

Clyst Hydon From Whimble and back via Clyst St Lawrence and a few crosses.

Map OS Explorer 115 – Exmouth & Sidmouth. 1:25000.
6.7 miles Time: – 3½ hours
Grade Easy but can be muddy in Winter. Good boots or Ark could be useful. Mud usually avoidable.



Drive to Knowle Cross (GR 041977), the first of many crosses, just outside Whimble and park in the Recreation Field Car Park. Walk a few yards down the road to the junction on which a footpath is signposted to the right beside a cottage. Follow this really good track to where a sign offers two footpaths! Take the right, but remember the other one because if your track is very, very flooded then the left hand track will cut off a corner. All clear? Stay on the track and soon where the track finishes pass through a gate into open fields. Straight across and uphill through another gate keeping the hedge on your left. Follow the hedge round to the right and then immediately left through gateway and downhill keeping hedge on your right. Keep going and look for the stile on your right. Bit steep down the steps, but safe. Follow row of trees on your right and eventually reach the gate on to the road.

Left and then very soon off right on a Public Footpath that runs along a really good lane. Take a small path right through some trees just before the buildings (small brewery!) and skirt the thatched cottage via a small stile. Aim for a marker post in the trees and then diagonally left downhill to a gated bridge. More or less straight across the field to a gateway and then diagonally left aiming for the farm buildings and Church, using a small gate beside the barn to gain access to the road and Clyst St Lawrence city centre!

Right here and then left on to Public Footpath between two cottages. Via a small bridge move diagonally left across fields to a wooden kissing gate and then uphill (keep hedge on your left) to another wooden kissing gate on the skyline. Straight on over a shallow drainage ditch and then bear right dropping down to find a small gated bridge in the far

right-hand corner at the bottom of the field. Now, straight ahead uphill to a gateway and in a few yards, right over a small wooden bridge. Left and left round a tall yellow marker post across to a gate beside the bungalow. Right here and pass (or maybe not immediately if it's open!) the old Five Bells Inn and right at One Fir Cross (another cross) up to Three Firs Cross. Just past and opposite the school, there is a very handy seat beside a thin brook and a road to the right.

Down here and after about 300m take a small path through a gate on your left and follow the hedge, slowing to look at the old Manor on your left. Keep walking up to the corner of the field, towards a small house. Here take the path to the right, through a metal gate Straight on passing a yellow marker post, through the gateway in the hedge and then diagonally left to a point about 100 m beyond the farm buildings. You will emerge on to a good farm track through a small gate. Enjoy the good bit because in bad weather you will move through a very, very muddy gateway, Left across to a small wooden gate in the hedge and then diagonally right across field to open gateway. Aim for the large mass of buildings ahead, moving left across the front of them to a wooden gate on to the road.

Right. Then, at the corner, left on to good track. (Don't leave track for path on the left). Stay on this track for some way coming to a somewhat hidden stile / bridge over a muddy brook. In fact the easy option, if it's not too muddy, is to just go via the big wide gateway! The stile/ bridge is just in the bushes to the left of the gateway and is really the proper way. Move on passing under small power cables to a gate. Through this and immediately right through gateway and then left following hedge on your left down to a mix of gates and stile (bit superfluous the stile!) Keep on following hedge down to corner – bit deceptive, there is a stile and bridge over stream but a bit hidden. Left to marker post and then slightly diagonally left and uphill over open field to hedge on far side. There is a marker post but just turn right and follow hedge and hit road. Left on the road and then right at Rull cross (Last cross!). Follow the road back to the playing fields.

Chris Harwood Revised March 2012.