



Walk 68. Dulverton, Brushford and Chilcott.

- 8.3 miles, ascents and descents of 390 metres. 3 hours 10 minutes continuous walking, allow 4-4½ hours.

Terrain: Roads, paths and fields, muddy in places. There is a ford and a boggy section soon after Wilway.

Access: By car, park in the long-stay car park next to Exmoor House (SS 912 280, TA22 9HL, £). Dulverton is served by bus 25 from Taunton and Bampton, 198 from Minehead and 398 from Tiverton and Bampton.

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

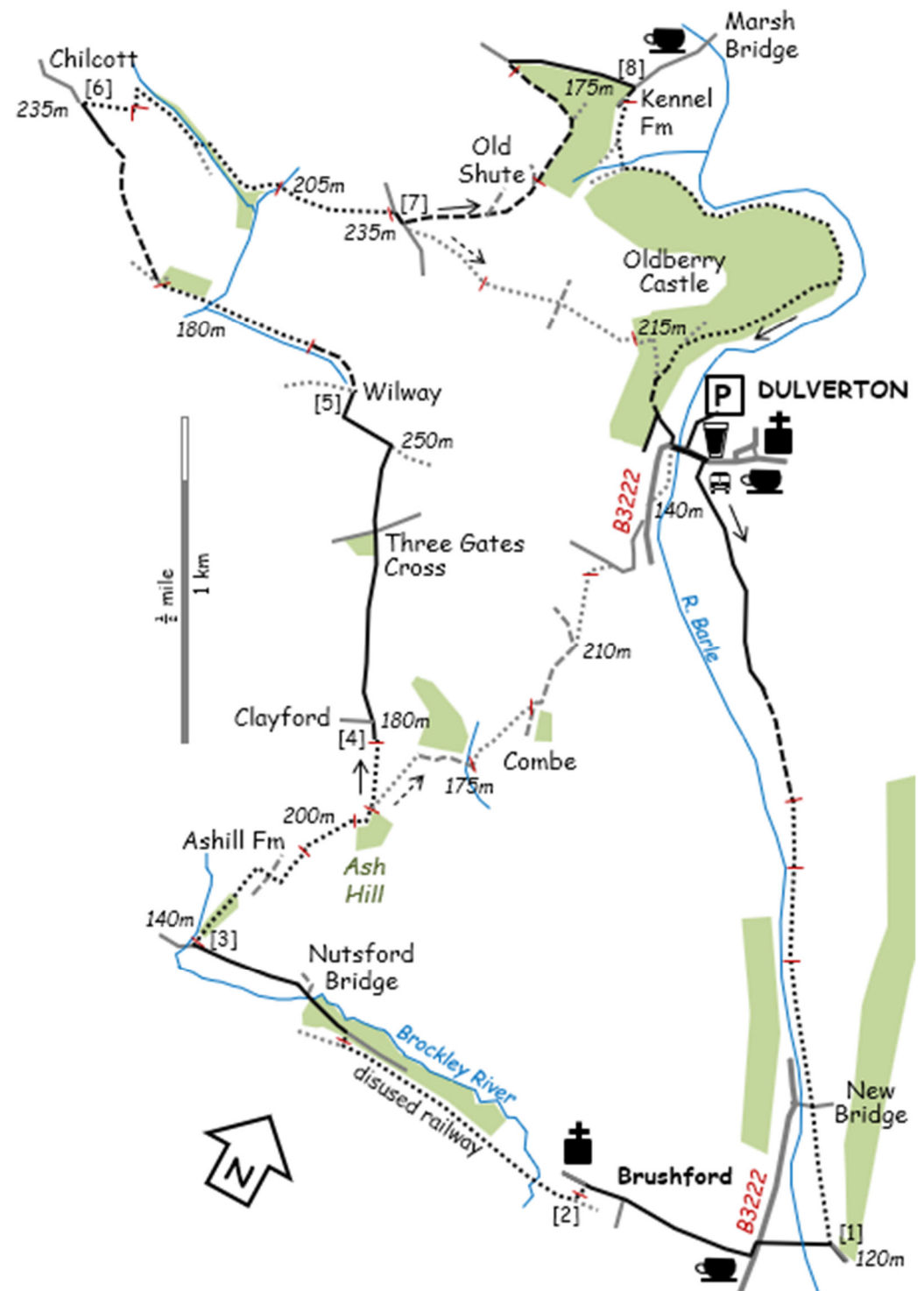
Refreshments: In Dulverton, tea garden at Marsh Bridge 5 minutes off the route, café in the shop in Brushford.

THIS PLEASANT WALK partly follows the signposted Dulverton and Brushford circular route, which is included as a shorter alternative, but breaks off northwards to continue on a little-walked route to the north-west of Dulverton. The walk starts out as a level stroll in meadows alongside the River Barle before heading through Brushford and, for a short stretch, along part of the disused Taunton to Barnstaple railway. After leaving the railway the route becomes more undulating through farm and woodland to the west of Dulverton, with views across the valley of the Brockley River. The final section uses a permitted path past Old Shute that is closed on Christmas Day (an alternative short-cut is possible), to meet the River Barle close to Marsh Bridge before following it back to Dulverton.

From the Bridge Inn in Dulverton turn away from the bridge, then opposite the mill stream turn right into Chapel Street. Pass the chapel and continue along Mill Lane. The lane gradually narrows to become a footpath, then it heads across a series of flat fields in the lower Barle valley. Note the hydroelectric generator at Beasley Weir in the river to your right; this provides enough electricity to power over a hundred houses. Cross a driveway for a lodge (a short detour to the right brings you to 'New Bridge' over the River Barle), walk across the next field, then go through a gate (or over a stile) and turn right on a narrow road (35mins, [1]). Cross the river, then cross diagonally left over the main road to continue into Brushford, signposted to the church and village hall (and, on a smaller sign, 'circular walk').

Pass the village hall but ignore the turning on the left. Two minutes or so later, immediately before Ashleigh House, turn left on a footpath, through a metal gate and up some steps, then turn right on the track of the old railway (45mins, [2]). Go over a road bridge then in seven or eight minutes take a path to the right signposted (not very prominently) 'circular walk'*. Turn left on the road, go over a small bridge, then about five minutes later (before coming to the

* The walk can be extended by following the railway path for another mile until it comes to an end at a road. Turn right here, then right at some houses, and follow the road back to Nutsford House and the stile.



entrance to Nutsford House) turn right over a stile to join a footpath (1hr5mins, [3]). The signpost says 'Dulverton 4', but the direct distance via the shorter walk is a little under two miles. Keep to the left of the trees and head upwards; as you come into the open aim for the far right-hand corner of the field, turn right as signposted in front of a farm, cross a driveway then turn left at the next signpost. Continue along the left-hand boundary (not through the gate on to the farm drive). Enter a field marked as an animal sanctuary. In the next field follow the path around to the left. Go through the gate. The **shorter walk** (see below) now bears slightly right to head back to Dulverton.

To continue on the main walk, keep the field boundary on your left. Head through the next gate and continue along a track; at a barn (1hr25mins, [4]), go straight ahead at the junction. At a crossroads go straight on into Wilway or Wellway Lane. Follow the road around bends until it comes to Wilway farm (1hr40mins, [5]). Two tracks head left: take the second, downhill one. Go through a gate, then keep to the left-hand side of the field above a stream. A potentially boggy area at the end leads to a ford across the stream; cross it, then head uphill along the right-hand edge of the field, bearing slightly left at the end along a line of trees. Turn right to go through a field gate, and continue ahead, uphill on a grassy path with views to the left. Keep right when the path forks; note the small cross on the right, a memorial to local author Norma Huxtable. Now follow the track towards Chilcott.

Just before the first house (2hrs, [6]), turn right through a gate and walk diagonally across the field, heading for a point halfway along the right-hand boundary. You may meet an inquisitive horse or two here. Go through a pedestrian gate then immediately left through a field gate. The official path continues at an angle across the bracken, but particularly in summer and autumn it is easier to keep to the left-hand boundary then turn right at the bottom to walk beside a stream. In 3-4 minutes, come to a footbridge on the left. Cross over and turn right. Bear slightly left on a rough path to rise gradually above the stream. The path swings around to the left, then descends to the right to a ford and a gate. Cross the stream and head straight on up a dry valley past two individual oaks, then to a gate just to the left of a (not very conspicuous) house (2hr20mins, [7]).

Turn right on the road, then left on a drive past the house, 'footpath to Northmoor'; this is a permitted path that is closed on Christmas Day. (An alternative, shorter return route uses the footpath just beyond; this follows walk 67 from its 3hr45min point [11]). Pass Old Shute and continue on the path towards Marsh Bridge. When the path forks, go through the gate on the right. At the next fork, keep left and follow the drive to another gate; just beyond it, turn sharply right on a road. In nearly five minutes take the first turn to the right, signposted as a footpath to Dulverton, through Kennel Farm (2hr35mins, [8]). Ignore a right turn and splash through a small stream. The path now runs above the River Barle, with the first houses of Dulverton gradually appearing on the opposite bank. Keep left when you meet a road, and left again to cross the bridge into Dulverton.

Shorter walk: Dulverton and Brushford (● 4.6 miles, ascents and descents of 165 metres). This is the (partially) signposted Dulverton and Brushford circular walk. Follow the main walk instructions past the 1hr5min point ([3]) and as described above. After the gate bear slightly right to the telegraph pole in the centre of the field. Now head a little further to the right towards the lower corner of the field, and follow a rough lane between posts towards farm

buildings; this is Combe. Go through the gate, then head to the left of the farmhouse as indicated on a short signpost. Walk up to a spreading oak. Continuing uphill make for the right-hand side of the two enclosed barns ahead of you. Go through a gate here to join a narrow road. As the road levels out and bends left, come to a viewpoint above Dulverton. Enter the field and head diagonally left as signposted. This brings you to another footpath sign; keep left here along the edge of the woods, then go over a stile to join an enclosed, uneven footpath. Turn right when you meet a road. This descends steeply to the B3222; take the footpath on the other side, which joins the River Barle and follows it to the town bridge in Dulverton. Turn right over the bridge for the car park and town centre.



River Barle in Dulverton

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