

Stage 1

Dunsford to Bridford

Start: St Mary's, Dunsford (EX6 7DA)

Parking available on the road outside the church

End: St Thomas Becket, Bridford (EX6 7HT)

Distance: 3.2 miles (5.1 km)

Time: Approximately 1¾ hours

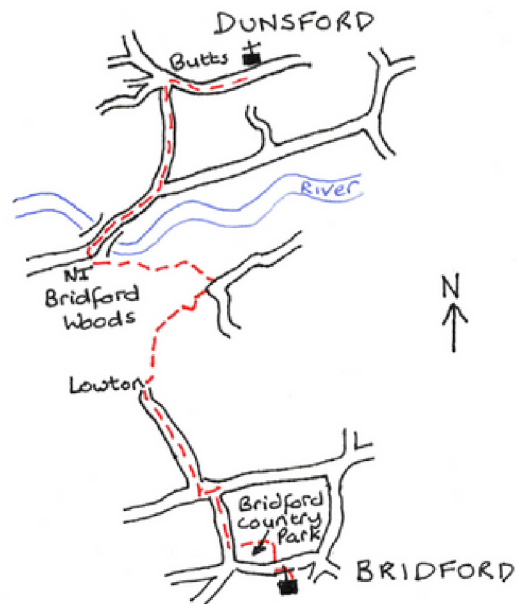
Difficulty: Challenging



Overview

This route initially passes through Bridford Woods, with a steep climb after Steps Bridge, but levelling out beyond into open countryside. The path travels along some beautiful country lanes and footpaths with spectacular views across the undulating farmland.

The route finishes in Bridford Country Park where you can sit and rest in tranquil surroundings with spectacular views before entering Bridford Church for your next opportunity to meditate and pray if you so wish.



St Mary's, Dunsford

Open 9am - 6pm



Reading Genesis 1:1-5

'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.'

Meditation

'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God' (John 1:1). God spoke the Word and became incarnate in creation. Creation is the first language of God. God's message is of life and light, and springs from the love overflowing from the eternal dance of the Creator, the Word and the breath of the Spirit. The invitation is to join the dance, to collaborate as stewards of Eden, as gardeners sowing the seeds of the new creation, God's Kingdom here on earth.

God spoke the Word to Mary, 'The Lord is with you' (Luke 1:28), and she accepted the invitation: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' (Luke 1:38). And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the Light of the World. 'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and earth were created... all things have been created through him and for him.' (Colossians 1:15-16)

Such a small word, 'yes', to transform creation. Do we hear God's invitation to us? Do we, like Mary, say 'yes'? When we listen and hear and say 'Thy will be done', God says 'Let there be light' and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it.

Prayer

Creator God,
to you be praise and glory forever.
Your Spirit swept over the face of the waters
and breathed life and light
into the whole of creation.
Pour down your Spirit on us
that we may walk as children of light
and by your grace
reveal your presence.
Amen.

Directions

Outside **St Mary's Church**, turn right and follow the road, passing the village hall on your left and the school on your right.

Continue along this road, and in just under ¼ mile turn left into Whidley Lane opposite the 'Butts' signpost. Bear left down Lee Lane signposted to Steps Bridge.

After half a mile, at the bottom of the road, turn right onto the B3212. Continue for ¼ mile and cross the stone bridge over the river Teign.

Walk up the hill for a short distance and enter into Bridford Woods National Trust car park. Walk through this parking area and then take the wide path which veers left rising uphill marked with a BYWAY signpost. Walk uphill in an easterly direction rising through Bridford Woods.

Ahead is a wooden gate which should be ignored so keep right up the main track.

At the top of the hill is a fork with a 4-way sign, continue straight on the BYWAY.

Arrive at a metal gate with a phone mast on your left.

Emerge on to the road and immediately on your right is a finger post indicating the Bridleway to Lowton Farm. Go through the wooden gate and follow the bridleway uphill for just over ¼ mile. You are now walking along a lovely old Devon lane, cool in the summer and sheltered in the winter with remains of hedge laying in ancient times.

After the next wooden gate look for a 3-way finger post on your right. Turn left and follow 'Bridleway Avoiding Farm Yard'.

In 150yds pass straight on through a metal gate immediately followed by a wooden gate with a Bridford sign.

In 100yds turn left on to a metalled lane heading south.

Keeping on this metalled lane (ignoring farm entrances on your right and left) for approximately ¾ mile you will reach a T-junction where you will follow the road by turning left and after 100yds follow the road to the right.

After 350yds the road bends to the right, but instead enter the gate on your left allowing access to Bridford Country Park. Take the middle path and explore any route in a south-easterly direction. You will find many sheltered places to rest and enjoy the views to Haldon Hill. Near the southeast entrance you will find a large shelter with an eco-toilet. The park is a very good example of what a local community can achieve with its own labour and grant funding to cover material costs.

Pass through the southeast gate on to the road and turn left.

After the Bridford sign look for a lane on the right signposted to the village hall and church parking. Descend the lane with allotments on your right. Follow the lane to the left and descend the steps to the west door of **St Thomas Becket Church, Bridford**. Rest and meditate awhile in this peaceful church enjoying the splendid and renowned medieval rood screen.

