

# EXMOOR AND THE QUANTOCKS

## Outstanding Circular Walks

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# Hunter's Inn and Woody Bay

**Start** Hunter's Inn

**Distance** 4½ miles (7.2km)

**Height gain** 900 feet (275m)

**Approximate time** 2½ hours

**Parking** Opposite NT shop and information centre (honesty box) or on laneside

**Route terrain** Coastal tracks and quiet lanes; steep descent to Hunter's Inn

**Ordnance Survey maps** Landranger 180 (Barnstaple & Ilfracombe), Explorer OL9 (Exmoor)

## GPS waypoints

-  SS 655 480
-  A SS 659 490
-  B SS 673 486
-  C SS 670 485
-  D SS 665 479

*Here is one of those ideal, leisurely half-day walks which, with comparatively little effort, enables you to enjoy the most outstanding views. It divides itself naturally into three almost equal sections: above the lovely, steep-sided and thickly wooded Heddon valley, the spectacular stretch of coast between Heddon's Mouth and Woody Bay, and along quiet paths and winding lanes back to the start at Hunter's Inn. The paths are generally wide and well surfaced with gentle gradients.*

Even by Exmoor standards, the valley of the little River Heddon at Hunter's Inn is a particularly narrow, steep-sided and secluded one – accessible only by

*Woody Bay from the coast path*

similarly narrow, steep and twisting lanes.

 Walk down the road towards Hunter's Inn and take the path to the right of it, signposted to Martinhoe, Woody Bay and Heddon's Mouth. Go through a gap to enter the National

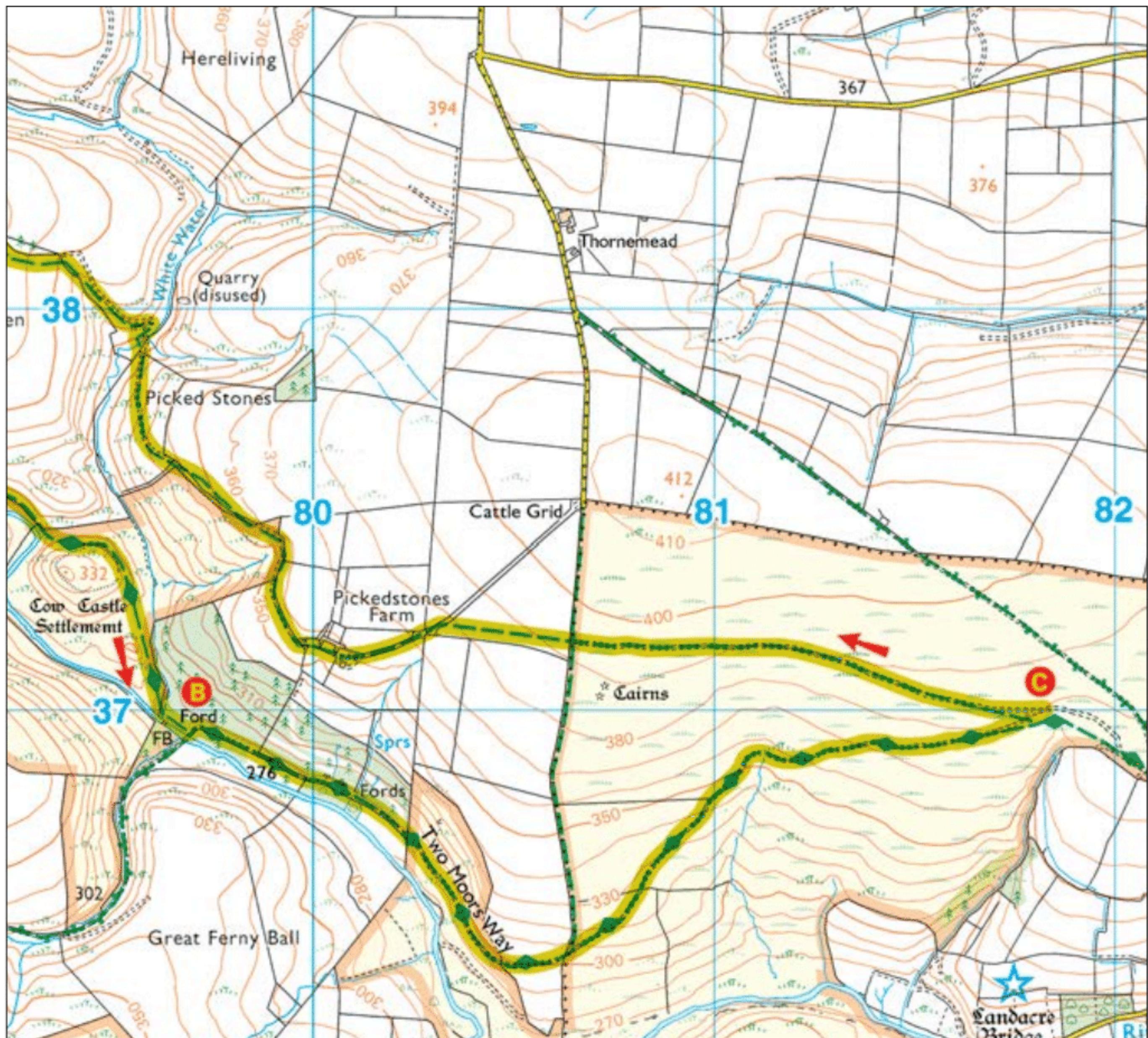




*Beech trees on the banks of the River Barle*

path through the wood, bearing right at a bridlepath sign and heading downhill back to Simonsbath. On this final

stretch of the walk comes one more outstanding and memorable view: looking down through the trees on the left towards the river and Simonsbath Bridge.



well-surfaced track, constructed to commemorate the devotion of Lady Harriet Acland, who nursed her husband back to health after he was wounded as a prisoner of the French in the American War, keeps along the wooded banks of the river to the hamlet of Hartford **D**. Here bear right at a bridleway sign to Upton, go through the gate of Hartford Mill and bear left in front of a house along a fenced path to the river. Turn left along the bank for about 50 yards and then turn right over a footbridge. Now turn left along the other bank of the river to a gate; go through and keep ahead, following the fenced path and bearing slightly right to join a concrete water authority road; bear right to a gate by a cattle-grid. Go through and continue along the road, now with the river on your left, and at a fork keep ahead along the uphill road,

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*Wimbleball Lake from Haddon Hill*

climbing to the top of the right-hand side of the dam. Continue to another gate by a cattle-grid, go through and keep ahead, still walking uphill, to a bridleway sign **E**.

Here turn left along a track which heads downhill to a gate. Go through to rejoin Lady Harriet's Drive, which curves left down towards the lake and then bears right alongside it, passing through a gate into woodland. The next part of the walk is particularly attractive as the pleasant grassy track continues through the wood, with the waters of the lake sparkling through the trees below on the left – at this point the lake becomes quite narrow. On reaching a footpath sign turn right **F** and follow a rather indistinct footpath uphill. On meeting a track turn left for a few yards, then bear right and right again on a narrow uphill path on the left edge of woodland. Where the hill levels off bear right for the car park.

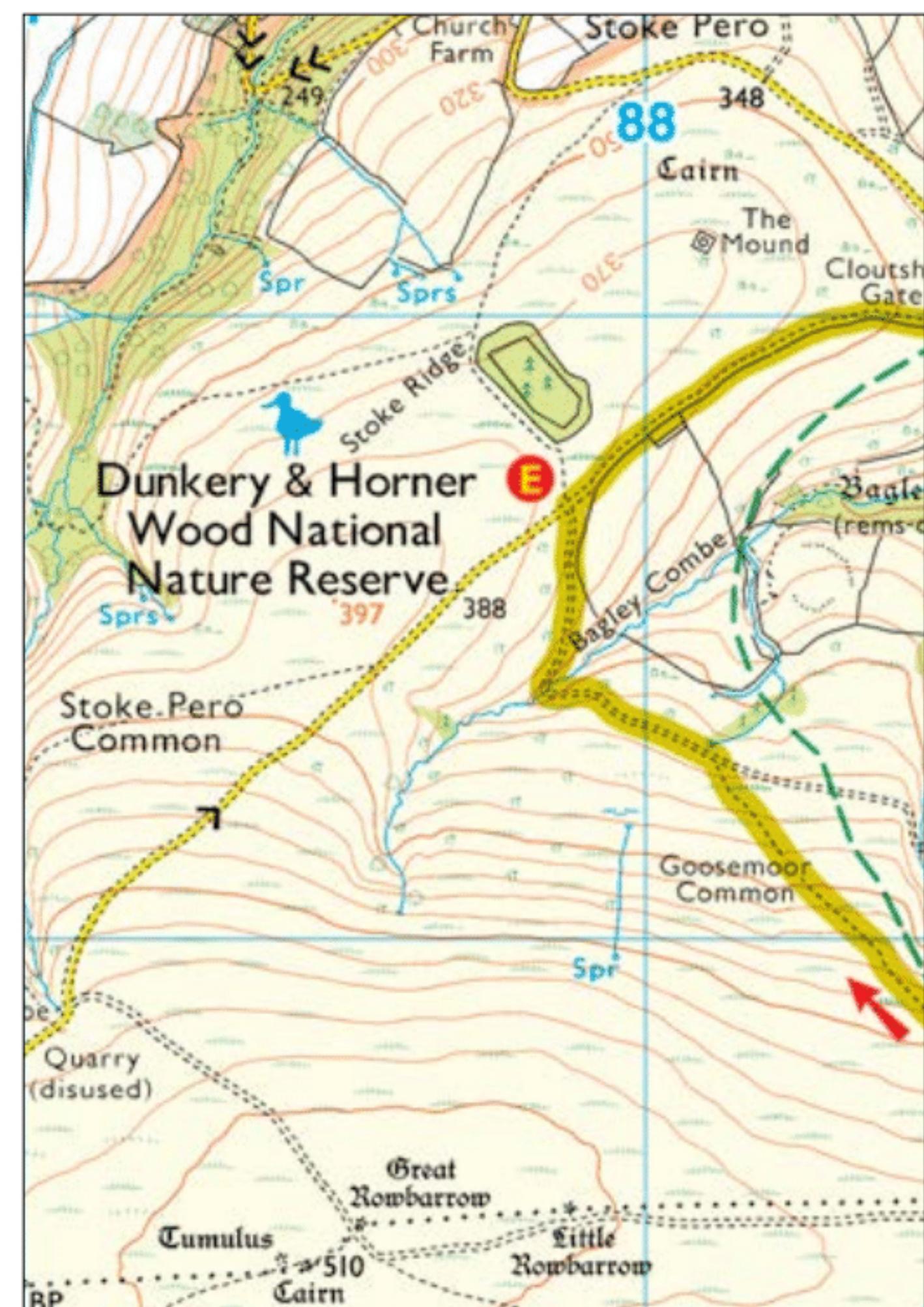


# Dunkery Beacon

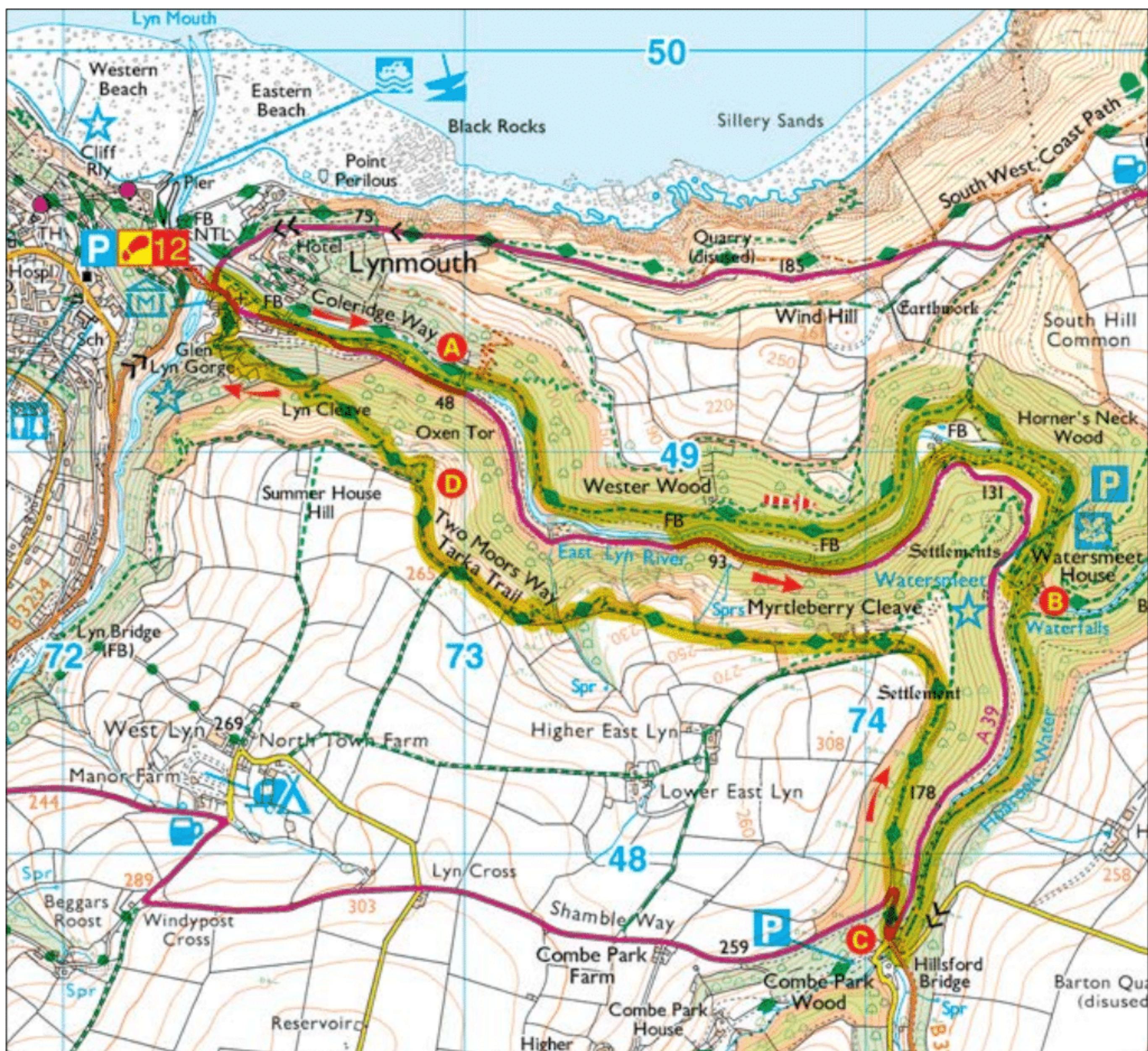
<b>Start</b>	Webber's Post	<b>GPS waypoints</b>
<b>Distance</b>	7½ miles (12.1km), shorter version 6 miles (9.6km)	 SS 903 439
<b>Height gain</b>	1,820 feet (555m), shorter version 1,330 feet (405m)	 SS 903 433
<b>Approximate time</b>	4 hours, shorter version 3 hours	 SS 896 425
<b>Parking</b>	Car park at start	 SS 891 415
<b>Route terrain</b>	Moorland and woodland tracks, quiet lanes, steep and steady ascents/descents	 SS 886 415
<b>Dog friendly</b>	On leads on Dunkery Hill and commons	 SS 878 426
<b>Ordnance Survey maps</b>	Landranger 181 (Minehead & Brendon Hills), Explorer OL9 (Exmoor)	 SS 892 431
		 SS 901 441
		 SS 906 448
		 SS 910 444

Although the highest point on Exmoor at 519m, Dunkery Beacon is an easy, gradual climb from any direction and the modest effort rewards you with a magnificent view, not only over a large part of Exmoor but over much of the surrounding countryside and coast as well. This is another of the walks on the Holnicote Estate of the Aclands, now owned by the National Trust, and many of the paths are named after members of the Acland family. The descent from Dunkery is as easy as the climb and the walk continues along the wooded valleys of Horner Water and East Water, involving some minor 'ups and downs'.

Probably the stiffest climb awaits those who do the full walk – the final haul from Luccombe village back to the starting point. Although there is no real danger in bad weather conditions, this is a walk best saved for a fine day when it can be enjoyed to the full.



SCALE 1:25000 or 2½ INCHES to 1 MILE 4CM to 1KM



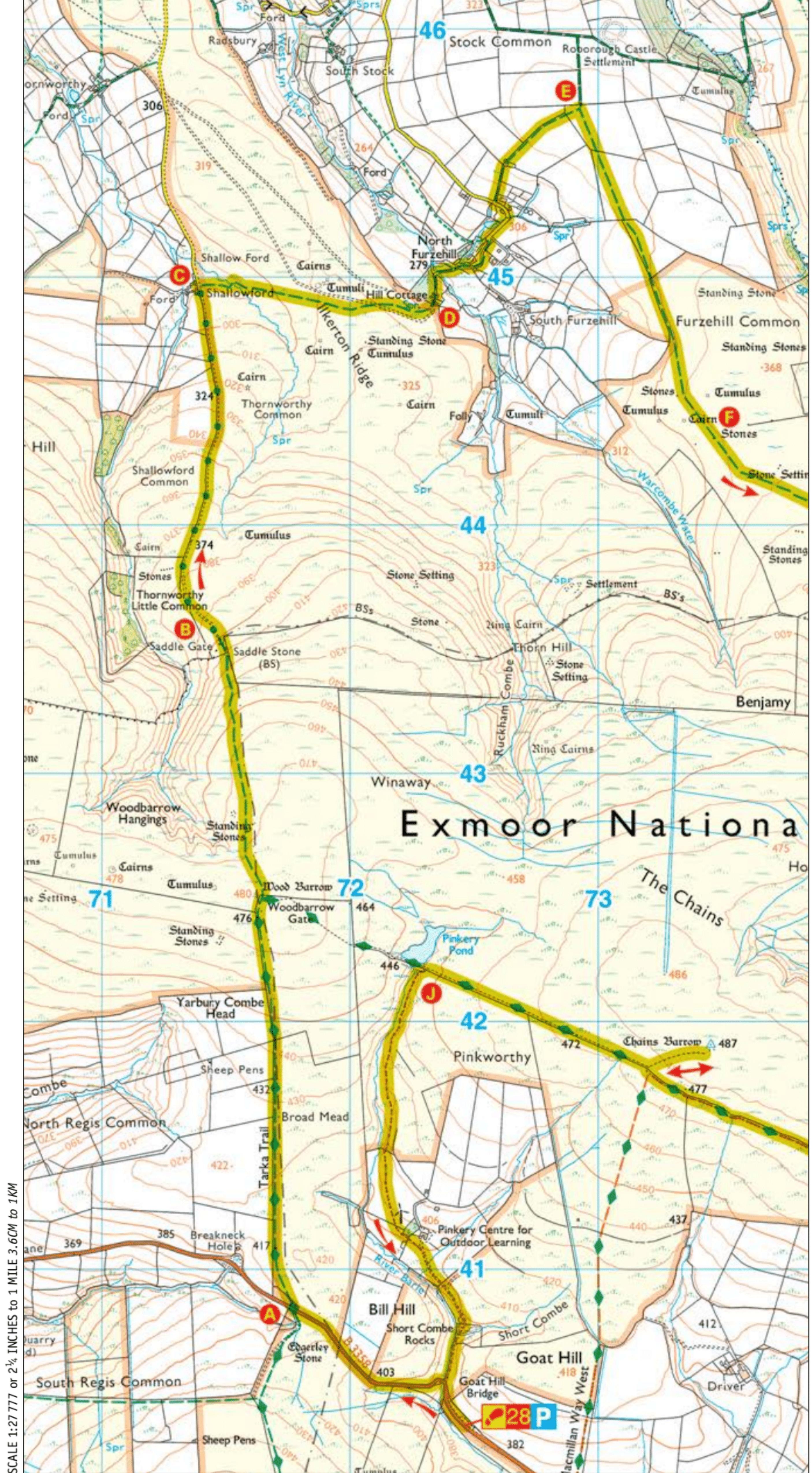
SCALE 1:25000 or 2½ INCHES to 1 MILE 4 CM to 1 KM

0 200 400 600 800 METRES 1 KILOMETRES  
0 200 400 600 YARDS  $\frac{1}{2}$  MILES

car park, near the bridge over the East Lyn River. Take the path that runs beside the car park along the right bank of the river, keeping ahead at the first footbridge but turning left **A** over the second one to enter the National Trust property of Watersmeet. Turn right to follow the other bank through the enchanting, narrow, steep-sided, thickly wooded East Lyn valley. Walking through this virtual gorge, it is easy to envisage how much damage these rocky waters could do when greatly swollen with floodwater. The path bears left uphill, signposted 'Watersmeet, Countisbury'. At the next fork you can either bear left on the Woodland Walk and follow signs to Watersmeet or – if you want to keep near the river – bear

right downhill to cross a bridge. Turn left on the other side and follow the river upstream, passing another bridge, and eventually passing between fences at Myrtleberry. The path joins a drive; keep ahead by the river, eventually turning left over Chiselcombe Bridge (the original was destroyed in 1952 by floodwater). Turn right to continue to Watersmeet **B**.

This is a charming spot and the waters that meet here are the East Lyn and Hoaroak Water. Cross the footbridge in front of Watersmeet House, originally built in the 19th century as a shooting and fishing lodge by the Halliday family, and now a National Trust shop and information centre with a convenient **café**. Turn right for a few yards and just before the next footbridge turn left along a path signposted 'Hillsford Bridge and



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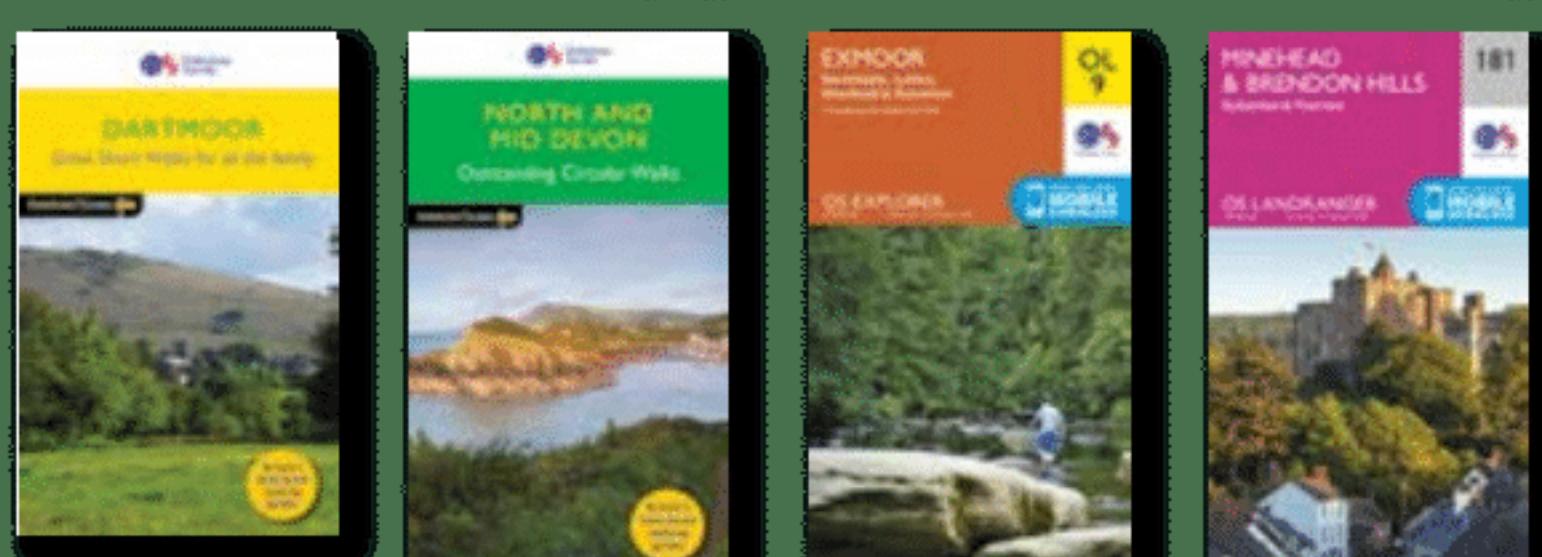
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