



Walk 85. Waterrow, Clayhanger and Raddington.

- 9.7 miles, ascents and descents of 425 metres. 3 hours 50 minutes constant walking, allow 5½ hours.

Terrain: Mainly paths, roads and tracks, and a few fields; can be muddy in places. Most of the lanes are fairly quiet, but they are narrow so beware of traffic.

Access: There is limited parking off the B3227 in Waterrow (TA4 2AX), either on the opposite side of the bridge to the Rock Inn (ST 052 254), or in a layby further south opposite the entrance to the caravan site (ST 052 250; not the parking area outside the houses, which is for residents). Waterrow is on bus route 25 (Monday to Saturday) from Taunton via Wiveliscombe and Bampton to Dulverton.

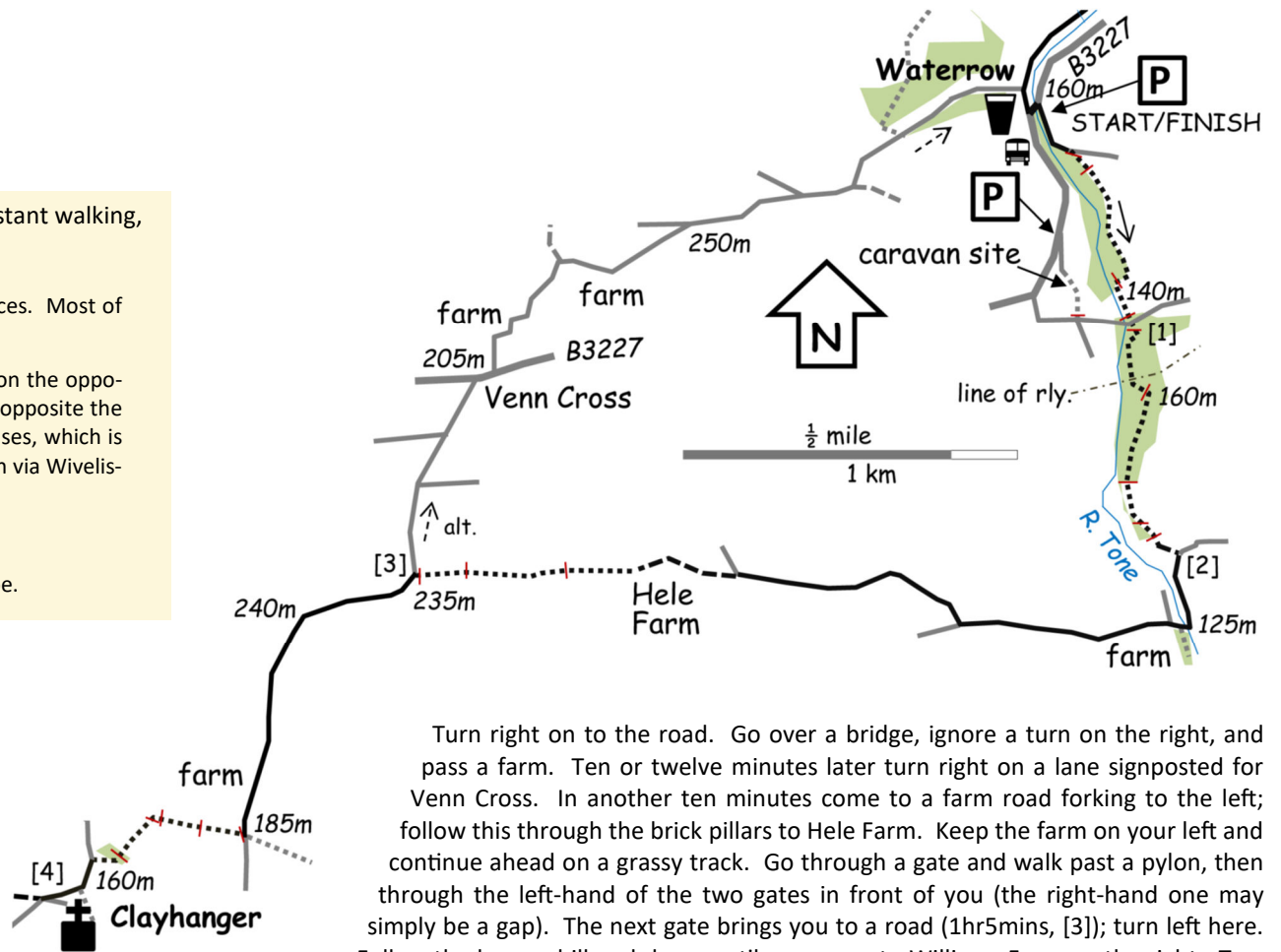
Map: OS Explorer 128 Taunton and the Blackdown Hills.

Refreshments: The Rock Inn at Waterrow, other options in nearby Wiveliscombe.

WATERROW IS A SMALL VILLAGE STRUNG OUT ALONG THE RIVER TONE, Clayhanger little more than a hamlet, and Raddington with its delightfully secluded church hardly that; all are situated in the gently rolling hills and patchwork fields that characterise the country south of the Brendons and into mid-Devon. On this walk the only connection that you will have with the bustle of modern life is crossing the B3227.

Start at the parking area opposite the Rock Inn in Waterrow. Turn left away from the main road along a narrow lane with the river on your right. Pass a house on the left, then as the road bends left go through a partially hidden stone stile on the right to join a permissive path. The path soon goes through a gate and becomes enclosed between fences. Follow it beside fields, then when you come to a T-junction turn right downhill. Go through a gate and bear left across a meadow. Another gate brings you to a road: cross over to enter a wood, the Hurstone nature reserve (12mins, [1]). (If you have parked in the layby, walk into the caravan site, keep to the left of the service building, then follow a grass path that will bring you to a gate at a road; turn left here, then in two minutes right through the gate into the wood. This route can also be used if the permissive path is closed).

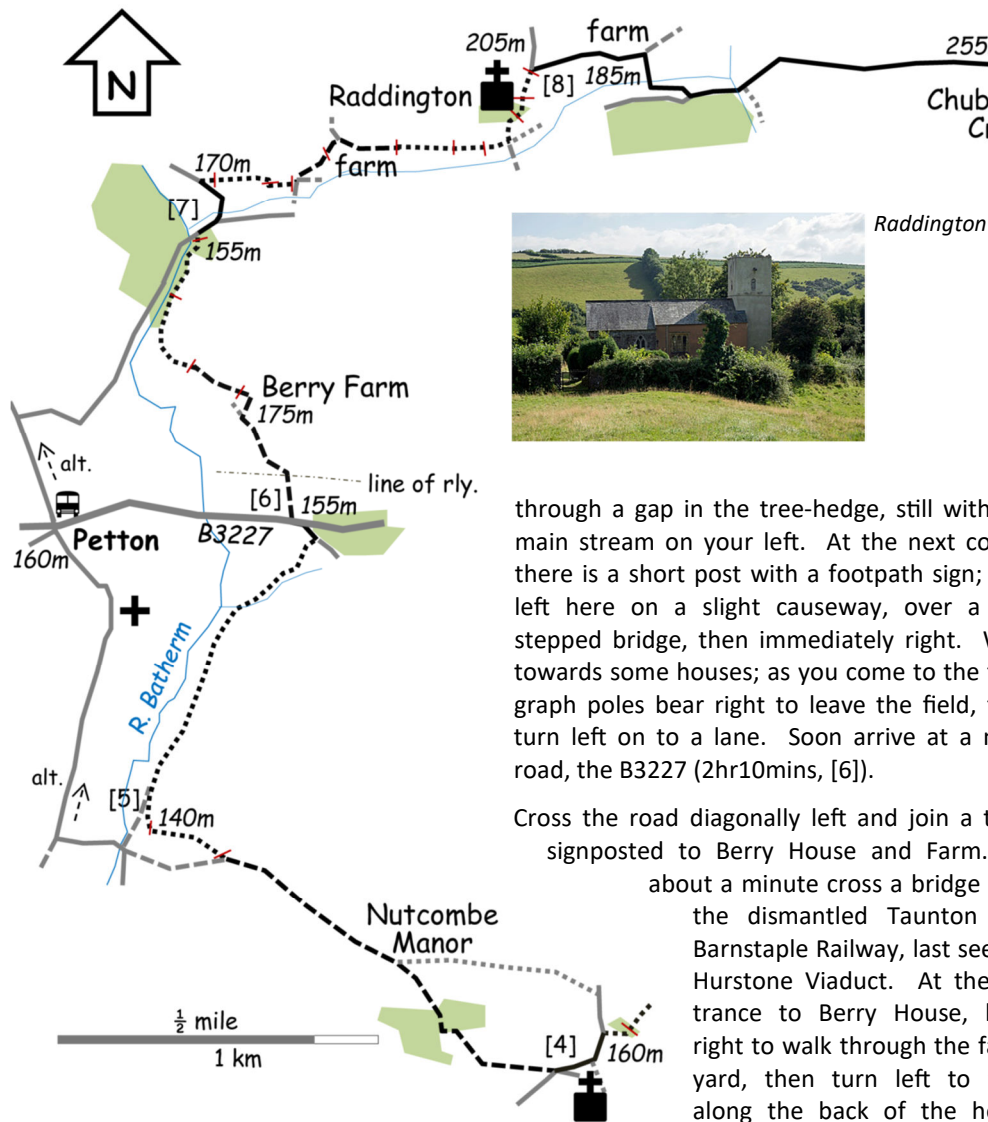
In the nature reserve turn immediately right on a narrow path and descend steps. After some short boardwalks the path climbs up between the towering pillars of the former Hurstone Viaduct. Turn right at a post, head up more steps, and go through a pedestrian gate. Descend through the woods. The River Tone widens out below you to the right, then the path leaves the wood through a gate. Keep to the right-hand side of the field, then go through a kissing gate on the right, initially hidden from view. Drop downhill and go over a stile; the path comes alongside a house, joining its driveway and coming to a road (25mins, [2]).



Turn right on to the road. Go over a bridge, ignore a turn on the right, and pass a farm. Ten or twelve minutes later turn right on a lane signposted for Venn Cross. In another ten minutes come to a farm road forking to the left; follow this through the brick pillars to Hele Farm. Keep the farm on your left and continue ahead on a grassy track. Go through a gate and walk past a pylon, then through the left-hand of the two gates in front of you (the right-hand one may simply be a gap). The next gate brings you to a road (1hr5mins, [3]); turn left here.

Follow the lane uphill and down until you come to Williams Farm on the right. Two minutes later turn right on a crossing path into a field. Walk across this field and the next, then in a third field turn left through a gate. Clayhanger is in front of you; head just left of its leftmost house. A gate takes you into a belt of trees and over a footbridge, then through a muddy patch into a field. Turn right to come to a gate and descend to a road, turning left into Clayhanger (1hr30mins, [4]).

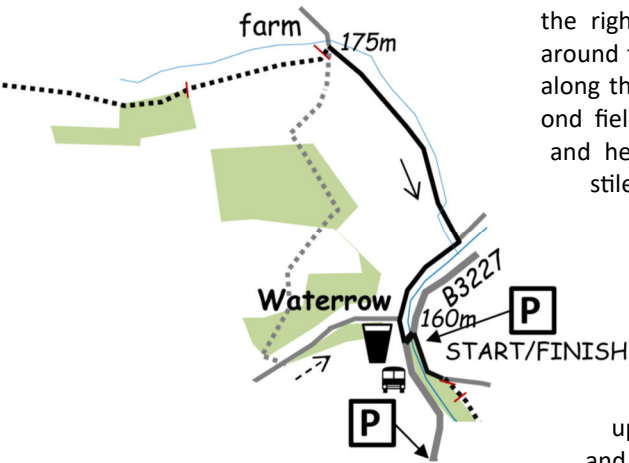
Clayhanger church is worth a short detour to the left; your way on is to the right opposite its access road, on an unsurfaced lane signposted as a footpath. This takes you past the sixteenth-century Nutcombe Manor. Six or seven minutes further on it is possible to continue on the track, but take the signposted footpath to the right through a field gate and keep to the left-hand field boundary. At the end of this field, pass a derelict pond; this is possibly part of an abandoned village. In the next field, climb down in to the gully next to the hedge on the left, and go through a gate (1hr50mins, [5]). Turn right to go around the back of a house, then keep right, not on to the vehicle track but on a narrow footpath that runs parallel with it. Keep the stream on your left. When you come to the corner of a field continue



through a gap in the tree-hedge, still with the main stream on your left. At the next corner there is a short post with a footpath sign; turn left here on a slight causeway, over a tiny stepped bridge, then immediately right. Walk towards some houses; as you come to the telegraph poles bear right to leave the field, then turn left on to a lane. Soon arrive at a main road, the B3227 (2hr10mins, [6]).

Cross the road diagonally left and join a track signposted to Berry House and Farm. In about a minute cross a bridge over the dismantled Taunton and Barnstaple Railway, last seen at Hurstone Viaduct. At the entrance to Berry House, keep right to walk through the farmyard, then turn left to walk along the back of the house and go through a gate. Bear

left to follow an enclosed, possibly very muddy path. Go through a pedestrian gate. The path, now uneven rather than muddy, bends around to the right and comes to a field gate. Continue ahead; you may hear the Batherm, Bampton's river, below you. Another field gate brings you on to a road just above the Batherm bridge (2hr30mins, [7]). Turn right, then keep left at the road junction. Pass a house on the left, then turn sharply right into a field entrance. Go through a gate and keep to the right-hand edge of the field. As you approach a corrugated barn turn right through a gateway, then left to continue alongside the hedge. Through another gate, then take the left-hand branch of the track to head uphill. Note a large pond over to



the right. Go through a gate, then head around the back of a farm. Follow the track along the edge of a field, then across a second field. Follow the path through a stile and head for a house. Through another stile, past the house, then left on a grass track that soon becomes an enclosed path. This brings you to pretty, ancient and isolated Raddington church (2hr50mins, [8]).

The way on is out of the back of the churchyard, on the left. Walk uphill along the field edge to a gate, and turn right here on a narrow lane. Follow the road past the farm to a T-

junction and turn left. After fifteen minutes or so of uphill walking come to another T-junction, Chubwell Cross (3hr20mins, [9]). Continue ahead through a gate and follow the path along the edge of the field, through a small wood, then across further fields. After walking above a valley on your left go through a gate and turn right on the road. In about ten minutes this brings you to a T-junction on the edge of Waterrow. Turn right and soon arrive at the Rock Inn and your parking place; if you have parked at the layby, turn right on the main road and it is five minutes further on.

One-way walks. Bus 25 stops at Petton, half a mile west along the B3227 from where the walk crosses, making it possible to do either half of the walk other than on a Sunday. Check the bus times before planning your walk. **Waterrow to Petton via Clayhanger**, (● 5.1 miles, ascents and descents of 220m). Follow the main walk to the 1hr50min point ([5]), go around the back of the house, but now turn left on the driveway to pass Denscombe Mill. Turn right on the road at a gate (rejoining the main track from Nutcombe Manor) and go over a small bridge. Follow the road right at a sharp bend. This will bring you to Petton in just over ten minutes, by way of nineteenth-century St Petrock's church, with its bellcote. The bus stops at the crossroads with the B3227. **Petton to Waterrow via Raddington** (● 4.4 miles, ascents and descents of 200m). From Petton walk northwards up the lane on the opposite side of the road to the bus shelter. In around five minutes turn right at a junction, signposted to Raddington. A little under fifteen minutes later cross a small bridge over the Batherm, and join the main walk where it comes in from the right at its 2hr30min point ([7]).

Short circular walk: Waterrow, Hurstone Viaduct and Venn Cross (● 4.3 miles, ascents and descents of 210m). After the first section this walk is mainly on tarmac, but it is none the worse for that and the last stretch back from Venn Cross is quite picturesque. Follow the main walk to the 1hr30min point ([3]) and turn right. In around eight minutes come to the B3227, and cross diagonally right to follow a minor road towards Raddington (take care: the main road has a 60mph limit and visibility to the right is limited). The road climbs through bends and past farms. Follow it back to Waterrow, via a steep descent through a small wood. Turn right at the T-junction to come back to the Rock Inn.

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