



Walk 22. Porlock Weir and Culbone Church.

- 5.4 miles, ascents and descents of 430 metres. 2 hours 25 minutes of constant walking, allow at least 3 hours.

Terrain: Paths, tracks and lanes. Slightly uneven and potentially muddy in places. Some steep ascents on the outward section.

Access: By car, park in Porlock Weir (SS 864 479, TA24 8PD, £) and start from there. By bus use service 10 from Minehead to Porlock Weir (Monday-Saturday).

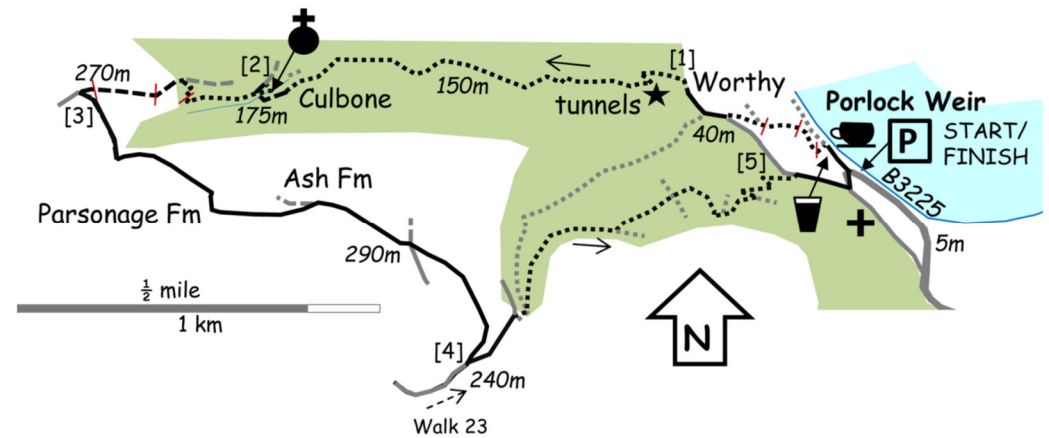
Map: Croydecycle 02 Porlock or OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: In Porlock Weir.

THIS HILLY BUT HISTORIC AND SCENIC WALK starts from the attractive harbour village of Porlock Weir, the name coming from a tidal fish weir or trap rather than a barrier across a river. It heads up past the Ashley Combe estate where Ada Lovelace, daughter of Lord Byron and a pioneering mathematician and computer programmer, once lived; the house is long gone but there are some interesting remnants including the gate house and tunnels leading to the coast. The next stop is the tiny church at Culbone, dedicated to St Bueno (a seventh-century Welsh saint) and reputedly dating from Saxon times. It is claimed to be the smallest church in England that is still in use. The return route passes Ash Farm. It is here that the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge was thought to have been distracted from writing *Kubla Khan* by 'a person from Porlock', causing him to stop mid-flow and leave the poem unfinished. Back in Porlock Weir a short detour will bring you to St Nicholas' Church, a prefabricated 'tin tabernacle' built circa 1880.

From Porlock Weir car park head past the harbour shop and to the end of the row of workshops and cafés behind it. Turn left to go up steps between two garages; at the top, turn right on a path. When this meets a rough track, keep left and upwards. Turn right at the road. Arrive at a toll cottage, part of the Ashley Combe estate (15mins, [1]). Go through the right-hand arch on to the Coast Path. Walk through the first tunnel and through another arch. Over the years the coast path has been eroded by landslips; follow the zig-zags upwards as signposted. After the broken-down entrance to another tunnel, keep right on the coast path towards Culbone then right at a T-junction. A little way further on there is another zig-zag, then the path begins to level out. Arrive at a bridge with a house attached (Culbone Mill, with Culbone Church next to it). Cross the bridge and turn right, then turn right through a small gate into the churchyard (1hr, [2]).

Keep right, leaving the churchyard through a gate on the left; turn right here and go under the bridge. The path heads upwards through woods; after a sharp right-hand bend, go



through a gate then fork left to come to an unsurfaced road. Turn left here towards Silcombe Farm. After the second gate come to a surfaced lane (1hr20mins, [3]); turn left, then keep left at the next fork. Ignoring any side-turnings, follow the road for half an hour; keep sharp left at a turn-off for Pitt Farm (1hr55mins, [4]), then in about three minutes turn right on a bridleway. Ignore a left turn, but nearly ten minutes further on turn left on a narrow woodland path. Cross a broader track, later joining it to follow it around a sharp left turn; ignore the first path to the left, but in another 3-4 minutes turn left on a signposted narrow path. Zigzag downhill carefully on this stony path until you reach a road (2hr20mins, [5]). Turn right here; the car park and beach are down the next road on the left, and the 'tin tabernacle' is straight ahead.

Linked walk. Walk 23 includes an extension that reverses this walk.



Culbone Church

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