

Circular Walks in Exmoor and North Devon

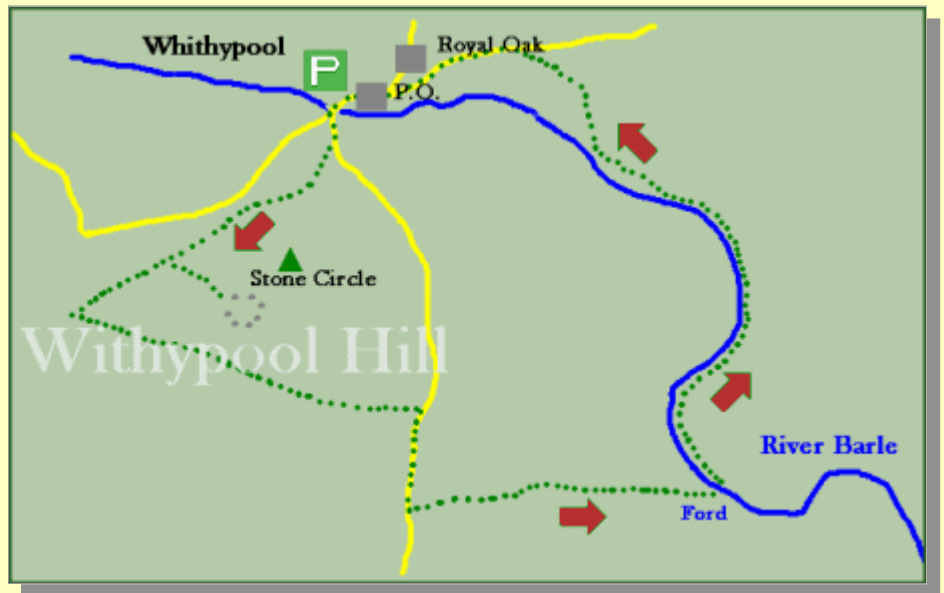
Withypool

Circular walk from Withypool taking in the Stone Circle and the river Barle; 2.5-3 hrs finishing at The Royal Oak (including fording the river).

The Route:

Start at the car park in Withypool, turn right out of the car park and walk up the hill past the council houses and the village hall and then about a further 150 yards up the lane. You will see a signpost on the right to "Porchester Post". Take this track towards Withypool Hill. The path winds its way around the lower slopes of the hill and if you're lucky you might see a herd of Exmoor ponies that live on this part of the moor.

The track naturally veers towards the road, but ignore this and keep straight on towards the hills. Cross two major paths. (To visit the Stone Circle, take the second path and walk towards the summit, then head off to the right. The circle is to be found just beneath the right of the summit as you face the hill with the road behind you.)



Carry on a little further to another major track coming in from your right at about 45 degrees. Turn left here. You should see two new farm barns in the distance slightly on the right of you, the summit of the hill is now to your left. Follow this path to the left and eventually you meet a small lane by a cattle grid. Turn right over the grid and follow the lane a little way down the hill. You reach a farm track on your left, signposted "Bridleway - no foot bridge". Turn left here and follow the track into a small farmyard; bear left before the barns. Follow the hedge descending to a wicket gate leading through into a field. Start a steep descent down towards the river, keeping to the lefthand hedge. Through a wooden gate at the bottom past some old ruins and into the lefthand field, follow the path diagonally across the field to a small wicket gate at the bottom and the river Barle.

Ford the river diagonally to another wicket gate (Warning: Do not attempt this when the water level is high!) Turn left and follow the path along the edge of a big field, heading up-stream along the banks of the Barle towards Withypool. The path follows the riverside leading you through a succession of open meadows and small wood back towards Withypool. At the road, turn left and

head down the hill into the village. It's time to visit the Royal Oak, on your right, for a pint of Exmoor and a steak roll.