



Walk 3. Morteheoe, Morte Point and Lee Bay.

- 7.2 miles, ascents and descents of 550 metres. 3 hours 5 minutes constant walking, allow 4-5 hours overall.

Terrain: A mix of roads, tracks, and paths, some uneven and potentially slippery. Morte Point is uneven rock.

Access: The walk instructions start from Morteheoe. There is a car park (SS 458 452, EX34 7DR, £) but all-day parking is excessively expensive outside of winter (£15 in 2023). Alternatives are to start from the car park at Lee (down narrow lanes at SS 480 464, near EX34 8LR), or arrive on bus 31 that runs roughly hourly between Ilfracombe, Morteheoe and Woolacombe on weekdays and Saturdays.

Maps: Croydecycle 07 Morteheoe & Woolacombe or OS Explorer 139 Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.

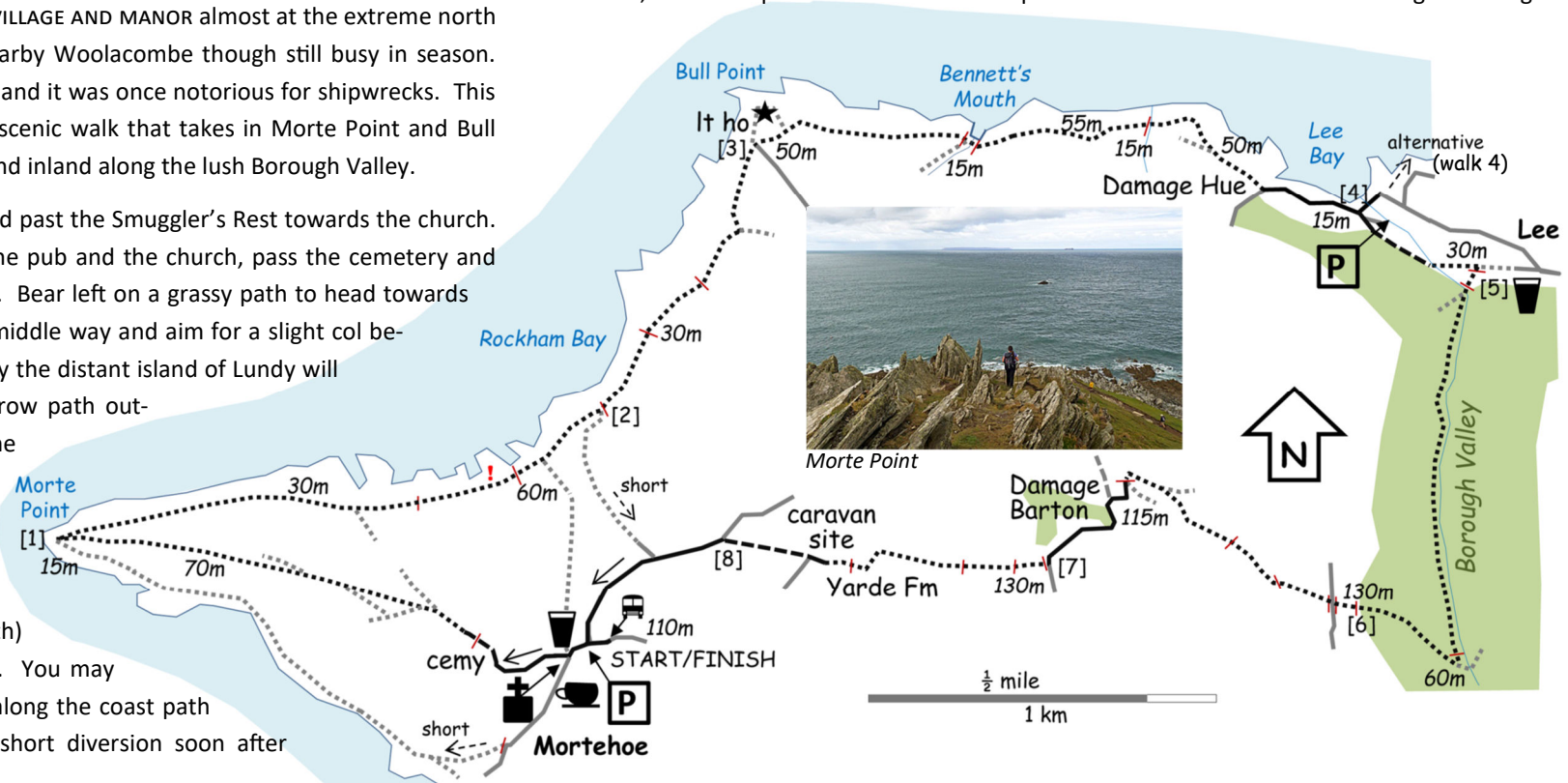
Refreshments: Pub and tea room in Morteheoe, pub in Lee village just off the route.

MORTEHOE IS AN ATTRACTIVE FORMER FARMING VILLAGE AND MANOR almost at the extreme north-western point of Devon, less visited than nearby Woolacombe though still busy in season. Nearby Morte Point is formed of jagged slate, and it was once notorious for shipwrecks. This is an undulating, mildly strenuous but highly scenic walk that takes in Morte Point and Bull Point before heading to picturesque Lee Bay and inland along the lush Borough Valley.

Starting from the post office in Morteheoe, head past the Smuggler's Rest towards the church. Take the narrow road to the right between the pub and the church, pass the cemetery and continue on a rough track past a pair of gates. Bear left on a grassy path to head towards Morte Point. When the path forks, take the middle way and aim for a slight col between a pointed hill and a ridge; on a clear day the distant island of Lundy will be ahead of you. From the col follow a narrow path outwards along a ridge; as you come closer to the point you will walk through a jumble of jagged slate, like a stegosaurus's back. Pick your way carefully down to the point (25mins, [1]), then turn around and take the coast path on what is now your left-hand (north) side, heading for the lighthouse at Bull Point. You may see seals among the rocks here. Continuing along the coast path ignore the turn to Morteheoe, but follow a short diversion soon after

where the original path is dangerously close to crumbling cliffs. Go through a gate, climb upwards, and pass a short section next to a sheer drop before heading down again. Through another gate, then another path from Morteheoe comes in from the right; keep left here. The path goes up and down before going through a third gate, just after another Morteheoe path (55mins, [2]), and bearing left. After the next gate the path diverts briefly inland; the 2014 storms washed away the way down to the beach, leaving wooden steps hanging precariously over the cliff. Follow the coast path first inland then to the left, bringing you to Bull Point lighthouse (1hr10mins, [3]). You can walk all the way around the lighthouse enclosure, but the way on is the main path to the right. Drop down to a small rocky bay or inlet (Bennett's Mouth), zigzag up the other side, then descend to another small inlet and bridge (Hilly Mouth). Head uphill again and up steps (ignore the path to Sandy Cove on the left). The onward path is signposted to Lee. Meet a road and turn left to stroll down into Lee Bay (1hr40mins, [4]). This picturesque and relatively undeveloped little bay is worth exploring, particularly when the tide is out.

To continue, take the small road close to where you came down the hill, signposted to the car park and toilets. The footpath, initially a broad surfaced track, is the right fork. Pass the toilets, then the path narrows and runs parallel with a field. The main village is straight



ahead, but to continue the walk turn right through a gate ('Borough Woods'; 1hr55mins, [5]), across the end of the field then through another gate and over a footbridge. Turn left. This rather lovely path rises gently beside the stream among trees and ferns. Just after a metal kissing gate turn right and head upwards. After a fairly steep and possibly slippery climb leave the woods, go over a stile (2hr20mins, [6]), and cross the field ahead. Cross a narrow lane, continue along the right-hand side of the field, then turn left at a hedge to go through a gate. Bear right to cross the field to the next gate, and follow the path through a field dotted with gorse scrub. Join a track, then turn left to follow footpath posts beside a belt of small trees. Go through a gate and descend to a track. Turn left, then come to a massive stone barn and turn right in front of it. This is Damage Barton. Turn left to pass the front of the farmhouse, then head up the drive past two seats overlooking the coast. Turn right over a stile (or through a gate; 2hr40mins, [7]). Follow the path to a second gate, then keep right along the field edge. Through another gate, then down steps on a broad enclosed path. Continue ahead at a junction ('Mortehoe'), then bear left on a grassy path. Go through a gate and past a pond, then turn left at some buildings. A concrete path takes you into a caravan park facilities centre. Continue ahead through parking area and along a drive, ignoring the entrances on your left. Leaving the park, come to a T-junction (2hr55mins, [8]; the right-hand turn is a private road to Bull Point lighthouse). Turn left and stroll back into Mortehoe.

Shorter alternative: Morte Point and Bull Point (● 4.2 miles, ascents and descents 300m). Follow the main walk to Bull Point (1hr10mins, [3]). Turn right on the driveway; this is closed to vehicles other than people staying or working at the lighthouse compound. Follow it around bends. Within half an hour from leaving the lighthouse you will go through a gate to join a public road (and the main walk at its 2hr55min point, [8]). This brings you back into Mortehoe.

Short walk: Morte Point (● 2.8 miles, ascents and descents 175m). In Mortehoe follow the road downhill from the church. Turn right through a gate when the road bends sharply left, and follow the path downwards and slightly to the right. This brings you to the coast path. Walk out to Morte Point, picking up the main walk at the 25-minute point ([1]). Continue through the two gates, then before the third turn right on the path towards Mortehoe ([2]). Follow this well-defined path until it joins an alley between houses, arriving at a T-junction opposite North Morte Well. Turn right here and stroll back into Mortehoe.

Walk 4 is an alternative linear walk from Mortehoe to Ilfracombe.