



East Devon
National
Landscape

EAST DEVON WAY - EAST TO WEST (COLYTON TO SIDBURY)

Route Summary

Starting through peaceful meadows alongside the River Coly, this section of the route then follows quiet country lanes as it climbs up through the historic villages of Northleigh, Farway and Church Green to reach the highest point at Farway Hill. Here there is the earthwork of Farway Castle, an Iron Age farmstead and also a round barrow cemetery from the Bronze Age. Enjoy the views before dropping down through Knapp Copse Local Nature Reserve and the hidden woodlands of the Roncombe Valley to Sidbury.

Start: Station Road near Umborne Bridge, Colyton

End: Sidbury

Distance: 12.1 miles/19.5km

Estimated time: 5 hours 53 minutes

Difficulty: Category 4

Nearest postcode: EX24 6AB **What Three Words:** ///ever.against.bulldozer

Accessibility information:

Access: Category 4 - Some sections are not accessible to mobility vehicles and buggies/pushchairs due to stiles, kissing gates, 2 in 1 gates with a stepover bar, steps and narrow bridges.

Terrain: Tarmac, stony tracks, narrow paths with tree roots, loose stone, mud and grass.

Field furniture: 26 gates (including two 2 in 1 gates), 6 kissing gates, 4 stiles, 12 narrow footbridges and 27 steps.

Total ascent: 1798 feet/548m

Maximum gradient: There are several steep sections, one ascent of approximately 1 in 5 (17%) for 109 yards/100 metres and one descent of approximately 1 in 2 (36.3%) for 87 yards/80 metres.

Maps: OS Explorer 115 Exmouth & Sidmouth, OS Explorer 116 Lyme Regis and Bridport

Other useful information:

Dogs: Welcome under close control.

Refreshments: Colyton has a range of shops and places to eat at the start and Sidbury has a pub and a shop at the end.

Highlights: The chance to see sand martins in the banks of the River Coly in spring and summer, to explore the churches of St Giles in Northleigh and St Michaels and All Angels at Church Green and enjoy the peaceful, wildlife rich Knapp Copse Local Nature Reserve.

A landscape of history

Colyton, now a market town with a range of shops and places to eat, was reputedly one of the first Saxon settlements established in Devon. It is known as 'the most rebellious town in Devon' due to the 105 local men and boys who supported the Duke of Monmouth in the Monmouth Rebellion, a plan to overthrow the King James II in 1685.

The main building of the church of St Andrew's, in the centre of Colyton, dates back to the 15th and early 16th centuries, while the tower is 12th century with an unusual octagonal lantern top stage sitting on top. During renovation after a fire in 1933, a late 10th century cross was found, which now stands beside the font.

Colyton is also the northernmost stop on the Seaton Tramway, a narrow gauge heritage tramway that runs for 3 miles alongside the Axe Estuary and the River Coly.

St Michaels and All Angels Church at Church Green was built in the Norman period and underwent changes in the 14th, 15th and 17th centuries before being rebuilt in 1877. The oldest part is a 12th century arcade. There is a field nearby known as the Money Acre where, according to a local tale, Humphrey Hutchins ploughed up a crock of gold. He donated some of the treasure to the church for the rebuilding of the north aisle. The route passes through Money Acre Cross at the top of the hill to the east of the village of Church Green where it crosses into Farway Plantation.

Sidbury was mentioned in the Domesday Book and is said to be one of the oldest settlements in Devon with its Iron Age Fort at Sidbury Castle. It still has a working mill producing flour.

St Giles in the centre of the village is a Grade I listed church with a 7th century Saxon crypt under the chancel.

Important Wildlife

The exposed banks of the River Coly are home to a colony of sand martins during the spring and summer months.

Knapp Copse supports a wide variety of wildlife including many birds. In summer look out for redstarts and marsh warblers and listen for the long trilling call of the grasshopper warbler. Year round you may see nuthatches, great spotted woodpeckers and, at dusk, tawny owls or even a barn owl. The site also has 13 species of bat, a thriving dormouse population and roe deer. In summer there is a wealth of wild flowers in the open meadows and it is an important place for orchids including early purple and southern marsh.

The broadleaved woods and copses around Sidbury are a rich habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. Look out for woodland birds including nuthatches, woodpeckers and long tailed tits and for buzzards soaring overhead when you emerge into open fields. Ferns grow in abundance in the damper areas and you may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of a roe deer bounding away through the undergrowth.

Directions:

1. **At the end of River Mews turn left along Dolphin Street** and take the first right along Rosemary Lane.
2. **Continue ignoring all side turnings to a T-junction and turn right.**
3. **At the next junction turn right and follow the road over a bridge.** Immediately after the bridge turn left through a wooden kissing gate onto a footpath alongside the river.
4. **Follow the riverside path through a wooden kissing gate** and along a tree lined avenue to another wooden kissing gate.
5. **Go through the gate, turn left and follow the river to a gated footbridge.**
6. **Cross the bridge and follow the footpath across the centre** of the field, then alongside a hedge on the right and then straight on, then alongside a hedge on the right again.
7. **Go through a wooden pedestrian gate and continue alongside** the river passing a footbridge. Follow a path through the woods to a metal pedestrian gate.
8. **Go through the gate and head straight on across the field** on the right hand path.
9. **Cross a footbridge and go through a metal pedestrian gate.** Continue straight on then bear around to the left on a slight rise heading towards another footbridge.
10. **Go through a metal pedestrian gate and over a narrow footbridge** and head towards the footbridge. DO NOT GO OVER. Continue straight past crossing a track and following the footpath alongside the river on the left. In spring and summer look out for sand martins in the exposed river bank.
11. **Follow the riverside path to the end of the field** and turn right for a short distance to a gated footbridge.
12. **Go over the bridge and turn left** to follow the riverside path to the end of the field.
13. **Go down a slope through the hedge,** over a narrow footbridge and through a wooden pedestrian gate into the next field. Bear left to follow the riverside path to the end of the field.
14. **Follow the hedge on the left up the field for a short distance** to a wooden pedestrian gate and a footbridge on the left. Go over and head straight across the field to a narrow footbridge and wooden pedestrian gate.

15. **Go through and follow the left edge of the field** until you come to a gap in the hedge just after an open section of river. Go through and down the bank to a metal pedestrian gate on the right.
16. **Go through and bear left alongside the river** before heading straight across the field to the far fence. Turn right and follow the left edge of the field around to a footbridge and wooden pedestrian gate.
17. **Go over the bridge, turn right and follow the hedge** on the right. When the hedge swings right head straight on to a narrow footbridge and wooden kissing gate out onto a minor road.
18. **Turn left and follow the road to a junction** and continue towards Northleigh, Southleigh and Farwood Cross.
19. **At Farwood Cross go straight over towards Northleigh.**
20. **Follow the road down over a bridge into Northleigh.**
21. **At the road junction continue around to the left** towards Farway, Southleigh and Honiton.
22. **Turn right towards the church and then where the path divides** bear left along the footpath, following it between houses to a minor road.
23. **Turn right and follow the road.** When it bears right downhill turn left along a footpath that follows a track to a field gate.
24. **Go through the gate and straight across the field** to a metal pedestrian gate.
25. **Go through and turn right.** Follow the hedge on the right down the field and turn right down some steps and over a stile to a minor road.
26. **Go diagonally left across the road and over a stile onto a footpath.** Head diagonally left across the field to a footbridge.
27. **Cross the footbridge and head diagonally left** then parallel with the hedge on the right to go over a stile onto a minor road.
28. **Turn right along the road and follow it past Netherton Hall.** Take the first left and follow the road down over a footbridge alongside a ford.
29. **At Farway Cross turn right towards Farway Church and Honiton.** Follow the road around to the right at the next junction and follow it out of the village.
30. **At the next road junction turn left** and then immediately right through a metal pedestrian gate onto a footpath through fields.
31. **Head straight across the field dropping down** to go through a metal pedestrian gate and over a footbridge.

32. **Bear left through the next field to go through a wooden kissing gate** and straight across a track and through a wooden pedestrian gate.
33. **Follow the path around to the left and over a footbridge.** Turn right and continue parallel with the trees on the right.
34. **Go through a gap into the next field** and head straight on heading for the gateway in the far left corner.
35. **Go through the gateway and turn right** to follow the hedge on the right to a 2 in 1 gate onto a minor road.
36. **Turn right along the road and follow it to Church Green**
37. **At the road junction by the church turn left** and follow the road out of the village.
38. **Follow the road uphill for approx 0.8 miles/1.3km** and bear left to a T-junction.
39. **TAKE CARE crossing diagonally left into a parking area** to pick up a bridleway along a forestry track. Follow it until the track widens out, then turn right along a narrower path.
40. **At junction with track turn left** and follow it along the edge of the wood.
41. **Where the path divides bear right through a gap** and follow the fenced path straight on between fields and then around to the right and then left to a road.
42. **TAKE CARE crossing straight across onto a bridleway.** Go through the gate and follow the track past some barns.
43. **Turn left through a metal bridleway gate onto a bridleway** through Knapp Copse. Follow the bridleway down through the woods ignoring all side turnings until you come to Lower Knapp Farm.
44. **Go through the metal bridleway gate** and bear left between the holiday cottages to follow the drive out to a minor road.
45. **Turn right along the road** and follow it to the entrance to Mincombe Barn.
46. **Turn left along the bridleway, going past the house** on your left and over a bridge into a farmyard. Bear right and follow the bridleway through a wooden field gate and uphill around to the left.
47. **Go through another wooden field gate** and continue to follow the bridleway uphill and around to the right into a field.
48. **Continue diagonally left, leaving the copse on your right,** to a metal bridleway gate out onto a minor road.
49. **At the road turn right** and follow it for a short distance.

50. **Just after the house on your right turn right** over a stile onto a footpath to Sidbury. Follow it past the house and around to the left. Go through a wooden field gate and follow the footpath downhill through the wood to a 2 in 1 gate.
51. **Go through the gate and follow the footpath straight on** across the field. Go straight cross the track and into the wood.
52. **Go through the wooden pedestrian gate into the wood** and continue past the footpath on the right to a boardwalk. Go over the first boardwalk and straight across the track onto a second boardwalk and follow the footpath through the woods to a wooden kissing gate.
53. **Go through the gate** and follow the footpath straight on across the field, staying below the trees in the field to a stile into a wood. Go over and follow the path through the wood to a metal pedestrian gate.
54. **Go through the gate into a field and follow the hedge** on the right to a metal pedestrian gate out onto a minor road.
55. **At the road turn left and follow it uphill** for approx 427 yards/390 metres.
56. **Turn right along a bridleway.** Follow it along a track for approx 0.7 miles/1.2km ignoring all side turnings until you come to a path junction.
57. **At the junction turn right along the footpath towards Sidbury** and follow it as it curves right and then left to go steeply down through the woods to a narrow footbridge and metal pedestrian gate into the fields.
58. **Go through the gate and head straight down** through the field to a metal pedestrian gate. Follow the hedge on the right to cross a ditch and go through a gate on the right.
59. **After the gate bear left down through the next field** to the left side of the barns and then right to steps and a wooden kissing gate onto a minor road. Turn right along the road.
60. **Turn left in front of the farm and follow the road** straight on down over a bridge and up into Sidbury.