

Lannacombe and East Prawle

Blessed with sandy coves, rocky shores, craggy cliffs, a blue sea, lush vegetation and tremendous wildlife, this walk takes you as close to paradise as makes no difference.

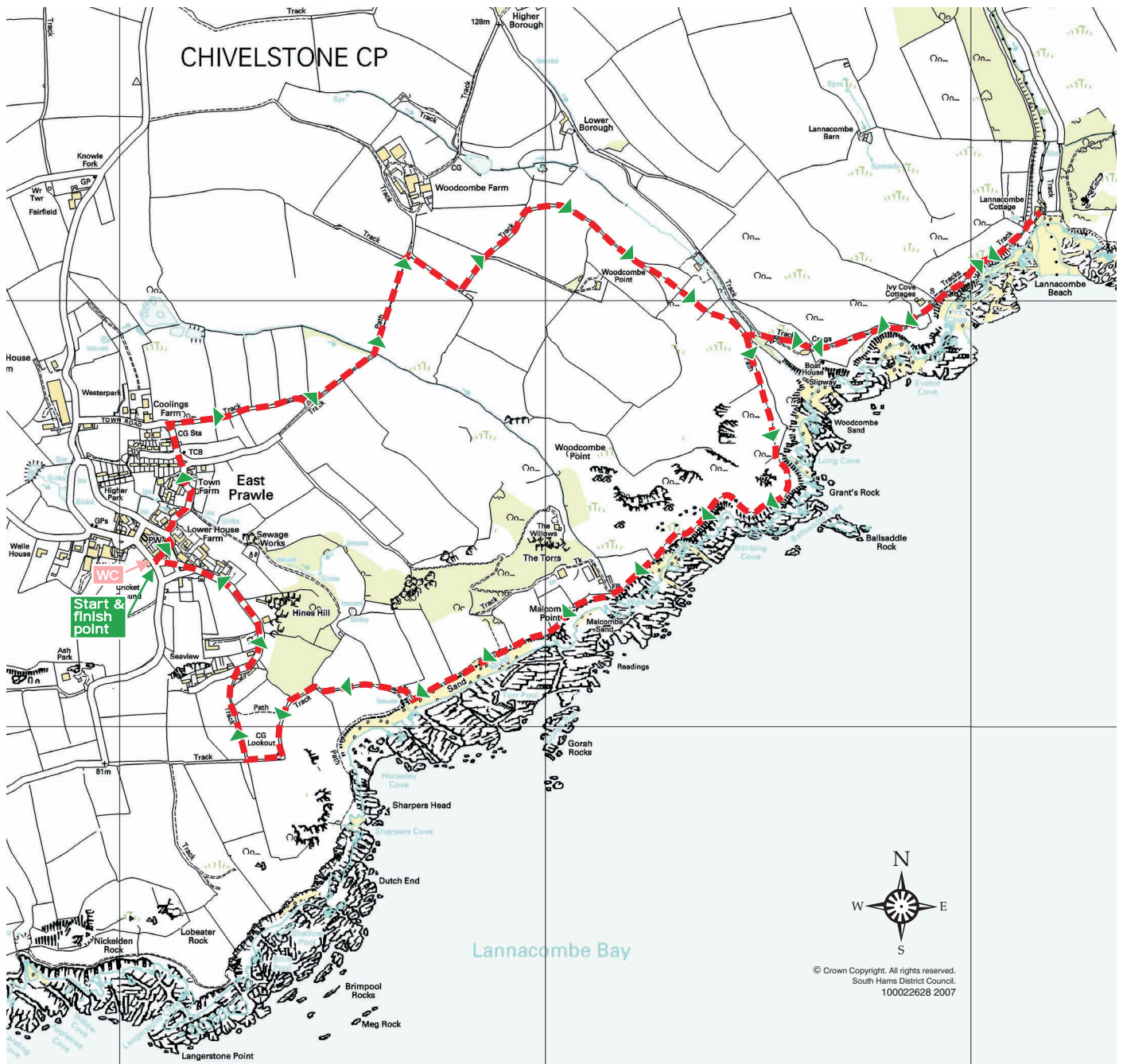
Start:	East Prawle Village Green
Distance:	5 miles
Circular Walk:	Yes
Grade:	Moderate
Terrain:	Green lane, muddy in places in wet weather; coastal footpath with some uneven and rocky sections; surfaced road.
Obstacles & Steep Gradients:	1 steep ascent; 1 steep descent.
Public transport:	Extremely limited. Coleridge Community Bus runs from Kingsbridge to East Prawle once a week on Wednesdays. Ring 01548 511309 for more details.
Refreshment stops:	In East Prawle: Providence Inn 01548 511208; Pig's Nose Inn 01548 511209; Grunters Café open Easter – end October 01548 511486.
Toilets:	Public toilets situated immediately above the village green.
Parking:	Parking around the village green. By donation.
Accommodation:	Please contact Kingsbridge Tourist Information Centre 01548 853195 www.kingsbridgeinfo.co.uk
Other facilities:	Public payphones by village green, and Higher Park, East Prawle. Piglet Stores village shop by village green, East Prawle.
OS map:	Explorer 0L20
Grid Ref:	SX 782364



Description

1. From village green take road running down past Pig's Nose Inn and bear left. Round the corner turn first right.
2. Follow lane round edge of village. 60m beyond red phone box, on left hand bend, turn right along public bridleway signed 'Lannacombe Green 2m'.
3. At t-junction turn left following blue waymarker arrow.
4. After following track along top field edge turn right along diverted public bridleway.
5. After 250m bear left signed 'Public Footpath and Bridleway'. After a further 150m bear right signed 'Woodcombe Sand ½m'.
6. Route emerges from green lane and drops down through grass and scrub. At the footpath junction turn left signed 'Coast Path'. Follow path to Lannacombe Beach.
7. From Lannacombe retrace your steps along coast path, and continue to follow coast path westwards.
8. Beyond the land of Maelcombe House, the path skirts a field. At the next fingerpost follow sign reading 'Public Bridleway East Prawle ½m', leading through gate and up old green lane.
9. At green lane junction at the top of the rise, turn right up towards the houses.
10. At the road turn right and return to village green.





Further Interest

Heritage

On the cliff edge just before Lannacombe Beach stands the ruin of an old water mill. The millstones that once ground the grain can be seen laid beside the path.

This mill was the victim of an attack by French privateers during the Napoleonic Wars. The plucky miller, determined that the raiders would not seize his savings, threw his money bag out of the window during the plunder. The following day he found that, miraculously, the bag had not disappeared into the sea, but got caught in the branches of a small tree on the cliff edge.

East Prawle has also been the site of mayhem brought by the sea. An Italian ship was wrecked nearby one night in 1872. The crew safely made it ashore and were put up in the village. Later that night, however, one of the crewmen went mad, stabbing three of his shipmates and two of the local coastguards and their wives, before being killed by a blow from a cutlass.

Landscape

The Green Lanes which take you out of East Prawle, and then back towards it on the return leg, are part of an ancient network of rural byways. They have been used by farmers, drovers, traders and smugglers over centuries, and possibly even millennia.

Some of South Devon's green lanes were neglected and fell into disrepair over the years. However, many of them have been restored through two recent initiatives, On the Right Tracks and Life into Landscape. These projects raised money to repair erosion and carry out traditional hedgelaying on the old Devon banks.

Looking east from the coast path, the stretch of cliff beyond Lannacombe reaches out to Start Point, site of a lighthouse - automatic these days, with no lighthouse keeper. The last sea pirate to be captured, Henry Muge, was hanged in chains at the Point in 1582.

The ground on which you walk through the grassy sward and arable fields around Maelcombe was once underwater. In past ages, when sea levels were much higher, the steep high ground to your right was sea cliffs, and the waves lapped in around their feet.

Wildlife

Prawle is the most southerly spot in Devon. This means that it is the first point of arrival and last port of call for all kinds of migrating birds and butterflies. In spring and autumn in particular it pays to keep your eyes peeled for rare winged visitors during your walk.

The green lane leading out of East Prawle is fringed with bluebells in the spring, and on through the summer with sprays of the leggy Red Campion with its bright pink flowers.

As you drop down towards the coast path at Woodcombe, you pass through grass and Hawthorn scrub. This makes for a rich and increasingly rare kind of habitat. Areas like this support a whole local 'food chain', from grasses, flowers and insects to birds, small mammals, and predators like the Barn Owl.

The hawthorn trees here are entwined with the slender tendrils of Honeysuckle. Its exquisitely scented yellow- white flowers attract moths during the night and bumble bees during the day to feed on their nectar and pollinate the plants.

The stretch of coast between East Prawle and Lannacombe is fabulously rich in wildflowers. The best time to catch it in



bloom is in spring and early summer, before the bracken grows up and takes over later in the season.

Bluebells grow here in the spring. So much associated with woodland, they make a striking,



unexpected sight out on the open cliffs. Spring also brings the bright yellow Lesser celandine, Primroses, and delicate Violets with their rosettes of heart- shaped leaves.

Red Campion, the white blooms of Stitchwort in sprays on slender stems, and masses of Foxgloves, all flowers alongside the coast path. Sea Campion, growing in clusters, has white, open flowers with a small bladder- like sac behind each bloom, and a mat of small bluish leaves.

The glossy, leafy Alexanders, with its massed 'umbels' of tiny yellowish-green florets, loves the coastal climate in these parts, and you will find patches of here and there all along the route.



Down at Lannacombe, Tree Mallow grows along the grassy edge behind the beach. This tall, woody- stemmed plant has large velvety leaves that are lovely to the touch, and vivid pink-purple flowers with dark veins on the petals.

Common Lizards sometimes can be seen on the coast path, basking in the sun. Usually around 10 to 16cm long, these lizards feed on insects, spiders and snails. They are able to shed their tails if threatened by predators.

Peregrine Falcons breed along this stretch of the coast, and can often be seen perched up on the one of the craggy rock pinnacles or gliding along the cliffs. Peregrines have a whitish underside, yellow legs, and grey upper wings. They mainly hunt other birds, often catching them in incredibly fast stooping dives.

There is a chance you might glimpse the nationally rare Cirl Bunting as you pass through the fields beyond Maelcombe House. This beautiful little bird has green and yellow stripes through the face, head and throat, and greenish- yellow plumage with rusty red patches.

The cirl bunting relies on traditional mixed farming practises which provide plenty of weed and grain seeds along with a rich mix of insects, especially grasshoppers. This kind of farming has been dying out over recent years, but the land in this area is managed with its interests firmly in mind. The cirl bunting now only breeds here in South Devon.

