

6 Circular Walks in the north eastern Blackdown Hills

Walk 3 – Castle Neroche and Curland

From Castle Neroche the route is downhill all the way to Curland. The second half then takes you steadily back up to the height of around 850 feet above sea level where you began. A particularly good walk in the bluebell season.

Park at the Castle Neroche car park, which is shown by a sign off the Staple Hill to Chard road. Explorer map 128. Grid Ref: ST 274 157.

4 miles, 6½ kilometres

Leave the car park, following the waymarked Herepath Trail path into the woods and turn right onto the track along the top of the woods. There is a very steep drop on your left. The path soon bends to the left and takes you sharply downhill. The red waymarks and the Neroche Herepath and Millennium Walk signs show you the way. Join a wider path and keep ahead to a gate. Continue straight ahead: your path is signed for Curry Mallet Drove.

You are on the edge of the forest, with fields on your right. Further on, the fields and forest seem to swap sides. Ignore a wide track on the left. Eventually there is a short section where the woods are on both sides of the path. As you step clear of the woods, turn left on a wide track. It soon bends right, but you keep straight ahead. As you progress, there is a good view on the left to the hill where you started and a pleasant open view to your right. The wide drove is easy to follow and leads you to a road where you turn left.

Walk through Curland village, keeping to the left of the little triangle of green by the old post office. Leave the village and just beyond a turning to the left, there is a footpath sign and a stile. Walk up through two fields with the hedge on your right. At the top of the second field, veer slightly left to a stile. Now follow the hedge on your left through two more fields. There is a good view all round which includes the handsome church tower at Staple Fitzpaine to your right. At the top of the second field look for a narrow stile and follow the hedge round to the right. It leads to a track beside the tiny and now redundant church of All Saints, converted to a dwelling.

On reaching the road, turn left. Cross the turning to the left and just a few yards beyond, turn onto the bridleway through a gate. This stony track takes you steadily uphill. Cross a wide track and keep heading upwards. At the top cross a little grassy area on the left and don't miss the splendid view across Taunton Vale to the Quantocks. Over to your right, you can trace some of the ramparts of the old Iron Age hill fort before returning to the car park where you started.

