



Walk 10. Hunter's Inn, Voley and the upper Heddon valley.

- 5.8 miles, ascents and descents of 415 metres. 2 hours 30 minutes constant walking, allow around 3½ hours.

Terrain: Mainly paths and farm tracks, short sections on fields and roads. Can become very muddy and waterlogged between Trentishoe Manor and Voley.

Access: Park at Hunter's Inn (SS 655 482, EX31 4PY; access on narrow lanes). There is a National Trust car park (£ or free to members), or limited free parking on the road.

Map: Croydecycle 05 Combe Martin and Hunter's Inn or 54 Lynton Lynmouth with Hunter's Inn; OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

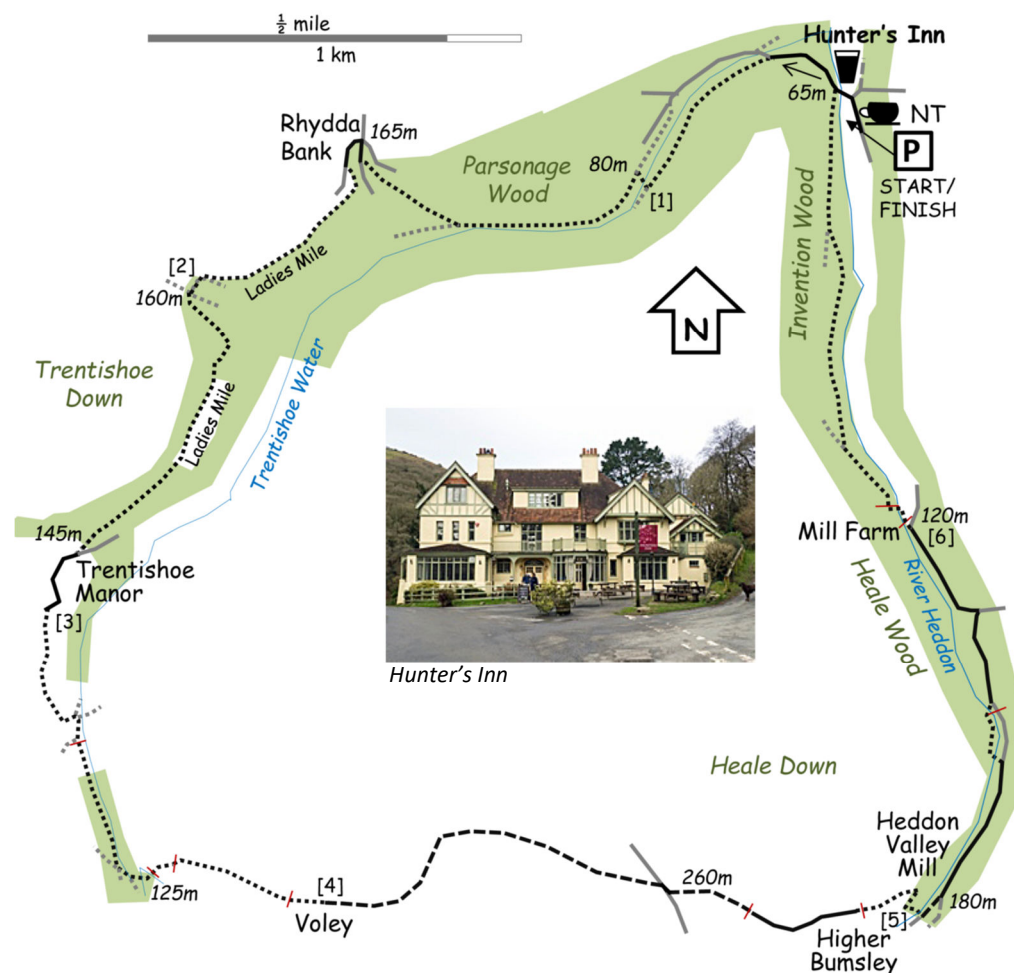
Refreshments: Hunter's Inn, at the inn itself or the NT café.

HUNTER'S INN IS AN IDEAL BASE FOR EXPLORING THE LOWER REACHES OF THE HEDDON VALLEY and joining the Coast Path, but routes can also be made up away from the coast. This walk heads out along the wooded Trentishoe Water valley and on to the southern edge of Heale Down, before returning downstream along the Heddon Valley. It is a good walk for a hot day: not too strenuous and there is plenty of shade. Even when I walked this route on a busy July afternoon the only other people I encountered were all within sight of Hunter's Inn.

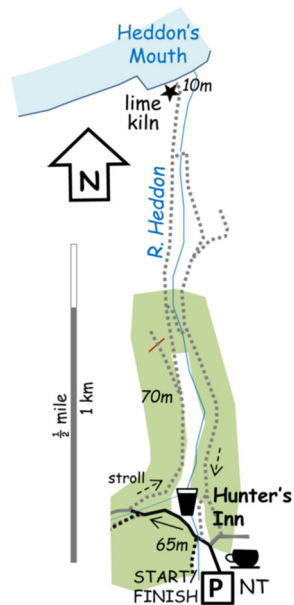
From the National Trust car park walk to Hunter's Inn and follow the road over the Heddon to its left. A couple of minutes later approach a second bridge; turn left just before it on to a wide track signposted to Vention and Heale. Look out for a sign to Trentishoe Mill and Rhydda Bank; turn sharply right here, walking between a house and its stone outbuilding (13mins, [1]). Cross a footbridge and turn left. At a fork take the right-hand route to Rhydda Bank. A steep but short climb alongside a seasonal stream brings you to a road. Turn right here then left at the crossroads. As you round the bend take the path to the left (Ladies Mile). This atmospheric contour path takes you past lichen-clad oaks, with occasional views to the left over a lush valley. In ten minutes arrive at a crossing path (40mins, [2]) and continue ahead. A little under 15 minutes later turn right on to a lane opposite the entrance to Trentishoe Manor.

The lane ends at an isolated house (Rudd's Cottage; 55mins, [3]). Your way on is upwards on a stony path to the right of the cottage. In about five minutes descend to a small bridge, bear left, then almost immediately turn right and upwards towards Voley (and) Dean. Half a minute later bear left, either over a stile or through an open gateway. At the next crossing take the left-hand path downwards towards Voley, then shortly after turn left again and cross two

footbridges; it can become very muddy and waterlogged here. Keep right in the field and go through a gate, then head slightly left and upwards to the field boundary, turning right to walk alongside the fence. At the end of this long field go through a kissing gate next to a field gate, joining a grassy track and coming to Voley Farm and its holiday cottages (1hr20mins, [4]). Bear left here on to the stony farm drive. This rises gradually, after around 15 minutes coming to a narrow lane. Cross diagonally right and continue along the drive towards Higher Bumsley. Go through a gate and downwards on a tarmac drive; you will be able to see Parra-combe in the middle distance. The drive comes to a small car park at a farm: continue ahead here on a grassy path, taking a sharp right-hand bend to drop down to a stream, the River Heddon (1hr50mins, [5]).



Cross a footbridge then turn left in front of Heddon Valley Mill, a large triple-gabled house. Keep left on the drive and follow it along the river for two or three minutes until you are directed to the left over a footbridge. The path soon crosses back again, next to a high metal gate. Turn left to continue along the drive until it meets a road. Turn left and follow the road to Mill Farm, a white-painted stone house (2hr5mins, [6]). Turn left here into a field, signposted (to the left of the gate) to Hunter's Inn and Heale. At its far corner cross the river on a footbridge and turn right. Go through a gate and walk beside a dry stone wall. Start to head uphill then take the right-hand path down rough steps, signposted to Hunter's Inn. Ignore a path coming in from the left. A little later you will arrive at a road; turn right to cross back over the river to the inn (left to continue to Heddon's Mouth).



The walk can easily be extended to **Heddon's Mouth**, a two-mile return stroll (map left). Coming from Mill Farm turn left at the road as if you were restarting the main walk, but this time cross the second bridge and turn right immediately afterwards on the signposted path. Follow this easy path to Heddon's Mouth, where there is a lime kiln and small shingle beach. If the water is low it may be possible to splash across at some stepping-stones, but otherwise return to the first footbridge to cross the river and walk back along the other side. Pass another footbridge then look out for a right turn which will take you through a garden area back to Hunter's Inn and the road.