

Dumpdon Hill and (Optionally!) Hartridge

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

Time: 2 – 2½ hours (or about 4 hours with Hartridge)

Grade: Moderate – some uphill.



Drive along the A30 toward Honiton from the Exeter direction, not entering Honiton but leaving the A30 at the further end of Honiton going around the roundabout and taking the Dunkeswell road. Follow this road for about 2 km to the crossroads – Combe Raleigh Cross – and turn left down into Combe Raleigh. Drive through to the Church and park here. (GR 158 023). Walk back through the village to meet the main road. Just before the main road and on the left in the bank look for a small commemorative stone –the Centenary Oak!). Turn left.

Up the road for about 200 metres (with care, it's a terrible road but try to cross it once to look back at Combe Raleigh)) and then cross the stile on to the Public Footpath off to the right. Just follow the path along the field side passing by the imposing Hill House and down to the minor road to Luppitt. Left up the road for about 300 metres, passing a group of cottages and crossing a large culvert that goes under the road. Just after the farm – and the inevitable Holiday Cottage complex – bear right on the Public Footpath through the gate and wend your way diagonally left across the field down to a small footbridge.

Once over the bridge, follow the delightful track curving left and upwards. A truly magic lane. You will arrive at a small complex of old dwellings – Cuckoo Cottage and Wicks Farm to name just two. Bear left, moving on to what becomes a barely surfaced road and finally a properly surfaced minor road. A fair amount of uphill – but take time to look back across the incredible landscape – passing Palmerhayes on the left until you see a small car parking and turning area on the right with a National Trust sign saying “Dumpdon”.

Take the stepped path out of this area, up and off to the right through wonderful woods to emerge via a single gate on to open heath and a path that contours around the base of Dumpdon Hill itself. Resist the temptation to strike off up the hill but rather keep contouring round, slightly up and down, passing through a solitary (quite useless !) gate to a point where the track clearly moves uphill diagonally left. This point is identifiable

by old beech trees and a padlocked gate down to the right. Progress uphill with the woods above you and follow the track, not dropping down to a small clearing beside the road but rather staying up. Very soon, having passed through a small kissing gate and down some rustic steps, you will drop down into a National Trust parking area (very small!) Here there is a small information board with directions. These are not really necessary as you need only take the track to the right of the board, as you face it, out of the parking area and, again via a small gate, follow it curving upwards and diagonally left to the summit of Dumpton Hill – and its trig point.

The views from the top are astounding and it's the ideal place to potter round the earthworks of the old Iron Age fort, into the copse or just lie in the sun! To return, in case you are disorientated, stand by the trig point, back to the trees and walk NE (about 2 o'clock) to the edge of the earthworks and follow your original track down to the small NT parking area. **(SEE END OF WALK FOR OPTION OF GREATER EXCITEMENT AND SLIGHTLY LONGER WALK!)** From here move out on to the road, bear left for 400m and then left again towards Wick. You will recognise Wicks Farm, Cuckoo Cottage, the lane, the bridge and so back up through the field bearing diagonally left this time to the road. Left and this time, having passed the holiday complex and then the cottages don't take the Public Footpath off right but stay on the road, passing the nursery on your left, to the cross road. Bear right here and up to the main road. Straight across – with care – and so back into Combe Raleigh and your car.

BUT! For the adventurous – the extra option! On leaving the car park at the foot of Dumpton Hill, turn left but instead of turning left again in 400 m keep walking straight on towards Beacon. Not a huge development but some very attractive cottages. At the cross-roads, straight on, bit of an uphill, on road to Upottery. At next junction, bear left but in about 100m take stony track off right and follow it up, bearing left at the top to follow a grassy track with hedgerow on your right. You are now up on Hartridge and there is a tumulus over the hedge and across the field but it's very insignificant. Where the hedge turns sharp right, your track goes slightly left and drops downhill to meet a narrow road. Briefly left and then almost immediately right down the hill. In the dip bear left downhill to a sharp right hand corner in the road. Here, at Antelope cottage, take the lane left and passing cottages you will move on to the most incredible green lane. Follow this down to eventually emerge on to a narrow road. Left here and then right at the Barn Cross junction. Stay on this Combe Raleigh road, passing Perry Thorn Cross, the nursery and then here, right, back up to the main road and over to your car in Combe Raleigh.