

West Monkton - An ancient parish in the shadows of the Quantocks

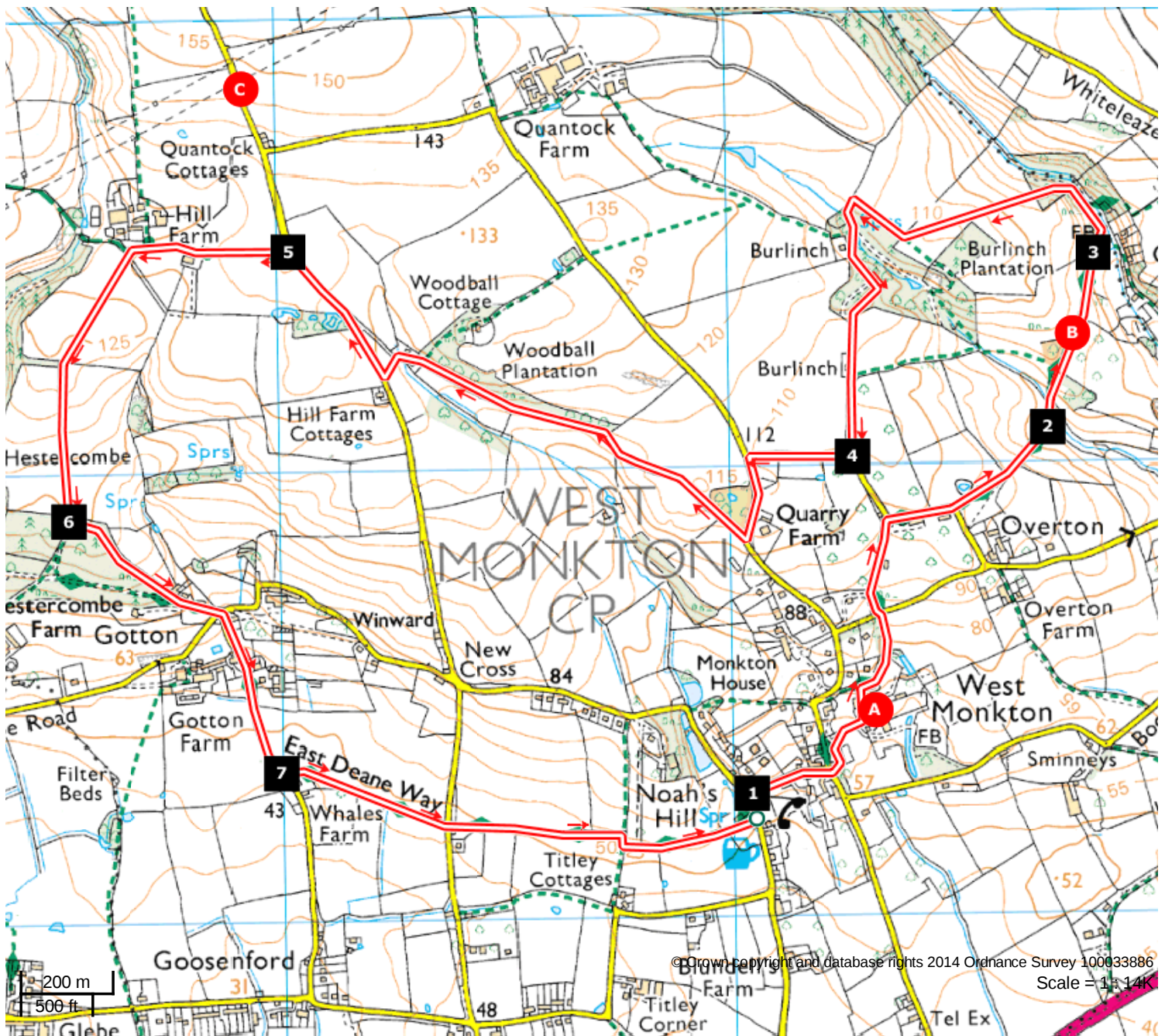


Starts at The Monkton Inn. Blundells Lane. West Monkton

2 hours 30 minutes | 4.8miles 7.7km | Moderate

ID: 0.1978 | Developed by: Chris Mumford | Checked by: Edward Levy | www.ramblersroutes.org

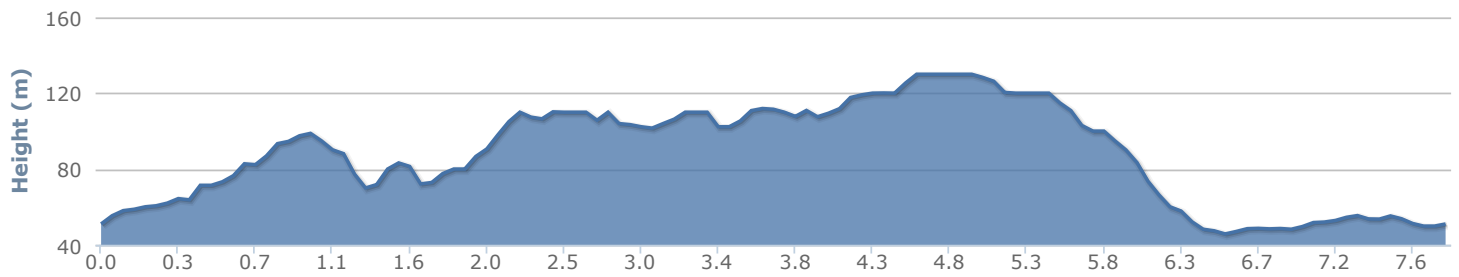
This circular walk takes you into the gentle hills and coombes north of West Monkton on track, fields and some minor roads. Several stiles but no steep ascents. One section can be very muddy. Some good views.



— Main Route — Alternative Route H Point of Interest 4 Waypoint

Distance: 7.66km Ascent: 165m Descent: 165m

Route Profile



*move mouse over graph to see points on route

The Ramblers is Britain's walking charity. We work to safeguard the footpaths, countryside and other places where we all go walking. We encourage people to walk for their health and wellbeing. To become a member visit www.ramblers.org.uk



Starts at

West Monkton lies to the North East of Taunton off the junction of the A38 and A3259. Driving from Taunton, at junction turn left into Docsters Lane, signed West Monkton and once in the village turn left into "The Street" and to the start.

Getting there

The village is not served by public transport but a bus service does stop at the junction of the A38 and A3259 leaving you to walk to the village. Log onto www.travelinesw.com using Taunton to West Monkton to find the information you require

Route instructions

[1] Leaving the Inn, turn left and then right to walk along 'The Street'. At its end, cross over and walk up the drive to the Church.

(A) Church of St. Augustine. The oldest parts of this Red Sandstone church date from the 13th century. They can be seen in the mouldings on the eastern face of the tower arch, which show the roof-line of an earlier building, and also in the fine chancel arch and the deeply splayed window at the western end of the south aisle. Most of the rest of the church dates from the 15th century, including the fine wagon roof with good carvings. Note the large collection of interesting monuments including a small half-figure of a cleric in brass. In the churchyard there are well-preserved stocks and whipping posts under a canopy. It is thought that the big yew tree could be as old as 1,500 years.

Pass in front of the porch of the west tower into a narrow pathway passing some cottages and onto a drive where you turn right. Follow this driveway, which soon turns into a path, up to its junction with a metalled road. Cross over and pass through a small metal gate into and along an enclosed path between a hedge and a stone wall. Cross over a stile and emerge onto a metalled road where you turn right. At the right-hand bend pass over a stile on the left and almost immediately cross another stile into a field and follow the right hand fence/hedge line. This route takes you over another stile where you start to descend into the valley.

[2] At the next way-marked stile, cross over into the field on your right, turn sharp left and continue down hill, now with the hedge on your left. Cross over a stile by a gate then over a stream to climb out of the valley but now with the hedge on your right bearing sharp right at the top of the climb. Cross a stile ahead diagonally to the left so that you are on a path between a small quarry and the hedge.

(B) West Monkton Quarry this now abandoned quarry was worked for the Morte Slate that was much used as a rough walling stone in the area. The rock dates from the Devonian period (400 - 350 million years ago) and was formed of muds, sands and silts that were deposited in shallow seas and then subjected to deep burial, compression, folding and faulting which transformed the finer grained sediments into slates. Quarrying ceased here over 100 years ago, allowing vegetation to recolonise the site. The secondary oak-ash woodland, much of it reaching maturity, now supports a valuable and extensive resident wildlife community, made more diverse by the presence of open water.

Cross another stile and continue along and down, still with the hedge on your right hand. Pass through a pedestrian gate into a wooded area and turn left to follow the path down hill. *The hamlet of Coombe Bottom can be seen on your right through the trees.*

[3] Cross a stile into a steep side, wooded and wet area. Ignore a stile on your right and follow up stream to pass through gate to enter a field. Walk up this field bearing slightly right to the top near the right hand corner to a gate which takes you into the woods. Go along the track to the corner. Take the path left downhill inside the wood and meet a track near a stream with a cottage. Follow the ascending track in front of you up past the cottage. Continue on this track, up through the wood, past another cottage, to a metalled road.

[4] Turn right then at the T-junction left to walk down to Quarry Farm, opposite which and skirting the quarry is a footpath off to the right. Follow this path through fields and woods with the hedge on your left. At end of second large wood go straight ahead at a fork where a path veres right and shortly pass between two cottages. In a few yards turn left through a pedestrian gate. Walk across the field to pass through the hedge and onto a metalled road where you turn right and walk up this road.

[5] Take the first left down to Hill Farm (marked no-through road). Where the drive dips down right to the farm buildings, walk ahead into a track, through a gate to turn left through another gate. Walk straight ahead with wire fence on your right to corner of field and pass through a gate.

[C] Take in the view over the Vale of Taunton Deane.

In next field continue in same direction with wall of Hestercombe Gardens on your right..

[D] Towards the bottom of the field if you look back you should be able to see the Gothic Alcove in Hestercombe Gardens. Hestercombe Estate Hestercombe was first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon charter of 854 and from 1391 until 1872 it was continuously owned by one family, the Warres. Miss Elizabeth Warre, the last of her line, died in 1872 and the following year, Hestercombe was acquired by the 1st Viscount Portman who undertook considerable remodelling of the house including the creation of the Victorian Terrace. In 1903, the Hon Edward Portman, his grandson, commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens to create a new formal garden. In 1944 the estate was sold to the Crown Estate who continue to hold the land apart from Hestercombe House itself and the formal gardens.

The Somerset County Council originally leased the house from the Crown in 1953, following the death of the last owner, the Hon. Mrs Portman. It subsequently took over the freehold in 1987 utilising the house as office space which was mostly used as the Head Quarters for the Somerset Fire Brigade who eventually vacated the house in 2006. Since October 2003, the gardens have been managed by the Hestercombe Gardens Trust. The Somerset County Council are in the process of transferring ownership of Hestercombe house to the Trust and so the gardens and house will once again be reunited. Whilst the County Council institutionalised the interior of the house, the basic structure remained intact and it is this that will be revealed once again during the refurbishment.

[6] At corner of field pass through a gate and and continue down a track with woodland on your left. At "T" junction turn left which takes you down and through a collection of estate cottages. At the road junction cross straight over and walk down towards Whales Farm.

[7] Just before the farm cross over stile into the field on your left. Walk this field with hedge on right hand to a wide gap which you pass through to turn left and follow the left hand hedge to a gateway on to a metalled road. Cross over into the field opposite to follow right hand hedge and looking out for a pedestrian gate to take you into the right hand field. Carry on in the same direction as before but now with hedge on left hand. At the field corner vere to the right to pass through a pedestrian gate ahead.. Walk along the left hand hedge for a few yards and take yourself up some steps and through another pedestrian gate onto a fenced path which brings you out into the garden of the Inn.

Additional 'Point of Interest' information

West Monkton The ancient manor of West Monkton once belonged to the Abbey of Glastonbury, to whom it was given by Royal Grant in 682. It is thought to have been part of an administrative area called the Hundred of Whiteleigh, most of which consisted of Abbey estates on the eastern bank of the River Parrett,

so it therefore became known as West Monkton.

The parish grew to become one of the largest in Somerset, with settlements scattered from the southern slopes of the Quantock Hills to the edge of Taunton. In the Domesday Book of 1086 three subtenants of the Abbey of Glastonbury are noted and this sub-dividing produced smaller holdings such as Overton, Gotton, Heathfield, and Bathpool. Once a valuable asset to the monastery, the estate diminished over time, and after the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539, that part of the parish that was still in its possession was forfeited to the Crown and then came into the possession of William Poulet, Marquess of Winchester, whose house is thought to be the present Rectory. In 1616 the manor passed to the Warre family of Hestercombe, (see more information under Hestercombe Estate)

The north, east and west boundaries of the parish have changed little since 682, and many of the place names can be traced back hundreds of years. Large areas in the south have been swallowed up by the expansion of Taunton.

Notes

Map: OS Explorer 128 – Taunton & Blackdown Hills

Terrain: Alternating gentle ascents and descents, mostly on farm tracks, paths and fields. Can be a little muddy. A little road work. Quite a few stiles.

Dogs: on leads near livestock and when requested

Refreshments: The Monkton Inn, Blundells Lane, West Monkton 01823 412414.

SATNAV post code: TA2 8NP

Total walk ascent: 540 feet

Acknowledgements

Developed by: Chris Mumford

Checked by: Edward Levy

This route was devised for the Tiverton & District Group of the Ramblers Association. Parts of this walk were inspired by Taunton Deane Council's Circular Walk #14

West Monkton Church

Photo taken by: Mumfy



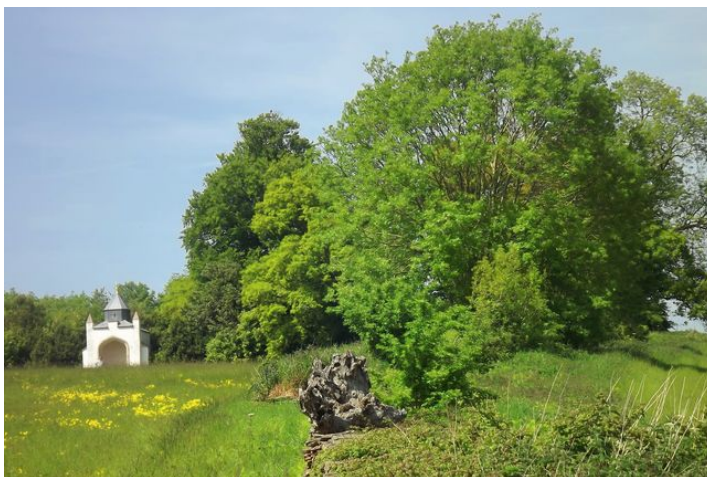
One of several wooded paths on the walk

Photo taken by: Mumfy



The Monkton Inn, winner of the best country pub 2012. The walk starts and finishes in the vicinity.

Photo taken by: Mumfy



Gothic Alcove Hestercombe Gardens

Photo taken by: Edward Levy

