

Horner Woods



Horner Woods shelter wild red deer and are said to contain Britain's largest area of ancient oak woodland. The colourful heathland of Ley Hill provides superb views towards Dunkery and the Bristol Channel coast.



POINTS OF INTEREST

Horner Mill [SS 898454](#)

The mill was built in the 1850s for John Clarke, a miller from West Lynch who was expanding his business. It milled imported corn through rollers as opposed to grindstones. The business closed before the Second World War and for a while the machinery was geared up for farm work. It has recently been restored as a house. Previous mills in Horner dated back at least to the 16th century. These included fulling mills for the cloth industry. Cloth was stretched out to dry on the village green.

Horner Water

The name of the river may come from the Saxon 'hwrnwr', meaning 'snorer'. It has many tributaries. The one that flows under Pool Bridge is Chetsford Water. From there it can be followed five miles to the sea at Bossington.

Horner Woods

The woods are a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a National Nature Reserve. They are unusual in being open to the surrounding heathland, producing a natural gradation of vegetation from the depth of the woods to the open heath. Grazing sheep and deer create an open woodland, on which depends diverse wildlife. Over 320 species of lichens can be found on the old oak and ash trees

and there are hundreds of species of beetles and most species of British bats.

Holnicote Estate

Most of the present Holnicote Estate was given to National Trust by Sir Francis Acland in 1944. The estate was established through the marriage of Sir Thomas Acland 7th Baronet to local heiress Elizabeth Dyke in 1745. At first its chief interest to the Aclands was as a sporting estate, particularly for stag hunting, which has now been discontinued on National Trust property.

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 Dr Geoffrey Shaw.

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
Website: www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

MAP

Scale 1: 25000 SHEET No. 55

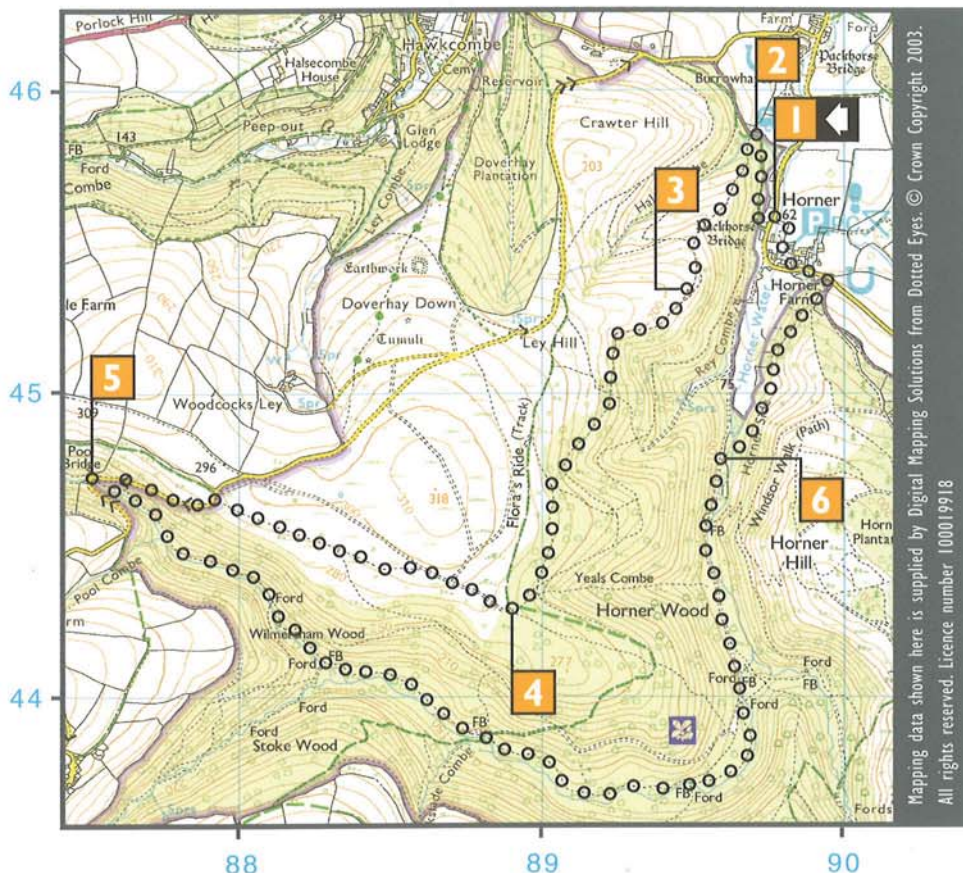
The map section below can be found on the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map OL9.

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: National Park car park at Horner.
 Moderate to strenuous: Many crossing paths in woodland make accurate navigation difficult. No public transport on route. Nearest buses are at Red Post on the A39, nearly a mile from Horner, and run from Taunton to Barnstaple. Tea gardens at Horner in season. WC At Horner car park. On a lead.

WALK DIRECTIONS

All of the land covered by this walk belongs to the National Trust. Much of the walk is not on Public Rights of Way but on permissive paths maintained by the Trust.

1 Leave the car park via the car entrance. Turn left and along the road. Within a few metres turn right on the footpath which crosses the old packhorse bridge into **Horner Woods**. Turn right after the bridge and continue ahead for another 300 metres above the river on your right.

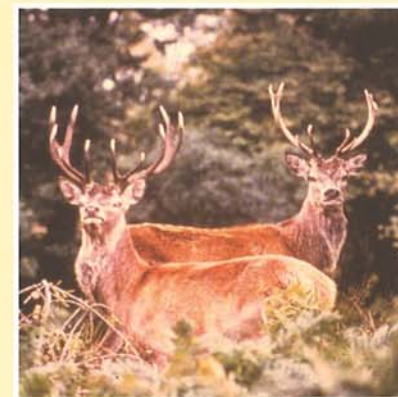
2 Opposite the camp site and just before the path crosses a stream, turn sharp left up Pentley Path. The path rises steeply through woodland and out onto heath. It eventually meets Granny's Ride Path. Turn left and then right, following the signs to the seat.

3 At Pentley Seat continue uphill. After another 400 metres continue ahead at a crossing of broad paths. Keep ahead in the same direction. There are many forks but keep ahead with the woodland as close as you can to your left but without entering it. 900 metres after the last broad crossing you will come to another crossing of broad tracks. These are Flora's Ride and Lord Ebrington's Path but are not signposted.

4 Keep ahead at the crossing. In 200 metres there is a fork. Keep left and on the same level, still with the woodland on your left but not entering it. In another 800 metres you meet a road. Turn left and descend to Pool Bridge.

5 Without crossing the bridge, turn left and follow the path downstream with **Horner Water** on your right. There are many forks and bridges but do not cross the river and keep it on your right for the next 3 kms.

6 From the broad track turn right over a wooden footbridge. Keep to the path that runs left, passing a series of weirs and following the disused mill leat. In 400 metres this brings you out at the foot of a steep bridleway behind **Horner Mill**. Turn down to the left and left again along the road. Pass in front of the mill and shortly turn right down a lane beside the tea gardens. This leads back to the car park.



Red Deer

Exmoor is a stronghold for wild red deer, with half of the population for the species in England and Wales. They are particularly common in Horner Woods but are more easily seen when they come out onto the surrounding fields or heathland to graze in early morning or evening.