

Wild Walks Halsdon

Enjoy the woods and water of 'Ravilious country' in a walk for all seasons



A Torridge and Tarka Trail trek

Visit one of Devon Wildlife Trust's most popular nature reserves. A variety of waymarked trails through Halsdon's oak woodland and along the River Torridge allow you to explore this beautiful site. The 8 mile walk also takes in Beaford Wood, the landscaped parkland of the Heanton Satchville estate, a section of the Tarka Trail and two crossings over the Torridge. The riverside hide at Halsdon is the place for views of kingfishers and – for the lucky very early morning walker – otters. This is a fine wood for bluebells in spring and fungi in autumn. Bird life includes nuthatch, great spotted woodpecker and pied flycatcher.



Photos: Kevin New

Essentials

- Approx time: 4.5 hours
- Approx distance: 8 miles
- Use Ordnance Survey map Explorer 127 South Molton & Chulmleigh
- Terrain: Woodland, farmland and riverside paths and quiet rural roads. Paths through nature reserve can be muddy after rain.
- Start: Ashwell car park, DWT Halsdon nature reserve, grid ref SS 555 132
- Child friendly? Suitable for older children
- Dog friendly? Dogs on leads in the reserve (one area of the reserve has 'No dogs' signs but there are other paths to take).



Photo: kingfisher by Chris Root

Directions

(1) From Ashwell car park, walk through the kissing gate across open grassland down into the wood. There are a number of waymarked trails that will lead you through the nature reserve, so this is one possible route: follow markers to Halsdon hide. When you arrive there branch left in front of the hide. Walk along the river, turn left when you meet a fence, go through a gate then bear right. Cross a stile and bear right by a green and white marker, still following the river. Eventually the path leaves the river and bears left, following a stream. Follow it for about half a mile to a very small car park.

(2) Turn right out of the 'quarry' car park, go 30 yards along the minor road, over a bridge and at a junction turn right (signposted Huish) and pass two cottages. Part way up a hill take the Tarka Trail on the right. Follow the trail over two stiles, then go right at a footpath sign towards a cottage. At the cottage follow another footpath sign left, then shortly right to the end of a tarmacked lane. Here turn left at 90° to a public footpath sign to arrive at a T-junction in 150 yards. Here turn right and follow the minor road down to New Bridge (150 yards).

(3) Cross the bridge and pass a thatched cottage on the right. Take a bridlepath on the right through the cottage yard, and then follow it left and uphill through woodland. Go straight on through several fields and past more woodland until the path bears right through a gate down a concrete drive towards a church. Just past the church turn right on to a bridleway signposted Heanton Satchville; a tarmacked track takes you uphill through parkland to a crossroads. At the top of a hill continue straight on and then bear left on to a footpath which goes downhill to a bridge over a small river then up again till you reach the village of Merton.

(4) Here turn right on to a minor road by a thatched cottage. Follow the road for half a mile to another thatched cottage then turn left (signposted Beaford) and continue for three quarters of a mile. At Balls Corner turn right and follow the road round a sharp left turn and down to Beaford Bridge. Cross the Torridge and follow the road round a sharp bend to the right going very steeply uphill. Shortly after this take a footpath off to the right which

goes through Beaford Wood down to the Torridge. After a footbridge at a path junction carry straight on along the river. The path turns away from the river, uphill. 300 yards later it joins a broad track which comes to a minor road after a third of a mile.

(5) Turn right and follow the road round several bends for half a mile. After passing farm buildings behind trees on the right, follow the road round a bend to the right until the DWT Nature Reserve sign on the right. Follow the track downhill to the Ashwell car park.



Photo: nuthatch by Neil Bygrave

