



Walk 57. Wheddon Cross to Dulverton via Winsford.

- 10.5 miles, ascents of 540 metres and descents of 690 metres. 4 hours 5 minutes constant walking, allow 5-5½ hours.

Terrain: Roads (mostly quiet lanes), paths and fields. Some slippery paths and muddy sections. The route undulates almost continuously until the final mile into Dulverton.

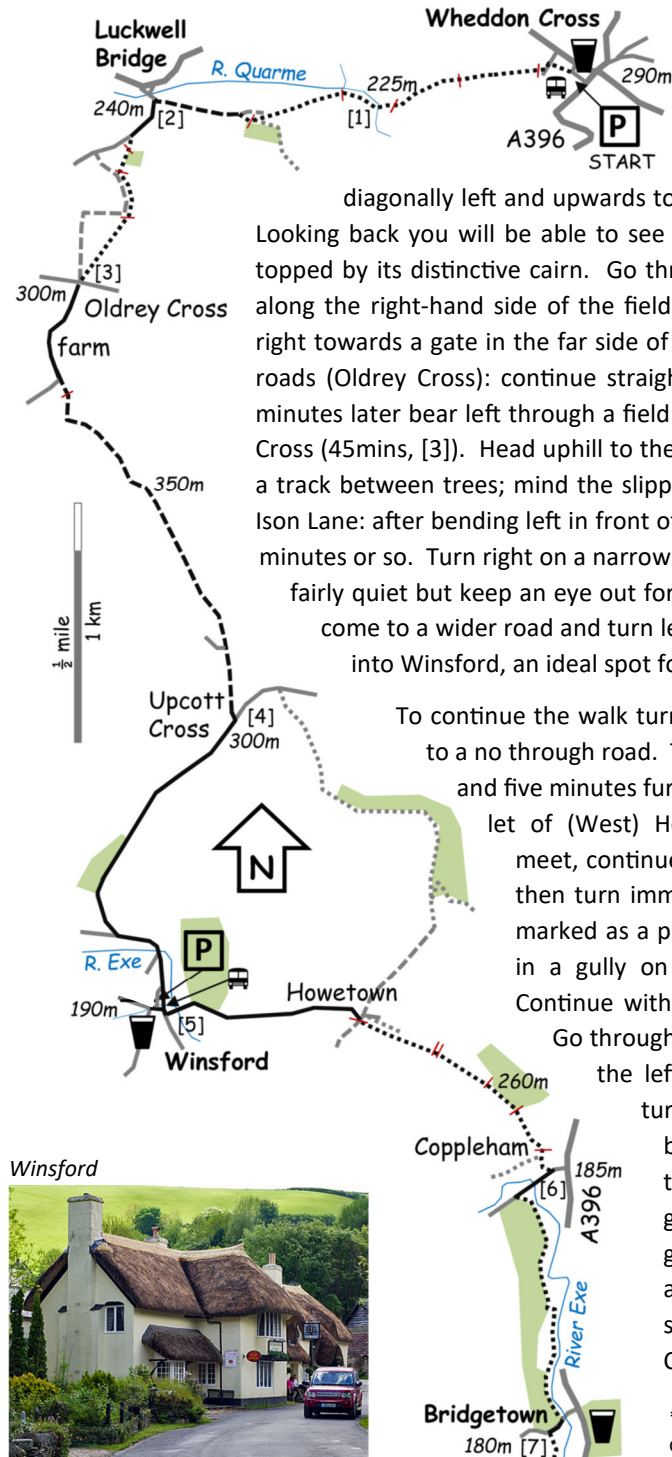
Access: By car, either park in Dulverton next to Exmoor House (£, at SS 912 280, TA22 9HL) and take the morning bus 198 or 467 to Wheddon Cross, or park next to the inn at Wheddon Cross (SS 924 388) and return by bus or taxi. Bus 198/467 connects Dulverton, Wheddon Cross and Minehead; there are three buses daily (not Sundays), two via Winsford.

Map: OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor; Winsford to Dulverton is on Croydecycle 16 Wimbleball.

Refreshments: Pubs in Wheddon Cross, Winsford and Bridgetown, wide choice in Dulverton.

Wheddon Cross, at 300 metres above sea level, is at the highest point on the A396 north-south road and is sometimes claimed to be the highest village on Exmoor (Simonsbath, largely created in the nineteenth century, is 25 metres higher). With a welcoming inn (the curiously-named Rest and Be Thankful), car park, seasonal tea room, mini-supermarket and bus stop, it is an ideal starting-point for linear walks in all directions. This one crosses undulating hills to the picturesque village of Winsford, explored further in walks 60 and 61. Tracking the River Exe, the route continues to the small riverside village of Bridgetown, another option for a halfway refreshment stop. It then returns to the high downs on paths, through woods and across fields, staying roughly parallel with the A396. The climbing is finally over at Court Down, when the route starts descending to the attractive and well-equipped little market town of Dulverton, another hub for walks in southern Exmoor.

Leave the car park in Wheddon Cross through a gate by the toilet block, following the bridleway along the right-hand field boundary towards Luckwell Bridge. At the end go through a gap or gate next to a house. Head diagonally left and go through a field gate with a blue-topped post to join an enclosed path. When the path comes into a field, head left to a ford and footbridge (10mins, [1]). Cross the stream then turn right and walk along the field boundary, confirmed by a blue-marked fencepost. After a gate, join a well-defined track running parallel with the stream. Keep left at a fork then come into a small open area, the remains of a shallow quarry; follow the sign towards Luckwell Bridge. At a second old quarry continue ahead through the right-hand field gate, then bear left to join a vehicle track. Come to a T-junction, with the bridge on your right (25mins, [2]); your onward route is to the left.



Start heading uphill on the road, then just after the largely blank wall of a house on the left, turn left up steps on a footpath. After a gate head diagonally left and upwards to the end of a line of tall conifers. Looking back you will be able to see Dunkery Beacon in the distance, topped by its distinctive cairn. Go through another gate and continue along the right-hand side of the field. Cross a stile then bear slightly right towards a gate in the far side of the field. Just beyond is a cross-roads (Oldrey Cross): continue straight ahead, pass a farm, then two minutes later bear left through a field gate on to a bridleway to Upcott Cross (45mins, [3]). Head uphill to the left, going through a gate to join a track between trees; mind the slippery bedrock on this path. This is Ison Lane: after bending left in front of a gate, stay on it for the next 25 minutes or so. Turn right on a narrow lane (1hr10mins, [4]); it is usually fairly quiet but keep an eye out for vehicles. Within fifteen minutes come to a wider road and turn left to head over the River Exe and into Winsford, an ideal spot for a break (1hr30mins, [5]).

To continue the walk turn left just past the bus shelter on to a no through road. This goes over the River Exe again and five minutes further on comes to the pretty hamlet of (West) Howetown. Where three tracks meet, continue to the right through a field gate then turn immediately left on a concrete track marked as a permissive path (the original path, in a gully on the left, is badly overgrown)*. Continue with the field boundary to your left.

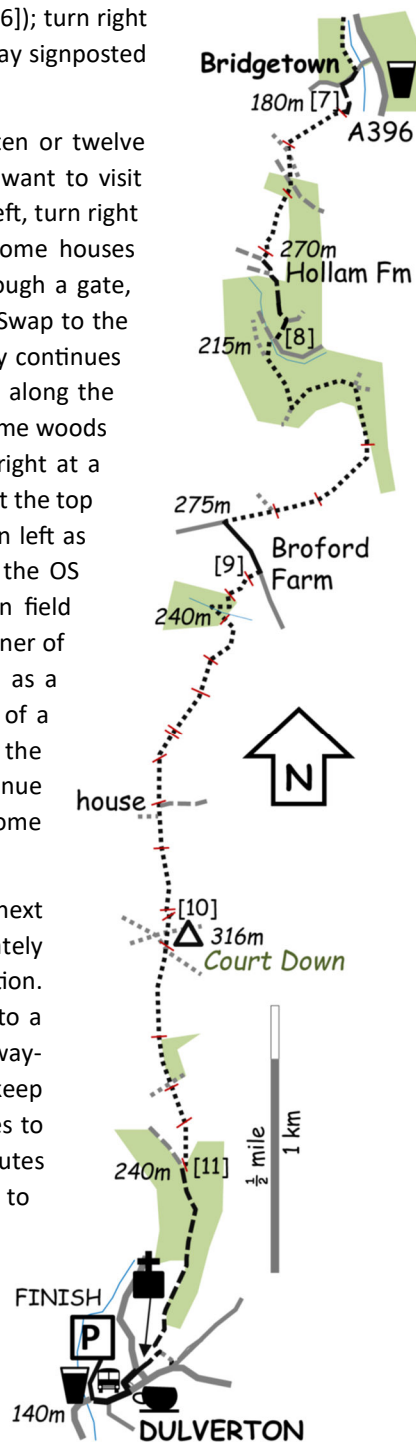
Go through a pair of field gates then keep to the left-hand side of the field without turning off through any gates (don't be tempted by the stony vehicle track on the right). Go through a gate at the end and follow a grassy path above a valley. After a gate with a stile the path drops steeply alongside trees to come to Coppleham, another attractive

* An alternative route at this point is described overleaf.

hamlet. Join a drive and walk down to the road (2hrs, [6]); turn right here, then in a couple of minutes turn left on a bridleway signposted to Bridgetown.

The bridleway continues alongside the River Exe for ten or twelve minutes before coming to another road. Unless you want to visit the inn at Bridgetown, which is over the bridge to the left, turn right and then within a minute turn left on a drive past some houses ('bridleway to Hollam Farm'; 2hr15mins, [7]). Go through a gate, then turn right to keep the stone bank on your right. Swap to the other side of the hedge at the next gate; the bridleway continues uphill in a gully, but it may be easier to walk above it along the edge of the field. After a fairly steep ascent come to some woods and turn left through a gate on a grassy track. Fork right at a bridleway sign to continue uphill on a narrower path. At the top of the hill there is a wide crossing track: turn right then left as signposted to continue on the bridleway (if you have the OS map, it misses out the track). Go through a wooden field gate, keep to the right and go through a gate in the corner of the field. Just beyond is a junction: turn left, marked as a footpath, to come to Hollam Farm. Turn left in front of a barn then pass in front of the farmhouse and follow the drive downhill. Keep right at a junction and continue down to a road where there is an open yard with some grain silos (2hr45mins, [8]).

Cross the stream using the ford or wooden footbridge next to the silos. Turn left at the junction almost immediately after. Turn left again when the track comes to a T-junction. As the path bends around to the right you will come to a complex junction: keep right and upwards on the way-marked footpath. Go through a gate into a field and keep to the right. Continue ahead through two further gates to come to a lane. Turn left here, and in maybe three minutes arrive at Broford Farm (3hr10mins, [9]). Your way on is to the right through the farmyard, leaving by a field gate at the back. Cross a small field and go through a gate. Turn left, follow the track across a stream and back around to the left. Go through a blue-marked gate on the right and walk along the left-hand field boundary. Turn right as signposted to follow a line of trees to the far corner of the field. Head through



a gate, then along the left-hand side of this and the next field. After a double pedestrian gate head slightly to the left, to come to a gate set back into the hedge. Continue across the field here, to another gate just left of a house. Carry on straight ahead, along the edge of fields. When you come to a double pedestrian gate go through and turn left. You are now on Court Down, with a trig point ahead (3hr40mins, [10]). Heading into the field at a shallow angle—well to the right of the trig point—will bring you to two field gates next to each other. Take the left-hand one and continue with the hedge on your right. Cross a field between trees then walk along a lane between hedges. Cross a field, then after entering the next field beneath a spreading tree turn sharply right to go through a gate. Turn left on to a track signposted as a bridleway (3hr50mins, [11]). Go through the gate and turn left. In eight or ten minutes this track brings you to Dulverton, by the church; turn right to head into the centre and back to the car park or bus stop.

Alternative route at West Howetown. Go through the field gate but turn right along the field edge on a bridleway rather than left along the concrete track. Soon go through a gate, the path now becoming a pleasant enclosed track opening out into woodland. After a second gate pass an old quarry on the left; the River Exe will be to your right. Keep right after a third gate, and a fourth where you enter a grassy area. You will soon come to a fenced-off pack-horse bridge at Edbrooke. Go through two more gates and keep left; soon go through a gate on the left to continue along the wood edge. After the next gate the path comes into the open. Two gates appear ahead of you: head to the left-hand, upper one. Beyond this, go through another gate and continue along a contour above the river. Fork right and downwards to a gate. Continue ahead here, across an access drive and through a gate, then turn right on a driveway in front of a small stable. Walk down to the road and rejoin the main route at the 2hr point ([6]).

Shorter walks: The walk can be divided at Winsford or Bridgetown, both with good parking and bus stops. In Winsford the bus stop and layby are in the centre of the village, in Bridgetown they are just south of the Badgers Holt inn. The distances are:
 Wheddon Cross to Winsford: ● 4 miles, ascents of 150 metres and descents of 245 metres
 Wheddon Cross to Bridgetown: ● 6.2 miles, ascents 260m and descents 365m
 Winsford to Dulverton: ● 6.5 miles, ascents 390m and descents 445m
 Bridgetown to Dulverton: ● 4.6 miles, ascents 300m and descents 340m.

Longer walk: Wheddon Cross – Winsford – Tarr Steps – Dulverton (● 15.5 miles, with ascents of 700 metres and descents of 850 metres). Follow the main walk to Winsford. From Winsford follow the outward half of **walk 61** to Tarr Steps, then see **walk 58 or 63** to continue to Dulverton.

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