

L. Lynmouth to Watersmeet

Distance: 2 miles

Total Ascent: 196 metres

Walk Summary: Pavements and quiet road through the village, followed by riverside walk on good surface as you leave Lynmouth. Rough and undulating woodland path through steep-sided valley to Watersmeet with a number of short stretches of ascent and some descent.

OPTIONAL ROUTE EXTENSION

To get yourself in Romantic mood, start the route at Poets Corner in the Valley of Rocks, walking through stunning scenery to The Pavilion below:

From the shelter at Poets Corner take the path towards the coast, carrying on past the right-hand fork up Hollerday Hill to join the South West Coast Path at the end of The Warren. On the Coast Path turn right, following it around the north face of Hollerday Hill, high above the sea. Continue ahead through the trees and on along North Walk, passing the top of the cliff railway to where the Coast Path zigzags downhill, crossing back and forth over the railway to come out through the arch beside The Pavilion.

173 From the Exmoor National Park Centre in the Pavilion, turn right to walk along the Esplanade to the pier. Turn right again, along Riverside Road.

172 Cross the river on the first footbridge, turning right to walk alongside the river to the main A39.

171 Cross the road to walk straight ahead along Tors Road, bearing right along the riverside footpath a little further ahead.

170 Ignore the footbridge over the river, carrying on along Tors Road and continuing ahead after the car park, when it turns into a footpath through the trees.

169 Carry on past the next footbridge, also ignoring the paths uphill towards Countisbury. The path turns sharply left to follow the river through Wester Wood. Stay on the main path, ignoring smaller paths down to the river and its footbridges.

168 When the path forks, stay on the lower path, still ignoring smaller paths on the right to the river and on the left towards Countisbury. The path curves gently northwards in the lee of **Wind Hill** and joins another path from Countisbury.

167 Fork right here and carry on through Horner's Neck Wood, following the signs for Watersmeet as the path turns abruptly right and heads southwards around the loop in the river.

The Coleridge Way

In the Footsteps of the Romantic Poets



It is impossible not to be awed by the stunning cliffs and crags in the Valley of Rocks, with their towering spires and pinnacles and the feral goats browsing among them. Look out for the White Lady appearing between the boulders on Castle Rock, and Mother Meldrum in the Devil's Cheesewring – but don't be tempted to dance here on a Sunday, or the devil will turn you to stone!

The South West Coast Path is a 630-mile long distance walking trail, travelling from Minehead to Poole (in Dorset). Climbing the equivalent of four times up Everest during its transit of the coastal path first trodden by coastguards on the lookout for smugglers, the Coast Path was nonetheless described in Lonely Planet's 'Great Adventures' guide as 'walking at its most diverse, most spectacular and most delicious!'

Water is pumped from the river to power the cliff railway, making it the world's only carbon-neutral cliff railway. It was built in 1890 at a cost of £8000, and was part of a large-scale scheme designed to bring Lynmouth and Lynton the commercial success attracted by Minehead and Ilfracombe as a result of their position on the busy Bristol Channel. The scheme also included a pier and a narrow gauge railway link to Barnstaple, and was financed by the district's two wealthy Victorian entrepreneurs, Sir George Newnes and Benjamin Halliday. Newnes was a Derbyshire haberdasher whose magazine, Tit-Bits, made him a vast fortune. He built himself Hollerday House, above Lynmouth, and set himself up as its benefactor.

The river's rushing waters played a much more tragic role in Lynmouth's history, when the infamous 1952 Lynmouth Flooding destroyed many of its buildings and left 34 people dead.

Watersmeet is noted for its wildlife, and a number of rare trees and plants are found in the ancient oak woodland. Other features among the trees bear witness to an earlier Halliday's industrial endeavours – shafts from his fairly futile attempts to mine iron ore, quarries where he obtained the stone for his building work, and limekilns, where he burnt limestone to make fertiliser.

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