



East Devon
National
Landscape

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

Route Summary

Starting from Sidbury and climbing up through the hidden woodlands of the Roncombe Valley and Knapp Copse Local Nature Reserve, this section of the route reaches its 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 along quiet country lanes through the historic villages of Church Green, Farway and Northleigh to walk through peaceful meadows alongside the River Coly to the market town of Colyton

Start: Sidbury

End: Station Road near Umborne Bridge, Colyton

Distance: 12.1 miles/19.5km

Estimated time: 5 hours 45 minutes

Difficulty: Category 4

Nearest postcode: EX10 0SD **What Three Words:** ///clef.support.enthused

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 2 (36.3%) for 87 yards/80 metres and one descent of approximately 1 in 5 (17%) for 109 yards/100 metres.

Narrowest path width: 45cm

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

Other useful information:

Dogs: Welcome under close control.

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

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

A landscape of history

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.

The route passes through Money Acre Cross at the top of the hill to the east of the village of Church Green where it leaves Farway Plantation. 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 of St Michaels and All Angels Church at Church Green. Built in the Norman period the church underwent changes in the 14th, 15th and 17th centuries before being rebuilt in 1877. The oldest part is a 12th century arcade.

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.

Important Wildlife

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.

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

Directions:

1. **Go down Bridge Street and over road bridge** ignoring right turn and heading straight on to a T-junction.
2. **Turn right and then, immediately after the farm, turn left** onto a footpath going through a wooden kissing gate and up steps. Bear around to the left and follow the path to the top left corner of the field.
3. **Go through the metal field gate and over the ditch** and follow the hedge on the left up to a metal pedestrian gate. Go through and head straight on up the field to the woods.
4. **Go through a metal pedestrian gate** and over a narrow footbridge and follow the footpath steeply up through the woods.
5. **When the footpath flattens out turn right** and follow it around to the left to a T-junction. Turn left along the bridleway and follow it for approx 0.7 miles/1.2km to a minor road.
6. **Turn left and follow the road downhill** for approx 427 yards/390 metres.
7. **Turn right through a metal pedestrian gate onto a footpath** opposite Hatway Cottage. Follow the hedge on the left to another metal pedestrian gate into a wood.
8. **Go through the gate and follow the footpath** through the woods and over a stile into a field. Continue straight on to the left of the trees and go through a wooden kissing gate into a wood.
9. **Follow the path straight on going over a boardwalk** and straight across a track onto a second boardwalk. Continue past a footpath on your left.
10. **Go through a wooden pedestrian gate** and continue straight on along the path.
11. **Go straight across the track and follow the footpath** across the field to a 2 in 1 gate into the woods. Follow the path uphill and through a wooden field gate then around to the right to a minor road.

12. **Go over the stile, turn left** and follow the road for a short distance.
13. **Turn left through a metal gate onto a bridleway** through fields and head diagonally right to the right of a copse. Continue diagonally downhill into a wood and follow the bridleway as it swings left down to a wooden field gate.
14. **Go through the gate into an enclosed track.** Follow it downhill and around to the right and through a wooden field gate into a yard.
15. **Turn left through a gate and over a bridge** and continue past the house on your right to the road. Turn right.
16. **Follow the road for approx 317 yards/290 metres.**
17. **Just before the bridge turn left** onto a bridleway along the drive to Lower Knapp Farm.
18. **Walk straight through between the holiday cottages** and follow the bridleway around to the right after the swimming pool building. Go over a bridge and out through a metal gate onto a track.
19. **Follow the bridleway up through Knapp Copse** ignoring all side turnings until you come to a metal bridleway gate and a T-junction of tracks.
20. **Go through the gate and turn right along the track,** passing the barns and continuing to the road.
21. **Go through the gate and TAKE CARE crossing** straight cross onto a bridleway. Follow the path straight on and then around to the right and then left between fields to a path junction.
22. **Go through the gap to a path junction and turn left.** Follow the track for a short distance before turning right along the bridleway.
23. **At the track junction turn left and follow the main track** to a parking area alongside a road.
24. **Go through a gap to the road and TAKE CARE** crossing diagonally left onto a minor road to Farway and Northleigh.
25. **Follow the road downhill for approx 0.8 miles/1.3km** to Church Green.
26. **Turn right opposite the church and follow the road downhill** and over a bridge. Immediately after the bridge turn left through a 2 in 1 gate onto a footpath through fields.
27. **Follow the hedge on the left for a short distance** then turn left through a gateway into a second field. Head straight on aiming for a gateway in the far left corner. Go through into a third field and follow the boundary on the left to a footbridge on the left.
28. **Go over the footbridge and through a wooden pedestrian gate** and follow the footpath around to the right to another wooden pedestrian gate. Go through and

straight across a track and through a wooden kissing gate. Continue to follow the path parallel with the fence on the right to a footbridge.

29. **Cross the footbridge and go through a metal pedestrian gate.** Head straight on up the field aiming to the left of the houses.
30. **Go through a metal pedestrian gate to a minor road** and turn left and then immediately right towards Farway and Northleigh.
31. **Follow the road around to the left at the next junction** then turn left to Netherton at Farway Cross.
32. **Cross the footbridge alongside the ford** and continue to the next junction.
33. **Follow the road around to the right past Netherton Hall.** After approx 350 yards/320 metres turn left onto a footpath through fields.
34. **Go over the stile and follow the footpath parallel with the hedge** on the left. After a short distance, head diagonally right to a footbridge. Cross the bridge and head diagonally left to a stile in the top left corner of the field.
35. **Go diagonally left across the road,** up the steps and over a stile into a field. Turn left and follow the footpath alongside the hedge on the left up to a metal pedestrian gate on the left.
36. **Go through and head straight on across the field** to a metal field gate. Go through and follow the track to the road.
37. **Turn right and follow the road downhill towards Northleigh.** Ignore the first footpath on the left and turn left along the second footpath following it between the houses to the church.
38. **At the path junction turn right to a minor road and turn left.**
39. **At the road junction continue around to the right towards Colyton.** Go over the bridge and follow the road up to the cross.
40. **Go straight over at Farwood Cross towards Colyton.**
41. **At the next road junction continue towards Colyton.** Cross a bridge and turn right through a wooden kissing gate onto a footpath through fields immediately afterwards.
42. **Continue straight on parallel with the river** heading towards the corner of a hedge on the left. Walk alongside the hedge on the left to the corner of the field and turn left over a footbridge and through a gate.
43. **Bear right and follow the fence and river on the right** around the edge of the field before heading diagonally left across the field to a metal pedestrian gate.
44. **Go through the gate and follow the path left** up a bank into another field. Turn right and continue parallel with the river to a wooden pedestrian gate.

45. **Go through the gate, over a narrow footbridge** and head straight across the next field to another footbridge and wooden pedestrian gate.
46. **Go through the gate and bear right to follow the footpath** alongside the river and around the edge of the field to a wooden pedestrian gate.
47. **Go through the gate, over the footbridge** and up the slope into the next field. Turn right and continue to follow the footpath along the riverside edge of the field to the next gated footbridge.
48. **Go over the bridge and bear right to continue to follow the river.** In spring and summer look out for sand martins in the exposed river bank.
49. **Cross the track and go past the footbridge** and bear left away from the river heading towards the farm and a gated footbridge. Cross and follow the path as it bears around to the right on a slight rise to another footbridge and metal pedestrian gate.
50. **Go over the footbridge and follow the footpath straight on** and then around to the right heading just right of the right hand oak tree.
51. **Go through a metal pedestrian gate** and over another narrow footbridge and continue straight on.
52. **Go through another metal pedestrian gate** and follow the footpath through the wood. Go past a footbridge and continue alongside the river to a wooden pedestrian gate.
53. **Follow the hedge on the left and then head straight on**, then alongside the hedge on the left again. When it swings left for a second time head straight on across the field to a gated footbridge.
54. **Go over the footbridge and bear right to follow the river** to a wooden kissing gate on the right. Go through and follow the path around to the left and through trees alongside the river to a second wooden kissing gate.
55. **Go through the gate and continue to follow the riverside path** to another wooden kissing gate out onto a road.
56. **Turn right and follow the road over the bridge.** Take the first left along Vicarage Street then the first left into Rosemary Lane.
57. **Continue, ignoring all side turnings**, to the junction with Dolphin Street and turn left.
58. **Just before the bridge turn right along River Mews.**