



### Walk 70. Dulverton to Bampton.

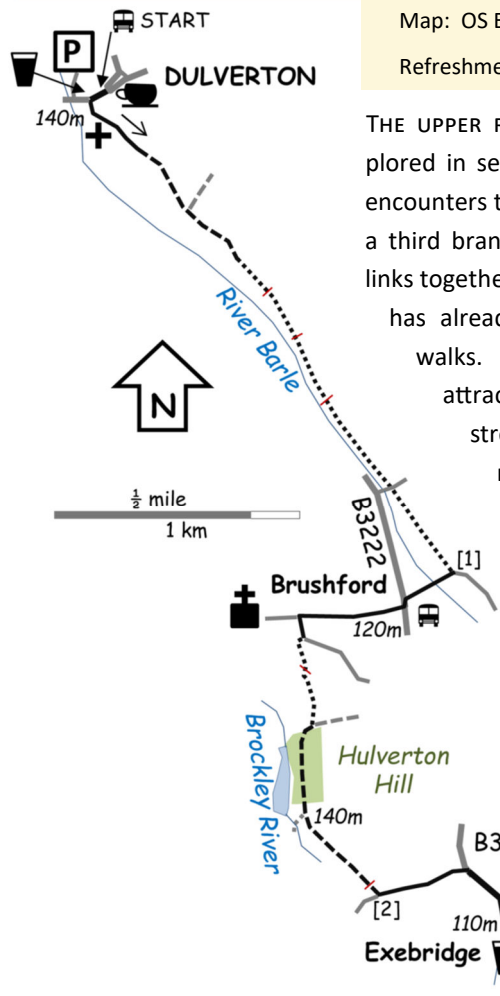
- 6 miles, 2 hours 10minutes. Ascents of 210 metres and descents of 250 metres.

Terrain: Roads, paths and fields, may be muddy in places.

Access: By car, park in Bampton (there are two car parks, a small one by the river at SS 959 222, near EX16 9LX, and a larger one off Station Road, SS 956 222, EX16 9QJ), and take the bus to Dulverton. The bus stop for the 25 is next to the war memorial, just up from the Swan Inn; the 398 also stops in Brook Street. By bus, Dulverton is on routes 25, 198 and 398, and Bampton on 25 and 398; buses run Monday to Saturday.

Map: OS Explorer 114 Exeter and the Exe Valley.

Refreshments: In Dulverton, Exebridge and Bampton.

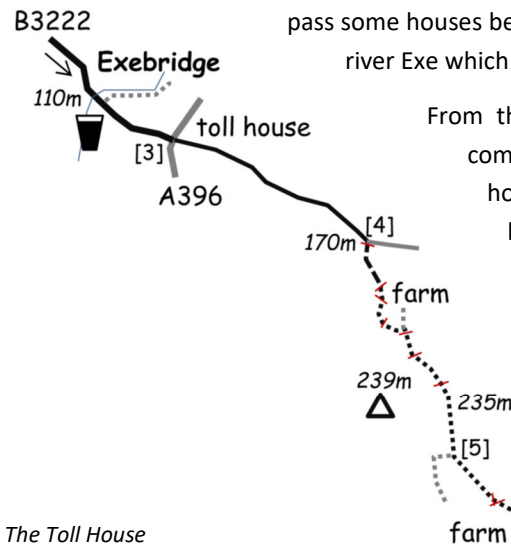


THE UPPER REACHES OF THE RIVERS BARLE AND EXE are explored in several of the high moorland walks. This route encounters the rivers close to their junction, and finishes on a third branch of the same system, the Batherm. It also links together two delightful small market towns. Dulverton has already been introduced in several of the earlier walks. Bampton has a lower-key feel but it is still an attractive and satisfying place, with a wide main street that runs down to the river and catches the midday sun. Both offer plenty of refreshment options, and there is a pub mid-way at Exebridge with a beer garden on the river bank, making this an ideal slow stroll. The walk follows part of the Exe Valley Way, which runs from Exford to the sea at Exmouth; it is currently only signposted at the Bampton end.

Start at the bus stop in the centre of Dulverton. Head downhill towards the Bridge Inn, but before you get there turn left into Chapel Street. Pass

the chapel and continue along Mill Lane. The lane gradually narrows to become an unsurfaced track, ending at a gate into a field. Continue on the footpath across the fields. Note the hydroelectric generator on the right in the first field; this provides enough power for over a hundred houses. After the third field 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 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 then, unless you want to visit the 13th-century church, take the next road left, over a bridge. This used to be the old railway line that connected Taunton and Barnstaple, but looking over the bridge you will only see back gardens. Just after the bridge, as the road bends left, take a blue-signed bridleway on the right. Head uphill and then through a gate on the right; now keep the hedge on your left. At a wood, bear right as the bridleway joins a wider track. Look out for a lake through the trees on your right, before the track goes through a muddy patch and drops downhill to a stone barn. Go through a gate and turn left just after at a T-junction. Coming to a stone house (1hr5mins, [2]), turn left on to a minor road. In three or four minutes arrive back at the Dulverton road. Turn right and pass some houses before crossing the bridge at Exebridge, over the river Exe which has now joined forces with the Barle.



From the Anchor Inn continue along the road and come to an early 19th century octagonal toll house (1hr15mins, [3]). Keep to the left of the building and cross the main A396 to continue along a narrow lane. This can be quite busy so keep an eye out for traffic; it is also the steepest part of the walk. Head uphill for ten minutes or so, then turn right on a track beneath some power lines (signposted as the Exe Valley Way footpath, [4])

The Toll House



and go through a field gate. Head towards a white farmhouse, but before you reach it turn right to follow the well-marked footpath to come behind the farm.

Leave the farm on the signposted path, roughly parallel with a smaller set of power lines. After a kissing gate continue ahead alongside a beech hedgerow. Turn left at a crossing path signposted Exe Valley Way (1hr50mins, [5]), soon bearing right through a gap and crossing the field diagonally. In the next field Bampton comes into view; head diagonally towards it. After a gate, frequent marker posts emphasise your route along the left-hand field edge. At the bottom go through a kissing gate and over two stiles in quick succession. Join a track, look out for some tall conifers and follow the path up through them, then go over a stile on the right and along the left-hand edge of the field. Go through a gate, downhill on a driveway, then turn left on a narrow lane (2hr5mins, [6]). This takes you back into Bampton. To walk down to the River Bathern, turn left, walk into the centre, through the 'no entry' road signs, then turn right into Brook Street (2hr15mins).

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