

CREDITON



Walk 2. Salmonhutch and Posbury. 6.4 miles. 3.5 hours.

A gentle beginning alongside the River Yeo gives way to some exertion as the route ascends to Posbury. Some sections can be muddy after rain.

Facilities: Pubs and shops in CREDITON;
Tearooms (closed Sundays) at CREDITON station.

Walk to the level crossing. The signalbox, the last remaining on the line, dates from 1875 and marks the recommencement of single-line working, all Barnstaple-bound trains now being required to move over to the more northerly track. Alighting passengers can witness a time-tested safety procedure to prevent two trains meeting head-on: to access the line ahead, drivers exchange a token with the signalman, thus providing tangible evidence that the single track just vacated is now available for trains travelling in the opposite direction.



Turn left away from the town immediately entering Fordton, and look for a signposted track opposite a row of cottages. Turn right here and follow a pleasant footpath making its way between the railway line and the north bank of the River Yeo. After 0.8 miles the path reaches a quiet lane. Immediately to your right lies the Salmon Pool level crossing. When the BBC was gathering oral histories for an archive of wartime memories, a delightful contribution was made by Brian Cox, then a child of 12, the son of the crossing keeper. He recalled this remote crossing being blocked for almost two hours by a seemingly endless convoy of American armoured vehicles, much to the frustration of the Southern Railway.

Turn left, away from the level crossing, to cross the river and pass Salmonhutch Coarse Fishery. Avoid the left turn just beyond Uton Barton (pronounced Yewton, and clearly a corruption of Yeo-Town). Instead, bear right round the corner to enter Uton. At Uton Village Cross

turn left and proceed uphill for 0.8 miles to Posbury Clump, a stand of trees along the south west horizon. Beyond, on the left, lies the isolated mid-victorian chapel of St. Luke. An ancient quarry, now disused, provided stone for buildings as far distant as Newton St. Cyres. This remote location has in its time known both peace and war. Posbury is still home to a nunnery founded in 1934 and dedicated to St. Francis. Historians are generally agreed that the earthworks a few hundred yards to the south west are the most likely location of the Battle of Posentesburh (661 A.D.) at which Cenwalh, King of Wessex, defeated the Britons, driving them off the fertile redlands.

At the chapel turn right along a narrow track, which later becomes a footpath and leads downhill across several fields to join a lane at Gunstone Mill. Turn right into the lane and follow it across the Yeo and the railway beyond to reach a T-junction. Turn right here and 0.3 miles further on, at the fork, keep



right to Follymoor where the lane bends sharply right. At this corner, leave the lane continuing straight ahead over a stile marked by a footpath sign.

Two footpaths begin here. Avoid the narrow canyon to your left but proceed ahead up the bank to a gate opening onto a field. Follow the field edge ahead along the lower slopes of the hill to reach Denbury Farm whose outbuildings have clearly seen better days. Follow the footpath past the farm and along two more field edges to Beare Mill Farm. At this point the footpath descends to a drive connecting the farm with the public road. Bear left and follow this drive to a T-junction.

Cross the lane here and take the steps up the bank directly opposite. These lead to a

stile and a steep hillside. Aim for the first power pole ahead and slightly to your left, and continue upwards making for the top left-hand field corner. The climb up "Heartbreak Hill" is steep but short with good views. At the top left hand field corner, go through the gate and follow the upper hedge of the field beyond. At the end of this field there is a gate in the hedge to your right. Pass through, noting the fine thatched longhouse two fields distant (and the distinctly less fine school buildings to the right). Follow the footpath to reach the longhouse and, beyond, the town of CREDITON with its shops and pubs. The station lies 0.5 miles distant at the lower end of the town, off the main A377 road to Exeter directly behind the Shell petrol station.

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