



Walk 25. Bossington, Selworthy and Allerford.

- 7 miles, 3 hours 5 minutes. Ascents and descents of 590 metres.

Terrain: Mainly paths and tracks, some uneven and muddy. ! Beyond Hurlstone Point the path becomes fairly narrow as it traverses above an unprotected sloping cliff, then there is a steep uneven zigzag upwards. Do not attempt this section in fog, heavy rain or strong winds, but see the walk notes for an alternative route.

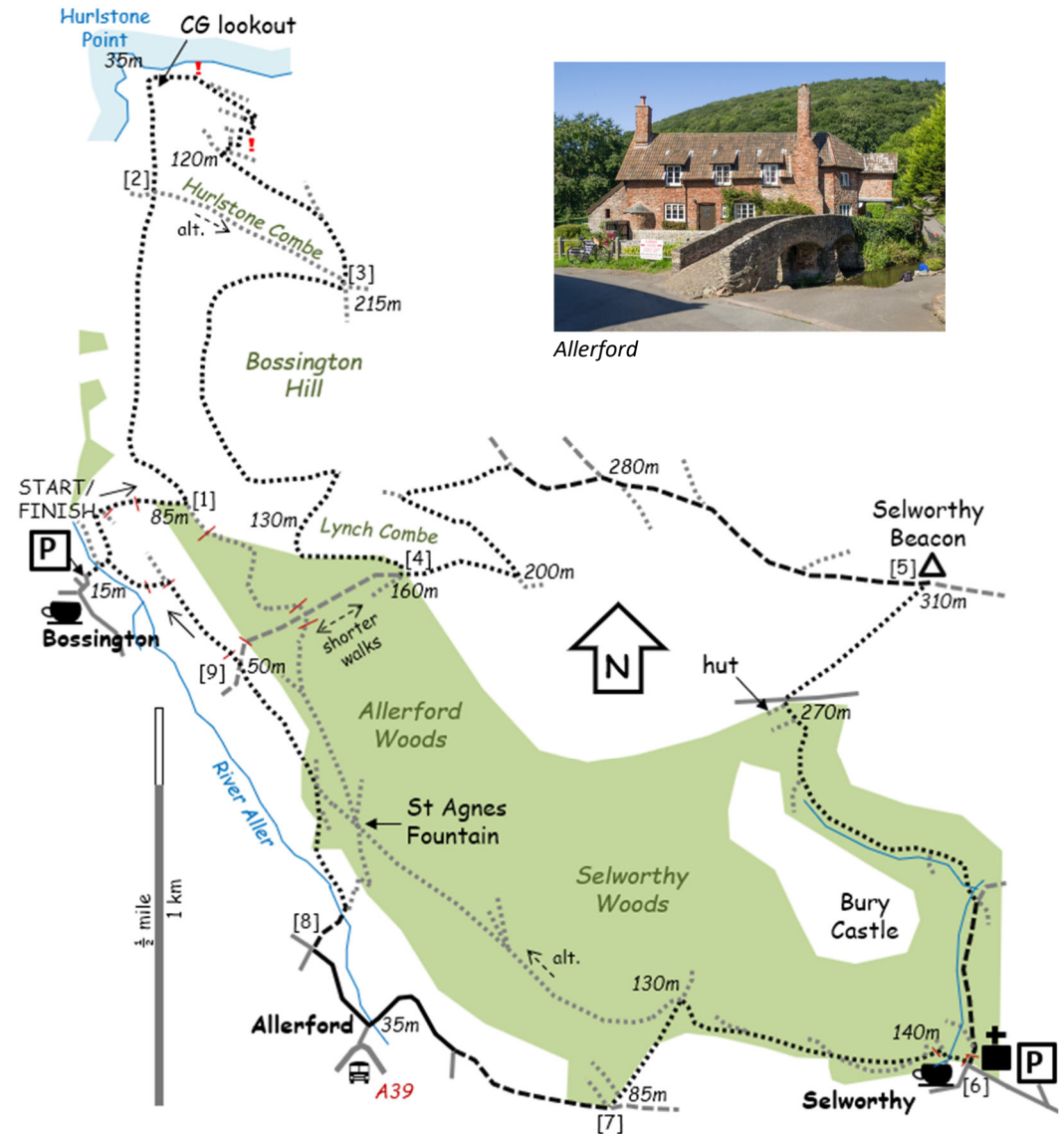
Access: By car, park in Bossington car park (SS 898 480, TA24 8HQ £, free to National Trust members). Alternatively (and for short walk B) start at the National Trust car park in Selworthy just east of the church (SS 9205 4680, near TA24 8TR); approach Selworthy from the A39 almost opposite Holnicote, then the car park will be on the left past the church. By bus, service 10 Minehead to Porlock stops at Allerford: walk into the village, turn left in front of the bridge and join the walk just before the 2hr40min point ([8]).

Map: Croydecycle 01 Minehead, Dunster and Selworthy or 02 Porlock; OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Tea rooms in Bossington and Selworthy (check opening times), more options in nearby Porlock and Minehead.

THIS VARIED AND INITIALLY STRENUOUS WALK TAKES IN A BRACING COASTAL PATH, open moors with far-reaching views, woodland streams, and the picturesque villages of Bossington, Allerford and Selworthy, the last with its garden-like green surrounded by thatched cottages. Add steep ascents interspersed with gentler traverses along the contours, and in only a few miles it captures much of what northern Exmoor is about.

Start in the National Trust car park in Bossington. Leave the car park on a path by the information board, crossing a stream (Horner Water). Ignore the bridleway to your left, but follow the path ahead uphill initially alongside a drystone wall. After a stiff climb the path comes to a gate and continues upwards next to another wall. Turn left at a T-junction (10mins, [1]). The hillside drops away to the left, and you will soon have views across the Vale of Porlock. The path descends gradually, crossing the official coast path (20mins, [2]) before continuing to Hurlstone Point. There is a ruined coastguard station here, used from 1902 until the early 1980s. Beyond the tower the path becomes narrow and continues above a steep drop into the sea. If you find the path unnerving or the weather conditions make it dangerous, return to the 20-minute point and turn left on the steep 'coast' path to ascend Hurlstone Combe. Otherwise follow it around the hillside, ignoring a narrow track going down to the left. Care is needed as the path zigzags steeply up the hill. Ignore two false trails heading right. At the top of a ridge (35mins) turn left; the edge is now on your right, falling into Hurlstone Combe.



Allerford

Continue upwards along the side of the combe, joining a wider path coming in from the left. The alternative route, the official coast path, is clearly visible in the combe bottom; this soon meets your path at a signposted junction (50mins, [3]). Immediately beyond it turn right to go around the other side of the combe on a contour path. Your earlier exertions are rewarded by even more far-reaching views along the coast and across the vale as the path tracks around Bossington Hill, a hundred metres or so above your outward route. After navigating another small combe, the path comes to a final viewpoint framed by trees before entering dense woodland. At the next (signposted) path junction (1hr15mins, [4]) it is time to climb

again: turn left uphill on a stony path (short walk A leaves to the right, and B joins). The path emerges into bracken and becomes a grassy track. Come to a T-junction where there is a conveniently-placed seat with views over the coast. Turn left here and contour around the hillside above Lynch Combe. At a short blue signpost (1hr30mins) turn right on grass towards the hilltop. Turn right at a well-defined path, bear left at a hillock, keep right when a path joins from the left, then fork left at an acorn-marked post. This wide track will take you to Selworthy Beacon, marked by a mound of stones and a trig point (1hr50mins, [5]). You are at the highest point of the walk, with views in all directions.

Leave Selworthy Beacon by turning back almost towards the way you came, heading downhill diagonally to the left. Cross a road, go through a vehicle barrier and continue slightly to the left on a broad path (a shelter, suitable as a wet-weather lunch stop, is a minute or so to the right). Soon join a stream and follow it downhill. A little later cross two streams in succession and come to a crossroads. Turn right towards Selworthy. Arrive at a gate in front of a road (2hr15mins, [6]): go through, but turn immediately right through a pedestrian gate in front of a war memorial. (If you are starting from the car park in Selworthy, turn right on the road, pass Selworthy's striking white-rendered church, then the gate is ahead of you).

Selworthy Green is on your left. Even if you can resist the tea room and shop it is worth a few minutes exploring. The route continues across the bridge opposite the tea room. Go through a gate, shortly after turning left towards Bossington and Allerford at a T-junction. In a few minutes bear left where the path forks. Keep left at the next fork to continue along the edge of the woods, with views over the vale to Dunkery Beacon. Arrive at a crossing vehicle track: turn left here for Allerford (straight on to stay on the woodland path, missing out Allerford; see the notes at the end). Follow the track ahead through a gate, then at a T-junction turn right on to another stony track (2hr30mins, [7]). Turn right when it meets a narrow road; this soon brings you in to Allerford. Pass in front of a house and go over the picturesque pack-horse bridge, then turn right on to the road (the bus stop is to the left, on the A39).

Allerford has a traditional blacksmith's shop, a post office and stores, and a small museum. As you are leaving the village turn right at Stoates Farm on the footpath towards West Lynch (2hr40mins, [8]). Cross the Aller River and turn immediately left to follow it. Continue uphill then keep left when you meet another path. Keep left at the next junction towards Bossington, follow the path through a vehicle barrier, ignore a path to the left, and splash through a tiny stream (2hr55mins, [9]). Short walk B turns right here; otherwise go through the gate in front of you into a field. Cross the field, go through another gate and turn left as indicated. Go through a gate in the corner, descend some slippery steps and follow the path right above the stream. Soon arrive at a path coming up from a bridge on the left: descend to it and cross over to return to the car park at Bossington. The village and tea garden are through the car park on the left.

Short walk A. Bossington Hill (● 3.1 miles, ascents and descents of 320 metres; ! as for main walk). Follow the main walk to the 1hr15min point ([4]), then turn right on the bridleway to Bossington. Don't go through the gate, unless you want to follow the signed path back to Allerford and the bus stop. As the wood comes to an end, go through a gate then shortly afterwards turn right through a gate to rejoin the main route at the 2hr55min point ([9]).

Short walk B. Selworthy, Allerford and Selworthy Beacon (● 4.4 miles, ascents and descents of 360 metres). Start from Selworthy or Allerford, following the main walk to the 2hr55min point ([9]). Turn right before the gate on a bridleway marked 'Selworthy Beacon', then go through a gate into Allerford Woods and continue upwards. Ignore a crossing footpath, continuing straight ahead where the Hurlstone footpath joins from the left: you are now back on the main route at the 1hr15min point ([4]).

Alternative woodland return route (missing out Allerford). At the crossing track where the main route turns left to descend to the 2hr30min point ([7]), continue straight ahead on a broad path roughly following the contour. Ignore a small crossing path, then at a small glade where the path splits in three take the left-hand, lower route. Arrive at a junction of many paths, with a convenient seat. Note St Agnes' Fountain on the right, a spring spilling into a small pool or font. Take the middle of the three paths ahead of you, signposted Hurlstone Point. Ignore a crossing path, then keep right when a path comes in from the left. A minute later, fork right and slightly uphill. Go through a pedestrian gate, cross a stony track (a stream in winter), and continue through a field gate. A few minutes later go through a pedestrian gate, then come to a path descending to the left. You are at the 10min point ([1]) of the main walk: turn left to return to Bossington, or if you have started from Selworthy continue ahead to Hurlstone Point.

Lynmouth

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