

Three hidden villages

Distance - 12 miles Map: OS Explorer 115. Exmouth & Sidmouth

Walk 12

In common with most other walks, this one includes a fair amount of road walking. It's inevitable. That's how the local terrain is. However, most of the road work is on quiet lanes, and there are sections of woodland at Farway Hill and Colwell.

The attractions of course are the trio of "hidden villages", Northleigh, Farway and Church Green. Save this until the weather favourable and allocate a full day.

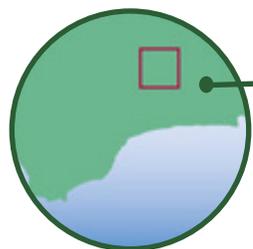
Start/car parking - HPB Complex

It would be a great help to future walkers if you could record any inaccuracies you come across during this walk and report them to reception so that appropriate amendments can be made.

Thank you. Happy walking!



HPB Lower Knapp



WALK

Leave the HPB complex by the gate near the swimming pool. Ignore the left turn, and where the path divides take the right fork (East Devon Way) that soon becomes a metalled surface and rises steeply.

Reaching some farm outbuildings, turn right then cross the busy main road (extra careful – fast cars) to walk along a pebbled path. The path wriggles through a copse and leads to a three-way junction. Take the left option, following the blue arrow waymark into the woodland. Search for a waymark on the left (150 yds) indicating a right turn, then follow a wide track, running between an avenue of trees.

Entering a clearing, turn left, and left again when reaching a road. Follow the road (2 miles) to a junction and turn right, passing Honiton Golf Club. Keeping on the road turn left (Offwell and Axminster) and proceed towards a sharp left hand bend. At that point depart from the road to enter a field on the right (signpost), walking close to the right hand boundary. Do the same in the next field, but after a few paces veer right, pass through a gateway and veer left, to pass the farm buildings and attendant "attractions". **Careful navigation is needed while passing through Colwell Wood. It's easy to become disorientated. Follow the directions assiduously. Be vigilant. Duration? Just over one mile.**

Leaving the farm behind enter a bridleway on the right. This curves right soon after to enter a pleasant woodland setting (Colwell Wood). At a junction veer left, descending along a track that twists and turns, but remains evident.

Arriving at a major junction (Offwell woods left. Private woods. No entry, right) continue straight on, keeping to the bridleway, then 50 yds before reaching a house, turn right (footpath sign) and cross Offwell Brook (two bridges), turning left immediately (signpost).

The path rises steadily between the tall Pine trees. Turn left at a waymark, then left again when a choice of paths is encountered. Leaving the woods behind maintain the previous line, between a double row of trees. Cross a footbridge, and a few yards ahead pass through a gate on the right and turn left along a driveway, passing the houses to join a road. Turn right – uphill. A steep climb follows.

At a road junction turn left, then turn right at a crossroads to commence the long descent to Northleigh. (Note the odd, misspelt order, affixed to a gate at the first bend).

Northleigh contains some spectacular residences. Some unusual notices too. Riverside Cottage warns against rats and dogs.

Follow the road beyond the village hall to reach a junction. Turn right, ascending towards the church (St. Giles). Approach the church then enter a narrow, green lane on the left. Turn right along the road, (en-route to Farway) then immediately before reaching some houses, swing left, into an obvious green lane. Cross the centre of the ensuing field and pass through the facing gate. Keep close to the right hand boundary, seeking an exit stile sunken below some steps.



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Cross the road to a stile, then proceed diagonally across the field towards a footbridge, where after a left turn leads to an exit stile concealed in the distant corner.

Turn right along the road to enter the peaceful hamlet of Farway, passing Netherton Hall, recently converted into flats. Turn left at the junction, walking downhill. Note the waterwheel at the former watermill on the left.

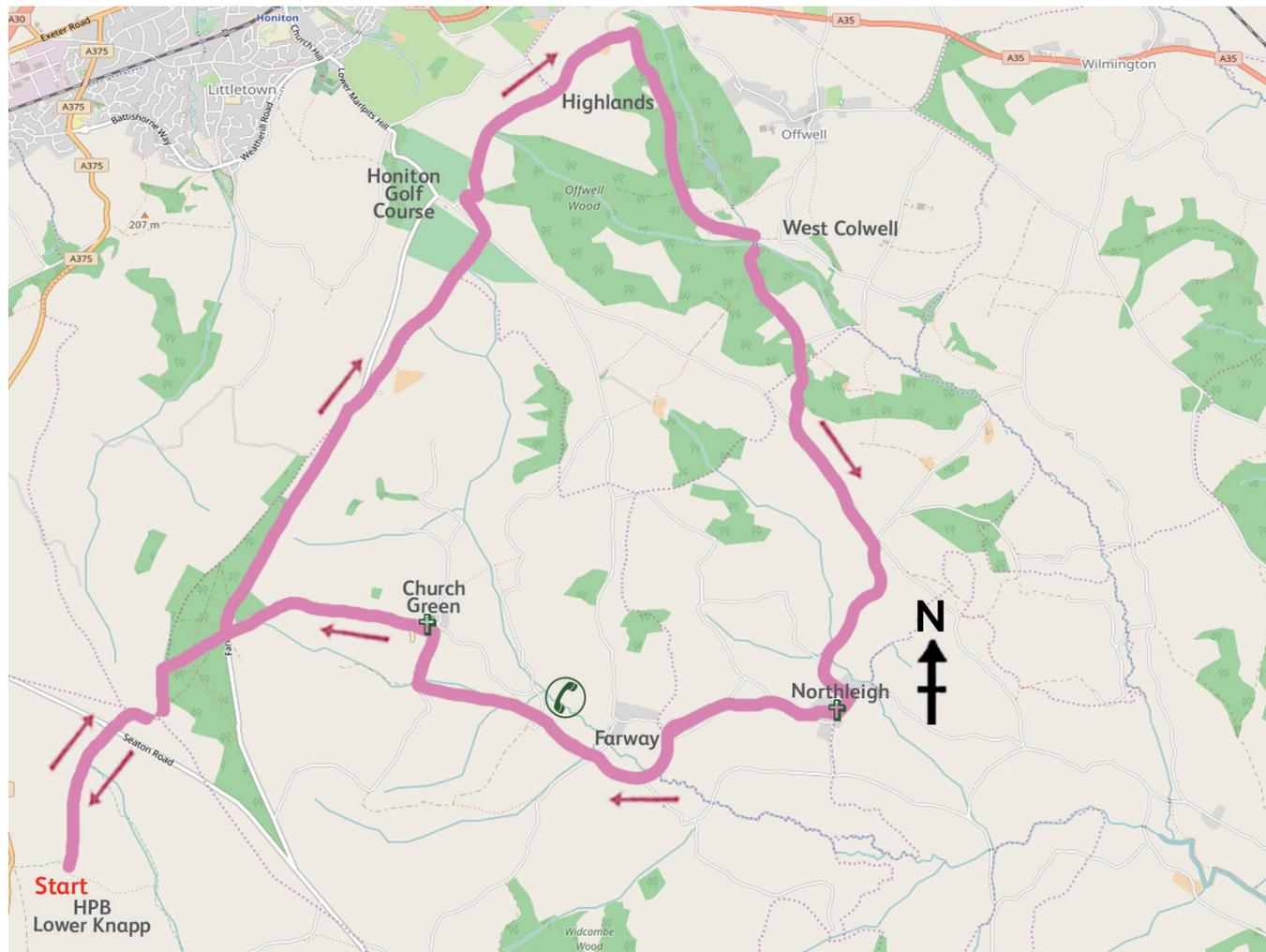
Cross a ford, then veer right at the staggered junction (Honiton) to pass the preserved petrol pumps. Proceed along the road to reach a junction (dead end to left) then hop over the stile hidden behind the telephone box (2002). Cross the field and a footbridge, then veer diagonally left, using the telegraph poles as guides. Cross two adjacent stiles then 20 paces farther on swing left, to cross a concealed footbridge.

Turn right, crossing a long field towards the exit gate. Turn right along the road to enter the last of the three villages, Church Green and St. Michael's church.

It's somewhat confusing hereabouts because the village is called Church Green, but the school and church are affiliated to Farway.

Turn left at the crossroads and begin the long, energy-sapping ascent from the village towards the main road, almost a mile away. Spectacular retrospective views may compensate?

At the summit cross the main road, re-enter the woodland and retrace earlier footsteps for the 1¼ mile return to your accommodation.



— - Walk — - A35 — - A375

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