



National Trust, Parke a Countryside Walk looking at Devon Hedges



National Trust



Devon Hedge Facts

- A Devon Hedge comprises of an earth bank, usually with a line of shrubs growing on top
- The bank may be faced with either stone or turf
- Devon has around 33,000 miles (53,000 km) of hedges, more than any other county in the UK
- Three quarters of Devon's hedge are thought to be medieval
- Around 20% of the UK's species-rich hedges are in Devon
- Hedges require management, including periodic rejuvenation by laying, to prevent them from disappearing

For more information about Devon Hedges visit <http://www.devon.gov.uk/hedges.htm>

The Devon Hedge Group

The Devon Hedge Group is a forum of organisations and individuals interested in working together to promote the appreciation and conservation of hedges found across the county. Members of the Group represent the full range of interests associated with hedges in Devon, including agriculture, the conservation of wildlife and landscape, and historical and cultural values. This leaflet has been produced as a part of the Devon Hedge Group's Green Veins and Lanes project.

Follow the Countryside Code



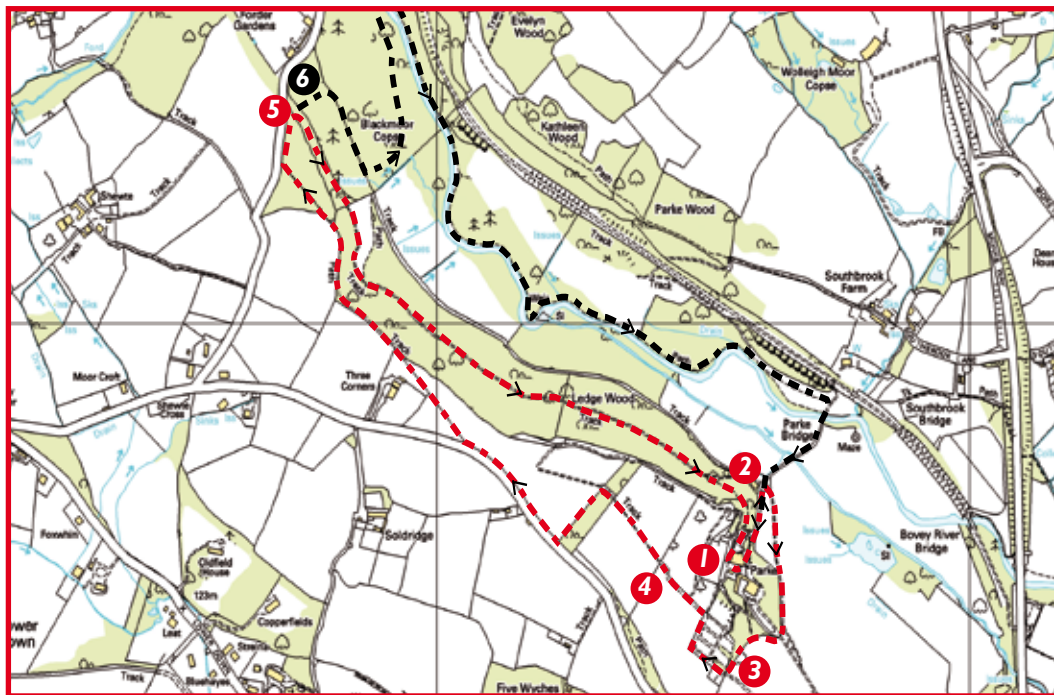
- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



LOTTERY FUNDED



This walk, at National Trust, Parke on the edge of Dartmoor, will take you through parkland, pasture, woodland and has the option of a river walk. The shorter woodland walk will take about one hour (1.9 miles), and the slightly longer river walk, approximately 1½ hours (2.6 miles), at a leisurely pace. Waterproof footwear is recommended especially after periods of wet weather. The park and fields are used for grazing sheep and ponies and we ask you to keep your dog under close control in these areas. There is a National Trust car park, public toilets and the Home Farm Café all at hand.



the steps down the hill. At the bottom, the path loosely forks.

YOU NOW HAVE A CHOICE – take either 5 or 6 depending on how long you wish to spend.

5. For the short woodland walk: (1.9 miles)

Follow the path which forks to the right along a wide woodland track, taking you along the side of the valley. After a short distance, you will find a bench where you can enjoy the view over the woodland canopy with Bovey Tracey in the distance. Keep directly ahead of you, avoiding any paths or tracks turning left. At the end of this woodland walk, the path will take you up a few steps, turn left at the top onto the track. On your right, you will see the entrance to the Walled Garden. Follow the track down the hill and you will find yourself back at the beginning of the walk with a welcome sight of the café.



1. The walk starts at the National Trust Rangers Office (grid ref SX 8056 7860) at Parke. Walk down the steps, on the left of the office, to the courtyard below, where you will find the public toilets and an open fronted barn containing some original Dartmoor farm carts. To the left of the barn, pass through a picket gate and follow the footpath to the left taking you to another picket gate. Go through and turn right to walk down the track.

On your right this old hedge has been planted without the traditional Devon stone/earth banks and comprises mainly of ash trees. It was laid in Autumn 2012 in the Devon style with steepers and crooks. This will help the hedge to bush out and form a healthy stock-proof barrier.

2. At the bottom of the slope, turn right through a gate into the park. Follow the vehicle track up towards Parke House, now the offices for the Dartmoor National Park Authority. Near to the front of the house, turn up the hill to the right, cross the drive and follow the hedge on the right hand side

This is what many may think of as a 'garden hedge', few varieties and regularly trimmed to keep it 'tidy'. It does however still host a useful number of bird nesting sites but is limited in biological diversity.



3. Cross the public drive and pass through the gate to the left of the cattle grid. Walk through the car park to the far side where you will find a five bar gate in the corner. Pass through this gate and follow the track sloping uphill, passing a pony paddock on your left and the apple orchard behind the hedge on your right.

This is an excellent example of a "mixed-hazel" hedge on top of an earth/turf bank. It is rich in shrubs and hedgerow trees – particularly hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, oak and ash – and has associated woodland flowers including primrose, bluebell, red campion and dog's mercury. The extra height gained by the earth bank makes for a good stock proof barrier. It was laid in winter 2010 and should not require further work until 2015 or later.

4. Pass through the next five bar gate and directly up the hill on a track through the centre of the field. At the top of the field, you can look back and admire the fine view across to Bovey Tracey and Heathfield. Pass through the next two gates and then turn immediately left along the edge of the field keeping the woodland to your left. When you reach the field boundary, turn right keeping the hedge to your left.



This hedge has not been laid for several decades and is now due for work. It will be 'sided up' (cut back) and then laid, retaining the larger mature trees as 'standards'. If you look carefully you may find some old horizontal stems in the hedge which were the result of laying many years ago.

Follow the hedge to the end of the field and pass through the swing gate into the woodland beyond. Keep straight ahead following this woodland path until you can see a stile in front of you. Turn right just before the stile following

6. For the longer river walk: (2.6 miles)

Follow the path down the hill which forks to the left. Keep following the track, which turns back on itself (do not go through gate onto lane) and after approx. 100 yards, turn left down some woodland steps which then develop into a boardwalk. At the end of the boardwalk, follow the track until you start to hear the rush of the river. Turn right to cross the footbridge, turn right again and follow the footpath. The path meanders and occasionally divides through the woods, keep the river on your right and all the paths go in the same direction. Eventually, you will come across another small section of boardwalk, turn right at the end and walk through another small pasture. Turn right over the stone bridge and keep following the track, eventually taking you uphill and back to the white picket gate from the beginning of the walk. Pass through the gate and back up to the café for some welcome refreshment.

