

6 Circular Walks in the north eastern Blackdown Hills

Walk 5 – Staple Hill and Staple Park Wood

The first mile of the walk is downhill, so it's no surprise that later on there is a steady uphill section, passing close to the highest point of the Blackdown Hills. The route coincides with parts of the East Deane Way, the Neroche Millennium Walk and the Staple Fitzpaine Herepath.

Park at the Staple Hill car park, two miles west of Castle Neroche.

Explorer map 128. Grid Ref: ST 246 159. 5 miles, 8 kilometres.

There are two exits from the car park, almost side by side. Ignore the kissing gate and sign to the loop walk and go through the metal gate to the right, signed for the Herepath. Walk past the turning to the left and down a steep track through the woods to a gate. Bear left through this gate, leaving the Herepath and then pass through a second gate at Mount Fancy Farm where the track becomes a lane. Proceed down this lane for about 3/4 of a mile, passing South Hill Farm. Immediately beyond the next house on the left, turn left on the signposted footpath. It takes you straight ahead, along field edges to a bridge. Keep straight ahead across the next field and then again along a hedge to a lane.

Cross to another footpath opposite and continue the same line across the first field. Keep the hedge on your right in the next one. By the stream, bear gently left to a stile, a bridge and a lane. Turn left.

Immediately beyond Staple Park Farm, stay ahead on a bridleway, which is part of the East Deane Way and then the Herepath too. At the farm gate, follow these signs which take you behind the buildings to turn left, then right, then left again. You are now on a wide track which leads gently uphill through Staple Park Woods. After a while it bends left and a little further on it reaches a gate onto Underhill Lane. Turn right and prepare for the steepest part of the walk.

The lane enters woodland again at a gate. Continue ahead, and at a junction of paths stay ahead on the Herepath route. At the next sign turn left to complete the circuit and return to the car park. As you make this final turn, you are very near the highest point of the Blackdown Hills at around 1,000 feet above sea level. When you are almost back to the car park, you have the option of a short diversion through a kissing gate to the viewpoint. On a clear day, it's too good to miss.

