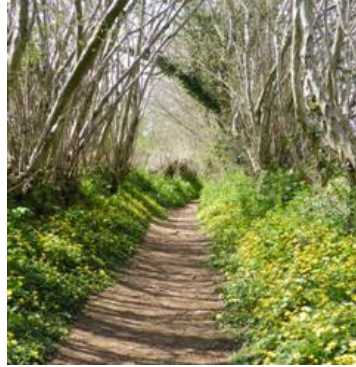


## *Budleigh to Otterton and Back – via the Hibernaculum.*

Map OS Explorer 115 – Exmouth & Sidmouth. 1:25000.

Time: – 3 plus hours about 7.5 miles

Grade: Moderate – some uphill.



**S**tart in the main car park in Budleigh Salterton, close to the beach at the mouth of the river Otter. (Pay the meter – they show no mercy here!) Follow the path out of the car park, beside the cricket ground and along the Otter Estuary. Tidal here, with wonderful wildlife, excellent information boards and even a hide but later becoming river in its own right and flowing to the sea. At the road bridge, right for a few metres and then right again at the gateway to South Farm Court and Pynes Farm Shop on to the footpath signposted.

**G**ently up hill, following the estuary on its other side back toward the sea. Look for another hide in the trees to the right – well hidden this time. Some useful boarding over damp areas. Wonderful views back over Budleigh, the coast and the estuary mouth. Onwards and just before the path veers left up to the cliff top look for the old Hibernaculum! It was an old wartime pill box but now strictly the domain of bats. A notice, once on the wall, now lies looking forlorn in the grass by the box.

**N**ow follow the cliff top path with its gentle ups and downs – well, fairly gentle- and after some distance pass through a gate and on to see the old wartime Brandy Head gunnery observation post. This has been tidied up and the information boards are a mine of – yes- information! A good spot for a rest and picnic. Drop downhill and then back up looking out for the Permissive Footpath sign (a wooden one) to Otterton and the River Otter pointing to the left. **Ignore it** and carry on for about 800 metres, through a wooden kissing gate and follow the signposted route to Otterton, moving left up the field, not forgetting to take in the great views of Ladram Bay and its sandstone rocks. With the hedge on your left move up to a wooden gate. Take the short track to a lane; move left and on to a T – junction at Stantaway Farm (Close to Otterton FC ground). Sharp left for about 100 paces down the road and look for a narrow, signposted unmetalled road off to the right. Not named on the post but this is Lea Lane and meant for the walker. Feels like lots of history here and on a warm day it offers

flowers, ferns, birds, and butterflies - everything you could wish for. Stay on the track, bending here and there but at the marker post bear left to reach the road.

**H**ere, left downhill to Colliver Cross (Signposted but not named) and now – magic- move right into Colliver Lane, the most beautiful tunnelled bridle path, again with loads of history. Down to a gate, right through another and move left around the field. The track following the field edge moves uphill and out on to a lane by two large brick pillars. Left and then quickly right down old steps, over the river bridge and then decisions!! Left back to the Start or – better by far – right along the riverbank to Otterton Mill. (You could ignore crossing the bridge and carry on right along the lane rather than down the steps, and into Otterton.) Here you could obtain light (or heavy!) refreshment at the Otterton Mill. Suitably refreshed, over the road bridge and left to meander back beside the river to the start of the walk. Depending on the season there will be a variety of wildlife to enjoy – mullet floating near the surface, waders, and divers and if you are very quick-sighted the flash of red and blue as the kingfisher patrols the water.

(Revised November 2013)