This is the main climb on this walk so take breathers at the viewpoints on the way up.

7, SS 939 439, 2.1 miles

Nearing the top take the first path that bears off to the right slightly downhill. Soon glorious views open up on

your right with Wootton Courtenay below and as the path bears round to the left, Timberscombe is ahead and the beginning of this walk down on your right. Soon you reach a well-used track with one coming up from the right and one ahead uphill.

8, SSS 943 437, 2.5 miles

Ignore the main track across and take the one opposite going uphill, through the trees. Soon you reach another main track coming in from the left. Continue ahead along it and soon another track comes in from the left. Continue ahead on the bridleway towards Dunster.

9, SSS 948 441, 2.9 miles

As this track goes over a brow, then turn left to go through to another track almost parallel to this one and turn right on to it, immediately ignoring a track off to the left. Continue ahead level.

10, SSS 952 440, 3.2 miles

When this track passes through a gap in an old wall, with a track coming from behind right out of the woods and the track ahead divides, take the left fork slightly downhill into woodland. Now ignore all tracks off.

11, SSS 962 443, 3.8 miles

Having lost some height pass by the barrier and now ignore the track diagonally across you, continuing straight ahead on the track slightly to the right of the more main track.

12, SSS 964 445, 4.0 miles

On reaching the T-junction turn right signed to Alcombe, shortly joining a track in from the right, bearing left downhill, now with a valley of conifers on your right which you soon start to drop down into.

13, SSS 967 444, 4.2 miles

Now ignore the path back right along the valley, instead continuing ahead fairly level through the conifers to then lose height again. Follow this path hard back right, ignoring the one ahead, down into the valley.

14, SSS 970 442, 4.6 miles

On reaching the path at the bottom, turn left along it, pass the barrier and go round to the right. The Youth Hostel road is opposite you. Turn right signed a bridleway to Alcombe Common up a surfaced road to almost immediately turn left up a bridleway, leaving the road ahead behind. Follow this deciduous woodland path round to the right and soon ignore the path down to the left to Alcombe, instead continuing ahead uphill to come on to the edge of a common. Soon ignore the path across, continuing ahead level.

15, SSS 978 439, 5.2 miles

Shortly you reach a bend in a track. Turn left downhill

along it, ignoring the track ahead uphill. Good views of Minehead ahead.

16, SSS 978 440, 5.3 miles

Part way down by a row of beech trees on the right, turn right through a kissing gate up a footpath to follow the bank of trees on your left to a bridle gate. Continue ahead fairly level to soon pass through the next kissing gate, continuing ahead slightly uphill initially. Soon ignore the bridleway coming in from the right.

17, SSS 984 438, 5.8 miles

Soon you come to high deer fence gates. Ignore the path going up to the right and pass through the high gate on the path going downhill. Pass St Leonard's Well (see note) on your right. Continue ahead for a while to drop to Dunster.

18, SSS 988 438, 6.0 miles

On reaching the road, ignore the one immediately right called Hangers Way, instead turning right down the road to reach the school.

19, SSS 989 436, 6.1 miles

Turn left opposite it along Priory Green. Pass by the dovecot, church gardens and tithe barn. Continue ahead to follow the road round to the right to then turn right down to Dunster High Street.



Wootton Courtenay from Timberscombe Common

Note: St Leonard's Well is of medieval origin with a substantial arched stone canopy, fitted with a modern wooden door controlling access to the well. Water was once conveyed from the well in wooden and lead pipes to Dunster and the lane is known as Conduit Lane. Pipes still lead from the well possibly supplying water to nearby field troughs. At the bottom of the lane there is a grill in the wall of a Victorian house and this grill gave access to the water source fed via the pipes from the well.