

Bye Common and Winsford



Winsford village, with thatched cottages, green, ford and bridges lies in the beautiful valleys of the Exe and Winn. Bye Common provides extensive views over the Exe valley, with potential sightings of wild red deer and waterside birds.



Royal Oak SS 906348

This beautiful thatched farmhouse and inn dates back to the 16th century. The original farmhouse developed from a simple two-roomed longhouse that is now a private house. The inn was an adjacent three-roomed longhouse and has had many alterations and additions. It has suffered from a series of fires to its thatched roof, the most serious being in 1995, when much of the first floor was destroyed.

Bridges

Within the village are three bridges over the Exe and five over the Winn Brook, which gives Winsford its name. This walk passes three of the latter. The first, over the main road to Exford, was built when the road was realigned in 1928. On the other side of the car park is the old road and double-arched bridges. Another two-arched bridge runs alongside the ford and is often covered when the brook floods. Beside it is the Craft Gallery, originally built as a thatched chapel and later used as the village hall.

Parish Church SS 904350

The church of St Mary Magdalene is large for an Exmoor village church. Its tower, built in three stages, rises to 90ft. The church has a Norman font and the building is thought

to date from that time. The ironwork on the doorway was made in the 13th century and is thought to have come from St Nicholas's Priory, which was further down the Exe Valley.

Red Deer

On Exmoor wild red deer just managed to survive the persecution that had exterminated them from the rest of England and Wales by the early 19th century. Today numbers have built up to several thousands and on Exmoor, with about half of their population in England and Wales, they are probably as numerous as they have ever been.

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 Valerie Birrell.

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 32384 | E-mail: DulvertonVC@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk Website: www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

MAP

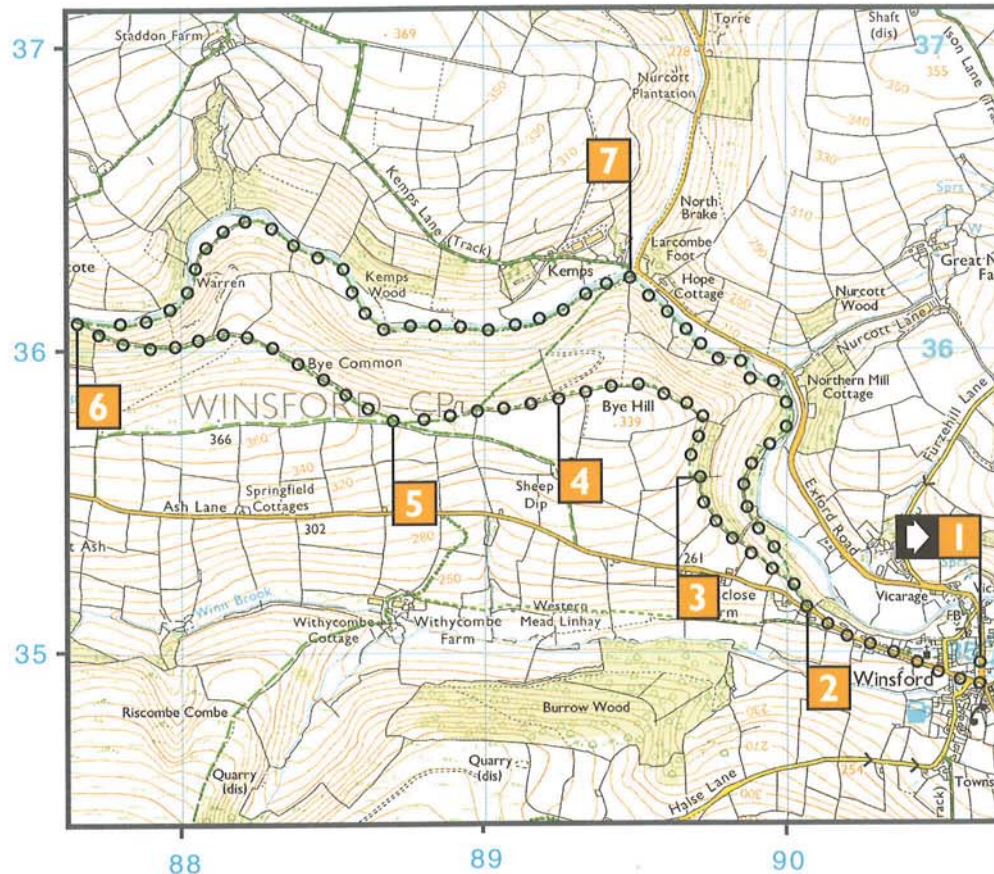
Scale 1: 25000 SHEET No. 55

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 181.




 1 Kilometre

 1 Mile

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK



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 5 miles (9 kilometres).  2 1/2 hours.  Start Point: Winsford village car park.

 Moderate. The route is marked with yellow and blue waymarks and is easy to follow.

There are uphill sections and parts of the route can be muddy and slippery at times.

 Buses to Winsford from Tiverton and Minehead.  Pub at Winsford and teas and lunches near car park in season.  WC At Winsford Village Hall.  On a lead.

WALK DIRECTIONS

 Part of the route is not on Public Rights of Way but a permissive path provided by the landowner. The walk starts at Winsford's car park in the village centre, opposite the garage.

1 From the car park, with the garage on your left and tea rooms on your right, turn right along the road towards the ford. Look left towards the **Royal Oak**. Cross the **footbridge** by the ford and carry on up Ash Lane. Continue up the road past the **parish church**.

2 After you pass the Winsford village sign, leave the road and bear right through a metal gate, following the sign for Exford and Larcombe Wood. Pass an electricity sub-station and follow a track descending slightly. After about 100 metres take the left fork signposted Exford via Bye Common. The path gradually climbs through trees and ferns. Continue through two gates, after which are views back to the village.

3 Turn left up a short, steep stretch, then right, following waymarks along the edge of the field. Go through the next gate and the next gate immediately on your right. Turn left and rise gradually on the track with fields on your left. Here there are views over the Exe valley with a chance of seeing **red deer**.

4 Go through the gate further along the path and continue until

it merges with a wider bridleway coming from the right. Follow this to a gate. Go through the gate and follow the track up towards the middle of the field, then bear right along an indistinct path heading towards a signpost and standing stone at the centre of the common.

5 At the signpost bear right for Exford via Nethercote. Follow the grassy track with a field boundary on your right. Follow the bridleway signs through a gate and another one to the right. Turn left with the field boundary on your left, then through another gate and descend along the track to the river.

6 At the bottom of the track turn sharp right and follow the dirt road along the side of the river. Follow this for about 1 mile, passing the Millennium Wood at Larcombe Foot, until you reach a gate leading over a bridge to the Winsford-Exford road.

7 Do not go through the gate but follow the signposted path to Winsford through a gate on your right, keeping the river to your left. This path can be very muddy after rain. Without crossing the river, continue through two gates and fork right, uphill to the second signpost you passed at the beginning of the walk. From here continue straight on back to Ash Lane and retrace your steps down to the village.