

Route Description:

This route follows some ancient tracks and passes by some ancient farmsteads. On reaching the South West Coast Path the walk becomes more strenuous as you traverse six deep valleys along the way. You will also see some amazing sedimentary rock formations with the strata often being tilted upright. You will pass through two sea-dissected valleys, where the erosion of the sea has broken through to a valley before the point that it originally met the sea. This enabled the river to take a more direct line to the sea, abandoning its original route, leaving a short section of dry valley. You will also see one of the best waterfalls to be visible on the whole of the South West Coast Path.

Directions to start:

From the A39 between Bideford and Kilkhampton, take the B3248 on the Kilkhampton side of Clovelly Cross, towards Hartland. Continue through the village to then go left towards Stoke and Hartland Quay. You will see the high church tower ahead. On reaching Stoke, park in front of the church in the small car park.

Route Directions:

1, SS 234 247: Park in the front of St Nectan's Church and go through the gate towards the church. It is a beautiful church with a painted wagon-roof and intricately carved wooden screen. Turn right at the church to follow the path to an unusual swing gate lych-gate. Turn left to pass the Public Toilets and go down the small road ahead into the valley.

2, SS 237 249, 0.3 miles: Cross the river bridge and keep on the road up the other side of the valley. At the brow of the hill ignore the path on the right, continuing ahead on the road. Pass through



St Nectan's church

the old farm buildings and as the road turns right, ignore the footpath on the left.

3, SS 234 254, 0.8 miles: Go straight ahead to pass through the middle of the three gates to follow a track down between hedged Devon banks. Continue down into the valley and up the other side.

4, SS 231 261, 1.3 miles: On reaching the farm buildings (Atlantic House) keep right on the track up to the road and at Blegberry Farm entrance on the left, turn right along the road.

5, SS 235 262, 1.6 miles: Shortly turn left off the road and then immediately left again, down another hedged Devon bank track towards the sea, signed Public Bridleway. The track soon narrows as it descends into the next valley.

6, SS 234 267, 2.0 miles: At the bottom cross the footbridge to follow along by the stream to a bridle gate. Just the other side, turn right along the grassed track signed to Blagdon. Shortly pass through a gate and continue ahead along the top edge of this field with a hedged bank on your left. Pass through the next gate and up to the farm buildings.



Hartland Point lighthouse

8, SS 235 274, 2.6 miles: Follow the signpost to Hartland Quay to the left, to follow the Coast Path up to the Coastguard Station.

9, SS 231 275, 2.8 miles: At the station turn left to follow the Coast Path along the cliff edge. Soon the lighthouse can be seen down on the right as you approach the stile.

7, SS 235 272, 2.4 miles: Continue ahead on the concrete road. When a road comes in from the right, continue ahead on the road signed to Hartland Point with the radar station up on your right. Pass through the gate by a stile, down to the car park where there is refreshment in season.

Now follow the edge of this field with the hedge and cliff edge on your right.

10, SS 229 273, 3.1 miles: Pass the memorial stone to the Glenart Castle hospital ship and then pass by the 'abandoned' stile along the Coast Path. Shortly cross the next stile and continue along the cliff edge to soon drop down into the next valley.

11, SS 229 266, 3.5 miles: Near the bottom turn left inland towards the caravan. Note the amazing rock formations. Soon cross the bridge over the stream and stile and climb the steps up the other side.

12, SS 230 266, 3.7 miles: At the top turn right through the bridle gate to go back towards the sea. Ignore the footpath to the left and continue down into the next valley to pass another stile on the way down. You are now entering Smoothlands and a very unusual geographical area. This valley is known as sea-dissected where the sea erosion has caused the stream to abandon its original valley to take the now direct route to the sea. Continue along the bottom of this valley and at the other end follow the path as it climbs.

13, SS 224 262, 4.1 miles: Shortly turn hard inland to avoid the cliff edge ahead. At the top there is a seat. Continue along the cliff edge to soon descend into the next valley. Pass through the bridle gate and continue up the other side passing over a stile on the way.

14, SS 226 258, 4.7 miles: At the top by the stile look back to see the twin waterfalls on to the beach below. Continue down into the next valley with Stoke church



Damehole Point

inland. At the bottom of this valley is a good place for a picnic.

15, SS 226 256, 4.8 miles: Now turn inland up the track to pass the cottage on your right and then bear right down to a kissing-gate and on to cross the river bridge and through a bridle gate. Turn right on the Coast

Path (shortcut back to Stoke to the left) back towards the sea, passing through the next bridle gate.

16, SS 225 256, 5.1 miles: There is now a drawn-out climb up the other side of this valley. On levelling out, pass the tower folly towards Rocket House ahead. Pass to the right of the house (shortcut to the left to the church) to cross the stile.



The Folly

17, SS 226 247, 5.7 miles: Now turn right down towards Hartland Quay. Follow the yellow waymarker along by the cliff edge. Note the twisted rock formations to your right. On reaching the road, continue down the road to the quay where there are toilets, a museum and refreshments.

18, SS 223 247, 5.9 miles: From the car park follow the Coast Path sign up the cliff, soon rounding the edge of another car park to follow the track ahead going slightly inland.

19, SS 224 246, 6.0 miles: Pass through the bridle gate before returning towards the sea. Continue along the coast and then go inland of the hill ahead along another sea-dissected valley to cross the stream. Now

bear left towards the bridle gate in the wall ahead.

20, SS 226 240, 6.5 miles: Turn right from this gate and climb the next cliff rounding the next bay. At the top pass through the next bridle gate and follow the zigzag path down into the next valley. Here you will



Flat rock near St Catherine's Point

find one of the best waterfalls along the whole South West Coast Path, called Speke's Mill Waterfall.

21, SS 225 236, 6.8 miles: From here we head back inland along the track up the valley. When the Coast Path bears off right, continue ahead up the track signed to Lymebridge.



Speke's Mill waterfall

22, SS 227 233, 6.9 miles: At the brow of this hill take the footpath that bears off left, initially slightly climbing and then getting steeper. Pass through the kissing gate to the house and road, continuing ahead up the road.

23, SS 232 234, 7.3 miles: At the top ignore Kernstone Farm entrance on the left, bearing right to follow the road.

24, SS 236 233, 7.5 miles: On reaching Kernstone Cross crossroads, turn left along 'unsuitable for motors' road.

25, SS 237 235, 7.7 miles: At Wargery Farm take the track on the left downhill towards the church tower, into the valley and up the other side.

26, SS 237 239, 8.0 miles: On meeting the small road, continue ahead until reaching a small crossroads.

27, SS 236 245, 8.2 miles: Continue ahead and at the T-junction turn left to go across to the lych-gate with the swing gate and back to the car park. We hope you enjoyed this walk.

*Walk written by: Bryan Cath of West Country Walks
Photographs by: Northern Devon Coast and Countryside Service, Paul Wilkinson*

Walks on The Hartland Peninsula

Stoke via Hartland Point and Speke's Mill

8.3 miles, circular



Fact file:

Highlights: St Nectan's Church, Hartland Abbey, Hartland Point lighthouse, twisted rock formations, Hartland Quay, Speke's Mill waterfall

Start Grid ref: SS 234 247

Distance: 8.3 miles, circular

Height gained/lost: 549 metres, starts moderate, becomes strenuous in parts along the coastline, ending moderate to easy.

Highest Point: 121 metres

Lowest Point: 12 metres

Toilets: Stoke, Hartland Quay

Eating Places: Hartland Point and Stoke (in season), Hartland Quay

Time required: 4hr 45 min, plus stops

Mileages shown are cumulative

The route directions will take you around this walk without using the OS grid references, if preferred.