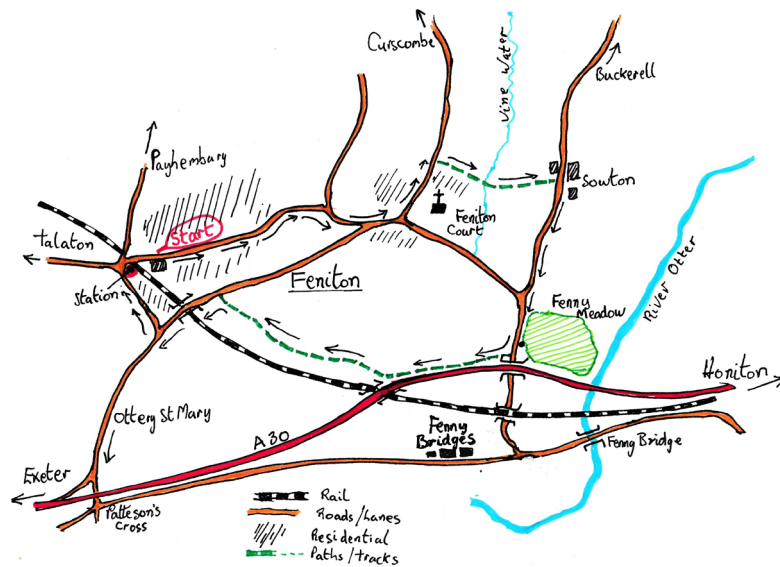


# A Visit to the Battlefield of Fenny Bridges

Map OS Explorer 115. Exmouth and Sidmouth

*A short, level, walk of about 3.5 miles from Feniton on beautiful green paths, quiet country lanes. More importantly - a bit of history in the shape of the Battle of Fenny Bridges.*



Drive to Feniton (GR SY 0968 9941) where you can park along the road beside the Spar shop. Walk along this road passing the school on your left. Drop down into Old Feniton, passing between some geologically interesting high sandstone walls. At the triangular green take the Curscombe Road again passing through interesting rocks, and in about 300yds look for the Public footpath off to the right. This is a glorious little track passing through the woods and grounds of Feniton court and under a low ancient footway. The woods shield a small stream, Vine Water that flows through the masses of wild garlic. Pass over a thin plank bridge and into open pasture. At the time of writing the field supported a herd of wonderful long-horned cattle. Follow the hedge on your left to emerge on the road beside some houses.

Now in Sowton. Move right - lane walking at its best - and with the massive concrete bridge carrying the very noisy A30 in sight look to your left - The Battlefield! It was here that the rather violent and bloody Battle of Fenny Bridges was fought. It is marked by a stone plaque on the roadside (GR SY 1127

9888). Perhaps understandably this is known as Fenny Meadow or Bloody meadow.



**Historically - The introduction of the Book of Common Prayer in 1549 with its associated banning of Catholic Mass and suppression of the Cornish language enraged folk from the predominantly Catholic areas of west Devon and Cornwall. This rage culminated in the Prayer Book Rebellion when the aggrieved marched on Exeter to express their anger. Numerous battles between the rebels and the royal forces occurred but of local interest was the violent Battle of Fenny Bridges between troops of Lord Russell and the rebels on July 29<sup>th</sup> 1549. The rebels were defeated!**

Take the Public Footpath to the right, just before the bridge. Now follow the hedge on your left for a considerable distance, passing through wonderful open countryside. Shame about the noisy A30 but you can switch off from that. Move sharp right as signed but straight ahead over the stile. Soon bear right with the hedge on your right to arrive at an old windmill. Ahead here to meet the road and then left. At the junction bear right into Feniton, maybe having a quick look at the gate of Tool Gate Cottage on the corner. Over the level crossing and back to your start.