



## Walk 14. Lynmouth, Lynton and the Valley of the Rocks.

- 5.6 miles, ascents and descents of 570 metres. 3 hours constant walking, allow up to 4 hours.

**Terrain:** Mainly on well-made paths, with some steep and possibly slippery sections. The coast path to the Valley of the Rocks runs alongside cliffs above the sea, but the path is well-constructed and provided you look where you are walking there is little actual danger other than in strong winds or poor visibility.

**Access:** Parking at either end of Lynmouth (SS 724 494, EX35 6ES or SS 719 497, EX35 6HJ, both £), or start from the main car park in Lynton ('Bottom Meadow'), off Castle Hill (SS 721 493, EX35 6AR, £); there is free on-street parking between November and Easter. Lynton and Lynmouth can be reached by bus 309/310 from Barnstaple, and the Exmoor Coaster bus from Watchet and Minehead goes to Lynmouth.

**Map:** Croydecycle 54 Lynton and Lynmouth with Hunter's Inn; OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

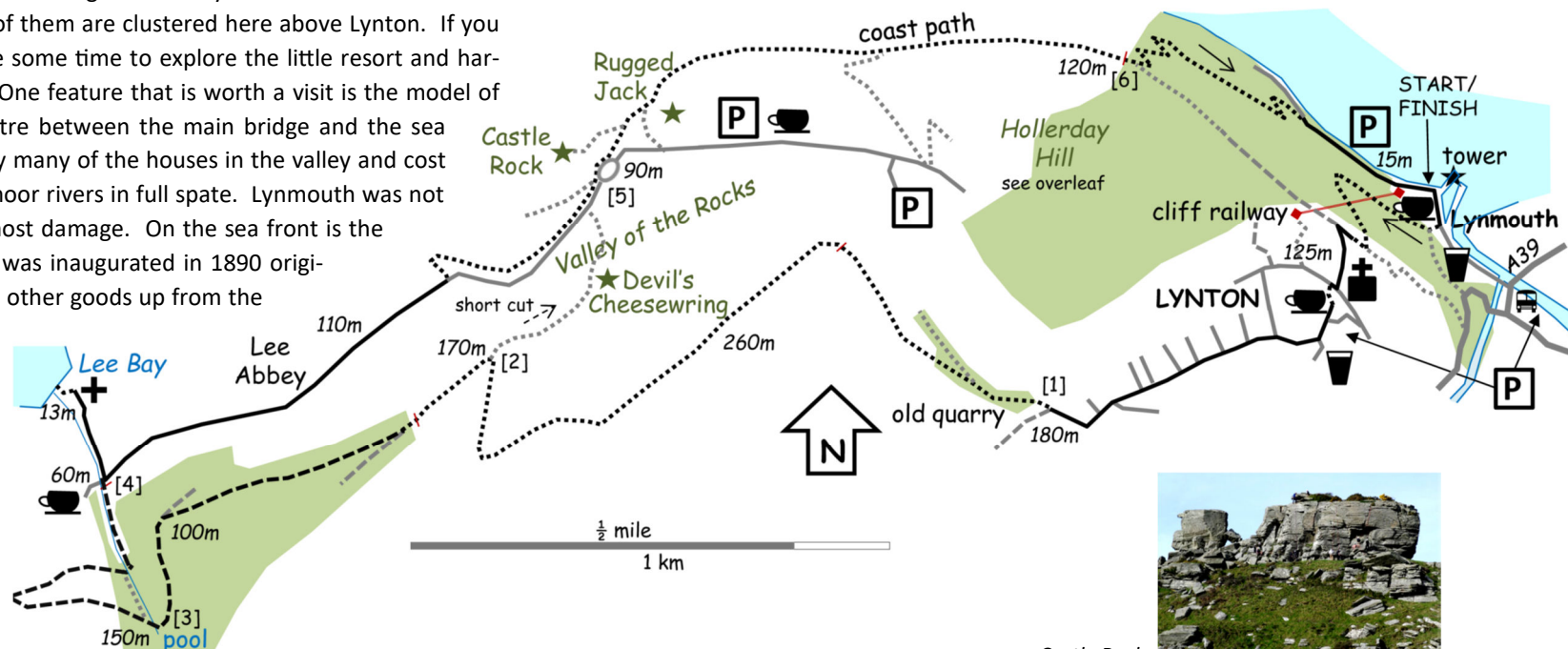
**Refreshments:** In Lynton and Lynmouth; seasonal tea gardens at Lee Bay and in the Valley of the Rocks.

THIS SHORT BUT STEEP WALK TAKES IN THE ATTRACTIVE TWIN TOWNS of Lynton and Lynmouth, along with some stunning coastal scenery and the enigmatic Valley of the Rocks. Exmoor has few tors or exposed rocky outcrops; several of them are clustered here above Lynton. If you haven't visited before, you may want to take some time to explore the little resort and harbour of Lynmouth before starting the walk. One feature that is worth a visit is the model of Lynmouth pre-flood, in the small visitor centre between the main bridge and the sea front. The summer flood of 1952 swept away many of the houses in the valley and cost 34 lives, demonstrating the power of the Exmoor rivers in full spate. Lynmouth was not the only place affected, but it suffered the most damage. On the sea front is the lower terminus of a funicular railway, which was inaugurated in 1890 originally to transport coal, building materials and other goods up from the harbour. It now takes passengers up the steep hill to Lynton. The carriages are powered by gravity, using water piped from the West Lyn River a mile away; the top car fills its tank in order to descend (carefully controlled by the 'driver') while pulling the bottom one up. It empties at the bottom while its twin fills at the top and repeats the process. The railway runs daily between mid-February and mid-November.

From **Lynmouth** start from the Rhenish Tower on the sea front. Turn right, and either walk up the steps next to the Pavilion to take the zigzag path up to Lynton, or take the cliff railway. At the top of the path turn left on a road and come to the church, then turn right and immediately left on to pedestrian Queen Street. From the upper railway terminus follow the path, turn left on the road, and then right into Queen Street just before the church. Follow the road down into Lydiate Lane, forking right to walk alongside a raised terrace of houses.

Starting from **Lynton** reduces the distance by around half a mile and height gain by roughly 70 metres. From the main car park turn left on to the road, fork immediately left and continue left around the school, then bear right on Market Street. Turn left at the T-junction and follow the road around to the right past a raised terrace of houses.

Continue along this road, keeping straight ahead at a 'give way' sign, then when it bends sharply left continue ahead on a narrow lane ('unsuitable for motor vehicles'). After a short climb turn right on a footpath to Lee Abbey and Bay (35mins from Lynmouth, [1]). Two or three minutes later, just after a disused quarry, take the left-hand path into the woods. Go through a pedestrian gate and alongside a drystone wall. The path leaves the wall and crests a hill, later rejoining it, with views starting to appear over Lee Abbey and Lee Bay. Follow the path sharply right, downhill, then left on the larger path at a T-junction (1hr10mins, [2]). (To shorten the walk via the Valley of the Rocks, turn right here and follow the steep and narrow path past the Devil's Cheesewring, rejoining the main walk at the 'roundabout' on the Valley of the Rocks road; this is the 2hr15min point, [5]).

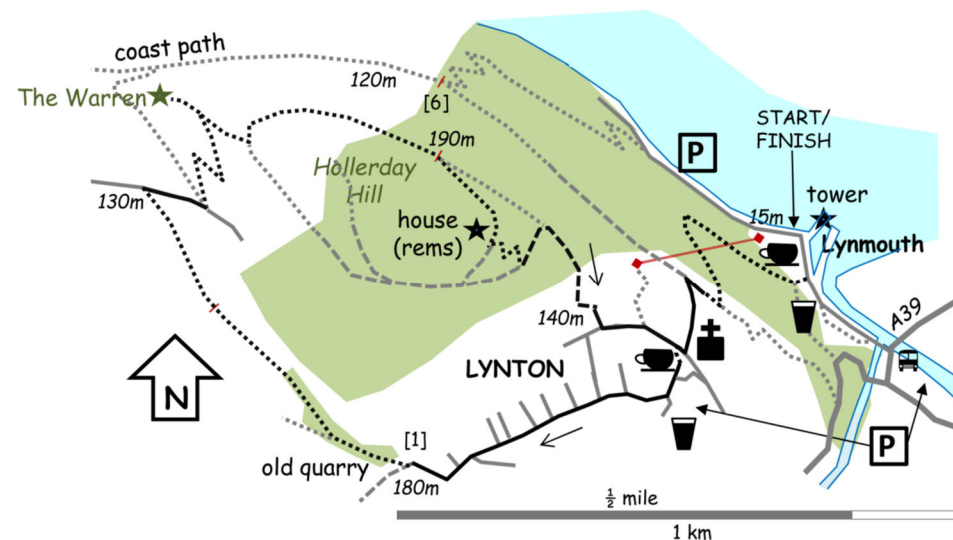


Castle Rock

Go through a kissing gate and shortly after fork right at a bridleway sign. Six or seven minutes later turn left at a T-junction. Ignore a track heading uphill to the left, pass between two hairy lime trees and come to a pond, with a stream running downhill to the right (1hr30mins, [3]). Cross the bridge and follow the path around to the right. Five minutes later take a path on the right, which will take you over the stream descending from the pond. Turn left to follow the stream downhill, go through a gate, and arrive at the road (1hr40mins, [4]). Lee Abbey's seasonal tea garden is to the left, while the path ahead will take you down to Lee Bay. Note the tiny chapel in the cliff.

Returning to the road from Lee Bay, turn left and head uphill past Lee Abbey, a Christian community, retreat and activity centre rather than a conventional monastery. A massive tor, Castle Rock, looms above you to the left. A cut-out in the rock reveals a figure called the White Lady. At the 'roundabout' (2hr15mins, [5]) take a grass path to the left of the second tor, Rugged Jack, to join the coast path. This well-made path heads along the cliff edge and eventually comes to a gate (2hr40mins, [6]). To return to Lynmouth, take the zigzag path immediately to the left; this will bring you almost to the far end of the promenade. For Lynton, continue ahead and follow the path as it widens into a road that passes hotels and guest houses. Cross over the Cliff Railway, keep right, and then come to a T-junction next to Lynton's church: the car park and bus stop are on the left just beyond the church.

**Alternative walk: Hollerday Hill** (● 3 miles, ascents and descents of 300 metres). This short but energetic walk offers stunning views west down the Valley of the Rocks and takes in the site of the former Hollerday House. Follow the main walk to the 35min point ([1]), then after the quarry keep right. The path passes a cemetery and descends to a road opposite a cricket pitch. Turn right here, then take a path to the left in front of a stone shelter. Turn off on the right-hand, grassy path, which zig-zags uphill; you will soon have views west along the valley. At a seat, the left-hand path just takes you to a viewpoint on Chimney Rock; the main path continues to the right. Soon afterwards, arrive at a T-junction and turn left to walk high above the coast. As the path starts to enter woods, go through a gate and keep right level with the contour. Soon arrive at an information board and the remains of Hollerday House, built in 1893 for Sir George Newnes, a wealthy publisher and MP who was also instrumental in developing the cliff railway and Lynton's town hall. The house burned down in 1913, three years after Newnes' death. The path to the right continues back to the T-junction, while the small path below the information boards heads towards Lynton. Following this downhill, turn left on to a broad track at a T-junction where there are views over Lynton. This drive was once the carriage route to the house. Follow it around to the right then through a cutting to come to stone gateposts. Turn right, then left at the main road into the centre of Lynton. The next left takes you to the cliff railway, or continue to the church to turn left and walk down to Lynmouth or keep ahead on the road for the car park in Lynton.



**Extension to Woody Bay.** The walk can easily be extended via Caffyns Heanton Wood to Woody Bay (**walk 13**). At the 1hr30min point ([3]) of this walk continue around to the right, joining walk 13 at its 1hr5min point [3]. Follow the route for walk 13 back to Lee Bay then rejoin this walk (● 10.3 miles and 1050 metres starting at Lynmouth).

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