



AW7. Arlington and Loxhore.

- 5 miles, ascents and descents of 250 metres. 2 hours 5 minutes continuous walking, allow 2½ to 3 hours.

Terrain: Lanes, paths and one field. One section can be very muddy at any time of year. There are a couple of fairly steep climbs, hence the 'green' rating.

Access: Start from the National Trust car park for Arlington Court (£, members free), signposted from the A39 (SS 611 408, near EX31 4LP). There is occasionally some free roadside parking, but be careful not to cause an obstruction. Monday-Saturday bus 309 from Lynmouth and Lynton to Barnstaple stops on the A39 ('Arlington Turn') a quarter of a mile from the start; from Lynton/Lynmouth the timings allow 4½ hours at Arlington, but from the Barnstaple direction only 2½ hours.

Map: OS Explorer 139 Bideford, Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.

Refreshments: National Trust tea room within the pay area at Arlington Court, smaller seasonal café near the car park.

ARLINGTON IS ONE OF THE GREAT ESTATES OF NORTH DEVON, for many years the home of the Chichester family and now looked after by the National Trust. Beyond the more manicured area close to the house, the estate is a mix of wooded valleys, grassland and lakes, with plenty of footpaths to explore (please note that the formal gardens and areas around the house require payment if you are not a National Trust member). This route can be completed without entering the 'pay area', and connects the estate hamlets of Arlington and Loxhore.

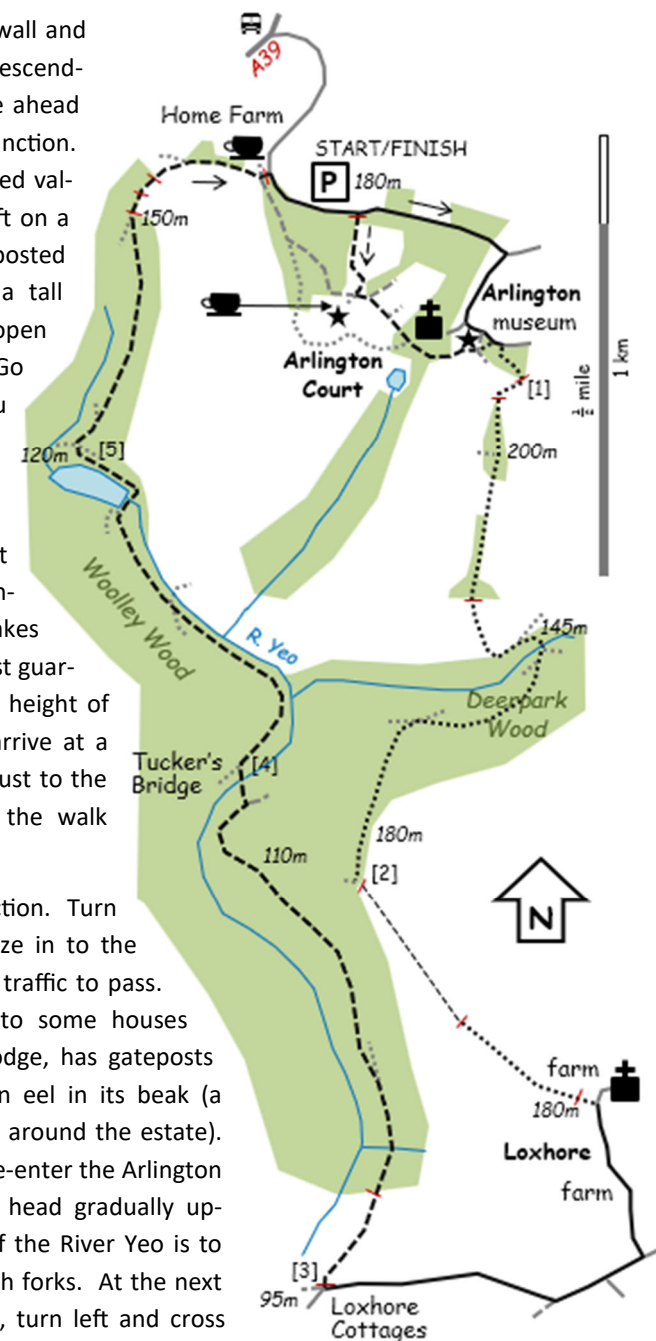
Members and paying visitors can start by crossing the road from the car park and going through the gates into Arlington Court. After the visitor centre, keep left on the path to pass the formal garden and come to the carriage museum. Note an old raised grain store on your right. Take the narrow footpath to the right, and bear right to pass the staff car parks.

Otherwise, turn left out of the car park and walk along the lane. In five minutes take a road to the right signposted to Arlington. As you approach a building (the back of the carriage museum) keep left, then come to a small group of buildings. Keep left around them past the staff car parks.

Turn right into the woods, bearing slightly left on a footpath. Come to a gate and turn right into the field (10mins, [1]). Follow the path around to a gate and enter a narrow strip of woodland ('Deer Park Wood'). A short diversion to the right takes you to a viewpoint, with a tall stone cairn commemorating Queen Victoria's golden jubilee. After a short stretch partly in the open the path enters a small block of woodland and starts to descend. Go through a

gate, possibly open. Arrive at a wall and follow the path to the left, soon descending into another wood. Continue ahead ('Loxhore Church') at a path junction. The path contours along a wooded valley. At the next junction bear left on a diagonal crossing path again signposted Loxhore Church. Climb up to a tall beech tree, then come into the open and start to descend gradually. Go through the gate ahead of you into a field (35mins, [2]); keep roughly parallel with its right-hand edge, heading for the right-hand end of the hedgeline in front of you. Keep left of the first bushes, funnelling in to a gate. This takes you on to an enclosed path, almost guaranteed to be muddy even in the height of summer. After a second gate, arrive at a narrow lane. Loxhore Church is just to the left, around a bend; otherwise the walk continues to the right.

Pass a farm and come to a T-junction. Turn right, and be prepared to squeeze in to the side of this narrow lane to allow traffic to pass. Walk downhill until you come to some houses (1hr10mins, [3]). One, a gate lodge, has gateposts each topped by a heron with an eel in its beak (a theme repeated in several places around the estate). Turn right between the posts to re-enter the Arlington estate. Go through a gate and head gradually upwards on the path. The valley of the River Yeo is to your left. Keep left when the path forks. At the next junction, marked Tucker's Bridge, turn left and cross the stream (1hr30mins, [4]). Follow the path around to the right. Ignore the first right, Smallacombe Bridge; a little way further along the path bears right over a dam, with a reedy pond on the left. The path curves left; the lake is to the left though it is rarely visible through the vegetation. Soon come to an urn on your left, a memo-



rial to Rosalie Chichester, the last private owner of Arlington (1hr50mins, [5]). A bird hide is off to the left a little further on. Head steadily upwards on the main path. Go through three gates in succession, noting a partial avenue of Chile pines or monkey puzzle trees. Just beyond on the left is a seasonal café. To return to the car park, turn left between the heron-topped gateposts, then right on the road; otherwise if you are a member or have paid, the path continues to Arlington Court.

Shorter walks. Several routes of between 1 and 3 miles are detailed by the National Trust on noticeboards, leaflets available from the visitor centre, and on the Arlington Court website.



Lodge at Loxhore with heron-topped gate pillar