

The Samaritans Way Notes

Please visit our website at www.samaritansway-southwest.org.uk/ for all updates on our guide book and any revisions to the walk directions. Follow our progress on <http://twitter.com/samaritanswaysw> and give us your news and views.

This is a pocket-sized guidebook which sets out a long-distance walking route from Bristol to the North Devon coast.

The route, which is on existing rights of way, goes through some of the finest scenery in the South West, including the Mendips, Quantocks, Exmoor, Doone Valley and Brendons. It takes in attractive villages such as Chew Magna, Monksilver, Stogumber, Luxborough and Winsford. The first 100 miles to Lynton, where it joins the Coastal Path, are set out in fine detail, making it accessible to people who are not brilliant map readers. The remaining 30 miles to Croyde Bay (being well waymarked and documented elsewhere) are outlined more briefly. In creating the route, the author reported and followed up forty major footpath faults, thereby opening up paths for local people as well as long-distance walkers.

Strong walkers can complete the walk in a week. The less energetic can break it up into smaller chunks, as there are several points along the way where public transport may be picked up, such as Cheddar, Glastonbury and Bridgwater. There is a youth hostel in Bristol, and five more available en route, as well as B&B accommodation. Bristol itself is well served by public transport, and for those finishing at Croyde Bay or other points on the North Devon coast there is regular transport back to Bristol from Barnstaple. In addition, the path can be used to link the Cotswold Way to the coast.

To obtain the guide book 'Samaritans Way South West - A Walk from Bristol to Lynton' by post, please send a cheque or postal order for £5.45 (including p&p) to Samaritans Way S. W., c/o 6, Mervyn Road, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 9EL.

OVERVIEW

The idea of devising a walk from Bristol to Lynton came in November 1992, inspired by the appeal of the particularly varied scenery in between. The route has been surveyed approximately ten times, which has involved roughly 1000 miles of walking.

On the initial trip in 1993, it was obvious that 75 miles, or three-quarters of the route, would be fairly easy to deal with. Paths were already established, going through such well-known scenery as Chew Valley (which had already been surveyed by Bristol Group RA between 1987 and 1991, with 98 footpath faults put right).

The Mendip, Quantock and Brendon Hills and the Exmoor National Park offered little resistance. The real challenge, pleasure and sense of achievement came from linking these outstandingly beautiful areas, for instance finding a route between the Mendip and Quantock Hills via the Somerset Levels and Polden Hills.

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Difficulties came between Westbury sub Mendip, at the foot of the Mendips, and Goathurst, which lies four miles west of Bridgwater. Many of the faults were reported to Somerset County Council and the Ramblers Association from 1993 onwards. By late 1999 the majority of the more serious problems were cured.

At last a reasonable track was available, and with the help of Lorraine Orriss' hand drawings and Jill Holley's editing this little book went to print in February 2000. Once the complete route is cleared of all faults and waymarked, it is hoped that the walk will become popular and thereby reduce the erosion on other long-distance paths.

Graham Hoyle