



## Walk 1. Excursion to Lundy.

- ● Various routes possible, up to 9 miles and ascents and descents of 700 metres.

**Terrain:** Most of the island can be reached on good paths and tracks, with some optional detours across moorland and over rocks. Lundy is basically a plateau; ! be aware that there are many unprotected drops over steep cliffs.

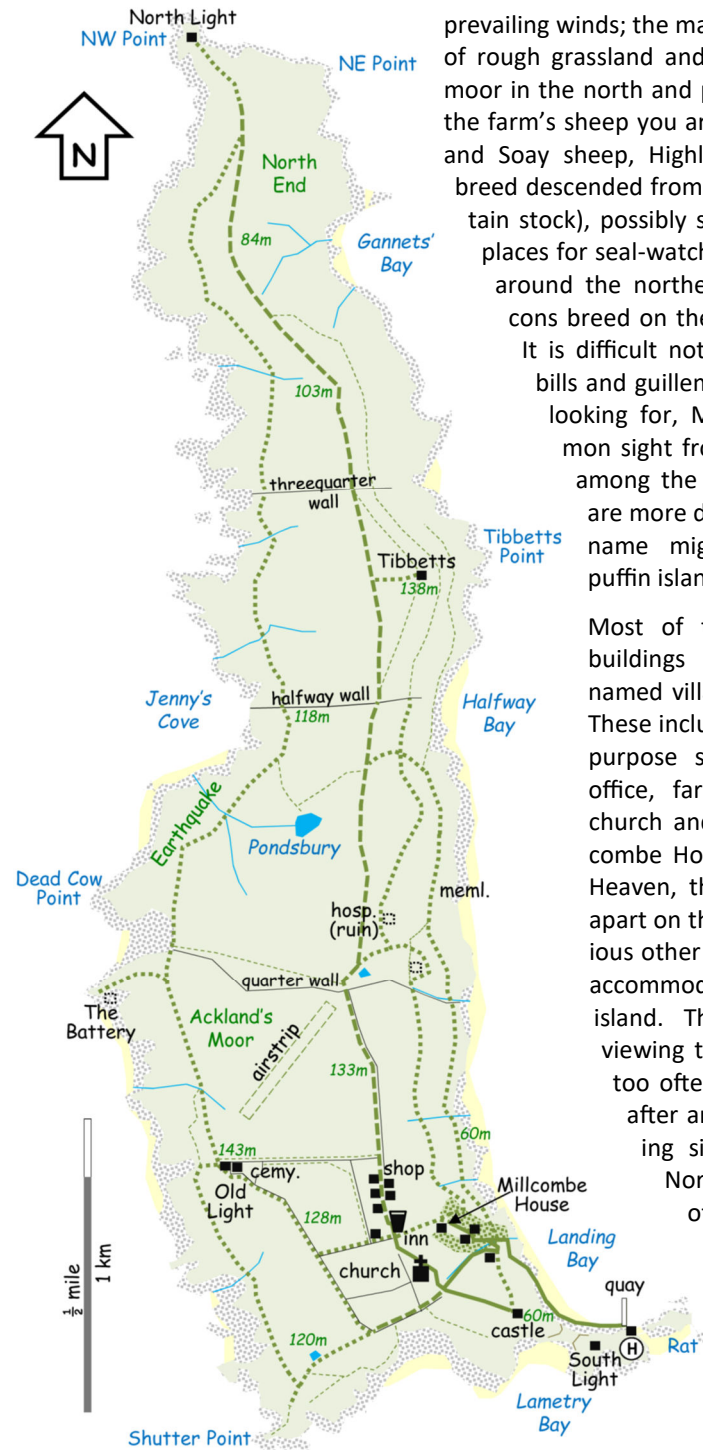
**Access:** Day trips by passenger ferry (MS *Oldenburg*) from Ilfracombe or Bideford, return fare £50 in 2023. The ferry runs midweek and Saturdays between Easter and October: check the timetable at [www.lundyisland.co.uk](http://www.lundyisland.co.uk), pick up a leaflet or call in to the ferry offices on the quay in either town (advance booking advised particularly on Saturdays and during school holidays). Starting from Bideford gives longer on the island, typically 6-7 hours, while a trip from Ilfracombe may only allow you four hours. Small boat charters can sometimes also be booked from north Devon ports. In **Ilfracombe** there is expensive all-day parking at the quay (SS 526 479, EX34 9EQ) or cheaper parking near the Hillsborough swimming pool off the A399 (SS 529 474, EX34 9QL, allow at least 20 minutes to walk down). For **Bideford**, park at the Riverbank long-stay car park (SS 456 271, EX39 2QS) less than half a mile from the ferry terminal. Frequent bus 21/21A connects Ilfracombe, Barnstaple and Bideford. Self-catering accommodation also available any time of year.

**Map:** A good detailed map is provided on the ferry leaflet, or a larger one can be bought cheaply from the ticket offices; or OS 139 Bideford, Ilfracombe and Barnstaple.

**Refreshments:** In the Marisco Tavern on Lundy (food items also available from the shop), on the *Oldenburg*, and in the departure ports.

VIEWED FROM THE NORTH COAST OF DEVON, the island of Lundy appears as a wall of stone in the Bristol Channel. It is sometimes described as a piece of Exmoor that has broken off and floated out to sea, though a visit will reveal that it is geologically more like Dartmoor. Situated 17 miles west of Baggy Point near Croyde and 11 miles north-west of Hartland Point, the island is approximately three miles north to south by half a mile wide. Lundy has historically been kept as a private estate, most notoriously by the de Mariscos in the early medieval period, continuing with different owners through to the last century. The last owners, the Harmanes, sold up in 1969 and the island was bought by the National Trust with a generous donation. Lundy is managed by the Landmark Trust, who have several holiday properties of varying sizes; most of the accommodation is fairly basic, and it needs to be booked well in advance. The only permanent residents are island staff, and there is a single pub and shop.

Lundy is composed mainly of granite, with slate and shale in the south-eastern corner. The island is basically a plateau averaging a little over 100 metres in height, walled by cliffs. In places the rocks have been eroded into curious formations, particularly in the area known as the Earthquake and around the Devil's Slide, both on the west coast. These are somewhat reminiscent of the Dartmoor tors or the Valley of the Rocks. There is little tree growth on the island other than in Millcombe Valley and the undercliff just to the north, which escape the



prevailing winds; the majority of the island is a mixture of rough grassland and dry heath, with low heather moor in the north and plenty of bracken. Apart from the farm's sheep you are likely to see semi-wild goats and Soay sheep, Highland cattle, ponies (a distinct breed descended from New Forest and Welsh Mountain stock), possibly sika deer, and seals – the best places for seal-watching are in the landing bay and around the northern lighthouse. Peregrine falcons breed on the island, and seabirds abound. It is difficult not to see oystercatchers, razor-bills and guillemots if you know what you are looking for, Manx shearwaters are a common sight from the ferry, and puffins nest among the western rocks, although they are more difficult to find than the island's name might suggest (lund-ey means puffin island in old Norse).

Most of the island's more important buildings are concentrated in an unnamed village in the south of the island. These include the pub, a well-stocked all-purpose shop and post office, estate office, farm, and several houses; the church and castle are nearby, and Millcombe House (built in 1835 for William Heaven, then proprietor) stands a little apart on the way down to the quay. Various other houses, most used for holiday accommodation, are dotted around the island. The central lighthouse is now a viewing tower open to visitors. It was too often obscured by low cloud, and after an experiment with a fog warning signal it was replaced by the North and South Lights at the end of the nineteenth century. There are information displays about different aspects of the island at the quay, near the shop and in the church.

**Walking on Lundy** It is difficult to get lost on Lundy, as there are essentially eastern and western coast paths plus a broad track that runs northwards from the island's hub along its 'spine' to the northern lighthouse. You can wander over most of Lundy without restriction, the main exception being the area around the southern lighthouse above the landing quay. Beware of steep drops, and keep in mind when you need to be back at the ferry; if you need to return quickly, from most parts the best route will be to go inland, pick up the central track, and head to the Marisco Tavern, down to Millcombe House, then you can join the road that descends to the quay. Two routes are suggested below. Both of these use the principle that it is best to start off by exploring the more distant parts of the island first, then you can relax in the village area before returning to the ferry (most visitors tend to make a beeline for the pub or shop, then explore in whatever time is left). If you are relying on the pub for lunch, the clockwise route is more practical as you can detour from the Old Light.

● **The whole island anticlockwise.** 9 miles, around 550m of ascent; 4 hours constant walking, allow 6 hours. Only really feasible on trips from Bideford unless you walk very quickly and don't make any stops.

As you walk up from the quay, turn right opposite the first building you come to and go through a small gate: if you arrive at Millcombe House you have gone too far. This narrow, uneven and undulating path takes you above the coast but beneath the clifftops. Note a Heligoland bird trap, then further on a quarry with a barely-readable memorial to John Pennington Harman VC, son of former proprietor Martin Coles Harman. Shortly after here keep left on the main path, rising to the plateau. Continue ahead and come to the main north-south track; turn right here, cross the Halfway Wall and pass Tibbetts (an old admiralty lookout). After the Threequarter Wall you will head across a broad expanse of heather moor to the north end of the island. Steps take you down to the North Light. Return to the main track and start back along it, but soon take the coast path to the right. This continues (with various detours to viewpoints) all the way down the west coast, noted for its rock formations, sea-birds (there is a chance of seeing a puffin or two here in season), wild goats and Soay sheep. Just after the Halfway Wall you can make a detour along a narrow track on the left to Pondsbury, the largest body of water on the island; it is here that you may see Highland cattle.

The path continues past the Earthquake, an area of broken rock and chasms. Just past the Quarter Wall there is an option of detouring down to the Battery, where cannon and later rockets were fired as a warning to shipping during fog. Less than half a mile beyond is the Old Light, which offers views across the island, and inland of it the cemetery; one of the graves contains the remains of an eight-foot giant, probably medieval. Return to the coast and walk down to Shutter Point, Lundy's far southwestern tip. Turn left to walk along the south coast until the small, squat castle comes into view; it is now used as holiday accommodation. Beyond the castle is a small cave. It is possible to drop down and climb up the steps to the lighthouse enclosure, but not to visit the light.

From the castle take the main track to St. Helen's Church, built in 1897 by the appropriately-named Hudson Grosett Heaven, vicar and proprietor. The track now takes you into the island's village or hub, where the Marisco Tavern, toilets and shop can be found. Give yourself a little time to explore the area around Millcombe House and the flagpole before returning down the road to the quay.

● **The southern half clockwise.** 6 miles, around 350m of ascent; 2 hours 30 minutes constant walking, allow 4 hours. Suitable on trips from Ilfracombe, and easy to shorten. The clockwise route can also be extended northwards, with a relatively quick return on the central track.

On the route up from the quay, look for a blue painted building above and to the left (the former Sunday School), and take a narrow path a little way below it. This brings you to a bungalow (Hammers), a seat with views back along the eastern coast, and on to the castle. As for the anticlockwise walk you may want first to explore beyond the castle, but your route takes the wide track towards the church. You can visit the church now or save it until the end; your route turns left before the church on a path to Shutter Point. If you divert slightly inland, you will come to a large wooden post (the Rocket Pole) and a small pond. From Shutter Point head northwards along the coast, diverting briefly to the Old Light. For a short route back (or lunch in the Marisco Tavern) continue past the cemetery into the village.

Otherwise continue north, with the optional detour to the Battery on the left. The path takes you past the Earthquake and Jenny's Cove (a good place to watch for seabirds) before coming to the Halfway Wall, where you can turn right and then right again on the main track running along the spine of the island. (Alternatively, a short way before the wall turn right on a narrow path that brings you to Pondsbury, continuing across to the track). If you are short of time the track will return you to the village, otherwise before you reach the quarter wall look for a path on the left to a row of ruined cottages. Just beyond them another path follows the top of the cliff. Continue south on it until you come to Millcombe House; turn right here and head up to the village. When it's time to leave, the road will take you back to the quay.



Lundy: Landing Bay; MS Oldenburg; Old Light; rock formation; Northwest Point.

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