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## A dynamic coastline

A self-guided walk around Westward Ho! in North Devon



Walk along a stunning section of the North Devon coast  
Discover how coastal landforms were created by different processes  
Explore a purpose-built Victorian seaside resort  
Find out how the area's geology, ecology and heritage is protected

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the stories of our landscapes  
discovered through walks





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This booklet is to be used alongside the audio commentary for this walk

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**Created in collaboration with**



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Cover image: View from Kipling Tors, Dave Edcombe © North Devon AONB

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## A dynamic coastline

### Explore the spectacular North Devon coast around Westward Ho!

Beach, cliffs, spit, salt marsh, rocky foreshore, sand dunes. This short section of the North Devon coast exhibits the key characteristics of the seaside.

Some of the coastal landforms here are particularly spectacular including a two-mile long pebble ridge, a five-mile long wave-cut platform and a beach raised ten metres above current sea levels. Find out how and when they were created.



This is also a dynamic coast. The landforms are shifting and evolving. They are affected by winter storms and high tides, the longer-term sea level change, and by human activities.



This walk passes through the Victorian seaside resort of Westward Ho! Its founders took advantage of the coastal setting including the expansive beach, cliff top walks and bathing pools.

But from its inception to the present day the resort has faced a constant battle against the changing coastline. See buildings moved away from the seafront and a wall designed to protect the resort.

It is not surprising that this area has numerous designations for its scientific importance, ecological significance and scenic beauty. Find out why this coastal landscape is being preserved and protected.

The pebble ridge (top) and sunken forest (bottom) Dave Edgcombe © North Devon AONB

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## Route map



### Stopping points

- |              |                                    |               |                                      |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Start</b> | Top of pebble ridge                | <b>10.</b>    | Cliff top above Mermaid's Pool       |
| <b>2.</b>    | Top of pebble ridge                | <b>11.</b>    | Cliff top above Mermaid's Pool       |
| <b>3.</b>    | Beach                              | <b>12.</b>    | South West Coast Path loop           |
| <b>4.</b>    | Slipway                            | <b>13.</b>    | Cliff top path                       |
| <b>5.</b>    | Seafront, beside green space       | <b>14.</b>    | Kipling Tors coastguard lookout      |
| <b>6.</b>    | Seafront, in front of Horizon View | <b>15.</b>    | Kipling Tors ridge path, third bench |
| <b>7.</b>    | Seafront, overlooking Rock Pool    | <b>16.</b>    | Kipling Tors ridge path, fifth bench |
| <b>8.</b>    | The Pier House                     | <b>17.</b>    | Kipling Tors woods                   |
| <b>9.</b>    | Field beyond Seafeld House         | <b>18.</b>    | Ocean Park, Atlantic Way             |
|              |                                    | <b>Finish</b> | Seafront, beside green space         |

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## Practical information

<b>Location</b>	Westward Ho!, North Devon, Southwest England
<b>Start point</b>	Pebble ridge (beach just north of Westward Ho!)
<b>Finish point</b>	Seafront, Golf Links Road
<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Car</b> – Westward Ho! is close to Bideford and just a mile off the main A39 road which runs across North Devon.

### Directions and recommended parking place

Leave the A39 at the roundabout which leads to Bideford one way and Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! in the other. Follow the A386 (Heywood Road) which becomes the B3236 (Lakenham Hill then Atlantic Way) after about half a mile. Ignore various right turnings to Appledore and Northam town centre.

About  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile after the Welcome to Westward Ho! sign you will enter a one-way system around the town centre. Follow Atlantic Way then turn right down Youngaton Road. At the next junction go straight across into Golf Links Road. The main car park is on the right (charges apply).

There are several pedestrian exits to the car park. You can use any of them to return to Golf Links Road. Make your way to the beach and onto the pebble ridge.

**Train** – The nearest railway station is Barnstaple 10 miles away. It is served by trains from Exeter St Davids that run once an hour. This is the scenic Tarka Line. Transfer from Barnstaple railway station to Westward Ho! by bus (see below).

**Bus** – Buses run regularly from Ilfracombe via Barnstaple and Bideford to Westward Ho! Use [www.journeydevon.info](http://www.journeydevon.info) to plan your journey.

### Directions from bus stop to walk start point

Alight at the stop in the centre of the town on Golf Links Road. From the bus stop go a short way down Golf Links Road to the seafront. Follow the promenade round to the beach and make your way onto the pebble ridge.

**Bicycle** – National Cycle Route 27 (The Tarka Trail) runs through Bideford a couple of miles to the southeast.

<b>Walk distance</b>	3 ½ miles
<b>Level</b>	<b>Moderate</b> – No major hills involved with the exception of a steep ascent and descent off Kipling Tors
<b>Terrain</b>	The walk starts on the pebble ridge where the stones can be slippery and move underfoot. Most of the remainder of the route is on pavements, surfaced and unsurfaced footpaths. Much of the route (Stop 4 to 13) follows the South West Coast Path; look out for the acorn symbol and yellow arrows.
<b>Conditions</b>	Outside the town there is little shelter from sun, wind or rain. Take suitable protective clothing and footwear.
<b>Dangers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep off the beach when there is a heavy swell, a high tide or storm conditions.</li> <li>- Extreme care should be taken near the cliff edge. Avoid walking there in heavy rain and high winds.</li> <li>- If you go onto the beach or foreshore take great care. Avoid exploration directly below the cliffs and be aware of incoming tides.</li> </ul>
<b>Suitable for</b>	<p><b>Families</b> – There is plenty for families to explore and enjoy but take great care of young children on the pebble ridge, on the foreshore and near the cliff edge.</p> <p><b>Wheelchairs and pushchairs</b> – The seafront section from the seafront promenade along the old railway line (Stops 4 to 13) is suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. For further details see <a href="http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/westward_ho_easy_access.pdf">http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/westward_ho_easy_access.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Dogs</b> – Dogs are not allowed on most of the beach between May and September; keep dogs under close control on the seafront promenade which can be busy and near the cliff edge where there are sheer drops without fencing; many of the restaurants and pubs welcome dogs.</p>
<b>Public toilets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Car park by slipway (Stop 4)</li> <li>- Golf Links Road by bus stop (near Stop 5 and finish point)</li> <li>- Seafield car park (between Stop 8 and Stop 9)</li> </ul>

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### Refreshments

- The Pebbleridge Café serves snacks and ice creams (start point).
- There are several cafes, fast-food outlets and ice cream vendors around the slipway (Stop 4).
- There is usually an ice cream van on the seafront (Stop 5 and finish point).
- There are several cafes, a fish and chip shop and a small supermarket on Golf Links Road (near Stop 5 and finish point).
- The Pier House is an upmarket bistro (Stop 8).
- The Village Inn on Youngaton Road serves traditional homemade pub food (between Stop 18 and Stop 19).

### Places to visit

**North Devon AONB** – Find out about other parts of the coast that you can explore on foot or by bike; includes family-friendly activities.  
[www.explorethecoast.org](http://www.explorethecoast.org)

**Northam Burrows Country Park** – The Country Park includes dunes, grassland, salt marsh and the pebble ridge. The small visitor centre (open from the end of May to early September) gives more information about the history, geology and wildlife of the area.  
[www.torridge.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=461](http://www.torridge.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=461)

**Bideford Railway Heritage Centre** – This small museum at the old station includes displays about the Bideford, Westward Ho! and Appledore Railway.  
[www.bidefordrailway.co.uk](http://www.bidefordrailway.co.uk)

**Shipwreck and Smuggling Museum** – A small museum at Hartland Quay, the site of an ancient and historic port, positioned precariously amongst spectacular coastal scenery.  
[www.hartlandquayhotel.com/shipwreck-museum](http://www.hartlandquayhotel.com/shipwreck-museum)

### Places to stay

The Village Inn, Youngaton Road, Westward Ho!  
[www.villageinndevo.co.uk](http://www.villageinndevo.co.uk)

Manorville Youth Hostel, Fosceth Hill, Westward Ho!  
[www.yha.org.uk/hostel/westward-ho](http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/westward-ho)

### Tourist information

Bideford Tourist Information Centre  
Burton Art Gallery & Museum, Kingsley Road, Bideford EX39 2QQ  
Tel: 01237 477676 or 01237 421853  
Email: [bidefordtic@torridge.gov.uk](mailto:bidefordtic@torridge.gov.uk)  
[www.visitdevon.co.uk/areas-to-visit/north-devon](http://www.visitdevon.co.uk/areas-to-visit/north-devon)  
[www.northdevon.com](http://www.northdevon.com)



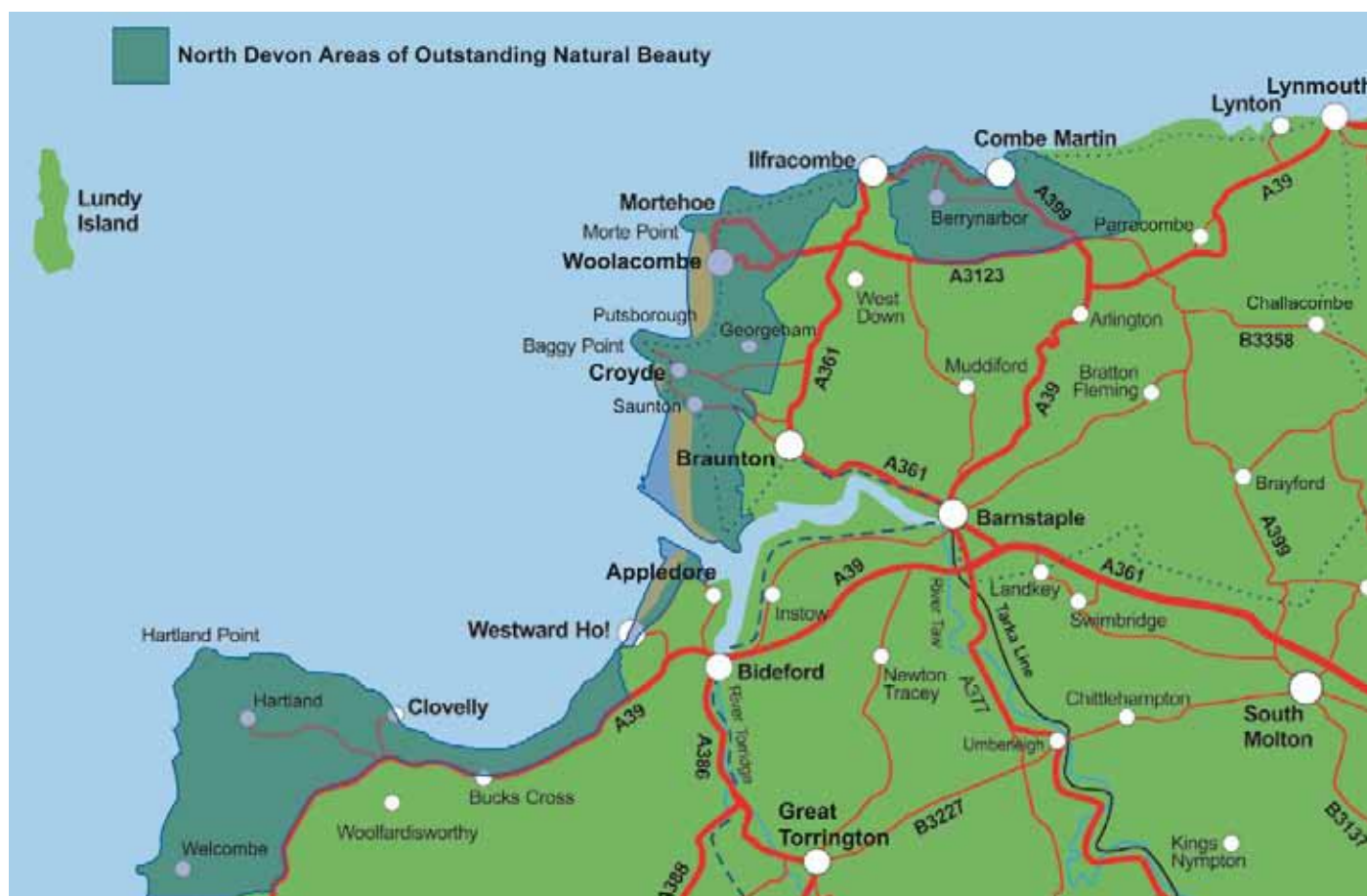
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## Directions

Listen to each track then read the directions in the boxes below to get to the next stop

### 1. Welcome to the North Devon coast

#### Top of pebble ridge



The North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty stretch along the coast  
© North Devon AONB

#### Directions 1

Remain on the pebble ridge and listen to Track 2. Do take care as the stones can be slippery and can also move underfoot.



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## 2. A pile of pebbles

### Top of pebble ridge

#### Directions 2

If the tide is out, go onto the beach. Look for an area about 100 metres from the bottom of the pebble ridge that is distinct from the surrounding sand. It may resemble a lumpy raised platform and be a grey colour in contrast to the light brown of the surrounding sand. When you have found it listen to Track 3. If the tide is in and you cannot go onto the beach, go along the top of the ridge to the slipway.

## 3. Dry cliffs and a wet forest

### Beach

#### Directions 3

Go across the beach towards the slipway. At the slipway go up the ramp and turn immediately right. Stand on the sea wall above the slipway, look back along the beach and listen to Track 4.

## 4. Amphibious landing

### Slipway

#### Directions 4

Go along the seafront promenade with the sea on your right. There is a short stretch of pavement alongside Golf Links Road. Stop on the next stretch of promenade - which is adjacent to an open green space - and listen to Track 5.

## 5. Novel origins

### Seafront, beside green space

#### Directions 5

Continue a short distance along the seafront promenade. Stop by the first large apartment block (Horizon View). Look over the seawall and listen to Track 6.

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## 6. An unnatural barrier

### Seafront, in front of Horizon View

#### Directions 6

Continue for a short distance along the promenade. Before reaching the next modern apartment block, look over the seawall onto the rocky foreshore for a seawater swimming pool. Listen to Track 7.

## 7. The Uses of Sea Water

### Seafront, overlooking Rock Pool

#### Directions 7

Continue along the seafront. At the new apartment block of Nassau Court (where the old swimming baths were) the coast path goes around the inland side of the building. When you reach Pier House go through the car park on the lower side of the building. Stop on the path on the other side and listen to Track 8.

## 8. Handsome and commodious

### The Pier House

#### Directions 8

From The Pier House continue along the coast path past a row of beach huts. The next major building is Seafeld House (built in 1885) adjacent to which are some public toilets. Here the coast path passes between Seafeld House and the car park and continues across an open green area. Keep to the seaward edge of the field. Go past the first set of benches and continue along the cliff top. Look for a gap in the hedgerow which reveals the crumbling cliffs and a view to the sea below. Stop here and listen to Track 9.

## 9. Slopes and slumps

### Field beyond Seafeld House

#### Directions 9

Continue along the bottom of the field to the end where a slight incline takes you up onto a surfaced track. Turn right and follow the track. On the left is a small quarry, one of several in the area that provided building stone for the development of the town. Stop almost opposite where there is a fenced section of cliff and listen to Track 10.

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## 10. From cave to platform

### Cliff top above Mermaid's Pool

#### Directions 10

Remain in the same place and listen to Track 11.

## 11. From horizontal to vertical

### Cliff top above Mermaid's Pool



The fault (dotted line) and slippage of rock strata  
Dave Edgcombe © North Devon AONB

#### Directions 11

Continue along the path. There are several places where you can stop and look over the cliff to the sea and appreciate the wave cut platform if the tide is low.

After about 700 metres look for a small path on the right that leads walkers off the main surfaced path. There is a South West Coast Path sign (acorn and yellow arrow) but this is sometimes obscured by vegetation.

This path is a short loop that re-joins the main path after about 200 metres.

## 12. Striding out

### South West Coast Path loop

#### Directions 12

Continue along the cliff-top path. Where it rejoins the main path you may like to stop for a rest at the benches. When you are ready, go along the main surfaced path back towards Westward Ho! Stop after about 500 metres on a straight section of path where you can see ahead to where the path passes through a notch in the cliff. Listen to Track 13.

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### 13. Rail route

#### Cliff top cutting

##### Directions 13

Continue along the path. After going through the old railway cutting and past the old quarry, look for a turning on the right which marks the entrance to the National Trust Property at Kipling Tors. As you begin the ascent keep to the right and ignore all left hand turnings. Stop when you reach the coastguard lookout building and listen to Track 14.

### 14. From wreck to rescue

#### Kipling Tors coastguard lookout

##### Directions 14

Take time to appreciate the stunning views of Barnstaple and Bideford Bay. You can see Westward Ho! and many of the coastal features that we have found out about so far. A toposcope will help to identify various landmarks both near and further afield.

When you are ready, retrace your steps back down the path and take the first turning on the right. This goes along the higher ridge path of Kipling Tors. Stop at the third bench - which is directly above Seafeld House and the car park - and listen to Track 15.

### 15. Protected beauty

#### Kipling Tors ridge path, third bench

##### Directions 15

Continue on the path along the ridge. Stop at the second bench - which is directly above the modern apartment block of Nassau Court - and listen to Track 16.

### 16. From common land to country park

#### Kipling Tors ridge path, fifth bench

##### Directions 16

Continue along the path which soon starts to drop down into woodland. At the first major crossroads of paths go straight across and follow the zig-zag path down into a wooded valley. Stop on the zig-zag path in the woodland and listen to Track 17.



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## 17. From grassland to woodland

### Kipling Tors woods

#### Directions 17

At the bottom of the steep valley is a t-junction of paths. Turn right and follow the footpath. This eventually joins a small track and then soon meets the bend in a road (Stanwell Hill). Turn left and go round the bend. Cross over the junction with Merley Road and stop in front of the four red-brick apartment blocks called Ocean Park. Listen to Track 18.

## 18. The Company, the Captain and Charles

### Ocean Park, Atlantic Way

#### Directions 18

Walk along Atlantic Way past the four blocks of Ocean View. At the far end, below the church, the road forks. Take the right fork (Atlantic Way). Along this stretch look out on the left for the arched doorway of the old Union Club which was hastily relocated here in 1879 when the sea was encroaching on its original premises. Also look up to the right at the grand terraces, many of which were Molesworth's developments.

Take the first left (Youngaton Road) which takes you straight downhill. On the right is The Village Inn, originally Youngaton Farm, which was one of the only buildings in Westward Ho! prior to its development as a seaside resort. At the crossroads with Nelson Road go straight ahead into Golf Links Road which takes you back to the seafront. Stop by the seawall at the bottom and listen to Track 19.

## 19. Coast of change

### Seafront, beside green space

#### Directions 19

This is the end of the walk.

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## Credits

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Footprint designating the South West Coast Path  
Dave Edgcombe © North Devon AONB

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