

### **WALK 3**

BURLESCOMBE – WAYTOWN TUNNEL VIA  
HOLCOMBE ROGUS

OS MAP REFERENCE – EXPLORER 128  
Pathfinder Series  
ST 01/11 1:25000

APPROXIMATE DISTANCE – 3 miles

APPROXIMATE TIME – 2½ miles

STARTING POINT – Fossend Bridge car park

TYPE OF WALK – Easy – moderate

**Walk 3 is varied using the Grand Western Canal towpath, footpaths across farmland and quiet country lanes, passing through beautiful Mid Devon countryside and villages.**

Walk 3 starts at Fossend Bridge, Burlescombe. The rough parking area is immediately adjacent to this bridge, which is at the bottom of the hill leading down from St. Mary's Church, Burlescombe. Before commencing the Walk, a brief stop at St. Mary's Church ❶ on top of the hill leading into the village is worthwhile for the commanding views over the valley and neighbouring hills. If you've time, go inside the church to view the monuments to the Ayshford family, dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries, whose family seat was in the village from the reign of Henry I to the 17th century.

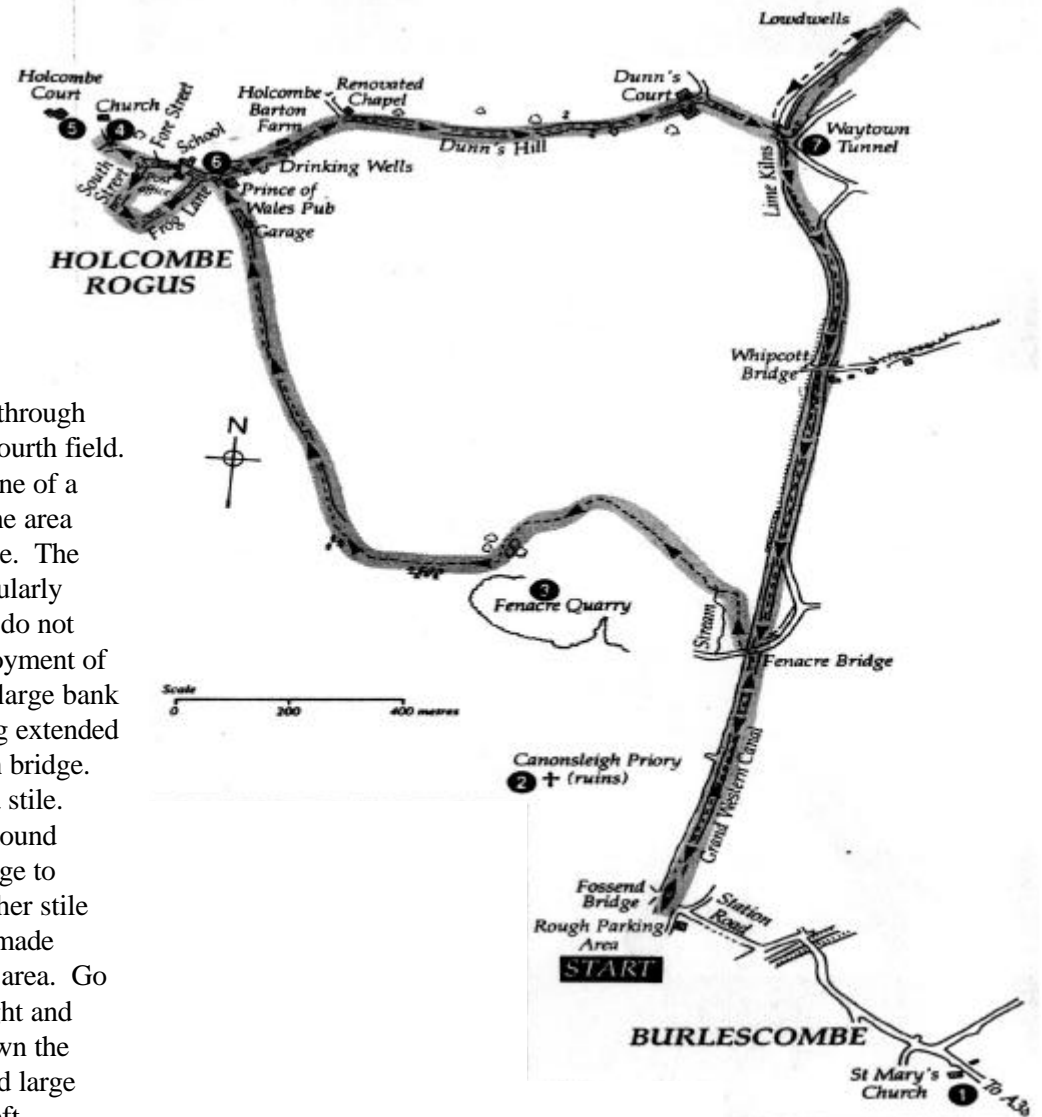
To start the walk turn right out of the canalside area to cross over the bridge. Walk down the right-hand side to reach the canal towpath. Turn right and follow the towpath to Fenacre Bridge. The ruins of Canonsleigh Priory ❷, an Augustinian nunnery founded in the 12th century, can be seen on your left across the field.

At the next bridge (Fenacre Bridge) leave the towpath up the slipway to join the road. Turn left and then almost immediately right over a stile and into a field. Walk diagonally across the field towards a wooden footbridge. Cross the bridge and go through the gate facing you into a second field. The walk continues through this pleasant farmland alongside a stream and through a gateway into a

third field, and then left through another gateway into a fourth field. To the left can be seen one of a group of quarries ❸ in the area which provides roadstone. The quarries can be seen regularly throughout the walk but do not really intrude on the enjoyment of the countryside. Pass a large bank where the quarry is being extended and cross over a wooden bridge. Turn right and go over a stile. Follow the large earth mound around, keeping the hedge to your right, towards another stile and walk up some man-made steps in a small wooded area. Go over the stile on your right and walk along, and then down the ridge keeping a fence and large tree plantation to your left.

After crossing a ditch, veer right into a small tree plantation at the end of the field. Pass through a gate at the right-hand corner of the plantation and then over a stile to enter a field.

Walk straight on, keeping the hedge to your right, crossing over a stile onto a field track. Pass through another gate and continue along the track through the farmyard to join a tarmac road, passing the Prince of Wales pub on your right and garage on your left, and enter the village of Holcombe Rogus.



The village is well worth an exploration, particularly All Saints Church ④ and Holcombe Court ⑤ which can both be reached by turning left and walking up the road past the Post Office. The present church building lies slightly to the east of the site of the original Norman Church. Notable features include the south aisle which dates back to the 13th century and the south porch, built in 1343. The dominating feature is the court pew surrounded by its handsome carved screen.

Tradition holds that the carving was done in about 1620 by Dutch refugees who had settled at nearby Topsham. The carved medallions depict stories from Genesis and Exodus with two further carvings added in the 1880's by a local craftsman. The privately owned Holcombe Court was restored in the 1970's to much of its former glory and now stands as an attractive example of a smaller 16th century manor house set in its wooded grounds. The Court is not open to the public. Drinking wells ⑥ set into walls, by which means the village obtained its water supply until the 1950's, can be seen throughout the village.

From the church walk back towards the garage. Before reaching the garage, turn right into South Street and follow it around turning left at the junction into Frog Lane. Approach the village crossroads with a view of the school's 19th century belltower to the left, and turn right into the road leading out of the village, passing the Prince of Wales pub on your right and Holcombe Barton on your left.



Follow the road up the hill, bearing right at an old chapel to your left (converted into a house). Continue on down the hill with an old quarry on your right. Views of the Quantock Hills to your left can be seen along this quiet leafy road. On reaching the bridge\* turn right through a gate onto the Canal towpath which passes over the Waytown Tunnel ⑦. The tunnel has no towpath. The limekilns, which can be seen on the far bank, are still in good condition and serve as a reminder of the importance of lime to the existence of the Canal.

Continue along the towpath for approximately 1 mile, passing under Whipcott Bridge and Fenacre bridge back to your starting point at Fossend Bridge.

\* If you wish to prolong your walk and reach the end of the Canal at Lowdwells, turn left through a gate onto the Canal towpath. Continue along the towpath for approximately half a mile to reach Lowdwells. Return to the bridge over Waytown Tunnel, cross, and rejoin the Canal towpath. Follow directions above.

