

6 Circular Walks in the north eastern Blackdown Hills

Walk 2 – Churchstanton, Burnworthy and Stapley

This route is constantly undulating and is on footpaths, lanes and then back onto footpaths. The Blackdown Hills scenery is excellent throughout.

Park in the lay-by opposite Churchstanton church. Explorer map 128.

Grid Ref: ST 196 145. 5 miles, 8 kilometres.

From the lay-by head left, down the road and turn right at the fork. After about 250 yards, as the roadside woods give way to a field, look for a little bridge on the left across the ditch to give access to a footpath. Keep the hedge on your left down through fields to a gate. Stay ahead on the tarmac drive towards the right hand side of the house. Along here you cross the infant river Culm before heading up a short gravel path to a footpath up through the trees.

On emerging from the trees cross a stile and keep to the right hand side of the field. Look for a stile on your right. Walk up this field to the far end, through the gate and then cross the next small field. Follow the path up through the trees beside a pheasant pen fence. Veer left to reach a farm track which brings you to Burnworthy. As you approach the near corner of the buildings and perimeter fence bear left. After about 70 yards turn left again, so that the farm buildings are now behind you. You should have a hedge on your right and some woodland up ahead. As you enter the woods, bear left and follow this path, which soon opens out to a field. Keep ahead, with the field on your left until you come to a lane. Turn right.

A little way beyond the bend, go through a kissing gate on the left, into Ringwood Nature Reserve. Turn immediately right, into the field and walk down the left hand edge of this and the next one. Keep ahead through a little scrubby wood until you come into another field. Here you must veer right, diagonally down to the Wiltown Valley stream, where you cross from Somerset into Devon. Walk ahead, with a pond on your left and up through the trees, ignoring left forks. Proceed over little plank bridges and up some simple steps to a small field, which you cross uphill to a gate onto the road.

Turn left. The next mile or so is on quiet lanes. On your right is Applehayes, connected with the Camden artists. Enjoy the lovely scenery as you drop down to cross the Culm again and re-enter Somerset. It's now uphill past Brimley Cottage to a T-junction, where you turn right. Soon afterwards, turn left and continue uphill until you reach Craighend Cottage. Beside the gate, follow the footpath sign through the yard. Cross a stile and turn left to walk along the top of two fields to a metal gate. Stay ahead along the clear track to the far corner of this field and head down through the farmyard to a road.

You are now in Stapley, where once a silk mill employed over a hundred people. Turn left and after a short distance, left again into Grabham Farm. The path leads to the right of the house and uphill to a choice of gates. Go through the second on the right and walk between hedges to a field. Keeping the hedge on your left, look for a gate and stile to cross into the adjacent field. Continue on a similar line to an access midway along the opposite hedge boundary. Follow the waymark diagonally left across the next field to a double stile where you enter the final field. The footpath stays along the edge of this one, with the hedge on your right. When you reach the corner turn left, always keeping the hedge on your right. You may see the tower of Churchstanton church over to the right. At the road, turn right to reach it.

