



Burrington Combe and Velvet Bottom

A steep climb to the top of the rocky steep-sided gorge of Burrington Combe, then a walk over moorland to magnificent Beacon Batch

Essential Facts

- Route distance: 15.0 km (9.4 miles)
- Approximate time: 4 hours 30 mins
- Approx. total ascent: 350 metres
- Start point Grid Ref: ST 476 588
- GPS Ref: ST 47634 58812
- Recommended O.S. Map: Explorer 141
- Toughness Rating: Somerset 3

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

This walk starts near the village of Burrington, which is just off the A368 east of Weston Super Mare.

Set out from the parking area at Burrington Combe, **S**, just up the road from the Burrington Inn. Take the path that runs behind the toilet block steeply uphill. Near the top enter some trees and turn right along the top of the cliffs. When the path ends turn left and follow a narrow path with woodland on the right. The path widens and bends round to the right to reach a rocky outcrop. Follow the second path on the left that crosses a shallow dip to reach a crossing path. Turn left and walk along the ridge for about 800 metres, then bear right and down hill to reach a road at a small car park at **A**.

Turn left along the road for 50 metres and then right along a track past Ellick House. When you reach open moorland continue uphill along the track straight ahead. At a crossing track turn right to visit the Triangulation Pillar at Beacon Batch, **B**.

Retrace your steps and head towards two radio masts. Drop down to a gate and continue along an enclosed track to reach the masts. Follow the access road downhill to a lane. Turn right and in 100 metres cross a stile on the left. Keep a stone wall on the right along a field, cross a footbridge and follow a cinder path past a pond across an area of former lead mines. At a crossing track turn right to reach a parking area at Blackmoor Reserve, **C**.

Follow the track round to the right and at a pedestrian gate turn left along a permissive bridleway. At a lane turn right and in just 20 metres turn left into Velvet Bottom Nature Reserve. Follow the path through the reserve for about 1.5 km, to reach a gate into Black Rock Reserve at **D**.

Turn right and walk to a gate leading to Long Wood. Continue uphill along the edge of the wood to a stile. Cross it and keep a fence on the left across fields. When the fence turns left go half right to the left hand of two gates. Continue with a stone wall on the right to Ashridge Farm. Turn right along a lane to Tynings Farm at **E**.

Continue ahead to climb a track. At the top continue ahead across the open moorland of Black Down. Begin to descend and at a crossing track turn right. Take the first track on the left to continue downhill with a valley on the right. After about a kilometre turn right along a crossing track and in 50 metres turn left down a steep path that descends into the valley. At the bottom turn left to follow a stream to the B3134.

At the road turn left to follow a footpath beside the road back to the start, **S**. Give consideration to refreshment at the nearby inn.



View Near Beacon Batch



Velvet Bottom



Long Wood

Refreshment

The Burrington Inn
Public House
Burrington Combe
Tel: 01761 462227
Meals, bar snacks
Afternoon teas
Outside seating



The Burrington Inn

LOCAL INFO

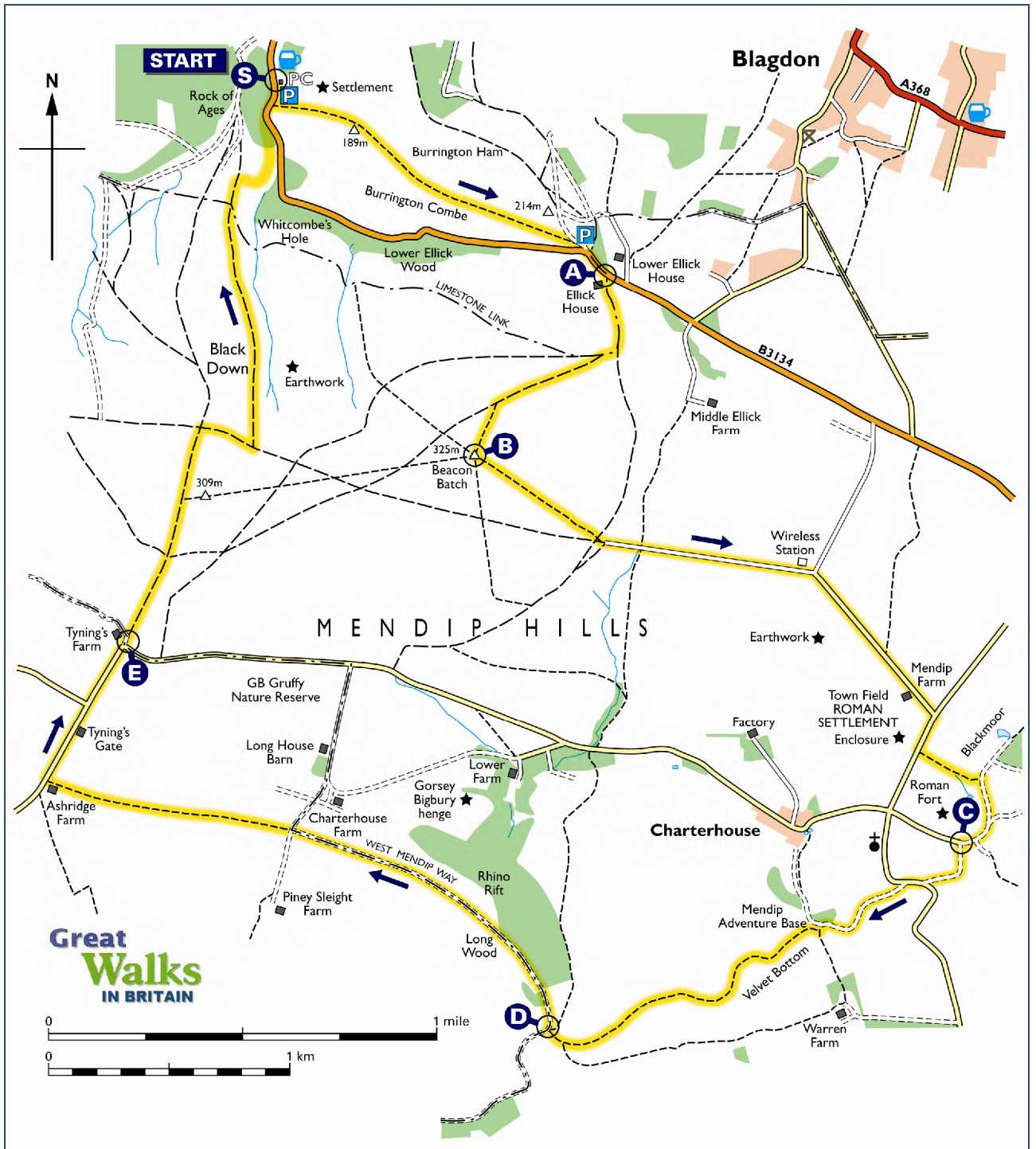
Burrington Combe is a carboniferous limestone gorge surrounded by caves formed from rain dissolving the limestone rock. These caves provide a habitat for the rare Greater Horseshoe Bat. The large fissure in the cliff opposite the parking area is known as The Rock of Ages as it is here that the Rev. Augustus Toplady is said to have been inspired to write the hymn after sheltering in the rock from a thunderstorm in the late 1700s.

Beacon Batch is a former Beacon site. It is the highest point on the Mendip Hills and offers superb views across the Bristol Channel and across to Wales. All over Black Down there are lines of round mounds. These are the remains of a decoy town set up during the Second World War to prevent Bristol being bombed. The mounds had small lights to simulate street lights.

Velvet Bottom sounds as if it should be the home of a grand Victorian Toilet Paper Magnate. In fact it is a nature reserve that lies on the floor of a dry river valley in an area that has been mined for lead from pre-Roman times until the 1880s. Remains of the mining activity can be seen both here and in Blackmoor. The buddle pits where the lead ore was washed are visible as sets of circular depressions as you enter the Reserve. The area is slowly being colonised by plants that are adapted to high lead levels. Rabbits and adders are commonly seen.

BURRINGTON COMBE & VELVET BOTTOM G.P.S. WAYPOINTS

| WAYPOINT NAME | MAP REF | CO-ORDINATES | ELEVATION: Metres |
|------------------|------------|----------------|----------------------|
| BUV S | S | ST 47634 58812 | 142 |
| BUV A | A | ST 49007 58019 | 208 |
| BUV B | B | ST 48464 57269 | 325 |
| BUV C | C | ST 50545 55678 | 209 |
| BUV D | D | ST 48763 54924 | 194 |
| BUV E | E | ST 47016 56496 | 249 |



Great Walks
IN BRITAIN

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| 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 **Somerset & North Devon** 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 Somerset & North Devon.