



Walk 24. Porlock, Bossington and Horner.

- 7.6 miles, ascents and descents of 285 metres. 2 hours 50 minutes continuous walking, allow around 4 hours.

Terrain: Paths, tracks, roads, fields and shingle beach. Potentially muddy in places. ! The section after Porlock Weir may briefly be impassable at high spring tides.

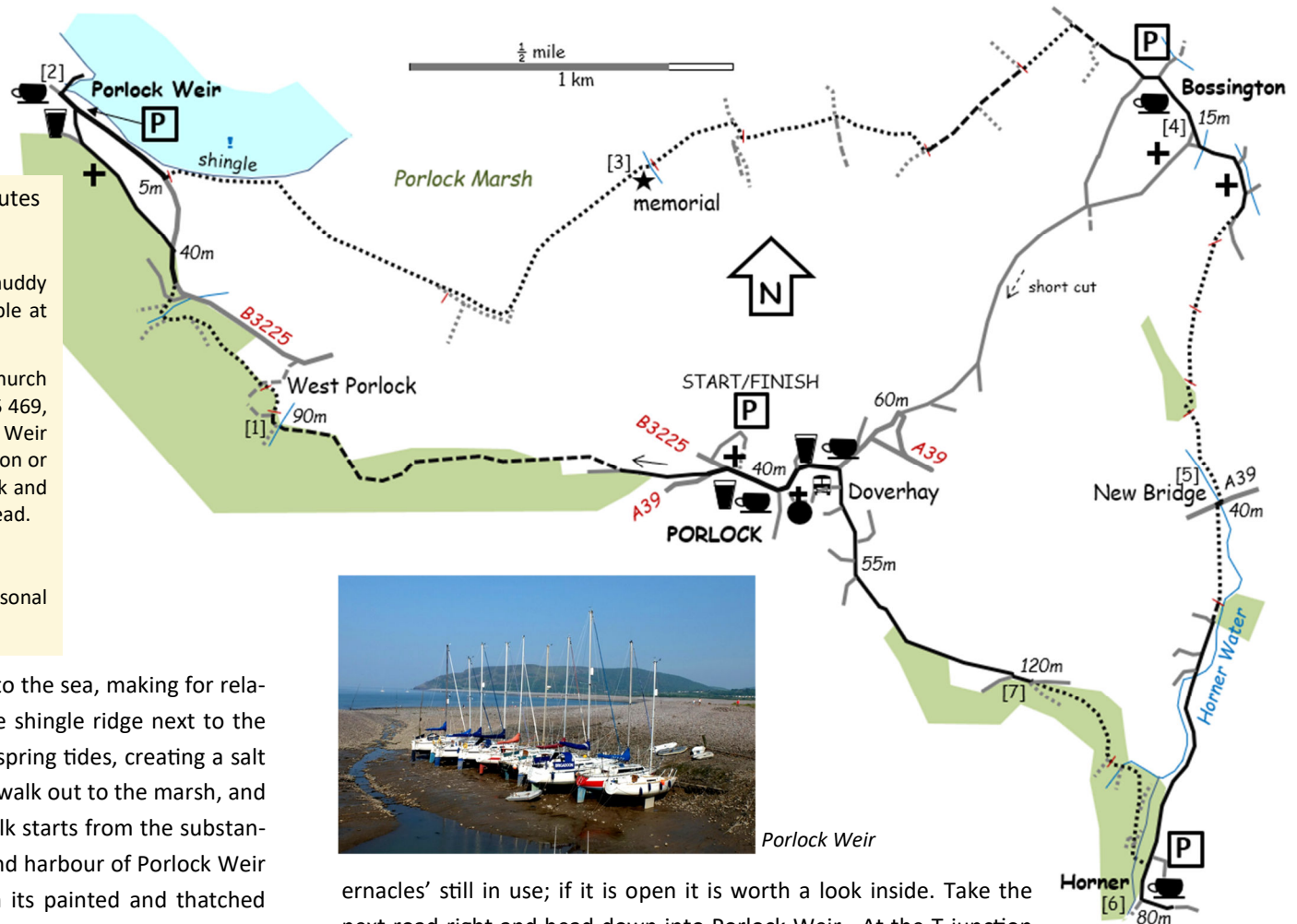
Access: By car, park in Porlock: there may be a space next to the church (SS 886 466, near TA24 8LA), or park in the long-stay car park (SS 885 469, TA24 8PH, £). Alternatively the walk can be started from Porlock Weir (expensive private car park, some road parking Nov-March), Bossington or Horner (£, NT free). By bus, use service 10 from Minehead to Porlock and Porlock Weir (Mon-Sat) or Exmoor Coaster from Lynmouth or Minehead.

Map: Croydecycle O2 Porlock; OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: A choice in Porlock and Porlock Weir, as well as seasonal tea gardens in Bossington and Horner.

PORLOCK VALE IS THE ONE PART OF EXMOOR that slopes gently down to the sea, making for relatively easy walking. At one time the Coast Path headed along the shingle ridge next to the beach, but a tidal breach has led to the area becoming flooded at spring tides, creating a salt marsh and diverting the path inland. It is easy enough however to walk out to the marsh, and the National Trust has thoughtfully provided a boardwalk. This walk starts from the substantial and much-visited village of Porlock, exploring the mini-resort and harbour of Porlock Weir before heading around the marsh to contrasting Bossington with its painted and thatched cottages. The final stretch heads inland to Horner, returning through woodland to Porlock.

From the centre of Porlock follow the High Street past the church and around to the right towards Lynmouth. Pass a row of shops and a second (Methodist) church on the right; the footpath from the car park joins here. Continue on the A39 to the (Top) Ship Inn and turn right on to the toll road. Three or four minutes later fork right on to a wide path signposted Coleridge Way to Porlock Weir. The path climbs gently into woods, then undulates more steeply. Arriving at a signposted junction with a wooden barrier, turn right alongside a fence - on the footpath rather than the bridleway (30mins, [1]). Continue ahead at a signposted crossroads, then keep left at a junction with a private track. About five minutes later, turn right at a T-junction and descend to cross a small stream. Walk past a long low building and cross a tarmac lane. A little further on come to a road. Turn left, then at the 'Porlock Weir' sign fork left on a minor road. This takes you past St Nicholas' church, one of the few 'tin tab-



Porlock Weir

ernacles' still in use; if it is open it is worth a look inside. Take the next road right and head down into Porlock Weir. At the T-junction your onward route is to the right, but first turn left and explore the village and harbour (50mins, [2]).

Leave Porlock Weir on the coast road, then as the road turns inland towards Porlock descend some steps on to the shingle beach (if you are unfortunate enough to arrive at a very high tide you may have to wait for it to start going out). Follow the shingle ridge to a lone oak tree. Just beyond it, turn right as signposted on the diverted coast path. Ten minutes later ignore a gate on the right; follow the coast path gradually around to the left, on the edge of the salt marsh, to pass an isolated building. Pass a memorial to the crew of a crashed wartime Liberator aircraft (1hr20mins, [3]), and cross a narrow footbridge to continue parallel with the coast. Go through a gap, entering the National Trust's Holnicote Estate. Your route continues ahead, but you might want to make a diversion on the boardwalk to the left to see

the breach in the shingle. Follow the signs towards Bossington, staying on the official coast path which is well signposted; your direction is towards the broad bulk of Bossington Hill. The path doglegs inland, widening to become an enclosed track then briefly narrowing again before arriving at a T-junction. Turn right here on a stony track towards Bossington and Minehead. This soon brings you to the pretty village of Bossington, where it becomes a hard road and continues around past the car park. The tea room is on the right.

To take the short-cut to Porlock (see the shorter walk directions below), turn right at a triangular green (1hr45mins, [4]); otherwise carry on past West Lynch farm and chapel, following the road past a bridge on the left until you come to a footpath to the right. Head into the field here and walk along its left-hand boundary to a gate; turn into the next field and head diagonally to a gate in the opposite side, just to the left of a wood. Cross the next field to a pedestrian gate into the wood; the woodland path soon re-emerges into another field. Head along its right-hand boundary to come to the A39 (2hrs, [5]). Cross both the road and the bridge over Horner Water, turning left into a field towards West Luccombe. Keep to the left of the field as far as a large oak, then continue ahead to go through a gate and join a farm track. Continue ahead where this joins a hard road, and in a little over ten minutes come into Horner (2hr20mins, [6]). Your route back to Porlock is a blue-signed public bridleway to the right, opposite the first house and just past the (inconspicuous) entrance to the car park. Horner's two tea gardens are a little further on.

The bridleway heads over a stone packhorse bridge and bends right; take the right-hand path at the fork. The path now climbs up above Horner Water then levels out and bends left. Go through a gate and head right, walk alongside the wire fence, then take the left, upward fork towards Porlock. Join a road (2hr35mins, [7]) to head uphill, then fork right towards Porlock. Keep right after a steep downhill gradient and soon come into Porlock. At the main road turn left to return to the church and car park.

Shorter walk: Porlock, Porlock Weir and Bossington (● 5.9 miles, ascents and descents of 200 metres). Follow the main walk to Bossington then turn right at the triangular green on to the road signposted to Porlock ([4]). The road comes into the outskirts of Porlock, past large, well-spaced individual detached houses. Ignore a left turn, then joining the A39 keep right on the one-way system (a narrow pedestrian lane is marked at the side of the road) and join the High Street to return to the church and car park.

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