

Stage 5

Doddiscombsleigh to Dunchideock

Start: St Michael's, Doddiscombsleigh (EX6 7PT)
Parking available on the verge by the church gate

End: St Michael & All Angels, Dunchideock (EX2 9UB)

Distance: 3 miles (4.8 km)

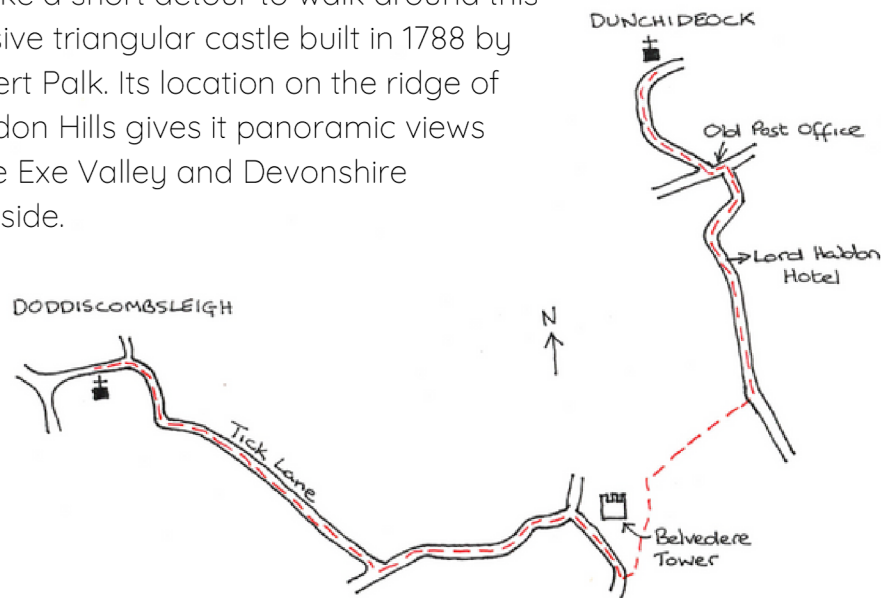
Time: Approximately 1½ hours

Difficulty: Moderate with challenging start



Overview

This is an interesting route with plenty of far-reaching views as well as wooded country lanes, making it ideal walking on hot sunny days. It passes the Belvedere Tower, where you can make a short detour to walk around this impressive triangular castle built in 1788 by Sir Robert Palk. Its location on the ridge of the Haldon Hills gives it panoramic views over the Exe Valley and Devonshire countryside.



St Michael's, Doddiscombsleigh

Open 8am - 9pm



Reading Genesis 1:9-13

'And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.'

Meditation

Abundance, such abundance of life in the garden. Every seed fell on fertile soil and yielded a hundredfold.

What went wrong? What did we do? Or what did we fail to do? Was it disobedience or was it complacency that led us to think we could go it alone? Without God? Are we jealous of God that we yearn for power? Can we do better than God? We can indeed "play" at being God; we can imitate and pretend that we understand the purpose of existence, but our efforts have disfigured the earth.

'You shall have no other gods before me' (Exodus 20:3). In our pursuit of knowledge and power we have turned away from God. We have ceased to listen properly to the language of creation, to God's Word in the land: we continue to crucify God's Word in the earth.

God speaks the Word in us; we are seeds of the new creation born in the Word made flesh. Are we fertile soil?

Prayer

Blessed are you, Lord God of all life: in your goodness you have given us as seeds of the new creation. Help us perceive the promise of life, the wonders of your creative love; by your blessing, let us be signs of your creative power, that in sowing and watering, tending and watching, we may see the miracle of growth, and in due course reap a rich harvest. Amen.

Directions

Hi-vis

From the gate of St Michael's Church turn right. After 150yds, follow Tick Lane round to the right and continue uphill for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the T-junction and turn left.

Continue climbing for $\frac{1}{3}$ mile until you reach the major road on top of Haldon Hill and turn right (signposted to Chudleigh) passing Belvedere Tower on your left.

In 200yds spot a Devon County Council finger post on your left signposted to Belvedere Parking. Follow this hard track round the rear of Belvedere Tower.

Just beyond a 'No Parking' sign there is a steel gate marked 'Private', but with a yellow arrow on its signage. Pass through the gate as this footpath is a public right of way.

Descend the path lined with fir trees on your right. Follow the path which veers to the right and go through the next metal gate.

The path opens out before you and you are treated with splendid views across the Devon countryside towards the River Exe.



Hi-vis

Continue down the path reaching a metal gate where you turn left onto the road.

Continue on the road for $\frac{1}{4}$ mile noting the opportunity to stop for refreshment at the Lord Haldon Hotel on your right. Or to continue, pass under the bridge and follow the road for $\frac{1}{3}$ mile until the next T-junction and turn left.

In less than 100yds turn right following the signs to the Parish Church and Dunchideock Barton.

Follow the road around to the right and arrive at the church gate where you can explore the wonderful Church of St Michael and All Angels, built between the 14th-15th Century in local red sandstone.

Inside there is a notable Rood Screen carved with vine and other foliage work.

Enjoy the tranquillity and peace as you meditate within.

