



## **Branscombe – Beach and Cliffs**

**A gentle walk for the most part, along country lanes, fields and the South West Coast path; a long climb from Branscombe Beach up to the cliff path**

### **Essential Facts**

- Route distance: 12.5 km (7.8 miles)
- Approximate time: 3 hours 30 mins
- Approx. total ascent: 210 metres
- Start point Grid Ref: SY 166 889
- GPS Ref: SY 16644 88971
- Recommended O.S. Map: Explorer 115
- Toughness Rating: Devon 2

Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report

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CHALLENGE ?**

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**Full Info from the Great Walks web site**

## THE ROUTE

Today's walk sets out from the National Trust car park in Weston, a short drive from the A3052 just west of Sidmouth.

From the car park, **S**, rejoin the road and turn right to pass the remains of Weston House, and continue along to a sign-posted path, **A**, on the right at Daws B & B; it is indicated to Weston Cliffs and Coast Path. Follow the tarmac drive to bear right onto a track from where the path enters a field via a stile. Bear left in the field to go ahead to a second stile and keep straight on to join the coast path. Turn left and follow the path to a kissing-gate from where the path turns inland and takes a diagonal course (NE) to another kissing-gate. Turn right and follow the path along the edge of the field, pass the Romany Van and shortly bear right through a kissing-gate where the path is indicated to Branscombe Mouth.

The way now passes along the cliff top to another signpost, **B**, and from here take the path indicated to Berry Barton which follows a NE course. Shortly a signpost is seen atop a stone wall and from here the path turns left and continues along the unmade track to Berry Barton and a minor road.

At the road turn right and descend to a T-junction. [Turn left to reach The Fountain Head Pub, which is a very short distance from here.] Turn right to pass thatched cottages displaying a wonderful array of colourful hanging baskets, tubs and window boxes in summer. Shortly the tower of St Winifred's church at Branscombe is seen. The church sits below road level, whilst opposite is a house called Church Living, which was once the summer residence of the Canons of Exeter Cathedral.

Follow the road to pass the thatched Old Forge on the left and the thatched Old Bakery Tearooms on the right. Immediately after the Old Bakery, fork right onto the path, **C**, indicated to the Coast Path. The initial tarmac surface gives way to a good dirt track at Manor Mill. When the way divides keep straight on to cross a wooden footbridge and follow the path indicated to Branscombe Mouth. [To reach the Masons Arms, bear left and follow the path over a footbridge and up a road to a T-junction and the pub is to the left.]

Continue along the track to arrive at Branscombe Mouth and beach. Beside the Sea Shanty turn right onto the path for Weston Mouth, **D**, and climb diagonally across the field to a gate; the large house to the left was once Coastguard cottages. Turn left through the gate and go straight ahead to a kissing-gate and the path leading to the cliff top. The path turns right, but before continuing it is worth following the path ahead to a vantage point from where Hooken Cliffs, on the other side of Branscombe Mouth, can be viewed. In 1790 these cliffs were the scene of a major landslide when 10 acres of land plunged 200' into the sea.

Return to the path and continue the steep climb up West Cliff through mixed woodland; there are occasional views across Branscombe when the trees thin a little. When the path divides, **E**, turn left to Weston Mouth and after a kissing-gate turn left to follow the path through the field to rejoin the cliff top path again. From this point onwards there are good views along the coast to Sidmouth and beyond.

Follow the coast path to rejoin the outward route and once more pass the Romany Van. Continue on the coast path to pass the footpath to Daws and keep on the path to Weston Mouth, with its splendid views. When the path divides at a bench seat, **F**, turn right onto the relatively level path; do not take the path which descends. The path joins a wide track and here turn right to return to the car park, **S**.



Cottages at Street



St Winifred's Church



Colourful Cottages At Branscombe

## Refreshment

The Masons Arms Hotel  
Hotel and Public House  
Branscombe  
Tel: 01297-680300  
Pub with food.

The Fountain Head  
Public House  
Street, Branscombe  
Tel: 01297-680359  
Pub Food

The Old Bakery  
Tearooms  
Branscombe  
Tel: 01297-680333  
Meals and Snacks

The Sea Shanty  
Café – Bar  
Branscombe Beach  
Selection of meals &  
snacks



**The Masons Arms Hotel**

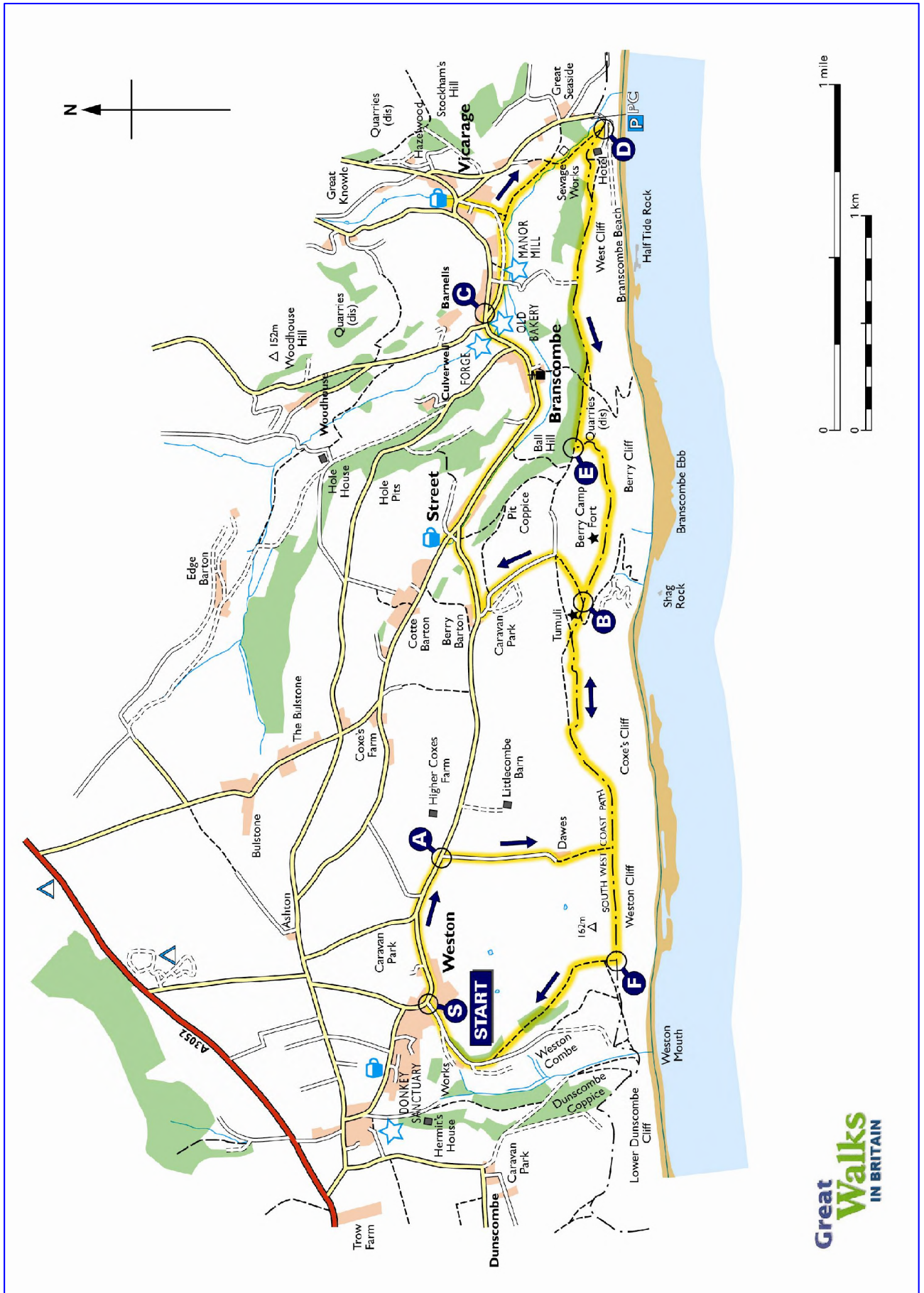
## LOCAL INFO

**Branscombe** is a secluded village often described as the prettiest in East Devon. A large part of the village is now owned by the National Trust, including the Old Forge and the Old Bakery, which until 1987 was a traditional working bakery. Manor Mill, also National Trust, is a restored water-powered mill, which would probably have provided the flour for the Bakery. Branscombe hit the headlines in 2007 when the MSC Napoli was deliberately grounded just off Branscombe Mouth. Salvage is still continuing on the wreck but its substantial anchor is now on permanent display close to the Sea Shanty licensed restaurant.

The name Branscombe probably derives from St Brendon the Voyager, who had a chapel at nearby Seaton; however, the church is dedicated to St Winifred, an obscure Welsh Saint. The church dates from around the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with additions and alterations being made over the next four centuries. It is in a beautiful setting and contains a much of interest; indeed it possesses something from every century since the Normans. The unusual round stair turret is late Norman and the tower contains a Priest's Room. There is a 15<sup>th</sup> century mural and a memorial to the mother of Sir Nicholas Wadham, who founded Wadham College, Oxford, in 1616. The church has an unusual three-decker pulpit and the chancel roof contains 200 yards of oak beams.

### BRANSCOMBE – BEACH AND CLIFFS G.P.S. WAYPOINTS

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF	CO-ORDINATES	ELEVATION: Metres
WES S	S	SY 16644 88971	82
WES A	A	SY 17326 88905	160
WES B	B	SY 18385 88285	141
WES C	C	SY 19812 88710	28
WES D	D	SY 20689 88152	13
WES E	E	SY 19212 88290	110
WES F	F	SY 16838 88109	154



MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	M6 Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	A23 Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	B2116 Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road		Built up area		Picnic site
	Track		Woodland		Camp site
	Footpath		Sand, shingle or mud		Major tourist feature
	Bridleway		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	National trail				
	Railway				

## Safety First

**Safety should always** be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

**Lead a group** of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

**Weigh up the capabilities** of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

**Ensure** all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

**Emergencies** are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality?

**Refreshment**, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

**On tougher walks** it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

**All our walks use legitimate routes:** Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

**Road** walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

**Occasionally** you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

**It is courteous** to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

**Mutual respect** for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

**Dogs** should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

## Walking Our Routes

**Our walks** are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

**On mountain, moorland and open heathland** walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

**Take care** to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

**Consider conditions before setting off.** Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

**When navigating the route** look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

**All our routes are carefully checked** before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

**The approximate time** given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

**Total ascent** is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

**GPS users** can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

**Remember that GPS** is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

### TOUGHNESS RATINGS

Most of our **Devon & Dartmoor** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise the map segments and our recommended Ordnance Survey maps, together with the route guidance notes.

The toughest walks should be undertaken or led only by experienced mountain walkers with navigational expertise. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.
2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.
3. More strenuous walks. There may be prolonged steep ascents, and perhaps several ascents over the whole walk. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.
4. The toughest walks, requiring considerable fitness and navigational experience. There may be prolonged steep ascents. The ability to navigate by compass may be essential.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area. For example a walk rated as demanding in Cambridgeshire may be equivalent to an easier or moderate route in Devon & Dartmoor