Exmoor Walk

EXMOOR Character Cottages

Countisbury
Circular 2 mile walk

All photographs by Julia Amies-Green

Look at Julia's photographs, and you'll get the sense - and perhaps the smell - of Countisbury. Sky, sea and land meet on this section of the South West Coast Path. There are vistas out to Wales across the Bristol Channel, as well as to the Brendon Hills, the East Lyn Valley and Wind Hill Fort.

The Walk 2 miles 1 Hour

Directions: 16 miles from Minehead on A39. Look for the Barna Barrow NT car park just before the cattle grid before entering Countisbury.
Sat Nav: EX35 6NE

Leave the Barna Barrow NT car park heading towards the sea. Take the left fork and follow the wall around to the church. When you reach the church, walk around the back of the building and follow the coast path.

Head towards Lynmouth. You will pass a signpost on a fork in the path, go straight ahead taking the permitted path signposted to County Road, leaving the South West Coast Path (SWCP), the right fork, at this point. Continue along the permitted path and pass through an open gate. You will see the road and need to stay on the right side of the stone wall to gain access to the road. At the road, cross over (taking care of fast traffic on this bend) and pass through a gate on the opposite side of the road, signposted to Wind Hill. On the stone wall there is a sign saying 'The Beacon'.

Walk up the gentle incline of Wind Hill to the top. When you're almost at the top, you'll pass through a large gateway and very shortly after (a matter of feet away!) in a cutting, is a right turn, signposted to Lynmouth.

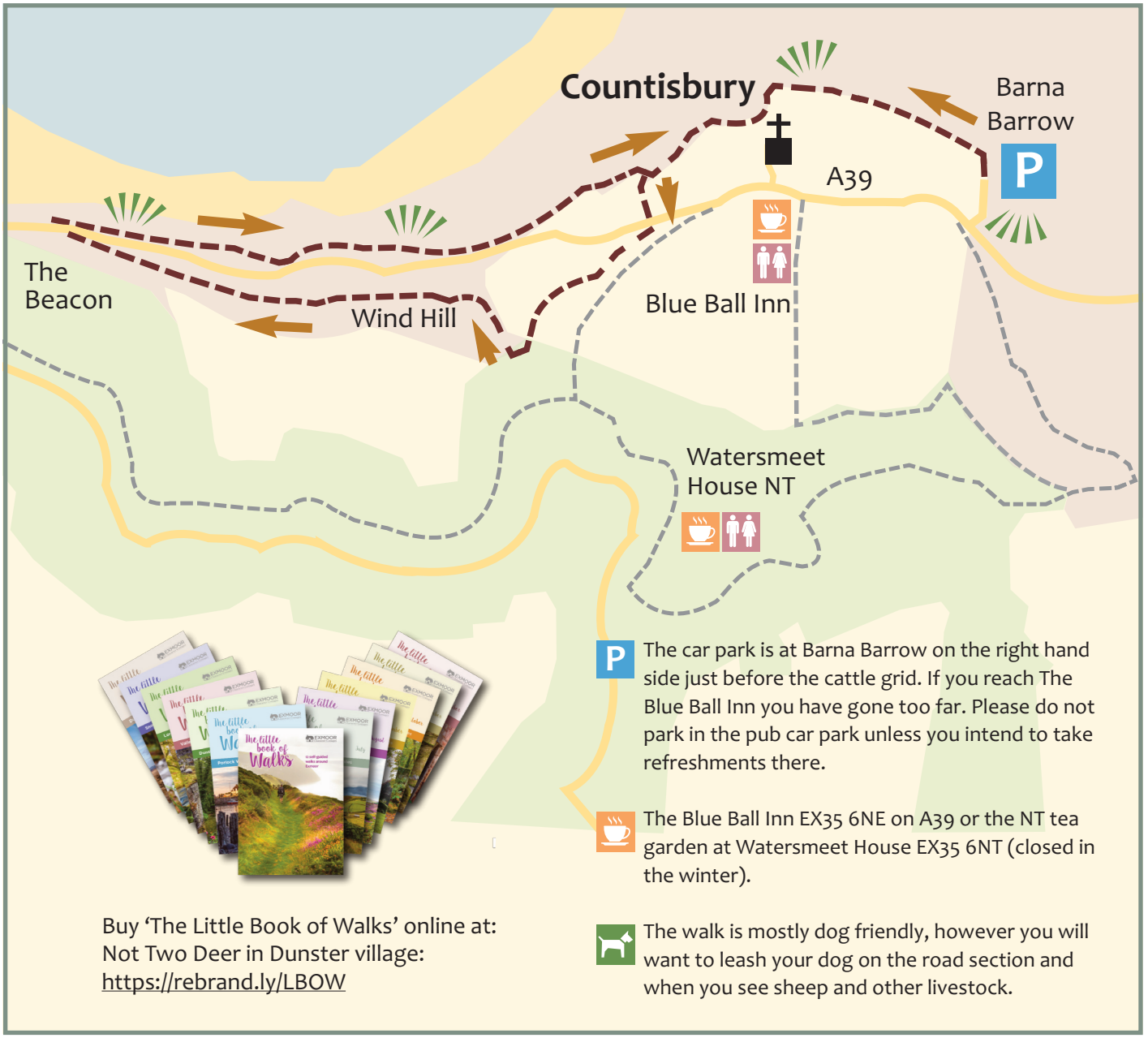
Take this right turn and you will find yourself on the footpath that is pictured on the front cover of our Little Book of Walks. The far-reaching coastal views from here are spectacular, taking in Lynton and Lynmouth one way and Countisbury the other. This footpath runs above but parallel to the road down into Lynmouth. Pass through the small gate and continue down until you reach the road. On the opposite side of the road is the SWCP. Cross over, again taking care of fast-moving traffic and join the SWCP turning right and start the gentle climb back up along the cliff path back towards Countisbury. From here retrace your steps back to the Barna Barrow car park.

If at this point you would like a longer walk, you could continue onto Foreland Point Lighthouse and follow the footpath round and back to the church/car park.

There is a longer walk (3.5 miles) from the NT that takes you inland to Watersmeet House as shown on the map: https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/watersmeet/trails/countisbury-to-watersmeet-circular-walk

Watersmeet House
This fishing lodge was built in 1832. It's constructed from local stone, quarried above the East Lyn River. The East Lyn is one of the few rivers in North Devon that can be paddled by kayakers, and there is fishing seasonally. The NT runs Watersmeet House as a popular tea room.

The East and West Lyn at Lynmouth
You'll notice the river at Lynmouth is dotted with large boulders. These were left here by the powerful storm of the devastating 1952 flood when 90 million tons of torrential rain rolled down into the village, destroying everything in its path and killing 34 people. You can see more about this in the Lynmouth Flood Memorial Hall.This walk could be combined with the Valley of the Rocks (April), making a day's excursion along the A39 with time for lunch and/or cream tea if you plan well!



Buy 'The Little Book of Walks' online at:
Not Two Deer in Dunster village:
https://rebrand.ly/LBOW

P The car park is at Barna Barrow on the right hand side just before the cattle grid. If you reach The Blue Ball Inn you have gone too far. Please do not park in the pub car park unless you intend to take refreshments there.

The Blue Ball Inn EX35 6NE on A39 or the NT tea garden at Watersmeet House EX35 6NT (closed in the winter).

The walk is mostly dog friendly, however you will want to leash your dog on the road section and when you see sheep and other livestock.

EXMOOR Character Cottages

Lucy Green, owner of Exmoor Character Cottages, researched this and 11 other walks, and her friend and talented photographer Julia Amies-Green supplied all the images. The routes are designed to suit all abilities, from short and easy to longer and more challenging. Most are dog friendly, but please always be ready to leash your dogs and close gates – and follow additional requests from farmers where you see them. Our maps are for guidance, and for more detailed maps we recommend the 1;12,500 versions sold in the Exmoor National Park Centres. Collectively the walks are published in 'The Little Book of Walks' which was created in response to requests from guests at our four luxury holiday cottages in Dunster and Minehead. You can find out more about the Book and holiday cottages here:
www.exmoorcharactercottages.co.uk