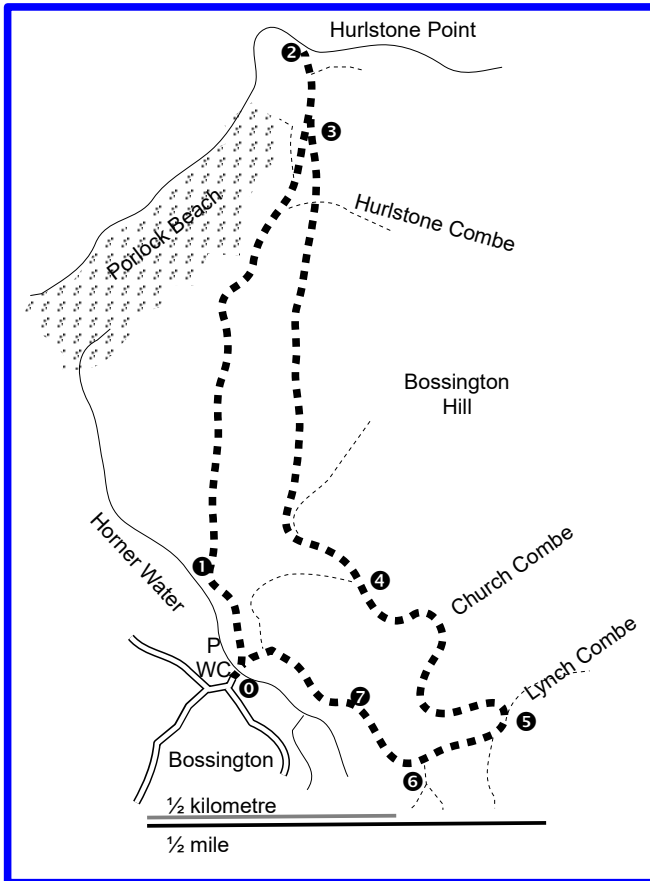
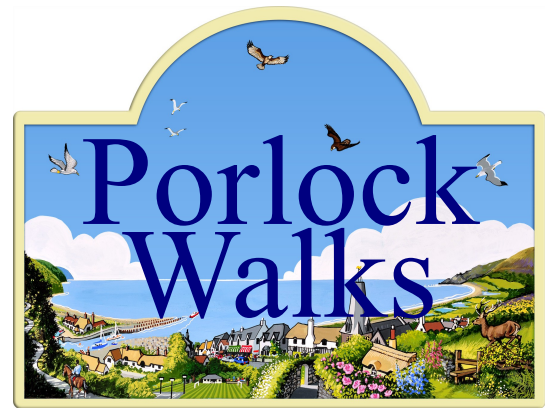


Bossington and Hurlstone Point

2½ miles / 1¼ hours



This walk starts in the pretty village of Bossington, at the National Trust “pay and display” car park, free to Trust members. There are toilets, tables and barbecues in the car park and Kitnor's, an excellent tea shop (TA24 8HQ; SS 8979 4797).

The walk goes out to Hurlstone Point from where there are great views. Traversing the hillside, the walk returns through ancient Holm Oak woods eventually descending Lynch Combe and thus returning to Horner Water. There are several seats on the walk, all offering fantastic views.

In 2016, this walk was adopted as a National Trust Discovery Walk and is signed along the entire route with pink arrows. The entire walk is on the National Trust's Holnicote Estate, over 5,000 hectares in size and containing over 150 miles of footpaths!

Leave Bossington by the public bridleway at the rear of the car park, passing to the right of the noticeboard and map ①. Cross the bridge and then turn left to follow the stream, signed Hurlstone.

The stream is Horner Water which flows down Horner Combe, through Bossington, where it is joined by the river Aller, and on to the sea in Porlock Bay. Horner Water does not really flow into the sea; it forms a small lake behind the shingle bank on the beach and the water percolates through.

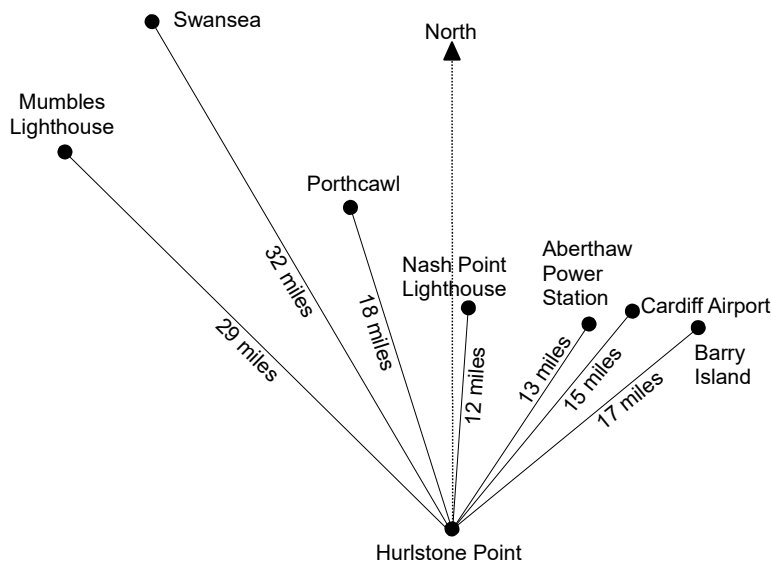
Follow the path ① slightly right signed Coast Path, away from the stream and not through the gate into the field ahead.

Later, the track forks. Again, take the right, uphill, track and pass through a gate to leave the woods and enter the moor.

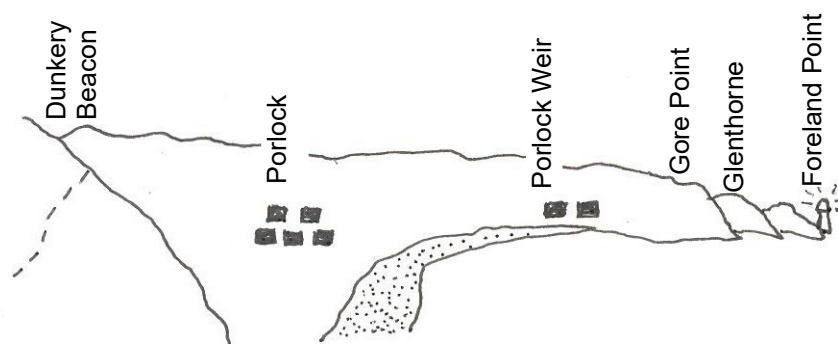
At the National Trust Hurlstone sign, keep straight ahead. Ignore the left fork and climb to reach the old ruined building on the point ②.

The ruined building is an old, two storey coastguard station, built around 1900. It was continuously manned until after World War II and there was a tall semaphore signalling system on the end of the point. The station was finally closed in 1983.

On a clear day, the view from Hurlstone Point out to sea is spectacular. In front of you the Welsh coast can be seen from Swansea and the Mumbles in the west to Barry in the east.



Looking inland the hills and combes of Exmoor are spread before you, from Foreland Head in the west, the lighthouse is unfortunately hidden around the headland, to Dunkery Beacon, the highest point on Exmoor, due south.



Glenthorne marks the border with Devon. A lovely old house is set above a small beach, reputedly once popular with smugglers. Their smuggled goods – rum, brandy and even tea - were often stored at the top of the combe in the small house at County Gate. It is said that the smugglers evaded the customs men by crossing the county line from Somerset into Devon and back again.

Retrace your steps for about 80 metres to where the track splits ③. Take the left, higher track to traverse the hillside. Cross the Coast Path and carry straight on, signed Lynch.

The valley to your left is Hurlstone Combe is a noted location for peregrine falcons (pictured) who have been resident in the area for many years. You are also likely to see sea birds, buzzards and, in recent years, red kites.

There are wonderful views from this path. Below you are the villages of Bossington, West Lynch and Allerford – beyond them Horner Combe, Hawkcombe and Porlock.

A bench here is dedicated to Bungy Prideaux, a colourful local gentleman who died in 2007.

When a wall comes up to meet the path from the right ④, keep ahead again, signed Lynch Combe.

The wall runs from Bossington to Selworthy, more than three miles. It is probably medieval, built to enclose and protect fields below from animals on the common moorland above. It is shown on the 1809 Holnicote estate map. Since its restoration, started by National Trust rangers and volunteers in 2007, the wall once again keeps livestock from straying into the woods.

Eventually you will pass through a gate in the wall to enter the wood.



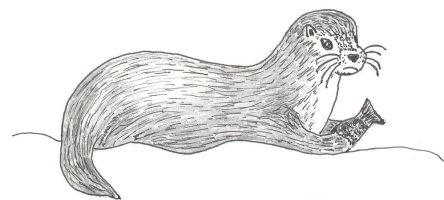
The edges of this wood contain many species of tree – ash, beech, sycamore, holly and English oak. But the main wood is of Holm Oak (pictured). This is not a native to England and is evergreen. Nothing grows below these oaks as insufficient light gets through the canopy, giving the wood a rather sinister feel.

At the end of this wood, pass through another gate into Lynch Combe. Turn right, ⑤, down the combe, signed Lynch Bridge.

Pass through a further gate to leave Allerford Woods. After about 50 metres take the right turn ⑥, signed to Bossington, through a field gate. Go straight ahead across this pasture.

At the end of this field, pass through a gate to enter a second pasture field. Turn immediately left ⑦, signed with a yellow and pink arrows.

In about 40 metres a kissing gate takes you out of the field to pass down some old steps back to the side of Horner Water, which flows below you.



Otters are now back on every major Exmoor river. To see them you need to be up early or at around dusk, be very quiet and very lucky. You may, however, come across their droppings (called spraint), used to mark their territory and strategically left in prominent spots. The spraint is black, pencil thin and smells sweet and fishy.

Turn right and follow the stream. Eventually turn left back to the bridge ⑧ and, thus, the car park, toilets and tea rooms.



It is well worth walking a little way left out of the car park through Bossington, a beautiful National Trust village. There are many picturesque houses that are characteristic of the area. You may notice the use of pebbles in the wall construction, the round chimneys and the curved bread ovens that stick out below the chimneys.

If you have any comments, corrections or ideas that might improve our route description, please email us at porlockwalks@gmail.com.

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