

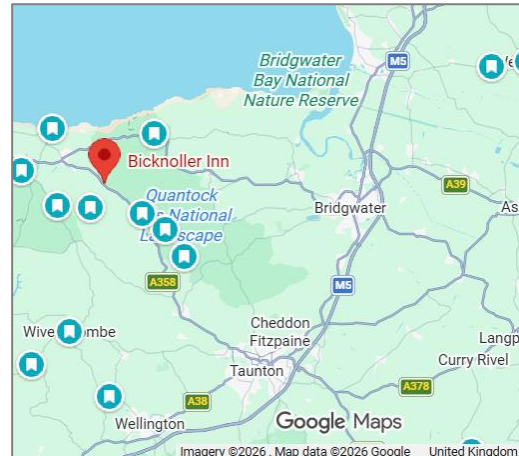
Bicknoller Inn Walk

Quantock Hills Ridge & Combes

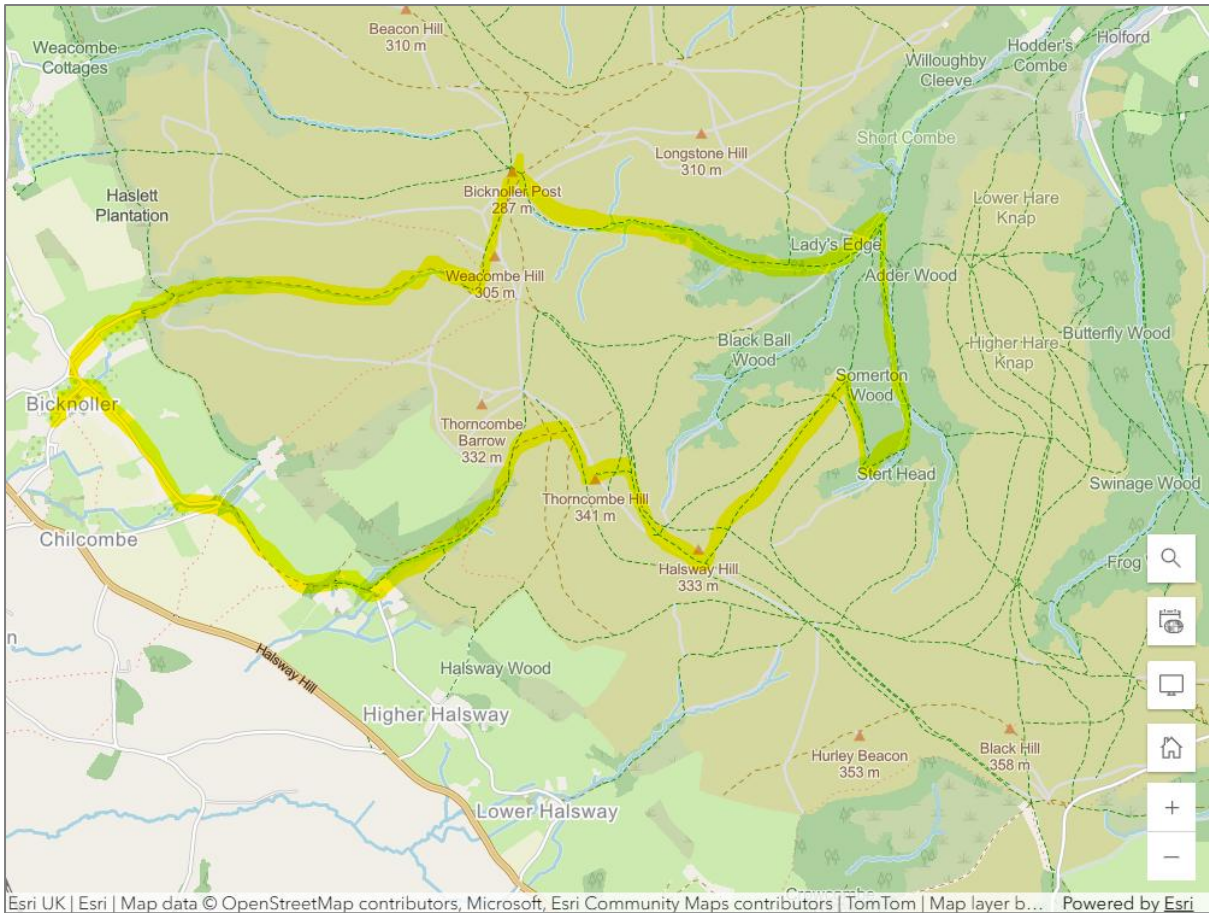
OVERVIEW

A classic introduction to the Quantock Hills. From Bicknoller, the route takes you uphill onto the Quantock ridge, offering fine views, then drops down into steep wooded combes, so typical of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Watch out for Red & Roe Deer in the combes; sheep, horses & DofE participants on the moorland tops.



Start/Finish	Bicknoller Inn, Church Lane, Bicknoller, TA4 4EL. 10984 656234
Parking	Bicknoller pub car park. The village hall/shop also has parking.
OS Grid Reference	ST 110 394
What3Words	Ruffling.maps.email
Distance	7 miles / 11 km Time 3 hours Ascent 1400 ft / 426 m
Paths/Terrain	Wide, stoney paths most of the way, which are well signposted only within/close to the village. Can be exposed at the top, sometimes misty despite sun below. Some of the combes form natural gullies for streams to form after heavy rain. Village lanes at the start and end of the walk, very quiet.
Difficulty	Moderate. The walk includes a couple of long, uphill climbs. No stiles, but a few gates.
Public Transport	A regular bus service runs between Taunton and Minehead which passes the village. You may hear a train while on the walk – it’s the West Somerset steam railway running from Bishop’s Lydiard to Minehead.
Toilets	Only at The Bicknoller Inn, very clean!
Other Pubs Nearby	On this side of the Quantocks: Carew Arms, Crowcombe (does B&B); Blue Ball Inn, Triscombe; The Rising Sun, West Bagborough (a village gem). And on the other side of the A358 is the White Horse, Stogumber; and the posh Farmers Arms, Combe Florey.



From the village, the route takes you up Bicknoller Hill.

At the top you bear left to arrive at an oak post, Bicknoller Post, at a 'crossroads' of numerous paths.

As you approach the post, bear right to drop down all the way into Lady's Edge combe.

The return back to the ridge is via Somerton combe, up to Halsway Post.

Then follow the Macmillan Way NW along the spine of the ridge, before picking up a grassy track to your left to head down Paradise Combe.

At the bottom you'll bear right to join the Quantock Greenway for the return to the village.



DIRECTIONS

1. From the car park head up through the village in the direction of St George's Church, following Church Lane.
2. Turn LEFT here, following Trendle Lane towards the Village Hall/Shop.
3. Turn RIGHT onto Hill Lane in front of the entrance to the Village Hall/Shop. It's signposted as a No Through Road. Continue up the lane to a gate through into a combe where a National Trust sign announces Bicknoller Hill.
4. The steady ascent through Bicknoller Combe opens out to offer glimpses of the summits above.
5. Your goal is the level ground of the Quantocks ridge. As you ascend, numerous paths in front of you present a choice, but as long as you're continuing upwards to the ridge, you're heading the right way!
6. At the top you bear North (LEFT), continuing on this very distinct track to Bicknoller Post, where multiple paths connect. These posts are a feature of the Quantocks and Exmoor to identify these crossroads in remote areas.
7. On the approach to the Post, check the map & image above carefully: you need to bear right a little as you walk up to it and past it, to pick up a downhill path that starts to then curve around to the left, down into Sheppard's Combe. This is a popular mountain bike path, so look for clues.
8. As the path descends into the combe, you'll likely see signs of deer activity. As you drop into Lady's Edge the ground starts to level out, pools of mud are visible, evidence of a bathing spot for deer.
9. There are no signposts down in these woods, so you need to use the map to eliminate certain paths as you identify which one is Somerton Combe. It's well walked, whereas some of the other paths that return eventually to the ridge are a little less trafficked.
10. Whichever route takes you back uphill, you'll arrive eventually back on the Quantock ridge line - the Macmillan Way.
11. You'll bear RIGHT at the top as you aim for the path to take you down Paradise Combe. You'll notice that a few paths run in parallel here at the top, and you need the upper most one, a grassier option compared to the stony Macmillan Way, eventually heading downhill into an area of ferns.
12. At OS Grid Reference ST 131 393 you join Paradise Combe, which takes you off the Quantock Hill as it heads down steeply through a valley with trees/woods to the right-hand side and a hillside to your left.
13. Eventually, at the bottom of the combe, go through a gate near a house on the left before picking up signs for the Quantocks Greenway, heading right on now level ground back towards Bicknoller, and onto Trendle Lane.
14. Rehydrate at The Bicknoller with a pint of Palmers.

NOTES

When I first visited the Quantocks, I was a little frustrated by the lack of signposts. Now, I appreciate that there's very little human-made furniture on the Hills. If you have a rough sense of direction and can recognise up from down, it's unlikely you'll get lost on the Quantocks. And you'll probably find people to help if you're unsure. But my trusty OS Maps app has never let me down!

And as you might see from the route map above, there are numerous footpaths to follow, providing options to shorten or extend the route as you prefer.

If you're interested in seeing red deer, then this is a good route to take. October is the peak deer rut season, and you're sure to hear the roar of a stag if you're wandering this route as the light fades.