



EAST DEVON WAY LINK ROUTE - FARWAY TO BRANSCOMBE

Route Summary

This route takes you through a range of wildlife-rich habitats including broadleaved woodlands and meadows as you leave the East Devon Way in the village of Farway and make your way in a southerly direction to the Jurassic coast at Branscombe Beach. On the way you will pass Blackbury Camp Iron Age Hill Fort hidden among the woods. Built during the 4th century, it still has a moat which can fill with water in wet weather. Shortly afterwards you will start dropping down towards the picturesque village of Branscombe with its National Trust restored mill and working thatched forge.

Sections of this route have a wonderful remote feel about them, where you might be lucky enough to hear the eerie bark of a roe buck or glimpse a fox crossing your path. The flat bridleway sections of the route across the top (between Ball Lane and the road past Blackbury Camp) can be very wet and muddy in winter, making this more of a seasonal route to enjoy during the summer months.

Start: The disused petrol pumps, Farway

End: The Sea Shanty, Branscombe Beach

Distance: 7.3 miles/11.8km

Estimated time: 3 hours 34 minutes

Difficulty: Category 4

Nearest postcode: EX24 6DF **What Three Words:** ///disclose.warned.notices

Access: Category 4 - Some sections are not accessible to mobility vehicles and buggies/pushchairs due to a stile, kissing gate, steps and narrow footbridges.

Terrain: Tarmac, stony tracks and paths, grass, tree roots and mud.

Field furniture: 20 gates, 1 kissing gate, 1 stile, 4 footbridges and 18 steps.

Total ascent: 988ft (301m)

Maximum gradient: 1 in 6 (16.8%) ascent for approx 60 metres and 1 in 5 (20%) descent for approx 60 metres.

Narrowest path width: 50cm

Map: OS Explorer 115 Exmouth & Sidmouth

Other useful information:

Dogs: Welcome under close control.

Refreshments: There is a cafe close to the route before Blackberry Camp, a cafe in Branscombe and a cafe on the beach at the end.

Highlights: The chance to explore a variety of peaceful wildlife-rich habitats including grassland, broadleaved woodland and the Jurassic Coastline. The Iron Age hill fort at Blackbury Camp. The working thatched forge and restored mill at Branscombe.

A landscape of history

Blackbury Camp is an oval hill fort maintained by English Heritage and sited close to the junction of two ancient tracks. It has a rampart 10 ft/3 metres high and 33 ft/10 metres wide. Now hidden in thick woodland, it's difficult to imagine how it was in earlier times.

Branscombe has two claims to fame as it is widely considered to be the longest village in the country with what is believed to be the oldest thatched working forge in the country. The National Trust has also renovated the mill, which is now in working order again.

Important wildlife

The area is home to a wide variety of wildlife including many birds. Look out for woodland birds inland, including goldcrests, wrens, tits and finches gulls and for gannets and cormorants at the coast. Overhead you may see ravens and buzzards. If you're lucky you may also hear and see a roe buck or catch a glimpse of a fox. The area is also important for bats with six different species being recorded, including the rare Greater Horseshoe bat.

Directions:

1. **Starting with your back to the Farway disused petrol pumps**, turn right and then almost immediately right again up Ball Lane.
2. **Ignore the right turn and follow the road uphill** to a bridleway on your left into woodland.
3. **Turn left up the bridleway and then, after a short distance**, turn right off the track and follow the bridleway steeply uphill to a metal field gate.
4. **At the top of the fenced path, go through the metal field gate** on the left. Follow the path alongside the fence on the left, then bear diagonally right into the field and follow the path around to the left, heading for a gateway through a wire fence in the centre of the field.

5. **Go through the gate and bear diagonally right towards the corner** of the fence on the right. Continue alongside the fence on the right to a wooden bridleway gate.
6. **Go through the gate and follow the track to a minor road.** Go straight across and follow the bridleway alongside the fence on the right to a tarmac drive. This section can be very wet in the winter months.
7. **Go straight across the drive and continue to follow the bridleway** alongside the fence on the right to a bridleway junction. This section can also be very wet in the winter months.
8. **Turn left and follow the bridleway behind Blackbury Honey Farm to a minor road.**
9. **At the road turn left and follow it past Blackbury Camp Hill Fort.**
10. **Continue straight on at the next junction** and after approx 820 yards/750 metres turn right onto a footpath.
11. **Go down some steps, over a footbridge,** through a metal pedestrian gate and down more steps and follow the footpath down through the woods.
12. **Go through another metal pedestrian gate** and continue to follow the waymarked footpath down to a track. Turn right along the track following it down past a pond and up the other side.
13. **Where the track divides, turn left** and follow the footpath along the track to Borcombe Farm.
14. **Go through a gate and past the buildings on your right.** Where the track divides, turn right up a footpath, going through another gate and continuing uphill past the buildings on your right.
15. **Follow the footpath uphill through a field** and over a footbridge on the right. After the bridge turn left and continue uphill to a metal pedestrian gate.
16. **Go through the gate and follow the hedge** on the left to the corner of the field and a field gate on your left.
17. **Go through the gate and follow the hedge** on the right to a metal kissing gate out onto the verge of the A3052.
18. **Go through the gate and turn right along the verge for a short distance.** TAKE CARE crossing the road to another footpath.
19. **Go over a stile and head diagonally right across the field to a field gate.** Go through and continue diagonally left down through the field to a gate onto a track.
20. **Go through the gate and follow the track down to a junction.** Turn right for a short distance, passing a cattle grid. Turn left through a wooden pedestrian gate and follow a footpath down steps. Turn right and follow the path down and around to the left behind a house.

21. **Follow the footpath down through the woods**, keeping right at the junctions until you come to a shed and a house. Leave both on the left and continue down the drive.
22. **Continue straight on to a junction.**
23. **Turn right downhill and follow the road down** and up the other side to Hole House, ignoring the footpaths to the right and left.
24. **At the junction by Hole House turn left along the track** for a short distance and then take the bridleway up to your right through the woods.
25. **At the road junction turn left and follow the road down** past two cattle grids to the school.
26. **Turn left through a pedestrian gate opposite the school** and follow the fenced path down to a car park.
27. **Turn right across the car park to the road.** Turn left and then after a short distance turn right along Mill Lane - signed to Branscombe Mouth and Coast Path.
28. **Follow the lane to the end and go straight on** along the footpath to Branscombe Mouth.
29. **Continue to follow the footpath**, keeping right at the two footpath junctions until you arrive at the Sea Shanty and Branscombe Beach.
30. **From here you can:**

Turn left along the South West Coast Path for Beer.

Turn right along the South West Coast Path for Sidmouth.