



Walk 13. Lee Bay and Woody Bay.

- 5.5 miles, ascents and descents of 620 metres. 3 hours continuous walking, allow up to 4 hours in all.

Terrain: Paths, roads and fields, with some steep and possibly slippery sections.

Access: Start from the Lee Bay car park off the Lee Abbey toll road (SS 695 481 near EX35 6JJ), or alternatively the parking area above Woody Bay (SS 676 486, approached on a very narrow lane either from Lee Bay or Martinhoe).

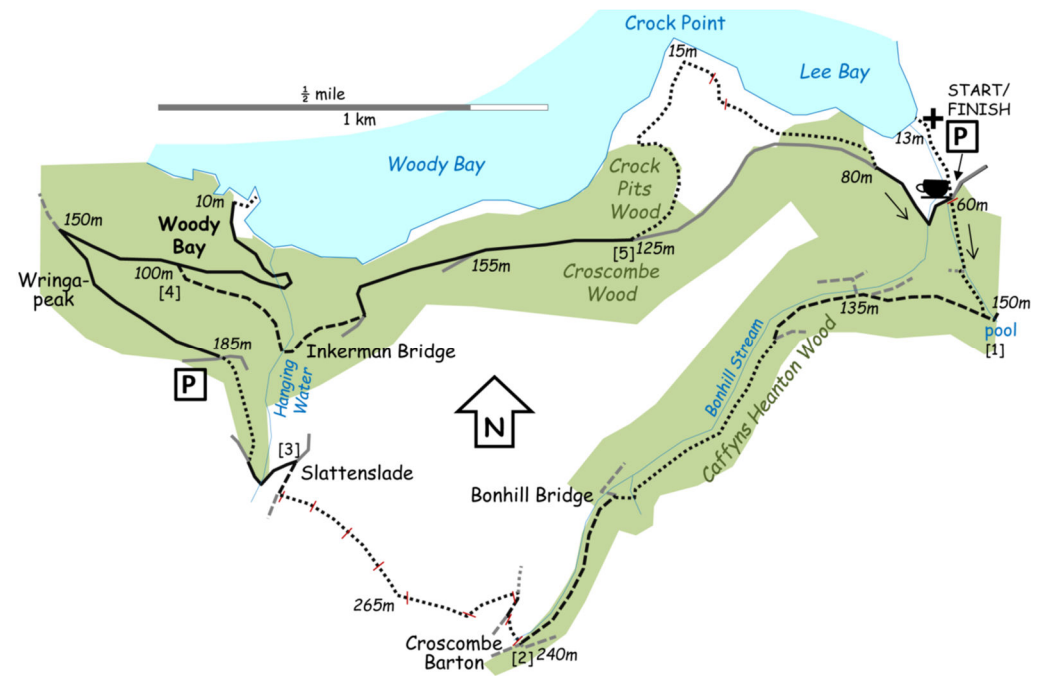
Map: Croydecycle 54 Lynton & Lynmouth with Hunters Inn or OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Seasonal tea garden at Lee Bay, otherwise in Lynton/Lynmouth or at Hunter's Inn.

THIS SHORT BUT STRENUOUS WALK connects Lee Bay and Woody Bay via secluded wooded tracks, returning on the Coast Path. The views are superb, and the far section involves an atmospheric descent and re-ascent through a woodland wonderland punctuated by individually-styled houses, leafy combs and a babbling stream. The route has a significant height gain for its length, but apart from the climb back out of Woody Bay it never feels quite as strenuous as the figures suggest: the ever-changing landscape and expectation of something new around every corner means the walk will never become a slog.

Start from the Lee Bay car park. Walk back to the road and cross it to the cottage opposite; take the track on its right as you face it, signposted to Bonhill Bridge. When the track crosses the stream, continue on the narrower path with the now cascading stream on your left: the path becomes steeper and possibly slippery, and eventually rises on steps to a broad vehicle track. A small pond is on the left (15mins, [1]), but your onward route is to the right.

Keep left when you meet a path from the right (this is the continuation of the track from the cottage). A little later ignore a bridge on the right, continuing ahead on a woodland path. Keep right at the next T-junction to stay above the stream. Ten minutes later the path crosses a side-stream, then descends on slippery 'steps' of rocks and scree to a small disused building. Soon come to Bonhill Bridge; don't cross it, but follow the bridleway signposted Crocombe Barton. In another ten minutes come to the farm gate; just before it (50mins, [2]) turn right as signposted down steps, cross a small bridge, enter a field, and just uphill on the opposite side go over a ladder stile. Turn right on an enclosed track, then at its end look for a pedestrian gate on the left. Go through into the field and turn left, keeping close to the left-hand boundary. In the next field turn right, following the right-hand edge through several more fields until you reach a rough track. Turn right here (Slattenslade), then left at the T-junction on to a narrow road (1hr5mins, [3]).



Follow the road around a sharp right-hand bend. Just beyond, an unmarked path descends to the right. Follow it through the woods. Come to another road; the Woody Bay parking area is on the left here. Cross diagonally left and go downhill on a no through road. Follow the road past Wringapeak, a prominent house on the left, then through a hairpin bend. Less than five minutes beyond the bend come to a broad path to the right, signposted to Lynton (and New Zealand; 1hr25mins, [4]). To shorten the walk by half an hour and 100m of ascent turn off here, otherwise continue down the lane to Woody Bay. This attractive and intriguing spot was once planned to be a holiday resort to rival Lynton and Lynmouth, and although the enterprise failed it has left several grand houses including the former Woody Bay Hotel, along with the remains of a stone pier intended for visiting vessels. After exploring at your leisure climb back up the road and return to the Lynton and New Zealand junction (2hrs, [4]), turning left. Your path rounds the head of acombe before ascending gradually to a narrow road: turn left to follow it along the clifftop, keeping an eye out for the occasional car.

The clifftop road continues for over half a mile. Soon after it leaves the cliffs look out for a left turn marked 'Coast Path' (2hr25mins, [5]). Take this path to descend steps and head through woods, continue downwards, and then bear left to follow the path around a field. You will soon have views over Lee Bay, with Duty Point Tower and Lee Abbey opposite. The 'Abbey' is a Christian retreat, activity and conference centre rather than a conventional monastery. Continue over stiles and head uphill partly on steps back to the road. Turn left to round a bend and come to Lee Abbey's summer tea garden and the car park; an optional detour to the left here takes you down to Lee Bay.

Connecting walks. This walk can be connected with **walk 12** from Hunter's Inn for a strenuous but spectacular circuit. Follow walk 12 to Woody Bay then pick up this walk to Lee Bay and back to Slattenslade (the 1hr5min point, [3]). Continue around the bend and down the path on the right, but at the junction at the bottom turn left past the parking area. When the road bends sharply left, continue ahead on the lower of the two paths, a permissive bridleway that used to be the old carriage drive to Hunter's Inn. This will take you back to the inn as described in walk 12 (● 10.5 miles, ascents and descents of 1070 metres including Woody Bay).

The walk also connects with **walk 14** to make a strenuous ten mile circuit from Lynton or Lynmouth, as described in the walk 14 instructions.



Lee Abbey and Bay

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