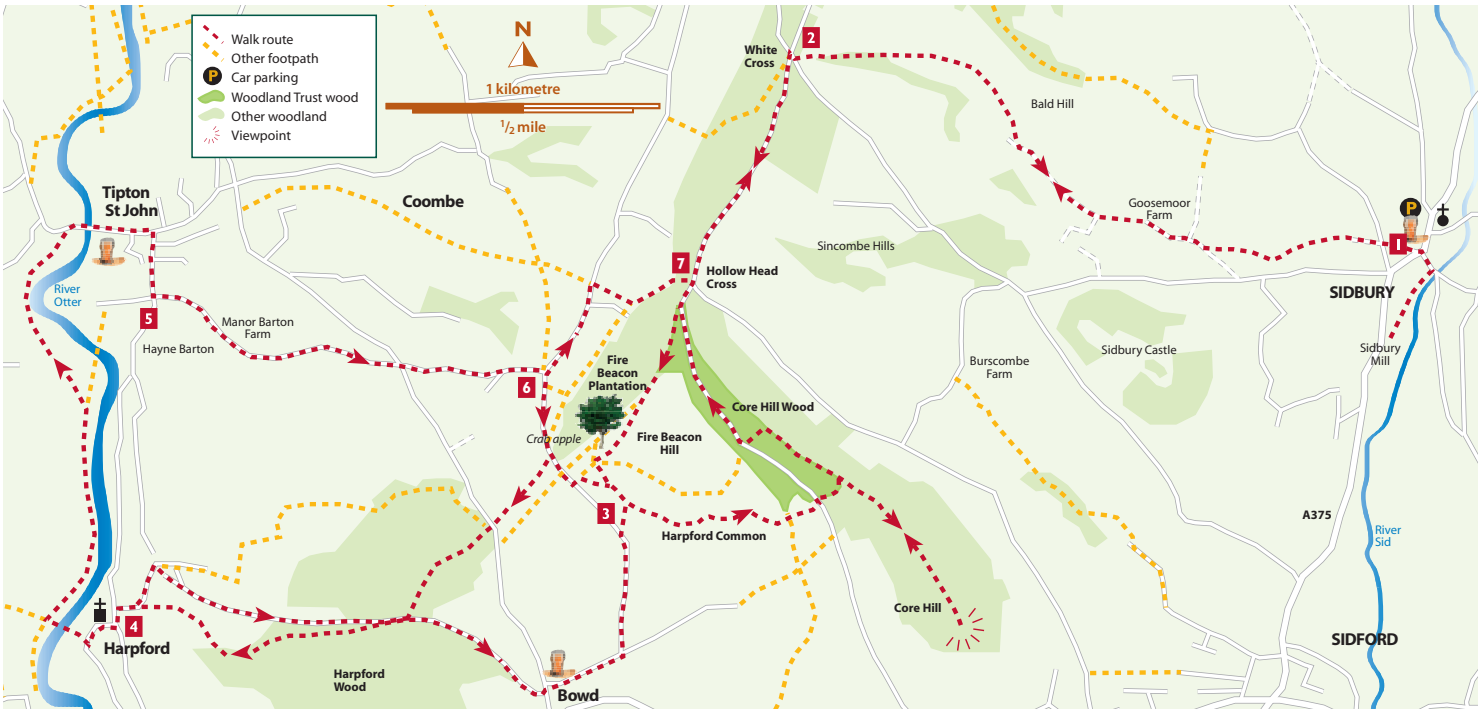


Fire Beacon Hill and Core Hill Wood

3 TO 11½ MILES, DEPENDING ON SHORT CUTS
1½ TO 6 HOURS
MODERATE (WITH STEEP SECTIONS)

1 START

From Sidbury, take lane signposted to White Cross, just opposite red telephone box. After about 30 metres go over crossroads, through field gate and past corrugated-iron shed on L. This is arable land so keep to right-hand field margin. Continue to stile and across narrow field of rough pasture. Go over next stile on to tarmac lane and turn R over bridge. Keep L and go up gravel track past Goosemoor Farm, through timber gate ahead and up green lane. (Note views of Sidbury Castle to L.) At top of hill leave lane and cross arable land. Follow East Devon Way (EDW) purple-foxglove waymarkers to road at White Cross.

2 1½ MILES

Cross road and go along track through beech woodland, still following EDW. Just beyond where track emerges at Hollow Head Cross, fork off to R on to Fire Beacon Hill. On the heath is an information panel on your L. Explore the area using firebreaks and paths, visit triangulation point and enjoy the views, then return to EDW. On R note a splendid crab-apple tree standing alone. Make your way down steep, narrow path to L, being careful not to slip on loose fist-sized flint stones.

3 2½ MILES

At junction you have a choice of routes. For short cut continue straight on following the bottom of slope. R is to a stone driveway and on to road to the thatched 17th-century Bowd Inn (excellent children's play area). Or, to continue, take sharp R down to lane, turn R, then immediately L down steep steps to stile. Go down slope and to the R over second stile to large oak at bottom of hill. Climb over stile and cross busy road into Harpford Wood. Take EDW to L. Pass beneath disused railway line through brick bridge. Opposite stream is a tunnel taking water under the embankment. Pathway ends at tarmac road.

4 4 MILES

Either turn R, up and over old railway, R again on to line, turn L and follow line back to the Bowd Inn. Or turn L on tarmac road, L again opposite Harpford church, then R and R again at bottom of lane, over stile and over River Otter footbridge. Turn R and follow river upstream to Tipton St John. Once on road in Tipton St John turn R back over River Otter and into village. Turn R then L up Hayne Road opposite new brick houses.

5 5½ MILES

Pass farm and go up green lane, cross busy road and continue up lane, until you emerge on minor road.

6 6¾ MILES

Either turn L on to road and then R up footpath back to Hollow Head Cross. Or turn R back to foot of Fire Beacon Hill and take woodland walk along base of hill towards Core Hill Wood. The path is narrow but not too difficult. It comes out in a field and stile into lane is directly opposite. Turn L and enter Core Hill Wood car park, go R through squeeze gap and take path up to huge beeches. Go R up sandy bank and take pathway along ridge terminating at viewpoint and bench overlooking Sidford. Retrace your steps and, remaining on ridge, continue up sandy banks towards edge of beacon. Go L and then R and join track alongside heath and back to Hollow Head Cross.

7 9¾ MILES

Follow EDW to White Cross and back down EDW to Sidbury.

TERRAIN

The majority of the route is easy walking, fairly level once on top of the ridge but with occasional short, steep sections. Some of the paths up to Fire Beacon Hill are covered in loose, uneven flint stones; other parts of the walk are green lanes used by livestock so will be muddy at times.

PARKING

Free car parks at White Cross (grid reference SY115924), Sidbury Parish Rooms (grid reference SY138918) and the Woodland Trust's Core Hill Wood (grid reference SY118908), where space is limited.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The 52A from Exeter to Seaton and the Jurassic Coast X53 both stop at Waitrose on the A3052 at Middle Woolbrook (grid reference SY121897) and at the Bowd Inn (grid reference SY107900). The 52B from Sidmouth to Honiton stops at Sidbury (grid reference SY138917). For timetable enquiries, call Traveline on 0870 608 2608, ring 01803 664500 or visit www.stagecoachbus.com

REFRESHMENTS

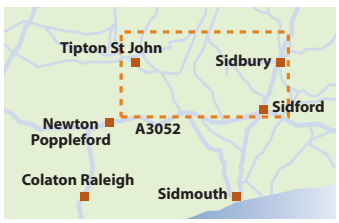
The Bowd Inn (grid reference SY107900; telephone 01395 513328).
The Red Lion Inn, Sidbury (grid reference SY139917; telephone 01395 597313).
Sidbury Watermill and Kingfisher Gallery (grid reference SY137913; telephone 01395 597700).
The Golden Lion, Tipton St John (grid reference SY092918; telephone 01404 812881).

ACCOMMODATION AND TOURIST INFORMATION

Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre, Ham Lane, Sidmouth (telephone 01395 516441 or visit www.sidmouth.ws).
Nearest youth hostel is in Beer (telephone 0870 770 5690).

MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 115, Landranger 192 (visit www.woodland-trust.org.uk/woods to buy online).

OTHER WOODS TO VISIT

See the Our Woods section on the Trust's website at www.woodland-trust.org.uk or the *Exploring Woodland* guide for Southwest England. Further information also at www.devon.gov.uk