

6 Circular Walks in the north eastern Blackdown Hills

Walk 6 – Thurlbear and Orchard Portman

A varied and pleasant walk with good views across the Vale of Taunton and to the surrounding hills. It is one of the gentler walks in this collection.

Park by the side of the road at Thurlbear. Explorer map 128. Grid Ref: ST 265 212.
4¼ miles, 7 kilometres.

From Thurlbear church, walk along the road downhill past Church Farm. Continue and about 150 yards beyond a cottage on the left, there are field gates on the right signposted for the Herepath. Go through the gate signposted for Netherclay and keep to the left hand side of the field to the road. Cross carefully and head down the lane opposite. Beyond the equine centre the road becomes a track. Follow this, ahead through a field with the woods up on your right. At a fork just beyond a gate, keep left on the main track.

This is an attractive and secluded part of the walk. At a cross roads of paths turn right (where the Herepath goes to the left). As you follow this track down to a lane, there are some fine mature trees in the fields on your left.

At the road, by Mill House, turn right and walk for about ¾ of a mile along the lane. There is a good view of Taunton racecourse ahead, and of the edge of the Blackdown Hills behind you. Along this lane, you will pass a waterfall on Broughton Brook and will gain a view of the tower of Orchard Portman church. A little way beyond Orchard Portman Farm, there is a sign pointing to the 13th century church. Here, you also find a stile on the right. Cross it and bear diagonally left across the field, passing just to the right of an electricity pole.

Cross a little bridge, and an often busy road, to a stile immediately opposite. Keep the little stream on your left as you cross the fields. With Broughton Farm ahead of you, go through a gate and across another small stream and turn right. After just 50 yards, go through the gate on your right and turn sharp left. Keep by the left hand hedge as you walk for about a mile until the footpath brings you to the road at Greenway Farm. On the way, you will see the landmark of Thurlbear church tower. At the highest point of the path, shortly before the farm, there is a very pleasant view, which even includes the distant Wellington Monument. At the road, turn right, to return to the starting point.

