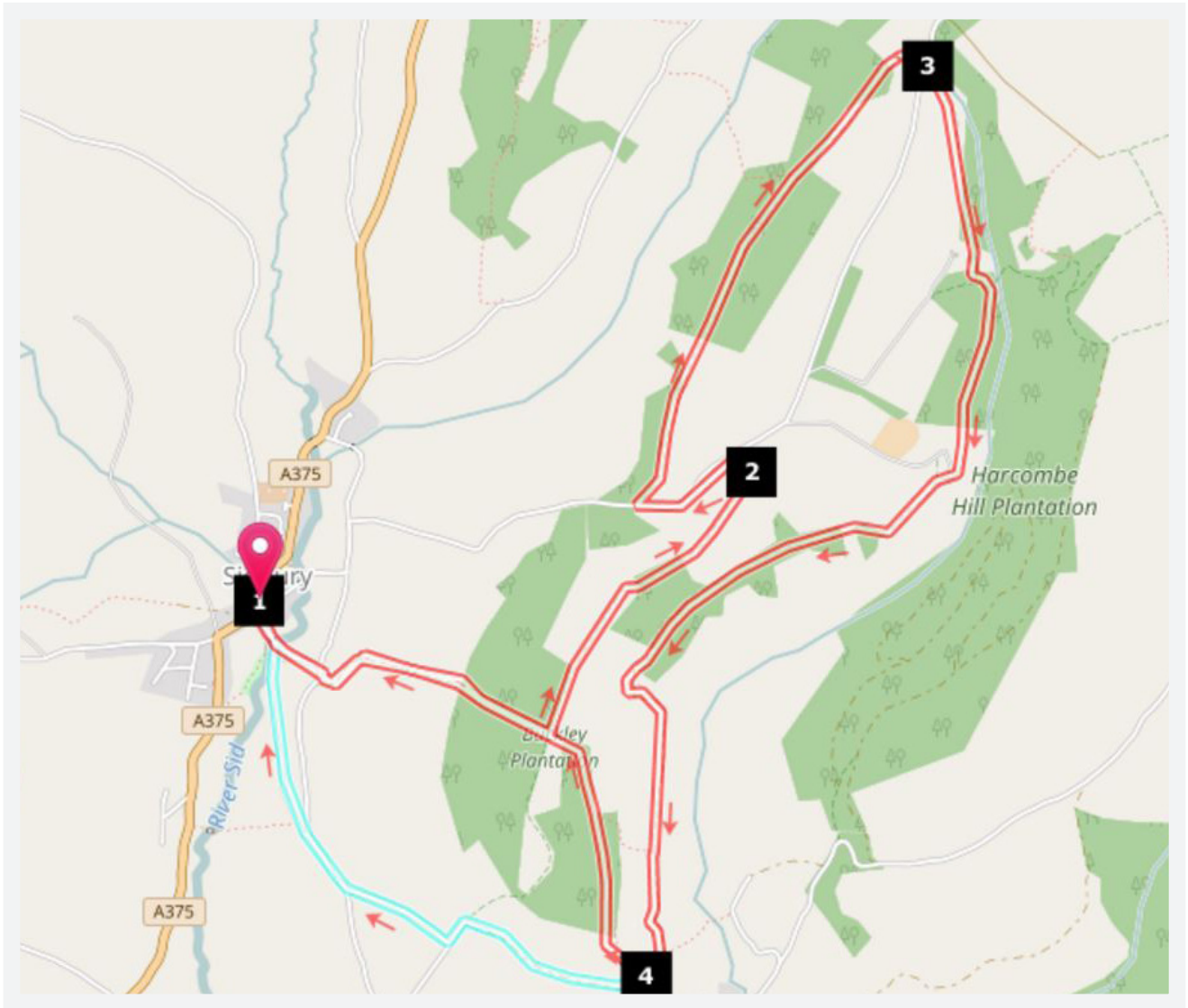
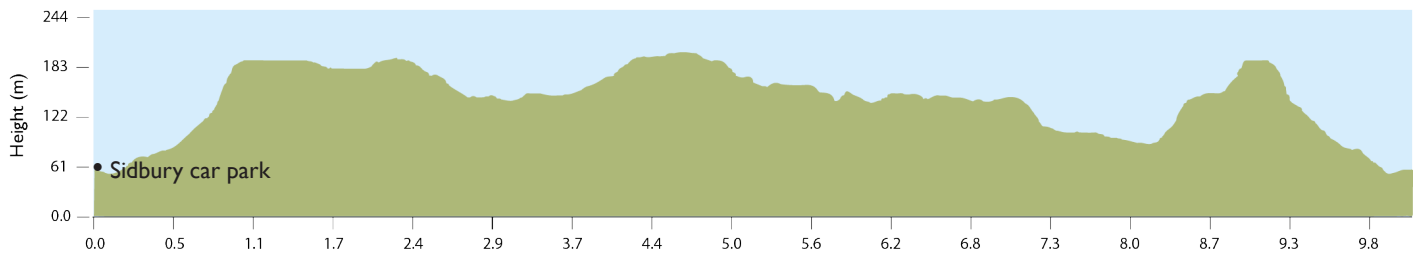


Circular 7

Sidbury, Harcombe & Sweetcombe Circular



Difficulty: Moderate
Walking time: 3 hours 10 minutes
Length: 10.2km / 6.3mi



Distance 10.14 km Ascent 386m Descent 386m

Circular Route 7

Sidbury, Harcombe & Sweetcombe Circular



Difficulty: Moderate

Walking time: 3 hours 10 minutes

Length: 10.2km / 6.3mi

Start location: Sidbury car park.

Route Summary: A circular walk partly on the East Devon Way taking in the hills and valleys around Sidbury, Harcombe and Sweetcombe. There is an abundance of wildlife and it is a rich habitat for wild flowers.

Description

[1] The walk starts at Sidbury free Car Park, follow the A375 south past the church, turn left and join the East Devon Way down Bridge Street. Cross the first Mill Race, then the River Sid, and on up to the T junction. Turn right and just after the farmyard cross the stile on the left. Go to the top left of the paddock, entering the field beyond by a tiny stream, it can be muddy. Continue straight up along the line of the old hedge to the top of the field.

Enter the wood at a bar stile and plank bridge and continue up the very steep footpath, crossing two tracks until you reach the level hilltop. At the bridleway junction turn left, north easterly, and follow the Green Lane track to a road at Hatway Hill.

St Giles Church is one of the most interesting in the County. There is a Saxon crypt, and a rare example of Norman diaper work can be seen on the outside of the east wall.

Green Lane track follows the watershed between Sweetcombe, Roncombe and Sid Valleys.

[2] Turn left down the hill for a quarter of a mile and take the footpath on the right, opposite Hatway Cottage (SY151920). Follow the track through fields until you enter the woodland known as Tailmoor Coppice. The path is on a spring line

with some very wet patches. Continue across the field and follow the path above Mincombe Wood until it reaches the road to the south of Oaklands bungalow (SY160933). Leave the East Devon Way and cross the road onto a broad track. As a large farm comes into view, fork right off the track and follow the fence line and elevated path to the right of the farm.

Clear views of the characteristic "dissected plateau" with the Sid and Roncombe Valleys joining, and divided by Pen Hill.

Sidbury nestles further down the valley and Sand House "ancient seat of the Sands, Ashleys and Huyshe", lies to the front.

[3] After passing farm continue along the track to a gate on the left, the path enters a wood and goes along its upper edge almost parallel with the track which continues to Higher Sweetcombe Farm. On leaving the wood it bears slightly down left, following the line of a former hedge bank and slightly below it. Cross the stile and footbridge and turn left onto a steep track in a wooded area.

Go down a short distance then take the path branching off to the right, through the conifer wood. The path continues southwards through the conifer wood for three quarters of a mile before reaching Lower Sweetcombe Farmhouse. Just before Lower Sweetcombe Farm (SY160921), the track turns right-left round the upper side of the yard and house. Keep going south westwards. Do not take the track to the right which goes to the Sidbury road.

Continue on a broad track in about two hundred yards the path swings to the right through a gate and skirts to the right of a coppice before passing through a gate and joining an old track on the left. Follow the track along the bottom of the field, through a gate into a stretch of woodland.

Circular Route 7

Sidbury, Harcombe & Sweetcombe Circular cont.



Turn to the right and follow the short stretch of fence up to the edge of the field. Keep walking for a hundred yards or so, along the edge and pass through another gate in the corner of the field next to the pheasant rearing pen. The bridleway follows the path above White Hill Coppice along the contour and through some wilder countryside.

The path has been running parallel to Green Lane at the top of the slope, which was walked earlier. After passing along the bottom of a steep field of bracken, scrub and gorse for 250 yards, you reach a diverted section which avoids a quagmire. Pass through the gate at the top of the slope, drop down to the left and at the end of the track head for the stile below and follow the track downhill.

At the bottom turn right to join Northground Lane (SY151913). The bridleway goes gently downhill and ends half a mile further at track T junction (Buckton Lane SY151904).

Close to Lower Sweetcombe Farm and above and on either side of the valley are interesting remains of hydraulic rams, once commonly used in this area to raise water. If you wish to investigate, the path to the ruins is boggy and difficult to follow.

[4] Turn right and look for the footpath and stile on the right in approximately 20 yds up to Buckton Hill. The path follows the edge of the field.

The path enters the south-eastern corner of the wood which covers Buckton Hill on its east side. Follow the waymarks as the path winds through the woodland.

The path goes steeply up in a west north westerly direction through a small gate and into a field. Pass along the side of the field through a gate and to Buckley Plantation and the waymark post you left some time ago.

Rejoin the East Devon Way and retrace the route

steeply downhill through the plantation bar stile to the top of the field and so back to the start.

From the stile there are good views of Sidbury and the hills to the west. Bald Hill, Ball Hill, Evergreen Hill and Castle Hill which is surmounted by the large Iron Age hill fort from which Sidbury takes its name. Immediately west of the village you can see the red brick building of Sidbury Manor, nestling in a fold of the hill.

As an alternative avoiding the steep climb up Buckton Hill, you may continue along the lane to Sidford or follow the old track to Buckton Farm and minor roads back to Sidbury.

Map: OS Explorer 115 Exmouth and Sidmouth

Route developer: James Baldwin

Route checker: Ted Swan