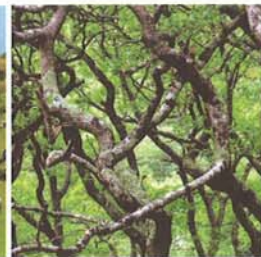


# Countisbury and Brendon



The Foreland's massive cliffs provide superb views along the Exmoor coast and a contrast between its exposed western side and sheltered, wooded eastern side. The East Lyn river tumbles rapidly through pools with trout and salmon.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

### East Lyn Valley

From Rockford to Lynmouth the East Lyn cuts one of the deepest gorges in Britain. Early in the Ice Age the valley was much shallower and continued through the Valley of Rocks. Rising sea levels in a warm part of the Ice Age caused coastal erosion and the river fell to the sea at Lynmouth, quickly deepening its valley whilst cutting back from the sea in a series of waterfalls.

### Whitebeam Trees

Whitebeam trees are so called because of the pale undersides to their leaves. There are several species in Britain and in isolated places they have hybridised to form separate species. Around Watersmeet and the Exmoor coast there are 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. The varieties are difficult to identify but whitebeams can easily be found along the route around Watersmeet.

### South West Coast Path

At over 600 miles long, this is the longest of Britain's National Trails. The Somerset and North Devon section was opened at a ceremony on the Foreland in 1975 and later re-routed through agreement with the Glenthorne Estate. The route starts at

Minehead and the Exmoor section includes the highest, wildest and remotest parts.

### Rhododendron

*Rhododendron ponticum* originates from Turkey. On the Glenthorne Estate, it was introduced in the 19th century as cover for game, including wild boar. Although attractive when in flower in June, it is poisonous to British wildlife and has covered huge areas of the estate, ousting the rare native plants of the coastal heaths and woodlands. At Seven Thorns a large area has been cleared and trees planted under the National Park Authorities' New Native Woodland scheme.

## 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 Eileen Skipworth.

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)

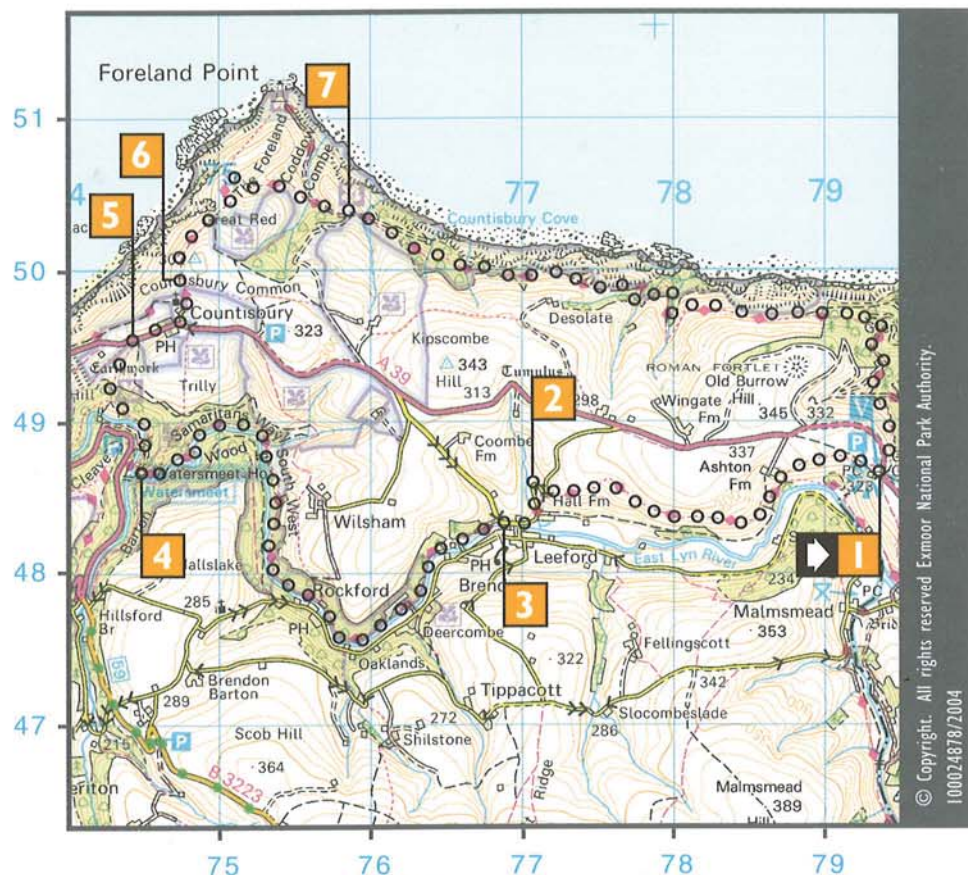
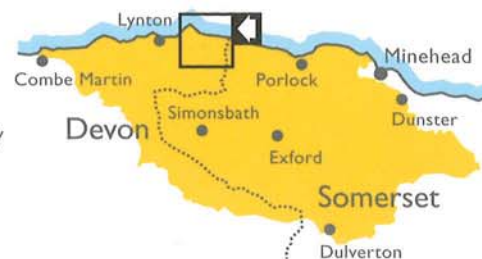
## MAP

Scale 1: 50000 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



- 10 miles (16 kilometres).
- 5 hours.
- Start Point: County Gate car park.
- Strenuous. Navigation is mostly easy, but take care during first mile. Steep climbs up Chiselcombe and Seven Thorns.
- Buses run between Minehead and Lynmouth along the A39.
- There are pubs at Countisbury, Brendon and Rockford and teas in season at Brendon and Watersmeet.
- WC At Watersmeet and County Gate.
- On a lead.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

The walk begins at the car park adjacent to the National Park Visitor Centre on the A39 at County Gate, 6 miles west of Porlock and 5 miles east of Lynmouth.

**1** From the car park take the path running from the corner next to the Peel memorial (opposite the entrance). This runs along the crest of Ashton Cleave. Keep straight ahead. The path drops past Ashton Farm and climbs slightly again.

**2** After a mile and a half the path meets a minor road, from which there is a left turn to drop and regain the road towards Brendon. At the junction by the bridge at Brendon keep ahead and do not cross the bridge.

**3** Where the road turns uphill to the right, keep ahead on the path by the river, following signs to Rockford and Watersmeet. Keep the river on your left for two and a half miles.

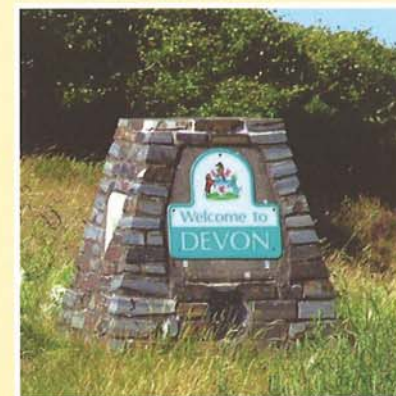
**4** From Watersmeet House, with the river on your left, continue towards Lynmouth. Do not cross Chiselcombe Bridge (the large stone and concrete one). Continue for about a quarter of a mile and fork right up the steep combe towards Countisbury.

**5** At the top of the combe turn right and go up the road to the Sandpiper Inn. Turn left up the lane to the church. Go through the churchyard and keep ahead over the brow of the hill to join the Coast Path coming along the cliff from the left. Coast Path signs

with their acorn waymarks are followed for most of the way back.

**6** Keep right following the cliff for a few hundred yards, then dropping down a combe to the right to join the lighthouse road. Turn right up the road to where it bends sharply upwards to the right. Continue ahead on the path and through a gate.

**7** Continue on the Coast Path for another three miles, to where it cuts inland through the woodland of the Glenthorne Estate. The path goes up the drive to Glenthorne House for a short distance, then drops to the spring at Sisters' Fountain before rising to a broader level track which takes the Coast Path to the left. Here make a right turn to climb steeply up Seven Thorns to the A39 and cross the road to County Gate.



## County Gate

*The National Park Visitor Centre was the gatehouse for the Glenthorne Estate. Near the old gateposts a cairn marks the county boundary.*