



EXETER & DISTRICT RAMBLERS WALKING WEEKEND AT HOLNICOTE HOUSE
FRIDAY 9th OCTOBER to MONDAY 12th OCTOBER 2026.
THE WALKING PROGRAMME.

We would like to welcome you to our walking holiday on Exmoor. Thanks to the Groups wonderful walks leaders, we can offer a varied programme of weekend walks in the company of our fellow walkers. We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all the walks leaders who have planned, given up time to travel up to Exmoor to recce and produce the walk descriptions for our benefit.

On the day of arrival, we will be able to gain access to our rooms from 2.30pm. Those joining the walk that starts from the house will be able to park there beforehand. Afternoon tea and scones will be available from 3.00pm in the house.

Would you please select your walk for the first day and email the leader ideally by 8.00pm Thursday 8th October, so that they know how many to expect.

Booking on walks for the other days will be a generally informal arrangement confirmed the night before the walk takes place. We hope you find the walks programme of interest and will appreciate the lovely landscapes and places of interest we will see.

On our departure day, where the walks leave from the house, we will be able to leave our cars in the car park.



Friday	A chieftain, a statesman and a magnificent listed organ		
11.00am	Leader Les Bright	07712 386846	Lesbright1@btinternet.com
7 miles	Start: Winsford village car park – with toilets – Post Code TA24 7JE		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 906 349	W3W: ///responds.loafing.prayers
Walk: Winsford village is around 13 miles from Selworthy, a mile off the A396, south of Wheddon Cross. We leave Winsford heading gently uphill on good woodland tracks until emerging close to the Caratacus Stone [probably] erected in the 6th century. We then walk towards the summit of Winsford Hill and the Wambarrows, three Bronze Age burial chambers – a possible lunch stop, dependent on weather conditions. We then descend gently – at first - around the beauty of The Punchbowl from where there are exceptionally good views - near and far. At Withycombe Farm we climb again to reach a ridge path on Bye Hill that provides excellent views along the Exe valley. As we walk down to the village, a stop at the Church of St Mary Magdalene, a Grade 1 listed building dating from the Norman period with commanding views across the village and beyond, is worth a few minutes of our time before returning to the car park via one of the village's 8 bridges. Booking by email in the previous few days and by Thursday evening (20:00) to give numbers.			
Estimated Finish Time. 3.30pm			

Friday	An Exmoor Classic		
12.00(Noon)	Leader Hazel Pond	07872 940527	pondlife05@hotmail.co.uk
5 miles	Start: Exford village car park Post code TA24 7PP		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 853 384	W3W: ///mountains.jeep.motor
Walk: This classic walk combines moorland with a beautiful riverside path in the Exe Valley. There is a steep climb up to Road Hill and Room Hill, from where you get extensive views, including towards the highest point on Exmoor, Dunkery Beacon 1713ft (519m). The bridleway then drops steeply into Curr Cleave, where you will see evidence of the erosive power of the river. After crossing the Exe at Nethercote, the return route uses a bridleway and footpath back to Exford. Booking by email in the previous few days and by Thursday evening (20:00) to give numbers.			
Estimated Finish Time. 3.30pm			

Friday	Start with the high point - Dunkery Beacon		
12.00 (Noon)	Leader Sue Howell	07849 452829	sm.howell@btopenworld.com
4.0 miles	Start: Dunkery Bridge car park		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 895 406	W3W: ///saloons.composer.sofas
Walk: Walking East from car park to River Avil and on to Dunkery Errish. By track Northwest to join Macmillan Way and ascend to Dunkery Beacon and then return to car park. All at a leisurely pace. The scenery is the best, walking through woodland, across pastoral farmland, river valley and open moorland. A couple small brooks to navigate. MEET at Dunkery Bridge Car Park. Booking by email in the previous few days and by Thursday evening (20:00pm) to give numbers. Estimated Finish Time. 3.00pm			

Saturday	From Castle to Coast: The Dunster Circular		
10.00am	Leader Helen Sail		helen.sail@icloud.com
9.0 miles	Start: Dunster Steep Car Park (more info on parking below) Post Code TA24 6AS. Leave Holnicote car park at 9.30am.		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 99319 43937	W3W: ///educates.yesterday.majors
Walk: A circular walk starting and finishing at Dunster car park, taking in the historic village of Dunster, the famous Yarn Market and views of Dunster Castle. From Dunster, we climb up onto Gallox Hill, home to an Iron Age hillfort, before continuing to another ancient hillfort at Bat's Castle. We then follow the ridge to Withycombe Hill, before taking a mixture of lanes and paths down to the village of Withycombe and onwards to Blue Anchor and the coast. From Blue Anchor, we follow the coast path back towards Dunster, passing through the marshes and nature reserve. This final section of the walk runs close to the West Somerset Railway, with steam trains passing regularly throughout the day, adding an extra point of interest to the route. Many options for a cream tea or a refreshing drink at the end of the walk. Dunster Steep car park (next to National Park Visitor Centre) costs £6.40 for a day. National trust members can park for free in the Castle car park which is next to Dunster Steep Car Park, just follow signs for Dunster Castle. (remember to get a ticket) and walk a short distance through the trees to Dunster Steep Car Park. If you do this, I suggest you leave Holnicote a bit earlier.			
Estimated Finish Time: 3.30pm			

Saturday	A little bit of the Porlock Pilgrim's trail and some more		
9.30 am	Leader Gill MacPhail	07784 820524	gillmacphail@btopenworld.com
12.0 or 8.5 miles	Start: Porlock Central Car park. £6.40 all day (pay by card or phone) Post code TA24 8PH		
Moderate to Strenuous	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 88526 46888	W3W: ///locating.diverged.loans
Walk: The walk begins at the parish church of Porlock, where a decapitated spire, a fine 15th century alabaster tomb of a knight and his wife and a 15th century clock, can all be seen. Following the Coleridge Way, our next stop is the "tin tabernacle" at Porlock Weir. During the days of the British Empire, tin tabernacles were sent to far-flung parts of the empire and to remote communities within the UK. Leaving Porlock Weir we follow the South West Coast path as far as the beautiful Worthy Toll House. From here, if the group decides to do the longer version of the walk, we will continue along the rugged coast path to the remote and beautiful church at Culborne. Then we will follow paths and quiet lanes up to Pitt Farm. If the group decides to do the shorter version we head directly inland from Worthy ascending Worthy Combe to Pitt Farm. In both versions we continue from Pitt Farm ascending through Pitt Combe to arrive at Pittcombe Head. The remainder of the walk will be easy walking across Porlock Common and then descending through the most beautiful Shillett Wood and Hawkcombe Woods National Nature Reserve and back into Porlock.			
Estimated Finish Time. 4.30pm or 3.00pm			

Saturday	Villages and Bridges of Horner Water		
9:30 am	Leader Nikki Wroe	07814 614731	nikkiannwroe@yahoo.com
5.0 miles	Start: Holnicote House car park. Post code: TA24 8TJ		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 910 464	W3W: ///unsecured.dumps.toolbar
Walk: From Holnicote Hotel we will cross fields to visit a Pack Horse Bridge and West Luccombe. Fields and woodland to Lynch Bridge and then on to Bossington Village by lane. From here we can take a tour of the beach area (or not – may depend on tide etc.). From Bossington return by footpath to Lynch, Lower Allerford then track way towards Selworthy, turning off through woodland back to the Hotel. All at a leisurely pace, with stops. Horner Water, footpaths across fields, though woodland and picturesque villages with interesting bridges and buildings to view. Hopefully we will get to Bossington Beach.			
Estimated Finish Time. 3:00pm			

Saturday	Allerford and St Agnes Fountain		
10.00am	Leader Richard Clarkson	07773 569867	Randa12779@gmail.com
3.5 miles	Start: From Holnicote House outside Boot Room. Post code: TA24 8TJ		
Amble	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 910 463	W3W: /// acrobatic.pronouns.willpower
Walk: A circular walk from the house. We cross the main A39 road into woodland and after a short climb, turn towards the village of Allerford. We walk over the packhorse bridge and through the village before crossing the river and climbing up to a path junction where we take a path towards St Agnes fountain-a good spot to stop for a morning coffee and to enjoy the views. We then continue through woodland, with some steep sections of climbing, some open views and good paths taking us into Selworthy. The church is worth visiting and we can have our lunch on seating outside the church, with distant views to Dunkery beacon. There is the opportunity of having a cup of tea in the cafe in the village, before we take the road and path back to the house. There is varied terrain on the walk, with some rough stoney sections and short steep climbs. There are no stiles. There are toilets in Selworthy village and in the cafe.			
Estimated Finish Time. 2.30pm			

Sunday	Bratton Ball		
10.00am	Leader Nikki and Ian Wroe	07513 168451	lan.wroe@outlook.com
9 miles	Start: From Holnicote House, meet in car park. Post Code TA24 8TJ		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 910463	W3W: ///acrobatic.pronouns.willpower
Walk: A circular walk from the house. We visit Piles Mill where we cross the A39 to Brandish Street and turn right to pass Selworthy (toilets) then mainly by footpaths through East Lynch, around Little Headon Plantation to Bratton Court, a medieval manor house. Here we turn north via Bratton Wood and take a zig zag climb to Bratton Ball, a scenic high point and attractive walking route giving sweeping views of the coast and surrounding valleys. We turn northwest and follow a path to Selworthy Beacon and descend back to the house via the Memorial Hut and Katherine's Well. An invigorating walk with great views mainly on paths and tracks.			
Estimated Finish Time: 3.30pm			

Sunday	Pinkery Canal and Chains Barrow Walk, including the Tarka Trail		
10.30am	Leader Richard Macphail	07936 186674	r.macphail@btopenworld.com
6 miles moderate	Start: Start in long, partially grassed, layby between Challacombe and Simonsbath. Post code (nearest) TA 24 7LJ (Macmillan Way West) Leave from Holnicote House car park at 9.15am to drive to walk start at 10.30.		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 729 401	W3W: ///sharpens.ambition.handfuls
Walk: There is an about 17 mile/40 minute drive from HF Holnicote House. From the layby we head up the Macmillan Way West into the formerly Royal Forest of Exmoor, passing the Pinkery Canal (October 1819) purportedly to carry lime to improve the local soils by the Knight Family – excavation, soil and paleoenvironmental studies are ongoing. >100 people went to the open day at the site (last July). We then skirt the boggy moorland area called The Chains, and make a short visit upslope to the Bronze Age Chains Barrow and trig point at 487 m. We return to the main path westwards to Pinkery Pond, joining the Tarka Trail at Wood Barrow Gates, going downhill and south, crossing the B3558 near the Edgerly Stone through to Lew Combe. After the Soley marker stone, we pass Mole's Chamber the location of a disreputable Victorian inn that closed in 1883, while heading northeast along Great Vintcombe, back to the B3224, and car park. Highlights include the mysterious and intriguing Pinkery canal history, which is 8km long and was the highest canal in England which has been recently (July) excavated by Exmoor National Park Authority. The canal was constructed to aid the reclamation of the moor for agricultural purposes. Pinquerry Pond itself was created by the Knight family in 1830 by damming the headwaters of the River Barle to form a reservoir. The high point/highest point is the Bronze Age (2500-700 BC) Chain Barrow (a bowl barrow). (See https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/exmoor-for-everyone/walking/exmoor-classics/The-Chains) Driving route: suggest leaving HF Holnicote House driving west along the A39, via Porlock and the famous Porlock Hill taking a minor road south at Whitstone Post across Porlock Common down to Exford, then turning west onto the B3224. Continue on the B3224 through Simonsbath, and halfway to Challacombe is the parking area on a shallow righthand curve.			
Estimated Finish Time. 3.00 PM			

Sunday	The Highs and Lows of Selworthy		
10:30am	Leader: Andy Birnie	07757 527030	andyjbirnie@yahoo.co.uk
6.5 ml/ 10.5km	Start: Holnicote House car park. Postcode: TA24 8TJ		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 910 463	W3W: ///acrobatic.pronouns.willpower
		W3W:	
Walk: Leaving the hotel car park, we make our way to the village of Selworthy and past All Saints church. Journeying north we walk through woodland to the earthworks at Bury Castle then on to the memorial hut with its inscribed poem by John Keble. After traversing the open moorland, we arrive at Selworthy Beacon the highest point of the walk at 1,010ft or 310m with stunning views. Heading west whilst admiring the amazing views of the Welsh coastline we follow the path to Bossington Hill. After circumnavigating the hill, we continue into the woods at Lynch Combe and pass the remains of St. Agnes Fountain. Continuing in an easterly direction we make our way back to the village of Selworthy returning to Holnicote House.			
Estimated Finish Time: 2.30 pm			

Sunday	3 Castles and Heritage Village		
10.00am	Leader Sue Howell	07849 452829	sm.howell@btopenworld.com
5 miles	Start: Dunster Castle NT car park Post Code: TA24 6SG		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 993 437	W3W: ///library.pixies.dragonfly
Walk: From Dunster Castle NT car park, a loop East below Dunster Castle to Gallox Bridge. Pick up the Macmillan Way across the ridge and Bats Castle, with a short diversion to the settlement of Gallox Hill. Down to Withycombe Hill Gate. Using Park Lane SW and then NW back to Gallox Bridge. Complete the circulation of Dunster Castle on West side though village including the Church and Yarn Market. There are other things potentially to see on route – Water Mill, Lovers Bridge, Dove Cote, Potters Kiln (+ the Castle itself so bring your NT card if you have one) All at a leisurely pace, with stops. Parking follow NT signs for Dunster Castle (not village).			
Estimated Finish Time. 2:00pm (for Walk)			

Monday	An Exmoor Classic – We will finish on a High!		
10.00am	Leader John Howell	07711 961297	John.owl@btopenworld.com
8.5 miles	Start: Webber's Post Car Park – 4 miles from HF house Post Code: TA24 8TB Leave Holnicote House car park by 9.30am at latest.		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 903 439	W3W: ///sprayed.mend.flattery
Walk: The walk starts with a steep ascent to Cloutsham Ball, Cloutsham, before visiting the very lovely 13 th century church at Stoke Pero, the highest and most remote church on Exmoor. We will cross Stoke Pero Common, before ascending to the top of the ridge to the east of Little Rowbarrow and on to Dunkery Beacon at 519m, the highest point on Exmoor. We will then walk while descending along the MacMillan Way West to Higher Brockwell, please note there has been some erosion repairs carried out to the track, making it uneven in places. We will return to Webber's Post along The Dunster Path, which is part of the Coleridge Way. Being high up on Exmoor there are extensive and stunning views in all directions, including Wales, to the East Devon coast and the northern slopes of Dartmoor. Exmoor ponies and deer are almost always seen on this walk!			
Estimated Finish Time. 3.00pm			

Monday	A Walk in the Woods		
10:00 am	Leader: Maggie Stewart	07758 865064	maggierosestewart@gmail.com
6ml/9.7km	Start: Holnicote House. Postcode: TA24 8TJ		
Moderate	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 910 463	W3W ///acrobatic.pronouns.willpower
A walk through Horner woods, one of the largest and most beautiful oak woods in Britain, and up to Ley Hill, with extensive views across the coast and the Bristol Channel. We cross the fields from Holnicote House and take the lane to Horner, where we cross the late medieval packhorse, or Hacketty Way bridge into Rey Combe. A long, fairly steep climb brings us out onto Ley Hill (at about 260m) and Doverhay Down where we start the descent to Hawk Combe. We cross to the other side of the valley and down the lane towards Porlock, before joining the Coleridge Way and returning to Horner. We then retrace our steps across the fields to Holnicote House. Generally good paths and quiet lanes, with some steep sections and rough downhill slopes. Total ascent 344m.			
Estimated finish time: 2.30pm			

Monday	Overlooking Bristol Channel and Porlock Bay		
10.00am	Leader Sue Howell	07849 452829	sm.howell@btopenworld.com
4 miles	Start: Bossington Hill car park. Leave Holnicote House car park 9.15am		
Short/Amble	Map: OL9	Grid Ref: SS 911 477	W3W: ///notes.snail.forgives
Walk: From Car Park a loop of Bossington Hill for views (keeping high), then East to Selworthy Beacon. Continue East for a bit before going North and join the (Southern) SWCP back to cars. Walk any distance between 4 and 6. This depends on when to go North onto SWCP. At a leisurely pace. Views to Wales and Dunkery Beacon. Car park at West end of Hill Road. (Drive via Minehead and along the ridge). Estimated Finish Time. 1.00pm			

Some Photos of what we might see.



Dunster Yarn Market.



Dunkery Beacon.



St. Nicholas by artist-sculptor Rachel Reckitt Withycombe Church - Helen Sail



The Caratacus Stone.



Gallox Bridge – Helen Sale.



Coast Path near Dunster – Helen Sail.



Stoke Pero Church.



View from ridge above Dunster – Helen Sail.