



### Walk 52. Winsford to Exford via Bye Hill and Room Hill.

- 5.4 miles, ascents of 355 metres and descents of 290 metres. 2 hours 15 minutes constant walking, allow 3-3½ hours.

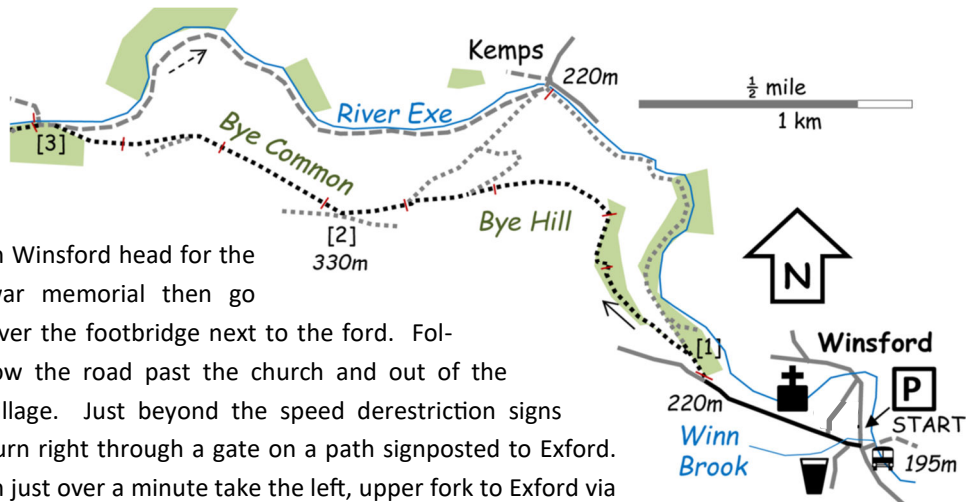
Terrain: Paths, fields and short stretches on roads.

Access: Winsford and Exford are connected by the twice-daily 198 bus (no Sunday service) from Dulverton to Minehead. Unless you are using two cars park in Exford and take the early afternoon bus to Winsford, or park in Winsford and make sure you can reach Exford in time for the return bus. Parking in Winsford is in a large layby (SS 906 349, close to TA24 7JG) and in Exford down a lane next to the school (SS 854 383, near TA24 7PP).

Map: Croydecycle 53 Exford or OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Pubs and tea room in Exford, pub in Winsford.

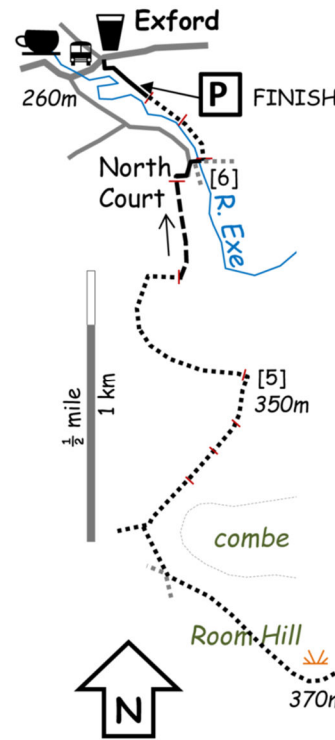
THIS WALK CONNECTS WINSFORD, with its thatched houses, village green and many bridges over the rivers Exe and Winn, with Exford, arranged around a high village green. Unlike the companion Exford to Winsford route (walk 51) it follows the hills, so it is slightly more energetic than the riverside walk though far from strenuous by Exmoor standards. There is an option to return via the river at the halfway point, or combine it with walk 51 for an 11-mile circuit.



In Winsford head for the war memorial then go over the footbridge next to the ford. Follow the road past the church and out of the village. Just beyond the speed derestriction signs turn right through a gate on a path signposted to Exford. In just over a minute take the left, upper fork to Exford via Bye Common (10mins, [1]). Continue uphill on to Bye Hill, where the National Park Authority are carrying out extensive tree planting. Eventually the path levels out with views across the Exe valley and beyond to Dunkery Beacon. Join a track

coming up from the right, then go through a vehicle gate and take the bridleway towards Ash Lane (40mins, [2]). Follow the right-hand field edge and go through two gates. In the third field there is a gate on the right: ignore it, but soon afterwards start to descend into a gully and go through a pedestrian gate. Follow the grassy path downhill, go through a gate, and turn left to walk alongside the River Exe. Almost immediately you will come to a concrete bridge over the river (55mins, [3]): ignore it, and turn left through a gate on to a permitted path towards Exford. Keep close to the river; divert away from it to cross a stream, then cross the field to go through a gate. Continue parallel with the river. When you come to a raised footbridge (1hr5mins, [4]) go through the gate and turn left. The track soon turns left and starts to ascend, gently at first then more steeply.

The character of the walk changes again as the path flattens out and comes into the open at a marker post on Room Hill. Continue ahead on an initially vague grassy track, around the end of a small valley, and at a signpost take the right turn towards Exford. Pass the head of a deep combe on your right and join another bridleway, bearing right to walk alongside the hedge of trees on your left. Follow the path through three gates, the last two at lines of beech trees. After the last gate the path starts descending; turn left through a gate, signposted to Exford (1hr50mins, [5]). You will have a panoramic view over Exford and beyond



before the path goes through a gate into a small wood. The well-defined path now continues downhill towards Exford, eventually becoming a vehicle track and passing between houses. Where it comes to a junction turn right ('footpath to Exford and Winsford'), then continue ahead over a bridge (2hr5mins, [6]). On the far side of the bridge turn left and follow the river back to the car park and Exford.

**Circular walk: Winsford and Bye Hill** ● 5 miles, ascents and descents of 270 metres). Follow the main walk as far as the concrete bridge ([3]). Turn right on a wide vehicle track, following it alongside the river for a mile and a half before it crosses back over at another bridge. Don't cross the bridge but turn right on a footpath signposted to Winsford. In a further twenty minutes the path forks: keep right and uphill, then bear left where it joins another path ([1]; this is your outward route). Soon arrive at a road:

turn left here and stroll into Winsford. (An interesting detour is to take the footpath through the front garden of house number 2, cross the churchyard, and turn right to rejoin the road). Cross the footbridge at the ford to return to the centre of the village.

**Linked walk: Winsford to Exford and back** (● 10.9 miles, ascents and descents of 525 metres). Follow this walk then use **walk 51** to return from Exford.



*Winsford*

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