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Terrain

Very varied terrain on this section, ranging from the glorious rolling hills of Devon (still steep!) through to wild moorlands on Exmoor, up and down the precipitous escarpments of the Quantock Hills, across the flat and rather wet Somerset Levels, through the limestone gorges of Cheddar.

And finally over the Mendips, into Bristol and thence along the Severn Estuary to cross into Wales.

DAY 11 Widemouth Bay to Bradworthy
15 miles

DAY 12 Bradworthy to Great Torrington
15 miles

DAY 13 Great Torrington to South Molton
17 miles

DAY 14 South Molton to Withypool
13 miles

DAY 15 Withypool to Roadwater
16 miles

DAY 16 Roadwater to Radlet
17 miles + 3 to the pub & back!

DAY 17 Radlet to Wedmore
24 miles

DAY 18 Wedmore to Draycott
5 miles

DAY 19 Draycott to Rickford
9 miles

DAY 20 Rickford to Bristol
14 miles

DAY 21 Bristol to Henbury
8 miles

DAY 22 Henbury to Chepstow
13 miles



DAY 11 – *Widemouth Bay to Bradworthy*

There were mixed feelings today, for we turned our backs on the coast and the blue sea that had been our constant companion for ten days, knowing that we would not walk by the ocean again until the north of Scotland. If your route is the same as ours though, you may also heave a sigh of relief that there are no more coastal cliffs to climb. I know I did.

There were other contrasts today. Mostly the walking is on quiet country lanes which is pleasant but rather hard on the feet so it was during these few days that I developed the first real blisters that would then plague me all the way to Glasgow. Very often the first job on arrival in the evening (and sometimes even during the day too) was to do a little surgery on my blisters with a needle. It worked, usually, but it hurt. A lot.

If you are walking in spring, as we did, the high banks of the Devon lanes are covered in primroses, violets, celandines and many other spring delights. A slight detour of several hundred yards up to the lovely café at Lower Tamar Lakes was worth it. Bradworthy was full to bursting with a tractor rally when we arrived but you are advised to book ahead if you are planning to stay here as it's only a small village.

We decided not to eat out but to eat in our room. We ended up with tinned potatoes, tinned sweetcorn and tough roast beef, all cold. It was one of the low points of the whole journey.

DAY 24

Parkend to Ross-on-Wye

Huge, straight oak trees, long forest vistas, glade after glade carpeted with bluebells, straight flat ex-railway tracks to walk on, the Forest of Dean was heaven! It is one of the surviving ancient woodlands of Britain, being first an area for royal hunting, and although it seems incredible now it does also have an industrial past, being used for charcoal burning, coal mining, and iron working (hence the railways). Now all is peace. Deer graze in the quiet dells and if you are lucky (we weren't) you may see wild boar, of which evidence was everywhere in rooted piles of earth.

Once out of the forest we dropped steeply down to rejoin the Wye Valley Walk at Lydbrook, then climbed some 600 feet up again to an iron age hill fort from where a magnificent view opened up of Ross-on-Wye below us and the blue hazed Hay Bluff and Brecon Beacons off in the distance.

Ross was one of our most favourite places on the whole walk. It wasn't just the hotel (the King's Head) which was superb in every sense from bedroom to food to service, but the whole town appeared to have adopted the same





Bob on the trail south of Chester

into Chester, it was a relief to leave the main road. But we were dismayed to find that we could not proceed to the north through the park and gardens without paying a fortune so had to divert round to the south, only then to find that the path by the river was closed here due to a bank collapse (a landslip, not a Northern Rock moment!). We then had two options: walk a good mile back to the road and find another way or nip over a wall at the back of the mansion and into the gardens. Scandalously, we chose the latter option and subsequently had a lovely



*On the West Highland Way at
Mugdock Wood, north of Milngavie*



Black Rock Cottage with Buachaille Etive Mor behind

beautifully situated, is not a pretty town. It owed its existence to the aluminium smelter which is now closed, and today tourism is its main purpose. The village houses the National Ice Climbing Centre, and of course the West Highland Way brings thousands of visitors, so regeneration and improvement is ongoing and no doubt in the near future Kinlochleven will be a superb place to visit.