



Walk 60. Winsford and around Winsford Hill.

- 8 miles, ascents and descents of 350 metres. 3 hours 15 minutes constant walking, allow around 4½ hours.

Terrain: Mainly on paths and tracks and across fields. Paths can be stony and muddy, steep in places.

Access: By car, park in Winsford opposite the garage (SS 906 349, close to TA24 7JG). By bus, service 198 between Minehead and Dulverton calls at Winsford twice daily except Sundays.

Map: Croydecycle 56 Dulverton and Tarr Steps or OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Pub in Winsford.

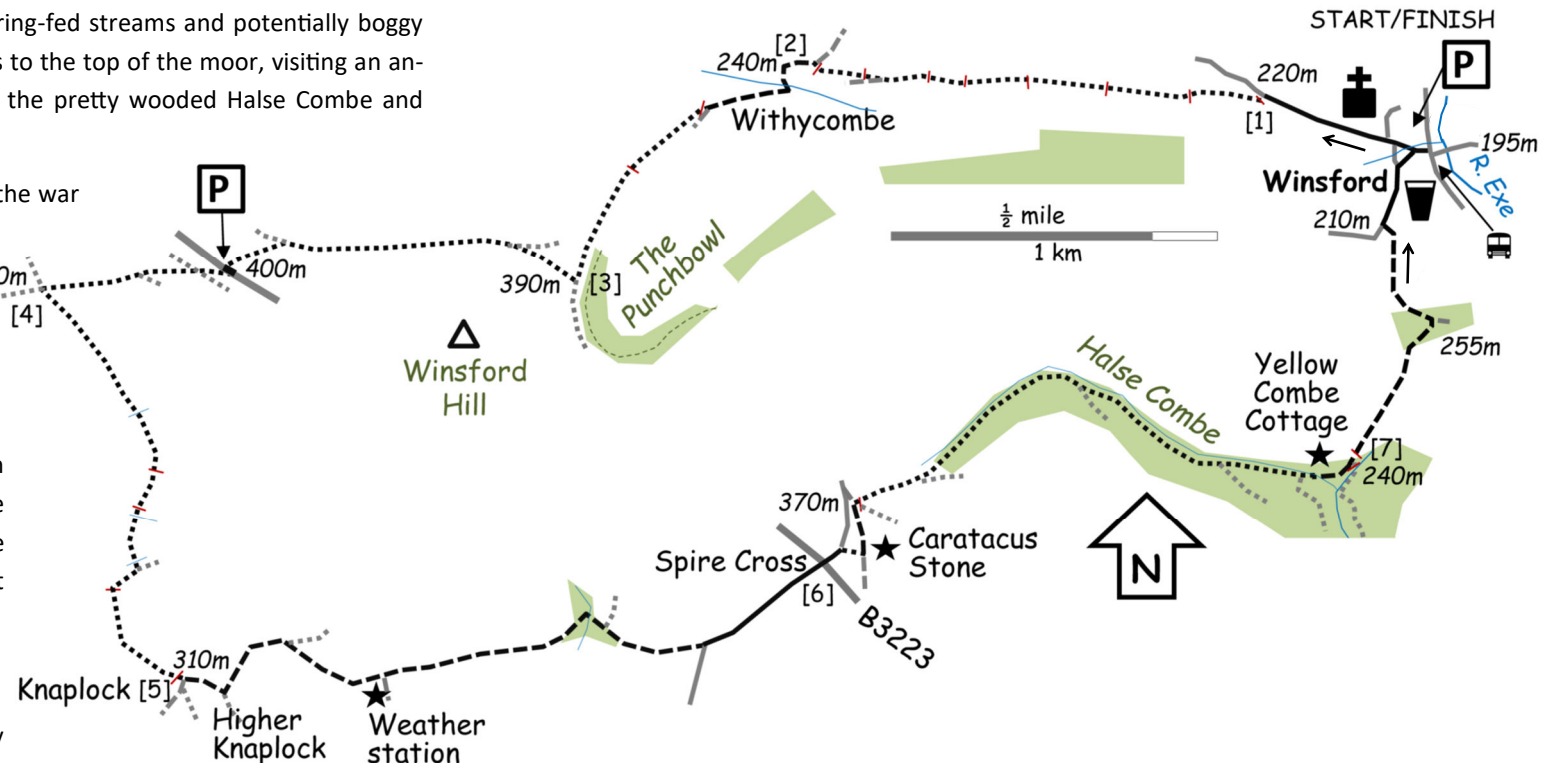
THIS WALK STARTS FROM WINSFORD AND CIRCLES WINSFORD HILL, an alternative to the Tarr Steps route described in walk 61. The outward part of the route ascends beside the Punchbowl, a hollowed out hillside that may have been caused by glaciation. Moorland paths then head down towards the River Barle, encountering some spring-fed streams and potentially boggy ground on the way. The walk continues on farm roads to the top of the moor, visiting an ancient Celtic boundary stone before dropping through the pretty wooded Halse Combe and joining the track back to Winsford.

Starting from the car park or bus stop, head towards the war memorial but before reaching it turn right over the footbridge next to the ford. Follow the road past the church and out of the village. Soon after the last row of houses on the left, turn left on a signposted footpath (10mins, [1]). The path is initially enclosed, but soon crosses fields. Follow it through several gates until coming to a broken-down stone barn. From here, head for a gate slightly to the right of the main farm track, taking you around the back of the farmhouse. Keeping to the left of the next field, come to a road and turn left to walk through the farmyard (30mins, [2]); take the middle exit, which leads to a home-made footpath sign and a bridge across the Winn Brook. Follow the wide track sharply

right as it heads uphill. The rim of the Punchbowl is in front. The track takes you around its side; go through a gate on the right and turn left at the signpost to continue upwards now with the trees on your left.

After a short ascent, go through a second gate and continue along the side of the Punchbowl. Soon come to some scrubby thorn trees. The fourth one spreads directly from the ground (1hr, [3]). Turn sharply right here on to a grassy path. Soon bear left along a stony ridge and follow a broad, almost level path. First a farm then an individual white house comes into view in the distance ahead of you. Just before coming to a dotted group of thorn trees, bear left on a smaller path. After climbing gently this brings you to a road at a small parking area next to a depression (a former quarry). Cross the road diagonally right to continue on a bridleway signposted to Withypool. Ignore any crossing paths, following the track towards a distant farm until you come to an isolated thorn tree (1hr20mins, [4]).

Just beyond the tree turn left on a path signposted to Tarr Steps. Your route roughly follows the line of the fence or bank. You may encounter some boggy ground on this path and have to divert slightly to the left or right to avoid it. Continue through a gate on an enclosed, possibly muddy path. Soon bear right on a joining path, also potentially muddy. Keep left of the



'tunnel' of vegetation, which is very overgrown. Soon afterwards the path appears to come to an end; turn left through a gate, again on an enclosed path. Go through another gate, through a metal gate and then across a farmyard (Knaplock) to some stone barns (1hr50mins, [5]). Turn left here on the farm road (signposted, but the sign is concealed behind a gorse bush).

Soon come to another farm (Higher Knaplock). Keep left here on the road without going through any gates. The road heads uphill, bends to the right where a bridleway turns off, passes a track on the right to a weather station, then bends around a small wooded valley. Turn left at a T-junction and continue to a crossroads (Spire Cross; 2hr20mins, [6]). Just beyond the crossroads head right on a grassy track and walk to a stone shelter, housing the Caratacus Stone (inscribed 'Cara.aci nepus' and thought to have been erected as a boundary stone by a fifth-century descendant of King Caratacus or Caradoc. Beyond the stone, bear left to walk alongside the bank.

You will soon arrive at a gate on the right. Go through and follow the left-hand path ahead. A faint grassy path soon bears off to the left: you are aiming for the right-hand edge of a large rounded beech tree, where there is a confirming yellow-topped post. The path now becomes clearer and descends into Halse Combe through the shade of beech woods. Stay on the path above the Halse stream, ignoring a signposted path to the right. After splashing through the stream at a ford pass an isolated cottage on the left and a footbridge to the right. Go through a gate (2hr55mins, [7]) and continue along the path, now rising gradually. At a T-junction (the right turn is a field entrance) turn left on a stony descending path; this can be slippery when wet. Meet a road at the bottom and turn right to walk down into Winsford.



Into the Punchbowl

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